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A Case Study of Relative Satisfaction with Justice in State Courts: Perceptions of Access and Fairness Among Hispanics/Latinos and Whites

Christopher George Bleuenstein
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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

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2010

Abstract

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Perceptions of Access and Fairness Among Hispanics/Latinos and Whites

by

Christopher George Bleuenstein

M.A., Kent State University, 2003

M.A., University of Akron, 1994

B.A., University of Akron, 1991

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Public Policy and Public Administration

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Abstract

Previous studies have neglected to focus on the generalized affective satisfaction (diffuse support) to state level courts among Hispanics/Latinos. A western US county was selected for this case study to test a racial and ethnic theory of procedural justice in a region with a large Hispanic/Latino population. Differential experience theory was used as a theoretical foundation and posits that people determine their level of satisfaction with the courts based on their own actual experience with the courts. The main research question was whether Hispanics/Latinos have a different level of satisfaction with their access to, and fairness in, the court when compared to Whites. Data were gathered from 1406 people exiting the courthouse for any reason in 2007 and 2008. The exit survey data were used to test a logistic regression model to empirically investigate whether race or ethnicity is a significant predictor of court user satisfaction. Level of satisfaction was operationalized by assessing responses to questions regarding the accessibility to, and perceived fairness in, the court. Although race/ethnicity proved to be significantly linked to both measures of satisfaction in 2007 these associations were no longer observed in the 2008 data. Mean satisfaction ratings affirmed the findings of other researchers in the field that Hispanics/Latinos have a high level of satisfaction with their access to, and fairness in, the court. This is important because the legitimacy of the judicial branch is dependent upon the good will of the public. This study can directly contribute to social change by informing outreach programs designed to increase voluntary participation in state and local legal systems among members of Hispanic/Latino communities, and thus help to realize more equitable justice for all citizens.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends, especially to Mother for her unwavering support and encouragement to reach my dreams; to Father for making sacrifices so that his kids could have a better future; to Oma and Otta for teaching me the value of hard work; to Mrs. Hamburg for challenging me to do better; to Mr. and Mrs. Hansen for the edification in civility; to Bill for always being there as a friend; to April for opening my eyes to the world; and to Erick for his patience and understanding.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background of Study

This dissertation explored whether race or ethnicity was a significant predictor of court–user satisfaction regarding the accessibility of the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County (hereinafter referred to as the Court). Also this dissertation explored whether race or ethnicity was a significant predictor of court-user satisfaction regarding fairness of the Court. Specifically, the perceived satisfaction of accessibility and fairness of Hispanics/Latinos who interacted with the Court for any matter within the jurisdiction of the Court was explored via archival data from a public satisfaction survey that was administered to court-users exiting the courthouse in 2007 and 2008.

Although race has a long history in this country, the question related to ethnicity is new. Even more contemporary are the questions of satisfaction based on ethnicity and race. Scholars have long been concerned with public satisfaction regarding the judicial branch. This is evident by remarks made by the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, John Jay, when he stated: “Next to doing right, the great object in the administration of justice should be to give public satisfaction” (Rehnquist, 1999, p. 9). The legitimacy of the U.S. government is dependent upon the support of the people. Public satisfaction and public opinion weigh heavy on our institutions of government, and especially heavy on the judicial branch, which is dependent upon an elected legislature for a fiscal budget allocation. Additionally, the courts are dependent upon the executive branch of government for the enforcement of its orders. Therefore, dissatisfaction with the judicial branch could erode the legitimacy of the courts.

Dissatisfaction with the judicial system has a long history in the United States. Pound, a leading law professor at the turn of the 20th century, studied the public's dissatisfaction with the judicial system and reported the finding in 1906 at a conference of the American Bar Association. Pound (1906) hypothesized that the public was dissatisfied with the administration of justice because of (a) the mechanical nature of judicial operational rules, (b) the inevitable difference between law and current public opinion, (c) the popular opinion that the administration of justice is an easy task that can be performed by anyone and, (d) the public impatience for delay that is built into the system (p. 3). Pound's research did not gain renewed interest until 1971, when Supreme Court Chief Justice Burger recognized, as did Pound, that dissatisfaction of the courts was an important issue. One of Burger's first orders of business on this issue was to convene a National Conference of the Judiciary. During this first-ever conference, inconsistencies among federal, state, and local court systems were identified (National Center for State Courts, 2009). To address this issue, the Chief Justice called for the establishment of a National Center for State Courts. Such a place would serve as an educational and research center to bring consistency and best practices to courts around the country (National Center for State Courts, 2009).

At the beginning of the 1970s, academics who also were concerned with the public's dissatisfaction with the American judiciary, recognized procedural justice as a legitimate field of study. In their classic book on procedural justice, Thibaut and Walker (1975) emphasized the importance of effective and consistent procedures in court proceedings related to the outcome of individual cases. They argued that an emphasis on

effective and consistent procedures “...[leads] to greater satisfaction and higher levels of compliance with decisions” (Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

It is well documented that there is dissatisfaction with the judicial system in the United States (Benesh & Howell, 2001; Higgins & Jordan, 2005; Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, & Winkle, 2004, 2005; Rottman & Hansen, 2001; Tyler, 2000a, 2000b). Additionally, Benesh & Howell (2001), Higgins & Jordan (2005), Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, & Winkle (2004 & 2005), Rottman & Hansen (2001), Tyler (2000a & 2000b) asserted that the dissatisfaction with the judicial system is abundant, but generally manifest through people’s distinct experiences of poor accessibility and a perception that courts are less fair to minorities. Researchers have also argued that negativity toward the judicial system has increased since the highly publicized trials of O. J. Simpson and Rodney King. The high profile nature of these two cases fueled the debate regarding racial profiling, which in turn easily alienated racial minorities which lead to lower levels of diffuse support for the judicial system (Benesh & Howell, 2001; Higgins & Jordan, 2005; Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, Winkle, 2004, 2005; Rottman & Hansen, 2001; Tyler, 2000 a, b).

In order to determine if this low level of diffuse satisfaction translates to other court jurisdictions, this study examined the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County. This Court was selected to explore levels of diffuse satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court. Other studies have found that distinctive experiences of court-users affect satisfaction of accessibility and fairness. Maricopa County, Arizona was selected as the research setting because of its outlier status regarding the

Hispanic/Latino population rather than its proximity to the mean. In other words, Maricopa County has a Hispanic/Latino population that is higher than the national average. For this reason, Maricopa County provides a distinct opportunity to empirically explore this growing population. Additionally, the current Hispanic/Latino population of Maricopa County is 30% (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009) which makes the county the fifth largest Hispanic/Latino population in the country. Lastly, the County is a good setting because it has gained a reputation of violating the civil rights of Hispanics/Latinos (Archibold, 2010, p. A11; Lacey, 2010, p. A11).

Statement of the Problem

The problem that was explored in this research was the potential differences between ethnic or racial communities regarding the level of satisfaction with access and fairness vis-à-vis state courts. Perceptions are formed by a person's actual court experience and these perceptions are important because levels of satisfaction have been associated with institutional legitimacy. While previous research (Bennack, 1999) has considered satisfaction vis-à-vis the United States Supreme Court (federal court level), little research has investigated similar themes for state courts (Benesh & Howell, 2001). When research has been conducted on the state level, the focus has been primarily on Black populations (Higgins & Jordan, 2005; Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, Winkle, 2005; Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, Winkle, 2004; Rottman & Hansen, 2001). Sun and Yu (2006) contended that "one of the common limitations in previous studies was the omission of non-Black and non-White racial and ethnic groups in the analysis." The perception of access and fairness in the Hispanic/Latino population has mostly been

ignored in the literature. When these studies have included Hispanic/Latino participants, sampling techniques were insufficient to draw significant conclusions (Rottman & Hansen, 2001). This may have been the result of insufficient racial and ethnic data that were diluted by research designs that were too large in focus. This current research addressed this gap by exploring whether Hispanic/Latino ethnicity was a significant predictor of satisfaction regarding accessibility and fairness at the state court level.

Wenzel, Bowler, and Lanoue (2003) explored the sources of public satisfaction in state courts. They identified four factors in their analysis: (a) actual experience with the court; (b) the method of judicial selection in a state, such as partisan elections, appointment, retention, etc.; (c) the effect of mass media; and 4) demographic factors. The strongest source of public satisfaction was actual experience with the court. This study used the dichotomy established by Easton (1975), which understands attitudes towards the institution conditionally as either *specific* or *diffuse* support. Specific support means the reaction of citizens to particular court decisions. Diffuse support, on the other hand, means a generalized affective reaction to the institution as a whole.

There is a difference between the public's interaction with the federal and state courts. Few citizens interact with the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., the Supreme Court does not use jurors, few are parties to a case, and live media coverage is not permitted. On the contrary, many citizens at the state level serve as jurors, are parties to a case, observe courtroom cases and issues via local news outlets, or come to their local courthouse because someone they know is a party to a case. The public is much more likely to interact with their state level court and therefore form an opinion of the court

system based on that interaction. Tyler (2006) suggests that direct experience with courts significantly determines citizens' perceptions of court legitimacy.

Purpose of Study

The intent of this study was to explore whether Hispanics/Latinos have a different level of satisfaction with their access to, and fairness in, the Court when compared to Whites. Part of the legitimacy of a court is determined by the level of a person's satisfaction with access to, and fairness of, the Court. The level of satisfaction can be measured by surveying an individual court-users' direct experience with the Court.

This study used data to empirically investigate whether race or ethnicity was a significant predictor of court-user satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court when controlling for differences such as age, gender, level of education, and level of income. The study investigated satisfaction of court-users by examining the significance of relationships among court-users. "If these additional variables are not controlled for, any observed relationship between" a court-users race or ethnicity and their level of satisfaction might be spurious (D'Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2003). For the purposes of this study, access and fairness were defined as an aggregate of exit survey questions represented by the creation of a summated scale for both.

This research study has broad social implications. Given that the legitimacy of governmental institutions is linked to level of satisfaction by the public, knowing the perception of the public regarding the courts is tantamount in maintaining and securing the legitimacy of the judicial branch. The social unrest regarding immigration and the negative treatment of Hispanics/Latinos in Arizona in particular may deteriorate the high

level of support currently enjoyed by the Court. The potential change in social behavior among Hispanics/Latinos has broader implications as this population increases in the County and around the country.

Theoretical Basis for Study

Thus far, the problem has been identified as the lack of research in the field and the study is described as an empirical test at the state court level to determine whether race or ethnicity in the archival sample data of 2007 and 2008 is a significant predictor of court-user satisfaction. Previous studies have contended that the level of satisfaction for court-users is grounded in the differing level of individual experience with a court. The next section provides a theoretical basis for the study by first discussing a theory of direct, but different experience and secondly by an exploration of the usage and meaning behind race and ethnicity.

Differential Experience Theory

Differential experience theory explains attitudinal differences toward courts by ethnicity and race. This theory hypothesizes that people of different races and ethnicities have differing levels of satisfaction with the courts, which is largely influenced by their “distinctive experiences” with the justice system in general, and with the courts in particular (Sun & Wu, 2006, p. 458). Minorities have a greater probability of direct and indirect contact with the criminal justice system than Whites. Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos are more likely to be arrested, convicted of felonies, incarcerated in jails and prisons, and also more likely to be victims of crimes (Maguire & Pastore, 2004).

Sun and Wu (2006) contended anyone who is more involved with the justice system tend to develop “resentful attitudes toward agencies of social control including the criminal courts” (p. 458). Since Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos are more likely to be arrested and processed through the system, these communities in particular may tend to be resentful and have less satisfaction with the courts (Sun & Wu, 2006).

To test whether this theory applies in Maricopa County, this dissertation explored sample data to predict what the data would be for other years. Also the 2007 data and results have been previously discussed in a report by this researcher (Bleuenstein, 2009). This was explored by using archival data collected by the Court in 2007 and 2008 from a satisfaction survey administered to citizens and non-citizens exiting the Court. Sun and Wu (2006) stated that differential experience theory “posits that citizens’ perceptions of the courts are mainly influenced by distinctive experiences they have with the criminal justice system in general and the court in particular” (p. 458). Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos appear in courts more than Whites due to the trends in arrests by race, while Whites make up a larger proportion of other case types, such as civil cases. Because Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos appear in courts more than Whites, differential experience theory would suggest that Whites would be less resentful of the Court and have a higher level of satisfaction with the Court. Conversely, Hispanics/Latinos would be more resentful and have less satisfaction with the Court. As previously stated actual experience with a court is associated with level of satisfaction, with the access to, and fairness in, the Court. Procedural justice theory would suggest that court procedures, if accessible and fair, could lead to greater satisfaction (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). This

dissertation explored whether environmental circumstances (distinctive experiences) with respect to race or ethnicity had a significant influence on court-users' satisfaction with the Court.

Race and Ethnicity in America

Race and ethnicity in American society has been transformational. However the transformation has not come easy or without a price. Walker, Spohn, and DeLone (2007) stated that race has traditionally been defined in biological terms. The biological approach delineates three overarching racial groups: Caucasians (White), Negroid (Black), and Mongoloid (Asian). According to this taxonomy, people are White, Black, or Asian. Anthropologists and sociologists do not accept the biological taxonomy of racial groups because human breeding over time has made it virtually impossible to identify exclusive racial categories based on the biological approach (Walker, Spohn, & DeLone, 2007). In other words, it is virtually impossible to maintain that humans fit into a specific biological category of race. Therefore, through social conditioning, humans self-select a race category. This is typically determined by the color of one's skin (Walker, Spohn, & DeLone, 2007).

The concept and social construction of ethnicity affects the discussion of race. The word ethnic is defined by Merriam-Webster as: "of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background" (ethnic, n.d., Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). Non-White people who have darker skin might be referred to as Hispanic or Latino and are generally thought of in American society as a race. The U.S. Census states that people

of Hispanic origin may be of any race and should answer the question on race by marking one or more race categories shown on the questionnaire, including White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and Some Other Race. Hispanics are asked to indicate their origin in the question on Hispanic origin, not in the question on race, because in the U.S. federal statistical system, ethnic origin is considered to be a separate concept from race. (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1998, p. 2).

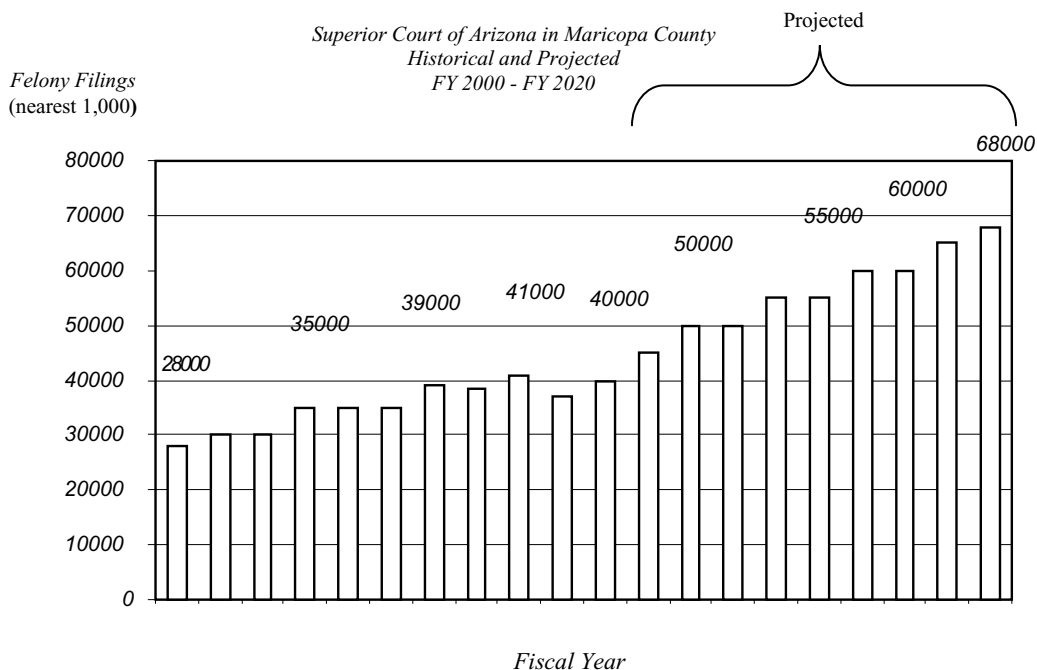
Americans often disregard or perhaps confuse race and ethnicity as being the same thing. The old adage holds in this discussion: perception is nine-tenths of reality, hence the categorization of race; and ethnicity is a social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

Research Setting

In order to test the theories on the public's diffuse support of the state court, the setting of Maricopa County was explored. In order to understand the setting in Maricopa County regarding the court system, a brief explanation of the judicial structure is provided (see also Appendix A). In all 50 states, the State Supreme Court is the highest Court. Under the Arizona State Supreme Court there are two divisions of the intermediate appellate level which serve different areas of the state. Arizona has one Superior Court, and this court is divided into 15 geographic jurisdictions that correspond to the 15 counties in the State (see Appendix B). Within the state of Arizona the Superior Court in Maricopa County is the largest with more than 150 judicial officers and the

Court is the fourth largest trial court in the United States. The Superior Court has general jurisdiction, which means it is permitted by Arizona law to hear all criminal matters at the felony level as well as most family, juvenile, civil, mental health, and probate case matters (Arizona Supreme Court, 2009).

The Court processes approximately 70,000 people arrested on felony charges per year. Although the State drops some charges, nearly 45,000 criminal cases are filed annually. The juvenile court adds another 23,000 cases to the Court's docket. The civil docket consists of approximately 50,000 civil cases each year (Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, 2010). This high volume of cases means that both citizens and non-citizens of various demographic backgrounds enter the courthouse for a variety of reasons. A vast majority of people coming to the Court are interacting with the Court (adult and juvenile) on the criminal level (Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, 2010). During the next ten years the docket of the criminal division is expected to increase in relation to the expected increase in the population of Maricopa County.



Bar graph of felony case filings by year (historical and projected) for the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County. Retrieved from the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, Department of Research and Planning, 2010.

Figure 1. Bar graph of felony case filings by year (historical and projected) for the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County. Retrieved from the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, Department of Research and Planning, 2010.

Much of the increase in the population of Maricopa County is due to the growth in the Hispanic/Latino population. Maricopa County has a population of approximately 4 million people. The ethnic or racial composition of the population is mainly Whites and Hispanics/Latinos, while Blacks (4.9%) and Asians (3%) make up the next largest segments of the population (U.S. Census, 2009). In only 5 years, Arizona's percentage of Hispanics/Latinos grew by 15.8 % from July 2000 to July 2005. Nationally, the average for the Hispanic/Latino population is 14.8%, while in Maricopa County the percentage is

twice that at about 30%. Within the largest city in Maricopa County, Phoenix, the Hispanic/Latino percentage is even larger. The city has approximately 1.5 million residents and 49% are of Hispanic/Latino origin (U.S. Census, 2009). According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2009), within the next few years the Hispanic/Latino population in Maricopa County is expected to surpass the White majority.

Demographics' Role in Court Satisfaction

Maricopa County, Arizona was selected for this study because of the large Hispanic/Latino population, which provides a distinct opportunity for empirical exploration of this population for three reasons. First, Maricopa County has the fastest growing Hispanic/Latino population in the country (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Second, current Hispanic/Latino population is already 30% of the total County population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Lastly, in Maricopa County, Hispanics/Latinos have experienced repeated civil rights violations over the past few years (Archibold, 2010, p. A11; Lacey, 2010, p. A11).

In order to investigate the perceptions of the Hispanic/Latino population, this study uses several control variables which explored various demographic categories. These measures were used because it is possible that certain demographic groups would perceive they have less accessibility to the Court and are treated less fairly by the Court than other demographic groups. As noted earlier, Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionately represented in the amount of criminal defendants and these two groups may be more resentful of the courts than other ethnicities or races.

Gibson and Caldeira (1992) and Wenzel, Bowler & Lanoue (2003) agreed that Whites tend to be more supportive of the courts than minorities and that individual courtroom experiences do have a meaningful impact on attitudes toward the court system. These authors also found in their studies that, while controlling for other theoretically relevant factors, such as income, age, and gender, they discovered that higher educated respondents (of any race or ethnicity) and Hispanics/Latinos (of any education level) had significantly higher levels of support for local courts.

Current Political Discourse in Maricopa County

The political discourse in Maricopa County is affected by the racial profiling allegations by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office of Hispanics/Latinos and most recently the enactment of Senate Bill 1070, an illegal immigrant law, by the Arizona State Legislature (Archibold, 2010, p. A11; Lacey, 2010, p. A11; Nowicki, 2009, online). Therefore, it is important to determine if the distinctive experiences of Hispanics/Latinos affect their diffuse satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court. The current political discourse in Maricopa County involves the issue of racial profiling. The Hispanic/Latino population has been vocal in their opposition to the currently elected Maricopa County Sheriff. Since the enactment of SB 1070, the political rhetoric has heightened to include the current Governor and the State Legislature. Over the past few years the tone of the political discourse has escalated. The Hispanic/Latino population alleges that the Sheriff is conducting racial profiling by conducting "round-ups" of Hispanics/Latinos based on no reason other than their race or ethnicity in order to ferret out "illegal immigrants" (Phoenix New Times, 2009).

Historically, Arizona has been a solid “red state.” The term was coined by Tim Russert, NBC News political correspondent, during the 2000 Presidential campaign to mean states where registered voters predominantly vote for the Republican Party. This structural advantage has benefited the Sheriff since 1993 when first elected as Maricopa County Sheriff. The Sheriff has enjoyed double-digit reelection margins in 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008 (Maricopa County Board of Elections, 2009). However, in the past three elections (2000, 2004, and 2008), his advantage has been eroding. The result in the 2000 election was Sheriff Arpaio, 66.49% vs. 26.39%. In 2004 and 2008, the results were 56.74% vs. 30.71% and 55.2% vs. 42.2% respectively. Although the Sheriff has enjoyed double-digit re-election margins, the margin between winner and loser has fallen by a double-digit margin (11.29%). Additionally, the spread of the margin has gone from 40% in 2000 to 13% in 2008. Each of these elections was a three-person race. The most telling sign of a structural change was the 2008 election where the third-party candidate only received 2.7 % and the Democratic candidate received 15% more than Arpaio’s previous Democratic challenger. Should this trend continue and turn the advantage to the Democrats, ultimately political power will be placed in the hands of the Hispanic/Latino population. Due to the shift in population demographics, it is likely that this trend will continue.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This dissertation explored whether race and/or ethnicity impacts perceptions about access and fairness in the judicial system of Arizona in Maricopa County. The research question was as follows: Does perceived satisfaction with accessibility and

fairness change based upon the ethnicity and race of individuals who interacted with the Court System in Maricopa County? The following hypotheses were suggested:

Access to Justice

H_1 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court, than White respondents.

H_2 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court as the age of the respondent increases.

H_3 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they are male.

H_4 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of education

H_5 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of income.

Fairness of Justice

H_6 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly in the Court, than White respondents.

H_7 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court as the age of the respondent increases.

H_8 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they are male.

H_9 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of education.

H_{10} = Analysis of exit survey data will show that that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of income.

Research Design

This study used archival survey data; the samples were collected by the Court in 2007 and 2008. The Court presented the outcome of the survey results but did not analyze the data further. This research used the raw data collected by the Court to test hypotheses. This researcher explored the 2007 data in a report prepared for the National Center for State Courts (Bleuenstein, 2009). This dissertation used the results from the 2009 analysis and combined it with the 2008 data to create the research design for this dissertation. The Court decided to implement the survey to court-users to determine their level of satisfaction because during her tenure, the former Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, Ruth McGregor, designated issues of access and fairness as the number one priority in her 2005–2010 strategic plans, called “Good to Great” (Arizona Supreme Court, 2009).

This study analyzed the data that was gathered by the Court at three different courthouse locations in Maricopa County in 2007 and 2008. The Court’s Department of Research and Planning collected the data from individuals willing to participate who were exiting the following three courthouse locations: (a) Main Superior Court Complex

in downtown Phoenix, (b) Northeast Superior Court Complex in Phoenix, and (c) the Durango Juvenile Court Complex in Phoenix. The sample size was 869 for 2007 and 766 for 2008. After data cleaning, the n was reduced to 769 in 2007 and 637 in 2008. The respondents could be defendants, friends and family members of defendants, victims, friends and family members of the victims, witnesses, attorneys, or simply individuals exiting the Court after completing paperwork or obtaining information. No court employees, law enforcement officers, judicial officers, or jurors were part of the sample population. Although the perception of jurors is important to the question of legitimacy of the courts they were excluded from the sample to avoid a sample that might be skewed because jurors, in independent surveys, are typically shown to have high levels of satisfaction after their experience serving as a juror, they were excluded from the sample to avoid skewing.

The exit survey consisted of 15 questions, including several demographic questions, and used a five-point Likert scale. These archival data were analyzed by hypothesis testing to determine whether levels of satisfaction with access and fairness were impacted based on a person's race or ethnicity. More detail about the methodology appears in chapter 3.

Significance of the Study

Since levels of satisfaction are associated with court legitimacy this is an important topic. This research is significant to the growing body of procedural justice literature, not for its overall generalizability, but to test a theory on a state level population that will become larger in the years to come. This research used sample data from 2007

and 2008 to predict what data would be in years to come. As other counties and states across the country transform into a multi-racial population, this study can serve as a template. The outlier status of Maricopa County provides a distinct opportunity to empirically explore whether race or ethnicities are significant predictors regarding levels of satisfaction with the Court. This research is significant as well because, previous research on this topic focused primarily on the satisfaction of Whites and Blacks rather than Hispanics/Latinos. While a large body of literature exists regarding public satisfaction of the U.S. Supreme Court, this literature cannot be extrapolated to the state court level.

Social change will be promoted by bringing this topic to the consciousness of society. This study is preliminary work that will bring awareness of the issue to the forefront of the field and the accumulation of knowledge which is necessary for the advancement of the social condition. Specifically it will serve as a guideline for other state courts that have a growing Hispanic/Latino population. Since this dissertation found that Hispanics/Latinos do not perceive they have less access in and are not treated less fairly by the Court this study can serve as a model for best practices for other state courts.

Assumptions

This study makes three assumptions. The first is that participants filling out the exit survey reported accurate demographic information and were able to provide objective accounts of their own level of satisfaction. The second is that participants could be anyone in need of services, including just receiving information from the Court

and therefore the results could be generalized to the entire county population that uses the court system. Lastly, it is assumed that the survey instrument developed by the National Center for State Courts is reliable and valid.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include factors related to self-response bias and non-response bias. Self-response bias is inherent in survey research. Nevertheless, significant attempts were made to reduce its impact on overall findings and efforts by the Court will be discussed in later sections. It is noteworthy to indicate it is impossible to completely control for this bias. Non-response bias, another limitation inherent to survey research, could not be controlled because this study uses archival data. Lastly, the exclusion of Black and Asian respondents in this study due to the low number of Black and Asian respondents is a limitation to this study. These issues will also be discussed in further detail in the methodology section of this study.

Summary

It is becoming increasingly important for state courts to better identify the needs of the large and growing Hispanic/Latino community. It is important because their level of satisfaction vis-à-vis access to, and fairness of, the Court is associated with legitimacy. Cultural differences exist among many ethnicities; therefore it is important for courts to understand these differences regarding levels of satisfaction and adjust court management practices as appropriate. Due to a gap in literature regarding the level of Hispanic/Latino satisfaction at the state court level, this study was conducted to increase knowledge regarding this group.

Exit survey data allow researchers to investigate court-user satisfaction of accessibility and fairness in a state-level judicial system. Specifically, this dissertation explored the role of race or ethnicity as a predictor of satisfaction with the Court. The survey data were collected at three different Superior Court locations that serve the community of Maricopa County in 2007 and 2008. This study used this archival sample data to explore the research questions. The percentage of Hispanic/Latino respondents in the survey data analyzed in this study is 27%, and thus is representative of the general population (30.1%) of Maricopa County. The total sample number in 2007 was 769 and in 2008 it was 637. Because of the large Hispanic/Latino population and the unique political and environmental conditions, Maricopa County is the ideal place to test a racial and ethnic theory of procedural justice.

Despite 3 decades of research in this area, previous studies have neglected to focus on the diffuse support to state level courts among Hispanics/Latinos. Maricopa County, Arizona was selected for this case study to test a racial and ethnic theory of procedural justice in a region with a large Hispanic/Latino population. Differential experience theory was used as a theoretical foundation because it states that people determine their level of satisfaction with the courts based on their own actual experience with the courts. The main research question was whether Hispanics/Latinos have a different level of satisfaction with their access to, and fairness in, the Court when compared to Whites. This is an important topic because studies have associated level of satisfaction with court legitimacy. This study used exit survey data and logistic regression to empirically investigate whether race or ethnicity is a significant predictor of

court-user satisfaction. This study affirmed the findings of other researchers in the field that Hispanics/Latinos have a high level of diffuse support for the state courts. This research study has broad social implications. Given that the legitimacy of governmental institutions is linked to level of satisfaction by the public, knowing the perception of the public regarding the courts is tantamount in maintaining and securing the legitimacy of the judicial branch. The social unrest regarding immigration and the negative treatment of Hispanics/Latinos in Arizona in particular may deteriorate the high level of support currently enjoyed by the Court. The potential change in social behavior among Hispanics/Latinos has broader implications as this population increases in the County and around the country.

Organization of Dissertation

In response to the research problem and questions raised, the second chapter is devoted to a review of the procedural justice literature. The first section is the introduction. Next is the conceptual framework for procedural justice theory, followed by the foundations of procedural justice. The next two sections are devoted to the group-value model of procedural justice and examining why interactions are important. The examination then proceeds with the effects of procedural justice, public opinion of procedural justice, and procedural justice in other settings. The third chapter is devoted to methodology. The chapter begins with an introduction and then an explanation of the researcher's philosophy. The next subsection is the research design and strategy. The research hypotheses for the study are presented. The sampling design is explained, measures are discussed, and data collections are presented. The next subsection discusses

the data analysis procedures and also addresses the limitations of the research design. Both internal and external validity are addressed. Finally, the findings are shared, along with ethical considerations and a summary of the chapter.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the ecological-level analyses that test 10 hypotheses. It begins with a presentation used to test hypotheses for the independent variables. Next, it explores the results of the hypotheses testing to assess the appropriateness of parametric testing for the study. The chapter then turns to the actual tests of hypotheses 1–10, which explored a comparison of subgroup means to determine if they are ordered in the manner predicted by the hypotheses. Logistic regression is used to determine whether there were significant differences between the means and to determine which independent variable was the best predictor for the research question.

The fifth and final chapter starts with an introduction, and then turns to the analysis of the results of both the individual and ecological level results. It also draws several theoretical conclusions, offers suggestions for future research, and explores the implications for social change. It ends with a summary of the chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This study was designed to investigate whether race or ethnicity, age, gender, level of education, and level of income are systematically associated, at the ecological level, with court-user satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court. This chapter reviews the literature on the level of satisfaction of different ethnicities/races regarding their access and fairness in state courts. Previous research on this topic primarily focused on satisfaction in the Supreme Court and fewer have been documented regarding state courts (Gibson & Caldeira, 1992; Hirsch & Donohue, 1968; Jaros & Roper, 1980; Murphy, Tanenhaus, & Kastner, 1973).

A review of the information and data available were examined to arrive at conclusions relating to the functioning of state courts and how that functioning affects perceptions of access and fairness among the public, particularly among Hispanics/Latinos. Specifically the databases explored were political science complete, CQ researcher, SocIndex with full text, criminal justice periodicals, and Google scholar. The keywords used in the exploration of the aforementioned databases were: procedural justice, court legitimacy, differential experience theory, court-user satisfaction, minority perception, logistic regression, public perception, administration of justice, perception of the courts, court surveys, attitudes toward courts, court experience, institutional legitimacy, public opinion, and judicial fairness. The articles available from this search numbered in the hundreds, yet the number reviewed was approximately 400. Articles were rejected if the focus was more generally related to other aspects of the criminal

justice system, for example the police or law enforcement. Articles were included in the research if they addressed perceptions and levels of satisfaction with the courts or if they addressed a public survey of the courts. Also included were articles exploring race, ethnicity, age, income, gender, or education of court-users and any article addressing the topic of institutional legitimacy.

Perceptions are important because levels of satisfaction are associated with institutional legitimacy. The functioning of state courts is examined using the theory of procedural justice. First, the conceptual framework of the theory is explored, then the affects of the theory are examined, and lastly the relationship between procedural justice and public opinion are discussed.

What is Procedural Justice?

Tyler (2000a) defines procedural justice as those processes of judicial information and procedures to resolve disputes that impact the level of satisfaction with fairness of the Court. The procedure, commonly referred to as the due process of law, is defined differently around the world. It is termed procedural fairness in Australia, procedure of fundamental justice in Canada, and procedure of natural justice in other countries of common law. In U.S. courts, procedural justice is reinforced by the fact that defendants are innocent until proven guilty, which is not the case in most other countries. The proof of guilt is a procedural process that is required to be administered by the State. This administration, therefore, must be consistent in order for the public to perceive the process to be fair.

The National Association for Court Management (2009) states that procedural justice is concerned with the use of mechanical methods to ensure fairness during all aspects of court processes, and also in the allocation of resources for carrying out those processes. Procedural justice also involves the formal and informal discussions in legal proceedings, as well as case-flow management. Case-flow management, according to the National Association for Court Management (2009) are the court procedures of processing cases from when they are filed to the disposition of the case. This includes all pre-trial phases such as calendaring and case initiation, trials, and also legal matters related to post conviction.

Rawls (1999) posits several general ideas relating to procedural justice. He argues that “perfect procedural justice” is characterized by independent criteria regarding how the constituents of fair and just procedures arrive at outcomes, and in the process assure the achievement of fair outcomes in 100% of cases. However, he states that there is no method that will guarantee the achievement of fair outcomes; “perfect procedural justice” is simply an ideal. “Pure procedural justice,” according to Rawls, describes a situation whereby there are no specific criteria that impact outcomes, but rather it is the procedure itself that can guarantee the fair outcome (p. 17). This is the focus of the current discussion.

According to Barrett-Howard & Tyler (1986) and Tyler (1989), the public is not only concerned with the issue or problem at hand, but also their interactional relationship with the institution. This relationship is dependent upon how procedures are carried out. The public reacts to how decisions are made, to information presented to them, and to the

interpersonal context between them and people with whom they interact within the court system. In addition, Tyler (1989) suggested that the public interacting with people in an institution are concerned with their long-term identity. Within this group identity people expect the decisions emanating from people within the institution to be neutral and trustworthy. The public also expects to be treated with respect, dignity, and politeness (Barber, 1983; Bies & Shapiro, 1987; Lane, 1988, Buckler, Cullen, & Unnever, 2007). A fair procedure requires that all parties must be heard before any decision is taken in the matter under consideration.

The ratification of decisions and policies in the courtroom is the basis for ensuring that the universal nature of principles of justice is met. The extent to which different procedures are used in making fair decisions is related to the entire system of procedural justice. Tyler (2000a) suggested that the concepts of procedural justice are evident across all cultures, and that regardless of culture all constituents desire a fair and transparent process. For this study that point is important since under investigation is the level of satisfaction based on ethnicity and race. Tyler (2000a) argued that fair procedures are the most important component to ensure fair outcomes. Procedural justice, therefore, aims to implement decisions in accordance with fair procedures.

Conceptual Framework for Procedural Justice Theory

The foundation of procedural justice lies in the preservation of the due process of law. Numerous examples of specific procedures can be found in court proceedings. For instance, the procedure to allow police officers to enter a private home requires numerous protocols, such as the police justifying to a judge the need to enter, the judge agreeing

that the police provided sufficient evidence to warrant a search, and the evidence presented is being obtained legally through appropriate channels. While this is a simplistic example, what is important to note is that in order for the judicial system to be perceived as fair, these procedures must be consistently followed. The main idea behind the theory is that the legitimacy of the judicial system is reinforced when procedures are followed in an open and transparent manner.

Procedural justice theory examines the process of decision making in exchange relationships where one party has the authority to make decisions regarding issues that affect another party. The theory deals with situations that are directly concerned with relationships between the defendant, or their agent, and the court, whereby the defendant voluntarily authorizes their agent to be the decision making authority. The theory is specific in addressing how the exchange relationships effect the satisfaction of constituents regarding fair treatment and decision making.

Thibaut and Walker's (1975) research was based on the premise that people would be more willing to accept outcomes when they believed those outcomes were decided fairly. Decision making procedures, therefore, were of utmost importance to the individuals' level of satisfaction with judicial fairness. The researcher's first systematic sets of experiments were designed to show the impact of procedural justice. Their studies demonstrated that the individuals' level of satisfaction with fairness was derived from the decision making process and procedures that shaped their satisfaction with the outcomes. Results of Thibaut and Walker's research (1975) laid the groundwork for procedural justice theory.

This groundwork was laid more than 30 years ago, Thibaut and Walker conducted a social psychological laboratory study utilizing undergraduate students. Their work was a combination of psychology and law and was the first study to coin the idea of procedural justice. Thibaut and Walker discovered that different dispute resolution procedures elicit differing levels of satisfaction of fairness, regardless of the outcome of the dispute. Byrne and Cropanzano (2001) assert that Thibaut and Walker's (1975) original work still has relevance today.

They argue that the many interpersonal and inter-group conflicts that have long occurred within societies and institutions remain. Now, as in the past, it is imperative for institutions to seek ways to resolve conflicts and promote harmonious interpersonal and inter-group relationships. (2001, p. 10)

Institutions must ensure that the methods whereby the decisions are made are accepted by all parties. In turn, this will reduce long-term animosity among the parties and minimize feelings of hostility toward the authority (Earley & Lind, 1998).

According to Byrne and Cropanzano (2001), levels of satisfaction increase when people can accept the decision of the Court and believe they were treated fairly.

Many characteristics of the decision maker are well documented as contributing towards the level of satisfaction of fairness (Weber, 1947, Kitzman & Emery, 1993; Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993; MacCoun, Lind, Hensler, Bryant & Ebner, 1988; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997; Wissler, 1995). One of the most important procedural factors is considered to be "voice." MacCoun (2005) defined the term "voice" as the opportunity given to provide input and have some level of control

into the decision making process. Here, it becomes important for the different aspects of the information available to be shared with the decision maker; this also involves the other party's inputs. Finally, timely feedback must be given regarding the result emanating from the decisions; justifications for those decisions must be included in the feedback.

Two factors emphasize the importance of procedural justice in the judicial system. First, procedural justice ensures that the self-interest of the individual is fully protected at all times (Tyler, 2000b). The perception of fair procedures and treatment lends credence to the benevolence of the judge, and serves to further strengthen the public's view of the system as being neutral and honest (Tyler, 1998 & 2000b). According to Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001), in cases where the individual is not satisfied or happy with decisions, just procedures will, in due course, ensure that he or she will eventually benefit from the exchange relationship between the public and the court.

The second factor relating to the importance of procedural justice in the judicial system involves how fair procedures impact the public's compliance with decisions. Tyler's (2000b, 2001) research suggested that using fair decision-making procedures is central to the development and maintenance of voluntary cooperation. Those authorities that use fair decision-making procedures are viewed as more legitimate, and people more willingly defer to their decisions. This produces uniformity of behavior in-line with institutional rules and the decisions of institutional authorities. When authorities want people to defer their own desires to the interests of the society, authorities can obtain such behavior by calling upon the public's perception that institutions are legitimate.

Consequently, this creates an increase in commitment and identification with the institution.

Procedural justice has been shown to be a central antecedent of institutional outcomes such as loyalty (Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998; Schaubroeck, May, & Brown, 1994), and commitment (e.g., Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Mansour-Cole & Scott, 1998). Not only has procedural justice been linked to a wide variety of positive outcomes, but recent research has also shown a link between procedural injustice and negative outcomes, such as retaliatory behaviors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997), theft (Greenberg, 1990), and rule breaking (Tyler, 2006). Additional research has demonstrated that procedural justice effects primarily operate via perceptions of fairness or unfairness (Blader & Tyler, 2003).

A large body of research links procedural justice evaluations to judgments about one's institutional-related identity, such as their identification with the institution, pride in the institution, and perceptions of respect from the institution (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1996; Blader & Tyler, 2003). In other words, procedural justice affects how people define themselves in terms of their sense of personal obligation to legal and political authorities, which consequently affects their perception of the institution. This differential influence can be linked to the significance of procedures for institutional identity, and not to the satisfaction of the outcomes they may produce.

The original research on procedural justice by Thibaut and Walker (1975) advocated a control-oriented understanding of procedural justice regarding the courts and their justice partners, whereby procedures were defined in terms of the level of input or

participation that procedures permit, again this is often referred to in the literature as “voice.” The public were hypothesized to care about control because it provided greater assurance that judicial outcomes reached would be fair. This approach emphasized an instrumental understanding concerning procedures, and implied that fair procedures were defined as those that provided high levels of such control and, therefore, the greatest opportunity to achieve desired outcomes in the long term.

Subsequent research, however, has disputed the notion that procedures are important solely because of their direct relationship to outcomes. Rather, procedures have been shown to be important because of their relational significance, or the information they convey regarding one's relationship with the institution (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Relational indicators are believed to underlie the meaning of procedural justice. In other words, procedural justice is defined in relational terms. Fair procedures are thus defined as those that provide positive relational information.

Tyler, Degoey, & Smith (1996) identified three relational indicators that are used to assess the fairness of procedures: loyalty, commitment, and trust in the benevolence of authorities. The researchers contended that when there are high levels of these indicators, individuals will perceive their connection to the institution more positively. Importantly, these relational indicators are detached from the nature or level of outcomes obtained. While the control definition of procedural justice is inherently linked to the outcomes attained, the relational definitions are distinctly unrelated to outcomes and instead emphasize the influence of the group on shaping one's identity. In other words, when the public is loyal, committed and trusting of the courts and judicial partners (e.g., police)

they will tend to view them more positively even if the outcome of their experience is less than desirable.

Blader and Tyler (2003) delineated two dimensions for organizing what the public considers as procedural justice. They are procedural function and procedural source. There are two key procedural functions of procedural justice. The first procedural function is those characteristics of the process related to the fairness of decision making procedures. In other words, the public evaluates a procedure based on the attributes of the process and makes a determination as to whether the process which led to an outcome was perceived as fair. Fairness in this context translates into public access and fairness in the procedures of justice, the literature refers to this as the quality of decision making. The second function of procedural information goes beyond the public's concern about how decisions are made and also incorporates the concern of how they are treated. This second function is known as status recognition within the relational model of procedural justice. Procedural justice encompasses both the quality of the decision making process and the quality of treatment in the process. Procedural source refers to the location in which the public encounters an authority. For this study the procedural source or source of justice is the Superior Court in Maricopa County.

Effects of Procedural Justice

Research has demonstrated that procedural justice can have positive effects. For instance, Lind and Tyler (1988) demonstrated through their research that the public is more willing to defer to court decisions when they perceive that the court process was fair. Subsequent studies also suggest that the public is more willing to accept the

decisions of other authorities, such as police officers, judges, and mediators; when they believe the authorities are treating them fairly (Kitzman & Emery, 1993; Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993; MacCoun, Lind, Hensler, Bryant & Ebner, 1988; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997; Wissler, 1995). More recently, Tyler (2003) examined four studies of public satisfaction in state courts: the Chicago study; the Oakland study; and two studies conducted by the National Center for State Courts. Each of these studies will be discussed below.

Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, and Sherman (1997) conducted the research study known as the Chicago Study. This study laid the framework for all future research in this field. The study was a random sample of 1,575 residents of Chicago, Illinois. Contacted via telephone, participants were asked about their confidence in, and support for, the police and the courts. The study explored differences in confidence levels between the majority (Whites) and the minority (all other races, non-White). This study suggested that all respondents, both majority and minority, are concerned about the way they are treated by authorities. While noteworthy as the first study to investigate this theme outside a university setting, researchers treated all minority groups as one monolithic group. This created no possibility for diverse opinions within the multiple racial groups to be delineated.

Tyler & Hou (2002) conducted the second major research study, called the Oakland Study. The study was conducted in a high crime area with a predominant minority population in Oakland, California. The study used mail-return questionnaires. The sample totaled 346 respondents (16% response rate), 68% Black; 11%

Hispanic/Latino; 11% White; and 11% Other. While this study focused on minority satisfaction more directly than the Chicago Study, there was no separate analysis for different minority groups. Nonetheless, the study suggested that the key issue important to the respondents was fairness of their experience and the quality of their treatment by authorities.

In 1999, the Hearst Corporation funded the National Center for State Courts to investigate the public level of satisfaction of state and local courts. Survey research was used involving telephone interviews of 1,826 randomly selected individuals. The first sample did not collect enough representation from Blacks and Hispanics, so an additional sample of these two groups was conducted. In the sub-group analysis of ethnicity, it was found that Black respondents were more likely to be influenced by their perception of whether the courts treat everyone the same. Hispanics/Latinos and Whites were more likely to be affected by perception about the quality of treatment the public receives from the courts (Tyler, 2001).

The second National Center for State Courts study was conducted in 2000. The study consisted of telephone interviews conducted by the University of Indiana Public Opinion Laboratory. The total sample was 1,567 respondents from a national sample, which used a stratified approach to over-sample minority groups. The analysis did not use a weighting framework; therefore, the responses by minorities are not representative of the national sample. The study suggested that the public will form their perception of the court by how fairly they were treated.

Tyler (2001) compiled the results of the four aforementioned studies to make several conclusions. First, he stated that people have a sense of affirmation if the adopted procedures are done in a manner that treats them with dignity and respect. In addition, outcomes are accepted more easily even if they have negative outcomes when treatment is viewed to be dignified and respectful. Finally, Tyler (2001) stated that procedures are viewed as fair when there is a strong element of consistency throughout the entire process and when there is emphasis on the system operating in a manner that treats all cases in a similar fashion. Traditionally judges operate as individual units with staff that they hire and supervise, in a large court system this can become problematic. Given the goal of procedural justice is consistency the centralized supervision of judicial staff could provide for more consistent procedures and processes.

This is an important policy decision given that three decades of research on procedural justice has demonstrated that the public cares more about the process and consistent procedures rather than the actual outcome of their case (Thibaut & Walker, 1978; Lind & Tyler, 1998). A major component of procedural justice is that those involved in the carrying out of procedures must exercise neutrality and impartiality at all times (Kitzman & Emery, 1993; Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993; MacCoun, Lind, Hensler, Bryant & Ebner, 1988; Paternoster, Brame, Bachman, & Sherman, 1997; Wissler, 1995). It is pertinent that procedures be carried out by decision makers in an unbiased manner so that accurate and fair conclusions are made. Furthermore, that decision makers must give the impression that their intentions are to treat people in a fair manner and to consider the opinions and viewpoints of all concerned parties in order to

give a clear indication of impartiality. This consideration of opinions is an important dimension referred to as voice, which is the ability for one to tell their story (MacCoun, 2005). If institutions prove themselves to be trustworthy, they will be viewed as implementing fair procedures. It is also important that all who are directly impacted by the decision be given the opportunity to represent themselves and be heard in the process. The prevalence of such practices reaffirms the status of the members of the groups, and builds trust in the decision making of authorities (Tyler, 2001).

Tyler, Lind, & Hou (2000) and Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, & Winkle (2004) argued that neutrality and impartiality become all the more significant in cases where the concerned parties are economically weak, or whose voices are marginalized. The researchers have provided empirical evidence that this is found to be widespread within Black communities. Overby et al. (2004) explored the differences in level of satisfaction of the state court system between the races of Blacks and Whites by examining a unique data set in the state of Mississippi. Mississippi, as Maricopa County, provides a unique data set in that the demographic profile yields unusually large samples of the minority being studied. The researchers found that Blacks are considerably more cynical about racial equity in the Mississippi court system than are Whites. The researchers further stated that of the studies to date, none has concentrated their analysis on the differences in the levels of satisfaction between races when state courts are concerned.

Wenzel, Bowler, and Lanoue (2003) revealed that the level of satisfaction is influenced by whether a person has interacted with a court. Their study also found that Hispanic/Latino ethnicity has a significant effect regarding the level of satisfaction with

the courts. Wenzel and associates (2003) hypothesized that Hispanics/Latinos would have a less favorable perception of the courts than other citizens, but unexpectedly they found that Hispanics/Latinos are “more positively disposed toward local courts than are their fellow citizens” (p. 202).

Nelson (1980) asserted that all processes have to be conducted transparently and that there should be no deception or secrecy in the processing of paperwork and/or information. Transparency involves reaching a decision through open procedures, such as publically accessible records and publically accessible courtrooms. This transparency reduces the public’s perception of possible deception and makes voluntary compliance more realistic. Tyler (2001) contended that voluntary compliance is increased when procedures are perceived to be fair. Furthermore, feelings of loyalty within the group in question are strengthened and the judicial institution is legitimized (Tyler, Boeckmann, & Hou, 1997).

Public Opinion and Procedural Justice

Warren (2000) noted that the public’s discontent regarding the administration of justice is well documented throughout our history. To support this assertion, he references Pound’s 1906 landmark address to the American Bar Association, titled “The Causes of Popular Dissatisfaction with the Administration of Justice is as old as law.” Unlike the past, however, the public now enjoys several ways to express opinions. One such way is public opinion surveys that can assist in clarifying the reasons for discontent with the court system. Currently, the public opinion regarding the performance of the courts and the fairness with which they work can be gauged from public concern in areas

that affect the fundamental values of the courts. The key issues that impact the public's confidence in the courts lead to identification of necessary actions to remedy the public's perceived shortcomings and grievances. In this context, it is vital to examine the relationships between procedural justice and public trust and the resultant implications of these relationships.

In 1999, the National Center for State Courts conducted the survey regarding the public's satisfaction with the performance of state courts. Results indicated that 79% of participants agreed that judges were honest; 74% were of the opinion that most court officials were courteous and helpful; and 85% agreed that the courts were doing a good job in protecting the constitutional rights of defendants. However, the same survey also clearly identified one area in which dissatisfaction was profound: participants felt that the values and fundamental goals of the judicial system were not uniform (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). The level of satisfaction of the public is formed from multiple sources: the media, personal experience with the court system, second-hand accounts of someone involved in the court system, and high-profile cases just to name a few.

Further research by the National Center for State Courts (1999) found similar themes. One study, conducted on the general population used pre-established standards developed by United States Trial Courts to measure various levels of performance, found that over two-thirds of those surveyed were of the opinion that it was very costly to initiate a case in the courts, and 87% indicated that the high cost of lawyers was an important deterrent in coming to court for solving grievances. Many respondents expressed dismay that the complex nature of the law and the slow pace of litigation

combined to discourage them from approaching the courts for assistance. Forty-seven percent (47%) felt as though they were “out of touch” with the courts. Half of the respondents were of the opinion that the courts were not considerate in adequately monitoring the progress of individual cases, and that cases were not decided upon within reasonable timeframes. Regarding whether participants viewed the justice system as being fair and equal, the results were even more negative. Eighty percent of the respondents were of the belief that it is the wealthy that get better treatment in courts and that minorities are treated unfairly.

Factors that led to the public’s dissatisfaction are many. Of particular importance, according to Overby et al. (2004) is of the view that judges are often influenced by political pressures. Because a large number of judges are forced to raise funds for political campaigns, their ability to remain unbiased is often questioned. The researchers also concluded that the majority of Americans felt dissatisfied with the courts’ system because it did not meet their expectations nor did it fully meet its own stated goals and objectives. Specific to the topic of this dissertation, it is noteworthy that most of the complaints regarding unfair treatment came from minorities comprising of Hispanics/Latinos and Blacks. The minorities were not satisfied with the system of procedural justice because opportunities were lacking that would have given them adequate representation of their cases in the court system, which they believed affected their ability to receive a fair trial (Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, & Winkle, 2004).

Another main factor relating to public dissatisfaction with the court system involves perceptions regarding the resolution of court disputes in a fair manner. Tyler

(2006) contended this factor alone is what determines the public's level of trust in the judicial system (Tyler, 2006). Although the public remains unhappy with the high costs entailed in seeking justice from courts, the main factor that forms their perception of the courts is the extent of fairness administered. Perceptions of unfairness are more widely prevalent among minorities in this country (Tyler, 2000a).

Summary

Because what matters most to the public regarding the court system is fairness in the procedures rather than the actual decisions and outcomes, it is imperative that measures be taken to improve public trust in the judicial system so that courts may maintain their legitimacy. Issues of accountability, independence, integrity, equality, fairness, punctuality, and access must therefore be addressed. Judicial officers should be unbiased and neutral; due respect must be paid to the decision making procedure. It therefore becomes the duty of judges, court administrators, and judicial staff to incorporate these fundamental values in form and practice in order to foster trust within all populations.

The studies explored suggested that the main factors influencing the respondents' level of satisfaction were fairness of their experience and quality of their treatment. Black's have been found to be more likely to be influenced by their perception of whether the courts treat everyone the same, while Hispanics/Latinos are more likely to be concerned with the quality of the treatment from the courts. It was argued that neutrality and impartiality becomes more significant when people are economically weak or when groups are politically marginalized. Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith, and Winkle (2004)

found that Blacks are more cynical of a southern state court system than Whites.

However, Wenzel, Bowler, and Lanoue (2003) found that Hispanics/Latinos were more positive toward local courts than their fellow citizens.

This chapter defined procedural justice and established a conceptual framework for examining procedural justice theory. Then a foundation was laid for examining procedural justice. Next, the chapter addressed the group-value model of procedural justice and explored why interactions are important in procedural justice theory. The chapter then discussed the effects of procedural justice. The chapter closes by addressing public opinion regarding procedural justice.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This study was designed to investigate whether race or ethnicity, age, gender, level of education, and level of income are systematically associated, at the ecological level, with court-user satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court. The theory presented in chapter 1 and developed more systematically in chapter 2 suggested that public perception is formed, in part, through a socialization process, and therefore differential experiences and procedural justice should be associated, at the ecological level, with satisfaction in access to, and fairness in, the Court. Specifically, there is reason to expect that a person's ethnicity and race, age, gender, level of income, and level of education is associated, at the ecological level, with perceptions about the level of satisfaction in access to, and fairness in, the Court.

This chapter specifies the methods that were used to investigate the connection between differential experience theory and procedural justice theory as they relate to a person's ethnic or racial background. The chapter begins with a discussion of the considerations made in data collection, including an explanation of the process used by the National Center for State Courts when it developed and validated the public satisfaction survey which the Court used to collect data in 2007 and 2008. The next section describes how the independent and dependent variables are operationalized. The final section delineates the approach to data analysis.

Approach to Data Collection

This section explains the central design issues that are germane to survey research and illustrates the approaches that are followed in this study. It begins with a discussion of, and rationale for, the data collection method that was used. This is followed by a description of the development of the survey instrument and the approaches used to assess the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. Population and sample population issues are then discussed. The section ends with an explanation of the study's data collection procedures.

Selection of Data Collection Method

The survey method, a cross-sectional design, allows researchers to gather information that is not readily available from other sources. Furthermore, a survey method is a set of standard questions that affords sampling of a population in an unbiased manner. It is an effective way to capture a person's attitude toward, and perception of, a topic. The fallibility of cross-sectional designs lies in the difficulty of analyzing the direction of causal relationships. Therefore, archival sample data was used in hypothesis testing to compare 2 consecutive years, 2007 and 2008. These archival data sets are cross-sectional surveys that asked the exact same questions at two different points in time.

The Survey Instrument

The first survey to assess court-user satisfaction was administered by the National Center for State Courts in 1977; it was a national telephone survey to gauge the public's satisfaction with state courts (Tyler, 2006). After the 1977 survey the National Center for

State Courts conducted subsequent surveys on a national level to gauge public opinion concerning state courts (Tyler, 2006). However, these efforts were toward conducting a national survey about state courts. What was lacking was a state survey instrument to be administered at the state court level. What culminated out of this early work by the National Center for State Court was the creation of Trial Court Performance Standards that were published in 1989 (Casey, 1998). One of the Trial Court Performance Standards developed a standardized court-user satisfaction survey that state courts could administer in their local jurisdictions. The National Center for State Courts named the court-user satisfaction survey: “Courtools: Access and Fairness.”

The Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County (the Court) used this standardized court-user satisfaction survey in 2007 and 2008 by administering the survey to people on a voluntary basis that were exiting the courthouse. Two distinct data sets were created, one in 2007 and the other in 2008. This dissertation used that data which had already been collected by the Court. In other words, this dissertation used archival data to address the research questions of this study. Also this dissertation used research related to the 2007 data that was discussed in a previous report (Bleuenstein, 2009).

A number of factors argued for this proposal – some theoretical, others practical. Perhaps a qualitative method, such as in-depth interviews or intensive observation of actual behaviors would have been ideal in obtaining a deep understanding of a person’s level of satisfaction with the court system (Creswell, 1994, 1998, 2003). However, the purpose of this study was to determine if a person’s ethnicity and race is a significant predictor of satisfaction with the Court. This would suggest the utilization of a

quantitative approach to allow for statistical comparisons of differences at the group level (Creswell, 2003). The data required for statistical comparisons suggests the suitability of survey research methodology.

Whether a survey is written, by telephone, or in person has little affect on results (Fowler, 1993). Therefore the decision as to which method is used is not dependent upon quality of the results. For this study, a written survey was used instead of other types because the data had already been collected in a written format. However the benefits to the written format would be beneficial to point out. First, the ranges inherent in the Likert-scale are well-suited to a written format. Secondly, respondents were not expected to have thought-out their perceptions of the Court prior to receiving the survey. This is a benefit to self-administered surveys where respondents have the time to reflect upon an answer, whereas an interviewer-administered survey may tend to elicit less reflective answers. Third, the self-administered survey eliminates the potential of interviewer-induced errors (Fowler, 1993). Finally, written exit surveys are very familiar to the public and people willingly completed the survey. The practical reasons for the use of the archival data is that the data already exists and the total number of surveys collected for each year was high which is required when conducting subgroup statistical analyses.

Question and Response Design

The National Center for State Courts designed the court-user satisfaction survey that was administered by the Court in 2007 and 2008. Questions were written to be clear and unambiguous; the questions were written at the appropriate reading level; and they were written while avoiding legal jargon or acronyms. Additionally, the questions were

written to avoid structural bias that can manifest by the grouping of similar types of questions and resulting in socially desirable responses. The survey was made available in two languages, Spanish and English, and administered to people exiting the courthouse. Since the survey was created by the National Center for State Courts and was only provided to courts in English, the Court had its Department of Interpretation and Translation Services translate the survey into Spanish. The survey was administered to an internal group of Court staff fluent in Spanish to test its validity. Signage for the administration locations was also produced in both English and Spanish.

The survey asked three types of questions. Section I consisted of 10 questions focused on gathering information about the accessibility of the Court. Section II of the survey consisted of 5 questions focused on gathering information regarding the fairness of the Court and the remainder of the questions in Section III consisted of 6 questions regarding demographics. Questions in Section I and II asked the respondent to strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with a series of statements dealing with access and fairness in the Court. This type of survey allows for the development of a summated Likert-type scale in order to test hypotheses about group-level differences (McIver & Carmines, 1981).

Summated Likert-type scales are typically used to determine variation between a respondents' perception, attitude, or opinion (DeVellis, 1991; McIver & Carmines, 1981). Gliem and Gliem (2003) claimed that single-item questions pertaining to a social construct are not reliable and therefore should not be used in drawing conclusions. It is

more appropriate to make inferences based upon the analysis of summated scaled questions when measuring a social construct.

Therefore this study created two dependent variables by summing the series of questions that ask the respondent about their satisfaction regarding how accessible the Court was to them (Section I: Questions 1 through 10 of the survey). This dependent variable is identified as: *Access to Justice*. The other dependent variable was created by summing a series of questions that ask the respondent about how fairly they have been treated by the Court (Section II; Questions 11 through 15). This other dependent variable is identified as: *Fairness of Justice*.

Responses to the survey questions which are intended to form a summated Likert-type scale range from strong agreement to strong disagreement. A neutral selection was provided, in addition to “not applicable.” Therefore, the selections were in the following order: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree (the neutral selection) agree, strongly agree, and not applicable. Since this survey was measuring access and fairness it asks the respondents to select an answer that reflects their personal perception of their experience, the neutral and not applicable selections were used in the event the respondent in fact was neutral, or had not experienced what the question was asking. In statistical terms this response format is ordinal data; however in order to allow for parametric statistical tests the data are treated as quasi-interval (DeVellis, 1991).

Validity

Determining validity for survey research is difficult because it is attempting to measure the personal experience of a respondent. As Fowler (1993) contends:

In contrast, when people are asked about subjective states, feelings, attitudes, and opinions, there is no objective way of validating the answers. Only the person has access to his or her feelings and opinions. Thus the only way of assessing the *validity* of reports of subjective states is the way in which they correlate either with other answers that a person gives or with other facts about the person's life that one thinks should be related to what is being measured. (p. 80)

In other words, it is possible to determine if the survey instrument is measuring what was intended to be measured. In the development of the access and fairness survey the National Center for State Courts used the concept of face validity to gain researcher and practitioner views on how the survey appeared. In other words, did the survey seem like a reasonable way to obtain the information on access and fairness? The pretesting of the survey instrument by the National Center for State Courts' provided face validity. Additionally, the National Center for State Courts used the concept of construct validity to examine agreement between the theoretical concepts of access and fairness and the specific items on the survey. In so doing, the National Center for State Courts devoted substantial resources in the attempt to define access and fairness. The operational definitions are critical to the survey items to ensure that key aspects of each concept are addressed. Critical review and comment of the Access and Fairness survey by both researchers and practitioners led the National Center for State Courts to conclude the survey had construct validity.

It is understood that the generalizability of the findings do not extend beyond the population of Maricopa County. Should generalizability to a larger population be

desired, future research will be needed to build upon the present investigation. Reactive testing and reactive effects do not apply to the current research design. Participants only completed the survey once; multiple treatment interference also does not apply to the current study. The Hawthorne effect is minimized by use of the public exit survey because the intention of the study is described for each respondent prior to registering responses. The instrument has low reactivity and was not expected to influence responses.

Survey methodology in general tends to be weak on validity. A researcher's ability to ascertain a respondents' perception and attitude can be difficult because the artificiality of the survey format degrades validity. It is difficult to measure a person's actual feeling or attitude in terms of a range of selections from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This categorization of perception is only an approximate indicator of what respondents truly feel. The survey instrument was carefully worded and formatted by the National Center for State Courts to increase its reliability. In addition, the survey instrument was pre-tested to ensure the methodology was measuring consistently (National Center for State Courts, 2009).

Reliability

Data reliability involves the degree to which the measurement is vulnerable to random error (DeVellis, 1991; Neuman, 2006). Consistency is the key to reliable measurement. It is important for the researcher to collect data in a methodical manner to ensure data reliability (Fowler, 1993). The National Center for State Courts took a number of steps to ensure the reliability of the survey instrument during the development.

These included the development of questions that would be interpreted consistently by respondents, use of Likert-scale response scales instead of open-ended questions, and the use of summated scales instead of individual questions to measure the dependent variable.

The National Center for State Courts analysis of reliability focused on internal consistency. In other words, the National Center for State Courts examined the extent to which the access survey items were correlated thus appearing to address different facets of a single concept (e.g., accessibility to the court). The National Center for State Courts' used the Chronbach's alpha statistic to measure the intercorrelations among survey items using results obtained in court conducting pilot studies. Because inter-correlations among test items are maximized when all items measure the same construct, Cronbach's alpha is widely used to indicate the degree to which a set of items measures a single uni-dimensional latent construct (e.g., accessibility to the court). Statistical tests showed that inter-correlations among the ten access items all exceeded .60 and the intercorrelations among the five fairness items all exceeded .60. The National Center for State Courts therefore concluded from the results that the survey achieved internal consistency (National Center for State Courts, 2009).

The use of a written data collection instrument, over the possible variation of an interviewer posing questions to a respondent, ensured data reliability. Additionally, the survey instrument was provided in two different languages, English and Spanish, instead of providing a Spanish interpreter who could have interjected bias. Both forms were written carefully to ensure that all respondents answered the questions in the same way.

Writing the questions in a clear and simple format that was free of legal jargon allowed consistent understanding to the questions and again furthered reliability.

The use of a summated scale is an additional way to help ensure the reliability of an instrument (Neuman, 2006). The use of single opinion questions allows for a significant amount of error. One technique to minimize this error is to combine a series of single-opinion questions into a summated scale. This ensures that no single question takes on too much importance and also it tends to average out random error (McIver & Carmines, 1981).

Population and Sample Selection

This study used an archival data set collected by the Court in two separate years, 2007 and 2008. The populations surveyed were people exiting the courthouse at three different locations on three different days in each given year. The sample population was 769 in 2007 and 637 in 2008. The National Center for State Courts developed the survey tool used in this study. This study used these archival data sets to answer research questions not explored in the literature.

It should be noted that the data collected by the Court does not include in-custody defendants. In-custody defendants are individuals being held in jail awaiting their preliminary hearing, pretrial hearing, or trial. Interviewing in-custody defendants would be inappropriate given their status in the judicial process. Although the data misses this important demographic, the data may reflect the opinions of family and friends that come to Court on behalf of the in-custody defendant. Being able to include in-custody

defendants in the satisfaction survey would be ideal, but administering the survey to family and friends is a close proxy to actually questioning the in-custody defendant.

Data Collection Procedures

The survey was administered at the direction of the Court's Department of Research and Planning. The Court's Director for this department and their staff were stationed at the exit of each of the three courthouses. Staff administered the surveys by asking people exiting the courthouse to fill-out a satisfaction survey (Appendix D: Archival Survey Form). The surveys included 769 respondents in 2007 and 637 respondents in 2008, with a margin of error of .03. Since this study consists of two dependent variables and more than two independent variables this study tests hypotheses using a variety of statistical methods. This will be addressed in a later section. The exit survey questionnaire consisted of fifteen Likert scale questions (Table 1) which elicit a response ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. No Opinion/Not Applicable was also an option. In addition, there are six demographic questions. The fifteen Likert scale questions attempted to measure the respondents' level of satisfaction with access to, and fairness in, the Court. The primary focus of the independent variables is race or ethnicity. Therefore, the effects of race will be considered. Specifically, is there a difference in responses between Whites & Hispanics/Latinos? Further consideration will be given to age, gender, income level, and level of education of respondents to determine if these characteristics affected responses.

Table 1

Satisfaction Survey Questions

Access to Justice

1. Finding the Courthouse was easy.
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.
3. I felt safe in the Courthouse.
4. The Court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.
5. I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.
6. Court staff paid attention to my needs.
7. I was treated with courtesy and respect.
8. I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.
9. The Court's web-site was useful.
10. The Court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.

Fairness of Justice

11. The way my case was handled was fair.
 12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.
 13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.
 14. I was treated the same as everyone else.
 15. As I leave the Court, I know what to do next about my case.
-

Approach to Operationalization of the Variables

Previously introduced were the dependent and independent variables which are used in this study, additionally chapter 2 presented the theoretical justification for the incorporation of the stated variables. These variables are summarized in Table 2. This section of the study describes how each variable is operationalized. The six independent variables presented are basic demographic questions asked of the respondents’.

Table 2

Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent variables	Dependent variables
Race or ethnicity	Accessibility to court
Educational level	Fairness of the court
Income level	
Age	
Gender	

Independent Variables

The primary independent variable in the multivariate model was ethnicity and race. In the statistical model Whites are coded as a dummy variable and Hispanic/Latino the control variable, therefore the coding is 0 = White and 1 = Hispanic/Latino. The coefficients were then interpreted separately for Hispanics/Latinos as compared to Whites. Due to the lack of respondents for other races or ethnicities, all others were treated as missing data. This study uses, as does previous studies in this field and related areas of public opinion, a number of other demographic variables. The education variable is defined as years of formal education which is measure by the respondent

selecting one of three categories. The three categories were: (a) Graduate of, or attended some high school; (b) Graduate of, or attended some college or trade school, and (c) Completion of, or some work on a post graduate degree. Second, income was self reported by the selection of one of five categories. The income categories are less than \$10,000, \$10,001 to \$20,000, \$20,001 to \$30,000, \$30,001 to \$40,000, \$40,001 to \$50,000, and \$50,001 or more. Third, age was self-reported by selecting one of the following five ranges: (a) 20 years old or less; (b) 21 years old to 35 years old; (c) 36 years old to 50 years old; (d) 51 years old to 65 years old; and (e) more than 65 years old. Fourth, this study included a gender variable, coded as male equals 0 and female equals 1. Although the survey asked the question regarding the primary language of the respondent, too few respondent answered the question to include it in the statistical model for testing. Therefore, the primary spoken language variable was eliminated from the study. Since the dependent variables were categorical, the study estimated the multivariate model using regression.

Table 3
Coding for Hypotheses Testing

Independent variable	0	1	2	3	4	5
Race or ethnicity	White	Hispanic/ Latino	—	—	—	—
Education	—	High school graduate or some trade school	College or trade school graduate	Post graduate	—	—
Income	—	< \$10 K	\$10,001 to \$20K	\$20,001 to \$30K	\$30,001 to \$50K	\$50,001 or more
Age	—	20 years old or less	21 to 35 years old	36 to 50 years old	51 to 64 years old	65 or more years old
Gender	Male	Female				

Dependent Variables

This research used regression to test a model of access and fairness in the Court between Whites and Hispanics/Latinos who interacted with the Court. Maricopa County has a high level of Hispanics and Latinos in the general population and this provided a unique opportunity to examine the social behavior of this ethnic group. Blacks are not included in this study because the sample population did not approximate the Black percentage within the overall county population. Asians, although another important group to study, were not included in this research due to the low number of respondents thereby making any conclusions about this population and the Black population statistically insignificant.

The variables explored in this research are access and fairness. The survey asked respondents a variety of questions about the Court. Ten questions were used to develop a dependent variable to gauge the public's level of satisfaction with their accessibility to the Court and five questions were used for a second dependant variable to gauge the public's level of satisfaction with the fairness of the Court. The survey asked respondents to register their overall agreement or disagreement with the Court, using a five point Likert-type rating scale. *Strongly Agree* was coded as 5, *Agree* was coded as 4, *No Opinion/Not Applicable* was coded as 3, *Disagree* was coded as 2, and *Strongly Disagree* was coded as 1.

Approach to Data Analysis

This section describes the approach used to analyze the data. A discussion of which factors are more likely to predict satisfaction to access and fairness in the Court are

addressed. The discussion then turns to an overview of the methodology of data analysis to provide an overall framework of the study. Next, the preliminary steps taken to prepare the data are considered. Additionally, non-response bias is discussed as is the process used to create the scale for the dependent variables. The section concludes with a discussion of the methodology that is used to test the hypotheses.

Approach to Methodology

The philosophy that guided this study is from the post-positivist framework. Creswell (2003) portrays post-positivism as a “deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes” (p. 7). Letourneau and Allen (1999) stated that: “post-positivism has been defined as the search for ‘warranted assertability’ as opposed to ‘truth’” (p. 623). Positivism is diametrically opposed to post-positivism, which asserts that there is no absolute truth or reality, therefore it can never be found. Additionally, scientists do not prove theories, but rather fail to reject them. From the post-positivist viewpoint, the scientific method is followed to establish data that rejects or supports a theory, and subsequent revisions serve to strengthen a theory based on new information. This process of scientific inquiry is never complete; theories will be constantly modified and altered based on newly discovered data. Cloninger (1996) described this method as the “hypothetico-deductive method.” Researchers start with a formal theory, consisting of statements at an abstract level. Then, using logical deduction, hypotheses are made about observations in the real world, with the assumption that the abstract theory is true. The more these predictions are confirmed, the more likely the theory is to be accepted.

Finally, post-positivists contend that objectivity and subjectivity are necessary and inevitable parts of the research process (Creswell, 2003).

A post-positivist viewpoint is consistent with quantitative research strategies involving surveys. This viewpoint assumes that reality is measurable and observable which allows for comparisons among and between variables. The current research examined court-user perceptions as they relate to their access and fairness in the judicial system. Quantitative survey methods are assumed to be successful at obtaining objective data that can be statistically analyzed (Leedy & Ormond, 2005).

Level of Analysis and the Ecological Fallacy

Prior to discussing the specific analyses that was conducted in this study, it is important to explore the possible difficulties with the level of analysis. The problem that can arise regarding level of analysis is the data were collected at an individual level, but the analysis is conducted at the group or ecological level. This is referred to as an ecological fallacy. It is important to be cognizant not to assume that groups are homogeneous. Likewise we must be aware that the reverse is possible, using individual-level correlations for analyses to be conducted at the group level can also pose issues. This discussion is extensive in the literature and many authors have contributed to this issue (see, for example, Bochner & Hesketh, 1994; Dorfman & Howell, 1998; Leung & Bond, 1989; Nasif, Al-Daeaj, & Ebrahimi, 1991). Because both individual and group level analyses are used in this study, being cognizant of the level of analysis throughout the study is important.

Overview of the Approach to the Analysis

Several analyses are conducted to test the hypotheses developed in chapter 2.

Table 4 provides a synopsis of the types of analyses that were conducted and points out whether they are at the individual level or the ecological level. All analyses were conducted using SPSS for Windows, Version 17.

Data Preparation

Exit Survey responses were received in Excel format. The data then was reviewed for anomalies prior to preparing the data for coding. Individual respondents' for which 5% or more of the questions were missing were deleted from the analysis (Creswell, 2003). The data was coded for utilization in SPSS.

Table 4

Data Analyses

	Individual level	Ecological level
Preliminary steps		
Data preparation	X	
Non-response bias	X	
Participation rate	X	
Scale development	X	X
Hypotheses Testing		
H ₁ = White/Hispanic & accessibility		X
H ₂ = Age & accessibility		X
H ₃ = Gender & accessibility		X
H ₄ = Education level & accessibility		X
H ₅ = Income level & accessibility		X
H ₆ = White/Hispanic & fairness		X
H ₇ = Age & fairness		X
H ₈ = Gender & fairness		X
H ₉ = Education level & fairness		X
H ₁₀ = Income level & fairness		X

Participation Rate

Conceptualization of the term *court-user* can prove difficult. It could mean a respondent actually appeared in Court before a judicial officer. It could also mean that the experience of friends and or family members would suffice. In order to maximize the response of the public, the research sample included all those appearing in Court except judicial officers, jurors, Court staff, and in-custody defendants. This included those appearing in Court with or without a lawyer, those respondents that appeared in Court with a friend or family member, those respondents that came to Court with a friend or family member, or those respondents that came to Court as a witness in a Court case.

The participation rate (PR) in the exit survey was determined by a two step process. During the administration of the exit survey people exiting the courthouse were asked to fill-out the survey, except for the aforementioned groups. Court employees and jurors were easily identified because they are required to visibly wear identification tags. The administrators of the survey recognized judicial officers exiting the courthouse and therefore did not ask them to fill out a survey. Lastly, in-custody defendants do not use the public exits.

The number of people opting to not fill out the survey (nos) was added to the number of people who filled out the survey (fos) to come up with the denominator in the following equation, $PR = \frac{fos}{nos + fos}$. The participation rate is useful in describing the representativeness of the data.

Scale Identification of Dependent Variables

This study used two dependent variables. The first dependent variable was a summation of survey questions 1 through 10, the questions regarding the respondent's level of satisfaction with their accessibility to the Court. This dependent variable was named: Access to Justice. This variable was derived by summing the codes for each of the respondents $n = 769$ (2007) and $n = 637$ (2008) across all ten questions and then dividing the sum by ten. The second dependent variable was a summation of questions 11 through 15, the questions regarding the level of satisfaction with the fairness of the Court. This second dependent variable was named: Fairness of Justice. This variable was derived by summing the codes for each of the respondents $n = 769$ (2007) and $n = 637$ (2008) across all five questions and then dividing the sum by five.

Although the Access and Fairness variables are ordinal data (Ordinal data are ordered but the distance between levels is not known) this study treated the Access and Fairness variables as interval data (Interval data are ordered data where the distances between values are known and consistent) in order to analyze the relationship between variables using regression.

Table 5

Variables

Dependent variables	Access to justice (combination of survey questions 1-10 for each respondent)
	Fairness of justice (combination of survey questions 11-15 for each respondent)
Independent variables	Primary – race or ethnicity
	Control – age, gender, income, and education

The analyses used summated Likert-type questions indicating a respondents' perception regarding their degree of satisfaction with accessibility and fairness of the Court. This measurement is appropriate for interval level data. The relationship between the variables is interpreted with results identifying which independent variable most influenced the dependent variables of access and fairness. The analysis provides a profile of what variables are shown to be statistically significant with an alpha level of at least .06. Statistical significance at .05 or higher will also be determined and discussed, if applicable. Since the dependent variables were categorical, the study estimated the multivariate models using regression: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 F_1 + \beta_2 F_2 + \beta_3 F_3 + \dots + \beta_k F_k + \epsilon$.

Hypotheses

Access to Justice

H_1 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court, than White respondents.

H_2 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court as the age of the respondent increases.

H_3 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they are male.

H_4 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of education

H_5 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of income.

Fairness of Justice

H_6 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly in the Court, than White respondents.

H_7 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court as the age of the respondent increases.

H_8 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they are male.

H_9 = Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of education.

H_{10} = Analysis of exit survey data will show that that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of income.

Analysis of the Independent Variables

Hypotheses 1 through 5 (dependent variable: access to justice) and hypotheses 6 through 10 (dependent variable: fairness of justice) deal with ethnicity and race, age, gender, level of education, and income level of respondents. Each hypothesis entails the question of whether components of various subgroups systematically vary with regard to their belief about how accessible or fair the Court was to them. For each hypothesis, a four part analysis is conducted to test hypotheses:

1. Establish if the scale's distribution meet the required assumptions for the utilization of parametric statistical tests.
2. Evaluate whether the means for subgroup scores adhere to the predicted order.
3. Evaluate the significance of mean differences between the subgroups.
4. Conduct post hoc statistical tests to determine which means differed significantly when comparing more than two subgroups.

Analysis Plan for Hypotheses Testing

This study used the *t* test for the independent variables with two subgroups and used analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses with independent variable consisting of three or more levels. The independent variables with three or more levels are age, education, and income. While responses in the survey data which were collected using a Likert scale are theoretically ordinal data, there is ample research history to treat the data as quasi-interval. This is supported by DeVellis (1991), who states, "...although strictly speaking, items using Likert scale response formats may be ordinal, a wealth of

accumulated experience supports applying interval-based analytic methods to the scales they yield” (p. 112).

Statistical testing confirmed the data met the assumptions required for parametric testing; therefore, the first step in checking each hypothesis is to establish whether the primary data met the assumptions required for ANOVA. ANOVA requires two assumptions be met: First that the variables are normally distributed and secondly that the populations have equal variance. In order to ensure the ANOVA assumptions are met, several statistical tests were combined with a visual check of the data to establish whether the distributions are approximately normal and whether the variances are of approximately equal size (Neuman, 2006).

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test provides for inferential statistics on normality therefore it is used to evaluate the observed distributions with a normal distribution (DeVellis, 1991). The null and alternative hypotheses tested are as follows:

H_0 : The sample came from a normally distributed population.

H_1 : The sample did not come from a normally distributed population.

The null hypothesis is commonly rejected when the sample size is large as is the case in the primary data collected by the Court in 2007 and 2008. In order to avoid “Type I” error (α) or in other words a false positive is accepted. The skewness of the data and kurtosis is examined. It was found that the skewness and kurtosis results are between one (1) and negative one (-1) therefore the primary data is assumed to have a normally

distributed population. Lastly, frequency distributions were examined and determined to have data approximates a normal distribution.

Variance was assessed using Levene's test for equality of variances. The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H_0 : The variances of the two samples are equal.

H_1 : The variances of the two samples are not equal.

In addition to the ANOVA assumptions regarding population, ANOVA requires the residuals to be normally distributed. ANOVA is considered robust only when the residuals do not differ substantially from a normal distribution. The final hypothesis statistical testing for the appropriateness of ANOVA was to follow the same steps described above when testing for normality; that is, conducting the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, examining skewness and kurtosis and a visual examination of the residuals.

Compare Subgroup Scores

For each hypothesis the means are compared to establish whether they are distributed in the predicted order. If the group means differ in the hypothesized direction, this would lend support to the research hypotheses. If they differ in the opposite direction it would suggest the possibility of rejecting the hypothesis.

Significance of Observed Differences

For each hypothesis, the standard error is determined as

$$SE = s_{b1} = \text{sqrt} [\Sigma(y_i - \hat{y}_i)^2 / (n - 2)] / \text{sqrt} [\Sigma(x_i - \bar{x})^2]$$

Additionally, it was determined whether any of the group means varied significantly from each other. Since the data proved to be normally distributed, have equal variances, and have normally distributed residuals the use of parametric testing is justified.

Comparing two subgroups

Two of the independent variables – gender and race or ethnicity are divided into two subgroups. For these variables, a one-tailed independent sample t test was used to compare sample means (Pedhazur, 1997). The null and alternative hypotheses tested for the independent variables are:

$$H_0: \mu_1 \geq \mu_2$$

$$H_1: \mu_1 < \mu_2$$

Comparing three or more subgroups

Three of the independent variables are divided into three or more subgroups – age, level of income, and level of education. For these variables, ANOVA was used to compare the sample means. In each analysis, the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis are as follows:

$$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \dots \mu_r$$

$$H_1: \text{Not all } \mu_i \text{ (} i = 1, \dots, r \text{) are equal}$$

Post Hoc Testing

For the hypotheses of gender and race or ethnicity the results of the t test are examined and other tests were conducted. For the hypotheses of age, level of income, level of education, and race or ethnicity the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) is explored to determine if they are sufficient to accept the hypotheses.

Selection of Appropriate Test

Regression can only accurately estimate the relationship between the dependent and independent variables if the relationships are linear. Pedhazur (1997) and Cohen and Cohen (1983) suggested two primary methods to detect non-linearity. The first method is to use previous research to inform current analysis which this study has done in chapter 2. The second method is to exam plots of the standardized residuals as a function of standardized predicted values. Visual inspection of the scatter plots determined that the data is linear.

Regression can only accurately estimate a relationship if variables are measured without error. If the covariate is not reliably measured the effect sizes of other variables can be over-estimated. If the Cronbach's alpha is approximately .60 the reliability estimate will be acceptable. Additionally, the third assumption for regression is that of homoscedasticity. This assumption was checked by a visual inspection of a plot of the standardized residuals by the regression standardized predicted value. Since the residuals are randomly scattered around 0 providing a relatively even distribution this study assumes homoscedasticity of the data. All four of the assumptions are met therefore the study proceeded to examine the hypotheses utilizing regression.

Limitations of Research Design

Archival data sets limit this study because of the use of self-reporting in the research design. However, self-reporting is common to surveys. Strong efforts were made to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of responses, it is hoped that these efforts have facilitated honest answers to the survey. This study also contends that the unobtrusive nature of the survey questions reduced dishonesty by participants. Again, assurances of confidentiality were another attempt to reduce self-reporting biases. Efforts were also made to reduce non-response bias. These efforts included: providing the survey in both English and Spanish; allowing submission via U.S. Post; and the provision of a small token of appreciation.

Ethical Issues

The researcher is currently an administrator with the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County. However, data were collected independently of this researcher. This researcher used archival data only and had no part in tabulating the results of the exit survey. The Institutional Review Board approved the use of this archival data on April 1, 2010 and assigned the following approval number: 04-01-10-0283255. The ethical implications for this type of research is minimized because the research study was planned and tested to meet ethical standards by the National Center for State Courts, in Williamsburg, Virginia. During the administration of the public exit survey, the Court made every effort to ensure that steps were taken to protect and ensure the dignity and welfare of all respondents. All respondents voluntarily agreed to partake in the survey; an opt-out alternative was provided for those choosing not to participate.

Summary

This study sought to build on existing literature by investigating procedural justice and the perception of access and fairness in the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County. Using logistic regression, this research explored the sample data sets from 2007 and 2008 to predict what data would be for following years. In other words, was the race or ethnicity of the respondent a significant predictor of perception of access and fairness, when controlling for the independent variables of age, income, gender, and level of education. The archival exit survey was both reliable and valid. Adherence to all ethical practices regarding research involving human subjects was followed in the administration and collection of the sample data.

Chapter 4: Results

This study was designed to investigate whether race or ethnicity, age, gender, level of education, and level of income are systematically associated, at the ecological level, with court-user satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court. This chapter presents the results of the analyses conducted in this research study. It begins with an explanation of the preliminary analyses, including a summary of the process to prepare the data for analysis, and an analysis of the response rate and the response bias likely present in the sample data. The next section explores the data at the individual level. It explains the process used to delete items at the individual level to increase internal consistency. Additionally, the section examines the raw mean scores. Lastly, the chapter presents the results of the t test conducted at the individual level.

The majority of this chapter is devoted to the ecological level analyses that test the 10 hypotheses. The ecological level analysis begins with a presentation used to test hypotheses for the independent variables. Next, it explores the results of the hypotheses testing to assess the appropriateness of parametric testing for the study. The chapter then turns to the actual tests of hypotheses 1 through 10, which explored a comparison of subgroup means to determine if they are ordered in the manner predicted by the hypotheses. Logistic regression is used to determine whether there were significant differences between the means and to determine which independent variable was the best predictor for the research question.

Data Preparation

The archival data were received electronically from the Court's Research and Planning Department in Excel format. First, the data were examined at the individual level to determine which cases would be deleted because of missing data and to determine if the sample size of subgroups were sufficient for the hypothesized research questions. Secondly, the data were provided in text format, for example the Excel data field for gender textually indicated either *male* or *female*. The text formatting of each data cell required conversion into numeric form; however, reverse coding was not needed since the end value of each question fit the theoretical construct of the study. In other words, high values of a question reflect high scores on the item (e.g., education). Lastly, the data's characteristics were examined to determine the appropriate statistical test to be used.

Elimination of Records

First, the independent variables were examined. Through this visual inspection it was determined that the race or ethnicity variable would only include White and Hispanic/Latino respondents, since the low number of Black and Asian respondents would not provide statistically significance. Additionally, too few respondents answered the question of primary spoken language. Therefore, this variable was eliminated from the hypothesized model. After the data were cleaned, the n for each year was $n = 769$ for 2007 and $n = 637$ for 2008.

Data Conversion

Since the responses to the survey were provided electronically. Before beginning any statistical analyses, it was necessary to convert the 5-point scale perception-based responses into numeric format. Additionally, the demographic based responses provided in text format needed to be converted to numeric format. The 5-point Likert scale responses that were perception based ranged from strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, and strongly agree. The text format was recoded from text to numeric format, as follows: *strongly disagree* equal to 1, *disagree* equal to 2, *no opinion* equal to 3, *agree* equal to 4, and *strongly agree* equal to 5. The demographic data was recoded from text to numeric format, and in some cases, classified according to hypothesized groupings. During the data recoding process it was determined that none of the items required reverse coding because the direction of all the questions were scored consistent with the hypothesized direction. It should be noted that the race and ethnicity variable needed to be recoded from the original proposal since the race or ethnicity variable which had included Blacks was eliminated. Therefore, White is coded as 0 and Hispanic/Latino is coded as 1. Additionally, since the variable went from multivariate (White, Black, and Hispanic/Latino) to a bivariate variable the original assumption that hypothesis testing would use ANOVA is false and a *t* test was used. This will be discussed in a later section.

Data Characteristics

After establishing a common scale an examination of the summated questions revealed a distribution that appeared linear and close to a normal distribution. After

aggregated scales were developed and standardized they were examined for normalcy before the determination was made whether parametric or nonparametric tests were most appropriate. Additionally, upon visual inspection of the data, the demographic variables also revealed a distribution that appeared to be normal.

Respondent Characteristics

This study used archival data and the data is classified as a convenience sample, the survey was made available to those people exiting the courthouse on a given day. Because of this the goal of the research is not to draw conclusions about the entire population of Maricopa County based upon information gathered by the survey. Rather, the survey responses offer a convenience sample on which to support comparisons of people with differing demographic characteristics. However, there is good reason to believe that the sample, since the respondent demographic levels are close to the general population, should behave similar to a random sample from the general population. The number of independent pieces of information in each year of the data sets is 769 (2007) and 637 (2008) the degrees of freedom (v) are $v = 769$ and 637 respectively. Generally, the more degrees of freedom one has means the more certain we can be that the sample data is accurately reflecting the entire population.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test provides for inferential statistics on normality; therefore it is used to evaluate the observed distributions. Since the primary independent variable is race or ethnicity, the mean data from the sample population was compared to the mean data from the general population. The hypotheses tested were as follows:

H_0 : The sample proportions are not equivalent to the population proportions.

H_1 : The sample proportions are equivalent to the population proportions.

As summarized in Table 6, the null hypothesis is rejected for each of the primary demographic independent variable of race or ethnicity, gender, and level of education. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted that the sample proportions are equivalent to the general population proportions.

Table 6

Population and Sample Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristic	Sample Mean ^a	Sample Mean ^b	Population Mean ^c
Hispanic/Latino	.322	.451	.310
White	.678	.549	.588
Gender (female)	.559	.516	.496
Education (BA or >)	.226	.268	.259

^a 2007 data set

^b 2008 data set

^c U.S. Census 2010 for population mean data.

Bivariate Analysis

The comparison of raw mean scores for each question across all respondents is presented below (Table 7) in an attempt to gauge the overall level of satisfaction with the Court. I have previously discussed the results of the 2007 data, but for this study the 2008 data was newly available (Bleuenstein, 2009). The first ten questions ascertain the level of satisfaction of respondents regarding the accessibility to the Court. A satisfaction score less than 80% indicates lower satisfaction and therefore respondents perceiving their accessibility to the Court is less than desirable. A satisfaction score more than 80%

(combination of strongly agree and agree categories from the Likert scale) indicates higher levels of satisfaction, which translates into respondents perceiving they have good accessibility to the Court.

Table 7

Survey Questions 1 through 10 – Accessibility to Justice

Accessibility to Justice	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Year	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Years
1. Finding the Courthouse was easy.	.06	.05	.35	.54	2007	.89	+6%
	.02	.02	.32	.64	2008	.95	
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	.05	.06	.50	.39	2007	.89	+2%
	.02	.06	.47	.44	2008	.91	
3. I felt safe in the Courthouse.	.04	.02	.34	.60	2007	.94	None
	.03	.03	.27	.67	2008	.94	
4. The Court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	.03	.03	.45	.49	2007	.94	+1%
	.02	.03	.43	.51	2008	.95	
5. I was able to get my Court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	.09	.09	.36	.46	2007	.82	+1%
	.08	.09	.33	.50	2008	.83	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

(table continues)

Accessibility to Justice	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Year	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Years
6. Court staff paid attention to my needs.	.06	.05	.39	.50	2007	.89	+2%
	.04	.04	.36	.56	2008	.91	
7. I was treated with Courtesy and respect.	.06	.02	.35	.57	2007	.92	+3%
	.02	.03	.31	.64	2008	.95	
8. I easily found the Courtroom or office I needed.	.04	.03	.40	.53	2007	.93	+2%
	.02	.03	.31	.64	2008	.95	
9. The Court's Web site was useful.	.07	.06	.40	.47	2007	.87	+4%
	.03	.05	.60	.31	2008	.91	
10. The Court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	.05	.05	.44	.46	2007	.90	+1%
	.03	.05	.42	.49	2008	.91	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

The last five questions (Table 8) ascertain the perception of the public regarding their level of satisfaction with how fairly they were treated by the Court. A satisfaction score of less than 80% indicates lower satisfaction. Satisfaction scores less than 80% would indicate respondents perceive they are not being treated fairly by the Court. A satisfaction score more than 80% (combination of strongly agree and agree categories from the Likert scale) indicates higher levels of satisfaction, which translates into respondents perceiving they are treated fairly by the Court.

Table 8

Survey Questions 11 through 15 – Fairness of Justice

Fairness to Justice	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Year	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Years
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	.10	.08	.42	.40	2007	.82	+7%
	.04	.06	.35	.54	2008	.89	
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	.11	.07	.37	.45	2007	.82	+7%
	.05	.06	.37	.52	2008	.89	
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	.09	.07	.43	.41	2007	.84	+6%
	.05	.05	.33	.57	2008	.90	
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	.05	.05	.44	.46	2007	.90	+2%
	.03	.05	.37	.55	2008	.92	
15. As I leave the Court, I know what to do next about my case.	.04	.05	.45	.46	2007	.91	-2%
	.05	.05	.34	.55	2008	.89	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

The last five questions (Table 9) ascertain the perception of the public regarding their level of satisfaction with how fairly they were treated by the Court. A satisfaction score of less than 80% indicates lower satisfaction. Satisfaction scores less than 80%

would indicate respondents perceive they are not being treated fairly by the Court. A satisfaction score more than 80% (combination of strongly agree and agree categories from the Likert scale) indicates higher levels of satisfaction, which translates into respondents perceiving they are treated fairly by the Court.

Table 9

Survey Questions 11 through 15 – Fairness of Justice

Fairness to Justice	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Year	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Years
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	.10	.08	.42	.40	2007	.82	+7%
	.04	.06	.35	.54	2008	.89	
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	.11	.07	.37	.45	2007	.82	+7%
	.05	.06	.37	.52	2008	.89	
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	.09	.07	.43	.41	2007	.84	+6%
	.05	.05	.33	.57	2008	.90	
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	.05	.05	.44	.46	2007	.90	+2%
	.03	.05	.37	.55	2008	.92	
15. As I leave the Court, I know what to do next about my case.	.04	.05	.45	.46	2007	.91	-2%
	.05	.05	.34	.55	2008	.89	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

An aspect of the descriptive analysis examined a comparison of the White and Hispanic/Latino respondents. The preliminary analysis of each question in the exit survey is explored by reducing the responses to only the White and Hispanic/Latino

respondents. Then the responses for the categories of *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* were combined into one score called *Agreement* and the categories of *Disagree* and *Strongly Disagree* was combined into one score referred to as *Disagreement*.

Table 10

Survey Questions 1 through 10 by Year and by Race

	Year	Race	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Races
1. Finding the Courthouse was easy.	2007	White	.91	-1%
		Hispanic	.90	
	2008	White	.96	-1%
		Hispanic	.95	
2. The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	2007	White	.92	+1%
		Hispanic	.93	
	2008	White	.91	+1%
		Hispanic	.92	
3. I felt safe in the Courthouse.	2007	White	.95	-2%
		Hispanic	.93	
	2008	White	.95	-2%
		Hispanic	.93	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

(table continues)

		Year	Race	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Races
4.	The Court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	2007	White	.95	-5%
			Hispanic	.90	
		2008	White	.95	-1%
			Hispanic	.94	
5.	I was able to get my Court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	2007	White	.83	+4%
			Hispanic	.87	
		2008	White	.80	+6%
			Hispanic	.86	
6.	Court staff paid attention to my needs.	2007	White	.92	-4%
			Hispanic	.88	
		2008	White	.93	-3%
			Hispanic	.90	
7.	I was treated with Courtesy and respect.	2007	White	.94	-2%
			Hispanic	.92	
		2008	White	.96	-3%
			Hispanic	.93	
8.	I easily found the Courtroom or office I needed.	2007	White	.95	+1%
			Hispanic	.96	
		2008	White	.97	-5%
			Hispanic	.92	
9.	The Court's Web site was useful.	2007	White	.96	-1%
			Hispanic	.95	
		2008	White	.93	-4%
			Hispanic	.89	
10.	The Court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	2007	White	.92	+1%
			Hispanic	.93	
		2008	White	.91	-1%
			Hispanic	.90	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

When the perceptions of Whites and Hispanics/Latinos are compared for each question of the survey (Table 10) there is little discernable difference between 2007 and 2008 for each race or ethnicity. The largest difference was 5% which begs the question: Does this 5% reduction in satisfaction from 2007 to 2008 represent a significant trend that the Court should be concerned about?

This question is answered by conducting a hypothesis test:

H_0 = No difference exists between 2007 and 2008 data for court-user satisfaction.

H_1 = There is a difference between 2007 and 2008 data for court-user satisfaction.

Table 11

Survey Questions 11 through 15 by Year and by Race

	Year	Race	Satisfaction Score	Mean Difference Between Races
11. The way my case was handled was fair.	2007	White	.91	-1%
		Hispanic	.90	
	2008	White	.90	-1%
		Hispanic	.89	
12. The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	2007	White	.93	-4%
		Hispanic	.89	
	2008	White	.89	-1%
		Hispanic	.88	
13. The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	2007	White	.92	+1%
		Hispanic	.93	
	2008	White	.90	-4%
		Hispanic	.89	
14. I was treated the same as everyone else.	2007	White	.95	-2%
		Hispanic	.93	
	2008	White	.93	-2%
		Hispanic	.91	
15. As I leave the Court, I know what to do next about my case.	2007	White	.95	na
		Hispanic	.95	
	2008	White	.89	+1%
		Hispanic	.90	

^a $n = 769$ (2007). ^b $n = 637$ (2008).

The test statistics was between -2.00 and +2.00, therefore the results, the differences between means from 2007 to 2008 are not significant. The test statistic removed the variability of the sample results and the results indicate that the difference in the samples do not transfer over to the population they represent. Consequently the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. In other words, even though there are percentile changes between years, these changes are not statistically significant, and therefore the level of satisfaction in the entire population remained relatively stable between 2007 and 2008.

The second iteration of the analysis (Table 12) combines questions one through ten to form a score that is referred to as *access to justice* and combines questions 11 through 15 to form a score that is referred to as *fairness of justice*.

Table 12

Mean Scores by Year and by Race

		Year	Agreement	Disagreement
Access to justice	White	2007	.925	.071
		2008	.927	.078
	Hispanic/ Latino	2007	.917	.083
		2008	.914	.081
Fairness of justice	White	2007	.932	.068
		2008	.902	.098
	Hispanic/ Latino	2007	.920	.080
		2008	.894	.106

Furthermore, both dependent variables for access and fairness were examined by race or ethnicity. The mean results by race or ethnicity uncover little discernable difference in the satisfaction of either race or ethnicity (White or Hispanic/Latino) regarding the access to justice variable. In order to better determine which factors are more likely to influence access and fairness in the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa

County, the relationship between the variables will be interpreted with results identifying which independent variable had the greatest influence on the dependent variables of access and fairness.

Ecological Level Analysis

In order to perform the analysis on the ecological level the mean scores for each item were prepared for each subgroup for each independent variable. These mean scores provided the foundation for all ecological level analyses. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the *t* test, for the independent variables with two subgroups: race or ethnicity and gender for both 2007 and 2008. Both of these binary independent variables produced a *t* test score within the normal range. For the independent variables with three or more subgroups ANOVA was conducted. Therefore, the three independent variables of age, education and income for both 2007 and 2008 produced an ANOVA score within the normal range.

Since the null hypothesis is commonly rejected when the sample size is large as is the case in the primary data collected by the Court in 2007 and 2008, in order to avoid Type I error (α) or in other words to avoid accepting a false positive the skewness of the data and kurtosis were examined. Since both skewness and kurtosis results are between one (1) and negative one (-1) the primary data is assumed to have a normally distributed population. Since the data meets all the assumptions for parametric testing, a multivariate method is required to discern whether a respondent's race or ethnicity influences their level of satisfaction independent of other factors. Logistic regression is used for this purpose because it is appropriate for analyzing the dichotomous variable of

race or ethnicity and allows for the use of both continuous and categorical independent variables. The next section presents the results of the logistic regression testing of the hypotheses using the data set from 2007. The 2007 data presented here has been previously described in a non-peer reviewed report presented to the National Center for State Courts, Institute for Court Management (Bleuenstein, 2009).

Dependent Variable (Access to Justice 2007)

Hypothesis 1: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court, than White respondents. Table 13 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that race or ethnicity is a powerful explanation for perception to access to justice. The variable of race or ethnicity is significant and inversely related to the access to justice variable. In other words, as you move from White to Hispanic/Latino you have lower levels of satisfaction with access to justice. Since this study found that Hispanics/Latinos perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to Whites the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 2: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they are male. Table 13 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that gender is a powerful explanation for perception to access to justice. The variable of gender is significant and positively related to the access to justice variable. In other words, as you move from male to female a respondent has lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that males perceive that they

have less access to the Court as compared to females the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 3: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court as the age of the respondent increases. Table 13 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that age has predictive explanatory power, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of age is not significant, but is positively related to the access to justice variable. In other words, older respondents have lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that older respondent's perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to younger respondents the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 4: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of education. Table 13 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that level of education has predictive explanatory power, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of level of education is not statistically significant, but is positively related to the access to justice variable. In other words, respondents with a higher level of education have higher levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that respondent's with only a high school diploma perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to respondent's with a college education the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 5: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of income. Table 13 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that income level is a predictor of satisfaction to access to justice. The variable of income level is significant and inversely related to the access to justice variable. In other words, respondents with lower incomes relate to lower levels of satisfaction to the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that the level of income affects a respondent's level of satisfaction with access to the Court as compared to those with higher levels of income the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Table 13

Access to Justice 2007

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	Statistical Significance
Race or ethnicity	-.199	.075	.008*
Gender	.165	.066	.013*
Age	.059	.039	.125
Education	.049	.053	.359
Income	-.021	.029	.481

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Dependent Variable (Fairness of Justice 2007)

The 2007 data and results presented here has been previously described in a non-peer reviewed report presented to the National Center for State Courts, Institute for Court Management (Bleuenstein, 2009). The following hypotheses are analyzed using the 2007 data set:

Hypothesis 6: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court, than White respondents. Table 14 below suggests that the data fits the fairness of justice dependent variable. The data suggest that race or ethnicity is a powerful explanation for perception of fairness of justice. The variable of race or ethnicity is significant and positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, as you move from White to Hispanic/Latino you have higher levels of satisfaction to the idea that justice is fair. Since this study found that Hispanics/Latinos perceive that they have more access to the Court as compared to Whites the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 7: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they are male. Table 14 below suggests that the data fits the fairness of justice dependent variable. The data suggest that gender is a powerful explanation for perception to fairness of justice. The variable of gender is significant and positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, as you move from male to female a respondent has lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. Since this study found that males perceive

that they are treated less fairly by the Court as compared to females the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 8: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court as the age of the respondent increases. Table 14 below suggests that the data fits the fairness of justice variable. The data suggest that age has predictive explanatory power, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of age is not significant, but is positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, older respondents have lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. Since this study found that older respondent's perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to younger respondents the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 9: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of education. Table 14 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that level of education has predictive explanatory power, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of level of education is not statistically significant, but is positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, respondents with a higher level of education have higher levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. Since this study found that respondent's with only a high school diploma perceive that they are treated less fairly by the Court as compared to respondent's with a college education the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 10: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of income. Table 14 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that income level is a predictor of satisfaction to the idea of fair justice. The variable of income level is significant and positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, lower incomes relate to lower levels of satisfaction to the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that the level of income affects a respondent's level of satisfaction with access to the Court as compared to those with higher levels of income the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Table 14

Fairness of Justice 2007

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	Statistical Significance
Race or ethnicity	.479	.176	.007*
Gender	.290	.157	.065
Age	.054	.091	.553
Education	.064	.125	.610
Income	.020	.069	.772

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

The next section presents the results of the logistic regression testing of the hypotheses using the data set from 2008.

Dependent Variable (Access to Justice 2008)

The following hypotheses are analyzed using the 2008 data set:

Hypothesis 1: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court, than White respondents. Table 15 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that race or ethnicity does have predictive power, but it is not statistically significant. The variable of race or ethnicity is not significant, but is inversely related to the access to justice variable. In other words, as you move from White to Hispanic/Latino you have lower perceptions of access to justice. Since this study found that Hispanics/Latinos perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to Whites the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 2: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they are male. Table 15 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that gender does have predictive power, but it is not statistically significant. The variable of gender is significant and positively related to the access to justice variable. In other words, as you move from male to female a respondent has lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that males perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to females the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 3: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court as the age of the respondent

increases. Table 15 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice variable. The data suggest that age has predictive explanatory power, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of age is not significant, but is positively related to the access to justice variable. In other words, older respondents have lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that older respondent's perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to younger respondents the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 4: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of education. Table 15 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that level of education has predictive explanatory power, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of level of education is not statistically significant, but is positively related to the access to justice variable. In other words, respondents with a higher level of education have higher levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that respondent's with only a high school diploma perceive that they have less access to the Court as compared to respondent's with a college education the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 5: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court if they have lower levels of income. Table 15 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that level of income is an approximate indicator of what

respondents might be feeling, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. In other words, lower incomes relate to lower levels of satisfaction to the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that the level of income affects a respondent's level of satisfaction with access to the Court as compared to those with higher levels of income the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Table 15

Access to Justice 2008

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	Statistical Significance
Race or ethnicity	-.009	.043	.828
Gender	.038	.042	.362
Age	.006	.024	.806
Education	.046	.034	.174
Income	-.003	.018	.874

Dependent Variable (Fairness of Justice 2008)

Hypothesis 6: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly in the Court, than White respondents. Table 16 below suggests that the data fits the fairness to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that race or ethnicity does have predictive power, but it is not statistically significant. The variable of race or ethnicity is not significant and inversely related to the

fairness of justice variable. In other words, as you move from White to Hispanic/Latino you have lower levels of satisfaction to the idea that justice is fair. Since this study found that Hispanics/Latinos perceive that they are treated less fairly by the Court as compared to Whites the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 7: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they are male. Table 16 below suggests that the data fits the fairness of justice dependent variable. The data suggest that gender is a powerful explanation for perception to fairness of justice. The variable of gender is significant and positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, as you move from male to female a respondent has lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. Since this study found that males perceive that they are treated less fairly by the Court as compared to females the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 8: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court as the age of the respondent increases. Table 16 below suggests that the data fits the fairness of justice dependent variable. The data suggest that age is an approximate indicator of what respondents might be feeling, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of age is not significant, but is inversely related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, younger respondents have lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. Since this study found that younger respondent's perceive that they have less access to

the Court as compared to older respondents the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 9: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of education. Table 16 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that level of education is an approximate indicator of what respondents might be feeling, yet the relationship is not statistically significant. The variable of level of education is not statistically significant, but is positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, respondents with a higher level of education have higher levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. Since this study found that respondent's with only a high school diploma perceive that they are treated less fairly by the Court as compared to respondent's with a college education the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Hypothesis 10: Analysis of exit survey data will show that Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of income. Table 16 below suggests that the data fits the access to justice dependent variable. The data suggest that income level is a predictor of satisfaction to the idea of fair justice. The variable of income level is significant and positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, lower incomes relate to lower levels of satisfaction to the idea of access to justice. Since this study found that the level of income affects a respondent's level of satisfaction with access to the Court as compared

to those with higher levels of income the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is concluded.

Table 16

Fairness of Justice 2008

Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard Error	Statistical Significance
Race or ethnicity	-.039	.056	.485
Gender	.127	.054	.019*
Age	-.023	.031	.460
Education	.013	.044	.698
Income	.017	.023	.583

Note. * denotes statistical significance at the .05 level.

Strength of Relationships

This section assesses the relationships for the bivariate analysis and between the dependent and independent variables that were tested in each of the hypotheses. The majority of the tests determined there is not sufficient evidence at the ecological level to reject the null hypotheses. Although significance was found for race and gender in 2007 and gender in 2008, the lack of significance overall introduces a sizable risk of erroneous inferences about the effect of a respondent's race on their level of satisfaction with the accessibility and fairness of the Court. Overall, the multivariate logistic results furnish little empirical evidence of a systematic racial explanation regarding level of satisfaction

to the Court. However, the level of satisfaction in the bivariate analysis is quite considerable. Regardless of race or ethnicity the overall level of satisfaction with the Court is extremely high. This is important because the “ability of any legal system to perform effectively rests on the public’s belief that it employs fair procedures that result in just outcomes. Discerning what components people deem necessary to achieve fairness is vital for improving justice systems” (Anderson & Otto, 2003).

Table 17

Predictions of Hypotheses

Access to Justice	2007			2008		
	H ₀	H ₁	Predicted	H ₀	H ₁	Predicted
Hypothesis 1 Race or ethnicity		X	X	X		
Hypothesis 2 Gender		X	X	X		
Hypothesis 3 Age	X			X		
Hypothesis 4 Education	X			X		
Hypothesis 5 Income	X			X		
Fairness of Justice						
Hypothesis 6 Race or ethnicity		X	X	X		
Hypothesis 7 Gender		X	X		X	X
Hypothesis 8 Age	X			X		
Hypothesis 9 Education	X			X		
Hypothesis 10 Income	X			X		

Summary

This chapter provided the results of the analyses investigated by this study. The chapter started with a discussion of the preliminary steps that were taken, including data preparation and an assessment of response rates. It also investigated the survey data at the individual level finding that each satisfaction score for each question in the survey for both years investigated were above the 80% level. Moreover, when the results were bifurcated between White and Hispanic/Latino the satisfaction scores all remained 80% or higher for each race or ethnicity. Although individual level data is not needed for hypothesis testing, the information gleaned from the individual data was extremely useful. This research was also interested if the changes in satisfaction scores between 2007 and 2008 were by chance or statistically significant. To determine this, the test statistic removed the variability of the sample results and the results indicated that the difference in the samples do not transfer over to the population they represent. Therefore, even though there are slight changes in the satisfaction scores between years and races and ethnicities, these changes are not statistically significant. This indicates that the level of satisfaction in the entire population remained relatively stable between 2007 and 2008. Lastly the chapter addressed hypotheses testing at the ecological level.

The ecological level analyses addressed Hypotheses 1 through 10 for each data set (2007 & 2008). The initial step was to conduct a *t* test for each of the independent variables in order to determine the strongest possible model. The *t* test is important because it determines whether the difference between sample means differs significantly from the differences in the hypothesized model and the population mean. The

characteristics of each variable was examined and it was determined that the data met the assumptions for use of parametric testing.

The means of each subgroup were compared to determine if they conformed to the direction predicted in each hypothesis. The means were ordered in the predicted direction in all cases except for hypothesis 6 in both 2007 and 2008. Additionally, hypothesis 8 in 2008 did not conform to the predicted direction. In order to determine whether the differences in the means were significant, logistic regression was conducted.

The next chapter analyzes the results of both the individual and ecological level results. It also draws several theoretical conclusions, offers suggestions for future research and explores the implications for social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This study was designed to investigate whether race or ethnicity, age, gender, level of education, and level of income are systematically associated, at the ecological level, with court-user satisfaction regarding access to, and fairness in, the Court. Chapter 1 began by laying the groundwork for the exploration of whether race or ethnicity is a significant predictor of satisfaction regarding the accessibility and fairness of the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County, this study investigated the satisfaction levels of Hispanics/Latinos regarding their perception of accessibility and fairness with the Court in 2007 and 2008. Perceptions are formed by a person's actual court experience. Perceptions can range from dissatisfaction to satisfaction. This is important because higher levels of satisfaction have been associated with institutional legitimacy. Chapter 2 suggested that public perception is formed, in part, through a socialization process, and therefore differential experiences and procedural justice should be associated with satisfaction of access and fairness in the Court. Chapter 3 specified the methods that are used to investigate the connection between differential experience theory and procedural justice theory as they relate to a person's ethnic or racial background. The fourth chapter was devoted to the ecological level analyses that tested the 10 hypotheses. The ecological level analysis began with a presentation used to test hypotheses for the independent variables. Next, it explored the results of the hypotheses testing to assess the appropriateness of parametric testing for the study. The chapter then turned to the actual tests of hypotheses 1–10, which explored a comparison of subgroup

means to determine if they were ordered in the manner predicted by the hypotheses. Logistic regression was used to determine whether there were significant differences between the means and to determine which independent variable was the best predictor for the research question.

In this study, court legitimacy was gauged by the level of a respondent's satisfaction with their accessibility to the Court and also their level of satisfaction with how fairly they were treated by the Court. The research hypothesis that direct experience of court-users will affect their level of satisfaction with the Court is supported by the differential experience theory which explains attitudinal differences toward courts by ethnicity and race. This theory hypothesizes that people of different races and ethnicities have differing levels of satisfaction with the courts, which is largely influenced by their "distinctive experiences" with the justice system in general, and with the courts in particular (Sun & Wu, 2006, p. 458).

The potential effects of the political discourse were a major factor in selecting Maricopa County as the research setting. During the past several years Maricopa County, Arizona has been in the local and national spotlight for the alleged mistreatment and discriminatory practices toward the Hispanic/Latino population. For this reason this research set out to determine if their distinctive experiences affect their satisfaction of access and fairness with the Court.

Testing of Hypotheses

Research on state-level judicial policy is scant, often because data are not collected and when it is, the data are not made available to social science researchers.

Moreover, in an attempt to strengthen external validity, researchers turn to multistate, regional, or national level data to lend credence to their theoretical propositions. The current research acknowledges the importance of collecting a statistically significant sample, but such a sample can be collected at any level. The construct of a state or region is relative; in fact, Maricopa County is geographically larger than seven other states and ranks as the fifth largest metropolitan area in the country. Regardless, more important are the contextual detail of Maricopa County and the ability of this research to take advantage of a data set for the particular measurement of theoretical concepts. Given the contextual details of the county, the county is a microcosm of future national population trends and thus can serve as a template for others.

Individual Level Analysis

The results reported in chapter 4 did find differences in levels of satisfaction based upon year of the survey and upon one's race or ethnicity. This is observed in the descriptive analysis for accessibility to justice. The mean difference year over year for each question increased. Moreover, the median change was .90 in 2007 and .92 in 2008. The same direction was observed for the fairness of justice variable. The mean difference between 2007 and 2008 increased for four out of the five questions. The median change year over year was .86 in 2007 and .90 in 2008, but not statistically significant.

There are two important aspects of these findings to point out. First, considering the political environment identified in this study, it is surprising to find an increase in satisfaction between years. One might expect that the overall level of satisfaction would

decrease given the situation in the State and County. Secondly, the level of satisfaction for each year is high compared to what previous studies in the field have found. In other words, 90% (2007) and 92% (2008) of respondents agree and strongly agree that justice is accessible in the Superior Court of Maricopa County. Additionally, 86% (2007) and 90% of respondents agree and strongly agree that justice is fair in Superior Court of Maricopa County. But this is an extremely high level of diffuse support which has not been seen in any previously published scholarly studies regarding court satisfaction.

The results found differences in levels of satisfaction based upon one's race or ethnicity. This is observed in the descriptive analysis for accessibility to justice comparing Whites with Hispanics/Latinos. The median change in 2007 was .93 for Whites and .92 for Hispanics/Latinos. The median change in 2008 was .93 for Whites and .91 for Hispanics/Latinos. The mean difference between race or ethnicity in 2007 and 2008 was 1% and 2% respectively. The direction for the fairness of justice variable in 2007 was .93 for Whites and .92 for Hispanics/Latinos. The same 1% difference, albeit at a lower level for both, between the races was also observed in the 2008 data, .90 for Whites and .89 for Hispanics/Latinos.

There are three important aspects of these findings to point out. First, considering the political environment identified in this study, it is not surprising to find a decrease in satisfaction score between years. The satisfaction score for both Whites and Hispanics/Latinos decreased by 3% from 2007 to 2008. Secondly, the level of satisfaction for each race or ethnicity is extremely high compared to what previous studies in the field have found. In other words, in 2007, 93% of White respondents (93%

in 2008) and 92% of Hispanic/Latino respondents (91% in 2008) agreed and strongly agreed that justice is accessible in the Superior Court of Maricopa County. Additionally, in 2007, 93% of White respondents (90% in 2008) and 90% of Hispanic/Latino respondents (89% in 2008) agreed and strongly agreed that justice is fair in Superior Court of Maricopa County. Lastly, when comparing race or ethnicity year over year, the level of satisfaction regarding fairness of the Court remained the same for White respondents, yet went down for Hispanic/Latino respondents.

Ecological Level Analysis

This dissertation selected Maricopa County, Arizona for the outlier status regarding the Hispanic/Latino population. Maricopa County provided a distinct opportunity to theoretically and empirically test the research question for several reasons. Maricopa County has the fastest growing Hispanic/Latino population in the country. The Hispanic/Latino population countywide is 30% and within Phoenix it is 49%, which places the area as the fifth largest Hispanic/Latino population in the country. Lastly, the County provided a good venue because of its reputation as a civil rights backwater for Hispanics/Latinos.

The basis of this dissertation was to explore perceptions that are formed by a person's actual court experience because levels of satisfaction have been associated with institutional legitimacy. Wenzel, Bowler, and Lanoue (2003) identified four factors that affect a person's level of satisfaction toward state courts. The strongest factor is a person's actual interactional experience with the court. Secondly a person is affected by the method of judicial selection, judges are typically elected which can alienate people

through the partisan process or judges are appointed by a merit system as they are in Maricopa County. Arguably a merit based system removes the overt partisan environment that may lead to a general sense that judges are more fair and impartial. The last two factors are the effect of mass media and demographic characteristics.

This study found that demographic factors, other than gender, are not significant predictors of satisfaction with the Court. However, many studies have found minority disenchantment with the courts based on demographic factors especially amongst Blacks (Benesh & Howell, 2001; Brooks & Jeon-Slaughter, 2001; Collins, 1997; Cose, 1994; Dawson, 1994; Higgins & Jordan, 2005; Hochschild, 1995; Overby, Brown, Bruce, Smith & Winkle, 2004; Rottman & Hansen, 2001; Schuman, Steech, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997; Tyler, 2000 a, b). It was hypothesized that Hispanics/Latinos may be more sensitive to institutional discrimination given the environment in Arizona; this sensitivity would leave anyone more skeptical and possibly create a lower sense of institutional expectations. However, it seems when Hispanics/Latinos have interactional experiences with the Court their skepticism and low expectations are met with a different reality. That is, Hispanics/Latinos may be counting on the court system to be as disparaging as other institutions in Maricopa County, Arizona but come away from their experience with the Court with a positive view. The media coverage that has amplified the political discourse in the County and State has not translated into dissatisfaction with the Court amongst Hispanics/Latinos. Of course further research will need to be conducted to extend the examination through to the present. Therefore it appears that procedural

justice theory is a better explanation than differential experience theory within the context of this research.

Again, procedural justice is defined as those processes of judicial information and procedures that resolve disputes and in turn impacts the level of satisfaction regarding the fairness of the court. A major component of procedural justice is case-flow management which is the process by which courts move cases from filing to disposition. This dissertation reviewed and analyzed the available data to arrive at conclusions relating to the functioning of the Court and how that functioning/management affects perceptions of access and fairness amongst the public, particularly amongst Hispanics/Latinos.

Race or ethnicity. This study found some evidence to support the hypothesis that race or ethnicity matters, but the relationship did not hold up in the 2008 sample. As predicted Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court, than White respondents but by a small margin compared to Whites. The variable of race or ethnicity is significant and inversely related to the access to justice variable. In other words Hispanics/Latinos have lower levels of satisfaction with access to justice, but this predicted order only held true in 2007. The findings reveal high satisfaction rates for both Whites and Hispanics, 92% and 91% respectively. The Chicago study reviewed to in chapter 2 conversely found that only 28% of “minorities” had confidence in the quality of service (competence and performance) of the courts.

Regarding the fairness of justice, it was predicted that Hispanic/Latino respondents would perceive they are treated less fairly by the Court, than White respondents. This did not occur, instead it was found that in the 2007 data

Hispanics/Latinos perceived they were treated more fairly when compared with White respondents, but in 2008 this had changed and Hispanics/Latinos had lower levels of satisfaction to the idea that justice was fair. This certainly might be explained by the increased negative political discourse that Hispanics/Latinos have experienced with increasing frequency each year from 2007. But again the satisfaction rate as it was with access to justice is extremely high for both Whites and Hispanics/Latinos, 92% and 91% respectively.

The Chicago study reviewed to in chapter 2 as stated earlier found that only 47% of “minorities” believed that the court was treating them fairly. The Oakland study found that 72% of the respondents in the study indicated institutions used fair procedures and 75% indicate that they were treated fairly. The 1999 national survey found that 23% of respondents indicate a great deal of satisfaction with the courts in their community, 52% indicated some satisfaction, 17% only a little satisfaction and 8% indicated no satisfaction. Combining a “great deal of satisfaction” and “some satisfaction” the overall satisfaction score for this 1999 survey is 69%, still well below the satisfaction level found in this study.

The other studies referred to in Chapter 2, the Hearst study and the National Center for State Courts study in 2000 did not report the satisfaction rate specifically by race, but it did discover that “Hispanics/Latinos and Whites are especially likely to be affected by their judgments about the quality of the treatment that people receive from the Courts... a persons reaction to their experience is shaped largely by whether they think that they received fair treatment” (Tyler, 2001). In 2000, Warren found that 43% of

litigants and 57% of the general public felt that court procedures are “always” or “usually” fair.

Gender. This study predicted Hispanic/Latino respondents would perceive they have less access and are treated less fairly by the Court if they are male. The variable of gender is significant and positively related to both the access to justice variable and to the fairness of justice variable. That is, males tend to have lower levels of satisfaction regarding their accessibility to the Court and tend to believe they are treated less fairly as compared to females in both the 2007 and 2008 data sets. This variable was a significant predictor at the .01 level in each model except for the 2008 access to justice model. Since the survey tool did not include any indicators of ideological or partisan preference, gender is a factor that correlates strongly in their absence.

Easton (1965) established that gender has an affect on an individual’s perception of fairness and subsequently several researchers have argued that the social construction of fairness is different for men and women (Chesney-Lind, 1997; Gilligan, 1993; Hagen, 1989; Hagen, Gillis, & Simpson, 1993, Jaros & Roper, 1980; Villa, 1994). This study examined gender effects by testing whether different causal models apply to gender. This approach has support in the literature regarding the courts (Higgins & Jordan, 2005). As this study found, so did Fossati and Meeker (1997) find that a justification for court fairness was different for males and females. This is important for court management to use these findings to educate the public about court procedures and protocols that are used in the local courts especially White and Hispanic/Latino males.

Age. As predicted Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court and are treated less fairly by the Court as the age of the respondent increases. The data suggest that age is an approximate indicator of what respondents might be feeling, yet the relationship is not statistically significant but is positively related to the access to justice variable in the 2007 data set. This study found that older respondent's perceive that they have less access to the Court in both 2007 and 2008. The variable of age in 2007 was positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, older respondents had lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. However, in 2008, the relation was inversely related. That is, younger respondents had lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of fairness of justice. This is also substantiated by Sun and Wu (2006) found that, "younger citizens tend to believe that the courts discriminated against socially disadvantaged groups by treating them worse than other social groups" (p. 462).

Education. This study predicted Hispanic/Latino respondents would perceive they have less access to the Court and are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of education. The data suggest that level of education is an approximate indicator of what respondents might be feeling, yet the relationship is not statistically significant, but is positively related to both the access to justice and fairness of justice variables. This study found that respondent's with only a high school diploma perceive that they have less access to the Court and are treated less fairly by the Court as compared to respondent's with a college education in both 2007 and 2008. Other research has found mixed results, for instance Sun and Wu (2006) found that educational

background had no significant impact on perceptions of fairness by the court; however, Benesh (2006) concludes that those individuals that are highly educated will have the highest level of confidence in state courts.

Income. As predicted Hispanic/Latino respondents perceive they have less access to the Court and are treated less fairly by the Court if they have lower levels of income. The data suggest that income is an approximate indicator of what respondents might be feeling, yet the relationship is not statistically significant but it is inversely related to the access to justice variable. In other words, respondents with lower incomes relate to lower levels of satisfaction with the idea of access to justice in both 2007 and 2008. The variable of income level is positively related to the fairness of justice variable. In other words, lower incomes relate to lower levels of satisfaction to the idea of access to justice. Although this variable does not approach the traditional level of statistical significance, the coefficients for the access to justice model in both 2007 and 2008 carried negative signs and the coefficients for the fairness of justice model in both 2007 and 2008 carried positive signs. Regarding the fairness of justice, other authors have found this in their research. Brooks and Jeon-Slaughter (2001) found that respondents with family incomes at or below \$30,000 view the legal system as less fair, and respondents in the higher-income categories were very likely to hold a favorable view of the legal system.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

This study examined multiple variables derived from the Superior Court of Arizona in Maricopa County exit survey conducted in 2007 and 2008 to better determine the overall satisfaction of court-users as well as which factors were more likely to

influence access and fairness in the judicial system. The analysis not only examined the survey results by comparison of the means, but also explored the relationship between the variables utilizing logistic regression. The data was interpreted with results identifying which independent variable (primary is race or ethnicity and controlling for age, gender, income, and education) had the greatest influence on the dependent variables of access to justice and fairness of justice (Bleuenstein, 2009).

The problem that was explored in this research was perceptions regarding the level of satisfaction with access and fairness of different ethnic or racial communities' vis-à-vis state courts. While two of the subgroups (Hispanics/Latinos and gender) differed as predicted and were significant, the differences between the other subgroups did not reach statistically significant levels. It seems more plausible, given the extremely high satisfaction scores for each race or ethnicity, the lack of significance in the differences between the three subgroups happened because there is no statistical relevance related to these demographic factors when it comes to levels of satisfaction with the Court.

Conclusion for Study

This study affirms the findings of Wenzel and associates (2003) who hypothesized that Hispanics/Latinos would have a less favorable perception of the courts than other citizens, but unexpectedly they found that Hispanics/Latinos are "more positively disposed toward local courts than are their fellow citizens" (p.202). Unlike Overby's findings in Mississippi the minority population in Maricopa County are no more cynical about their treatment by the Court than Whites, in fact both Whites and

Hispanics/Latinos have very high levels of diffuse support regarding both access to, and fairness in, the Court.

The problem was identified as the lack of research in the field and this study conducted empirical tests at the state court level to determine whether race or ethnicity in the archival sample data of 2007 and 2008 was a significant predictor of court-user satisfaction. Since satisfaction is fundamentally grounded in individual level experience, this study determined that people of different races and ethnicities have differing levels of satisfaction with the courts, which is largely influenced by their “distinctive experiences” with the procedural justice in the court system.

Although the State of Arizona and the County of Maricopa have become known as a backwater for civil rights regarding the Hispanic/Latino population, the Superior Court in Maricopa County has a national reputation for excellence. During the past 5 years the Court has implemented several innovative ideas to address accessibility and fairness in the Court before and during the time period of the surveys for this study. One of these ideas was the implementation of Spanish DUI Court, a post-conviction, probation program conducted in Spanish. This program promotes accessibility to the Court by providing people with limited English proficiency access to court services.

Another forward thinking idea was the utilization of an expert to consult the Court regarding federal law requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Upon recommendations of the expert, the Court developed a handbook for Court staff to identify a customer’s spoken language in order to obtain an interpreter to help them.

The Court implemented this idea to prevent language from becoming a barrier to access and the fair administration of justice. One of the top priorities of the Court's former (2005-2010) Presiding Judge, Barbara Rodriguez Mundell was the implementation of community forums. This provided the community the opportunity to learn about the Court and for the Court to improve the perception of law and order. In addition to the community forums, access to the media was increased and for the first time the Court extended an invitation to the Hispanic media. The regular outreach meetings with the Hispanic media provided an effective way of disseminating important information about the judiciary to the Hispanic/Latino community.

Perhaps these measures and the fact that for the past 30 years judges of the Superior Court in Maricopa County have been merit-selected thereby avoiding the fray of partisan politics have fostered the high levels of satisfaction found in this study. It is interesting to point out that Arizona is one of 11 states in the Union that do not elect judges. Also, "to date, no state that has adopted a merit plan (also known as a Missouri Plan) has opted to replace it with an elective system. This fact alone, notwithstanding the empirical studies...is the best evidence that the merit system is the superior method of judicial selection" (Goldschmidt, 1994). The level of diffuse support for the Court is high, especially given the recent political discourse regarding the alleged racial profiling of law enforcement in Maricopa County. The highly positive results from this direct experience with the Court is significant. The legitimacy of our government is dependent upon the support of the people.

Social Change Implications for Practitioners

This research study has broad social implications. Given that the legitimacy of governmental institutions is linked to level of satisfaction by the public, knowing the perception of the public regarding the courts is tantamount in maintaining and securing the legitimacy of the judicial branch. The social unrest regarding immigration and the negative treatment of Hispanics/Latinos in Arizona in particular may deteriorate the high level of support currently enjoyed by the Court. The potential change in social behavior among Hispanics/Latinos has broader implications as this population increases around the country.

An objective mechanism to track social behavior is through the utilization of public satisfaction surveys. In order to measure trends in perceptions a survey needs to be conducted annually, the survey used should remain consistent in content and application each year to allow for cross-year comparisons. The value in maintaining consistency in data collection would permit courts to identify trends in the data and test whether social behavior has shifted from year to year.

Although the Court is at the national leader in improving accessibility, the Court does have opportunities to advance measures that would further improve accessibility to all court-users. One such way would be to evaluate the transparency of the dissemination of information to the public. Two very important aspects of governmental transparency is the assurance that information is clear, accessible to all, and understandable. The implementation of a transparent institution has its genesis in the education and training of judicial staff by highlighting the importance of their role in the judicial process. The

“face” of a court is the person with whom the public has direct interactional experience. This can be the Judge, but it could also be a person at the information center. Perceptions are formed by the public from any interaction and it is tantamount that judicial staff treats everyone interacting with the Court fairly and impartially.

The findings of this study have implications for the Maricopa County Superior Court and other state courts throughout the country. The findings could be used in the planning of educational opportunities for judicial officers and judicial staff. Additionally, policy decisions regarding judicial staff supervision to ensure consistency should be entertained and implemented.

Most specifically the answers given by respondents are reflective of their actual court experience and this study and previous studies have established this factor is the most important in the development of perceptions to a court. In order for actual court experiences to be meaningful and lead to positive levels of satisfaction consistency must be implemented throughout the judicial process.

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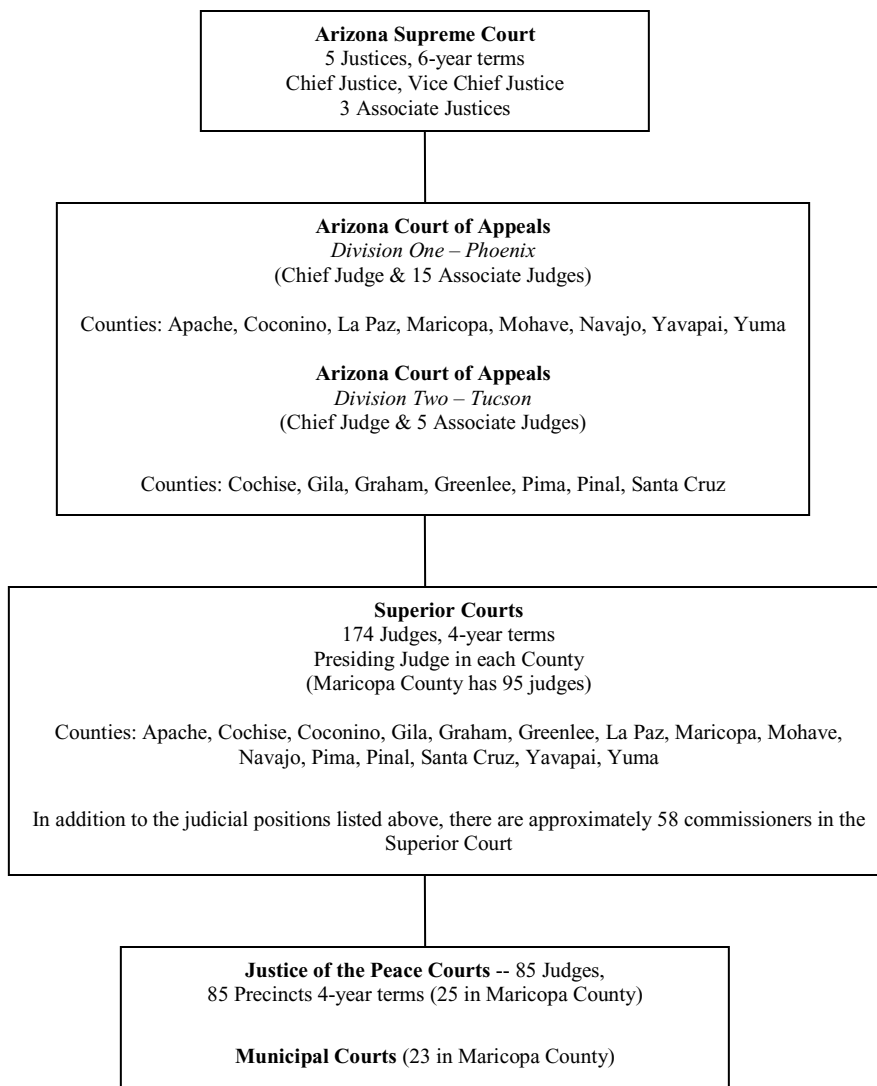
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Appendix A: Judicial Structure



Appendix B: State of Arizona by County



Appendix C: Images of Protesters in Downtown Phoenix



Appendix D: Archival Survey Form

JUDICIAL BRANCH OF MARICOPA COUNTY PUBLIC SURVEY FORM
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Section 1: Access to Justice

		Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion Not Applicable	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Finding the courthouse was easy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	The forms I needed were clear and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	I felt safe in the courthouse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	The court makes reasonable efforts to remove physical and language barriers to service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	I was able to get my court business done in a reasonable amount of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Court staff paid attention to my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	I was treated with courtesy and respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	I easily found the courtroom or office I needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	The court's Web site was useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	The court's hours of operation made it easy for me to do my business.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2: Fairness of Justice

11	The way my case was handled was fair.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	The judge listened to my side of the story before he or she made a decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	The judge had the information necessary to make good decisions about my case.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	I was treated the same as everyone else.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	As I leave the court, I know what to do next about my case.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLEASE TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF SO WE CAN SERVE YOU BETTER!

<p>A. Your GENDER</p>		
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male</p>		<p>J. YOUR ZIP CODE</p>
<p>B. YOUR PRIMARY LANGUAGE</p>		<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>		<p>ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:</p>
<p>C. YOUR AGE</p>		<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> 20 years or less <input type="checkbox"/> 21 – 35 years old <input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 51 -- 64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65 years or more</p>		<p>_____</p>
<p>D. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOU?</p>		<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic, Latino or Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>		<p>_____</p>
<p>E. YOUR EDUCATION</p>		<p>_____</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate or some high school <input type="checkbox"/> College or trade school graduate or attended some college or trade school <input type="checkbox"/> Post graduate degree or some post graduate work</p>		<p>_____</p>
<p>F. YOUR APPROXIMATE ANNUAL INCOME</p>	<p>_____</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$10,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,001 to \$20,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,001 to \$30,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,001 to \$40,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,001 to \$50,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50,001 or more</p>	<p>_____</p>	

Curriculum Vitae

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Educational Background

Walden University – Minneapolis, MN

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

School of Public Policy and Administration

The Effects of Satisfaction on the Legitimacy of State Courts: A Case Study of
Diffuse Support among Hispanics/Latinos in Maricopa County, Arizona

Degree conferred – November 2010

The National Center for State Courts – Williamsburg, VA

Court Executive Development Program

Certified Court Executive Institute for Court Management Fellow

Fellowship conferred – Washington, DC -- May 2009

- Phase I: Jury Management, Sioux Falls, SD – 2004
Court Performance Standards, Salt Lake City, UT – 2006
Human Resources Management, Salt Lake City, UT – 2006
Case Flow Management, Seattle, WA – 2005
Financial Management, Denver, CO – 2006
- Phase II: Distance Learning – February – May, 2008
Residency – Williamsburg, VA – June 9 – 27, 2008
- Phase III: Development of Thesis – August 2008 to March, 2009
- Phase IV: Presentation of Thesis and Graduation – May 2009

Kent State University – Kent, Ohio

Master of Arts in Public Policy (M.A.)

Thesis: The Moral Minority: The Role of Religious Fundamentalists in the
Passage of California's Anti-Gay Initiative Proposition 22.

Degree conferred -- August 2003

The University of Akron – Akron, Ohio

Master of Arts in Political Science (M.A.)

American Politics/Public Administration

Degree conferred -- May 1994

The University of Akron – Akron, Ohio

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (B.A.)

Major: American Government; Minor: International Policy

Ray C. Bliss Internship Program in Applied Politics

Degree conferred -- May 1991

Professional Experience

State of Arizona Judicial Branch

Superior Court in Maricopa County

Office of Court Administration – Phoenix, AZ

Deputy Criminal Court Administrator

January 14, 2008 to present

State of Arizona Judicial Branch

Superior Court in Maricopa County

Office of Court Administration – Phoenix, AZ

Special Projects Administrator

April 16, 2007 to January 11, 2008

State of North Dakota Supreme Court

Office of Court Administration – Bismarck, ND

Consultant

October 2, 2006 to December 1, 2006

State of North Dakota Judicial Branch

Northeast and Northeast Central Judicial Districts

Administrative Unit One – Grand Forks, ND

Trial Court Administrator

August 16, 2004 to October 1, 2006

Summit County Court of Common Pleas

Juvenile Division – Akron, Ohio

The Honorable Judith L. Hunter, Presiding Judge

Assistant Court Administrator

January 27, 1997 to December 31, 2002

Medina County Court of Common Pleas

Juvenile/Probate Division – Medina, Ohio

The Honorable Thomas Skidmore, Presiding Judge

Assistant Court Administrator

June 5, 1994 to March 31, 1996

Summit County Court of Common Pleas

Probate Division – Akron, Ohio
 The Honorable W. F. Spicer, Presiding Judge
 Deputy Clerk
 June 4, 1991 to June 4, 1994

*Professional Consultation**Violet's Cupboard – Akron, Ohio*

Multi-County HIV/AIDS Service Agency
 Supervisor: Erick Lear, MSSA, LISW
 Designed and administered a client satisfaction/needs assessment survey
 June 2003 to August 2003

Campaign Management – Summit County, Ohio

Managed all aspect of political campaigns: fundraising, volunteer recruitment and management, planning, calendar, speech writing, canvassing, literature design
 Management for several candidates and issues from 1990 to 2003.

*Community Service**City of Phoenix Design Review Committee – Phoenix, AZ*

Mayoral Appointment to Committee
 May 5, 2010 to present

Big Brother and Big Sisters – Phoenix, AZ

Big Brother Volunteer/Mentor
 July 2008 to present

Central City Village Planning Committee – Phoenix, AZ

Mayoral Appointment to Committee
 December 12, 2007 to present

Fire Hall Community Theatre – Grand Forks, ND

President of the Board of Directors
 August 2006 to April 2007

University of Akron – Akron, Ohio

Bliss Institute of Applied Politics
 Undergraduate Internship Mentor
 Fall 2000 and Spring 2001