Policing & Society

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

When is policing fair? Groups, identity and judgements of the procedural justice of coercive crowd policing

Journal:	*Policing & Society*
Manuscript ID	GPAS-2016-0066.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	procedural justice, social identity, policing, crowds

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Abstract

Procedural justice theory (PJT) is now a widely utilised theoretical perspective in policing research that acknowledges the centrality of police 'fairness'. Despite its widespread acceptance this paper asserts that there are conceptual limitations that emerge when applying the theory to the policing of crowd events. This paper contends that this problem with PJT is a result of specific assumptions that are highlighted using two experiments. Experiment 1 systematically manipulated the social categories used to describe crowd participants subjected to police coercion. The study demonstrates how these social categories dramatically affected participants' perceptions of the police action and that it was participants' relational identification with the police, rather than a superordinate category, that mediated the relationship between judgements of procedural fairness and intentions to cooperate. Experiment 2 then replicated and extended these findings by demonstrating how perceptions of procedural fairness are also influenced by levels of in-group identification. The paper concludes by exploring the implications of the data for reconceptualising the social psychological processes mediating these judgements and impacts of police legitimacy.

Keywords: procedural justice, social identity, policing, crowds

Total word count: 10,281

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Introduction

The literature underpinning procedural justice theory (PJT), particularly in its group engagement model (GEM: Tyler and Blader 2000, 2003, Blader and Tyler 2009) form, acknowledges that social identity processes are a key psychological mediator between perceptions of procedural fairness, cooperation with the police and obedience with the law (Tyler 1990, 2006, Tyler *et al.* 2015). In other words, people 'self-regulate' because of a perception that criminal justice processes are fair or legitimate (Tyler 2009). According to this PJT account 'procedurally fair' policing creates 'self-regulation' because it impacts upon a specific underlying social psychological process, namely inclusion and status in a superordinate social category (e.g., the benevolent nation state) of which the police are assumed to be prototypical representatives (Sunshine and Tyler 2003). This in turn is assumed to encourage people to internalise and legitimise the positive values associated with membership of this superordinate category, thus engendering cooperation and compliance with its representatives (i.e., the police). Conversely, 'procedurally unfair' policing indicates exclusion and alienation from this superordinate category leading to a sense of rejection and lower levels of compliance and cooperation with the group authority's directives (e.g., XXXX 2014, XXXX *et al*. 2015, Murphy *et al.* 2015).

According to this account, one reason why police procedural fairness is important to those being policed is that policing is 'identity relevant' and can alter subjective relationships with the powerful social categories the police are assumed to represent. This idea finds significant empirical support in the literature. In cross-sectional (Huo 2003, XXXX 2014, XXXX *et al.* 2015) and panel studies (XXXX *et al*. 2014), variation in

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perceptions of police procedural fairness and legitimacy has consistently been found to be associated with variation in affiliation with superordinate social categories of nation, citizenship and community. These findings resonate with a wider procedural justice literature beyond the policing context. For example, Huo *et al.* (1996) reported that employees who highly identified with their organisation placed greater emphasis on whether or not their supervisor was 'procedurally fair' than did employees who demonstrated weaker levels of identification. We suggest, however, that PJT's theoretical account of social identity processes is limited in a number of important ways.

First, implicit within much current research is the idea that procedural fairness is a universal and ontological precursor to social identification, somehow distinct from the dynamic social contexts within which those judgements are made (Lipponen *et al.* 2011). PJT research is premised on the idea that people find the police more or less fair depending on the way officers behave, but the contextual frame against which these judgements are made appears, implicitly at least, as broadly constant. As Waddington *et al.* (2015) put it there is an underlying assumption of "*a coherent unitary, public standard of what is acceptable and satisfactory in police conduct*" (p.1). In contrast, Haslam *et al.* (2010) argue that rules governing 'fairness' are not universal but relative in that they can be radically altered as a consequence of group membership such that fairness *"…is for our own moral community, for 'people like us'. Outside this, the rules are likely to change — if they apply at all*" (p. 120).

Second, and relatedly, it is assumed procedural fairness encourages shared group membership. However, as the above quotation implies, fairness may have to do more than simply be representative *of* 'us'; police activity may also need to be *identity*

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advancing or 'doing it *for* us' (Steffens *et al.* 2014). For example, Haslam *et al.* (2010) show that leaders are often endorsed when they exhibit fairness; however, they are equally rewarded for being *unfair* (e.g., in-group favouring) when their actions are seen as promoting the group's interest within the specific context in question. Thus, as PJT scholars have argued elsewhere, there is a pressing need to explore how social identification and the specific social context impacts on the 'boundaries' and nature of procedural fairness judgements (e.g., Jackson *et al.* 2015) and the outcomes of such judgements (Mazerolle *et al.* 2014).

Third, the prototypicality of the police as members of a nation state or community is often assumed but not measured despite this being a key feature of the PJT account (e.g., see XXXX *et al.*, 2015, p.6). An exception to this is Sunshine and Tyler (2003), who examined the extent to which the police were prototypical of the 'community's' moral values. However, this measure is operationalised with items that tend to treat prototypically as a relatively fixed expression of shared morals and values. Such an approach neglects the idea that the prototypical morals and values of a social group change from one social context to another (Turner *et al.* 1987, Turner *et al.* 1994). Moreover, it is now widely acknowledged that identity prototypicality is broader than being merely representative of fixed moral values, since it can also be dynamic, context specific and ideological in nature (e.g., Turner *et al.* 1987).

Fourth, the measurement of social identification in PJT research has tended to use items relating to the superordinate category the police are seen to embody (e.g., XXXX 2014, XXXX *et al.* 2014, Sargeant *et al.* 2014, Madon *et al.* 2016). Previous work has therefore largely ignored what we will refer to as *relational identification*, in other words,

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the extent to which those being policed identify with the police as a social category in their own right. This is important because there is evidence to suggest that relational social identification with the police is a salient aspect of people's perceptions of the legitimacy of policing, particularly in the context of the policing of violent crowd events (e.g., XXXX *et al.* 2008).

Taken together these issues suggest that perceptions of procedural fairness should not be viewed as independent from the identities of those making the judgements and the social contexts within which they occur. Moreover, to be seen as 'fair' the police may actively have to facilitate the shared group interests of that specific identity as defined by a given social context. In other words, for the police to be viewed as 'procedurally fair' in the eyes of 'the policed' their actions may have to capture the contextually defined prototypical dimensions of a shared relational social category. In this respect PJT research appears potentially limited in its theoretical conceptualisation of underlying social psychological processes. Therefore, we agree with Bottoms and Tankebe's (2012, p. 119) analysis that within PJT research *"…adequate theorisation has lagged behind empirical evidence*".

Finally, we also note that much extant PJT research in policing has been concerned, implicitly or explicitly, with the personal experiences of individuals at the hands of individual or small groups of police officers (c.f., Smith 2007). Indeed, it is probably fair to say that the underlying conceptual model is of a dyad within which one party (the police officer) has considerably more power than the other (the 'citizen'). However, many encounters between police and public, particularly in the context of crowd events, have a quite different form – most notably, in terms of the experiments

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reported here, people experiencing policing may do so not as an individual but as a member of a social category such as a protestor, football fan or as a broadly disinterested observer of the policing of others within a crowd. In all such cases, however, they are still likely to make judgements about the fairness of police actions, legitimacy, and so on, judgements that may have a profound impact on their subsequent actions (e.g., Reicher 1984, 1996, XXXX 2000, XXXX *et al.* 2001, Maguire *et al.* 2016).

The present study

Despite the centrality of these theoretical issues to PJT, there has been to date a relative paucity of simple experimental evidence testing the proposition that social categorisation and social context have important and far-reaching impacts upon judgements of procedural fairness. Drawing on Tyler's (2011) proposals regarding 'motive based trust', Waddington *et al.* (2015) point out that perceptions of police legitimacy are not bound within 'incident specific' encounters but are dramatically affected by "*the prior history of a person's relationship with the police*" (p. 3). Moreover, their qualitative study used focus groups to explore participants' interpretations of video footage of 'real life' police encounters with the public. The approach was able to demonstrate the divergent and contradictory ways in which the participants evaluated the same interactions leading them to conclude, "*there is no simple recipe for winning legitimacy*" (p. 1).

However, like much of PJT research, Waddington *et al.* imply a model of these historical relations that is interpersonal, and suggest that historical relations operate at the level of direct individual experiences. Their research approach does not formally examine

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the idea that category membership and historical inter-group relations can also be fundamentally important. As such their study was unable to explore the extent to which evaluations of police fairness varied as a function of social categorisation or the extent to which such judgements were systematically affected by underlying processes of relational identification with the police rather than identification with a superordinate social category.

In this study we aim to address these limitations by using an experimental paradigm to directly test the idea that the category membership of 'the policed' will be associated with differing perceptions among onlookers of the same policing incidents. Drawing from our discussion above we predict that judgements of procedural fairness will vary as a function of social categorisation. More specifically, police coercion against those perceived as an ideological out-group, those deemed outside the boundaries of 'our' community, will be justified and endorsed more so than aggression against in-group members or a 'neutral' out-group. Moreover, we sought to explore the GEM's key 'social identity mediation hypothesis' (Blader and Tyler 2009) to assess the extent to which judgments of social identification mediate the link between procedural fairness and cooperation whilst controlling for people's perceptions of police legitimacy.

Experiment 1

Method

Reflecting our general background interest in issues of procedural fairness with respect to the policing of crowd events, Experiment 1 explored our ideas using a 1 x 3 between-participants design capable of examining perceptions of the policing of a protest

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event. Within this we showed participants the same video footage of a charge by police on horseback into a group of otherwise peaceful protestors. As with Waddington *et al.* (2015) the video selected was chosen to provoke dissension among the participants. To create our experimental conditions we systematically manipulated the social category used to describe the protestors. We measured participant's perceptions of procedural fairness, police legitimacy, social identifications and intentions to cooperate with the police.

The video

The video was taken directly from a BBC News report depicting an actual confrontation between police and protestors at a student fees protest in central London in 2010[1]. The 27-second video showed police on horseback charging into a group of protestors causing them to disperse. Following the charge the protestors become agitated and throw missiles at the police. The video was filmed from an elevated vantage point looking down upon both the police and the protestors. This was advantageous as the exact nature of the protest and demonstration was ambiguous. Therefore we were able to manipulate the protestors' social category membership while presenting a standardised video of police-protestor interaction for each condition.

Design

[1] Whilst it is possible that participants may have recognised the footage, it is unlikely due to the lack of specific contextual clues, the elevated vantage point and the fact that the footage was broadcast four years prior to the experiment. In any case such recognition is likely to have been evenly distributed across conditions and so should not have exerted any systematic bias to the data. Link to the video used: https://youtu.be/TCdlZ6MsbPU

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The experiment was conducted online and hosted by "Bristol Online Surveys". The social category used to describe the protestors created three levels: the 'Trade Union Congress' (TUC); the 'English Defence League' (EDL); and the 'National Union of Students' (NUS). Our expectation was that the bulk of our participants would be students. In this respect, the EDL were chosen on the assumption that our participants were likely to perceive this social category as an ideological out-group. The TUC were chosen as a potential 'neutral' out-group with the NUS being a potential in-group. For the subsequent mediation analysis, we merged the groups and analysed the sample as a whole.

Participants

There were 103 participants who responded to an advertisement via social media and the "Call for Participants" website[2]. They were divided randomly via an online link generator between the three experimental conditions (34 EDL, 35 NUS, 34 TUC). The mean age of participants was 34 (SD = 12.10) with 57.3% being female (n = 59) and 42.7% being male (n = 44). Our expectation was that the bulk of our participants would be students. We therefore included three categories to allow for differential levels of in-group identification. However, we did not record participants' occupational affiliation. Given the mean age of the participants (34), and the fact that the NUS condition did not report higher identification with this occupational category, it seems plausible that this expectation was not borne out in the sample. However, we were interested merely in the impact of variability of categorisation on participant's perceptions police coercion. Therefore the critical manipulation relates to the operationalisation of an ideological

[2] https://www.callforparticipants.com

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'outgroup', which was achieved using this design. To this end, we did measure participant's political affiliations with the single item "*Where would you place yourself on a scale of political views from extremely left-wing to extremely right-wing?*" (adapted from Braga *et al.* 2014). Using a 7-point response scale, from "extremely left-wing" (1) to "extremely right-wing" (7), participants on average identified their political orientation as "slightly left-wing" (M = 3.32, SD = 1.38).

Variables

Independent Variable

The independent variable was operationalised via a prior written description of the video clip. Thus those in the EDL condition were provided with the following description:

> *The English Defence League (EDL) is a far-right street protest movement that focuses on opposition to what its members consider to be the spread of Islamism and Sharia Law in the United Kingdom.*

Accordingly, those participants in the NUS condition were provided with the following description:

> *The National Union of Students (NUS) is a confederation of students' unions in the United Kingdom. NUS' mission is to promote, defend and extend the rights of students by providing them with a collective voice. Around 600 students' unions are in membership, accounting for more than 95 per cent of all higher and further education unions in the UK.*

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Finally, for the TUC condition participants were provided with the following description:

> *The Trades Union Congress (TUC) is a national trade union centre, a federation of trade unions in England and Wales. The TUC lobbies the Government to implement policies that will benefit people at work and campaigns on economic and social issues.*

As far as was possible, the text was standardised across all three conditions. As such, the remaining description in each condition was identical except for the reference to the relevant group's name.

> *The [social category] organised a march of thousands of their members in central London in December 2010. The footage you are about to see is of events that took place on this march in Victoria Street, central London. After the event shown in the video, the [social category] maintained that their intentions were peaceful and asserted that their actions were in response to a heavy-handed and disproportionate police intervention.*

Manipulation Checks

All questionnaire items used 7-point Likert-type response scales, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7). Thus, higher numbers indicated greater endorsement (e.g., that the police were perceived as more fair, more legitimate etc.). Manipulation checks included three items on the participants' levels of relational identification with the protestors, adapted from Postmes *et al.* (2013) and Crisp *et al.* (2007), namely, "*I identified with the protestors in the video"*, "*I felt a sense of solidarity with the protestors in the video*", and "*I felt similar to the protestors in the video"*. These

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items were combined to create a composite scale (α = .95).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables included three items on procedural justice that were adapted from Gau (2014) and combined into a composite scale (e.g., "*The police in the video treated the protestors with respect*"; α = .83). In line with previous research, we measured police legitimacy as a felt obligation to obey the police. Four items were adapted from Tyler and Jackson (2014) and were combined into a composite scale (e.g., "*I would have supported the decisions of the police in the video even if I disagreed with them*"; α = .90). Relational identification with the police was measured with adapted versions of the three-item measure of relational identification with the protestors described above but replacing the words "the protestors" with "the police". These were combined to create a composite scale (α = .96). Participants' general levels of community identification were measured with adapted versions of the same three items (e.g., *"I feel a sense of solidarity with people in my community"*; α = .94). One-item measures adapted from Steffens *et al.* (2014) assessed the perceived community identity prototypicality (i.e. "*The police in the video acted as model members of my community*") and the perceived community identity advancement of police action (i.e. "*The police in the video acted as champions for my community*"). Finally, a four-item measure of intention to cooperate with the police was adapted from Mazerolle *et al.* (2013); e.g., "*If I was in the situation portrayed in the video I would willingly assist the police if asked*" (α = .92).

Baseline Control Variables

The baseline control variables were adapted versions of the above questionnaire

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scales to capture participants' general perceptions of the police. For example, "*In general, the police treat people with respect*" rather than "*The police in the video treated the protestors with respect*". These were measured before the video and were statistically controlled for to balance any baseline perceptual differences between participants in the three experimental groups.

Procedure

Once logged into the website, participants were provided with standardised information about the study and the nature of their participation in it. If they agreed to take part they completed the first questionnaire that focused on participants' general perceptions of policing (baseline control variables). Following this, participants were presented with the written description of the video appropriate to their experimental condition before then watching the same 27-second video. After this, they were asked to fill out a second questionnaire that measured the same variables as the first questionnaire, but the items this time related specifically to the context of the video they had just viewed (dependent measures). Finally, participants were thanked for their time and fully debriefed.

Results

Manipulation Checks

First, we sought to confirm if we had successfully created a psychological outgroup with regards to the levels of relational identification between our participants and the protestors portrayed in the video. On average, the participants' levels of relational identification with the protestors were lower in the EDL condition (M = 2.30, SE = .22)

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compared to the TUC condition (M = 3.96, SE = .23) and in particular the NUS condition (M = 4.12, SE = .22). A one-way between-participants Analysis of Co-Variance (ANCOVA), controlling for participants' general orientation towards political protestors as a social category, confirmed that these group differences were highly significant, $F(2, 99) = 20.49$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .30$. Planned contrasts revealed that compared to the EDL condition, participants identified with the protestors significantly more so in the TUC condition ($t = 5.22$, $p < .001$) and the NUS condition ($t = 5.82$, $p < .001$). We can therefore be confident that participants perceived the EDL as a psychological out-group and that as such our manipulation was effective. However, counter to our expectations the mean ratings indicated that the TUC and NUS were considered in more 'neutral' terms rather than being perceived as a genuine in-group or out-group.

Group manipulation effects

Descriptive statistics and ANCOVA results for Experiment 1 are presented in Table 1. A series of ANCOVAs were undertaken where the corresponding general measure (i.e. pre-video) was entered into the analysis as a control variable[3]. Any significant main effects were followed up by planned contrasts in order to explore whether or not those in the EDL condition ('the policed' as an out-group) perceived the video significantly differently compared to those in the TUC and NUS conditions ('the

[3] Our rationale for using ANCOVAs to analyse the data were twofold. Firstly, despite our random assignment, baseline measures of police legitimacy, $F(2, 100) = 4.66$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, police community identity prototypicality, $F(2, 100) = 5.63$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, and police community identity advancement, $F(2, 100) = 6.58$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .12$, were significantly different between conditions. Secondly, by maintaining baseline perceptions at a constant we can be more certain that any main effects were due to our manipulation. An exception was our community identification measure, where we analysed group differences using an ANOVA. Due to the abstract nature of this measure, we were, in a sense, already measuring people's baseline views and so this was entered as the dependent variable with no baseline equivalent included as a control variable.

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policed' as 'neutral out-group' or 'in-group').

[INSERT TABLE 1]

As Table 1 shows, after controlling for general views, there was still a significant main effect of the category on perceptions of procedural fairness of the police, $F(2, 99) = 7.72$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$. Planned contrasts revealed that participants perceived the coercion of the police to be significantly more 'procedurally fair' when the protestors were a psychological out-group (EDL) compared to the NUS ($t = -2.84$, $p < .01$) and the TUC conditions ($t = -3.78$, $p < .001$).

We also found a main effect of the category on relational identification with the police, $F(2, 99) = 4.21$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Planned contrasts revealed that those in the EDL condition identified with the police significantly more compared to both the NUS ($t = -2.08$, $p < .05$) and the TUC conditions ($t = -2.78$, $p < .01$).

There was also a significant main effect of category, $F(2,99) = 6.34$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, regarding perceived community prototypicality of the police, significantly more so in the EDL condition compared to the TUC condition ($t = -3.56$, $p < .01$). The difference between the EDL and the NUS condition was approaching significance ($t = -1.78$, $p = .08$).

Finally there was also a significant main effect of category upon police community advancement, $F(2,99) = 6.28$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. Planned contrasts suggested that the participants felt that that the police were advancing their community's' interests significantly more so in the EDL condition compared to the TUC condition ($t = -3.54$, $p < .01$). However, the contrast between the EDL and the NUS condition was not significant

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(t = -1.64, p = .10).

However, despite following the same pattern of means, there were no significant main effects of category on perceived police legitimacy, $F(2, 99) = 1.78$, $p = .17$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, nor community identification $F(2, 100) = .05$, $p = .95$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$, nor intention to cooperate with the police, $F(2, 99) = 2.04$, $p = .14$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$.

Mediation analyses

A parallel mediation analysis conducted using ordinary least squares path analysis (Hayes 2013) was undertaken to assess whether the relationship between procedural fairness and intentions to cooperate with the police was mediated by relational identification with the police and/or community identification. This was conducted using the Process macro with SPSS[4]. Previous work has often found that perceptions of police legitimacy are a key variable in the relationship between fairness and cooperation. Since we were primarily interested in exploring the impact of social identification, we chose to statistically control for people's views of police legitimacy rather than including it as an additional outcome measure. The results are shown in Figure 1.

[INSERT FIGURE 1]

As expected there was a positive and significant direct effect of procedural fairness on people's behavioural intentions to cooperate with the police, b = .34, t = 2.67, $p < .01$. However, this relationship became non-significant when our measures of social identification were added into the equation, b = .11, t = .75, p = .45. Relational identification with the police was in turn significantly and positively related to both

[4] For further details on the process macro see: http://processmacro.org/index.html

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procedural fairness, b = .74, t = 6.36, p < .0001, and behavioural intentions to cooperate with the police, b = .34, t = 3.49, p < .001. A Sobel test showed that relational identification with the police was a significant mediator of the association between procedural fairness and cooperation, b = .25, Z = 2.95, p < .01. In contrast, community identification was not significantly related to procedural fairness, b = .10, t = .65, p = .51. However, levels of community identification were significantly and negatively related to cooperation, b = -.19, t = -2.21, p < .05. A Sobel test[5] confirmed that community identification did not mediate the relationship between fairness and cooperation, b = -.02, Z = -.58, p = .56.

Discussion

By manipulating the social categories used to describe protestors we were able to systematically compare how coercive police actions against an 'out-group' were evaluated compared to identical actions against more 'neutrally' defined groups. As we expected, judgements of the same policing incident varied according to social categorisation. Indeed, there were also significant differences in the perceptions of procedural fairness, relational identification with the police, police community identity prototypicality and advancement.

Moreover, whilst there were no overall group differences in behavioural intentions to cooperate with the police, perceptions of fairness and relational

[5] We acknowledge that some researchers argue that alternative methods such as constructing bootstrap confidence intervals is preferable to the use of Sobel tests for assessing the significance of indirect effects, especially with small sample sizes. If the bootstrap confidence intervals do not contain zero then we can be confident that the indirect effect is significant (Preacher and Hayes 2004). Bootstrap confidence intervals using 1,000 bootstrap samples confirmed the significant indirect effect of relational identification with the police [.11 to .51] and that the indirect effect of community identification was not significant [-.11 to .03].

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identification with the police were found to have important consequences for encouraging such intentions. Research does suggest that social identity mediates the link between procedural justice and cooperation with the police (e.g., XXXX 2014). However, we noted that previous studies in a policing context have relied on measures of an assumed superordinate social identity (e.g., law-abiding 'citizen' or 'community'). Here, we report that it was people's judgements of relational identification with the police rather than levels of community identification that mediated the link between procedural fairness and cooperation, although unlike previous studies we did not specify which 'community' was at stake but left it to respondents to give meaning to the term and define who the people in this community were.

Overall then, Experiment 1 does provide support for our argument that some the assumptions made and implied in the PJT research literature are problematic because our data points to the importance of social categorisation when exploring people's perceptions of policing. Moreover, 'fairness' judgements varied as a function of who was being policed, such that 'unfair' policing in one context was seen as more 'fair' in another, particularly when such police coercion was understood to be identity advancing. Additionally, our data suggest that people more or less identify with the police as a distinct social group rather than a superordinate category per se, and that these judgements are a potentially important psychological mediator encouraging 'self-regulation'. A surprising finding was that community identification was significantly and negatively correlated with intentions to cooperate with the police. A speculative explanation of this finding would be that some of those who identified strongly with their community may have also felt that the police were not representing or acting in line with

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community values and so were less inclined to express intentions to cooperate with them.

However, despite these insights, Experiment 1 does have important limitations. First, although we systematically varied the group membership of 'the policed' we were only successful in creating a psychological 'out-group' but not necessarily an 'in-group'. Therefore, we were unable to compare perceptions of police coercion against 'us' (an in-group social category) relative to 'them' (an out-group social category). Finally, Experiment 1 only explored these issues in relation to the policing of a specific protest, the issues surrounding which the observers may have had little if any direct engagement with. Future research could address these limitations by drawing on different groups in contrasting social and historical contexts. In so doing, one might create greater levels of psychological engagement with the categories employed and demonstrate how differing intergroup relationships affect these underlying social psychological processes. We therefore turn to Experiment 2 which sought to address these limitations. Based on the findings and discussion above, we predicted that police coercion would be rated more positively if 'the policed' are a psychological out-group relative to the same incident involving a psychological in-group. Moreover, we also predicted that it would again be perceptions of relational identification with the police rather than community identification that would mediate any link between procedural fairness and intentions to cooperate with the police.

Experiment 2

Method

For Experiment 2 we sought to utilise existing social categories with a strong

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historical antagonism. To do so, we used the context of the policing of a football ('soccer') match within the UK. Specifically, we showed participants identical video footage of a confrontation between police and a group of fans of Newcastle United Football Club. As in football and other team sports elsewhere, football fans in the UK are strongly partisan, and moreover there are fierce local rivalries between the fans of clubs based in the same part of the country. To create our conditions we recruited supporters of Newcastle United Football Club (in-group) and their local rivals Sunderland Association Football Club (out-group)[6]. After they had watched the video, we assessed the fans' views via a questionnaire.

The video

The video depicted an actual confrontation between police and Newcastle United fans and police that took place on 14th April 2013[7]. The incident happened in Newcastle-upon-Tyne after a football match between the two clubs. The video showed police on horseback charging into a group of Newcastle United fans causing them to disperse. Following this, the video showed a group of Newcastle United fans charging towards police lines including police on horseback and officers on foot. After this, police on horseback again attempted to push the fans back. However, one fan stood his ground and appeared to attack a police horse. He was swiftly grappled to the floor by a police officer. The video then shows a stand-off between police and the fans gathered. A firework or other similar device is thrown from the crowd and explodes with a loud bang. This is

[6] Newcastle United and Sunderland fans have a long-standing and intense footballing rivalry based, in part, on the proximity of the two cities in the North East of England.

[7] Link to the video used: https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=63&v=xUhwn8R7Je4

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seen to embolden the group with antagonistic chants directed towards the police who now have a number of police dogs at the scene. The video then depicts the police again charging at a group of fans with both police officers on horseback and some on foot. Some police officers can be seen physically pushing slow-moving fans down the road.

Design

Following Experiment 1, Experiment 2 was again conducted online and hosted by Bristol Online Surveys. A simple 1 x 2 between-participants design was used with multiple dependent variables designed to measure perceptions of procedural fairness, police legitimacy, social identification and intentions to cooperate with the police. The between-participants variable was the football team that the participants supported. There were two levels: Newcastle United fans (in-group condition) and Sunderland fans (out-group condition). Again, for the mediation analysis reported below, we collapsed the groups and assessed the sample as a whole.

Participants

There were 142 participants of whom 72 self-identified as Newcastle United supporters and 70 as Sunderland fans. Two Sunderland fans left the vast majority of the questions blank and so they were excluded. Therefore, 140 participants were included for further analysis (72 Newcastle fans; 68 Sunderland fans). Participants of both fan groups were recruited via advertisements on online social media outlets (e.g., fan Facebook pages and Twitter accounts). Demographic information for both groups is provided in Table 2.

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[INSERT TABLE 2]

Measures

Manipulation Checks

Manipulation checks included four questions on the participants' levels of relational identification with the Newcastle United fans in a general sense (e.g., "*In general, I feel a sense of solidarity with Newcastle United fans*", *"In general, I feel committed to Newcastle United"*). These items (adapted from Crisp *et al.* 2007, Postmes *et al.* 2013) were combined to create a composite scale (α = .95).

Dependent Variables

All dependent variables included multiple items that were combined to create composite scales. The same three questions from Experiment 1 (adapted from Gau 2014) assessed procedural fairness with one additional item: "*The police in the video made decisions about how to handle problems in fair ways*" (α = .85). As in Experiment 1 we measured police legitimacy with four items (adapted from Tyler and Jackson 2014) that assessed participants' felt obligation to obey the police (α = .76). The three-item measure of relational identification with the police from Experiment 1 was used (α = .95). Participants' general levels of community identification were measured with adapted versions of the same three items from Experiment 1 (α = .94). Four items (adapted from Steffens *et al.* 2014) measured police community identity prototypicality (α = .97). Four items (also from Steffens *et al.* 2014) assessed police community identity advancement (α = .93). Finally, the same four-item measure of intention to cooperate with the police was adapted from Experiment 1 (α = .91).

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Procedure

Once logged into the website, participants were provided with standardised information about the study and the nature of their participation in it. If they agreed to take part they then watched the video. After the video, the participants then completed a questionnaire containing the measures outlined above. Finally, participants were then thanked for their time and fully debriefed.

Results

Manipulation Checks

Firstly, we sought to confirm if we had successfully created a psychological in-group and out-group. As expected, an independent samples *t*-test confirmed that Newcastle United fans perceived Newcastle United as a psychological in-group (M = 6.23, SD = .83) whereas Sunderland fans perceived Newcastle United as a psychological out-group (M = 2.18, SD = 1.06), $t(138) = 24.96$, $p = < .001$.

Group membership effects

Descriptive statistics and *t*-test results are presented in Table 3. With regards to procedural fairness, on average, there were significant differences between the two conditions with the out-group condition viewing the same coercive police action as significantly more procedurally fair compared to those in the in-group condition, $t(138) = 5.86$, $p < .001$, $d = .99$. As Table 3 shows, this trend was repeated for all our dependent variables except for judgements of police legitimacy and community identification where there were no significant differences between the conditions.

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[INSERT TABLE 3]

Mediation Analysis

As Figure 2. suggests, the results broadly replicate those found in Experiment 1. Thus, there was a direct effect of procedural fairness on people's behavioural intentions to cooperate with the police, b = .28, t = 3.73, p < .001. However, this effect became non-significant when our measures of social identification were added into the analysis, b = .07, t = .79, p = .43. Procedural fairness was positively and significantly related to relational identification with the police, b = .62, t = 8.78, p < .0001, which, in turn, was significantly and positively related to behavioural intentions to cooperate with the police, b = .32, t = 3.73, p < .001. A Sobel test showed that relational identification with the police was a significant mediator of the association between procedural fairness and cooperation, b = .20, Z = 3.42, p < .001. Again in contrast, community identification was not significantly related to procedural fairness, b = .08, t = 1.08, p = .28. However, unlike Experiment 1, community identification was not significantly related to cooperation, b = .12, t = 1.43, p = .15. A Sobel test[8] confirmed that community identification did not mediate the relationship between fairness and cooperation, b = .01, Z = .76, p = .45.

[INSERT FIGURE 2]

Discussion

Our goal in Experiment 2 was to replicate and extend Experiment 1 by comparing perceptions of police coercion in a different context against 'us' relative to 'them'. We did this by using existing social categories in the context of policing football. Here we

[8] Bootstrap confidence intervals using 1,000 bootstrap samples again confirmed the significant indirect effect of relational identification with the police [.06 to .33] and that the indirect effect of community identification was not significant [-.01 to .05].

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showed the same real-life confrontation between Newcastle United fans and the police to both Newcastle United fans and fans of their local rivals Sunderland. We predicted that police coercion would be perceived more positively if 'the policed' were an out-group compared to ratings of the same incident by people who viewed 'the policed' as a psychological in-group. Here we present data that suggested this was consistently the case. Across all but two of our measures (perceived police legitimacy and community identification), those who viewed 'the policed' as an out-group tended to rate the same coercive police action more positively than those who viewed 'the policed' as an in-group.

However, while our design allowed for the investigation of the impact that social categorisation has on participant's perceptions of a police-crowd confrontation, there were some important design limitations. For example, we did not to collect baseline data in order to prevent the questionnaire becoming too burdensome. It is feasible that the two fan groups may have differed systematically in terms of their 'general' views and/or relationships with the police. It is possible that Newcastle United supporters therefore have a more negative 'general' orientation towards the police than did the Sunderland supporters and that this fed into their views of the specific incident depicted in the video. However, given the two clubs are policed by the same police force and the two cities are only a few miles apart it seems unlikely that there is any systematic variation in the populations' historical inter-group relationships with or experiences and views of the police.

Yet with these important limitations in mind, the results do support and extend Experiment 1's findings that social categorisation and the broader intergroup context can

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affect the way in which policing is judged. Indeed, Experiment 2 suggests that police coercion is more likely to be endorsed if it is against a psychological out-group ('them') rather than an in-group ('us') (c.f., Harkin 2015). Moreover, Experiment 2 also replicates the finding that judgements of relational identification with the police rather than community identification that mediate the relationship between fairness and cooperation.

General discussion

Here we have introduced an experimental paradigm based on Waddington et al.'s (2015) qualitative exploration of how participants judged the same police-public encounter. Our intentions were twofold. First, we sought to systematically explore the extent to which judgements of procedural fairness, social identity, legitimacy and intentions to cooperate with the police regarding the same police-public encounter differed as a function of social categorisation. Second, we sought to explore the GEM's social identity mediation hypothesis building on previous work by including a novel measure of relational identification with the police as well as levels of community identification.

With respect to our first objective, the two studies presented here demonstrate that social categorisation and the intergroup context have profound effects on the perceptions of the same coercive police behaviour. Our findings provide initial experimental support for the idea that ostensibly 'unfair' policing might be more readily endorsed if 'the policed' are perceived as an out-group (c.f., Harkin 2015). The implication of this for PJT is that judgements of procedural fairness should not be assumed against a background "*coherent, unitary public standard of what is acceptable and satisfactory police conduct*"

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(Waddington et al. 2015, p. 212). Rather, our results suggest the situational contingency of what constitutes 'fairness', certainly in the context of policing crowd events. Since police procedural fairness has been found to be the key antecedent to police legitimacy (Tyler 1990, 2006), our results suggest that there is no universal or prescribed pathway to legitimacy for the police independently of the dynamic social contextual situations within which those judgements take place (c.f., Herbert 2006, Waddington *et al.* 2015).

Meares *et al.* (2014) make the distinction between the 'objective' lawfulness of police conduct as defined by constitutional law and people's actual perceptions of its lawfulness. Our analysis, like Waddington *et al.*'s (2015), suggest that there is a similar gap between ostensibly normative structures of 'procedural fairness' as defined by theory (i.e., the four components of neutrality, trustworthy motives, dignity and respect, and voice: Meares *et al.* 2014) and people's subjective perceptions of procedural fairness within the relative social and historical context. This is in concordance with Leventhal's (1980, p.32) assertion that people will apply *"…procedural rules selectively and follow different rules at different times*".

Moreover, our results suggesting that relational identification with the police changed as a function of the broader intergroup context is consistent with previous work on the nature of the emergence of collective violence in crowd events (e.g., XXXX 2000). Such work therefore points to the idea that PJT would be enhanced by exploring issues of identity and self regulation in more dynamic and fluid contextual terms, rather than simply measuring identification with the police in the relatively stable expressions of community or national superordinate identity (XXXX *et al.* 2011). This point is underlined by the corresponding finding that peoples' perceptions of police community

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prototypicality and whether or not they were seen to be acting for this community varied flexibly according to categorisation and intergroup context.

That being said, attention must be drawn to the findings in both experiments that perceptions of police legitimacy did not vary by social categorisation as expected. We chose to operationalise perceived police legitimacy by using existing measures widely utilised in PJT research that capture people's felt obligation to obey. Whilst this measure has been associated with important behavioural outcomes (e.g., cooperation and compliance), it remains the case that police legitimacy is an unobservable psychological construct with contested meaning. As Jackson and Kuha (2015) make clear, there is a gap between psychological constructs and measures of 'police legitimacy'. This reflects the way in which we, as researchers, go about exploring public perceptions of policing. By using quantitative methodology we necessarily have to, a priori, define what 'police legitimacy' is; we have to turn it into a psychological 'thing' in order for us to be able to measure it (Billig 2011).

It is possible that our measure may have only partially captured people's views of police (il)legitimacy, hence why perceptions did not change in our study relative to categorisation and context. For example, it is now commonly argued that perceptions of legitimacy include a moral component that references the extent to which people believe the police share and act on moral norms and values that are close to their own (c.f., Tyler and Jackson 2013). Yet, it could be argued that questions designed to measure moral alignment with the police (e.g., "*The values of most police officers are very similar to my own*"; Sunshine and Tyler 2003) indicate a perception (or not) of identity alignment with the police as well as being an indicator of (il)legitimacy. Whilst outside the parameters of

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this paper, future work should seek to explore this relationship. Perceptions of relational identification with the police as a distinct social group and a sense of moral solidarity with the police – as a 'component' of legitimacy – may be mutually constitutive (c.f., Turner and Reynolds 2010), and may even collapse into one another.

Moving on to our second aim, in both studies we report that community identification did not mediate the relationship between procedural fairness and cooperation. Moreover, community identification did not vary according to categorisation. Prior research within a PJT framework has tended to treat social categories in these relatively fixed sociological terms (c.f., Murphy *et al.* 2015). It is one thing for a person to acknowledge that a superordinate social category exists (e.g., national or community identity), but quite another for this category to be perceived by the same person as psychologically salient during a specific interaction with the police. Instead we have demonstrated that people's judgements of relational identification with the police were the important psychological mediator between judgements of procedural justice and cooperation. Our findings therefore support the assertion that such perceptions are fundamentally important in people's assessments of police action, in concordance with previous work (e.g., XXXX 2000, XXXX *et al.* 2008, XXXX *et al.* 2011). Taken together, previous studies in the PJT literature may have been using community identification as, as least in part, a proxy measure for the more 'direct' measurement of relational identification with the police we utilised here.

Overall, our findings pose important questions for PJT and our theoretical understanding of its conceptualisation of underlying social psychological processes. The procedural justice perspective, at least in its GEM form, tends to view social identity

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judgements merely as an outcome of fairness judgements (e.g., Lipponen *et al.* 2011). Yet our analysis suggests that identity judgements may also shape perceptions of police fairness. Moreover, critiques of PJT centre on the fact that it is solely focused on the outcomes of interpersonal interactions with the police (e.g., Waddington *et al.* 2015) and has neglected the broader role of group-level dynamics (Smith 2007), ideology (Harkin 2015) and historical context (Armaline *et al.* 2014) in police-public relations. Here, we report evidence that judgements of police actions are not just a matter of interpersonal relations or individual history. Rather, our study demonstrates that category membership, categorical relationships and therefore the intergroup context of these interactions may have a powerful impact, in a manner that is consistent with identity based analysis of conflict in the context of crowd events (Reicher, 1996, XXXX, 2000, XXXX 2011).

This study is not designed to provide a comprehensive critique of PJT and we agree fundamentally with many of its propositions and assumptions. Rather our data has provided important preliminary evidence that PJT research can benefit theoretically from further consideration of the complex role social identity and inter-group dynamics play in police-public relations, particularly in the context of crowd events (Maguire *et al.* 2016). We agree that social identity is an important part of the causal chain linking procedural justice to police legitimacy, cooperation and other outcomes. However, we suggest that the approach has paid inadequate attention to theoretical developments in the social psychological understanding of social identity processes, most specifically in the developments provided by self-categorisation theory (Turner et al. 1987, 1994, Haslam *et al.* 2010).

As we have contended, PJT research currently conveys a conceptualisation of

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social identity and 'procedural fairness' processes as relatively fixed and universal, whereby police officers are seen as the 'moral guardians' of some relatively static notion of a liberal nation state or community within which a normatively given form of 'procedurally just' police action acts as a central mediator of perceived membership or exclusion among its citizens. We have argued here for a more nuanced, fluid, contextually determined and relational conceptualisation of such processes, where 'fairness' and identification with the police are relative and inter-related judgments that emerge within and relate directly to a specific group level social relational context.

In this regard the experimental evidence provided here further supports the Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM) of crowd behaviour which proposes that judgments of policing 'fairness' and 'self-regulation' are inter-related but dramatically affected by the dynamic nature of the social identities and group level interactions that operate within crowd events (e.g., Reicher, 1996, XXXX, 2000). On the basis of ESIM, Reicher *et al.* (2004, 2007) propose a series of conflict reduction principles, such that police should *educate* themselves to gain knowledge about the community values, aims and objectives, as well as the historical context, of the social identities that are likely to be present within crowds. Such 'intelligence' will help the police to understand how to *facilitate* the lawful interests of those groups and, as far as it is possible, to adjust police actions to advance the contextually relevant interests of those identities.

Our study is consistent with this theoretical view that such action would promote perceptions of police 'fairness' that in turn may reduce conflict by promoting forms of 'self-regulation' within the crowd. Our study also suggests that such processes may also operate even when and if it becomes necessary for the police to use coercion. In other

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words, there is nothing inherently 'unfair' about police coercion, provided that when it is employed it is still seen to be exercised in ways that ultimately advance, rather than undermine, the collective interests of the groups and identities involved. Thus, by gaining a clearer understanding of how crowd members define themselves, the police can be better positioned to appreciate how to respond to the sometimes rapidly evolving nature of crowd situations such that if coercion is applied it is still likely to be understood by crowd participants to be facilitating their own identity consonant objectives. Thus, where such police action is seen as 'identity advancing' it may in turn help promote and maintain relational bonds of identification between the police and crowd participants which ultimately encourages conflict de-escalation through crowd participants' 'self-regulation' (Reicher *et al.* 2004, 2007, XXXX *et al.* 2008).

Conclusion

In summary, our research problematises some of the underlying assumptions concerning the social psychology of procedural justice, particularly as this relates to the policing of crowd events. More generally, our work also suggests the utility of a change of emphasis for those using PJT as a basis for policing, shifting from an exclusive focus on the ostensible fairness or otherwise of police actions to a focus on processes of social identity management. Thus, the extent to which the police can represent and advance a 'shared sense of us' within a given context may be an important factor governing the variable and complex relationship between perceived fairness and behavioural self-regulation. In turn, our work also supports the contentions of those theorists who see 'procedural fairness' as a social construct rather than a normative given but in so doing requires us to reconsider the centrality and nature of the social identity and group level

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processes involved.

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Tables

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics and ANCOVA results for Experiment 1

Variable	EDL *M* (SE)	NUS *M* (SE)	TUC *M* (SE)	*F*(2, 99)	η_p^2
Procedural fairness	4.30 (.18)	3.49 (.18)	3.28 (.18)	7.72**	.14
Police legitimacy	4.42 (.20)	4.13 (.20)	3.90 (.20)	1.78	.04
Relational identification with the police	3.83 (.26)	3.07 (.26)	2.81 (.26)	4.21*	.08
Community identification	4.98 (.24)	4.88 (.24)	4.96 (.24)	.05	.001
Police community identity prototypicality	4.06 (.26)	3.40 (.26)	2.74 (.26)	6.34**	.11
Police community identity advancement	4.01 (.27)	3.39 (.27)	2.65 (.27)	6.28**	.11
Intention to cooperate with the police	4.86 (.27)	4.37 (.27)	4.10 (.27)	2.04	.04

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

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Table 2.

Demographic information for Experiment 2 according to experimental condition

	Newcastle fans (in-group)	Sunderland fans (out-group)
N	72	68
Age	*M* = 36; *SD* = 13.06	*M* = 36; *SD* = 15.19
Gender:		
Female	13 (18.1%)	4 (5.9%)
Male	58 (80.6%)	60 (88.2%)
Missing data	1 (1.4%)	4 (5.9%)
Ethnicity:		
Asian	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.5%)
Black	0 (0%)	1 (1.5%)
Mixed	2 (2.8%)	1 (1.5%)
White	68 (94.4%)	63 (92.6%)
Missing data	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)

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Table 3.
Descriptive statistics and *t*-test results for Experiment 2

Variable	Newcastle fans ('the policed' as an in-group) *M* (SD)	Sunderland fans ('the policed' as an out-group) *M* (SD)	*t*(138)	Cohen's *d*
Procedural fairness	4.23 (1.44)	5.59 (1.29)	5.86***	0.99
Police legitimacy	4.78 (1.23)	4.99 (1.44)	.951	0.16
Relational identification with the police	3.92 (1.68)	4.70 (1.76)	2.68**	0.45
Community identification	5.18 (1.14)	5.49 (1.35)	1.47	0.25
Police community identity prototypically	3.70 (1.61)	4.58 (1.76)	3.09**	0.52
Police community identity advancement	4.05 (1.61)	4.96 (1.65)	3.29**	0.56
Intention to cooperate with the police	4.66 (1.56)	5.20 (1.66)	2.01*	0.34

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

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Figure Captions

Figure 1. Path diagram showing the mediatory role of relational identification with the police on the relationship between procedural fairness and cooperation

Figure 2. Path diagram showing the mediatory role of relational identification with the police on the relationship between procedural fairness and cooperation

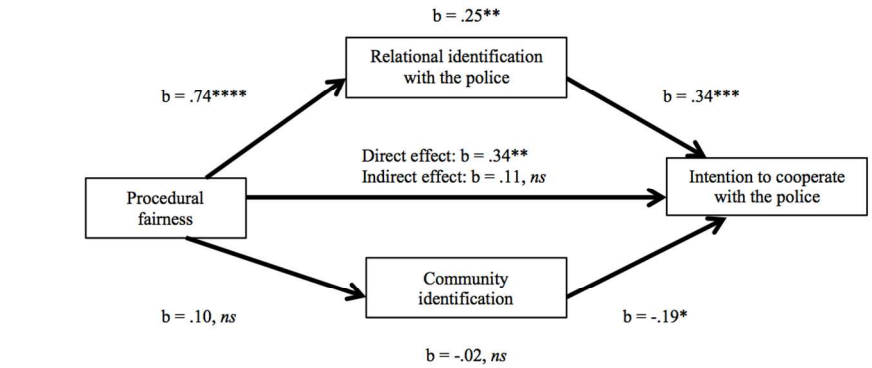

Figure 1. Path diagram showing the mediatory role of relational identification with the police on the relationship between procedural fairness and cooperation

238x141mm (144 x 144 DPI)

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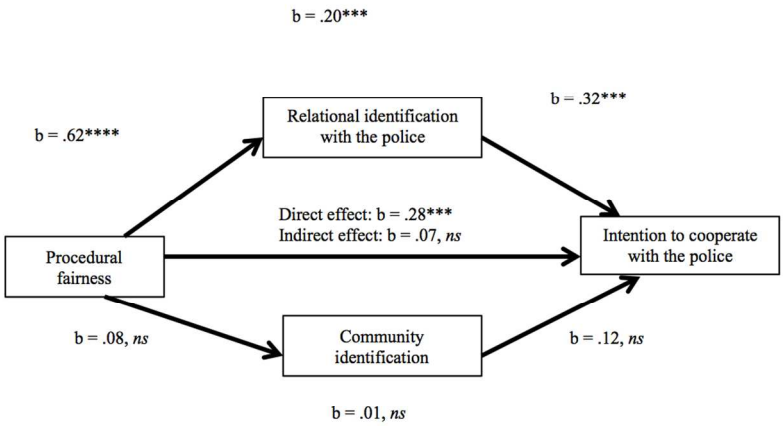
Figure 2. Path diagram showing the mediatory role of relational identification with the police on the relationship between procedural fairness and cooperation



Note. b = unstandardized coefficient; * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001, **** p < .0001.

Figure 2. Path diagram showing the mediatory role of relational identification with the police on the relationship between procedural fairness and cooperation

239x147mm (144 x 144 DPI)

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Correlation Matrix for Experiment 1

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Procedural fairness (1)							
Police legitimacy (2)	.70						
Relational identification with the police (3)	.74	.62					
Community identification (4)	.09	.06	.02				
Police community identity prototypicality (5)	.68	.69	.81	.02			
Police community identity advancement (6)	.65	.68	.80	.02	.97		
Intention to cooperate with the police (7)	.59	.64	.64	-.12	.60	.59	

Note. All correlations over .09 are significant ($p < .01$).

Correlation Matrix for Experiment 2

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Procedural fairness (1)							
Police legitimacy (2)	.38**						
Relational identification with the police (3)	.67**	.56**					
Community identification (4)	.12	.08	.10				
Police community identity prototypicality (5)	.70**	.54**	.80**	.17*			
Police community identity advancement (6)	.74**	.53**	.83**	.17	.93**		
Intention to cooperate with the police (7)	.45**	.61**	.61**	.16	.62**	.61**	

Note. ** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$.

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