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### Procedural justice, minorities, and religiosity

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### Procedural justice, minorities, and religiosity

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The current research explores six hypotheses derived from the well-known procedural justice-based model of legitimacy in two different religious groups in Israel, and adds to the model the effect of religiosity on the perceived legitimacy of rules and institutions of social control. Our results, based on data from a representative sample of 1,216 Israeli Jews and Arabs, provide general support for the hypotheses. We found that the social order is perceived as less legitimate by the Arab minority compared with the Jewish majority, and by highly religious members of the Jewish majority compared with those who are less religious.

**Keywords:** procedural justice; legitimacy; minorities; religion; religiosity

#### Introduction

In any society, the police represent one of the most important institutions of social control. Therefore, attitudes toward the police are a relevant indicator of how citizens perceive the legitimacy of the social order, as well as the degree of social cohesion within a society. The evaluation of such attitudes and their determinants has become a central issue in social research, and one that is particularly influenced by the concept of procedural justice (see, e.g. Cohn, White, & Sanders, 2000; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Törnblom & Vermunt, 2007; Tyler, 1990, 2004).

Lind and Tyler's (1988) theory of procedural justice attempts to explain why people willingly comply with law-enforcement authorities, even when this compliance does not necessarily seem to be in their instrumental interests. They propose that assessments of whether particular acts, including decision-making processes and procedures, are moral or just arise from internalized norms and not purely from self-interest (Tyler, 1988). In accordance, willingness to comply depends upon a belief that those authorities who carry out the law are legitimate – a belief that in turn relies on the perception that those authorities employ just and fair procedures (Herbert, 2003). The theory will be discussed further below.

The present research builds on the empirical approach to the procedural justice-based model of legitimacy as proposed by Sunshine and Tyler (2003b). The study has two main goals. First, we will test the replicability of Sunshine and Tyler's model in a different social setting from the original study, which was performed in the city of New York. In this regard, we will examine the applicability of some of the model's assumptions in a society with marked group cleavages, namely Israel. While Sunshine and

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Tyler took account of divisions between New York's three main ethnic groups (whites, Hispanics, and African-Americans), the social and political divisions between Israel's Jewish majority and Arab minority are notoriously deeper (Moore, 2000; Yiftachel, 1997). Second, we will look at how the perceived legitimacy of the institutions of social control (i.e. law-enforcement authorities) is affected by a construct not yet examined vis-à-vis this model – namely religiosity.

As a multicultural and multiethnic society, Israel serves as an interesting case for studying the procedural justice-based model, and in particular for exploring the effect of ethnic affiliation (minority vs. majority) and religiosity on the model's main premises. Israel's Arab minority is segregated in many senses – culturally, linguistically, geographically, and economically (Moore, 2000) – and members of this ethnic minority have been found to have the lowest level of support for state laws, and less supportive attitudes towards the police, relative to other social groups in Israel. Similarly, studies have found ultra-Orthodox Jews, a minority group within the Israeli Jewish majority, to have lower evaluations of the police and lower perceived obligation to obey the law compared to the majority (Hasisi & Weitzer, 2007; Rattner & Yagil, 2004; Rattner, Yagil, & Pedahzur, 2001). Understanding the normative motivations underlying the attitudes of minority groups toward the police in a deeply divided society such as Israel may aid efforts to develop tools aimed at elevating support for the institutions of law enforcement among social or ethnic minority groups in various societies.

### **The procedural justice-based model of police legitimacy**

The procedural justice perspective emerged as an alternative to the so-called self-interested or instrumental perspective, according to which people's willingness to cooperate with law-enforcement authorities is linked to perceptions of police performance (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a, 2003b). According to the instrumental perspective, compliance with the police is rooted primarily in two things: (1) the principle of deterrence (i.e. the threat of sanctions that would accompany non-compliance) and (2) perceptions that the outcome of any ensuing legal process will be fair (Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Sunshine and Tyler identify three main components of the instrumental perspective: perceived risk, police performance, and distributive fairness. *Perceived risk* refers to the threat of sanctions for non-compliance. *Police performance* means that support for the police is conditioned on public perceptions of efficiency in fighting crime and reducing public disorder. Finally, *distributive fairness* has to do with how the police distribute their services across people and communities.

Sunshine and Tyler (2003a, 2003b) argue that, while the three instrumental predictors are important, they affect people's attitudes less than *procedural fairness* – i.e. fairness in the processes by which the police make decisions about the allocation of resources, enforcement of the law, etc. Procedural fairness differs from distributive fairness in that the latter refers to outcomes, whereas the former deals with the processes that lead to those outcomes. Moreover, procedural fairness refers to fairness in specific interactions with citizens in both interpersonal treatment and in decision-making. According to Sunshine and Tyler (2003a, 2003b), the distinction between the instrumental- and procedural-based perspective is crucial to understanding the legitimacy of police institutions.

Under the procedural justice-based model, support for a society's law-enforcement institutions can be measured in three ways: through levels of compliance with laws and regulations; through willingness to cooperate with police activities (in actions such as

reporting crimes or calling for help); and through a willingness to empower the police (i.e. to allow them greater discretion within which to act) (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b). When the police are regarded as legitimate, levels of these three indicators of support will be high.

Over the years, numerous studies have tested Sunshine and Tyler's model in various contexts and settings, while suggesting some modifications to it (Jonathan-Zamir & Weisburd, 2011; Murphy, Tyler, & Curtis, 2009; Tankebe, 2009). It should be noted that although empirical studies have generally supported the hypotheses derived from the model, it has been criticized for its psychometrical properties, and some variations have been found in how the original model is manifested in different countries (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Reisig, Bratton, & Gertz, 2007; Tankebe, 2009).

From the procedural justice-based model of legitimacy, we can generate three hypotheses. The first states that procedural justice and the three instrumental predictors (distributive fairness, police performance, and perceived risk) will be found to influence the perceived legitimacy of the police, and that procedural justice will have a greater impact than the instrumental predictors ( $H_1$ ). The second hypothesis states that the perceived legitimacy of the police will be related positively to the three indicators of support for the police, namely compliance with the law, cooperation with police activities, and empowerment of the police ( $H_2$ ). Finally, the third hypothesis posits that procedural justice and the instrumental predictors will have a direct impact on the three indicators of support, and that procedural justice will have a greater influence on these indicators than the instrumental predictors ( $H_3$ ). The model is presented in Figure 1, with darker lines showing the effects that are presumed to be strongest, as per  $H_1$  and  $H_3$ .

### Minorities and religiosity

Minorities are members of society who are defined by others as 'different' in biological, cultural, behavioral, or organizational terms (Turner, 1986). The segregation which tends to follow from these perceptions increases interactions among members of the minority group and so intensifies their cultural, organizational, and behavioral distinctiveness, which in turn enhances the majority's prejudices and their sense of being under threat.

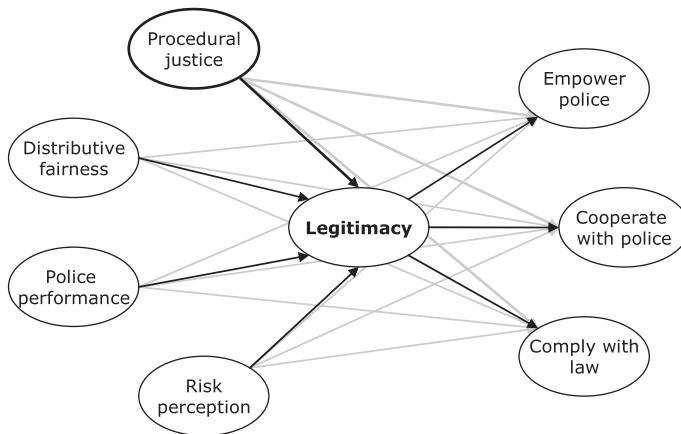


Figure 1. Procedural justice-based model of police legitimacy.

Growth in minority populations appears to enhance the majority's prejudices and sense of threat (Blalock, 1967; Factor, Kawachi, & Williams, 2011). This process is even stronger in deeply divided societies which are characterized by extreme polarization along ethnic lines (Hasisi & Weitzer, 2007).

Studies indicate that alienation and social exclusion among minority groups may lead to reduced commitment to and compliance with the law, and to a tendency to perceive the legal culture of the majority as less than legitimate (Rattner & Yagil, 2004). Indeed, there is ample evidence that members of minority groups express less trust, less confidence, and more negative attitudes about various institutions of social control than do members of the majority group (Factor et al., 2011; Hasisi & Weitzer, 2007; Rattner et al., 2001; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b; Weitzer, Tuch, & Skogan, 2008). We hypothesize that such differences will be clearly present in the Israeli case, such that members of the Jewish majority will perceive the police as more legitimate and will support the police more strongly than members of Israel's Arab minority ( $H_4$ ).

Sunshine and Tyler (2003b) argued that despite differences between minority and majority groups, 'the psychological basis of legitimacy is similar within each group' (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b, p. 537). The authors found support for this assertion among New York's three main ethnic groups: whites, Hispanics, and African-Americans. Yet, the question remains whether this assumption holds in a society where social and political cleavages are notoriously deeper, as in Israel (Moore, 2000; Yiftachel, 1997). To test this assumption, we hypothesize ( $H_5$ ) that the procedural justice-based model will work in a similar way among Israeli Jews and Arabs (i.e.  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ , and  $H_3$  will hold true for both groups).

One important issue that has received insufficient attention in the context of the procedural justice-based model is the effect of religiosity on the legitimacy of the rules and institutions of social control. Previous studies indicate that people who hold conservative religious views may give higher priority to what they regard as divine law than to rules of behavior imposed by society (Gibson & Caldeira, 1996; Richards & Davison, 1992). For instance, Rattner and Yagil (2004) found greater willingness to take the law into one's own hands among members of social groups with strong religious beliefs.

Thus, we add religiosity as an explanatory variable that may account for possible group differences in the Israeli context. Given the previous findings on conservative religious views described above, we propose ( $H_6$ ) that highly religious individuals in both groups (i.e. Orthodox Jews and highly observant Arabs, most of whom are Muslim) will score lower on both legitimacy and support for the police than less religious individuals. However, based on previous evidence (see, e.g. Rattner & Yagil, 2004), we suggest that the mechanisms in the two cases will be different: a feeling of discrimination and repression in the case of highly observant Israeli Arabs, and a perception of poor performance and effectiveness on the part of the police in the case of Orthodox Jews.

## Methodology

### Data

We sampled 1,216 adults (809 Jews and 407 Arabs) using stratified random sampling method. Probability sampling was conducted for each locality in the country, such that each locality would be represented in the final sample in proportion to the size of its population. Stratification was used in order to capture the heterogeneity of each locality in terms of religiosity and socioeconomic status. For the Jewish population, for example, we sampled groups such as the ultra-Orthodox, residents of Jewish settlements

in the West Bank, secular Jews, and other subgroups in numbers equal to their proportion of the population.

We constructed our sample using the database of Israel's national phone company, which includes both landline and cellular phone numbers. Of 5,962 phone numbers in the initial sample, contact was established with 3,193. Complete interviews were conducted with one person aged 18 or older in 1,216 households, yielding a response rate of 38.1%, slightly above the response rate typically reported for phone surveys in Israel.

Participants were interviewed from 2 to 27 August 2009. Interviews were conducted in Hebrew or Arabic, depending on the home language of the respondent. To ensure accuracy, the questionnaire was translated into both languages using standard techniques of back translation. In addition, we conducted a small interview-based pilot study to ensure that the items were understood similarly in both subsamples.

### Variables

The survey items represented eight scales designed to tap different aspects of the procedural justice-based legitimacy model (the items of the scales and the bivariate correlations between the scales can be obtained from the authors upon request). Following Sunshine and Tyler (2003b), we used Cronbach's alpha to test the reliabilities of the scales. All the reliabilities ranged from acceptable to good except for the police empowerment scale, whose reliability was comparatively low. Nevertheless, we chose to retain this scale in the model since similar results were reported in the paper of reference ( $\alpha = .56$ ). The Cronbach's alphas are shown in Table 1.

As represented in Figure 1, the three dependent variables that refer to support for the police (empowerment, cooperation, and compliance) are predicted in the model by legitimacy. At the same time, legitimacy is influenced by procedural justice and the three instrumental predictors (distributive fairness, police performance, and perceived risk).

Besides these predictive associations, we incorporate a series of control variables. The two central predictors are *group affiliation* and *degree of religiosity*. *Group affiliation* refers to the participant's ethnic identification with the Jewish majority or Arab minority in Israel. *Degree of religiosity* is measured on a four-point scale from highly religious to not at all religious. The variables are interrelated, and so to avoid problems

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the main research variables.

	Range	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Gender (1 = women)	0,1	.50	.50	
Age	18–88	42.03	16.38	
Education	1–6	3.79	1.49	
Income	1–5	2.74	1.36	
Degree of religiosity	1–4	2.88	1.07	
Procedural justice	1–5	3.12	.75	.91
Distributive fairness	1–5	2.90	.94	.64
Police performance	1–5	2.84	.86	.82
Risk perception	1–5	3.46	.72	.87
Legitimacy	1–5	3.38	.76	.87
Police empowerment	1–5	3.17	.84	.55
Police cooperation	1–5	3.36	.91	.83
Law compliance	1–5	4.57	.59	.64

relating to multicollinearity, the degree of religiosity is only included in models calculated separately for Arabs and Jews. Besides group affiliation and religiosity, the model includes income, education, age, and gender as control variables. Descriptive statistics of the research variables are shown in Table 1.

### Data analysis

Following Sunshine and Tyler (2003b), we estimated the models with a path analysis framework using maximum likelihood with Mplus 5.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2007). Besides the fact that we aimed to replicate the original model using the same method as its authors, path analysis by itself is especially attractive for testing the procedural justice-based model, since it enables testing all the assumptions of the model simultaneously – among other things, testing several dependent variables together – while accounting for all the variance at once. Moreover, path analysis allows for observing intermediate effects. In these respects, applying path analysis to test the research questions appears preferable to the more traditional method of executing several multivariate regressions.

We followed Sunshine and Tyler's model precisely and tested all possible paths, including direct and indirect paths. Our final models presented below include only the significant associations, except for the correlations between the four antecedents of legitimacy and the outcome variables, which were significant in most of the models but are not presented in the tables and graphs in order not to confuse our readers (the correlation between police empowerment and law compliance was not significant in the model presented in Table 2, and the correlation between police empowerment and police cooperation was not significant for the models presented in Figures 2 and 3).

## Results

### The general procedural justice-based model

Table 2 shows the main results for the path analysis estimation of the procedural justice-based model (the parameter estimates of additional predictors can be obtained from the authors upon request). Model I represents the influence of the predictors on

Table 2. Path analysis of the procedural justice-based model for policing.

	(I) Legitimacy	(II) Police empowerment	(III) Cooperation	(IV) Compliance
Procedural justice	.44** (16.48)	.27** (6.70)	.28** (6.80)	.07** (2.70)
Police fairness	.07** (3.60)	.06* (2.34)	.11** (3.69)	–
Police performance	.19** (8.46)	.08** (2.75)	–	–
Perceived risk	.07** (2.84)	.07* (2.19)	.13** (3.86)	.07** (2.90)
Legitimacy		.15** (4.19)	.05 (1.39)	.05* (2.03)
R <sup>2</sup>	.47	.22	.26	.14
Model fit				
$\chi^2$ : 55.49, df(45), <i>p</i> -value: .13				
CFI: .99 RMSEA: .013				

Notes: Maximum likelihood estimation; unstandardized coefficients; *z* statistics in parentheses; non-displayed coefficients fixed to 0; \*\**p* < .01, \**p* < .05.



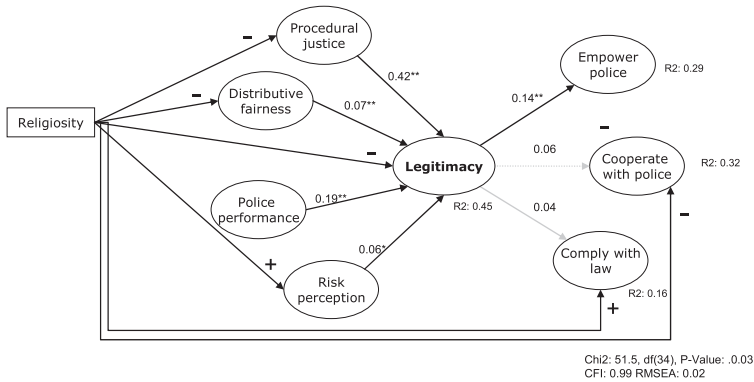


Figure 2. Procedural justice-based model of legitimacy in the Jewish population and the effect of religiosity.

Notes: Control variables: education, income, age, sex. Maximum likelihood estimation; unstandardized coefficients; \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

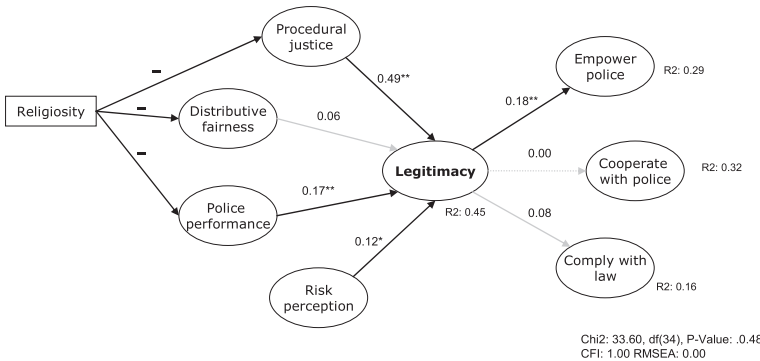


Figure 3. Procedural justice-based model of legitimacy in the Israeli Arab population and the effect of religiosity.

Notes: Control variables: education, income, age, and sex. Maximum likelihood estimation; unstandardized coefficients; \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*  $p < .05$ .

legitimacy, while Models II–IV include both legitimacy and its predictors as influencing the three scales of support for the police. Some coefficients were fixed to zero to improve the fit indexes since in an initial estimation they were not significant. Model indexes such as the comparative fit index (CFI) and root mean square of approximation (RMSEA) indicate a general good fit to the data, which means that the model works out in the Israeli sample.

In general, Model I in Table 2 shows that all four predictors are positively associated with legitimacy. All in all, the four predictors explain 47% of the variance of the legitimacy scale. Moreover, procedural justice has a stronger impact on legitimacy than the three instrumental predictors. Thus, the data support our first hypothesis.

Models II–IV provide partial support for our second hypothesis, dealing with the influence of legitimacy on support for the police. This is due primarily to the exogenous

determination of police cooperation and to the design of the compliance scale. Legitimacy appears to be positively associated with empowerment of the police and compliance with the law. No significant association was found with cooperation. However, an additional analysis of the model without the control and predictor variables provides evidence for a significant effect of legitimacy on cooperation ( $b = .11$ ,  $p < .01$ ; these results can be obtained from the authors upon request). This influence thus appears to be conditioned by exogenous predictors. In addition, the compliance scale was highly skewed and presented very low variance. For this reason, like Sunshine and Tyler (2003b), we carried out an additional analysis with a square root transformation and a logistic regression. However, this analysis did not produce any improvement in the results for the effect of legitimacy on compliance.

Our third hypothesis posited that procedural justice would have the strongest effect on the three aspects of support for the police. This is indeed the case for empowerment and cooperation (Models II–III), but in the case of the compliance scale we found a comparatively lower effect (Model IV). This finding suggests that compliance with the law is affected primarily by instrumental predictors. However, we must bear in mind the aforementioned problems with the compliance scale, and accept this result with caution. Despite the general predominance of procedural justice, which provides partial support for hypothesis 3, in general, we can observe significant direct effects of the instrumental predictors, and in particular for police empowerment. Therefore, in general, we can conclude that while procedural justices have primacy in determining levels of support for the police, instrumental predictors also play an important role.

To sum up the results of this first part of the analysis, we found general support for the hypotheses behind the procedural justice-based model of police legitimacy in the case of Israel. Procedural justice has a stronger impact on legitimacy compared to the instrumental predictors, legitimacy has a positive effect on support for the police, and support for the police is affected primarily by procedural justice. This replication of the model with the Israeli sample allows us to proceed confidently to the second step of this research, namely the analysis of differences between Israel's ethnic and religious groups.

### ***The influence of group affiliation and religiosity on the legitimacy of the police***

We begin the second part of our analysis by testing for group differences in relation to the different elements that comprise the procedural justice-based model of legitimacy. Then, we apply the model separately to the two main groups (Jews and Israeli Arabs) in order to analyze the role of religiosity.

Table 3 presents the results of the path analysis comparing the Jewish and Arab ethnic groups. Here, we correlated each variable listed in the table with a binary variable which represents group affiliation (the coefficients shown in Table 2 are not repeated here). Several results stand out. First, members of the Israeli Arab minority perceive the police as less legitimate than do members of the Jewish majority. Consistent with this finding, members of the Arab minority also report less support for the police, in terms of cooperation with the police and compliance with the law – results that support our fourth hypothesis. Second, with regard to the predictors of legitimacy, only procedural justice does not appear to be associated with group differences. The instrumental predictors of legitimacy are all higher for the Israeli Arabs than for the Jews.

Our final hypotheses dealt with the validity of the model ( $H_5$ ) and the effects of religiosity ( $H_6$ ) for the Jewish and Arab populations independently. To test these hypotheses, we analyzed the procedural justice-based model separately for each

Table 3. Group differences in the procedural justice-based model scales.

	Proced. justice	Police fairness	Police perform.	Perceived risk	Legitimacy	Police empow.	Coop- eration	Com- pliance
Affiliation (Ref= Jewish)								
Israeli	-.06	.31**	.26**	.29**	-.14**	.03	-.64**	-.10**
Arab	(-1.33)	(5.38)	(5.06)	(6.37)	(-3.09)	(.61)	(-12.27)	(-2.70)
R <sup>2</sup>	.04	.03	.07	.11	.46	.22	.25	.14
Model fit								
$\chi^2$ : 67.09, df(38), <i>p</i> -value: .00								
CFI: .99 RMSEA: .024								

Notes: \*\**p* < .01.

population, and then analyzed all possible paths for religiosity. The statistically significant results are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2 shows the results for the Jewish group. Most of the significant associations for the whole sample are also evidenced here; only compliance with the law is no longer significantly associated with legitimacy (there was no significant association for cooperation with the police in either the general model or the model for the Jewish subsample). As a consequence, the only measure of support associated with legitimacy for this subsample appears to be police empowerment. On the other hand, cooperation and compliance are directly affected by procedural justice (.12, *p* < .00; .07, *p* < .01, respectively; not shown in the figure), confirming the theoretical assumptions of the procedural justice-based model. Therefore, the procedural justice scale appears to be a better predictor of support for the police in this group than legitimacy itself. This finding reveals some limitations of the model (and/or its measurement) that will be further addressed in the discussion.

Turning to the role of religiosity in the Jewish subsample, we find support for our sixth hypothesis: Greater religiosity is negatively associated with the perceived legitimacy of the police. This result is consistent with the negative effect of religiosity on perceptions of procedural justice and on cooperation with the police. On the other hand, greater religiosity is also associated with a higher perceived risk of sanctions and with greater compliance with the law.

Figure 3 shows the results for the Israeli Arab subsample. As the figure shows, the coefficients that were not significant for the Jewish subsample are also not significant here, and an additional relationship also loses its significance – namely, the effect of distributive fairness on legitimacy. However, the remaining parameters of the model hold, supporting *H*<sub>5</sub>. Regarding religiosity, greater religiosity among Israeli Arabs is negatively associated with perceptions of procedural justice, as in the Jewish subsample. However, in contrast to the results for the Jewish subsample, we did not find a negative direct relationship between religiosity and legitimacy, thus contradicting *H*<sub>6</sub> for this population.

## Discussion

An interesting question in the fields of criminology and social control is why people willingly comply with law-enforcement authorities, even when this compliance does not necessarily serve their instrumental interests. The procedural justice-based model

attempts to resolve this question by arguing that the willingness to comply depends upon a belief that the institutions of law enforcement are legitimate, and that this belief relies in turn on a perception that the procedures followed by those institutions are fair.

In the current study, we explored the replicability of Sunshine and Tyler's (2003b) procedural justice-based model of legitimacy in a different social context with marked group cleavages. More importantly, we added to the original model the effect of religiosity, a dimension that, to the best of our knowledge, has not yet been examined in the context of this model. We proposed and tested six hypotheses using representative data from 809 members of Israel's Jewish majority and 407 Israeli Arabs.

Similar to other recent studies that have tested the procedural justice-based model (see, e.g. Jonathan-Zamir & Weisburd, 2011; Murphy et al., 2009), we found support for the majority of our hypotheses, and we were able to replicate the model in the Israeli context. Our findings show that procedural justice has a stronger impact on the extent to which the country's law-enforcement authorities are perceived as legitimate as compared with the three instrumental predictors tested ( $H_1$ ). We also showed that perceived legitimacy has a positive effect on support for the police ( $H_2$ ); such support is associated chiefly with procedural justice ( $H_3$ ); the minority group (Israeli Arabs) regard the police as less legitimate than the majority (Jews) ( $H_4$ ); the general procedural justice-based model holds for the two groups of Israeli society analyzed ( $H_5$ ); and among Israeli Jews, those who are more religious tend to regard the country's rules and institutions of social control as less legitimate than do those who are less religious ( $H_6$ ).

There are some important differences between our results and Sunshine and Tyler's original model. We found that legitimacy is associated with both procedural justice and the three instrumental predictors, namely perceived risk, distributive fairness, and performance. Therefore, we do not have enough evidence to say that legitimacy is absolutely independent of instrumental influences, at least as measured by our scale. This result is in line with that of Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd (2011), who found that 'there does not seem to be a zero-sum game between "police performance" and "procedural justice" in predicting police legitimacy' (2011, p. 2). Still, our results support one of the basic assumptions of the procedural justice model, namely that 'procedural fairness will also be a primary influence on judgments of legitimacy when people are evaluating the police in general' (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b, p. 519).

Regarding the effect of perceived legitimacy on the three aspects of support for the police, we – like Sunshine and Tyler – found empowerment of the police to have the strongest association with legitimacy. One important difference between our findings and those of Sunshine and Tyler is that in our case, cooperation with the police does not appear to be directly affected by legitimacy, and only once the exogenous predictors were removed were we able to replicate the original findings.

Similar to previous findings (see, e.g. Hasisi & Weitzer, 2007; Rattner et al., 2001), our comparison between Israel's minority and majority groups shows that Israeli Arabs perceive Israel's law-enforcement institutions as less legitimate than do members of the Jewish majority. They also scored lower on two measures of support for the police: cooperation with the police and compliance with the law. These distinctions were not evidenced in Sunshine and Tyler's comparative analysis of whites, Hispanics, and African-Americans in New York. It can be assumed that the particular nature of Israeli society – which, as discussed above, is characterized by deep social and political cleavages – is responsible for the significant group differences exhibited in our analysis. Further studies should validate these findings in other societies experiencing similar historical and social conflicts.

A second aspect of the minority–majority comparison worthy of note is that procedural justice is the only predictor that was not affected by group differences, whereas the instrumental predictors of legitimacy were all higher for the Israeli Arabs. This means that for Israeli Arabs, the legitimacy of the state’s law-enforcement institutions is based comparatively more on the principle of deterrence and the perceived risk of sanctions. This is not surprising, given this group’s minority status in Israel and the emotional ramifications of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Nevertheless, and consistent with the procedural justice theory of legitimacy, perceptions of fairness in police procedures are not only the most important predictor of legitimacy, but also appear to function independently of the instrumental predictors for minority groups. In short, for Israeli Arabs, the instrumental factors that underlie the legitimacy of the police seem to be more important than for Israeli Jews, but procedural justice is not less so. It is also interesting to note that among the Jewish sample, the procedural justice scale appears to be a better predictor of support for the police than legitimacy itself. One implication of these findings for policing in Israel is that Israeli law-enforcement institutions should develop intervention programs aimed toward greater legitimation, mainly – according to the procedural justice-based model – through elevating the minority’s perception of procedural justice.

A novel contribution of the current study is the addition of religiosity to the model. In both groups, we found a negative association between religiosity and procedural justice; i.e. higher religiosity is associated with lower perceptions of procedural justice. However, the effect of religiosity on legitimacy seems to differ for the minority and majority groups. In the Jewish sample, we found a negative effect of religiosity on legitimacy, meaning that Jews who are more religiously observant are likely to perceive the police as less legitimate than those who are more secular. This result is consistent with the negative association of religiosity with procedural justice and with cooperation with the police in this subsample. At the same time, among the Jews, we found a positive association between religiosity and both perceived risk of sanctions and compliance with the law, suggesting that the deterrent effect of law enforcement plays a key role in the attitudes and behavior of Israel’s religious Jews toward the police. Meanwhile, in the Israeli Arab sample, we failed to find a direct negative association between religiosity and legitimacy. Thus, highly religious (ultra-Orthodox) Jews perceive the institutions of law enforcement as less legitimate than do highly religious Israeli Arabs. These findings show that attitudes and behaviors toward the police are sensitive to variables reflecting values and identity. Police and other law-enforcement institutions should take this information under consideration when dealing with different segments of the population, and should seek ways to enhance perceptions of procedural justice among more religious individuals, as well as greater legitimation among highly religious Jews. Further, the findings open a series of questions regarding the role played by extreme religiosity and/or extreme support for intra-group values in majority groups, and about the social mechanisms that bring highly religious Jews to perceive law enforcement institutions as less legitimate compared to highly religious Israeli Arabs – questions that call for further research.

The results of the current study should be interpreted in light of its research limitations. First, the results are based on self-reports, meaning that respondents’ actual compliance or cooperation with the police is unknown. Second, we used cross-sectional data, which does not allow testing for causality. These two issues call for future studies that will test the procedural justice-based model of legitimacy with longitudinal data.

Third, we did not use formal statistical analysis for testing the mediated effects. Future studies should test these mediated effects using formal statistical methods.

Finally, in order to replicate Sunshine and Tyler's original model, we used the same measures of legitimacy as they used in the US. However, legitimacy is a context-specific and culturally rich concept, meaning that personal perceptions of legitimate authority are likely to reflect the individual's culture and that culture's particular circumstances and history. Our understanding of the issues raised here would therefore benefit from a re-conceptualization of legitimacy and how it is perceived in different cultures. To this end, we recommend that future studies employ more recent operationalizations of the legitimacy concept, as well as suggested modifications of the original model (see, e.g. Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012; Factor, Mahalel, Rafaeli, & Williams, 2013; Tankebe, 2013; Tyler & Jackson, 2012). A similar problem exists with regard to procedural justice, which is in fact a multidimensional concept. Individuals from different backgrounds are likely to interpret the meaning of 'fairness' in different ways. It is also questionable whether participants readily dissociate their assessments of procedural justice from other concepts in the model, such as police performance. Further research efforts, including the use of qualitative methods, should resolve these questions and, perhaps, uncover new measures of procedural justice.

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