Policing and social identity: Procedural justice, inclusion, and cooperation between police and public

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Policing and social identity: Procedural justice, inclusion, and cooperation between police and public

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Abstract
Accounts of the social representation of policing and of the relationship between police and citizen converge on the idea that police behaviour carries important identity-relevant meaning. Opinions of and ideas about the police are implicated in the formation of social identities that relate to the social groups it represents – nation, state and community. Procedural justice theory suggests that judgements about the fairness of the police will be the most important factor in such processes. Fairness promotes a sense of inclusion and value within the group. Furthermore, positive social identities in relation to the police should on this account promote cooperation with it. This paper presents an empirical test of these ideas in the context of British policing. Data from a survey of young Londoners are used to show that perceptions of police fairness are indeed associated with social identity, and in turn social identity can be linked to cooperation. Yet these relationships were much stronger among those with multiple national identities. Police behaviour appeared more identity relevant for people who felt they were citizens of a non-UK country, while for those who identified only as British there was a weaker link between procedural fairness and social identity, and legitimacy judgements were the main ‘drivers’ of cooperation. Policy and theoretical implications are discussed.
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Policing has always been implicated in processes of social inclusion and exclusion. From the founding of the London Metropolitan Police as, in part, a buffer between the respectable and disrespectful classes through to present day issues in the policing of ethnic minorities the police have played a key role in the social sifting of individuals and groups. The sorting and classificatory aspects of policing, and the differential ways in which individuals are drawn into the criminal justice system by police activity have significant material effects on the lives of those caught up in such processes (McCara and McVie 2007).

Yet policing also carries a heavy symbolic load. Strongly linked to community and belonging, the image of ‘British bobby’ is to this day a highly charged representation of a particular vision of social order (Loader 2006, Loader and Mulcahy 2003). Police and policing activity provide a set of symbolic tools that people use to describe and discuss their social environment, their place within it, and their hopes and fears for the future (Girling et al. 2000). For many, the story told appears to involve, still, an imagined national community (Anderson 1983) that appeals to the cohesion, safety and order of the immediate post-war years (Reiner 2010). The image of Dixon of Dock Green is of course hardly relevant to many other experiences of the police: those of inner-city, marginalised youth, for example. Yet here, too, issues of identity abound. The experience of negative policing styles could serve to encourage a pre-existing or nascent sense of difference and alienation from the wider social and political community. The police are a highly visible representation of the state, a concrete instantiation of its (often failed) claim to protect and represent all its citizens. The included and excluded may draw important lessons about their status from their experiences of policing.

This picture of the relationship between police and public resonates with a hitherto unexamined (at least in the UK) aspect of Tyler and colleague’s work on procedural justice. This model has developed a robust empirically grounded understanding of the relationship between individuals and authorities that revolves around process fairness (Lind and Tyler 1988, Tyler 2007, Tyler and Huo 2002, Tyler and Fagan 2008, see also Hough et al. 2010, Jackson et al. 2011, Tankebe 2009, Murphy et al. 2008). Strong, consistent links are found between fair procedure, legitimacy, and cooperative behaviour, among the general population at least. This is important because the police rely on some form of public cooperation in almost everything they do – and current research stresses that judgements about the legitimacy of the police are a key determinant of such cooperation. Yet group membership may be as important a predictor of cooperation. According to the group-value theory of procedural justice one reason people care so deeply about the fairness of authorities is that fairness communicates inclusion and status within the group the authority represents. Social groups are relevant and important to most individuals, and if they feel they are included and valued group members they are more likely to believe the group itself valid and valuable, and more likely to act in ways that support its representatives.

On this account fair treatment at the hands of police officers should promote identification with the social group the police represent – the imagined local or national community. Identification with this superordinate group should in turn encourage cooperative and other ‘pro-social’ behaviours (Tyler 2011). These ideas have yet to be examined in the context of British policing. Indeed, in highly diverse social settings such as those that now pertain in the major cities of the UK we might question their applicability. When people maintain multiple identities, and affiliate with a number of national, ethnic, religious, and local communities (among others), can police behaviour appeal to – or undermine – a shared identity in any meaningful way? Furthermore, the strong link between the idea of police and
socially dominant identities – such as nationality – may be problematic in such contexts. Some may feel a link with other nationalities; the (white) ethnic overtones of ‘Britishness’ (Gilroy 1987) may provide a barrier to people from minority ethnic groups.

This paper examines the potential link between police procedural justice and social identity. Two key hypotheses are tested using data from a survey of 1,017 young Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) men from four London boroughs. The first is that police procedural fairness promotes a sense of identification with the social group the police represent; the second is that a sense of identification with this group encourages cooperation with its representatives (i.e., the police). Evidence is presented in favour of both hypotheses, but mainly in regard to a sub-group of respondents who, while feeling they ‘belonged’ in Britain also expressed other national affiliations. The links between procedural fairness and identity among the group who identified only as British were weaker, and here it was police legitimacy that influenced decisions on whether to cooperate. The paper closes with discussion of the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

Policing, social identity, and public cooperation

“... policing remains closely tied to ... collective identity, and capable of generating high, emotionally charged levels of identification among citizens ... police institutions are able to evoke, affirm, reinforce, or (even) undermine the social relations and belief systems of political communities, serving, in particular, as a vehicle through which recognition within such communities is claimed, accorded, or denied” (Loader and Mulcahy 2003, p. 39)

In Policing and the Condition of England Loader and Mulcahy present a powerful argument for the continued relevance of a symbolic understanding of British policing (see also Loader 2006). While conceding ground to the idea that the police have been desacralized in recent times (Reiner 2010), and are in some ways now merely another mundane instrument of governance (Newburn 2003), they cleave strongly to the notion that there is something about the way policing is socially constructed and understood that continues to set it apart. It retains a strong symbolic potential, particularly as this concerns social identity, collective belonging, and, potentially, exclusion. Loader and Mulcahy argue that policing acts as a vehicle – or as a condensation symbol (Turner 1974) – via which individuals make sense of their past and potential future and through which collective identities are articulated. These identities appear to coalesce around a sense of local community that is nonetheless embedded in the wider national context (Girling et al. 2000).

These arguments are both well rehearsed (see for example Jackson and Bradford 2009) and in concordance with other work that, arguably, concentrates on the more mundane aspects of officers’ behaviour. While some have stressed the role of policing in communicating messages of inclusion or exclusion (or respectability/non-respectability - Waddington 1999), others have concentrated on the ways bureaucratic police activity names, delimits and transcribes the identities of those with whom officers interact (Ericson and Haggerty 1997). Perhaps more immediately relevant is work that has examined reactions to police stop and search activity. As one respondent in Parma’s (2012) study of reactions to Section 44 stop activity put it:

“I felt alright before I was stopped, I felt like this is my country, I was born here and there are so many parts of me that are all London … After the second time I was stopped I started to feel like people see what they want to see. The police see me as a terrorist, and then I’m invisible” (Parma 2011, p. 377).
These broadly sociological understandings of the police’s power to define and patrol the boundaries of social identities correspond with social psychological understandings of the role and meaning of group identity. Tyler and colleague’s work on procedural justice, specifically (Tyler 2007, Tyler and Huo 2002), and group engagement and social cooperation more widely (Blader and Tyler 2009, Tyler 2011, Tyler and Blader 2000, Tyler et al. 1996) involves just such an understanding. This body of work starts with the premise that social groups are important and meaningful in people’s lives. Individuals construct their identities around and in relation to groups they belong to or are affiliated to (Tajfel and Turner 1979), and assessments of inclusion and status in the group are made most importantly on the basis of fairness judgements. When people feel fairly treated by group authorities this indicates (a) that they are included and have status within the group and (b) that the group itself is worthwhile and something to be proud of. At the most basic level, people who feel strongly affiliated with a group incorporate it in their concept of self in such a way that the ends of the group become their own (Blader and Tyler 2009, p. 446).

Social identity is, on this account, linked to behaviour. These ideas therefore offer insight into some of the possible consequences of police behaviour that is perceived to be fair – or unfair – by those experiencing it. Fair treatment by group authorities such as the police strengthens people’s social identities in relation to the group: the extent to which they act in ways that further group interests will be predicted partly on assessments of inclusion and status; and partly on perceptions that the group itself has status and is worth supporting. Social identity provides, in short, a causal link between fair treatment and cooperative behaviour: “(a) procedural justice impacts behaviour, (b) procedural justice impacts social identity, and (c) social identity impacts behaviour, and ... social identity accounts for at least part of the reason that procedural justice impacts behaviour” (ibid, p. 447).

‘Social identity’ in this literature positions identity as an aspect of the ‘social-self’ that links the individual to the groups to which they belong (Tyler and Blader 2000, Tyler et al. 1999). No one particular group is imagined - it could be a work organization, a leisure group, a pressure group, or a nation – and the usage allows for the fact that people have multiple group memberships (Moghaddam 2008). Strong social identities vis a vis a particular group are marked by a sense of pride in the status of the group, and the extent to which people feel they themselves have status – or respect – within it. To put it another way, social identity has a cognitive component – a sense of belonging – and an evaluative component, which captures the worth people place on the group and their membership of it (Blader and Tyler 2009, p. 448).

The idea is, then, that (a) people’s social identities are shaped by the behaviour of the police as a group authority, and (b) the strength of individual’s identification with the group influences their behaviour in relation to it. Investigating the dynamics of crowd control through the prism of their elaborated social identity model (ESIM), Stott, Reicher and colleagues have provided strong evidence that police behaviour can indeed affect group identities (Drury and Reicher 2000, Reicher 1996, Stott and Drury 2000, Stott et al. 2011). Non-confrontational, process-based methods of policing football and other crowds activate social identities among crowd members that cross its ‘border’ to include other relevant social groups – including, perhaps, the police – while at the same marginalising ‘troublemakers’ within it. The majority in the crowd begins to police itself, isolating any members causing trouble, addressing their behaviour informally, and even helping police identify and interdict them. Aggressive, confrontational policing tactics, by contrast, fuse the crowd together in a group that stands against the police and strengthen the bonds individuals within the crowd have with each other, including with those who may want to cause trouble (Stott and Reicher 1998).
Does everyone care about procedural justice?

The central role of shared group membership in procedural justice theory raises concerns about its applicability in highly diverse, multi-cultural, settings. It may be, for example, that those who feel *ethnically* different from the police (or rather, the social groups the police represent) are not interested in fairness because their treatment at the hands of officers carries no identity relevant information. However, research from both the US and the UK (Bradford and Jackson 2010, Huo and Tyler 2000, Tyler and Huo 2002) has suggested that even in highly diverse contexts such as London and California people from different ethnic groups place a broadly similar weight on the fairness of the police in their overall judgements of the police and in the formation of their judgements about potential acts of cooperation (although see Murphy and Cherney 2011).

However there are other reasons for doubting the universality of a link between procedural fairness and a sense of shared group membership. Experimental and observational studies have suggested procedural justice may be more important in situations where people feel they are dealing with an in-group authority (Smith et al. 1998), or in situations where their status within the group is a more salient issue (Van Prooijen et al. 2002). When people do not recognise an authority figure as representing a contextually relevant group, or when they do not feel their status is in question, procedural fairness may mean little since the information it provides them is not identity relevant. Conversely Heuer and Stroessner (2011) found that respect – a relational variable – affected overall assessments of procedural fairness not only because it communicated ingroup status but also because it communicated *intergroup* standing. People’s judgements about the status of their own group *vis a vis* another were enhanced when a representative of the outgroup treated them with respect, and intergroup standing partially mediated the link between respect and overall assessments of procedural fairness. Procedural justice judgments may influence people’s sense of self in relation to groups other than those represented by the police.

Because Heuer and Stroessner found that *intragroup* standing was still relevant, in one respect they merely suggest that despite the fact that people have many (possibly competing) social identities, those they do share with the police may be strengthened by procedurally fair styles of policing. Nonetheless their study, along with the others outlined above, complicates the potential link between police procedural fairness and social identity, particularly in social settings where people have multiple, cross-cutting and possibly even conflicting identities. The increase in the volume and speed of population flows over the last quarter century has resulted in complex social identities that resist neat categorization – nationality is no-longer mono-cultural (if it ever was), migrants retain prior identities while at the same time developing new ones, resulting in hybrid forms, and the embeddedness of local cultures within a national – as opposed to a trans-national – context can no-longer be taken for granted (Bauman 2000, 2004). How might police behaviour influence social identity in such situations – will it be identity relevant to individuals with complex social identities?

The association between the police and *British* national (and local) identities provides one way of addressing these questions. On the one hand, it may be that the police, strongly identified with a particular nation-state and its claim to protect (and control) a tightly defined group of citizens, simply do not provide identity relevant information to individuals negotiating their way through multi-layered, trans-national identities. On the other hand, negotiating complex identity structures may make people more sensitive to the behaviour of authority figures because social identity is a ‘live’ issue for them; we might also suggest that police behaviour will not be identity relevant for those with more straightforward ‘British’ identities since this aspect of their identity is unproblematic and therefore not particularly
salient to them in most situations. The analysis described below therefore compares the associations between assessments of police procedural justice, social identity, and cooperation among those with multiple and single ‘national’ identities. Before that, however, some consideration is needed of other reasons why people do or not cooperate with the police.

Other influences on social identity judgements and cooperative behaviours
Blader and Tyler (2009) stress that procedural justice is not the only element of individual’s treatment at the hands of group authorities that might promote cooperative behaviour. In employment settings economic outcomes also encourage extra-role activity and other types of cooperation (see for example Podaskoff et al. 2000). This may indicate rational choice calculation, as people choose to work with authorities that can provide them with material rewards. Blader and Tyler argue, however, that evidence that people act purely on the basis of economic self-interest is mixed, at best (Kohn 1999, Tyler 2011). Furthermore, instrumental outcomes themselves carry important symbolic value, conveying information relating to self-worth, group values, and the extent to which the group values the individual (Porter et al. 1996). Both processes may of course occur at the same time. If assessments of instrumental effectiveness are associated with cooperative behaviours this may be because effectiveness indicates group status and values and because people are more willing to engage with authorities that provide them with material returns.

How might this translate into the context of policing? It could be that the instrumental aspect of policing – concerned with maintain order and ‘fighting crime’ – might itself convey status-relevant messages to citizens. When people feel the police are failing to keep their communities orderly and free from crime they may come to the conclusion that it, and the wider social group it represents, does not value them. This may, in turn, undermine their sense of identification with this wider group. Communities that have historically been ‘over-policied’ in a style that has damaged trust and legitimacy have also often been ‘under-protected’ (Kushnick 1999), and the failure of the state to protect its citizens may have been as keenly felt as any experience of unfairness. While research on public opinion of the British police consistently finds a valuation of fairness over effectiveness (Jackson and Bradford 2010) the notion that assessments of police efficacy are associated with trust, legitimacy and indeed social identity cannot be ruled out. Equally, people may indeed act as rational choice calculators, withdrawing cooperation when they feel the police are not providing a sufficiently robust level of service.

There are further routes toward, or away from, propensities to cooperate with the police. Previous work on British policing utilising the procedural justice model has focused on the link between fairness and legitimacy (Hough et al. 2010, Jackson et al. in press). As in the US (Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler and Huo 2002, Tyler and Fagan 2008), strong links are found between perceptions of police fairness, the legitimacy of the police, cooperation and even compliance with the law. The idea is that legitimate authorities generate a sense of duty among those they govern that motivates cooperation. The argument concerning social identity is entirely cognate with this understanding, albeit that it shifts the focus away from assessments of specific authorities and toward people’s general sense of inclusion and standing within the group as a whole. Tyler (2011) has recently argued that identity sits alongside moral values and attitudes (such as toward the legitimacy of the police) in a cluster of dispositional factors that promote cooperative behaviour within social groups. On this account social identity works in parallel and in conjunction with legitimacy judgements in promoting cooperation and compliance with rules.

Another argument is that the legitimacy of group authorities is itself partly emergent from social identity judgements. When people feel included in and valued by social groups
they are motivated to legitimate group authorities (Tyler and Huo 2002), and the legitimacy of authorities may partially mediate the links between procedural justice, social identity, and acts of cooperation or compliance. This notion speaks to a particular empirical or subjective concept of legitimacy akin to commitment or a sense of duty (c.f. Kelman and Hamilton 1989), rather than a fully rounded concept that incorporates individual’s moral judgements about authorities, or, indeed, to the objective qualities of those authorities (see Jackson et al. in press; Bottoms and Tankebe in press). Be that as it may, the potential link between group affiliation and legitimacy suggests that a full account of the links between procedural justice, social identity and acts of cooperation must attend to the possible role of legitimacy judgements.

Research hypotheses
The above discussion can be distilled into two hypotheses that echo those of Blader and Tyler (2009). These link perceptions to police fairness, social identity, and intentions to cooperate. A third hypothesis addresses the potential role of legitimacy judgements in mediating these associations.

The first hypothesis is that judgments concerning police procedural fairness will be positively associated with people’s identities in relation to the social groups the police represent. This hypothesis has two mutually exclusive components that address the potential complexity that may arise when the police, representative of a particular ‘national’ identity, are operating in social contexts where people have multiple affiliations to cognate identities. Hypotheses 1a is that police procedural justice will have an association with social identity that is similar for those with multiple and single national identities; Hypotheses 1b is that the association between procedural justice and identity will vary between those with multiple and single national identities.

Hypothesis 2 is that any association between judgements about police procedural fairness and individual’s willingness to cooperate with the police will be partly mediated by their social identity, such that those with a stronger social identity in relation to the groups the police represent will be more likely to offer their cooperation.

Hypothesis 3 is that any links between procedural justice, social identity and intentions to cooperate with the police will be partly mediated by assessments of its legitimacy. In line with the discussion in Tyler (2011) and elsewhere it is not expected that any mediation effect will be total, and significant direct associations between fairness judgements, social identity, and intentions to cooperate should remain even once legitimacy judgements are taken into account.

Note that responses to Hypotheses 2 and 3 are likely to depend on results in relation to Hypothesis 1. If there are significant differences in the relationship between procedural justice and social identity for the two groups of interest this may imply that the association between social identity, legitimacy and/or cooperation also differs (see below).

Data and methods
Data
Data are drawn a sample of 1,017 respondents from four London boroughs in the summer of 2010 (hereafter, ‘the BME survey’). The survey was a supplement to a larger public attitudes survey conducted on a rolling basis by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The sample included only young (16-30 years old) male respondents who self-identified as members of a minority ethnic group. This focus on ethnic minority populations is useful because of the long and difficult relationship between police and ethnic minorities in London and across the UK (Hall et al. 1978, Bowling and Philips 2002). In addition, the recent emphasis on counterterrorism policing in the capital, as elsewhere, is thought to have resulted in a greater
concentration of police attention on ethnic minority populations perceived as Muslim (Mythen et al. 2009), bringing the nature of the relationship between the police and young Muslim men into even sharper focus.

Two hundred and fifty interviews were carried in each borough sampled. A multi-stage geographical sampling process was used that lead to random selection of 25 sampling points in each borough. Interviewers were then given a quota of interviews to achieve within the areas selected.

Social identity in the BME survey
The social identities of the young men sampled are an important initial matter. In line with expectations they reported a wide range of affiliations – local, national, ethnic and religious. There was however a strong general identification with social groups associated with the police. Some 78 per cent felt they ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ strongly belonged to Britain; 82 per cent felt the same way about belonging to London (given the history and strong ‘brand-image’ of the MPS, belonging to London may be particular relevant in this context); 82 per cent felt they belonged to their ‘local area’. Almost all respondents (92 per cent) thought their national identity was very or fairly important to their sense of who they were. In a reminder of the multiplicity of identities held by these young people, 90 per cent felt their ethnicity was important to their sense of self, while 82 per cent felt this way about their religion.

The survey also asked respondents of which country they felt themselves to be citizens. The sample could therefore be split into two groups: UK citizens (n=669); and those who felt themselves to be citizens of other countries (n=348). Two points are worth noting. First, there was little difference between the two groups in relation to their sense of belonging either to Britain (82 per cent of the non-UK citizens felt they very or fairly strongly belonged, compared with 77 per cent of the UK citizens) or to London (86 per cent compared with 79 per cent). Second, this was a process of self-identification – respondents were not asked about legal citizenship, nor were they asked to provide evidence on this point. It is entirely possible that the ‘UK’ group contained individuals who were legally citizens of another country, and vice versa. In the context of this paper identity is entirely a matter of self-attribution.

Structure of the sample
The structure of the BME sample is shown in Table 1: figures for the total sample, the ‘UK’ group and the ‘non-UK’ group are all displayed. As might be expected, a large proportion of respondents were students; the unemployed were probably underrepresented (although note the difference between the UK and non-UK groups). There were significant numbers of individuals with Indian, Bangladeshi and Black African ethnicities, with smaller numbers of Black Caribbeans, Pakistanis, and individuals with mixed ethnic identities. Nearly half the respondents were Muslim. The most significant difference between the two sub-groups appeared to be that Indian Hindus were over-represented in the non-UK group, while Black Caribbeans were over-represented in the UK group. Note also that the UK group is significantly younger.

Table 1 near here

Constructs and measures
The BME survey contained a range of questions, all employing Likert-types scales, which addressed the key issues at hand (see the Appendix Table for question wordings). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in MPlus 6.11 was used to construct and validate measures for each of the key constructs required; the relationships between these were then
modelled using structural equation modelling. An important initial question was whether the factor structure was consistent enough across the UK and non-UK groups to allow comparison between them. Were the observed indicators measuring the same underlying ‘things’ – such as social identity – in the two groups? Accordingly, a multiple group CFA model was estimated in which factor loadings and the intercepts of the latent variables were constrained to be equal. Model fit proved to be adequate, indicating that the underlying factor structure was sufficiently invariant across the two groups to allow meaningful comparison between them (see Appendix Table for factor loadings and fit statistics). Note that in this and all subsequent models full information maximum likelihood modelling was utilised, meaning cases with missing values were not dropped but included in the analysis.

Two ‘response’ variables were required (the structural equation model has three dependent variables in total). The first represented respondent’s social identity, and comprised questions concerning assessments of how much they ‘belonged’ to their local area (defined as being within 15-20 minutes walk of their home), London, and Britain as a whole. This is therefore a very particular type of social identity that relates to people’s sense of belonging to a local and national ‘community’. The second response variable covered respondent’s willingness to cooperate with the police by reporting crimes, identifying suspects, and providing statements.

The main explanatory variable represented respondent’s assessment of the procedural fairness of the police. This scale contained items that covered fair procedure, voice and impartiality. These questions referred to perceptions of, or trust in, police procedural fairness: the scale does not cover the reality of police fairness but respondent’s judgements about this aspect of police behaviour. To address hypothesis 3 a second key explanatory variable, measuring respondent’s assessments of the legitimacy of the police, was also required. As operationalized, this measure covered respondent’s sense of duty to obey police. It is therefore only a partial measure of legitimacy that relates primarily to what Beetham (1990) might call expressed consent (see Bottoms and Tankebe in press).

One further explanatory variable was required: a measure of trust in police effectiveness. Recall that favourable outcomes may also influence social identity, and judgements that the police are effective might indicate that the group the police represent is successful fulfilling its remit of protecting its members, enhancing group status and pride.

Results

Figure 1 near here

Figure 1 shows a simple SEM that provides an initial response to Hypothesis 1. It displays the results of multiple group model (split between the UK and non-UK groups) in which social identity was regressed on both trust in police fairness and trust in police effectiveness. In this model factor loadings and latent variable loadings were again constrained to be equal across the two groups – the regression paths were however allowed to vary. Model fit was adequate, and the regression coefficients suggest a clear difference between the two groups. While in the UK group there was a weak, although statistically significant, association between procedural fairness and social identity, in the non-UK group this association was apparently much stronger. Conversely, in the UK group there was a significant positive association between police effectiveness and social identity; this was not found in the non-UK group.

The pattern of association between social identity and opinions of the police therefore seems to be different for the two groups of interest. Accordingly, to address Hypothesis 1 in a more robust manner and to consider Hypothesis 2 and 3, a larger multiple group SEM was
estimated that contained all the latent variable of interest as well as age, ethnicity, religion and social class as control variables. Results are shown in Figures 2a and 2b.

Figures 2a and 2b near here

The model shown in Figure 2a, covering only those who self-identified as UK citizens, first confirmed the results of the model shown in Figure 1. There were small but significant associations between police procedural justice and effectiveness, on the one hand, and social identity on the other. Second, for this group fairness rather than effectiveness was the main ‘driver’ of legitimacy. Third, controlling for procedural justice there was no association between social identity and police legitimacy. Finally, while both police legitimacy and effectiveness predicted cooperation, taking these associations into account there was no significant direct link between procedural fairness and cooperation.

The second model, shown in Figure 2b and covering only respondents who identified as being citizens of a non-UK country, was noticeably different from the first. The strength of the association between trust in police procedural fairness and social identity was confirmed – this was again much stronger for the non-UK than for the UK group. As in the other models, procedural justice predicted police legitimacy. Finally, and perhaps most intriguingly, in this final model trust in police effectiveness and social identity had significant unique associations with intentions to cooperate – net of these links, legitimacy and procedural fairness did not.

The extent of the variation across the two models suggests that all three hypotheses laid out above should be addressed separately for the ‘UK’ and ‘non-UK’ groups. The first hypothesis proposed that judgments about the procedural fairness of the police would be positively associated with individual’s social identities, at least as these related to the social groups the police represent. Evidence was found for this general hypothesis, but it was much stronger in relation to the ‘non-UK’ sample. It was therefore Hypothesis 1b that found most empirical support: the association between police procedural fairness and social identity varied according to whether individuals felt a single or multiple sense of ‘belonging’. For respondent’s who felt they were citizens of another country the perceived fairness of the police was strongly associated with the extent to which they also felt they belonged in London and Britain, but for those who felt they were UK citizens, the link between police fairness and this aspect of social identity was weaker, although still present.

Hypothesis 2 suggested that any association between judgements about police procedural fairness and individual’s willingness to cooperate with the police would be partly mediated by their social identity, and that those with a stronger social identity in relation to the police would be more likely to offer it their cooperation. There was evidence in support of this hypothesis only in relation to the non-UK group. Here, procedural justice had both a direct association with cooperation and an indirect link via social identity (the statistical significance of which was confirmed via the relevant Mplus function; β=.15, p<0.05). Individuals who felt themselves non-UK citizens were more likely to cooperate with the police when they felt a stronger sense of belonging in relation to local and ‘British’ identities. By contrast there was no significant association between social identity and intentions to cooperate in the UK group.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that any links between procedural justice, social identity and intentions to cooperate with the police would be partly mediated by assessments of its legitimacy. Among the UK group, legitimacy judgements entirely mediated the statistical effect of procedural justice on cooperation (the indirect statistical effect of fairness judgements on cooperation was significant: β=.26, p<0.05). Among the group who identified as citizens of non-UK country however there was no independent association between
legitimacy and intentions to cooperate. Finally, conditioning on procedural justice there was no significant link between social identity and police legitimacy in either model. Against expectation a feeling of belonging to relevant social groups did not promote police legitimacy – this appeared to be based primarily on assessments of the fairness of police behaviour.

Discussion
Results from the SEM modelling tell an intriguing story about the relationship between police procedural justice, social identity, legitimacy and cooperation in this London sample. First, trust in police procedural fairness, social identity, and cooperation were related, but not in a straightforward manner. The association between fairness and identity appeared stronger in relation to individuals who felt they belonged not only to the groups the police represent but also with some other cognate social group (that is, another nation state). Among this group, social identity furthermore predicted cooperation with the police – this was not the case, however, among the ‘UK’ group.

It may be, then, that police activity is a particularly important factor in promoting (or undermining) social identities among individuals who feel a more complicated sense of belonging – by dint, here, of seeing themselves as citizens of another country while also identifying with the community, city and country in which they lived. For such individuals police behaviour appeared to be strongly identity relevant. Having multiple cognate identities may have meant that they were more sensitive to way police officers treated them (or the ways they imagined officers would treat them). This may indicate some level of uncertainty or anxiety about their status and inclusion; or it may simply indicate more fluid identities that are more amenable to change as a result of experience. The group who felt themselves ‘only’ to be British citizens, by contrast, may have felt more secure in these same identities, meaning that the fairness (or not) of police activity was less identity relevant to them. Even here, however, there is evidence to suggest that the experience of police unfairness may, by communicating social exclusion and a lack of status, undermine identities in relation to community and nationality.

Second, the models demonstrate once again that the actions of police officers can have a profound effect on the legitimacy of the police. Among the particular population represented in the BME sample, as in the wider UK public (Hough et al. 2010, Jackson et al. in press) trust in the fairness of the police was very strongly associated with judgments about its legitimacy. This link was found in both the ‘UK’ and ‘non-UK’ samples. The association between legitimacy and cooperation was however more complex than has been suggested by previous studies: only in the UK sample did legitimacy (defined as duty to obey) influence propensities to cooperate. It seems that procedural justice influences propensities to cooperate with police via different, albeit complementary, pathways. In the UK group what appeared important was a sense of duty generated by perceptions of procedural justice. Among the non-UK group, however, it was identification with the social group(s) the police represent that was associated with a greater propensity to cooperate. A sense of belonging appeared to be a relatively more important influence on their decision-making.

Despite these differences, perceptions of the fairness of the police were in both cases an important ‘driver’ of intentions to cooperate. While the specific path varied between the two groups, the overall results accord with other research that has stressed the links between procedural justice and public cooperation with the police, whether the context has been the UK (Bradford and Jackson 2011); the US (Sunshine and Tyler 2003, Tyler and Fagan 2008), or Australia (Murphy and Cherney 2011). Whatever the specific path toward (or away from) cooperation, it appeared to stem most importantly from assessments of the fairness of the police.
Finally, fairness was not the only factor involved. In both sub-groups there was a significant direct path from police effectiveness to cooperation. While elucidation of this path is beyond the remit of the current study it does not seem unreasonable to suggest both an instrumental and a symbolic cause. People may be more ready to cooperate with the police when they feel it to be effective, a judgement that might be made on rational choice or social exchange criteria. At the same time, feeling the police are ineffective may signal abandonment or a loss of respect and undermine cooperation.

**Social identity, policing, and crime-related behaviour**
What is intriguing in the context of policing is therefore not only that procedural fairness appears to encourage public cooperation because it enhances the legitimacy of the police, but that fairness can also be linked to inclusion within the groups the police represent, and this in and of itself may influence behaviour in relation to these groups. It is here that the criminological and indeed policy implications of this study become apparent. An association between policing, belonging, and modes of inclusion (or exclusion) that discourage (or promote) law-abiding or socially productive behaviour has long been discussed in the literature. J. Young (1999) claims that the creation of denigrated outgroups forms part of a dialectic that leads those on the receiving end of material and symbolic exclusion toward acts of crime. People are less likely to commit crimes, and more likely to act in ways that are broadly ‘pro-social’, if they feel socially included. Those who are excluded may develop other identities that motivate offending and ‘anti-social’ behaviours.

This idea echoes theories of crime causation that stress the role of alienation and anomie more widely, and which encompass the notion that the extent to which individuals are embedded or alienated from social groups has implications for their readiness to commit crime (Downes and Rock 2007). Indeed, it edges toward the notion that police behaviour can be actively criminogenic when experienced as unfair: unfairness communicates denigration and exclusion, and may prompt individuals to form and adhere to group identities that facilitate and even encourage offending behaviour. At the very least, group identities that form (partly) in reaction to poor treatment at the hands of police officers are unlikely to encourage positive engagement with them at a later date (Clayman and Skinns 2011).

A more controversial, albeit complementary, example can be found in the ‘Prevent’ strand of counter-terrorism policy. The Prevent strategy document published in June 2011 specifically stated that to be successful counter-terrorism policy depended on “developing a sense of belonging to this country and on a perception of the importance and legitimacy of integration” (Home Office 2011: 18). This stress on integration, in turn, sits within wider policy and public discourses concerning the importance of enhancing citizenship and ‘belonging’ among ethnic and other minority groups (McGhee 2008). Critical voices have noted, often ironically, that many of the methods of current counter-terrorism policing such as stop and search activity may serve to undermine trust and turn communities inwards and away from the majority society and the state; because, indeed, they are found to be unfair (Parmar 2011, Spalek and Lambert 2008, Spalek *et al.* 2008, Vertigans 2010). As currently implemented, and despite the apparent intention behind Prevent, counter-terrorism policing that is not extremely well targeted may have entirely counter-productive implications, as aggressive police tactics and political rhetoric *create* radicalisation – a withdrawal from social identities associated with the wider society.

The importance of generating a sense of ‘belonging’ via Prevent policies (and indeed many other government initiatives) is an idea that continues to garner significant political support while at the same time being heavily critiqued by academics, community activists and others. There appears to be agreement on both sides of the argument, however, that policies should focus on promoting a sense of social inclusion among those ‘at risk’ of
radicalisation, and indeed among minority communities more widely. The government appears to favour ‘outreach’ and ‘partnership building’ (with some groups if not others) as a way to promoting a sense of belonging. Others might point to the importance of human rights and a social justice agenda. Yet the everyday activity of police and the lived experience of policing among young people from ethnic and other minority groups, may, in as much as it is experienced as fair or unfair, may be just as important an influence on their sense of identity and social embeddedness.

Limits of the study
As ever, this study has a number of limitations. First, its measure of social identity, while necessarily limited to the national and local ‘community’ in order to access respondent’s sense of affiliation to social groups the police might reasonably be considered to represent, was also limited by including only measures of their sense of belonging. Social identity also includes elements of pride and of evaluation both of the group and of the individual’s place within it (Blader and Tyler 2009). A more detailed measure of social identity might refocus or even alter some of the associations described above, and this would be a fruitful area of future research.

Second, the ultimate ‘outcome’ variable was a measure of self-reported propensity to cooperate with the police. This is clearly limited by being a measure of intention rather than action, but perhaps more importantly it cannot hope to capture the full range of actions an individual might undertake on behalf of the group the police represent: the cooperative acts covered were very firmly associated with the police as an organization. The association between social identity and pro-social behaviour may therefore be both under-estimated, because a sense of social inclusion generated via fair treatment at the hands of the police may promote other ‘cooperative’ actions, and over-estimated, because pro-social behaviour, as measured, is so firmly associated with the police that it may not really action on behalf of the group as a whole but rather something that occurs in conjunction with or even on behalf of the police.

Finally, the analysis utilised cross-sectional observational data. Any causality underlying the associations described in Figures 2a and 2b may therefore flow in the opposite direction to that implied. While public opinion of policing as a subject does not automatically lend itself to experimental research designs, due most importantly to the ethical issues that would arise in trying to manipulate people’s experience of the police in some way, some studies have taken experimental and quasi-experimental approaches (e.g. Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd 2011), and it would be fascinating to approach the issues described here from an experimental perspective. Aside from this panel designs have been used in related research in the US for many years (e.g. Tyler and Huo 2002, Tyler and Fagan 2008), and the relative lack of such data in relation to UK research on police-public relations continues to raise significant doubts about its robustness (although see Myhill and Bradford 2011). This is a particular concern in terms of the potential feedback loops that may exist between perceptions of fairness, social identity, and legitimacy.

Conclusion
Provisos aside the findings reported above provide significant evidence for the idea that, as well as enhancing legitimacy, experiencing police procedural fairness may strengthen individual’s identities in relation to social groups the police represent. Perceptions of police fairness, social identity and legitimacy can all have effects on propensities to cooperate with officers.

As originally envisaged by the wider project of which the BME survey was part the Prevent strand of counter-terrorism work therefore comprises an important backdrop to this
paper. Yet, the link between perceptions of police fairness and social identity suggests that this and similar policies may – at the very least – need to be refocused. It appears that attempts to generate social inclusion and a sense of belonging among minority populations – that governments have for many years said is a priority (McGhee 2008) – should attend not only to ‘community building’ and engagement with ‘community leaders’ but to the way in which people as individuals are treated by state representatives such as the police. This moves the focus of the debate firmly onto the street and everyday encounters between police officers and citizens. Attempts to promote ‘inclusion’ whether via policing methods or other policy tools should place more emphasis on these immediate, personal, interactions. From more operational viewpoint, police seem all too often to concentrate on ‘take me to your leader’ efforts while ignoring the fact that they are in daily contact with people the leader is meant to represent; people who draw direct, unmediated lessons from the way officers treat them and who may use these lessons in the construction of their social selves and in judgements about the extent of their commitment to the wider community.

There are many implications arising from this. To give just one particularly salient example, aggressive stop and search tactics as a counter-terrorism tool should be judged not only on the basis of instrumental effectiveness, or from a human rights perspective, but also on the basis that police-initiated contact is often experienced as unfair by those experiencing it (Bradford et al. 2009, Myhill and Bradford 2011) and may therefore undermine people’s sense that they share a social identity with the police. Modes of policing and security provision that stigmatise and exclude certain social groups (of which young ethnic minority men are the classic example) are therefore pernicious for reasons other than the raw injustices upon which they are premised (Hudson 2008, van Swaingen 2005): the experience of procedural injustice undermines positive social identities. Naturally, this argument should not be overstated, particularly in light of the finding that the link between procedural justice and social identity was relatively weak in the ‘UK’ sample. Yet, here, as across the sample, a concern with the way in which police officers wield their power shone through, and unfairness was linked to lower legitimacy and less cooperation.

Police unfairness therefore risks damaging the cooperative links between police and community that are necessary for the maintenance of an ethically viable criminal justice policy. Yet the reverse is also true. Hudson (2008) draws on Carson (2007) and I. Young (2000) to argue that policies of crime prevention can draw on ideas of community that do not collapse into essentialist communitarianism but which rather draw on a more cosmopolitan, multi-faceted concept of community. The findings presented here speak powerfully to this idea. The BME survey respondents evinced a wide range of identities, some of which were unlikely to be in any sense shared by the police or the groups it represents. Yet, for some a greater sense of inclusion along the axis of identity they did share with the police promoted a readiness to cooperate with officers. For others, it was a sense that the police, an important representative of the state with powers of governance over their lives, were legitimate that prompted a readiness to cooperate. In both cases this commitment to a cooperative effort to ‘fight crime’ – based on a sense of procedural justice – did not come at the expense of other identities but existed alongside and, arguably, in complement with other strongly held ideas of self and community.
Acknowledgements
The survey used in this study was funded by the London Metropolitan Police Service as part of a wider investigation into the impact of counter-terrorist and other forms of policing on people from ethnic minority groups living in the capital. Particular thanks must go to Betsy Stanko for allowing me access to MPS data and for her continued advice and support. Thanks also to Jon Jackson for his comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Notes
1. Within each borough five Census wards were selected via random probability sampling weighted according to number of eligible respondents in each ward. Second, within each selected ward, five Census Output Areas (OAs) were selected via random probability sampling weighted according to number of eligible respondents in each OA. Third, for each selected OA, all OAs adjoining or near to it were identified; four were then randomly selected. This gave a total of five sampling points per borough, each comprising 5 ‘clustered’ OAs. Finally, the interviewer team was provided with all the addresses in the selected sample point (from PAF) and instruct interviewers to free-find ten eligible respondents. A total of 25 sampling points (10 interviews in each) were issued for each borough giving 100 sample points in all.

2. These findings correspond with what it known about the identity beliefs of people from ethnic minority groups in the UK more widely. The 2009/10 Citizenship Survey (DCLG 2010), for example, found that 88 per cent of Whites (sic), 90 per cent of Pakistanis, 91 per cent of Bangladeshis, and 85 per cent of Black Caribbeans felt they belonged fairly or very strongly to Britain.

References


Murphy, K., and Cherney, A. 2011. ‘Understanding cooperation with police in a diverse society’ *British Journal of Criminology* Advance access.


### Table 1: Structure of the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>'UK'</th>
<th>'Non-UK'</th>
<th>Full sample</th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
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<td>31</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Hindu</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td><strong>Housing tenure</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner/occupier</td>
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<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social renter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private renter</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social class of head of household</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D/E</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| n                         | 665  | 347     | 1017        |

*Source: London Metropolitan Police 'BME' survey, 2010.*
Figure 1: Do associations between trust in the police and social identity vary?

Model fit statistics:
Chi-square = 381.1; df = 147; p = < 0.00005
RMSEA = .06; CFI = .99; TLI = .99

* Significant at 5 per cent confidence level
Unstandardized coefficients
Figure 2a: Full model predicting social identity and cooperation with the police (UK group)

Fit statistics:
Chi-square=8.09, df=418; p<0.00005
RMSEA=.04; CFI=.98; TLI=.98

* Significant at 5 per cent level
Unstandardized coefficients
Figure 2a: Full model predicting social identity and cooperation with the police (non-UK group)

Control variables – regression paths omitted for visual ease

Fit statistics:
Chi-square=809.4; df=418; p=<0.00005
RMSEA=.04; CFI=.98; TLI=.98

* Significant at 5 per cent level
Unstandardized coefficients
Appendix Table

Constructs and measures: results from the measurement components of the SEMs

Unstandardized factor loadings from multiple group CFA analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police fairness</strong></td>
<td>To what extent do you agree or disagree that when you deal with the police in London (1=strongly agree, 4=strongly disagree, reversed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People often receive fair outcomes from the police.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police use roles and procedures that are fair to everyone</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police clearly explain the reasons for their actions to people they deal with</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police provide opportunity for unfair decisions to be corrected</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police make decisions based on facts, rather than their own personal opinions</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>How well you think the Metropolitan police does (1=not at all well; 7=very well)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responds to emergencies promptly</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackles gun crime</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackles drug dealing and drug use</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackles dangerous driving</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social identity</strong></td>
<td>How strongly you feel you belong to (1=very strongly, 5=not at all strongly, reversed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local area</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police legitimacy</strong></td>
<td>To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (1 strongly agree, 4 strongly disagree, reversed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should accept police decisions because that is the proper or right thing to do.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should obey the directives of the police if you consider their actions lawful.</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperation with the police</strong></td>
<td>If the situation arose, how likely would you be to (1=very likely, 4=not at all likely, reversed):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call the police if you witnessed a crime</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report suspicious activity to the police</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide information about a suspect to the police</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Model Fit Statistics**

- Chi-square: 662.5
- Degrees of Freedom: 274
- p-value: <0.0005
- CFI: 0.98
- TLI: 0.98
- RMSEA: 0.05

n: 1,017

*Source: London Metropolitan Police 'BME' survey, 2010.*