**Literature Review**

The concept of citizen police academies is one that has been covered in the research literature. Many of the articles about these academies provide descriptions of various academy programs, including assessments of how they impact levels of citizen involvement in the police force, community familiarity with officers, and how well these academies promote integration of the police and the community. More rarely, articles review how citizen academies affect their participants, which could thereby determine whether police departments actually benefit from the use of these institutions. Often, claims are made about the efficacy of citizen police academies, but few researchers or police departments have undertaken to examine their impact on both the individual participants and the community.

Citizen police academies are a relatively recent phenomenon, with the first one being set up in Great Britain in 1977, and the United States following shortly thereafter in 1985, implementing its first program in Orlando, Florida (Bonello & Schafer, 2002). Primarily, their aim is to allow citizen volunteers to address needs normally met by community planners, whereby participants in these programs are “charg[ed] with improving the quality of life in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods” (Rohe, 2001). General duties can include assisting with special events in the community, code enforcement, and providing agency accreditation (Citizen Police Academies, 2008). These programs have proven to be fairly popular among many communities, despite the dearth of comprehensive research regarding their impact; a nationwide 2001 survey of police department heads found that 46 percent of the departments surveyed had implemented some form of community policing, including academies (Rohe, 2001).

One of the ways that citizen police academies have been assessed is in terms of their relative effect on establishing relationships between police and communities. Rohe (2001) details a study on the impact of a 167-member community policing program in the cities of Greensboro and Asheville, North Carolina. Around 78 percent of the officers in this community supported the use of community policing, leaving a sizable minority who did not (Rohe, 2001). Some citizens reported feeling safer after the introduction of the program: 66 percent of Asheville residents and 48 percent of those in Greensboro responded in the affirmative to this item, and 56 percent and 75 percent of the cities' residents, respectively, felt that the police were doing an adequate job of working with citizens of these cities in order to address community problems (Rohe, 2001).

However, the target communities that were meant to show improvements from these programs found that fear of crimes actually increased during the same period of time: Although crime decreased 8 percent in Asheville and 1.6 percent in Greensboro in the two-year period, 20 percent and 26 percent, respectively, reported being more fearful of crime, outweighing the 15 percent and 19 percent of residents in target communities that reported feeling less fearful (Rohe, 2001). In each city, some citizens—9 percent in Asheville and 51 percent in Greensboro—reported that an officer had come to their door to discuss neighborhood crime, and 16 percent and 58 percent of residents, respectively, stated that they personally knew a police officer in their neighborhood (Rohe, 2001). According to this study, then, it can be seen that these citizen policing academies have had some impact on their communities, although they have not always effectively raised perceptions of safety among residents, despite an overall decline in crime in the first two years of the program's existence.

Peak (1992) reports data from five surveys regarding a citizen policing program in Reno, Nevada to show how this program influenced community perceptions of the police force overall. The surveys used random dialing to assess citizen opinions. Respondents had quite poor perceptions of the police force before the implementation of the program: Less than one third stated that the department had a good or very good public image, but three years after the program had been in existence, this proportion climbed to 56.5 percent (Peak, 1992). Correspondingly, the percentage of citizens reporting that the department had a poor or very poor public image decreased drastically, from one third to just under 5 percent (Peak, 1992). Those citizens that had reported that they had interactions with the police indicated an increase in the proportion that expressed that they felt that the employee they contacted “project[ed] a feeling of concern,” from 69.4 percent to 81.8 percent over the same three-year period (Peak, 1992). There was also a change in the proportion of individuals that felt Reno was a safe place to live: While both “yes” and “no” responses increased, there was a statistically significant shift toward the percentage that responded in the affirmative (Peak, 1992). Interestingly, there was an increase—from 5.9 percent to 11.2 percent—in the proportion of citizens that felt the department dealt with offenders in a “very poor” fashion, which paralleled a decrease in those that felt they dealt with them in a “very good” manner; this decline was from 32.4 percent to 10.9 percent (Peak, 1992). Not all changes in accordance with community policing programs, then, can be said to be positive, although this survey, along with other quantitative analyses, seems to indicate that communities tend to respond in an overall favorable fashion toward community policing programs.

Possible methods for evaluating how police academy programs for citizens could be evaluated are described in Cheurprakobkit and Bartsch (2001). This study uses dimensions consisting of 14 police attributes, for which 581 residents of Texas were questioned regarding both their feelings on the importance of these attributes and how satisfied they were with local police departments' expression of them. Cheurprakobkit and Bartsch (2001) found that while there was a general level of contentedness with how police embodied these attributes, the attributes invariably had higher ratings for importance than satisfaction. Citizens tended to be more satisfied with professional conduct attributes, such as honesty and professional conduct, but that friendliness factors, encompassing concern, politeness, helpfulness, and others, as well as crime prevention and control factors, such as investigative skills and abilities to prevent crime, generated lower satisfaction scores (Cheurprakobkit & Bartsch, 2001). Friendliness tended to be the least important, according to these survey responses, however they demonstrate a real need for this police department to improve their crime-fighting abilities. These findings echo those reported in Bonello and Shafer (2002) and others. More importantly, however, this study provides a measure by which the effects of citizen police academy programs on communities could potentially be evaluated.

Another study, conducted by Reisig and Parks (2000), notes that demographic variables correlate with satisfaction with police. Surveys conducted in Indianapolis, Indiana and St. Petersburg, Florida among 5,361 citizens tended to show that African Americans, for example, expressed less satisfaction with police departments in their neighborhood than did white Americans (Reisig & Parks, 2000). However, it seems to be disadvantage and quality of life that mediate these relationships, rather than strictly race: Many African Americans are more disadvantaged and report lower qualities of life than many white individuals, however it is disadvantaged neighborhoods as a whole that express the least satisfaction with police departments (Reisig & Parks, 2000). In the Cheurprakobkit and Bartsch (2001) study, where overall satisfaction was expressed with police, the survey respondents were largely individuals in higher-income, more privileged neighborhoods rather than representing the diversity of neighborhoods reported in Reisig and Parks (2000). This study speaks to the need for any analysis of community policing to consider the program's effects on both high- and low-income neighborhoods.

In addition to assessing how citizen police academy programs can impact communities, the research literature has investigated how these programs can affect those involved in terms of both citizens and officers. One such study, reported by Bonello and Schafer (2002), discusses the impact of the effects of a Lansing, Michigan citizen police academy on its participants. The responses represent some 71 percent of the 134 graduates of the program. The vast majority of respondents, around 90 percent, indicated that they had an increased awareness of crime, police activities, and police problem-solving efforts (Bonello & Schafer, 2002). The number of respondents that volunteered their services to the police department increased slightly after graduating from the program, from 57 percent to 63 percent, but positive views of the department jumped radically—from 23 percent to 81 percent—after completion of the program (Bonello & Schafer, 2002). Around 34 percent of these individuals stated that they were more likely to volunteer after the program's completion, and 94 percent indicated that they were more likely to assist the police after this time, showing a general rise in positive attitude toward collaborating and volunteering with others (Bonello & Schafer, 2002). Generally, however, these individuals begin police academy programs with a positive perception of the police, which only tend to increase over time, and the authors note that these programs are an effective mechanism for “increasing understanding, trust, and dialogue with members of the community” (Bonello & Schafer, 2002).

Raffel (2005) describes other changes that can take place among participants in these programs, which involve shifting attitudes among graduates. Many individuals that are initially attracted to citizen police academies are drawn to them due to the more “exciting,” “action-packed” aspects of policing; these academies actually emphasize avoiding or reducing the need for physical force on the part of the police, assisting in crime prevention and investigation efforts, and to help explain police actions so that they seem more legitimate to the community (Raffel, 2005). After taking the course, however, individuals in this urban Great Lakes city program report becoming more interested in the non-violent aspects of policing, which allows these programs to play a useful role, according to the author, of “emphasiz[ing] the less adventuresome aspects” of policing (Raffel, 2005). Unfortunately, this study involved qualitative responses, not quantitative statistics, rendering it impossible to calculate the relative strength of this effect in this study.

The effects of community policing programs on officers have also been considered within the research literature, allowing discussions on values and attitude to take place. Haarr (2001) studied 446 police recruits in Phoenix upon their completion of their own training academy. Haarr (2001) reports that, over the 16 months of basic training and probation, the attitudes toward community policing and problem solving tend to become less favorable. Recruits tended to have more positive attitudes toward community policing and problem solving at the beginning of their training, which may be due to initial positive opinions imparted by the academy that later “dissipate” as field training as well as exposure to the work and environmental culture cause officers to refocus their priorities (Haarr, 2001). These individuals, it should be noted, still have overall positive perceptions of community policing, however as they internalize aspects and values of police organizational culture, they may begin to no longer be aligned with some community values, the consequences of which is discussed in a 2001 study by Thacher (Haarr, 2001).

Along with changes in participant attitudes toward the police, citizen police academies—as well as community policing programs—have a possibility of actually changing the role of the police departments themselves, which must be considered as a separate nature of change from community and participant attitude transitions. Zhao, Lovrich, and Robinson (2001) detail a study that involves an analysis of over 200 communities that have implemented community policing programs. One of the arguments for community policing is that increased citizen involvement and awareness would allow police departments to reprioritize certain tasks that they must undertake, for example, being able to spend more time on solving crimes rather than devoting these resources to investigating code violations (Zhao et al., 2001). However, this perspective is called into question by the results of Zhao et al., as they show that there has been “very little change in prioritizing police functions” during the three-year period that is in question, from 1993 to 1996. These findings support the findings of earlier research that have found a similar lack of change in police departments that operate citizen police academies. The contingency theory of these academies becoming a necessity in order to assist police or combat crime is thereby invalidated by these findings, and instead, the nature of these programs may be to fill a role predicted by the institutional perspective, where they attempt to lend legitimacy to the police departments and city governments implementing them and to thereby garner community support (Zhao et al., 2001).

Some of the other research that has been influential in the investigations of community policing involve discussions of the challenges that departments face in implementing these programs in an effective manner. Thacher (2001), for example, investigates conflicts over values that can emerge between police departments and community policing programs after their implementation. This study contends that innovations in police actions can aid in community–police collaboration; for example, community partnership can lend an air of legitimacy to police activities, such as anti-gang initiatives, similar to the institutional theory promoted by the results of Zhao et al. (2001) and others.

However, Thacher (2001) uses case studies to contend that some police departments do, in fact, change, but in the opposite direction predicted by the contingency theory: Police departments may start to internalize an emphasis on disorder and soft crime, sometimes at the risk of taking focus, and even resources, away from fighting hard crime. In other departments, there was internal backlash against creating community programs, even to the point of eliciting charges of “cozying up to the enemy,” which tended to occur when these programs were initiated in an effort to improve relationships in areas where residents are suspicious or hostile to the police; sometimes, it seems, conflicts of values emerge because this suspicion is mutual (Thacher, 2001). The success of collaborations between police departments and communities, according to Thacher (2001), tend to be largely contingent upon the values espoused by these departments, including their willingness to make changes in order to accommodate these relationships, exhibiting more tolerant behavior toward citizens, and shifting priorities as well as resources toward combating soft crime.

Chesluk (2004) offers a view of this conflict of values and shifting of priorities with a community policing program that was implemented in New York City. This study offers the opinion that any dialogues and value conflicts that take place stem from larger conflicts due to differences in sociological position, which would seem to offer a theoretical framework for the responses of Reisig and Parks (2000). New York City instituted a community police program during the 1980s and 1990s as part of a more general push to eliminate certain types of soft crime and disorder under the “broken windows” theory that postulates that tolerance of these soft crimes creates an environment where hard crimes can more easily occur (Chesluk, 2004). Chesluk contends that the implementation of the community police program by New York City police departments was an attempt to promote a more positive view of the police in the eyes of citizens. However, the alignment of values that occurs in other cities did not seem to occur in New York City: Citizens used the presence of the citizen police academy to debate larger aspects of the role of the police in their communities as well as to question whether any actual change in police behavior would come about as a result of these programs, in particular, whether citizens of low-income neighborhoods would be treated with more respect and tolerance by police (Chesluk, 2004). This case study would seem to reinforce the results of Reisig and Parks (2000), as well as the opinion of Zhao et al. (2001), that community values cannot always align with those of the police, and that an inability of the police to change may result in a continued negative evaluation of the police as well as of any community policing programs (Chesluk, 2004).

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