Two Different Worlds We Live In

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Outline

• Theoretical Impetus for Project

• Project Implementation

• Findings

• Implications
How do people make assessments of rightful police conduct?

• Outcome based?

• Norm based?
Legitimacy is key

• Social psychological concept

• “Normative,” not instrumental
  People care about:
  The primary issue shaping people’s views about legitimacy when dealing with the police is whether the police are exercising their authority in fair ways - procedural justice.

  • Quality of decision making (Are decisions made fairly, in a neutral, unbiased way?)
  • Quality of treatment (Are people fairly, in a respectful, courteous way?)
What shaped decision acceptance in personal encounters (California street stops)?

![Bar graph showing the strength of connection to decision acceptance.
- Yellow bar: Outcome favorability/fairness
- Blue bar: Quality of decision making (neutrality)
- Red bar: Quality of treatment (courtesy, respect)

Values:
- Yellow bar: 0.12
- Blue bar: 0.17
- Red bar: 0.59

Question:
Will the citizen voluntarily accept police decisions?
Understanding Legitimacy

• Lawfulness is . . .

• Legitimacy is . . .
Understanding Legitimacy

- Lawfulness is . . .

- Legitimacy is . . .

Where you want to be

Don’t want to be here
Project

• Two components:

  – Factorial Experiment
    Test how citizens perceive and evaluate police-citizens interactions along a range of types of situations and encounters.

  – Survey and evaluate citizen interactions with police
    Sample 1300+ individuals from ten cities in the United States that vary in the general quality of police-community relations. Sample stratified within each city by race, gender, and age. Oversample young males, a population that is disproportionately represented in police-citizen encounters.
Focus on Experiment here

Context variations:

(1) City description
(2) Legal context of arrest/stop
(3) Reputation and history of officer(s)
(4) Characteristics of the citizen
Experiment

• Randomly assigned contextual primes

• Watch videos

• Answer questions
  – Basic facts
  – Assess citizen’s conduct
  – Assess officer’s conduct
  – Speculate on officer’s motivations
  – Assess procedural fairness
  – Assess legality
  – Make judgment regarding punishment of officer
Video example
Findings

Figure 2. The influence of lawfulness and the perceived procedural justice of police conduct on the desire to punish police officers. All videos.
Findings

Impact of video on perceived illegality/desire to punish the police.
Path model

Figure 4. Overall model.
Implications

• People’s ordinary intuitions about rightful behavior do not comport with the law.

• A two-dimensional view (at least) that accounts for law AND “fairness” is necessary to bridge long-standing gaps between policing agencies and communities.

• Policing is importantly constitutive of communities (citizenship?) and legitimacy provides a map.
Thank you