"Trending Now: The Legitimacy of the Police"

A Factorial Vignette Study

on the Effects of Procedural Justice and Social Media Interfacing

by

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ABSTRACT

Recently, videos of negative police interactions have gone viral on social media causing riots and protests nationwide. However, police scholars have spent little time exploring how these videos affect individual's attitudes towards police legitimacy or why these videos are interfaced with—e.g., shared, liked, direct messaged, and quoted—on social media. The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which the content of police videos and the source of who is sharing them impacts how individuals view the legitimacy of the police as well as the likelihood of social media interfacing. This study used a factorial vignette design with an online sample (N = 179) that presented one of six experimental vignettes describing a scenario in which the participant received a video of a police interaction via social media. Within each vignette, the officer behaved in a procedurally just or unjust way and the video was shared by either a local news source, best friend, or online friend. Participants were asked questions assessing the legitimacy of the officer, as well as the likelihood they would share, like, direct message, or quote the video on social media. Participants in the procedurally unjust condition perceived the officer as less legitimate and were more likely to share the video than those in the procedurally just condition. The manipulation of source had no significant effects. The results from this study indicate that police departments need to be sensitive to these videos that are being interfaced with on social media by striving for a strong and positive social media presence in order to aid in being deemed as a legitimate authority that represents the community.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On May 25th, 2020, the words "I can't breathe" were heard around the world. The killing of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, by police officers caused an uproar of severe civil unrest. Taking to the streets, people demanded justice, reform, and/or defunding of the police. While the police serve as an authority that is responsible for protecting the people and for combatting crime, confidence in the police has reached a point in which their role is being questioned (Fine et al., 2020). The nation is in the midst of a legitimacy crisis in which trust and confidence in the police have reached a low point. As of August 12th, 2020, 56% of White adults and only 19% of Black adults reported that they have a "great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police within the United States (Jones, 2020). While Black adults reported an increase in confidence in 2021 with a change from 19% to 27% (Jones, 2021), their confidence continues to be substantially lower than White adults. When the death of George Floyd went viral on social media, the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter had been used approximately 47.8 million times on Twitter (Anderson et al., 2020). In less than a week after the incident, individuals were calling to dismantle the authority that has sworn to protect the public.

Social media consumption drastically increased from 2005 to 2021 (Pew Research Center, 2021). For example, the usage of at least one social media site for young adults aged 18-29 increased from 7% in 2005 to 84% in 2021. Today, young adults are repeatedly interacting with social media within a day, sometimes over multiple different types of social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Social media has the power to spread information within seconds. When negative videos of the police

are shared on social media, public sentiment has the potential to seemingly change almost instantly. As the murder of George Floyd shows, viral videos of police behavior can alter the legitimacy of the police overnight. With the ability to like, share, direct message, and quote on these social media sites, social media has become a powerful platform that is directly impacting the way the police are perceived, which can contribute to the belief that the institution of policing is in the midst of a legitimacy crisis.

Scholars have directed little attention to exploring why people share videos featuring police activity and the influence sharing them can have on public attitudes toward the police. At the same time social media was exploding in popularity, criminology witnessed a "legitimacy turn" in which more scholars were emphasizing the vital importance of police legitimacy in securing voluntary compliance, cooperation, and support from the public (Farrington et al., 2022; Tankebe, 2012, p.104). Scholars have shown that perceptions of fairness are a central feature in promoting police legitimacy (Walters & Bolger, 2018). More specifically, people are more likely to see the police as a legitimate authority entitled to obedience when they believe that officers are procedurally fair – i.e., treat individuals respectfully and utilize neutral and fair decision-making processes during encounters. Much of this literature is based on directly interacting with or viewing police officers within an individual's neighborhood. However, social media has provided an additional avenue for people to spread information about the fairness and legitimacy of police. Despite the importance of social media in understanding the public's view (Jones, 2021), scholars have spent little time exploring the direct impact that the content of videos featuring police behavior has on the legitimacy of the police,

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why people choose to share these videos, and if the source of who is sharing these videos influences individuals' perceptions of this authority.

Many social media platforms enable the user to have a moderate amount of control over who they choose to interact with and who they choose to see information from (i.e., "follow"). However, what is unclear is the extent to which followers matter in terms of sharing videos and their impact. In other words, does it matter who is sharing these videos, and does this impact how an individual chooses to interface (e.g., like, share, direct message, or quote) with videos of the police. Currently, scholars understand little about why people share videos of police behavior. The motivation behind studying this construct taps into the idea that certain entities may influence an individual to share or interface with a video more strongly than others.

As social media becomes more powerful in terms of spreading news, it is important to understand why videos of the police are being shared, and how this impacts perceptions of police in the eyes of the public. From what we have seen from the countless number of protests and riots that occurred worldwide, it is vital to address this gap in the literature to understand how and why the legitimacy of the police can seem to waver instantaneously when a video goes viral. As an authority figure who is responsible for enforcing the law and protecting the people, it is important to understand how sharing videos of police interactions affects the legitimacy of the police. The purpose of this paper is to assess why videos of police interactions are interfaced (e.g., liked, shared, direct messaged, and quoted) with on social media among the public, and what features of these videos affects the legitimacy of the police. In particular, I explore the degree to which videos showing procedurally (un)just interactions that are shared from multiple

sources influences people's perceptions of police legitimacy and decisions to further

spread that video into the social media ether.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Legitimacy

The police serve as an authority that is responsible for maintaining social order and combatting crime. Logistically, officers cannot be at all places at all times to surveil the public and ensure they are complying with the law. Research on the effectiveness of patrol and hot spot policing has shown that officers are focused on the areas where crime rates are high (see Kelling et al., 1974; Ratcliffe et al., 2011; Sherman & Rogan, 1995; Weisburd & Green, 1995). This indicates that officer resources are used where they are needed most in order to efficiently protect and serve society. Due to the inability to patrol all areas at all times, the police are reliant on the public voluntarily complying with the law and its agents (Tyler, 2004).

In order to encourage such voluntary compliance, the police should strive to be a legitimate authority as it is difficult to influence community members based on the use of punishment or reward due to the high expenditures of resources that would be necessary to control others (Tyler, 2006). Coercion requires a significant increase in surveillance to learn when people are breaking the law, a sufficient number of officers to provide a credible threat of getting caught and punished, and a correctional facility network large enough to house those who do receive punishment. Coercion would overall take away financial resources that could be used more efficiently elsewhere. If the people internalize the belief that police officers are appropriate and proper in the way they make decisions—i.e., see them as legitimate—they will feel a personal obligation to voluntarily obey the law.

Conceptualization of Legitimacy

Legitimacy can be defined as a psychological trait of an authority that leads those who are connected to them to believe that the decisions they make and the rules they implement are appropriate and proper (Tyler, 2006). When people view an authority as legitimate, they recognize the authority's position as a regulatory agent who is supposed to be in a position of power. Due to legitimacy, people feel an obligation to obey an authority and, subsequently, are more likely to defer to the rules they enforce and the decisions they make. Importantly, this deference is offered voluntarily, without the need for coercion, punishment, or the anticipation of being rewarded.

There are two key components of legitimacy: normative alignment and the obligation to obey. When people identify with an authority based on shared values and goals, this leads them to believe that the power that the authority holds is justified and that they should cooperate (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). This concept is known as normative alignment in which the values and goals of an authority are internalized and become the goals of the people without the need for instrumental outcomes. With this internalization, the people acknowledge that the authority has an authorized claim to power and feel a corresponding obligation to obey them (Pósch et al., 2020). When the people identify with the police, they will be more likely to obey the commands and decisions of officers due to a sense of felt obligation to obey since it is the right thing to do.

Two Models of Legitimation

There are two broad explanations of how an authority can become legitimate. The first is a resource-based model that assumes individuals are most concerned with the rewards and punishments associated with being a member of a specific group (Tyler &

Lind, 1992; Tyler, 1997). Here, group authorities are legitimated in the eyes of subordinates based on their ability to distribute resources in a favorable manner among group members. Under this model, individuals are especially sensitive to the outcomes they receive while interacting with authorities. In particular, the extent to which they receive positive/valued outcomes as well as avoid negative/punishment outcomes. In the policing context, this model argues that individuals will recognize the legitimacy of the police to the extent that the police deliver rewards (e.g., protection from crime) and eschew punishments (e.g., fines).

The second perspective on legitimation is a relational model which assumes individuals have a strong desire to be members of valued groups and are particularly sensitive to cues that signal group inclusion (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Tyler, 1997). Here, authority is legitimated based on the degree to which they recognize the status of an individual as a group member. Legitimacy under this perspective is connected to people's social identity. Individuals draw information about their social identity based on group membership. As an individual increasingly defines themselves as a group member, they integrate group norms and values into their self-concept. This internalization of norms and values of the group is linked to the obligation to follow the group's rules and defer to the group's authority. Due to this internalization, individuals will more likely follow the rules and defer to group authorities voluntarily, negating the need for coercion or the use of rewards. In relation to the police, this model argues that individuals will recognize the legitimacy of the police if they feel they are valued members of the community that these officers represent. Specifically, the people will internalize the norms and values of society underlying the law if they feel as if they have status and are valued as a

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community member. When officers signal group inclusion to the people, this leads to the internalized obligation to obey the law, and to defer to the police.

While both models of legitimation are important, the relational model has found significant support in establishing legitimacy (Elliott et al., 2011; Platow et al., 2012; Tyler & Lind, 1992). For example, Tyler (1997) tested both the resource-based model and the relational model of authority across educational, managerial, local political, national-level legal, and familial domains. Across all domains both models influenced perceptions of legitimacy; however, the impact of authority treatment signaling inclusion had a larger effect on legitimacy than the instrumental outcomes of gain or loss. This indicates that treatment and outcome favorability both impact the legitimation process independently, but that people are reacting to authorities primarily through the way they are treated, rather than the outcomes they receive.

Procedural Justice Theory

One of the dominant theories of authority legitimation is procedural justice theory. Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes that authorities use to make and enforce a decision or rule (Lind & Tyler, 1988). It is important to establish that this theory distinguishes between judgements of how an authority interacts with others (procedural justice) versus judgements of the outcomes that are derived from these interactions (distributive justice) (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Police interactions have been a primary focus within the procedural justice literature for the purpose of understanding how perceptions of fairness as demonstrated by police officers affects people's attitudes toward the law, and how this leads to the legitimation of the police as an authority.

Procedural justice can be broken down into two main dimensions: the quality of decision making and the quality of treatment (Blader & Tyler, 2003). Quality of treatment includes such things as treating people with respect, behaving with benevolent and caring motives, being polite, and being open and honest. On the other side, quality of decision making includes things such as allowing people to express their needs and concerns during an interaction (i.e., voice), making sure decisions are made in an impartial and bias-free manner based on facts (i.e., neutrality), and openly explaining their motives and intentions during an interaction (i.e. transparency).

Procedural justice is important because it produces more positive police interactions with community members. First, procedural justice signals to people that they are a valued and equal member of the group(s) they desire to be a part of (Lind & Tyler, 1988). The quality of treatment (i.e. politeness, respect, and benevolence) and the quality of decision making (i.e. voice, neutrality, and transparency) indicate that individuals have status as group members, which encourages the internalization of societal values as identified within the relational model of legitimacy. If police officers utilize procedurally just behavior, people are likely to increase their social bond to society and will engage in positive legal behavior. Second, procedural justice has been shown to encourage cooperation and compliance. Research on procedural justice over the last three decades has shown that when police officers are fair in making their decisions and treatment of community members, people are more likely to cooperate, and see the police as a legitimate authority (Bolger & Walters, 2019; Walters & Bolger, 2018).

Procedural justice theory has found support among research exploring direct interactions between police officers and community members utilizing randomized field

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experiences and surveys ranging from traffic stops to random alcohol breath testing (Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Mazerolle et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2013). For example, Mazerolle and colleagues (2013) conducted a study in which officers pulled over community members for random alcohol breath testing. Within the procedural justice condition officers were given a verbal script incorporating elements of procedural justice, while the officers in the control condition were instructed to behave as they normally would. The findings from this study showed that people in the experimental condition judged officers as more procedurally fair than people within the control condition, and that procedural justice judgements were related to assessments of legitimacy.

While research supports the notion that procedural justice matters in terms of direct experiences/interactions with police officers, watching videos of police encounters on social media is a qualitatively different experience. Videos of police encounters allow viewers to experience these interactions vicariously, which can lead individuals to make judgements of the police based on their behavior. Although procedural justice scholars have largely overlooked reactions to policing videos shared through social media, a number of studies examine vicarious police contact via having individuals rate videos of police encounters and make judgments about procedural justice and legitimacy (Lowrey et al., 2016; Maguire et al., 2016; Parry et al., 2017). For example, Parry and colleagues (2017) showed participants videos of an actual police interaction and found that simply seeing the encounter impacted perceptions of the police. Specifically, when this officer acted in a procedurally just manner during his verbal exchange with a community member, perceptions of the police in terms of procedural justice, the willingness to cooperate, and the obligation to obey were positively impacted. Alternatively, Lowrey

and colleagues (2016) analyzed videos of simulated police traffic stops that were presented to participants on a computer. To the degree that participants believed officers were procedurally just, they were more likely to trust the police, more willing to cooperate with the police, and more willing to feel an obligation to obey the law. Similarly, Maguire and colleagues (2016) studied how video clips of police officers who acted either in a procedurally just, unjust, or neutral manner during a simulated traffic stop impacted participants' willingness to trust, cooperate, and obey the police. Findings showed that observing an interaction in which an officer was behaving procedurally just enhanced perceptions of these outcomes, while procedurally unjust interactions undermined them.

Overall, vicarious interactions that are viewed within video clips have shown how indirect experiences of procedural justice affect the legitimacy of the police, as well as the willingness to cooperate and obey the police (Lowrey et al., 2016; Maguire et al., 2016; Parry et al., 2017). Distinguished from randomized field trials, these video clips have provided a new avenue of analysis on how perceptions of the police are impacted solely from watching a video. Similar to studies that have tested police procedural justice directly, these vicarious experiments have found that watching officers practice procedurally just behavior when stopping an individual positively influences perceptions of police legitimacy.

CHAPTER 3

POLICING IN A SOCIAL MEDIA CONTEXT

Social media has provided new ways of exploring perceptions of police legitimacy. While studies that directly test procedural justice support its use of police–public interactions (Hinds & Murphy, 2017) studies that have tested procedural justice through vicarious interactions have shown that merely watching a video of an interaction can influence how people view the police and determine if they are a legitimate authority (Parry et al., 2017). However, this prior research has not examined how and why these videos are interfaced with on social media platforms. The videos that are shared on social media, such as the murder of George Floyd, have influenced people to take to the streets to protest and riot for justice (Anderson et al., 2020). Social media has become a powerful platform that people utilize on a daily basis to connect with family members and friends, to keep up with current events, and to share videos or other content. A unique feature of social media is that content can be shared almost instantaneously. Through applications and websites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, people are sharing videos and other content by either pressing the "share" or "repost" button, by quoting videos (i.e. sharing the video with a personalized comment), or by directly messaging a specific individual or group. It is important to understand what people are sharing and why, as sharing certain videos of content can influence individuals to think one way or another. In regards to the police, there are two especially pertinent factors that may impact whether or not a video of an interaction is shared: the content of the video itself and the source of the video (i.e. who originally shared the video).

Video Content

In terms of video content, research from both policing and cyberpsychology scholars (Skogan, 2006; Rudat & Buder, 2015) suggest that videos depicting policing in a negative light are more likely to be shared on social media. In terms of policing scholarship, Skogan's (2006) asymmetry hypothesis notes that people are particularly sensitive to negative encounters with the police. He argues that favorable and unfavorable experiences do not have comparable effects on people's assessments of the police. People may disregard positive or favorable experiences because it is the norm or what is expected, and only pay attention when these experiences do not occur. On the other hand, since negative or unfavorable experiences go against expectations, people are more likely to react to these encounters and assess the police in a negative light.

Numerous studies have found support for the asymmetry hypothesis (Farren et al., 2018; Flexon et al., 2009; Thompson & Pickett, 2021). For example, Choi (2020) analyzed positive, negative, and mixed portrayals of the police in entertainment media and found that people were less confident in the police when they observed negative encounters than positive or mixed, and that positive encounters did not influence perceptions of the police. Choi's (2020) findings show that the asymmetry hypothesis applies to media exposure. Specifically, simply experiencing an interaction vicariously through a video clip drives perceptions of the police and influences an individual's confidence in the police as an authority. The asymmetry hypothesis overall suggests that people may be more likely to interface (e.g., like, share, direct message, or quote with videos that show an officer who is acting procedurally unjust.

Within the cyberpsychology literature, Rudat (2013) argues that social media content high in "informational value" is more meaningful for a large audience and has the potential to impact the minds or behavior of others. Factors that influence the level of informational value include relevance, controversy, negative consequences, and unexpectedness, as these features have the ability to restructure an individual's own mind as well as others. In a later test of this concept, Rudat and Buder (2015) found that tweets classified as having features signaling high informational value were more likely to be shared (i.e. "retweeted"). From this perspective, videos showing a procedurally unjust interaction should be more likely to be interfaced with on social media platforms as they display negative consequences, are unexpected, and generate controversy among the public.

Sources of Social Media

Where a video comes from or who shares it on social media can also potentially influence an individual's decision to share that video. For example, if a video were to be shared by someone's close friend or someone whom the individual has close relations with, this person may feel more of an obligation to share or interface with the video than if it were to be shared by an entity that the person does not have direct ties with. Indeed, Rudat and Buder (2015) highlight that sharing depends on the degree to which an individual sees another social media user as a part of their in-group. They argue that individuals are more likely to adapt their behaviors to those whom they identify as being in the same groups(s) as them. Thus, individuals would be more likely to replicate the behavior of those who are members of their in-group, rather than those who are out-group members. This suggests that individuals will be more likely to share videos or interface

with them on social media platforms when they are coming from people whom they have ties to (i.e. people who are a part of their in-group).

In a test of their argument, Rudat and Buder (2015) found that students were more likely to share (i.e. retweet) a tweet on Twitter if they were aware that it was shared by a fellow student in comparison to another user who did not share this connection. Further, they also found an interaction between informational value and the source of the tweet. Specifically, the participants (i.e. students) who read tweets that originated from out-group members were more strongly influenced by the informational value of the tweets when compared to tweets that originated from members of their in-group (i.e. other students). Overall, this demonstrates that within the context of sharing videos on social media, closer ties with the source of a video will increase the likelihood of interfacing with that video. Furthermore, the effect of high informational value discussed above will have a stronger influence on sharing decisions when the source is an out-group member compared to an in-group member.

The Current Study

Social media has become an influential platform used by the public to share information about the world around them. With videos of police interactions being shared in a matter of seconds, it is important to identify what elements of these videos influence the public to interface with them, and how they affect the legitimacy of the police. While scholars have explored how direct and vicarious police interactions affect police legitimacy, they have yet to assess whether a similar effect is occurring within the context of social media. Moreover, they also have not examined how procedural justice as well as the source of who is sharing these videos influences social media interfacing. To address

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this gap, the current study explores how the behavior of an officer as well as who shares these videos (i.e. the source) with respect to the perception of in-group versus out-group members impacts police legitimacy and social media interfacing. Using a factorial vignette survey, I manipulated procedural justice (procedurally just vs. unjust behavior) as well as the source of who shared the video (local news source, one's best friend, or an online friend) of a police interaction.

The hypotheses for this study are as follows: with respect to situational police legitimacy, following prior studies on procedural justice (e.g., Mazerolle et al., 2013), I hypothesize that those who read a vignette in which the officer acts in a procedurally just manner will be more likely to perceive the officer as situationally legitimate than those who read a vignette in which the officer is procedurally unjust. With respect to the source manipulation, no formal hypotheses were made given the lack of prior literature exploring this issue.

In terms of social media interfacing (i.e., liking, sharing, direct messaging, and quoting), following the asymmetry hypothesis as well as the work by Rudat and Buder (2015), I expect that procedurally unjust videos will cause more social media interfacing than procedurally just videos given the unexpectedness of the behavior of the officer and the video's high informational value. With respect to the source manipulation, following Rudat and Buder (2015), I hypothesize that people will be more likely to interface with a video if it was shared by their best friend or an online friend versus a local news source due to the stronger ties that are associated with these individuals.

Finally, based on Rudat and Buder's (2015) finding in which videos with high informational value have a bigger influence on sharing for those who have weaker ties to

the source of who shared the video when compared to those with stronger ties, I hypothesize an interaction between procedural justice and source. More specifically, the procedural justice manipulation will have a stronger effect on social media interfacing for the local news source compared to one's best friend or online friend. In terms of situational legitimacy, it is unclear whether or not Rudat and Buder's (2015) finding applies to legal perceptions. As such, no formal hypotheses were made in this regard.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This study used data from an online factorial survey distributed to participants on
Prolific, an online platform used to recruit participants for online research. Researchers
advertise their study on the platform to those individuals within the online panel that meet
a set of specified selection criteria. Those that want to participate are given a link to an
online survey or experiment. Upon completion of the study, participants are paid a
predetermined amount for their time which must be at least the equivalent of $6.50 per
hour. This study was advertised to those individuals meeting the following criteria: those
who are currently living in the United States and who were 18 to 25 years old. These
criteria were chosen for two reasons: (1) numerous protests have occurred in the United
States due, in part, to videos of police violence going viral on social media, and (2) young
adults are heavy users of social media and thus most likely to be familiar with such
platforms (Pew Research Center, 2021).

Participants

A total of 241 people completed the survey; however, participants were removed for
various reasons (see below for further discussion). First, 12 participants were removed for
failing narrative and attention checks. Second, 2 participants said they were older than 25
and thus did not meet the selection criteria. Third, 2 participants were removed for
completing less than 50% of the survey. Finally, 46 participants were removed for failing
the source manipulation check. Of the remaining 179 participants, the majority of the
sample was female (86.6%) and White (61.5%). On average, participants were 21 years

old ($M = 21.50$, SD = 2.09). Participants were paid $1.50 for completing the survey. Sample demographics are reported in Table 1.

Design and Materials

This study used a 2 (Procedural Justice: just, unjust) x 3 (Source: local news source, best friend, online friend) between-groups experimental design with participants randomly assigned to one of six hypothetical vignette scenarios. When shown the vignettes, participants were asked to imagine a situation in which they wake up in the morning. Upon checking their phone, they notice that a police video had been shared with them on social media from either a local news source, their best friend, or an online friend whom they do not know in real life. The video shows an officer approaching a man walking through a public park carrying a liquor bottle even though there are signs prohibiting such an activity. The officer stops the man and proceeds to interact with him in a procedurally just or procedurally unjust manner concerning his violation of the rule about open liquor containers. The video ends with the officer giving the man a warning for his violation and asking him to throw away the bottle, which the man does. The vignettes are presented in full in Appendix B.

Measures

Individual items for each measure are presented in Appendix C. Unless otherwise noted, items were (re)coded so that higher scores reflect a greater amount of the measured construct. Descriptive statistics for measures used in the primary analyses are presented in Table 2.

Situational Police Legitimacy

Situational police legitimacy was measured with six items tapping two components of police legitimacy: a felt obligation to obey the officer in the scenario (see Tyler, 2006) and a sense of shared values or normative alignment between the respondent and the officer in the scenario (see Tyler & Jackson, 2014). All items used a 5-point Likert response (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree). Items were averaged to create an index of situational police legitimacy.

Social Media Interfacing

Social media interfacing in this study refers to how an individual could interact with the police video described in the vignette. Four indicators were used to tap this construct by asking participants the likelihood in which they would press the *like* button for the video, *share* the video, *direct message* the video to someone else, and *quote* the video (i.e. sharing the video with a personalized comment). All items used a 4-point Likert response scale (1: extremely unlikely; 4: extremely likely).

Attention & Narrative Checks

To ensure that participants were paying attention throughout the study, two attention check questions were embedded into the survey. The first question asked the participants to select "disagree" for their answer, while the second asked them to select "no" for their answer. To assess if the participants understood the narrative in the vignette, they were asked: "Who did the man interact with in this scenario?" and "Where did the interaction in the video take place?". These questions were included to ensure that participants recognized the man interacted with a police officer and that the interaction took place in a park.

Manipulation Checks

To analyze if the procedural justice manipulation had its intended effect, five items were included to assess the extent to which participants judged the officer in the scenario as behaving in a procedurally just manner. All items used a 5-point Likert response scale (1: strongly disagree; 5: strongly agree). The items were based on five components of procedural justice: fairness, respect, voice, neutrality, and benevolence (see Brown & Reisig, 2019). These items were averaged to create an index of perceived procedural justice. To assess if participants were aware of the source of the video, they were asked: "How did the video pop up on your timeline?". Response options included: (1) a local news source posted it, (2) my best friend posted it, and (3) An online friend posted it.

Controls

Multiple measures were included to assess if the experimental cells were balanced with respect to other factors that could potentially influence how participants responded to the primary variables of interest.

Demographics. Participants reported their gender, race, and age. Given the sample was predominantly female, responses to the gender question were recoded so that 1 = woman, and 0 = not woman. Further, race was recoded so that 1 = White and 0 = non-White, given differences across White and non-White racial groups with respect to legal perceptions (Wiley, 2001; Wu, 2013). To measure socioeconomic status (SES), participants were asked their education level (1 = less than high school, 4 = Master's, professional, or doctoral degree), income (1 = less than $15,000, 5 = $75k or more), and

occupation (1 = unemployed, 4 = professional labor). An index of SES was created by standardizing and then averaging the three items.

Social Desirability. A measure for impression management was included to examine participants' inclination to respond in a socially desirable manner (Stöber, 2001). This measure contained 17 true/false statements. Each statement asked whether they engaged in a socially desirable yet improbable behavior, or a socially undesirable yet probable behavior. An index of social desirability was created by summing the responses.

Social Media Usage. Three items were included to assess participants' engagement and familiarity with social media. They were asked how active they are on social media (1 = I don't use social media, 5 = extremely active), how often they check social media (1 = I don't use social media, 6 = multiple times a day), and how often they post on social media (1 = never, 5 = always).

Criminal Justice Contact. Two items were included to assess prior criminal justice contact. Participants were asked if they had been stopped by a police officer within the last year (1 = yes, 0 = no) and if they had ever been arrested before (1 = yes, 0 = no).

Political Ideology. Given its association with attitudes about the criminal justice system (Gerber & Jackson, 2016; Ilchi & Frank, 2020), political ideology was assessed with a single item where participants rated themselves on a liberal–conservative scale (1 = extremely liberal, 7 = extremely conservative).

Procedure

All research procedures were approved by Arizona State University's Institutional Review Board. If Prolific participants agreed to complete the study, they were provided a

link to the survey. Upon accessing the survey, they first completed an informed consent form. For those that agreed to participate, they were then presented with one of the six vignettes described above (see also Appendix A). After reading the vignette, they completed the measures and provided demographic information. At the end of the survey, they were thanked for their time and redirected back to the Prolific website. Once their survey was approved by the researcher, their compensation was dispersed to their Prolific account. On average, the survey took approximately 14 minutes to complete ($M = 13.72$, $SD = 5.21$).

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Attention & Narrative Checks

Two participants failed at least one of the attention checks and were subsequently

removed from the study. Nine participants failed the narrative check asking about who

the man in the scenario interacted with (i.e., a police officer) and one participant failed

the narrative check assessing where the interaction in the video took place (i.e., a park).

All 12 participants were removed from further analyses.

Manipulation Checks

To assess if the procedural justice manipulation was having the desired effect, an

ANOVA was run with the procedural justice and source manipulations as independent

variables and procedural justice judgments as the dependent variable. The analysis

showed that procedural justice judgments were significantly different across the

procedural justice conditions ($F(1,177) = 299.08$, $p < .05$) while source ($F(2, 177) =$

1.06, $p = .350$) and the interaction terms were not significant ($F(5, 177) = 59.80$, $p =$

$.357$). Specifically, those that received the procedural justice manipulation rated the

officer as significantly fairer ($M = 3.99$, SD $= 0.61$) than those that received the

procedural injustice manipulation ($M = 2.09$, SD $= 0.81$).

With respect to the source manipulation check question, visual inspection showed

that 9 people in the local news source condition, 7 people in the best friend condition, and

30 people in the online friend condition incorrectly identified who had originally shared

the video with them. These 46 individuals were removed from further analysis, which

amounted to a final sample size of 179 participants.

Balance Tests

Results for the balance tests are presented in Appendix D. Experimental cells

were balanced across sex, race, socioeconomic status, age, criminal justice contact and

social media usage. Political ideology was not balanced across the procedural justice

manipulation ($F(1, 177) = 6.03, p < .05$), although it was with respect to the source

manipulation ($F(2, 177) = .35, p = .705$). This variable was thus controlled for in each

model.

Primary Analyses[1]

First, ordinal least squares (OLS) regression was used to assess situational police

legitimacy (see Table 3). For this model, situational legitimacy was regressed onto the

procedural justice and source manipulations, as well as political ideology. The procedural

justice manipulation was significant ($\beta = .37, p < .05$). Those who received a scenario in

which the officer behaved in a procedurally just manner were more likely to perceive the

officer as legitimate when compared to those who received a scenario in which the officer

behaved in a procedurally unjust manner. With respect to the source manipulation,

neither the best friend condition ($\beta = .06, p = .424$) nor the online friend condition ($\beta =

.08, p = .248$) were significantly different from the local news source. Finally, political

ideology was positively associated with situational police legitimacy ($\beta = .31, p < .05$).

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[1] All primary analyses initially included an interaction between procedural justice and source. However, no significant interactions emerged (see Appendix E). Hence, the interaction term was dropped from all presented models.

Next, ordered logistic regression[2] was used to assess the five single-item

indicators of social media interfacing (see Table 4). For these models, each outcome was

regressed onto situational police legitimacy, procedural justice, source, and political

ideology. For the model predicting *sharing*, the procedural justice manipulation was

significant *(b = -.67, p = < .05)*. Those in the procedural justice condition were less likely

to share the video than those in the procedurally unjust condition. With respect to the

source manipulation, neither the best friend condition *(b = .09, p = .812)* nor the online

friend condition *(b = .02, p = .947)* were significantly different from the local news

source condition. Finally, neither situational police legitimacy *(b = .17, p = .358)* nor

political ideology *(b = .17, p =.127)* were significantly associated with sharing.

For the model predicting *liking* the video, the procedural justice manipulation was

not significant *(b = .13, p = .674)*. In terms of the source manipulation, neither the best

friend condition *(b = .18, p = .639)* nor the online friend condition *(b = .06, p = .853)*

were significantly different from the local news source condition. However, situational

police legitimacy was found to be significantly associated with liking the video *(b = .48,*

p = .007). The more situationally legitimate the participants perceived the officer in the

vignette to be, the more likely they were to report pressing the "like" button for the video.

Finally, political ideology was not significantly associated with liking the video *(b = .11,*

p = .348).

For the model predicting *direct messaging* the video to another person, the

procedural justice manipulation was not significant *(b = -.36, p = .248)*. With respect to

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[2] All Ordered Logistic Regression Models passed the Parallel Regression Assumption, also known as the test for Parallel Lines. This test is used to prove that since relations between all pairs of groups is the same, that there is only one set of coefficients (only one model).

the source manipulation, neither the best friend condition ($b = -.56$, p $= .134$) nor the

online friend condition ($b = -.24$, $p = .439$) were significantly different from the local

news source condition. Further, situational police legitimacy was not significantly

associated with direct messaging the video ($b = 0.00$, $p = .985$). Finally, political ideology

was found to be insignificantly associated with direct messaging the video ($b = .14$, $p =$

$.212$).

For the model predicting *quoting* the video, the procedural justice manipulation

was not significant ($b = -.61$, $p = .052$). With respect to the source manipulation, neither

the best friend condition ($b = -.40$, $p = .284$) nor the online friend condition ($b = .35$, $p =$

$.263$) were significantly different from the local news source condition. Finally, neither

situational police legitimacy ($b = .09$, $p = .598$) nor political ideology ($b = -.10$, $p = .350$)

were significantly associated with direct messaging the video.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The goal of this study was to analyze how the content and source of police videos on social media impacts perceptions of police legitimacy and the likelihood of further interfacing with the video via sharing, liking, direct message, and quoting. Overall, the results showed mixed support for my hypotheses. With respect to procedural justice, as hypothesized, the participants who read a vignette in which the police officer behaved in a procedurally just manner compared to those who read a vignette in which the officer behaved in a procedurally unjust manner were more likely to perceive the officer as situationally legitimate. However, contrary to my hypothesis, the source of who shared the video had no relationship with situational legitimacy. Turning to social media interfacing, those who read a vignette in which the officer behaved in a procedurally unjust manner were more likely to share the video when compared to those who read a vignette in which the officer was behaving in a procedurally just manner. Again, contrary to expectations, procedural justice was unrelated to liking the video, direct messaging the video, and quoting the video. In terms of source, contrary to expectations, the source of who shared the video did not affect with situational legitimacy nor any of the social media interfacing outcomes. Finally, contrary to my hypothesis, no significant interactions emerged between procedural justice and the source of who shared the video.

Similar to prior literature (Lowrey et al., 2016; Maguire et al., 2016; Parry et al., 2017) the current study found that the level of procedural justice observed in videos of interactions between police officers and community members influenced officers' situational legitimacy. However, this study extends these current findings to show that

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these dynamics are also occurring on social media platforms as well. Although this study measured the legitimacy of a specific officer, the protests and riots that occurred due to the killing of George Floyd have shown that situational attributions lead to broader perceptions of the police institution itself (Péloquin et al., 2022). This shows that procedural justice and its influence on legitimacy moves beyond the scope of direct and vicarious interactions that prior literature has focused on. Specifically, perceptions of police legitimacy can be influenced by simply viewing a video of a police-citizen interaction on social media depending on the level of procedural justice observed. Implications of this finding show that irrespective of the experiences that individuals may have with police officers in their neighborhood, perceptions of police legitimacy are influenced by general videos of police-citizen interactions on social media.

This study also extends previous literature because it highlights that procedural justice has at least some effect on social media interfacing behaviors. For example, procedural justice increased the likelihood of sharing a video of a police interaction. Specifically, videos in which an officer was behaving in a procedurally unjust manner were more likely to be shared. This indicates that not only does procedural justice impact perceptions of the police, but it also influences the degree to which these perceptions can influence others based on this act of sharing these videos. With respect to the asymmetry hypothesis, this suggests that people are not going to be sharing videos of positive interactions between officers and community members, but that they are going to be more likely to share videos that are the most damaging to police legitimacy. Sharing these videos of high informational value in which the officer is behaving in a procedurally

unjust manner further amplifies negative perceptions of the police as an authority, which has led to the protests, riots, and civil unrest that have ensued in our neighborhoods.

Implications of this finding suggests that social media, on average, is going to be more likely to erode the legitimacy of the police rather than bolstering their legitimacy due to the likelihood of people sharing negative experiences rather than positive experiences. Given the massive proliferation of social media, it is a premium to understand what police departments can potentially do to mitigate this act of sharing negative videos in order to enhance perceptions of their legitimacy. Social media platforms are only going to continue to grow both in usage and in influence. Thus, it is pertinent for police departments to determine what precautions can be taken now in order to combat the further sharing of negative videos.

Situational legitimacy was also associated with social media interfacing in that people who had higher perceptions of legitimacy were more likely to press the like button for the video. This suggests that individuals who deem the police as a legitimate authority are showing their support for this institution by pressing the like button. Implications of this could mean that police departments should strive to be present on social media by posting videos that depict their institution in a positive light. This could not only aid in gathering support as an authority by influencing people to press the like button, but it can also be used as a mitigator against the sharing of negative videos that have been shown to erode their legitimacy.

While the outcome sharing was significant with respect to procedural justice, the other social media interfacing outcomes like, direct message, and quote were not associated with procedural justice. There are multiple possible explanations for this

finding. First, it must be acknowledged that these social media interfacing behaviors are independent of one another, but they are not equal. For example, if an individual chooses to share a video on social media, this may negate the need to interface with the video in other ways such as direct messaging or quoting. This is due to the idea that the video is already being shared to the public, which may negate the need to share the video directly with someone else. Further, the individual may not need to quote the video if they do not have anything to add to the video itself when sharing it. With respect to pressing the like button, depending on the content of the video, the individual may choose to press the like button if they are sharing a video that they support or neglect to do so if they are sharing negative content that they do not support. Therefore, with respect to the like outcome, it may be counter-intuitive for an individual to press the like button for a video that they are sharing, especially if they are sharing a video of an interaction between an officer and a citizen in which the officer was behaving in a procedurally unjust manner. With respect to the quote outcome, it is possible that while an individual may choose to share the video, they may not have anything to say in regards to what is being shown. Sharing the video itself may be enough to get their point across in terms of spreading awareness of the content of the video. With respect to the direct messaging outcome, it is possible that pressing the share button may negate the need to direct message a video to someone else, as it is likely that the person(s) whom an individual would direct message a video to is already connected to this person on social media. Therefore, the person whom they would direct message the video to would likely see the video from the simple act of sharing the video to the public. Finally, it is possible that these outcomes simply have no relation to

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procedural justice, or that individuals do not normally partake in liking, quoting, or direct messaging regardless of the content's informational value or unexpectedness.

Contrary to my expectations, the source of who shared the video did not have any influence on situational legitimacy nor any of the social media interfacing outcomes. There are two potential explanations for this finding. First, it is possible that the likelihood of individuals interfacing with a video on social media is not influenced by the source of who shared the video. Specifically, individuals may choose to share or not share a video regardless of where it came from. This suggests that any policing video shared by anyone from anywhere could go viral simply based on what an individual chooses to share. A major implication of this idea is that individuals may choose to attack police officers every time they see a video in which an officer is behaving in a procedurally unjust manner. As discussed previously, negative videos are more likely to be shared when compared to positive videos. This could lead to the increase of widespread protests, riots, and overall civil unrest if these videos can be shared by anyone and have the same influence on individuals. Since these videos can be shared by anyone from anywhere, it is almost impossible for police departments to take action to prevent this from happening. Thus, police departments should consider what steps should be taken to mitigate the influence that this has on their legitimacy.

Second, it is possible that the source manipulation did not have a relationship with any of the outcomes due to methodological reasons. Specifically, the source variable was designed to manipulate the amount of social ties that an individual has with each of the conditions. It is possible that this manipulation was not strong enough, and that it did not affect the proceed amount of social ties between each of these conditions and the

respondent. Unfortunately, this cannot be assessed because such manipulation check was not included in the current study; however, future research should strive to disentangle this explanation.

Future Directions

The results provide insight into how social media itself can change perceptions of police legitimacy almost instantaneously. Further, the results open the door in analyzing how social media interfacing is affected by videos of police–citizen interactions. Future research should work to progress this avenue of research in multiple ways. First, future research should measure for general perceptions of the police, as how individuals view the police in general may affect how they respond to the specific situation in the vignette (Nagin & Telep, 2017). For example, if an individual generally believes the police are legitimate, s/he may respond to a procedurally just video in a fundamentally different manner than if they generally believe that the police are illegitimate. This type of work would provide insight as to how individual situational judgements are informed by their general perceptions and vice versa.

Second, future research should experiment with utilizing actual cell phones with social media applications to present video clips in lieu of vignettes. This would provide a more realistic experience with how community members are exposed to these video interactions in daily life, in comparison to reading a hypothetical scenario. Third, the current study analyzed how a single video interaction on social media influenced police situational legitimacy and social media interfacing, rather than repeated exposure. As videos of police interactions continue to go viral on social media, future research should

consider analyzing how repeated exposure may influence perceptions, and how they may fluctuate depending on the interactions that they observe.

Last, the videos that have had the biggest impact over the last 5 years include interactions between a White officer and a Black community member. As such, people have become especially sensitive to these racial dynamics. As prior research shows, law enforcement in the U.S. has a fairness problem in which young Black men are disproportionately receiving coercive tactics by police officers when compared to their White counterparts (Paoline et al., 2016). Further, they are more likely to be stopped, searched, frisked, and be the recipient of force by police officers (Milner et al., 2016). Therefore, future research should manipulate the race of both the officer and the community member to better capture the events that have unfolded in real life. While analyzing this manipulation was beyond the scope of this study, future research would aid in better understanding how this factor may be influencing perceptions of legitimacy and social media interfacing.

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, the data collected was from an online platform. Using online platforms for experimental data comes with several challenges including possible threats to validity, issues with obtaining a representative sample, and in-group bias (Newman et al., 2021). While the current study took steps to ensure that participants were providing quality data (e.g. the use of attention and narrative checks), future research should consider utilizing traditional field data to avoid these challenges. Second, it is important to convey that the current study was a pilot. While this does not negate the usefulness of the results, future evaluations are needed to validate the results

with more rigorous methodology. Third, the final sample size of this study was fairly small ($N = 179$). One of the reasons why the final sample was small is due to the number of people who failed the narrative and manipulation checks. This could potentially indicate that the vignettes were difficult to understand, and that a selection bias was created in which some people did not understand what was being said. Further, the sample was also limited to those aged 18-25. While this age group consists of primary social media users, the current study cannot address how those who are older or younger than this age group would respond. Future work should aim to have a larger sample size that includes different age groups in order to potentially find more nuanced effects.

Additionally, this study used vignettes in which participants read hypothetical scenarios. The degree to which these scenarios translate to real-world interactions cannot be established here. Additionally, participants were asked about the likelihood that they would behave in a particular way. While behavioral intentions are associated with real behavior, they are not the same. Therefore, measuring for behavioral intentions does not supplant the need to study actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbien, 1977).

Conclusion

Videos of police brutality that have gone viral on social media have led many individuals to partake in behaviors such as protesting and rioting, and have further led to the questioning of the legitimacy of the police and their respect for minority groups. As I have shown here, there is good reason for police scholars to be concerned with analyzing what kind of impact these videos are having. In particular, procedurally unjust videos are more likely to be shared, and these videos can be shared from anyone and have the same influence. This problem will be left unsolved unless more research is paid towards

analyzing what can be done to mitigate the impact that these negative videos have on the legitimacy of the police.

As research on police legitimacy and procedural justice continues, scholars should continue to open up this new avenue of research on how social media impacts perceptions of the police. Specifically, the current study has opened the door to analyzing what videos are more likely to receive a reaction on social media. Social media has proven that it is a powerful platform that will only continue to grow, and that videos have the power to influence perceptions of the police almost instantaneously. Research thus far has only scratched the surface of how social media influences the way that the police and the public interact with one another. Thus, it is important for scholars, police departments, and the public to understand the impact that social media is having on the authority that has been sworn in to protect and serve the public.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Rick Trinkner
WATTS: Criminology and Criminal Justice, School of
-
Rick.Trinkner@asu.edu

Dear Rick Trinkner:

On 1/25/2022 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Social Media and Police Legitimacy (Part 2)
Investigator:	Rick Trinkner
IRB ID:	STUDY00015308
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• IRB_Thesis_final2.docx, Category: IRB Protocol; • Qualtrics survey_final 2.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Recruitment Scripts_final.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Thesis Consent Form_SGv2.pdf, Category: Consent Form;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 1/25/2022.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required.

APPENDIX B

VIGNETTE SCENARIOS

Condition A. **PJ: Just,** <u>Source: Best Friend</u>

       It is 7:00am and your alarm goes off. After getting dressed and doing your morning routine, you sit down to check your emails. Afterwards you open up your social media account and one of the first posts you see at the top of your timeline is a video that was <u>shared by your best friend</u>. Seeing that you had a few minutes before you had to leave, you click on the video.

       The video shows an officer approaching a man who is walking through a public park. He is carrying a liquor bottle, even though there are signs around the area warning about open containers. The officer stops the man and says **"Hi, my name is Officer Michaels. Did you see that sign over there? You're not supposed to be carrying open alcohol containers in the park. Why are you walking through here with an open bottle?"** The man explains that he was just cutting through the park to get to a party down the road. Officer Michaels responds "I understand, but I'm concerned because there are children and families around here. Can I see your ID?"** The man hands it over to him. Officer Michaels looks at the ID, then hands it back saying "Alright I will let you off with a warning this time, but you need to throw that bottle out." The man does what he says, and they part ways.

Condition B. **PJ: Just,** <u>Source: Local News</u>

       It is 7:00am and your alarm goes off. After getting dressed and doing your morning routine, you sit down to check your emails. Afterwards you open up your social media account and one of the first posts you see at the top of your timeline is a video that was <u>shared by a local news channel that you trust</u>. Seeing that you had a few minutes before you had to leave, you click on the video.

       The video shows an officer approaching a man who is walking through a public park. He is carrying a liquor bottle, even though there are signs around the area warning about open containers. The officer stops the man and says **"Hi, my name is Officer Michaels. Did you see that sign over there? You're not supposed to be carrying open alcohol containers in the park. Why are you walking through here with an open bottle?"** The man explains that he was just cutting through the park to get to a party down the road. Officer Michaels responds "I understand, but I'm concerned because there are children and families around here. Can I see your ID?"** The man hands it over to him. Officer Michaels looks at the ID, then hands it back saying "Alright I will let you off with a warning this time, but you need to throw that bottle out." The man does what he says, and they part ways.

Condition C. **PJ: Just,** <u>Source: Online Friend</u>

It is 7:00am and your alarm goes off. After getting dressed and doing your morning routine, you sit down to check your emails. Afterwards you open up your social media account and one of the first posts you see at the top of your timeline is a video that was shared by one of your online friends who you do not know in real life. Seeing that you had a few minutes before you had to leave, you click on the video.

The video shows an officer approaching a man who is walking through a public park. He is carrying a liquor bottle, even though there are signs around the area warning about open containers. The officer stops the man and says **"Hi, my name is Officer Michaels. Did you see that sign over there? You're not supposed to be carrying open alcohol containers in the park. Why are you walking through here with an open bottle?" The man explains that he was just cutting through the park to get to a party down the road. Officer Michaels responds "I understand, but I'm concerned because there are children and families around here. Can I see your ID?"** The man hands it over to him. Officer Michaels looks at the ID, then hands it back saying "Alright I will let you off with a warning this time, but you need to throw that bottle out." The man does what he says, and they part ways.

Condition D. **PJ: Unjust,** Source: Best Friend

It is 7:00am and your alarm goes off. After getting dressed and doing your morning routine, you sit down to check your emails. Afterwards you open up your social media account and one of the first posts you see at the top of your timeline is a video that was shared by your best friend. Seeing that you had a few minutes before you had to leave, you click on the video.

The video shows an officer approaching a man who is walking through a public park. He is carrying a liquor bottle, even though there are signs around the area warning about open containers. The officer stops the man. **Scowling, he says "Hey you, can't you read? You're not supposed to be drinking in the park. Before the man could even begin to explain that he was just cutting through the park to get to a party down the road, the officer cuts him off abruptly exclaiming "I don't care what you have to say and I don't want to hear any excuses! There are children and families around here and I'm sure they don't want to see some drunk ass stumbling around. Have some decency for crying out loud. Give me your ID."** The man hands it over to him. The officer looks at his ID, then hands it back saying "Alright I will let you off with a warning this time, but you need to throw that bottle out." The man does what he says, and they part ways.

Condition E. **PJ: Unjust,** <u>Source: Local News</u>

It is 7:00am and your alarm goes off. After getting dressed and doing your morning routine, you sit down to check your emails. Afterwards you open up your social media account and one of the first posts you see at the top of your timeline is a video that was <u>shared by the local news channel that you trust</u>. Seeing that you had a few minutes before you had to leave, you click on the video.

The video shows an officer approaching a man who is walking through a public park. He is carrying a liquor bottle, even though there are signs around the area warning about open containers. The officer stops the man. **Scowling, he says "Hey you, can't you read? You're not supposed to be drinking in the park. Before the man could even begin to explain that he was just cutting through the park to get to a party down the road, the officer cuts him off abruptly exclaiming "I don't care what you have to say and I don't want to hear any excuses! There are children and families around here and I'm sure they don't want to see some drunk ass stumbling around. Have some decency for crying out loud. Give me your ID."** The man hands it over to him. The officer looks at his ID, then hands it back saying "Alright I will let you off with a warning this time, but you need to throw that bottle out." The man does what he says, and they part ways.

Condition F. **PJ: Unjust,** <u>Source: Online Friend</u>

It is 7:00am and your alarm goes off. After getting dressed and doing your morning routine, you sit down to check your emails. Afterwards you open up your social media account and one of the first posts you see at the top of your timeline is a video that was <u>shared by one of your online friends who you do not know in real life.</u> Seeing that you had a few minutes before you had to leave, you click on the video.

The video shows an officer approaching a man who is walking through a public park. He is carrying a liquor bottle, even though there are signs around the area warning about open containers. The officer stops the man. **Scowling, he says "Hey you, can't you read? You're not supposed to be drinking in the park. Before the man could even begin to explain that he was just cutting through the park to get to a party down the road, the officer cuts him off abruptly exclaiming "I don't care what you have to say and I don't want to hear any excuses! There are children and families around here and I'm sure they don't want to see some drunk ass stumbling around. Have some decency for crying out loud. Give me your ID."** The man hands it over to him. The officer looks at his ID, then hands it back saying "Alright I will let you off with a warning this time, but you need to throw that bottle out." The man does what he says, and they part ways.

APPENDIX C

MEASURES

Social Media Interfacing

Note: All items measuring for social media interfacing used the following scale: 1 – Extremely unlikely; 2 – unlikely; 3— likely; 4 – extremely likely

1. What is the likelihood that you would press the like or heart button for this video?
2. What is the likelihood that you would share this video to your followers and the public?
3. If you shared this video, what is the likelihood that you would say something along with your post?
4. What is the likelihood that you would send this video directly to a person you know (i.e. DM)?

Social Media Usage

1. How active are you on social media? (Response options: 1 – I don't use social media; 2 – Somewhat active; 3 – Moderately active; 4 – Very active; 5 – Extremely active)
2. How often do you check social media? (Response options: 1 – I don't use social media; 2 – Once a month; 3 – Once a week; 4 – Multiple times a week; 5 – Once a day; 6 – Multiple times a day)
3. How often do you share posts/content on social media? (Response options: 1 – Never; 2 – Not very often; 3 – Moderately often; 4 – Fairly often; 5 – Always)

Situational Police Legitimacy

Note: All items measuring for situational legitimacy used the following scale: 1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neither agree nor disagree; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree

1. I would feel a moral duty to obey the police officer if I was in that situation.
2. I would feel a moral duty to support the decisions of this police officer, even if I disagree with him.
3. I would feel a moral duty to obey the instructions of this police officer, even if I don't understand the reasons behind them.
4. The officer that I observed in the video has a similar sense of right and wrong as me.
5. The officer that I observed in the video is upholding values that are important for my community.
6. The officer that I observed in the video stood up for values that are important to me.

Police Procedural Justice

Note: All items measuring for police procedural justice used the following scale: 1 – Strongly disagree; 2 – Disagree; 3 – Neither agree nor disagree; 4 – Agree; 5 – Strongly agree

1. The police officer in the scenario was fair in how he treated the man.
2. The police officer in the scenario treated the man with dignity and respect.
3. The police officer in the scenario listened to what the man had to say.
4. The police officer in the scenario acted in a neutral and unbiased fashion.
5. The police officer in the scenario was clearly concerned with the man's well-being.

Social Desirability

Note: All items measuring for social desirability used the following scale: 1– Yes; 0 = No
1. I sometimes litter.
2. I always admit to my mistakes openly and face the potential negative consequences.
3. In traffic I am always polite and considerate of others.
4. I have tried illegal drugs (for example, marijuana, cocaine, etc.)
5. I always accept others' opinions, even when they don't agree with my own.
6. I take out my bad moods on others now and then.
7. There has been an occasion when I took advantage of someone else.
8. In conversations, I always listen attentively and let others finish their sentences.
9. I never hesitate to help someone in case of emergency.
10. When I make a promise, I keep it – no ifs ands or buts.
11. I occasionally speak badly of others behind their back.
12. I would never live off of other people.
13. I always stay friendly and courteous with other people, even when I am stressed out.
14. During arguments, I always stay objective and matter-of-fact.
15. There has been at least one occasion when I failed to return an item that I borrowed.
16. I always eat a healthy diet.
17. Sometimes I only help because I expect something in return.

APPENDIX D

BALANCE TESTS

Table D1A – *Balance Tests for Dichotomous Variables*

		Arrest	
		Yes	No
Procedural Justice			
$X^2(1) = 2.78$, $p = .096$	Yes	n = 4	n = 74
	No	n = 1	n = 100
Source			
$X^2(2) = 1.66$, $p = .435$	Local News	n = 2	n = 63
	Best Friend	n = 0	n = 41
	Online Friend	n = 3	n = 70
		Gender	
		Women	Men
Procedural Justice			
$X^2(1) = 2.46$, $p = .117$	Yes	n = 64	n = 14
	No	n = 91	n = 10
Source			
$X^2(2) = 1.63$, $p = .444$	Local News	n = 59	n = 6
	Best Friend	n = 34	n = 7
	Online Friend	n = 62	n = 11

Table D1B – *Balance Tests for Dichotomous Variables*			
		CJ Contact	
		Yes	No
Procedural Justice			
$X^2(1) = 0.59, p = .444$	Yes	n = 20	n = 58
	No	n = 21	n = 80
Source			
$X^2(2) = 5.89, p = .053$	Local News	n = 11	n = 54
	Best Friend	n = 15	n = 26
	Online Friend	n = 15	n = 58
		Race	
		White	Non-White
Procedural Justice			
$X^2(1) = 0.36, p = .549$	Yes	n = 46	n = 32
	No	n = 64	n = 37
Source			
$X^2(2) = 0.22, p = .896$	Local News	n = 41	n = 24
	Best Friend	n = 24	n = 17
	Online Friend	n = 45	n = 28

Note: CJ Contact = Criminal Justice Contact

Table D2 – *Balance Tests using ANOVA for Demographics and Social Desirability*

	Age				SES			
	Mean	SD	$F(df)$	p	Mean	SD	$F(df)$	p
Procedural Justice			0.63 (1,177)	.017			0.17(1,177)	.677
Yes	2.68	2.77			0.01	0.78		
No	2.34	2.48			-0.04	0.74		
Source			0.12 (2,177)	.889			0.71 (2,177)	.932
Local News	2.51	2.65			-0.01	0.76		
Best Friend	2.66	2.81			-0.06	0.84		
Online Friend	2.41	2.48			-0.00	0.78		
PJ x Source			0.16 (2,177)	.856			1.15 (2,177)	.320
	Political Ideology				Social Desirability			
	Mean	SD	$F(df)$	p	Mean	SD	$F(df)$	p
Procedural Justice			5.85 (1,177)	.017			1.30 (1,177)	.255
Yes	2.72	1.60			10.01	3.06		
No	2.22	1.16			9.49	3.08		
Source			0.54 (2,177)	.757			2.31(2,177)	.102
Local News	2.54	1.45			9.57	3.39		
Best Friend	2.39	1.43			9.00	3.25		
Online Friend	2.37	1.33			10.25	2.58		
PJ x Source			0.53 (2,177)	.589			1.31 (2,177)	.273

Note: SES = Socioeconomic Status; PJ = Procedural Justice

Table D3 – *Balance Tests using ANOVA for Social Media Usage*

	Mean	SD	F(df)	p
Active on Social Media				
Procedural Justice			0.15 (1,177)	.704
Yes	3.26	1.05		
No	3.32	1.15		
Source			0.98 (2,177)	.379
Local News	3.22	1.11		
Best Friend	3.17	1.18		
Online Friend	3.43	1.05		
PJ x Source			0.53 (2,177)	.936
Check Social Media				
Procedural Justice			0.00 (1,177)	.947
Yes	5.58	0.94		
No	5.57	1.07		
Source			0.63 (2,177)	.536
Local News	5.52	0.99		
Best Friend	5.49	1.14		
Online Friend	5.68	0.96		
PJ x Source			0.22 (2,177)	.804
Post on Social Media				
Procedural Justice			0.83 (1,177)	.362
Yes	2.50	0.92		
No	2.63	1.01		
Source			0.04 (2,177)	.960
Local News	2.55	0.99		
Best Friend	2.61	1.09		
Online Friend	2.58	0.10		
PJ x Source			0.27 (2,177)	.761

Note: PJ = Procedural Justice

APPENDIX E

INTERACTION RESULTS

Table E1– *Ordinal Least Squares Regression: Predicting Situational Legitimacy with an Interaction Between Manipulations*

	β	b	[95% CI]	SE	*p*
Procedural Justice	.33	0.67	[0.25, 1.10]	0.22	.002
Source					
Best Friend	0.99	0.23	[-0.19, 0.66]	0.22	.284
Online Friend	0.02	0.03	[-0.35, 0.42]	0.19	.863
Political Ideology	0.00	0.22	[0.13, 0.31]	0.05	.000
PJ x Source					
Best Friend	-.07	-0.25	[-0.93, 0.44]	0.35	.477
Online Friend	.12	0.28	[-0.30, 0.86]	0.29	.339
Constant	--	2.16	[1.82, 2.51]	0.18	.000
F(df)			$F(6, 172) = 12.08, p = .000$		
R^2			0.30		
Adj R^2			0.27		

Note: PJ = Procedural Justice Comparison group for PJ X source = PJ X local news source

Table E2 – *Ordinal Logistic Regression Models for Social Media Interfacing Outcomes with Manipulation Interactions*

	Share				Like			
	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*
Situational Legitimacy	0.19	0.18	[-0.17, 0.55]	.295	0.49	0.18	[0.13, 0.85]	.006
Procedural Justice	-0.17	0.49	[-1.14, 0.80]	.040	0.39	0.49	[-0.58, 1.35]	.433
Source								
Best Friend	0.14	0.50	[-0.84, 1.13]	.774	0.30	0.51	[-0.69, 1.29]	.551
Online Friend	0.60	0.45	[-0.28, 1.48]	.181	0.26	0.43	[-0.58, 1.12]	.546
Political Ideology	0.18	0.11	[-0.17, 0.55]	.105	0.11	0.11	[-0.11, 0.33]	.333
PJ x Source								
Best Friend	-0.09	0.78	[-1.62, 1.44]	.906	-0.30	0.79	[-1.85, 1.26]	.708
Online Friend	-1.25	0.18	[-2.56, 0.05]	.060	-0.46	0.65	[-1.74, 0.82]	.479
Pseudo R^2			0.03				0.04	
LR X^2			11.31				15.75	
Prob X^2			0.13				0.03	

	Quote				Direct Messaging			
	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*
Situational Legitimacy	0.14	0.17	[-0.20, 0.47]	.420	0.03	0.17	[-0.31, 0.37]	.863
Procedural Justice	-0.73	0.48	[-1.67, 0.21]	.126	-0.08	0.48	[-1.01, 0.85]	.862
Source								
Best Friend	-0.88	0.49	[-1.83, 0.08]	.074	-0.61	0.49	[-1.57, 0.34]	.207
Online Friend	0.59	0.44	[-0.28, 1.45]	.182	0.10	0.42	[-0.73, 0.93]	.809
Political Ideology	-0.10	0.10	[-0.31, 0.10]	.326	0.14	0.12	[-0.07, 0.35]	.202
PJ x Source								
Best Friend	1.15	0.75	[-0.32, 2.62]	.124	0.09	0.76	[-1.40, 1.58]	.907
Online Friend	-0.43	0.63	[-1.66, 0.81]	.499	-0.78	0.64	[-2.06, 0.49]	.229
Pseudo R^2			0.03				0.02	
LR X^2			13.31				7.39	
Prob X^2			0.06				0.39	

Notes: Comparison group for source = local news source; PJ = Procedural Justice

Table 1 – *Sample Demographic Characteristics*

	M	SD	Min	Max	*n*
Age	21.50	2.09	18	25	179
SES	-0.02	0.78	-1.43	1.98	179
White	0.61	0.49	0 (non-White)	1 (White)	179
Woman	0.87	0.34	0 (non-Woman)	1 (Woman)	179

Note: SES=Socio Economic Status

Table 2 – *Means and Standard Deviations as a function of procedural justice and source.*

	Procedurally Just Mean(SD)	Procedurally Unjust Mean(SD)	Total Mean(SD)
Local News Source			
Political Ideology	2.68(1.70)	2.45(1.28)	2.54(1.45)
Situational Legitimacy	3.43(1.08)	2.71(1.02)	2.99 (1.09)
Share	1.64(0.49)	1.70(0.76)	1.68(0.66)
Like	2.08(0.76)	1.83(0.75)	1.92(0.76)
Quote	1.88(0.73)	2.25(1.03)	2.11(0.94)
Direct Message	1.92(0.81)	1.98(0.86)	1.95(0.84)
Best Friend			
Political Ideology	2.81(1.72)	2.12(1.17)	2.39(1.43)
Situational Legitimacy	3.45(0.90)	2.87(1.00)	3.09(0.99)
Share	1.69(0.70)	1.72(0.74)	1.71(0.72)
Like	2.13(0.96)	1.92(0.86)	2.00(0.89)
Quote	2.06(0.93)	1.88(0.97)	1.95(0.95)
Direct Message	1.69(0.70)	1.68(0.80)	1.68(0.76)
Online Friend			
Political Ideology	2.70(1.53)	2.03(1.00)	2.37(1.33)
Situational Legitimacy	3.75(0.66)	2.65(0.72)	3.21(0.88)
Share	1.49(0.65)	1.89(0.79)	1.68(0.74)
Like	2.08(0.76)	1.86(0.64)	1.97(0.71)
Quote	2.00(0.85)	2.56(1.03)	2.27(0.98)
Direct Message	1.68(0.82)	1.97(0.85)	1.82(0.84)
Total			
Political Ideology	2.72(1.60)	2.22(1.16)	
Situational Legitimacy	3.59(0.87)	2.73(0.91)	
Share	1.58(0.61)	1.77(0.76)	
Like	2.09(0.79)	1.86(0.74)	
Quote	1.97(0.82)	2.27(1.04)	
Direct Message	1.76(0.79)	1.90(0.84)	

Table 3 – *Ordinal Least Squares Regression Predicting Situational Police Legitimacy*

	β	b	[95% CI]	SE	p
Procedural Justice	0.37	0.74	[0.48, 0.99]	0.13	.000
Source					
Best Friend	0.06	0.14	[-0.20, 0.47]	0.17	.424
Online Friend	0.08	0.17	[-0.12, 0.46]	0.15	.248
Political Ideology	0.31	0.22	[0.13, 0.34]	0.05	.000
Constant	--	2.14	[1.82, 2.45]	0.16	.000
F(df)			$F(4, 174) = 17.40, p = .000$		
R^2			0.29		
Adj R^2			0.27		

Note: Comparison group for source = local news source

Table 4 – *Ordinal Logistic Regression Models for Social Media Interfacing Outcomes*

			Share				Like	
	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*
Situational Legitimacy	0.17	0.18	[-0.19, 0.52]	.358	0.48	0.18	[0.13, 0.83]	.007
Procedural Justice	-0.67	0.33	[-1.31, -0.03]	.040	0.13	0.32	[-0.49, 0.76]	.674
Source								
Best Friend	0.09	0.39	[-0.66, 0.85]	.812	0.18	0.39	[-0.58, 0.95]	.639
Online Friend	0.02	0.33	[-0.62, 0.67]	.947	0.06	0.32	[-0.57, 0.69]	.853
Political Ideology	0.17	0.11	[-0.05, 0.39]	.127	0.12	0.11	[-0.12, 0.33]	.348
Pseudo R^2			0.02				0.04	
LR X^2			7.10				15.24	
Prob X^2			0.21				0.01	

			Quote				Direct Messaging	
	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*	b	SE	[95% CI]	*p*
Situational Legitimacy	0.09	0.17	[-0.24, 0.42]	.598	0.00	0.17	[-0.33, 0.34]	.985
Procedural Justice	-0.61	0.31	[-1.22, 0.00]	.052	-0.36	0.31	[-0.97, 0.25]	.248
Source								
Best Friend	-0.40	0.37	[-1.12, 0.33]	.284	-0.56	0.37	[-1.30, 0.17]	.134
Online Friend	0.35	0.31	[-0.26, 0.96]	.263	-0.24	0.32	[-0.87, 0.39]	.459
Political Ideology	-0.10	0.10	[-0.30, 0.11]	.350	0.14	0.12	[-0.08, 0.35]	.212
Pseudo R^2			0.02				0.01	
LR X^2			8.70				5.42	
Prob X^2			0.12				0.37	

Notes: Comparison group for source = local news source

Table 5 - *Correlation Matrix for Manipulations, Outcomes, and Political Ideology*

	Share	Like	DM	Quote	Situational Legitimacy	Source	Procedural Justice	Political Ideology
Share	1.00							
Like	0.38	1.00						
DM	0.42	0.19	1.00					
Quote	0.31	0.08	0.31	1.00				
Situational Legitimacy	0.02	0.25	-0.02	-0.06	1.00			
Source	0.00	0.03	-0.07	0.08	1.00	1.00		
Procedural Justice	-0.14	0.15	-0.09	-0.15	0.43	0.12	1.00	
Political Ideology	0.11	0.17	0.08	-0.09	0.38	-0.05	0.18	1.00