**Demeanor and Police Culture: Theorizing How
Civilian Cooperation Influences Police Officers**

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Abstract

Purpose: This study revisits classic theoretical arguments regarding the broad effects of civilian demeanor on policing and extends associated findings.

Design/methodology/approach: Our theoretical framework draws on insights from the literatures on police culture, the group engagement model and fairness heuristic theory. We argue that demeanor is best conceptualized as the degree of procedural justice exhibited by civilians toward police. Theoretically, procedurally just cooperation should influence officers' adherence to police culture by affecting their social identification and assessments of civilians' motives and moral deservingness. To test our hypotheses, we surveyed sworn officers from a large metropolitan police department in the southeastern United States in the fall of 2016.

Findings: Results reveal that officers use their procedural justice judgments as heuristics to assess civilians' trustworthiness, dangerousness, and moral deservingness, and these judgments influence their policing style. Officers who perceive greater procedurally just cooperation by civilians feel less threatened by the public, are more willing to use procedural justice themselves, and are less supportive of a "tough cop" policing style.

Originality/value: We propose that: (1) civilian demeanor is best conceptualized as the extent to which civilians exhibit procedural fairness towards the police, and (2) in order for meaningful police reform to occur, it is important to acknowledge the role of civilian demeanor in shaping officers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

Keywords: Policing, procedural justice, occupational attitudes, police culture, trust

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The task of sustaining police morale cannot be left to the police themselves; it requires a community effort. The alternative may be a police force which, however competent, functions as an army of occupation.
      —James Q. Wilson (1967, p. 162).

Many countries are mounting efforts to implement policing reforms to improve police-civilian relationships, reduce officer misconduct, increase accountability, and foster greater community engagement and cooperation with law enforcement (Giacomantonio et al., 2016; Tyler & Murphy, 2011).[1] These interventions often focus on training and encouraging police officers to use procedural justice during encounters with civilians (Mazerolle et al., 2013a; Murphy, Mazerolle, and Bennett, 2014). When police use procedural justice—that is, when they treat civilians respectfully and fairly, and listen to them before making decisions—it enhances civilians' identification with police and increases their compliance, cooperation, and engagement (Bradford, Murphy, & Jackson, 2014; Tyler & Jackson, 2014).

However, efforts to implement policing reforms face considerable difficulties—including resistance or even revolt by police officers (Skogan, 2008; Wilson, 1967)—and interventions often fail to achieve intended effects (MacQueen & Bradford, 2016; Worden & McLean, 2017). One primary reason that police reforms are met with resistance is that some officers hold cynical and authoritarian attitudes (Skogan, 2008). Although there is considerable variation in officers' attitudes across police agencies and workgroups (Ingram, Terrill, & Paoline, 2018), there are segments of officers who are distrustful of civilians, have a strong "us-versus-them" social identification, prefer an aggressive policing style, and believe procedural rules lack moral validity (Paoline, 2003, 2004; Skolnick, 2011; Worden, 1995). These attitudes, in turn, influence officers' approach to policing and behaviors toward civilians (Terrill & Paoline, 2015; Terrill, Paoline, & Manning, 2003; Worden, 1996). For this reason, the "essential feature" for successful

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[1] Throughout this manuscript, we use the term "civilian" to refer to individuals who are not police officers.

policing reform must be positive motivation among police officers to change—simply put, "we need to change what they *want* to do" (Schulhofer, Tyler, & Huq, 2011, pp. 357-8, emphasis added).

The cynical and authoritarian attitudes that exist among many police officers are coping mechanisms for dealing with the strains they experience in their occupational and organizational environments (Brown, 1988; Paoline, 2003; Skolnick, 2011). An especially common and impactful source of strain is civilian disrespect (Bayley, 1995; Toch, 1996; Wilson, 1967). Officers frequently experience disrespect from civilians (Alpert & Dunham, 2004; Mastrofski et al., 2002; Reisig et al., 2004)—otherwise known as "contempt of cop" (Miller, 2004). Indeed, a recent survey of nearly 8,000 U.S. police officers found that 67% reported being verbally abused by a civilian while on duty in just the past month (Morin et al., 2017). Officers despise such behavior, and perceive much of their job as "asshole control" (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 307). A large literature has documented that civilian demeanor affects officers' behaviors within encounters (Alpert & Dunham, 2004; Engel et al., 2012). However, researchers have measured demeanor inconsistently; indeed, scholarly agreement about how to conceptualize demeanor has remained elusive (Dunham & Alpert, 2009; Engel et al., 2012; Klinger, 1994). As important, few studies have tested theoretical explanations for why and how civilians' demeanor impacts officers, either within specific encounters or more broadly.

Our contribution in this paper is twofold. First, we develop a conceptualization of demeanor based on procedural justice (Tyler, 1990, 2011). We take from the procedural justice literature insights about the characteristics of high quality interpersonal treatment, which include but are not limited to respectfulness, the current focal point of demeanor research. Importantly, our measure meets the requirement that demeanor includes only "*legally permissible* behavior of

citizens during interactions with police officers that indicates the degree of deference or respect they extend to the involved officers" (Klinger, 1994: 477, emphasis in original). Second, we theorize and test how civilian demeanor affects officers' endorsement of those attitudes that represent the greatest obstacles to policing reforms. Drawing on the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) and fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), we conceptualize demeanor as the degree of "procedurally just cooperation" (Pickett & Ryon, 2017) civilians exhibit with police, and hypothesize that officers' perceptions of demeanor affect their social identification and attitudes by serving as a heuristic substitute for information about civilians' motives and moral deservingness. An analysis of police survey data lends support to our hypotheses.

Conceptualizing Demeanor: Procedurally Just Cooperation

For as long as scholars have studied policing, they have recognized the importance to police officers of civilian respect (Sykes & Clark, 1975; Wilson, 1967). Sykes and Brent (1980, p. 184) emphasized that "officers seek to be treated by civilians in a respectful manner." Similarly, in a classic study, Wilson (1967) theorized that the perception that civilians are disrespectful would reduce officers' morale and strengthen their self-identification with the police culture. He found that officers were "profoundly affected by perceived citizen respect," much more so than by their perceptions of the quality of departmental management (pp. 154-5). Civilian respect remains at the center of contemporary research on demeanor effects in police-civilian interactions (Reisig et al., 2004; Nix et al., 2017a).

Extant scholarship on civilian respect (or disrespect) has confirmed that, like most people, legal authorities (police officers) respond negatively when they are treated badly, even when it is by someone who has less authority. What has been overlooked, however, is that respect is only one aspect of interpersonal treatment, a fact demonstrated unequivocally in the

procedural justice literature (Tyler, 1990; 2011; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). In addition to respect, other aspects of interpersonal treatment—aspects that make it "procedurally just"—include fairness, neutrality, turn taking in dialog (or voice), and explanation of decisions (demonstrating trustworthy motives) (Tyler, 1990; 2011).

As with respect, the additional components of procedural justice should matter to legal authorities, just as they do to subordinates. The reason is that the desire to receive procedurally just treatment is "at least widespread, if not universal" (Tyler et al., 1997, p. 239). Procedural justice effects reflect "a general human response to *social decision-making procedures*" (Lind & Tyler, 1988, p. 129, emphasis added). Whenever (and by whoever) social decisions are made— decisions, for example, about whether to cooperate with a request, provide needed information, or assist with some activity—the individuals on the receiving end "make procedural justice judgments and these judgments are always important to them" (Lind and Tyler, 1988: 140-41). The group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) and fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001) provide explanations for the generality of procedural justice. When interacting with others, regardless of whether they have more, equal or less power, people rely on procedural justice judgments to determine social identification (Bradford, Murphy, & Jackson, 2014; Tyler & Blader, 2003), and use them as a heuristic device to estimate their risk of exploitation, harm, and/or social exclusion (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, Lind, & Wilke, 2001).

The evidence supporting the generality of procedural justice is overwhelming (Donner et al., 2015). Researchers find positive effects of procedural justice when used by parents, teachers, employers, supervisors, police officers, and judges to make decisions (Baker et al., 2015; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014; Tyler, 1990, 2011). Procedural justice matters even in situations not involving authorities. Shared perceptions of procedural justice among business

partners increase cooperation and profits (Luo, 2005, 2008). Fast-food customers respond favorably to procedurally just waiting procedures at restaurants (Groth & Gillian, 2001). Individuals prefer, and are more likely to seek help from, expert advisors (e.g., retirement plan consultants) who use procedural justice in their meetings with advisees (Tyler, 2006).

Given the generality of procedural justice, officers should be responsive to the use of procedural justice by *civilians*.[2] One previous study has examined officers' perceptions of procedurally just cooperation by civilians. Pickett and Ryon (2017) found that officers who perceived that youth exhibit procedural justice toward police were more likely to support policing reforms aimed at protecting suspects' due process rights. We therefore argue that procedural justice defines the ideal civilian demeanor toward police. Conceptualizing demeanor it terms of procedural justice helps to clarify its distinction from criminal resistance. Procedural *injustice* by civilians includes such legally-permissible behaviors as interrupting officers, cursing at them, calling them names, and expressing prejudice against police generally, or against individual officers because of their specific backgrounds. Independent of whether they cooperate with or resist officers, civilians can be disrespectful, unfair and deny officers voice. For example, a civilian may handover his driver's license or allow himself to be cuffed while yelling profanities at the officer, making biased comments (either about the officer or police as a group), and/or talking over the officer.

Procedurally Just Cooperation and Police Culture:
Motive Signaling, Moral Judgment and Social Identification

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[2] This is certainly not to suggest that civilians lack authority. As Alpert and Dunham (2004, p. 177) have emphasized, "the suspect or citizen interacting with an officer also carries some degree of authority"—namely, he or she has legal authority based on "rights and preexisting legal restrictions on the officer's behavior" as well as "traditional authority" based on informal rules and collective values (see Weber, 1946).

The foundational work on police culture delineated attitudinal typologies of police officers (Brown, 1988; Muir, 1977; White, 1972). These studies found that many officers—variously described as the "tough-cop," "old-style crime-fighter," or "enforcer"—endorsed a cluster of cynical and authoritarian attitudes that increased their likelihood of prioritizing crime control over order maintenance or service, disregarding procedural rules, and using force (or "curbstone justice") against civilians (Worden, 1995). These officers tended to be the most distrustful of civilians, supportive of an aggressive and peremptory policing style, and opposed to due process protections. They identified strongly with the police culture, and had an "us-versus-them" mentality. Theoretically, the cynical and authoritarian attitudes prescribed in police culture developed as coping mechanisms to help officers handle the strains of police work, including the stress and anxiety caused by civilians' disrespect (Brown, 1988; Skolnick, 2011).

Subsequent research has shown that police culture is more complex and multidimensional than originally depicted, and that there is greater heterogeneity among officers in their attitudes (Paoline, 2003, 2004). However, this work has confirmed that many of the attitudes identified in early studies, especially distrust of civilians and support for aggressive policing, help to explain officers' coercive behaviors and brutality (Terrill, Paoline & Manning, 2003; Terrill & Paoline, 2015; Worden, 1996). These same attitudes foster resistance to policing reforms (Schulhofer, Tyler, & Huq, 2011; Skogan, 2008). Scholars of police culture have continued to emphasize that civilian demeanor has cumulative and generalized effects on officers because of the strain it causes (Bishopp et al., 2018; Paoline & Gau, 2018). Supporting this theoretical argument, one recent survey found that a majority of officers reported becoming more "callous toward people" since taking their job, and that those officers who had experienced recent negative confrontations with civilians were more likely to report this view (Morin et al., 2017).

Juxtaposed against research on police culture have been studies showing that civilians' demeanor shapes officers' behaviors within specific encounters (Engel et al., 2012; Mastrofski, Reisig, & McCluskey, 2002). Unfortunately, scholarship on demeanor effects has been incident-centered, rarely extending the scope of analyses beyond incident-specific outcomes, such as whether the officer searches, arrests or uses force against the suspect. However, as Toch (1996, p. 107) has explained, "incident-centered approaches become person-centered approaches when one compiles incidents over an officer's career and sees the officer as a composite of the incidents in which he or she has been involved." Van Maanen (1978, pp. 311-15) has likewise observed that the "experientially based meanings" that officers learn to ascribe to people are "sustained and continually reaffirmed through [their] everyday activity," and often become generalized such that whole classes of civilians are "'fixed' by the police as a sort of permanent asshole grouping."

Building on the above scholarship, and conceptualizing demeanor in terms of procedural justice, we argue that based on their past personal and vicarious experiences with civilians, officers develop global perceptions of the extent to which civilians use procedural justice with police. Perceived procedurally just cooperation should, in turn, influence officers' endorsement of attitudes prescribed by police culture. Theoretically, global perceptions of procedurally just cooperation should also affect officers' perceptions and behaviors within specific encounters, net of incident-level factors. We elaborate on these arguments below.

One of the most salient dimensions of police culture is cynicism toward civilians (Ingram et al., 2018; Niederhoffer, 1967). Many officers believe civilians are unsupportive of policing efforts (e.g., will not report crimes) and only obey the law out of fear of punishment (Paoline, 2003, 2004; Wilson, 1967). In short, these officers are very distrustful of civilians. The

literature on procedural justice, however, has shown that a principal antecedent of interpersonal trust is the quality of treatment that people receive (Nix et al., 2015; Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Indeed, prior studies have found that the effect of procedural justice on trust is largely invariant across individuals and situations (Jackson et al., 2012; Wolfe et al 2016; c.f. Murphy, 2017). Several randomized experiments have confirmed the causal ordering, demonstrating that procedurally just treatment leads to greater levels of trust (Lowery et al., 2016; Maguire et al., 2017; Murphy et al., 2014). The explanation is that justice judgments "serve as a proxy for interpersonal trust" (Lind, 2001, p. 56). Low quality treatment heuristically signals that others have untrustworthy or adversarial motives—namely, that they intend to exploit or do harm (Jackson et al., 2012; Tyler, 2011).

Police officers are preoccupied with danger and with maintaining an edge by reading civilians (Paoline, 2004). According to Skolnick (2011, p. 41), "the element of danger seems to make the police officer especially attentive to signs indicating a potential for violence and lawbreaking." This is important because officers believe civilian disrespect within encounters signals danger (Bayley, 1995); in their view, "an asshole who disrespects a cop is capable of anything" (Miller, 2004, p. 36). Bennett (1976) reported experimental evidence that within encounters a suspect's demeanor had a sizable effect on officers' perceived threat to their physical wellbeing. In the same way, global perceptions of civilians as procedurally *unjust*, by signaling adversarial motives, should undermine officers' trust in civilians and foster fears that civilians are dangerous and out to get the police. In turn, these fears should intensify officers' identification with the police culture by cultivating an "us-versus-them" mentality (Skolnick, 2011; Wilson, 1967). Perceived procedurally just cooperation, on the other hand, should have opposite effects.

Policy attitudes represent another pillar of police culture, such that officers hold favorable attitudes toward aggressive policing and unfavorable attitudes toward procedural rules (Paoline, 2003, 2004). Police "culture sees the procedural rule as something to be observed rather than obeyed; it is an unpleasant fact of life, but not a morally persuasive condition" (Skolnick, 2011, p. 204). Both Beetham (2013) and Coicaud (2002) emphasize that the legitimacy of law is enhanced through actions that reify and promote the social values underpinning the law. As Coicaud (2002, p. 41) explains, those societal values that determine the "duties that each person owes to himself and to others and that democratic institutions owe to the governed," and which are expressed in the law, "cannot be normative without being, to a certain extent, descriptive." Procedural law is underpinned by "the principles of fairness, equality, and the dignity and inviolability of the individual" (Pickett & Ryon, 2017, p. 16). Civilians' use of procedurally just cooperation exemplifies and reinforces the social values that normatively validate procedural law, and thus should increase its moral persuasiveness to officers.

Additionally, police see disrespect as "a moral transgression" (Van Maanen, 1978, p. 319). Because officers view themselves as "representatives of the moral order" (Van Maanen, 1978, p. 313), they believe disrespect is "a symbolic attack on the law itself" (Bayley, 1995, p. 101). On the other hand, "a suspect who shows deference [to the police] reestablishes himself or herself as an individual willing to be part of the moral and legal community" (Alpert & Dunham, 2004, p. 173). Extending this line of reasoning, we would expect that officers who perceive that civilians are procedurally *unjust* toward police will judge civilians to be less morally deserving, and, in turn, increase their opposition to procedural rules and support for a "tough cop" approach to policing. Theoretically, such perceptions should also increase officers' identification with the police culture by signaling greater normative disagreement between officers and civilians

(Wilson, 1967). By contrast, procedurally just cooperation should increase officers' belief in civilians' moral deservingness (Alpert & Dunham, 2004), and in turn increase their willingness to use a less aggressive and more supportive policing style, such as procedurally just policing (Mastrofski et al., 2016; Nix et al., 2017a; Pickett & Ryon, 2017).

Taken together, the above theoretical arguments yield several specific hypotheses, which we test in the remainder of this paper. We hypothesize that perceived procedurally just cooperation will be: 1) negatively related to officers' perceptions of civilian dangerousness, both within specific encounters and more broadly; 2) negatively related to officers' fears that civilians are out to make police look bad; 3) negatively related to officers' support for a "tough cop" policing style; 4) negatively related to officers' opposition to due process protections; and 5) positively related to officers' support for procedurally just policing, both within specific encounters and more broadly.

Methodology

Research Setting

Our data were obtained via a survey of a large metropolitan police department in the southeastern U.S. The department serves a jurisdiction of over 250,000 residents according to 2015 US Census estimates. At the time of our study, the department employed 1,247 sworn officers. Approximately 86% of the officers are male. The racial/ethnic breakdown of the sworn population was roughly 84% white, 12% black, 2% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and less than 1% other. In terms of age, approximately 26% of the officers were 30 or younger, 36% were between 31 and 40, 31% were between 41 and 50, and 7% were 51 or older.

Survey Administration

In the fall of 2016, we approached one of the agency's three Assistant Chiefs and requested permission to administer our survey which we developed for the purposes of this manuscript. We informed the Assistant Chief that respondents' identities would remain anonymous and that we would not reveal the agency's name in any subsequent publications. Upon receiving approval, we personally invited all sworn officers to take our survey using email invitations that contained a web link to an online questionnaire. To avoid systematic nonresponse associated with survey variables, the email invitations were vague about the purpose of the questionnaire, and only stated that "a goal of the survey is to better understand police officers' perceptions and attitudes, and potentially help inform the [agency's] training agenda." The informed consent form also provided only broad information about the survey topic, noting that it asked about their "views of police-citizen interactions, crime, media portrayal of the police, and some basic demographic information." The email invitations informed the officers that the survey was being conducted by researchers at a nearby university, that it was voluntary, and that they could skip any questions they did not want to answer.

Because of the inherent difficulties of using incentives in anonymous Web surveys, we did not offer any for participation. However, to increase response rates, we sent two follow-up reminders over the course of the following four weeks. Even still, web surveys tend to achieve lower response rates than other modes, especially with samples of police officers (Nix et al. 2017b). Additionally, response rates in police surveys have declined sharply in recent years for all modes other than in-person surveys (Nix et al. 2017b). To illustrate, recent self-administered computerized surveys of police officers have obtained response rates of 22% (Bishopp et al. 2018), 25% (Skogan 2015), and 28% (Reynolds & Helfers 2018). Similarly, our survey achieved

a low response rate. Specifically, our sampling frame included all of the agency's 1,247 sworn

officers, but only 251 officers returned completed or partially completed questionnaires, yielding

a response rate of 20% ([251/1,247] *x* 100). Meta-analytic research has found that "response

rates are a poor indicator of nonresponse bias" (Peytcheva, 2013, p. 90). Nonetheless, we

acknowledge this is a less than ideal response rate, but believe the data are still very useful. We

elaborate on this issue in the conclusion.

Independent Variable

Our independent variable captured officers' perceptions of how they are treated by

civilians. Specifically, we were interested in the extent to which officers believe civilians

exercise procedural justice when interacting with police. We thus developed items that measured

officers' perceptions of civilians' respect, fairness, and voice (Tyler, 1990). The only previous

study to measure procedurally just cooperation (Pickett & Ryon, 2017) was limited to asking

about the behaviors of youth toward officers. Instead, we asked officers about civilians in

general. Specifically, officers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1 = strongly agree

to 5 = strongly disagree) with the following seven statements: 1) people often disrespect and

insult the police, 2) people are normally polite when dealing with the police, 3) people treat

police officers with dignity, 4) people treat the police worse than they treat other government

employees, 5) people treat police officers unfairly, 6) people normally listen to the police before

jumping to conclusions in incidents, and 7) people will ignore or walk away from the police

when officers try to explain a situation. Principal factor analysis (PFA) indicated that the items

loaded onto one factor with loadings that ranged from .44 to .72. Responses were recoded so that

higher scores indicated greater procedural justice, then averaged to generate a mean index—

procedurally just cooperation—which demonstrated adequate internal consistency (α = .79).

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analysis.

[Table 1 about here]

Dependent Variables: Encounter-Specific Reactions

Our first two dependent variables gauged officers' responses to suspects in specific encounters. Recall that the general perceptions of procedurally just cooperation that officers bring with them into encounters should influence how they perceive the suspects therein and their attitudes about how they should respond to those suspects. We used an experimental design—a 2 x 3 randomized factorial vignette, which involved responding to a suspicious person call—to measure officers' reactions within encounters. The vignettes varied in terms of the suspect's race (white or black) and demeanor (respectful, disrespectful, or denies officer voice). Appendix A provides the question wording of the vignette. Consistent with our theoretical conceptualization of demeanor in terms of procedural justice, each of the manipulations for suspect demeanor within the specific encounter tapped a dimension of procedurally *un*just behavior by civilians—namely, disrespect and the denial of voice to officers. These manipulations are included as controls in the analysis. Based on the vignette, we constructed two dependent variables, which are described in turn below.

Probability that suspect will become violent. The first dependent variable measured officers' perceptions of how the suspect might behave. Officers were asked to indicate how likely (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely) it would be for the suspect to become physically combative during the interaction.

Importance of using procedural justice. The second dependent variable captured officers' perceived importance of using procedural justice with the suspicious person in the

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scenario depicted by the vignette. Officers were asked to indicate how important (1 = very unimportant to 5 = very important) they felt it would be to: 1) treat the suspect politely and with dignity, 2) explain to the suspect why you made contact with him, 3) give the suspect a chance to explain his side of the story, 4) treat the suspect respectfully, 5) listen to the suspect's side of the story, 6) explain your decision to the suspect, once you decide how to resolve the situation, and 7) treat the suspect fairly. PFA demonstrated that the items loaded onto a single factor. We averaged the items to generate a mean index with strong internal consistency (α = .92).

Dependent Variables: Global Attitudes

Beyond influencing officers' responses in police-civilian encounters, perceived procedurally just cooperation should also shape officers' general beliefs about civilian dangerousness and attitudes toward policing. Therefore, our next group of dependent variables captured officers' global beliefs about civilians and support for various styles of policing.

Perceived frequency of violent resistance by civilians. Our first global outcome of interest tapped officers' general perceptions of civilian dangerousness. It gauged how often officers believed civilians in their city behaved violently toward officers during police-civilian interactions. We presented officers with the following text:

> Violence in encounters between suspects and the police includes situations in which suspects physically resist, fight with, or otherwise attack the officer(s). Please think about the encounters between suspects and police officers in [your city]. Out of every 100 of these encounters, in about how many does the SUSPECT USE VIOLENCE against the police officer(s)?

Officers were instructed to enter a number between 0 and 100. Their responses were used to create a continuous variable: *percent violently resist*.

Fear of civilians. The next dependent variable captured officers' fear that members of the public are out to make the police look bad (see Van Maanen, 1978). We asked officers to

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indicate how afraid (1 = very unafraid to 5 = very afraid) they were of the following: 1) someone falsely claiming you illegally stopped or searched them, 2) someone falsely claiming you discriminated against them, 3) someone falsely claiming you committed misconduct, 4) someone falsely claiming you used excessive force, and 5) the media negatively portraying you in a news story. PFA suggested that the five items loaded onto a single factor. Responses to the items were thus averaged to create a mean index with strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .94$).

Support for procedurally just policing. Given the enormous body of research that points to the importance of procedural justice during police-citizen interactions (Mazerolle et al., 2013b; Tyler, 2011), we considered the level of support officers have for this style of policing. Officers were asked to indicate their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) with ten statements meant to capture the various dimensions of procedural justice (e.g., "Officers should at all times treat people they encounter with dignity and respect"; "It is very important that officers appear neutral in their application of legal rules"). PFA revealed that the ten items loaded onto a single factor. Responses to the items were therefore averaged to generate a mean index with adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$).

Support for "tough cop" policing style. A "tough cop" is distrustful of civilians, aggressive, and peremptory—insisting on immediate obedience from civilians (Paoline, 2003, 2004; Toch, 1996). We considered the extent to which officers embraced such a style of policing by asking them to indicate their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) with five statements: 1) in certain areas of [the city], it's more useful for an officer to be aggressive than to be courteous, 2) officers shouldn't take the time to listen to citizens complain about their problems, 3) officers have reason to be distrustful of many citizens, 4) letting people talk back only encourages them to get angrier, and 5) citizens will never trust the police enough

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to work together effectively. PFA demonstrated that the items loaded onto one factor, and thus we averaged across responses to create an index (α = .64).

Opposition to due process protections. Finally, we considered officers' stance on whether due process protections for civilians should be curtailed, which is an attitude prescribed by police culture (Bayley, 1995; Paoline, 2003, 2004). To do so, we presented officers with the following text:

> Due process procedures include such things as the Miranda warning and the probable cause standard. Please think about policy priorities for policing. Which of the following statements come CLOSEST to your view?

Officers were given three response options: 1) due process procedures should be increased to better protect suspects' rights, 2) due process procedures should be left at the current level, and 3) due process procedures should be reduced to make it easier for police officers to solve crimes and apprehend suspects. The majority of the sample indicated due process procedures should be left at the current level (77%). Roughly 21% of the sample felt due process procedures should be reduced, while only about 1% of the sample supported increasing due process procedures. Given this distribution of responses, we created a dichotomous variable that reflected *opposition to due process protections* (1 = due process protections should be reduced).

Control Variables

In order to minimize the possibility of generating biased estimates, we included several statistical controls in the multivariate models. First, we included a measure of officers' perceptions of the local crime trend during the past three years (0 = decreased or stayed the same, 1 = increased, 2 = increased greatly). We also used dummy variables to control for the responding officer's gender (1 = *male*), race (1 = *white*), education (1 = *college degree*), and rank (1 = *officer/detective*). Finally, *age* and *experience* were measured continuously in years.

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Analytic Strategy

Our analysis was divided into three phases. In the first phase, we used two ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equations to consider the two encounter-specific outcomes. In the second phase, we explored the factors associated with officers' global attitudes toward civilians.[3] Finally, the third phase of our analysis was concerned with officers' attitudes toward various police policy issues. We used two OLS regression models to explore officers' support for procedural justice and "tough cop" policing, respectively, and a logistic regression model to explore officers' opposition to due process protections.

Before proceeding, it bears noting that because of item nonresponse, the total analytic sample size in our models varies from 187 to 192. Item nonresponse is more common in Web surveys than in other modes, and increases with questionnaire length (Peytchev, 2009). In our survey, it resulted primarily from breakoffs due to questionnaire length, rather than from question content. We know this for two reasons. First, the correlation between question number (or location in the questionnaire) and item nonresponse was very strong and positive ($r = .94$). Second, officers who broke off appeared to hold attitudes toward civilians that were similar to those who did not break off. The first question in the survey was the matrix measuring procedurally just cooperation, which all but one respondent answered, and the scores on this variable did not differ significantly between officers with and without item missing data on the other measures used in the analysis (mean = 2.544 vs. 2.658, $t = 1.257$, p = .214).

Results

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[3] Each of the dependent variables used in the OLS models approximated normality, with the exception of *percent violently resist* (skew = 1.93, kurt = 6.31). We therefore performed a natural log transformation to induce normality (skew = .03, kurt = 2.24). This transformed variable was used in the analysis reported below, but note that substantively, the findings remained unchanged whether using the original or transformed variable.

Table 2 presents the results from our encounter-specific analysis. In Model 1, *probability suspect will be violent* was regressed onto the independent variable and each of the controls. The model explained roughly 20% of the variation in the outcome. Procedurally just cooperation ($b =$ –.475, p < .001) was significantly associated with officers' beliefs regarding the probability that the suspicious person in their vignette would become violent. In other words, officers who believed that, broadly speaking, civilians exhibit procedurally just cooperation were less likely to think that the suspicious person in their vignette would become physically combative, net of the suspect's race and demeanor. In Model 2, we considered officers' beliefs about how deserving the suspicious person was of being treated with procedural justice. This model explained about 12% of the variation in the outcome. Although the coefficient was in the expected direction ($b =$ .069), suggesting that officers who perceived greater procedurally just cooperation were more likely to believe it was important to use procedural justice with the suspect in the experimental vignette, the coefficient did not reach statistical significance (p = .222).

[Table 2 about here]

In Table 3, the focus of our analysis shifted to officers' global beliefs about civilians. Model 1 regressed *percent violently resist* onto our independent and control variables. The model explained approximately 17% of the variation in the outcome. Procedurally just cooperation ($b =$ –.487, p < .001) was significantly associated with officers' judgments about the percentage of interactions that involve violent resistance on the part of the civilian. That is, the more officers perceived civilians to be polite, fair, and respectful toward the police, the lower they estimated the risk of violent resistance in their jurisdiction. In Model 2, we explored the correlates of officers' fear of civilians—namely, their fear of having false allegations lodged against them or being negatively portrayed in the media. This model explained 9% of the variation in the

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outcome. Here again, procedurally just cooperation was significantly and inversely associated (b = –.320, p = .01) with officers' fear of civilians. Therefore, as hypothesized, officers who believed civilians treated police more respectfully and fairly were significantly less afraid of civilians being out to get them or make them look bad. Collectively, these findings suggest that perceived procedurally just cooperation weakens the feeling among officers that civilians are dangerous and enemies of the police.

The next phase of our analysis explored the factors associated with various policy attitudes. In Model 1 of Table 4, we regressed officers' general support for procedurally just policing onto the independent and control variables. The model explained roughly 10% of the variation in the outcome. As expected, procedurally just cooperation ($b = .130$, p < .01) was significantly and positively associated with officers' support for using procedural justice. In other words, officers who felt civilians exhibited procedurally just cooperation when interacting with the police were more likely to support treating civilians with politeness, taking time to explain decisions to them, and allowing them to express their concerns. Model 2 considered the factors associated with a much different, "tough cop" style of policing. This model explained over 28% of the variance in the outcome. Procedurally just cooperation ($b = –.246$, p < .001) was significantly and negatively associated with support for a "tough cop" style of policing. Thus, officers who felt civilians exhibit procedurally just cooperation were less likely to distrust civilians and think it wise to be aggressive and peremptory. Finally, in Model 3, we considered the factors associated with officers' opposition to due process protections for civilians.[4] Although the coefficient was in the hypothesized direction ($b = – .492$), suggesting that officers'

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[4] We also estimated supplementary models using King and Zeng's (2001) bias correction procedure for rare events in logistic regression. The findings were unchanged.

who perceived greater procedurally just cooperation from civilians were less likely to oppose due process protections, it did not reach statistical significance (p = .130).

[Tables 3 and 4 about here]

Conclusion

Citizens have traditionally been willing to withhold deference to state authorities until they have "earned it"; yet they still expect state agents always to respond with civility. The police keenly feel this irony.

—Mastrofski, Reisig, and McCluskey (2002, p. 519).

Criminal justice legitimacy is dialogic, involving a "perpetual discussion" (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012, p. 129), in which legal authorities and civilians "are responsible to each other before each other" (Coicaud, 2002, p. 39). Ideally, the police-civilian dialog will reaffirm mutual support and clarify normative expectations for behavior. Previous research suggests that if such a dialog can increase officers' use of procedural justice with civilians it may enhance public empowerment of and cooperation and engagement with police (Tyler, 2011; Tyler and Jackson, 2014). Likewise, our results, along with those of Wilson (1967) and Pickett and Ryon (2017), suggest that if such a dialog can increase the quality of civilians' treatment of police, officers may feel less threatened by the public and be more willing to implement procedural justice. Specifically, we find that among officers, procedurally just cooperation is associated with less perceived danger, less support for an aggressive and peremptory policing style, and with more favorable attitudes toward socially supportive and cooperative approaches to policing.

The evidence from our analysis thus supports several concrete policy recommendations for improving police-civilian relations and creating the positive motivation among police that is necessary for any successful reform of policing. First, our results suggest a need to pursue interventions that facilitate greater positive interactions between police and civilians. Wilson

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(1967, p. 162) long ago argued that "new ways … must be found to bring police officers and neighborhood groups together for nonbureaucratic and meaningful communication." This remains true today. Some possibilities might include holding police-civilian softball games and cookouts, or having open houses at police stations and providing games and events for families with children. Research on intergroup contact theory suggests that such activities may foster positive attitudes and emotions, and reduce negative stereotypes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). There is evidence that such interventions can improve civilians' attitudes toward police and intentions to treat officers well in future interactions (Broaddus et al., 2013; Goodrich & Anderson, 2014; Watts & Washington, 2014). A key question is whether in the current police legitimacy crisis, these interventions may also improve officers' attitudes toward civilians.

Second, our results suggest there may be benefits to public communication campaigns designed to inform civilians of the importance and positive impacts of using procedural justice with police. Prior research suggests that procedural justice "conduct norms" are communicated through socialization (Brunson & Weitzer, 2011; Pickett, Nix, & Roche, 2018), as is information about police legitimacy (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Wolfe, McLean, & Pratt, 2017). Compared to their older counterparts, younger persons exhibit more disrespect toward the police (Mastrofski et al., 2002; Reisig et al., 2004). Therefore, one promising strategy may be to develop and implement programs in schools designed to cultivate and reinforce procedural justice conduct norms among youth.

Third, the evidence herein that officers are broadly influenced by their perceptions of *civilians'* use of procedural justice suggests a need for greater efforts to increase the use of procedural justice by *supervisors and administrators* within police agencies. Wilson (1967) found that officers' perceptions of civilians and management were "to some significant degree

independent of one another" (p. 143), and that "perceptions of citizen respect were far more important than evaluation of departmental management in determining officer morale" (p. 151). However, he also found suggestive evidence of an interaction between the quality of management and officers' perceptions of civilians, such that civilian respect appeared to matter somewhat less to officers working under a higher quality management regime. Nix and Wolfe (2016) likewise found that higher quality management, as measured by perceived organizational justice, reduced the effect of negative publicity on officers. Therefore, the extant evidence, although limited, suggests that despite the salience of civilians' behavior toward them, officers may place less weight on procedurally just cooperation when the treatment they receive from their supervisors and administrators is more procedurally just.

Finally, the findings herein support calls for interventions designed to foster deliberate rather than automatic decision-making by officers in police-civilian interactions (Mazerolle & Terrill, 2018; Tahamont, 2018). In a seminal experiment, Owens and colleagues (2018) found that an inexpensive and easily implemented, cognitive-behavioral therapy-style intervention had lasting positive effects on how officers interacted with civilians. In the intervention, a supervisor modeled procedural justice during a meeting with an officer wherein the officer reflected on a recent encounter with a civilian where "nothing bad happened." This meeting helped officers think through police-civilian interactions, and supplied them with additional resources (alternative means) for resolving disputes without force (Tahamont, 2018). It also reminded "officers that authority does not always perfectly coincide with total control" (Owens et al., 2018: 54). Theoretically, the conflation of control and authority by officers is what leads them to react negatively to disrespectful civilians who are otherwise compliant. Thus, interventions like

those tested by Owens et al. (2018) may hold promise for reducing the effects of civilian demeanor on officers' attitudes and behaviors.

Our findings also have several theoretical implications. First, the results provide further support for the generality of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988), showing that the desire to be treated with procedural justice generalizes to police officers in their interactions with civilians. Second, the evidence herein strongly supports the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003) and fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), suggesting that officers use their justice judgments as a heuristic to judge civilians' motives, both in encounters and generally. The findings also support theoretical accounts emphasizing that officers are composites of their experienced incidents (Toch, 1996), and respond to the strain of negative encounters with civilians by strengthening their adherence to police culture and endorsement of the cynical and authoritarian attitudes it prescribes (Paoline, 2003, 2004; Wilson, 1967).

Our study is not without limitations. Most notably, the sample size was relatively small and the response rate to the survey was low. The small sample size reduced statistical power, which may help to explain why the coefficients for two of the outcome variables—suspect deserves PJ (model 2, table 2) and opposition to DP protections (model 3, table 4)—failed to reach statistical significance despite being in the hypothesized direction. Because of the relatively low response rate, if the propensity to respond was correlated with survey variables, the findings may be biased to some degree. One possibility is that because of the current climate of intense scrutiny of police, officers' attitudes about police-civilian relations may have influenced their decision to respond to the survey, which would result in nonresponse bias. It is critical, then, for future studies to attempt to replicate our findings using larger samples with less nonresponse. In particular, researchers should examine whether similar findings emerge using

data from in-person surveys administered at roll calls or during in-service training, which result in much higher response rates (Nix et al., 2017b).

Another limitation of our study is that it is cross-sectional and observational, limiting our ability to make causal inferences. We have argued that civilians' use of procedural justice should cause officers to perceive less danger and adopt supportive policing attitudes. Yet, socialization into police culture may instead influence officers' perceptions of civilians' behavior. Indeed, our measure of support for tough cop policing included an item asking about distrust of civilians, the assumption being that civilian procedural justice shapes officers' trust, but it could be the other way around. Although our assumption is consistent with theory and with experimental evidence showing that receiving procedural justice causes subsequent increases in trust among *civilians* (Lowery et al., 2016; Maguire et al., 2017; Murphy et al., 2014), it is important that future studies examine *officers'* attitudes using longitudinal or experimental data that is better suited for establishing causal order.

To conclude, police throughout the world are being encouraged to utilize procedural justice with civilians as a way to promote trust and cooperation from the public. However, interactions between the police and public are reciprocal exchanges (Alpert & Dunham, 2004; Sykes & Brent, 1980). Police behavior is one important contributing factor to the quality of police-civilian relationships, but so is civilian behavior. Our findings highlight the importance of procedurally just cooperation by *civilians*. If police reform is to occur, it will be important to consider ways in which to enhance civilians' use of procedural justice with police.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	*N*
Dependent Variables			
Probability suspect will be violent	3.254	1.116	236
Suspect deserves PJ	4.395	.493	236
Percent violently resist[a]	2.422	1.106	217
Fear of civilians	3.190	1.012	231
Support PJ policing	3.119	.352	219
Support "tough cop" style	2.400	.471	219
Opposition to DP protections	.213	—	225
Independent Variable			
Procedurally just cooperation	2.629	.632	250
Control Variables			
Suspect black[b]	.555	—	236
Suspect disrespectful[c]	.305	—	236
Suspect denies voice[c]	.326	—	236
Perceived crime	1.387	.624	225
Male	.845	—	213
Age	40.760	8.483	204
White	.815	—	211
College degree	.676	—	213
CJS career length	14.411	7.900	202
Officer or detective	.617	—	209

ABBREVIATIONS: SD = standard deviation; PJ = procedural justice; DP = due process; CJS = criminal justice system.

[a] Natural log transformation; [b] *Suspect white* is the reference category; [c] *Suspect respectful* is the reference category.

Table 2. OLS Regressions of Police Officers' Perceptions in a Suspicious Person Encounter on Procedurally Just Cooperation

Variables	Model 1: Probability Suspect Will be Violent			Model 2: Suspect Deserves Procedural Justice		
	b	SE	St. Coef.	*b*	SE	St. Coef.
Independent Variable						
PJ cooperation	−.475***	.129	−.257	.069	.057	.090
Control Variables						
Suspect white (ref.)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Suspect black	.005	.157	.002	−.022	.069	−.022
Suspect respectful (ref.)						
Suspect disrespectful	.934***	.195	.362	−.046	.085	−.043
Suspect denies voice	.719***	.182	.296	−.132	.080	−.130
Perceived crime	−.072	.129	−.039	−.035	.056	−.045
Male	.396	.224	.121	−.206*	.098	−.151
Age	.004	.017	.029	.015*	.007	.265
White	−.071	.198	−.024	.083	.087	.068
College degree	.020	.177	.008	−.223**	.077	−.217
CJS career length	−.009	.019	−.061	−.021*	.008	−.346
Officer or detective	−.213	.180	−.089	−.146	.079	−.146
R-squared		.203			.124	
N		192			192	

ABBREVIATIONS: b = unstandardized coefficient; CJS = justice system; dis. = disrespectful; ref, = reference; SE = standard error; St. Coef. = standardized coefficient.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two–tailed).

Table 3.   OLS Regressions of Police Officers' General Perceptions of Civilians on Procedurally Just Cooperation

Variables	Model 1: Percent Violently Resist			Model 2: Fear of Civilians		
	b	SE	St. Coef.	*b*	SE	St. Coef.
Independent Variable						
PJ cooperation	−.487***	.128	−.272	−.320*	.123	−.192
Control Variables						
Perceived crime	.232	.126	.131	.287*	.123	.172
Male	−.584**	.217	−.188	.374	.213	.127
Age	.015	.017	.118	−.011	.016	−.089
White	−.109	.195	−.039	.193	.189	.073
College degree	−.208	.176	−.087	.030	.169	.013
CJS career length	.006	.019	.041	.006	.018	.048
Officer or detective	.139	.175	.061	−.054	.172	−.025
R-squared		.171			.093	
N		187			192	

ABBREVIATIONS: b = unstandardized coefficient; CJS = justice system; dis. = disrespectful; ref, = reference; SE = standard error; St. Coef. = standardized coefficient.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two–tailed).

Table 4. OLS Regressions of Police Officers' General Policy Attitudes on Procedurally Just Cooperation

Variables	Model 1: Support Procedurally Just Policing[1]			Model 2: Support "Tough Cop" Style of Policing[1]			Model 3: Opposition to Due Process Protections[2]		
	b	SE	St. Coef.	*b*	SE	St. Coef.	*b*	SE	Odds Ratio
Independent Variable									
PJ cooperation	.130**	.041	.234	−.246***	.051	−.317	−.492	.325	.611
Control Variables									
Perceived crime	−.033	.041	−.059	.241***	.051	.311	.539	.315	1.713
Male	−.116	.071	−.118	.292**	.088	.212	.348	.577	1.416
Age	.002	.005	.059	−.015*	.007	−.255	−.050	.041	.951
White	.007	.063	.008	.011	.078	.009	−.826	.447	.438
College degree	−.082	.056	−.110	.038	.070	.067	−.247	.413	.781
CJS career length	−.002	.006	−.044	.010	.008	.165	.048	.047	1.049
Officer or detective	−.086	.057	−.119	.032	.071	.032	1.508**	.517	4.516
R-squared		.105			.284			—	
Nagelkerke *R*-squared		—			—			.190	
N		192			192			191	

NOTES: [1]OLS regress; [2]logistic regression

ABBREVIATIONS: b = unstandardized regression coefficient; CJS = criminal justice system; DV = dependent variable; SE = standard error; St. Coef. = standardized coefficient.

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two-tailed).

Appendix A: Experimental Survey Vignette

Table A1: Vignette Question Wording

"While on patrol, you receive a suspicious person call. You arrive at the scene and identify a suspect who fits the description you were given—a **[Manipulation A]** male, in his 20s, wearing baggy jeans and a t-shirt. When you approach the suspect, he seems uneasy and anxious. When you first begin to question him, he **[Manipulation B]."**

> **Manipulation A**:
>
> A1) white
>
> A2) black
>
> **Manipulation B**:
>
> B1) "is compliant and respectful, and refers to you as sir/ma'am"
>
> B2) "refuses to tell you anything. He is disrespectful, loud, uses profanity, and calls you names"
>
> B3) "backs away and starts to walk off while you are still talking"