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Do you hear what I hear?: A comparison of police officer and civilian fairness judgments through procedural justice

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ABSTRACT

Procedural justice theory posits that people care at least as much about how a decision was made as they do about the outcome. Although policymakers and researchers argue that procedural justice-based interventions can improve police-civilian interactions, little research has examined how authorities evaluate decision-making processes. This research examined whether police officers and civilians evaluate fairness in police-civilian encounters through the same mechanisms. 69 police officer and 113 civilian participants, recruited through Qualtrics professional panels and Amazon's Mechanical Turk respectively, read a vignette describing a police-civilian interaction in which the civilian explained why they violated the law (*procedural justice*) or were interrupted by the officer (*procedural injustice*) and made evaluations of the interaction. Multiple-group analyses using bootstrapping revealed that both police officers and civilians rated the procedural justice condition as more fair because they rated the officer as more respectful and trustworthy and because they perceived the civilian had more voice than in the procedural injustice condition. Further, direct and indirect pathways through respect were not present when police officer pathways were allowed to vary, suggesting police may rely on social information differently than civilians.

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American society is divided by well-publicized deadly encounters between police officers and civilians (see Corley, 2020; Sullivan et al., 2018). Over the course of the 2010s, scholars and reformers called for police reforms that focused on improving individual interactions through procedural justice to improve trust in and legitimacy granted to police (Meares & Neyroud, 2015; President's Task Force on Twenty-First Century Policing, 2015; Wood et al., 2020). Anecdotal evidence suggests that police officer and civilian third-party observers interpret the same police-civilian interactions differently (Glass, 2015). Extant research has demonstrated that civilians' perceptions of police-civilian interactions are informed by social-contextual information, including how the police officer behaved toward the civilian, how the civilian behaved toward the officer, the climate of police-civilian relations in the community, and the social identity of the observer (Bradford, 2014; Braga et al., 2014; Meares et al., 2015; Oliveira & Murphy, 2015). Social psychological theory and

methods provide various frameworks through which to examine how police officers perceive police-civilian interactions (Goff & Rau, 2020; Heuer et al., 2007; Wann & Dolan, 1994), yet we do not know how recent procedural justice police reforms impact police officers' perceptions of those police-civilian interactions.

This critical gap in the literature means policy makers and scholars know little about how police officers interpret their own and other police officers' interactions with civilians. Therefore, reform efforts that include trainings on procedural justice-based policing, called process-based policing, are based on how civilians perceive policing without knowing how police officers understand the same procedural justice constructs (National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, n.d; Wood et al., 2020). To understand how police departments and individual police officers implement alternative policing strategies, it is critical to understand how police officers interpret interactions with civilians using the same constructs researchers have identified for civilians (e.g. Sales & Krauss, 2015). The current research begins to fill this gap in the literature by exploring how police officers evaluate fairness in comparison to civilians.

Procedural justice theory

The comprehensive procedural justice literature examines what makes an individual interaction seem fair and how evaluations of fairness influence cooperation in future interactions (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 2017). Decades of research illustrated that parties care at least as much about how a decision was made as the favorability of the outcome (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 2017). For example, even when given information about the lawfulness of police conduct, civilian participants evaluated police conduct through the mechanisms of procedural justice (Meares et al., 2015). The group-value model of procedural justice maintains that fair procedures communicate important information about social identity (especially for minority groups) through perceptions of voice, neutrality, trust, and respect (Fondacaro et al., 2006; Lind et al., 1997). Fair tactics by the police communicate that civilians are valued members of the community and increase civilians' sense of belonging to the community (Bradford, 2014). Additionally, fair procedures increase perceptions of an authority's legitimacy and acceptance of the authority's actions (Gerber et al., 2018; Tyler et al., 2014; Walters & Bolger, 2019; but see Pina-Sanchez & Brunton-Smith, 2020).

What is fair process?

The most widely accepted model of procedural justice conceptualizes fair process through four constructs: voice and control; consistency and neutrality of decision-making and rules; trust in the benevolence of the authority's motive; and being treated with dignity and respect (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Hinds, 2007; Tyler, 1989). While each construct can be individually operationalized the constructs have also been found to work together to predict perceptions of fairness (Mazerolle et al., 2012; Poythress, 1994; Trinklner & Cohn, 2014; Tyler, 1988). For instance, a procedure that provides voice is more likely to be perceived as fair, because it communicates impartiality, good intentions, and respect (Lind et al., 1997).

Voice and control

Voice refers to an individual's ability to present their side of the story and express their preferences about how the decision will be made and what the resolution will be (Fondacaro et al., 2002; Tyler, 2000). Researchers have manipulated voice in randomly assigned vignettes that have depicted various decision-making processes (Fondacaro et al., 2006; Lowrey et al., 2016; Soloman, 2019; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014; Urbanska et al., 2019). For example, Trinkner and Cohn (2014) operationalized voice in vignettes by manipulating whether the authority listened attentively to (voice) or cut off (no voice) an adolescent who was explaining why they wanted to violate a rule. Although researchers have also manipulated components other than voice (see Lowrey et al., 2016; MacQueen & Bradford, 2015; Mazerolle et al., 2012; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014), the effect of voice is consistently the strongest predictor of fairness while also predicting evaluations of neutrality, trust, and respect (Dai et al., 2011; Soloman, 2019; Urbanska et al., 2019).

Consistency and neutrality of decision-making and rules

Perceptions of voice predict evaluations of consistency and neutrality of decision-making and rules, which in turn predict evaluations of procedural fairness (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Fondacaro et al., 2002; Lind et al., 1997; Poythress et al., 1993; Tyler, 1988). Consistency and neutrality refer to perceptions of impartiality in the decision-making process and the similarity of treatment and outcome across time, situation, and individuals (Fondacaro et al., 2002; Tyler, 1988).

Trust in the benevolence of the authorities' motive

When authorities provide an explanation or justification along with their decision they are perceived as more caring, concerned, and trustworthy (Tyler, 2000). Further, Fondacaro et al. (2002) found that fairness was positively predicted by ratings of authority honesty and trustworthiness. Perceptions of voice further predict perceptions of trust in the good intentions of the authority, which subsequently predict evaluations of procedural fairness (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Fondacaro et al., 2002; Lind et al., 1997; Tyler, 2000).

Being treated with dignity and respect

Perceptions of voice predict perceptions that the authority treated a subordinate with dignity and respect, which in turn predicts perceptions of procedural fairness (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Fondacaro et al., 2002; Lind et al., 1997; Tyler, 2000). Tyler (1989) found that civilians who rated police as more polite and more respectful also rated them as more fair (see also, Fondacaro et al., 2002).

Extant research has illustrated that the strong relation between whether a decision-making procedure provided voice and perceptions of fairness is explained by perceptions of voice, neutrality, trust, and respect (Huq et al., 2011; Lind et al., 1997). Additional research has demonstrated the civilians who identify more closely with their nation and with police officers rated police more positively (Oliveira & Murphy, 2016). However, little research has examined how police officers evaluate fairness, which is important because different social contexts and identities may lead police officers and civilians to evaluate the same situations differently (e.g. Braga et al., 2014).

The police officer social context

Much of the procedural justice and policing literature assumes that police officers and civilians identify as members of the same group (e.g. Braga et al., 2014; Meares et al., 2015). However, research suggests that police officers are a distinct social group (e.g. Gatto et al., 2010; Huq et al., 2011). For example, policing-culture research describes the common knowledge shared among police officers that derives from the departmental structure and organizational characteristics as well as individual officers' predisposition and experiences with officers and civilians (Brough et al., 2016; Cordner, 2017; Crank, 2004).¹ Some components of police culture, such as solidarity, emerge from the boundaries between who is 'us' and who is 'them'. These notions emerge from the inherent conflict between the police mandate and communities (Brough et al., 2016; Crank, 2004; Loftus, 2010). Police professionalization, training, and daily work contribute to boundaries between police officers and the communities they serve.

Over the course of the last decade, researchers have examined police officers' psychological experiences with their departments and civilians in order to identify individual-level predictors of police-civilian relations that can be improved by policy (e.g. Tyler, 2016). Officers' experiences with and perceptions of their own departments and civilians in their community predict officers' attitudes toward process-based policing. For example, police officers were more likely to endorse process-based policing tactics when they experienced organizational justice in their own department (Myhill & Bradford, 2013; Trinkner et al., 2016), when they perceived civilians as respectful and cooperative (Pickett & Ryon, 2017; Porter & Alpert, 2017), when they experienced social closeness with civilians (Kearns, 2017; Stein & Griffith, 2017), and when they were confident in their right to rule (Tankebe, 2019). However, policing research has not examined police officers' evaluations of police-civilian interactions to understand the consequences of the police-social context for police-civilian relations or for implementing and evaluating process-based policing.

Current research

Many programs implemented to improve police-civilian relations rely on procedural justice research. Scholars have argued that the burden is on police to make changes to improve police-community relations (Tyler, 2016). Yet, the research on police-civilian interactions has focused almost exclusively on civilian perceptions of police, officer experiences within their department, or officer's attitudes toward civilians and process-based policing. However, given the importance of social context and identity in evaluations of police and support for process-based policing, how police officers perceive police-civilian interactions is a critical gap in the procedural justice literature.

The purpose of the current research is to explore how police officers, as compared to civilians, evaluate the fairness of a police-civilian interaction when they are both third-party observers. In a pilot study with students and a study with police officers and civilians, participants were randomly assigned to read vignettes (five vignettes in the pilot and one vignette in the study) that depicted procedurally just or unjust police-civilian interactions. Further, we asked participants to make their own evaluations of the interaction (e.g. Trinkner & Cohn, 2014; Fondacaro et al., 2006). We recruited pilot study participants from an undergraduate psychology department participant pool and criminal

justice classes to test the vignettes. We recruited study participants from online participant pools of police officers and community members. As this is the first exploration of police officers' perceptions of procedural justice in police-civilian interactions that we are aware of, we developed one research hypothesis that guided our exploratory analyses.

Hypothesized mediation model

We predicted that participants who read about a civilian who explained why they violated the law (the procedural justice condition) will evaluate the interaction as more fair than those who read about a civilian who did not explain why they violated the law (the procedural injustice condition; see [Figure 1](#)). Further, we hypothesized that the relation between voice condition and fairness will be explained by a series of significant indirect effects. Specifically, we predicted that participants would evaluate the interaction as significantly more fair when they perceived the officer as more respectful, impartial, and acted with better intentions. They would perceive more respect, more impartiality, and better intentions when they perceived that the civilian had more voice in the procedural justice condition as compared to the procedural injustice condition. These findings will replicate the group value models, including those of Lind et al. (1997) and Fondacaro et al. (2002, 2006).

Once we establish that our data fit the group value model and replicate the pathways between condition and fairness, we will explore whether the data fit this model just as well for police officer and civilian participants. Further, we will examine the specific indirect effects between condition and fairness for each group. Although these analyses are exploratory, we predict the data will fit the model well for both civilians and police officers. However, based on the role of social identity and social context in evaluations of fairness and the identity information provided by fair treatment, we predict that some indirect pathways that are present for civilians will not be present for police officers. This research provides a foundation for future research on process-based policing from the police officer perspective.

Pilot study

We recruited undergraduate students from criminal justice courses and the psychology participant pool to test the vignettes and create a rough approximation of the sample to

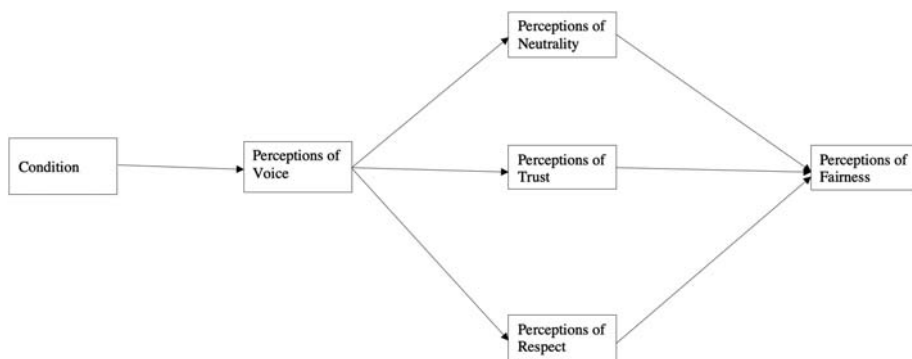


Figure 1. Depiction of group value model tested with mediation analyses.

be recruited in our study (see Bornstein et al., 2017). Some policing research suggests that there are individual tendencies that make it more likely for an individual to choose to become a police officer (e.g. Blumberg et al., 2016; Gatto et al., 2010). Those individual tendencies may be present within a sample of undergraduate students studying criminal justice (Barthe et al., 2013). As such, we reasoned that undergraduate criminal justice majors (54% of whom indicated they wanted a career in criminal justice) would provide a reasonable proxy for police officers with the important limitation that they would not have formal training or socialization as a police officer. The pilot study helped develop the materials used with the more expensive and difficult-to-access sample of police officers.

Methods

Participants

The pilot study used five vignettes with with two conditions (conditions: voice, no voice). One-hundred and twenty-six undergraduate students (*Age* = 20 years; *n* = 92 (73.0%) female, *n* = 33 (26.2%) male; *n* = 105 (83.3%) White/European American, *n* = 6 (4.8%) Black/African American, *n* = 6 (4.8%) Hispanic, *n* = 5 (4.0%) Pacific Islander, *n* = 4 (3.2%) missing) completed the study. Twenty-eight students (22.2%) indicated their major was criminal justice and 97 (77.0%) indicated their major was not criminal justice.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through a psychology department participant pool and in criminal justice courses. Non-criminal justice students and criminal justice students were compensated with course credit and entry into a lottery for a gift card, respectively. Students recruited through the psychology department participant pool, a convenience sample, followed a link to the online survey from the participant pool listing. We attended three undergraduate criminal justice classes, invited the students to participate in the study, and emailed the study link to those students who expressed interest. Participants who followed the link were randomly assigned to the voice or no voice condition of each of the five vignettes. Following each vignette, participants evaluated the vignette and provided demographic information. All procedures were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board.

Materials

Vignettes

Each participant read five randomly-ordered vignettes that depicted a police-civilian interaction: *truancy*, *traffic stop*, *noise complaint*, *jaywalking*, and *public indecency*. We selected non-serious criminal offenses because most police-civilian interactions are for non-serious criminal complaints (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2018) and to replicate the types of scenarios used in past research (Fondacaro et al., 2006; Reisig et al., 2018; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014). In the *no voice* condition, the described civilian did not explain to the officer why they committed the offense, whereas in the *voice* condition the described

civilian provided an explanation for their behavior. See supplemental materials for the full text of each vignette.

Demographics

Participants were asked to report their age, race, gender identity, and major.

Perceptions of fairness

Following each vignette, participants rated how strongly they agreed that the interaction was fair on a 5-point scale, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Results and discussion

The descriptive statistics and significance tests of mean differences between conditions are reported in Table 1. Independent sample t-tests revealed mean differences in perceptions of fairness between the voice and no voice conditions of the truancy and public indecency vignettes. Participants in the voice condition rated the encounter depicted in both vignettes as significantly more fair than participants in the no voice condition.

The truancy vignette was selected to improve upon for the current study because of the significant main effect of voice condition on evaluations of fairness (see Table 1) and because there were no other differences between the conditions. Further, we sought a narrow conceptualization and operationalization of voice behavior, which the truancy vignette provided (Avery & Quinones, 2002).

Study methods

Participants

A priori power analysis

A priori power analyses were conducted with G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). The analyses revealed that for an 80% chance of detecting a small effect ($r = .20$) in a linear multiple regression with five predictors, a total sample size of at least 70 is required. Therefore, we recruited at least 70 participants for each sample.

Police officers

Qualtrics participant panels were utilized to recruit police officers as participants in the fall of 2016. Research suggests that as compared to other online recruitment techniques, Qualtrics panels result in representative and high quality data from hard-to-reach populations (Boas

Table 1. Main effects of voice condition on perceptions of fairness for each vignette in pilot study.

Vignette	Voice			No Voice			<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>)	<i>d</i>	<i>r</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Truancy	56	4.38	0.62	58	3.00	1.06	−8.42 (112)*	1.84	0.68
Traffic Stop	63	4.05	0.83	61	4.18	0.92	0.842 (122)	−0.15	−0.07
Noise complaint	57	4.37	0.65	61	4.31	0.67	−0.47 (116)	0.09	0.05
Jaywalk	65	3.69	0.99	56	3.46	1.22	−0.47 (116)	0.21	0.10
Public Indecency	59	4.20	0.64	60	3.60	1.01	−3.88 (117)*	0.71	0.33

* $p < .001$.

et al., 2020; Ibarra et al., 2018). Qualtrics partners with organizations through which individuals elect to participate in a variety of scientific and marketing surveys. Based on their responses, participants were then invited by Qualtrics, via email and broader platforms, to complete studies for Qualtrics' customers. For the purposes of this project patrol-level officers were invited to participate. Those interested in participating followed the survey link to the survey in Qualtrics. Qualtrics participants received between \$2.00 and \$10.00 for their time, depending on the sampling source. Initial recruitment relied on broad sampling platforms that provided the lower level of compensation, but in order to reach enough police officers, a more targeted sampling platform was used that involved the higher level of compensation.

The panel process initially recruited 1,416 individuals to prescreen for our study. 1,275 (90.0%) participants who began the survey were not qualified to participate. Seventy (4.9%) were excluded because they failed an attention check and two (2.8%) police officer participants were excluded for failing the manipulation check, resulting in a final sample of 69 police officers. Police officer participants were 35–44 years of age, majority male identifying, White, earned more than \$70,000 per year, and had at least a Bachelor's degree. Our sample was consistent with the profile of the average police officer in the US (Data USA, 2019) suggesting that, although limited by self-selection bias, our sample was representative of police officers. See Table 2 for summary statistics.

Table 2. Demographic and test statistics for police officer and civilian samples.

	Police Officers	Civilians	(df) χ^2
<i>N</i>	69	113	
Median Age Range	35–44 years	25–34 years	
Gender identity			(2) 4.36
Male	42 (60.9%)	52 (46.0%)	
Female	25 (36.2%)	57 (50.4%)	
Another	0 (0.0%)	1 (.9%)	
Missing	2 (2.9%)	3 (2.7%)	
Race			(4) 1.73
White/European American	49 (71.0%)	85 (75.2%)	
Black/African American	8 (11.6%)	13 (11.5%)	
Hispanic	7 (10.1%)	8 (7.1%)	
Asian	3 (4.3%)	6 (5.3%)	
Mixed Race	2 (2.9%)	1 (.9%)	
Missing	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
Income			(6) 51.8***
Less than \$15,000	1 (1.4%)	23 (20.4%)	
\$15,000 – \$29,999	1 (1.4%)	23 (20.4%)	
\$30,000 – \$49,999	9 (13.0%)	29 (25.7%)	
\$50,000 – \$69,999	21 (30.4%)	22 (19.5%)	
\$70,000–\$99,999	24 (34.8%)	11 (9.7%)	
\$100,000 or more	13 (18.8%)	5 (3.4%)	
Missing	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	
Highest level of education			(6) 9.4
High school	3 (4.3%)	16 (14.2%)	
Some college	13 (18.8%)	26 (23.0%)	
Associate's degree	12 (17.4%)	19 (16.8%)	
Bachelor's degree	33 (47.8%)	39 (34.5%)	
Master's degree	7 (10.1%)	6 (5.3%)	
Professional degree	1 (1.4%)	2 (1.8%)	
Doctorate	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.7%)	
Missing	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.8%)	

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. Significance tests were not run for age range across police officers and civilians because different age categories were presented to each sample.

Civilians

One hundred forty-three civilians were recruited and compensated \$1.00 through Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) in the fall of 2016. MTurk is an online sampling frame of workers who are paid to complete surveys. Although it is widely acknowledged that MTurk samples are not representative of the American populace (Mortensen & Hughes, 2018; Weinberg et al., 2014), evidence suggests that at time of this data collection, MTurk samples did not produce lower quality data or produce significantly different treatment effects as compared to other traditional samples (Anson, 2018; Mortensen & Hughes, 2018; Weinberg et al., 2014). Further, empirical evidence suggests that MTurk sample validity significantly decreased beginning in the summer of 2018 and that thoughtful data screening improved the quality of the data collected after summer 2018 (Chmielewski & Kucker, 2020).

We restricted sampling to participants over 18 years of age, to those residing in the United States, and to those with a 95% performance rating. One hundred twenty-six (88.1%) participants completed the survey, but five (3.9%) participants were excluded for failing attention check questions. Ten (7.9%) civilians were excluded for failing the manipulation check questions, resulting in a final sample of 113 civilians. Civilian participants were 25–34 years of age, evenly split between male and female identities, mostly White, made less than \$50,000 per year, and had a Bachelor's degree or less. Our civilian participants were consistent with most MTurk samples and younger than the average American (Weinberg et al., 2014). See Table 2 for summary statistics.

Significant patterns of results emerged that revealed differences between our police officer and civilian samples on two features: age and income. Our civilian sample was younger than our police officer sample. Further, consistent with other findings, our police officer sample had a significantly higher yearly income than our civilian sample or the median US income in 2016 (Guzman, 2017).

Design

This study was a 2 (profession: police officer ($n = 69$), civilian ($n = 113$)) \times 2 (procedural justice condition: procedural justice ($n = 92$), procedural injustice ($n = 90$)) between-subjects quasi-experimental design. 58 (51.3%) civilian participants were randomly assigned to the voice condition and 55 (48.7%) were assigned to the no voice condition. 34 (49.3%) police officer participants were randomly assigned to the voice condition and 35 (50.7%) were assigned to the no voice condition.

Procedures

All participants provided informed consent. Participants read either the procedural justice or procedural injustice vignette and answered the 13 randomly-ordered questions, including the dependent variable. Lastly, they answered the demographic questions. All procedures were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board.

Materials

Independent variables

Demographics. Participants were asked to report their age, gender, race, employment status, career, educational background, and average household income. Participants

were asked to indicate which character in the vignette they identified with on a sliding scale from 0 (the civilian) to 100 (the officer). Additionally, participants responded 'yes' or 'no' to 'Was Sam confrontational toward Officer Jones' and 'Was Officer Jones confrontational toward Sam?'

A manipulation check question asked participants whether the student described in the vignette explained why they broke the law (yes or no): 'Did Sam tell Officer Jones why they were out of school?'

Vignette. The vignette depicted a police-civilian encounter and manipulated whether the civilian explained to the officer why they violated the law (procedural justice) or the officer cut off the civilian who started to respond (procedural injustice; e.g. Skogan, 2007; Trinklner & Cohn, 2014). In the *procedural justice* condition, one of a group of teenagers explained why they were not in school in the middle of the day: '... we were just heading back as soon as Jesse gets back from the store. We just had lunch around the corner at the sandwich shop and are heading back to school'. In the *procedural injustice* condition the civilian began to respond by uttering 'oh ...' and was cut off by the police officer. See [Appendix A](#) for the vignette.

Mediators. Following the vignette, participants indicated their agreement with 13 randomly ordered statements that measure fair process as defined by Tyler (1988; 1989), Poythress et al. (1993; Poythress, 1994), and Fondacaro et al. (2002). Participants were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with the statements on a 5-point scale, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). These items were aggregated to create the following latent variables.

Perceptions of voice. Seven items measured perceptions of voice and control, for example: 'Sam had the opportunity to tell his side of the story' and 'Officer Jones listened to what Sam had to say'. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .95$).

Perceptions of neutrality. Two items, 'This outcome represents what generally happens when police interact with citizens' and 'The interaction between Sam and Officer Jones represents how the police generally treat citizens' measured perceptions of neutrality. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .93$).

Perceptions of trust. Three items measured perceptions of trust: 'Officer Jones obtained good information to inform his decision', 'The outcome of the encounter between Sam and Officer Jones was legally correct', and 'The outcome of the encounter between Sam and Officer Jones was morally right'. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .81$).

Perceptions of respect. One item measured perceptions of respect, 'Officer Jones treated Sam with respect'.

Dependent variable

Perceptions of fairness. Participants rated their agreement with 'The interaction between Sam and Officer Jones was fair' on a 5-point scale, 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) to measure perceptions of procedural fairness. We used a single item for the dependent variable perceptions of procedural fairness rather than a multi-item measure of both

procedural and outcome fairness to focus on the fairness of the interaction (e.g. Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Blader & Chen, 2012; Soloman, 2019). The dependent variable was presented in random order with the mediators.

Analyses

Data were analyzed using moderated-mediation techniques and Mplus 8.4 software (Muthén & Muthén, 2019) with robust maximum likelihood estimation. There was no missing data. Data analyses were conducted in three phases. Preliminary analyses revealed that the data met the basic assumptions of SEM (Gau, 2010). Medaiton analyses for the full sample and exploratory multiple-group analysis (Figure 1) were each tested with bootstrapped analyses (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) to examine the modeled direct and indirect effects of condition on evaluations of fairness via perceptions of voice, trust, neutrality, and respect. We used a bootstrap approach with 5,000 sample draws to maximize statistical power, the recommended approach with relatively small samples such as ours (Schoemann et al., 2017). Bootstrapping minimizes the risk of Type II errors (missed effects) due to a lack of statistical power and minimizes the risk of Type I errors by relying on confidence intervals (CI's) through empirical approximation of sampling distributions of the indirect effects (Schoemann et al., 2017). Confidence intervals that do not contain zero indicate that an indirect effect is present (Preacher et al., 2007; Shrout & Bolger, 2002).

Multiple-group analysis was conducted to examine whether the modeled indirect effects vary across civilian and police officer samples. The models were compared to determine if the models that were allowed to vary by sample were significantly different from the model in which the paths were not allowed to vary across samples (Burnham & Anderson, 2004). Both modeled direct effects and indirect effects were explored.

Results

Preliminary analyses

See the supplemental materials for confirmatory factor analysis of the procedural justice items and subscales. The descriptive statistics and correlations of the subscales (including perceptions of voice, perceptions of neutrality, perceptions of trust, perceptions of respect, and perceptions of fairness) are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics and correlations of scales in main study.

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Voice	-						
2. Neutrality	.37***	-					
3. Trust	.68***	.45***	-				
4. Respect	.55***	.40***	.68***	-			
5. Fair	.58***	.46***	.84***	.75***	-		
6. Condition	.71***	.18*	.42***	.27**	.38***	-	
7. Group	.05	-.09	.05	.15	.02	-.2	-
N	182	182	182	182	182	182	182
Mean	3.47	3.63	3.95	3.97	4.05	0.51	0.38
SD	1.26	1.14	0.96	1.17	1.11	0.50	0.49

Note. Correlations and means were calculated in SPSS, and therefore with pair-wise deletion of missing variables.
***p < .001, **p < .010, *p < .050.

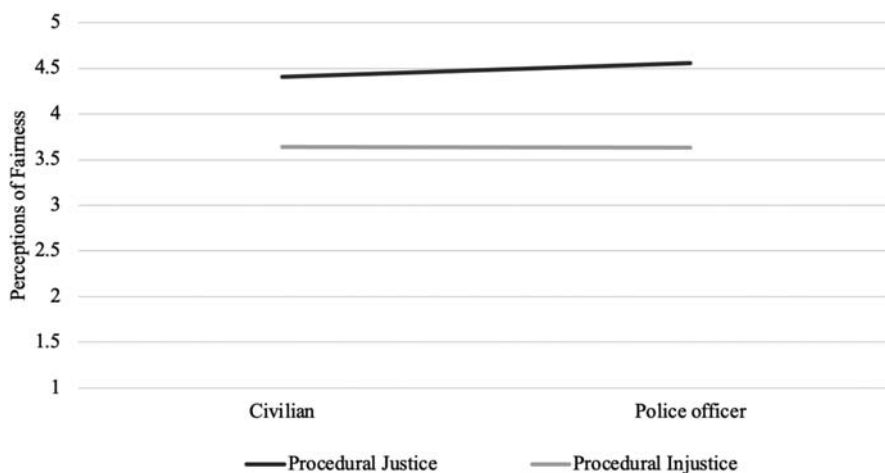


Figure 2. A line graph depicting the main effect of condition on perceptions of fairness.

The majority of police officers ($n = 62$, 88%) related more closely to Officer Jones, the police officer in the vignette, as compared to Sam, the civilian in the vignette. The majority of the civilians ($n = 59$, 52.2%) related more closely with the civilian in the vignette, as compared to Officer Jones, the police officer in the vignette. Additionally, participants did not consider either Officer Jones or Sam to be confrontational in the encounter. The majority of both police participants ($n = 67$, 97.1%) and civilian participants ($n = 112$, 99.1%) did not think Sam was confrontational ($X^2(1) = 1.1$, $p = .30$) or that Officer Jones was confrontational (police: $n = 57$, 82.6%; civilians: $n = 82$, 72.6%; $X^2(1) = 2.4$, $p = .12$). The majority of those in the procedural justice condition and the procedural injustice condition responded that neither Sam (procedural justice: $n = 91$, 98.9%, procedural injustice: $n = 88$, 97.8%; $X^2(1) = .36$, $p = .55$) nor Officer Jones (procedural justice: $n = 75$, 1.5%, procedural injustice: $n = 64$, 71.1%; $X^2(1) = 2.73$, $p = .10$) were confrontational.

ANOVA with least mean difference follow-up analyses were conducted to examine main and simple effects of condition and sample on perceptions of fairness in the police-civilian interaction. See Figure 2. A significant main effect of condition was found, $F(1, 178) = 29.35$, $MSE = 1.06$, $p < .001$, $d = .803$, $r = .376$. Although participants in both conditions rated the interaction above the scale mid-point, those in the procedural justice condition ($n = 92$, $M = 4.47$, $SD = .82$) rated the encounter as significantly more fair than did those in the procedural injustice condition ($n = 90$, $M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.20$). No significant main effect of sample was found for perceptions of fairness, $F(1, 178) = 0.19$, $MSE = 1.06$, $p = .664$, $d = .067$, $r = .033$. Civilians ($n = 113$, $M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.08$) and police officers ($n = 69$, $M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.16$) rated the encounter as equally fair. There was no significant interaction between the condition and the sample for perceptions of fairness ($F(1, 178) = 0.24$, $MSE = 1.06$, $p = .628$).

Full sample model analysis

The full sample model was estimated first with MPlus 8.4 to determine whether the data fit the model. The full model fit was just identified and therefore the global fit statistics are not

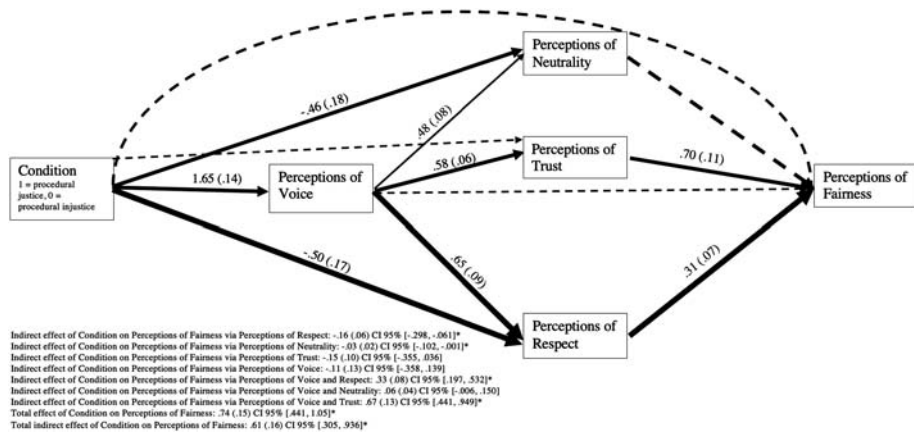


Figure 3. The full model representing the unstandardized coefficients of each unique modeled pathway between condition and perceptions of voice, trust, and neutrality. Non-significant pathways are represented with dashed lines, significant direct pathways (CI 95%) are represented with solid lines, and significant indirect pathways (CI 95%) are indicated with bolded solid lines. With statements were excluded for simplicity.

interpretable (RMSEA = .00 (90% CI [.00, .00]), SRMR = .00, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00). Unstandardized direct and indirect path coefficients and standard errors are reported in Figure 3 and standardized path coefficients and standard errors for the direct effects reported in Table 4 and the indirect effects in Table 5. The tested model explained 75.9% of the variance of perceptions of fairness, 43.9% of perceptions of voice, 17.2% of perceptions of neutrality, 47.0% perceptions of trust, and 31.8% of perceptions of respect.

Direct effects on perceptions of fairness

The simple direct effects partially replicated the group value model of procedural justice and therefore partially supported the hypothesized model. Results revealed that procedural justice condition was significantly and positively associated with perceptions of voice and significantly and negatively associated with perceptions of respect and neutrality. Perceptions of voice was significantly and positively associated with perceptions of neutrality, trust, and respect. Finally, perceptions of trust and respect were significantly and positively associated with perceptions of fairness. However, condition, perceptions of voice, and perceptions of neutrality were not significantly associated with perceptions of fairness when controlling for all other variables in the model. The direct effect of condition on perceptions of fairness was absent ($\beta = .06$, 95% CI [-0.046, 0.169]), meaning that the procedural justice subscales explained the relation between condition and perceptions of fairness in the police-civilian interaction.

Indirect effects of condition on perceptions of fairness

The mediation effects of condition on perceptions of fairness through the subscales revealed that the model replicated all but one indirect pathway of the group value model. The total effect of condition on perceptions of fairness, considering the influences of perceptions of voice, neutrality, trust, and respect was present ($\beta = .33$, 95% CI [0.202, 0.452]). Therefore, when accounting for the influence of perceptions of voice, neutrality,

Table 4. Standardized coefficients for both the constrained and free models ($N = 192$, civilians: $n = 113$, and police officers: $n = 69$) models representing each direct effect pathway between condition and perceptions of fairness through perceptions of voice, trust, neutrality, and respect in the main study.

	Full Model			Constrained Model			Free Model		
	β (SE)	95% CIs		β (SE)	95% CIs		β (SE)	95% CIs	
<i>Perceptions of Fairness</i>									
Condition ^a	.06 (.05)	[−.46, .169]		.10 (.05)*	[.012, .194]		.09 (.05)	[−.03, .192]	[−.69, .322]
Perceptions of Voice	−.7 (.09)	[−.28, .100]		−.3 (.08)	[−.00, .029]		−.5 (.09)	[−.19, .019]	[−.57, .301]
Perceptions of Neutrality	.08 (.05)	[−.12, .170]		.04 (.05)	[−.40, .128]		.01 (.05)	[−.89, .106]	[−.60, .249]
Perceptions of Trust	.60 (.09)*	[.404, .770]		.66 (.09)*	[.476, .836]		.73 (.09)*	[.534, .885]	[.205, .850]
Perceptions of Respect	.33 (.07)*	[.199, .470]		.34 (.07)*	[.201, .461]		.26 (.07)*	[.142, .418]	[.138, .649]
<i>Perceptions of Neutrality</i>									
Condition	−.0 (.07)*	[−.42, −.48]		−.8 (.09)	[−.53, .002]		−.7 (.11)	[−.71, .054]	[−.45, .126]
Perceptions of Voice	.52 (.08)*	[.348, .666]		.53 (.10)*	[.326, .709]		.52 (.12)*	[.266, .737]	[.160, .736]
<i>Perceptions of Trust</i>									
Condition	−.1 (.07)	[−.48, .033]		−.2 (.08)	[−.65, .039]		−.6 (.10)	[−.41, .034]	[−.94, .257]
Perceptions of Voice	.76 (.07)*	[.614, .869]		.77 (.07)*	[.613, .891]		.78 (.09)*	[.582, .941]	[.482, .947]
<i>Perceptions of Respect</i>									
Condition	−.1 (.07)*	[−.46, −.70]		−.2 (.07)*	[−.58, −.66]		−.6 (.09)*	[−.29, −.78]	[−.16, .175]
Perceptions of Voice	.68 (.08)*	[.519, .817]		.69 (.09)*	[.497, .850]		.75 (.10)*	[.531, .931]	[.246, .875]
<i>Perceptions of Voice</i>									
Condition	.66 (.04)*	[.573, .733]		.71 (.04)*	[.624, .781]		.73 (.04)*	[.638, .802]	[.487, .788]
<i>Perceptions of Neutrality with</i>									
Perceptions of Trust	.31 (.07)*	[.164, .450]		.35 (.09)*	[.180, .515]		.41 (.10)*	[.193, .575]	[−.77, .370]
Perceptions of Respect	.27 (.08)*	[.098, .428]		.26 (.09)*	[.092, .431]		.24 (.10)*	[.029, .413]	[.012, .560]
<i>Perceptions of Respect with</i>									
Perceptions of Trust	.52 (.06)*	[.390, .624]		.50 (.08)*	[.341, .637]		.55 (.08)*	[.374, .682]	[.156, .604]

Note. * 95% Confidence Intervals do not include zero. a Procedural justice = 1, Procedural injustice = 0.

Table 5. Standardized coefficients for the full model ($n = 192$), the constrained model, and the free model (police: $n = 69$; civilians: $n = 113$) models representing each indirect effect pathway between condition and perceptions of fairness.

	Full Model			Constrained Model			Free Model		
	β (SE)	95% CI		β (SE)	95% CI		β (SE)	95% CI	
Condition → Perceptions of Voice → Perceptions of Fairness	-.5 (.06)	[-58, .139]		-.0 (.06)	[-18, .018]		-.1 (.06)	[-42, .012]	
Condition → Perceptions of Trust → Perceptions of Fairness	-.7 (.05)	[-55, .036]		-.8 (.05)	[-88, .020]		-.2 (.07)	[-59, .016]	
Condition → Perceptions of Neutrality → Perceptions of Fairness	-.2 (.01)*	[-.02, -.01]		-.1 (.01)	[-36, .004]		-.0 (.01)	[-30, .014]	
Condition → Perceptions of Respect → Perceptions of Fairness	-.7 (.03)*	[-.98, -.61]		-.7 (.03)*	[-.37, -.24]		-.8 (.03)*	[-.54, -.23]	
Condition → Perceptions of Voice → Perceptions of Trust → Perceptions of Fairness	.30 (.06)*	[.441, .949]		.36 (.06)*	[.262, .481]		.42 (.07)*	[.297, .585]	
Condition → Perceptions of Voice → Perceptions of Neutrality → Perceptions of Fairness	.03 (.02)	[-.06, .150]		.02 (.02)	[-.13, .055]		.00 (.02)	[-.32, .046]	
Condition → Perceptions of Voice → Perceptions of Respect → Perceptions of Fairness	.15 (.04)*	[.197, .532]		.17 (.04)*	[.098, .250]		.16 (.04)*	[.084, .252]	
Condition → Perceptions of Fairness	.06 (.05)	[-.97, .384]		.10 (.05)*	[.012, .194]		.09 (.05)	[-.03, .192]	

Note. * 95% Confidence Intervals do not include zero.

trust, and respect, being in the procedural justice condition resulted in a .74-point increase in perceptions of fairness. We found two negative mediation effects of condition on perceptions of fairness through respect and trust, respectively. These indirect effects suggest that participants in the procedural justice condition perceived the interaction as less fair because they perceive the officer as less respectful and less impartial. Additionally, we found two positive mediation effects of the procedural justice condition on perceptions of fairness through perceptions of voice and then through perceptions of trust and respect. These indirect effects illustrated that participants in the procedural justice condition perceived the interaction as more fair because they perceived the officer as being morally and legally correct and as behaving more respectfully toward the civilian because the civilian had more voice.

The full sample partially replicated the group value model of procedural justice, confirming that the theory fits the data for the full sample. We found most of the indirect paths present in the group value model, which argued that when an individual has told their side of the story, that process would be perceived as more fair because their story had been shared, which in turn would increase perceptions that the process would be the same for others and that they were treated with dignity (Lind et al., 1997). However, the full sample model did not replicate the indirect effect of voice condition on fairness through perceptions of voice and neutrality.

Exploratory analyses: multiple-group analysis

In order to examine whether the model of procedural justice explains perceptions of police-civilian interactions for both police officers and civilians, the model paths were allowed to vary by group membership. The models are compared on both global model fit and the specific direct and indirect effects. We refer to the model in which the sample pathways were not allowed to vary, but instead required to be equal between the groups, as the constrained model and the model in which the sample pathways were allowed to vary and have different direct and indirect effects as the free model. These models were estimated with multiple group analyses in MPlus 8.4.

The model fit for the constrained model was excellent and for the free model was uninterpretable, Constrained: χ^2 (15) = 17.09, p = .313, CFI = .997, TLI = .994, RMSEA = .039 (90% CIs 0.000, 0.110), SRMR = .075; Free: CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.00, RMSEA = .000 (90% CIs 0.000, 0.000), SRMR = .000. The free model was just identified. Because one model was just identified, we compared models by examining the BIC and AIC values, which are meaningful when the models share a covariance matrix of the same variables and sample. The model with lower BIC and AIC values fit the data better (Burnham & Anderson, 2004). The BIC and AIC values were mixed (Constrained: AIC = 2148.55, BIC = 2260.69; Free: AIC = 2161.46, BIC = 2321.66). Because the BIC and AIC values are inconclusive, we examined and explain in the following sections the specific direct and indirect effects of both the constrained and free models to explore whether the groups relied on the same mechanisms to make judgments of fairness.

Constrained model

The specific direct and indirect effects of the constrained model are reported in Table 4, Table 5, and Figure 4. The direct effects between condition, perceptions of voice,

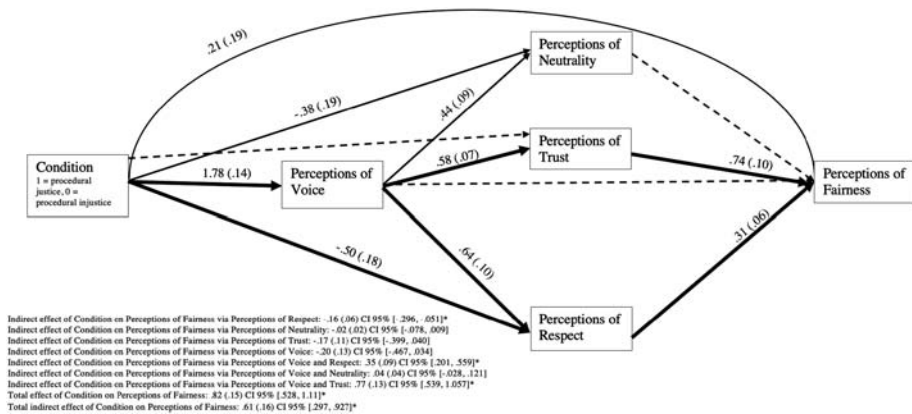


Figure 4. The constrained model representing each unique modeled pathway between condition and perceptions of fairness through perceptions of voice, trust, and neutrality for civilians ($n = 113$) and police officers ($n = 69$). Non-significant pathways are represented with dashed lines, significant direct pathways (CI 95%) are represented with solid lines, and significant indirect pathways (CI 95%) are indicated with bolded solid lines. R-squared estimates indicate that the constrained model accounted for 81.3% of the variance of perceptions of fairness, 50.3% of perceptions of voice, 47.4% of perceptions of trust, 31.3% of perceptions of respect, and 18.1% of perceptions of neutrality for civilians. The constrained model accounted for 71.2% of the variance of perceptions of fairness, 49.8% of perceptions of voice, 46.8% of perceptions of trust, 32.9% of perceptions of respect, and 12.4% of perceptions of neutrality for police officers. With statements were excluded for simplicity.

neutrality, trust, respect, and fairness match the direct effects of the full sample model. However, the indirect effect of voice condition on fairness through neutrality that was present in the full model was not present in the constrained model.

Free model

Unstandardized path coefficients and standard errors for both the direct and indirect effects of the free models are reported in Figure 5 for civilians and Figure 6 for police officers, the standardized path coefficients and standard errors for the direct effects of the free models are reported in Table 4, and the indirect effects of the free models are reported in Table 5.

Direct effect results revealed that both civilian and police officer participants' perceptions of fairness were significantly and positively predicted by the participants' perceptions that the officer in the vignette made a legal and moral decision and that the officer treated the civilian with respect. Further that both civilian and police officer participants' perceptions that the officer made an impartial decision, a morally correct decision, and treated the civilian with respect were predicted by their perceptions that the civilian was able to tell their side of the story. Civilian participants' perceptions that the officer in the vignette treated the civilian with respect were inversely related to the condition of the vignette, suggesting that civilian participants perceived the procedural justice condition as less respectful than the procedural injustice condition. Finally, both civilian and police officer participants perceived the civilian in the vignette as having more opportunity to express their preferences in the procedural justice condition as compared to the procedural injustice condition.

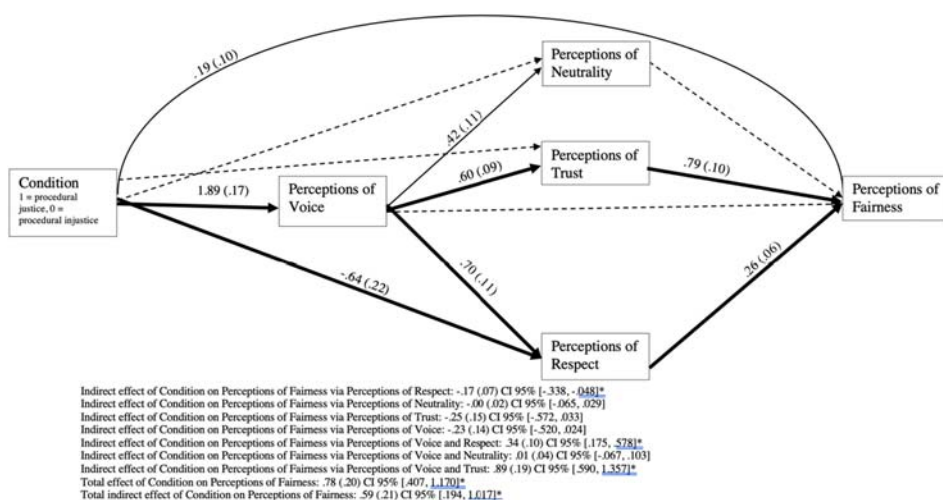


Figure 5. The free civilian model representing each unique modeled pathway between condition and perceptions of fairness through perceptions of voice, trust, and neutrality. Non-significant pathways are represented with dashed lines, significant direct pathways (CI 95%) are represented with solid lines, and significant indirect pathways (CI 95%) are indicated with bolded solid lines. R-squared estimates indicate that overall the model account for 84.1% of the variance of perceptions of fairness, 53.9% of perceptions of voice, 16.4% of perceptions of trust, 22.5% of perceptions of respect, and 43.6% of perceptions of neutrality.

The indirect effects of procedural justice condition on perceptions of fairness revealed that perceptions of trust and respect explain ratings of fairness through perceptions of voice for both civilian and police officer participants. Further, perceptions of respect

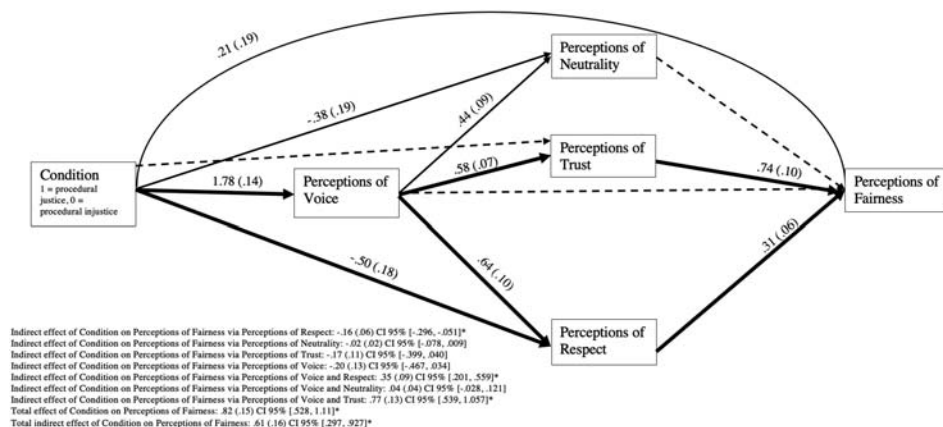


Figure 6. The free police model representing each unique modeled pathway between condition and perceptions of fairness through perceptions of voice, trust, and neutrality. Non-significant pathways are represented with dashed lines, significant direct pathways (CI 95%) are represented with solid lines, and significant indirect pathways (CI 95%) are indicated with bolded solid lines. Unstandardized coefficients and standard errors are reported for the direct and indirect effects. R-squared estimates indicate that overall the model account for 73.8% of the variance of perceptions of fairness, 44.8% of perceptions of voice, 51.9% of perceptions of trust, 28.8% of perceptions of respect, and 14.6% of perceptions of neutrality.

alone explained the relationship between condition and perceptions of fairness for civilians.

Discussion

The current research explored how police officers and civilians evaluated procedural justice in a police-civilian interaction vignette. We partially replicated the group value model of procedural justice in our analyses with the full sample and identified some differences in the pathways through which police officers and civilians evaluate fairness. The results revealed that police officers perceive fairness in police-civilian interactions through most of the same procedural justice mechanisms as civilians with a few important differences.

We replicated most of the group value model of procedural justice in mediation analyses with both police officer and civilian participants. The police-civilian encounter was perceived as more fair when the civilian explained why he and his friends were not in school as compared to when he was cut off by the police officer. Further, the encounter was perceived as more fair because participants thought that the civilian had more opportunity to and did tell his side of the story. This then lead participants to perceive that the officer treated the civilian with respect and was legally and morally correct. However, our results did not fully replicate the model due to two unexpected findings: the negative indirect effects through respect and neutrality.

We found that participants in the procedural justice condition evaluated the encounter as less fair because they perceived the officer as treating the civilian without respect and differently than the officer would treat other people. This finding may be because we manipulated procedural justice without clearly indicating whether the officer relied on the civilian's voice. Although policing research has largely not adopted the approach (e.g. Braga et al., 2014; Lowrey et al., 2016; Mazerolle et al., 2012), Avery and Quinones (2002) argued that voice is comprised of four components: voice opportunity (the actual chance to express one's preference), perceived voice opportunity (one's experience that they have the chance to express their preferences), voice behavior (the act of expressing one's preference), and voice instrumentality (the decision maker uses one's express preference to make a decision). They found that evaluations of procedural justice were conditional on voice instrumentality, especially for those who engage in more voice behavior. Perceptions of voice instrumentality may be particularly relevant for perceptions of respect and neutrality and explain our negative effects (De Vries et al., 2012). De Vries et al. (2012) found that voice behavior that is not used by the decision maker is associated with more inter-group conflict. Our findings suggest that respect and neutrality may be mechanisms of that relationship and provide important social context for interpreting interactions.

Our findings suggest that police officers' perceptions of police-civilian encounters are explained by the theory of procedural justice. However, they also suggest that police officers' perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal treatment do predict their evaluations as they do for civilians. Although in the full, constrained, and free-civilian models, participants evaluated the procedural justice condition as less fair because the officer was perceived as treating the civilians with less respect, perceptions of the quality of the interpersonal treatment did not explain police officers' perceptions of fairness. Although the absence of the indirect effects for police could be due to the relatively small sample of police officers, it also suggests that

police officers' evaluations of fairness in police-civilian interactions are not explained by their perceptions of whether the officer treated the civilian with respect or dignity like civilians do.

The current research replicated previous work demonstrating that voice opportunity and behavior predict perceptions of fairness in police-civilian encounters. Further, this work expanded on past work by revealing that civilians and police officers who are evaluating the same police-civilian encounter perceive how the police officer treated the civilian differently and police officers did not use those perceptions to evaluate fairness. Future research can continue to tease apart the role of the components of voice in police-civilian encounters as well as how police officers evaluate them to continue the important work of improving police-civilian relations for a more just and safe society.

Methodological considerations

The current research provided initial evidence that, contrary to assumptions made in the procedural justice literature (e.g. Meares et al., 2015), police officers and civilians both interpret police-civilian interactions through the mechanisms of procedural justice. Further, that police officers's perceptions may be informed by different social information. However, the current research is not without limitations.

The current research was limited to the effect of a voice behavior manipulation on perceptions of fairness and did not manipulate the other components of procedural justice. Future research should manipulate all the components of procedural justice and the interactions between them to understand the experiential differences between police officers and civilians identified in the current research (e.g. Lowrey et al., 2016; Mazerolle et al., 2012; Soloman, 2019). It would further be important to examine the components of voice separately as mediation through perceptions of voice seemed to account for more of the relationship between condition and fairness for police than for civilians.

The current research did not examine the predictors or moderators of any differences between police officers and civilians. Procedural justice evaluations are informed by many contextual variables (Braga et al., 2014) and police officers' perceptions and attitudes are informed by their departmental and community experiences (Pickett & Ryon, 2017; Tankebe & Mesko, 2015). Specifically, police officer and civilian perceptions of self- and police-legitimacy, respectively, influence their evaluations of police-civilian interactions (e.g. Braga et al., 2014). Future research should examine the role these contextual variables play in explaining how police officers evaluate procedural justice in police-civilian interactions.

Finally, although power analyses revealed that 70 total participants were required to detect a small effect in a regression with five predictors, the samples of police officers ($n = 69$) and civilians ($n = 113$) were still relatively small. A small sample size raises concerns not only about the potential of missing effects that are in fact present but also detecting inflated effects, especially because we are looking at whether the effects are present or absent across the samples (e.g. Barnes et al., 2020). However, the effect sizes in the full sample model are of the same magnitude as the effect sizes that we found in the constrained and free models that may have insufficient power. The indirect effect sizes are mostly small ($b < .20$) with a few medium sized effects ($b < .50$). Additionally, the effect sizes are consistent with those found by other researchers in the area (e.g.

Soloman, 2019; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014). Due to the potential concerns about sample size in this project, more research is needed.

Conclusions

To our knowledge, the current research is the first published research to examine police officer evaluations of fairness through procedural justice theory. We conducted a pilot study and a vignette study to explore police officers' and civilians' evaluations in fairness in police-civilian interactions. The results revealed that the group value model of procedural justice explains perceptions of fairness for both civilians and police officers. Further, that perceptions of respect did not explain police officers' evaluations of fairness. As scholars and activists argue for procedural justice to improve police-civilian relationships (see, Center for Policing Equity, 2019), researchers should replicate and extend these findings with an eye toward understanding the impact of procedural justice training on police behavior.

Note

1. Although general themes of police culture have been identified by research, not all departments are characterized by the same culture or subcultures (Cordner, 2017; Paoline & Gaa, 2018; Silver, et al., 2017).

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Data accessibility statement

The relevant, de-identified data that support the findings may be available by contacting the lead author to establish a data share agreement with the oversight of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board. Although this research was not preregistered, the research hypotheses, methodology, and plan for analysis were set out in the lead authors Master's Thesis proposal and Grant-in-Aid Proposal submitted and approved by the American Psychology and Law Society.

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Appendix A: Study vignette

[Procedural justice condition]

Please read the following description and answer the questions below.

Officer Jones observed a group of teenagers with backpacks standing on the corner near a convenience store around 1:00 PM on a Wednesday. He approached the group and the following interaction occurred:

Officer Jones: Good afternoon, aren't you supposed to be in school?

The teens all looked at each other and one, Sam, spoke up: Oh, [we were just heading back as soon as Justin gets back from the store. We just had lunch around the corner at the sandwich shop and are heading back to school.]

Officer Jones: Get back to school so I do not have to call any parents.

Officer Jones returned to his cruiser. Officer Jones observed a teen come out of the store and the group walked quickly in the direction of the school.