

ILLUMINATING THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY (GROUP)-LEVEL PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

A Qualitative Analysis of Protestors' Group-Level Experiences With the Police

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“Procedural justice” (PJ) has traditionally been thought of as an intragroup model, characterizing interpersonal interactions between police officers and specific individuals. O’Brien et al. recently proposed that PJ is also a useful framework for examining intergroup dynamics, and can thus be used to typify interactions between the police and communities/social groups as a whole. Yet, as a novel construct, its precise content remains unclear. We use qualitative, in-depth interviews with individuals who encountered police as a group of protestors, to illuminate the constituent elements of group-level PJ. We identify four concerns with group-level treatment: respect for the existence and cause of the group, partnership with the group, recognizing the individual within the group, and displaying the “right” motivation: allowing group activities to take place safely. We discuss the implications of our findings, arguing that they pave the way for more exhaustive modeling of the fairness embedded in authorities’ treatment.

Keywords: policing; legitimacy; procedural justice; community (group)-level procedural justice; qualitative analysis

The theory of procedural justice (PJ) has had tremendous impact in criminology, and in particular on the study of policing (Weisburd & Majmundar, 2018). As proposed by Tom Tyler and others (e.g., Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Huo, 2002), this theory views the manner by which police officers interact with individual citizens as the key to understanding broad evaluations of police legitimacy, and willingness to comply and

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cooperate with the police and the law. Accordingly, the micro-level interactions of policing have become a main focus of empirical research in this area (Gau et al., 2012; Hinds & Murphy, 2007; Kochel et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2008; Reisig et al., 2007; Schulhofer et al., 2011; Stoutland, 2001; Tyler, 2004, 2009; Tyler et al., 2010; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler & Wakslak, 2004).

Recently, O'Brien et al. (2020) proposed an innovative extension of the theory of PJ (also see Radburn & Stott, 2019). Based on the distinction between intragroup and intergroup dynamics (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), they argue that PJ applies not only to one-on-one, officer-citizen interactions, but also to police engagement with communities (or social groups) as a whole. Their arguments and findings (reviewed below) suggest that researchers and practitioners should begin thinking about PJ more broadly as a model that characterizes authorities' treatment of citizens on both the individual and community levels. Importantly, the idea of police interaction with communities as entities is not new, and echoes classic models of community-oriented policing (COP; Skogan, 2006a, 2006b). However, as detailed below, group-level PJ is different from community policing in that it seeks to provide a nuanced process model linking police engagement with communities to outcomes of legitimacy and cooperation (O'Brien et al., 2020).

Thus, the idea of treating PJ as a two-layer model bears much potential to advance theory, research, and practice in policing, as well as in other settings where dishonesty or violation of regulations is of concern (such as prisons, courts, and workplace environments). Yet, unlike individual-level PJ and its four constituent elements that have received tremendous theoretical and empirical attention (e.g., Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015; Mazerolle, Bennett, et al., 2013; Nagin & Telep, 2017; Worden & McLean, 2017), the concept of group-level PJ is in its infancy: it is not yet clear what features of police treatment of social groups/communities as a whole elicit feelings of fairness, status, and value (or lack of).

The goal of this study is to address this gap. Using a qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with individuals who have encountered the police as part of a group of protestors, it seeks to gain better understanding of the specific characteristics of police treatment that are the "building blocks" of group-level PJ. First, it examines if individuals intuitively distinguish between individual- and group-level treatment by the police because if the answer is negative, there may not be merit to the differentiation between the two levels of PJ. If the answer is positive, the second and main question of this study is raised: how is fairness expressed at the group-level? In other words, what concerns do people have when engaging with the police as a social group? What features of police treatment directed at the community as a whole convey the message that it is respected and valued? The article begins by reviewing the traditional, individual-level approach to PJ. It continues with an appraisal of the arguments made by O'Brien et al. (2020) that gave rise to the concept of "group-level PJ," while linking the discussion to the literature on COP. The data, analysis, and findings are described next, followed by a discussion of the findings and their implications for theory and practice.

INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

The concept of "procedural justice," or "the fairness of police behavior and the processes through which police decisions are made" (Mazerolle, Antrobus, et al., 2013, p. 36) is integrated into many contemporary discussions and research on police-community relationships.

The term developed in social psychology (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and was linked to legal authorities by Tom Tyler (1990, 2004) and others (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Since then, the theoretical, empirical, and policy implications of PJ in policing received tremendous attention (Bolger & Walters, 2019; President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015; Weisburd & Majmundar, 2018).

The main proposition of the PJ model is that when interacting with authorities, people care more about how they are treated than about the outcome of the encounter. The end result is important for instrumental reasons, but, in line with the Group Engagement Model, interactions with authorities also convey significant messages about one's self-worth and status in society. Fair treatment delivers the message that society values the individual, who, in turn, feels positive about herself and about being part of the community/social group (Tyler & Blader, 2013). Indeed, recent, empirical work suggests that a stronger sense of social identity is one of the casual mechanisms linking PJ to police legitimacy (Bradford et al., 2014; also see Bradford, 2014).

What is "fair treatment?" When interacting with authorities, people make subjective evaluations about the fairness of the treatment they received, which develop from four key assessments that have come to be recognized as the constituent elements of PJ (Schulhofer et al., 2011; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003 Tyler, 2004, 2009): "Was I given the opportunity to express my views before decisions were made about my case?" (participation/voice); "Was I treated in a neutral, unbiased manner?" (neutrality, which is often expressed in transparent decision-making processes); "Was I treated with politeness and dignity, and were my rights recognized and respected?" (dignity and respect); "Was the officer motivated by true concern for my wellbeing, or that of others?" (trustworthy motives).

In turn, an overall assessment of "fair treatment" is expected to increase the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the citizen. There is no single definition of "police legitimacy" in the literature (Tankebe, 2013), but a useful one is offered by Tyler (2004, pp. 86–87), following ideas set forth by Weber (1978) and others (Kelman & Hamilton, 1989): "the belief that the police are entitled to call upon the public to follow the law and help combat crime, and that members of the public have an obligation to engage in cooperative behaviors." Such views are expected to lead to numerous socially desirable outcomes, including willingness to comply and cooperate with the police, to accept police authority, to empower the police, and, in the long run, to obey the law more generally (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015; Mazerolle, Bennett, et al., 2013; Weisburd & Majmundar, 2018). The associations proposed by this model were demonstrated in numerous studies in different countries, contexts, and populations (Tyler, 2017), including in Israel, the location of our study (Factor et al., 2014; Jonathan-Zamir & Weisburd, 2013).

ZOOMING OUT: A COMMUNITY (GROUP)-LEVEL APPROACH TO PROCEDURAL JUSTICE

In line with the review above, O'Brien et al. (2020) observe that the concept of PJ initially developed from psychological models that view authorities and the individuals they have power over as belonging to the same social group, and has thus been used to characterize intragroup dynamics (Trinkner & Tyler, 2016; Tyler, 1994; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996). Accordingly, the fairness embedded in the treatment delivered by a police officer to a particular citizen was viewed as conveying messages about the

citizen's status and value within the community/social group to which they both belong (Tyler & Huo, 2002).

However, O'Brien and colleagues (2020) propose that the relationship between authorities and the citizens they have power over can also be characterized as an intergroup dynamic, whereby authorities and communities constitute two distinct groups (also see Radburn & Stott, 2019). In other words, they propose that in addition to the traditional approach reviewed above, police and citizens should be viewed as members of two distinct social groups, and their engagement as a form of contact between these groups. Theoretically, their arguments develop from a large body of psychological research demonstrating the distinction between interpersonal and intergroup dynamics (Brown, 2000; Roccas & Brewer, 2002), and specifically Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner et al., 1987), which postulates that people identify with and categorize themselves and others into social groups based on psychologically important characteristics (such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, political ideology, and religion) or temporary circumstance. These groups, and particularly the distinction between one's "in-group" and "out-group," have important implications in terms of emotions, attitudes, and behavior (Brown, 2000; Correll & Park, 2005; Leary & Baumeister, 1995).

In their study, O'Brien et al. (2020) focused on two elements they thought make up community (group)-level PJ. The first is "reconciliatory gestures": are the police trying to build trust with the community? The specific actions they take may vary. The defining characteristic is that they are perceived by community members as intended to build trust. The second element is "participation": citizens' belief that the community has a role in the creation and implementation of local policies and rules. The theoretical foundations of this element can be found in discussions about participation in governance within political science (Campbell, 2013), and research in psychology demonstrating the importance of voice in shaping evaluations of the process (Lind et al., 1990; Tyler et al., 1985). O'Brien and colleagues' (2020) analysis of survey data revealed that when perceived as sincerely intended to help the community, both types of evaluations predicted police legitimacy (and, in turn, willingness to cooperate with the police) over and above the impact of individual-level PJ. This finding was reinforced by three subsequent experiments (O'Brien & Tyler, 2020).

It should be noted that the idea of PJ in the context of communities/social groups is not new. However, previous studies in this area have focused on how belonging to, or identifying with a particular community/social group impacts interpretations of police behavior, or moderates the relationship between individual-level PJ and outcomes of legitimacy and cooperation (Bradford, 2014; Bradford et al., 2014; Huo, 2003; Murphy, 2013; Murphy & Cherney, 2011; Murphy et al., 2015; Radburn et al., 2018; Tyler & Huo, 2002). The notion of group-level PJ is different: it is concerned with how individuals perceive the fairness by which the police exercise their authority toward their community/group as a whole, rather than toward specific individuals.

In this context, it is important to directly address the question of where individual-level PJ ends and group-level PJ begins, given that police messages of status and value are always, in the end, received and interpreted by an individual citizen. Based on the theoretical arguments made by O'Brien et al. (2020), as well as previous observational studies of police field work (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015), it is argued here that the answer lies in the distinction between two different settings of police-citizen interactions. An officer may encounter a citizen in the context of her or his personal circumstances. In this "classic" case,

the nature of the officer's treatment would be characterized using individual-level PJ. Sometimes, however, the police address a crowd or the community as a whole (for example, in demonstrations, press conferences, or community meetings), or interact with an individual not as a private citizen, but as an official/unofficial representative of the group/community. Individual-level PJ is not adequate for characterizing these interactions, either because there is no specific individual being treated (such as when speaking to a crowd), or because the citizen is being treated as a group representative, and thus police messages to her or him are intended for the group as a whole. Treatment of this type calls for the concept of community (group)-level PJ.

It is also important to acknowledge the relationships between community (group)-level PJ and the more traditional notion of "community policing," and explain the difference between the two and the added value provided by the concept of community-level PJ. COP can be characterized as both a philosophy that calls the police to recognize that they cannot fight crime alone, and need to work closely with the community; and an organizational strategy, which may include tactics such as problem-solving, assigning officers to specific beats, and holding community meetings (Kelling & Moore, 1988; Skogan, 2006b). It is interesting to note that early discussions of community policing did not define crime reduction as a central element of its success (Klockars, 1988; Skolnick & Bayley, 1986). Research indicates that COP programs are effective in improving citizen satisfaction with the police and perceptions of police legitimacy (Gill et al., 2014; Weisburd & Majmundar, 2018), but it is not clear how or why. Community-level PJ, on the contrary, is not a strategy or tactic, but a psychological model concerned with group-level treatment. As such, it may be regarded as a process model, or "theory of change" (Rossi et al., 2019; Weiss, 1997), which may prove to be the missing link between COP programs and their outcomes. In other words, COP programs should be effective in improving citizen satisfaction, police legitimacy, and fear of crime, to the extent that they employ the principles of community-level PJ.

In sum, the notion of group-level PJ may prove to be of great value in modeling perceived police legitimacy and its outcomes. O'Brien et al. (2020) have made an important contribution by proposing the concept and providing theoretical justification for the two-layer approach to PJ. At the same time, because of its novelty, the precise meaning and real-world expressions of group-level PJ are underdeveloped. This study uses qualitative, in-depth interviews with individuals who have encountered the police as part of a group of protestors, to gain better understanding of how PJ (or injustice) is expressed at the group level.

METHOD

STUDY CONTEXT

This study takes advantage of 52 in-depth interviews with protestors who have participated in "Occupy Israel" protest events in 2012. "Occupy Israel" is the Israeli branch of the global "Occupy" social movement (also known as "99%"), which was established in North America in 2010, and spread throughout the world as a part of a wave of global resistance against neoliberal austerity following the 2008 financial crisis (Calhoun, 2013; Kilibarda, 2012). "Occupy Israel" had organized more than 50 protest events, mostly in 2012, in central cities such as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

These data raise two important questions: Are protestors a “social group,” and is Israel a suitable location for the study of group-level PJ? It is argued here that the answer to both is yes. First, there is little dispute that protestors constitute a social group. By its very nature, the act of protest is aimed at solving a group problem (Gamson, 1992). One of the defining characteristics of a “community” is that it is meaningful to the individual (Gill et al., 2014; O’Brien et al., 2020), and indeed researchers have identified a strong, positive relationship between identification with the social group and its cause, and willingness to participate in protests (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1995; Reicher, 1984; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stryker et al., 2000). Moreover, the “social group” continues to bond during the act of protest (Drury & Reicher, 2009; Drury et al., 2003). While, as individuals, social activists may not always see eye to eye on the goals and means of the group, participating in demonstrations brings them to a more homogeneous sense of group identity (Maguire, 2015).

Importantly, protestors are also perceived by the police to be a social group, and often a threatening out-group (Stott & Reicher, 1998). Hoggett and Stott (2010), for example, used observations, interviews, and questionnaires to examine how police officers undergoing public-order training in the United Kingdom view crowd policing. They found that most officers perceived the crowd to be homogeneous in terms of the level of threat it poses. While they recognized that members of the crowd came to the event as individuals, once they were together, they were perceived to be a unified front. This was clearly voiced by one of the officers: “Remember that once a crowd assembles they lose their individuality” (p. 224).

With regard to Israel as the study location: over the past few decades, Israel has come to be recognized as a useful setting for the study of policing, because it is similar in important ways to many policing contexts in the West, but, as reviewed by Jonathan-Zamir et al. (2015), the Israel Police has also had to face unique circumstances and challenges. Further elaboration on the Israel Police (Israel’s national police agency), its history, structure, and functions, as well as the ways in which Israeli policing resembles and differs from other policing contexts, can be found elsewhere (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015, 2019; Jonathan-Zamir & Harpaz, 2018; Weisburd et al., 2009, 2020). What is important to note here is that the model used by the Israel Police to handle protest events is similar in its main goals, procedures and restraints to those used by other police agencies in the Western, democratic world. As reviewed by Perry et al. (2017), the model sets forth three main goals: maintaining public order at the protest site, allowing the protest to take place, and ensuring protestors’ safety. A variety of methods may be used to achieve these goals, including negotiating with protest leaders, communicating directly with the protestors using a sound system, blocking street segments, and using powers such as arrest and physical restraint if necessary.

Moreover, the “Occupy Israel” activists interviewed for this study were not protesting over a unique local matter, but as part of a global social movement (Calhoun, 2013; Kilibarda, 2012). Finally, studies of PJ and legitimacy in Israel report similar findings to those reported in the United States, Europe, and Australia (Aviv & Weisburd, 2016; Factor et al., 2014; Jonathan-Zamir & Weisburd, 2013; Metcalfe et al., 2016; Perry et al., 2017). The present context is thus considered a useful one for gaining in-depth understanding of the concept of group-level PJ. The question of generalizability will be further addressed in the Discussion section below.

PARTICIPANTS

The interviewees were sampled as follows: All “Occupy” protest events that were carried out in four major cities in Israel (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Beer-Sheva) between February and August, 2012, were identified (using the “Occupy Israel” Facebook page and Twitter account) and attended by the second author and one/two research assistant/s. The 20 largest demonstrations (which included at least 150 protestors as estimated by the police) were included in the study. During the demonstrations, the researchers stood separately in central locations (entrance, exit, etc.), approached all protesters who passed them, and asked for their email address to participate in a survey about their experience at the demonstration. An average of 91% agreed, and a survey was sent to them via email up to 7 days following the event. Of 653 questionnaires, 470 were completed and returned, resulting in an overall response rate of 72% (for additional details on the sampling procedure and survey see Perry et al., 2017).

The last question in the survey asked if the participant was willing to be interviewed in person about her or his experience at the protest event. Fifty-two (11% of survey respondents) concurred. They included 31 men and 21 women, with an average age of 33 (range: 23–45). All were Israeli Jews who defined themselves as secular. Most (41) resided in Tel Aviv or its suburbs. No statistically significant differences were found between this subsample and other survey respondents in terms of socio-demographic characteristics and attitudes toward the police as measured in the survey (trust in the police, PJ, and perceived effectiveness; for additional information on these measures see Perry et al., 2017).

THE INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

The interviews were semistructured: all questions were prepared in advance and generally asked in a consistent order, but the interviewer could change the order or ask follow-up questions based on the natural flow of the conversation. The basic list included 24 questions capturing three main themes: (a) Personal background: socio-demographic characteristics, previous experience in activism, in protest events, and with the police; (b) The interviewee’s experience during the specific protest event: details about the event and her or his role and actions, the interaction she or he had with the police, police behavior during the event, and her or his views about it; (c) Broad views of the police: general attitudes toward the police, views regarding PJ, effectiveness and trust, and willingness to cooperate with the police in the future.

PROCEDURE

The interviews were carried out by the second author 4 to 9 days after the protest event, in a location chosen by the interviewee (most often her or his home, place of work, or university campus). The interviewer explained the general topic of the interview, that it would be recorded and transcribed, and that the interviewee can cease the interview at any time. All participants read and signed a consent form before the conversation began. The interviews lasted 2 to 6 hours. They were tape-recorded, but the researcher also took notes documenting what came across as significant points, or information about the interviewee’s behavior (such as if she or he became tearful). At the end of the interview, the interviewer inquired as to how the interviewee was feeling, and invited her or him to contact the

principle investigator or a designated social worker if she or he wished. All recordings were transcribed and merged with the notes within a week of the interview.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

The research questions of this study led to qualitative methods, which are particularly useful for gaining in-depth understanding into underdeveloped constructs and theories (Hill, 2012; Stiles, 1993). All interviews were content-analyzed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) in two steps, as detailed below.

Phase I

This phase used a deductive approach (or “directed content analysis”; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1281). The second author and one/two research assistants read all interviews manually 2 to 3 times, line-by-line, searching for statements that match the following categories:

Experiences of individual-level PJ. They were defined as statements describing how the police exercised their authority (as opposed to what they did) toward the protestor as an individual during or in the context of the protest event. Experiences in this category could include descriptions of police behavior that express PJ/injustice as identified in past research (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015; Worden & McLean, 2017), or other forms of police treatment perceived by the interviewee as indicating fairness (or unfairness). Statements could also express the interviewee’s interpretations of the messages embedded in police treatment of her or him as an individual.

Experiences of group-level PJ. These focus on how the police exercised their authority (as opposed to what they did) toward the protestors as a group, or toward the individual protestor as a formal/informal representative of the group, during or in the context of the protest event. Statements in this category could express “reconciliatory gestures” and “participation” as defined by O’Brien et al. (2020), but also other forms of treatment perceived as conveying fairness, value, and status (or lack of) to the group as a whole. Statements could also express the interviewee’s interpretations of the messages embedded in police treatment of the group as a whole.

Phase II

This phase focused exclusively on the statements identified in phase I as indicating group-level PJ. The first two authors separately read these statements manually 2 to 3 times, line-by-line, and, using a grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), inductive approach (or “conventional content analysis”; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279), grouped statements into themes according the element of group-level PJ their content appeared to indicate.

No preconceived categories directed the analysis in this phase. Alternatively, the analysis was guided by the following overall question: “When approached by the police as a group (or as a group representative), what about the way the police exercised their authority made the interviewee feel that she or he was treated with fairness/unfairness?” Subquestions include: “What did the protestor expect from the police (in terms of the nature of the treatment)?,” “How did police treatment make the protestor feel?,” and “What about the nature

of police treatment made the protestor happy/unhappy?” After the five themes (see below) were identified, all group-level PJ statements were re-read, and their allocation to a particular theme was re-checked. The meaning of specific statements and the emerging themes more generally were compared across the two researchers, and inconsistencies were discussed and resolved.

FINDINGS

The large majority of interviewees (43; 82%) described experiencing individual-level PJ (6) or, more frequently, injustice (37). For example, tapping the “dignity and respect” component of the model, interviewee four states:

What bothered me most was the way he (the officer) spoke to me—all the shouting, I felt threatened . . . It’s not what he said, because an officer is allowed to tell me to “fly off the road” (“get the hell off the road”), I have no problem with that . . . But come on . . . why would you talk to me this way?

Interviewee 36 describes lack of transparency with regard to excessive use of force:

. . . and then I saw five officers grabbing one of the protesters . . . and I keep asking him “Why? Why are you doing this?” He never replied. What drives me crazy is when they are violent like that without any explanation. If only they would say something, give me a reason . . .

Some interviewees, however, experienced positive one-on-one interactions:

. . . one officer . . . came and asked me: “What’s your name? Au, [name]? So I am [name], nice to meet you. I want to ask that you do not walk on the road because of so and so and so . . .” When someone comes and talks to you like that, it makes all the difference. Suddenly there is a good feeling, there is confidence . . . (Inter. 15).

Such statements were not surprising, as they are very much in line with the vast literature on individual-level PJ. What is perhaps less expected is that of the 43 interviewees describing individual-level treatment, more than half (23) also talked about how they were treated by the police as a group, or as a formal/informal representative of the group. These types of experiences with PJ were distinct and separate, suggesting that the differentiation between individual- and group-level treatment is not only theoretically plausible but also occurs intuitively in citizens’ interpretations of their encounters with the police. Four additional interviewees (who played leadership roles in the demonstrations) talked about group-level treatment with no reference to individual-level PJ, leading to a total of 27 interviewees describing group-level experiences. The analysis of these statements is presented below. It reveals four themes interpreted as key components of group-level PJ, and a fifth theme capturing its outcomes.

RESPECT THE GROUP AND ITS OBJECTIVES: “WE ARE NOT CRIMINALS, AND WE ARE FIGHTING FOR A GOOD CAUSE”

This theme mostly includes statements expressing the view that the police do not see protestors as law-abiding citizens fighting for a good cause, but as “the enemy” (Inter. 4, 9,

27, 36), “criminals” (Inter. 46), “hooligans” (Inter. 16), “anarchists” (Inter. 2, 4, 19, 42), or “spoiled” and “childish” (Inter. 19). It is the most common theme, appearing in statements made by 25 of the 27 protestors who talked about group-level treatment. It is well expressed in the words of Interviewees 7 and 46:

I don't think they (the police) were thinking of us as social activists. I'm actually sure they were not, because that is not the way you treat a bunch of people that are out there doing their best to make this country a better place to live . . . All I wanted to tell them was, you don't get it, but we are the good guys. For some reason you see us in such a negative light, but we are actually here for all of us, including you . . . If only they could understand that. (Inter. 7)

The insult was mostly from feeling that we are being treated like offenders, like a bunch of criminals that their only reason to be on the street is to destroy and disrupt and break the law, not in a real fight for democracy . . . its super insulting, when I know what our goals are, I know how much thought was put into this, how much we thought before we went out to the street like this . . . and for them, this is what we are, a bunch of criminals. (Inter. 46)

Interviewee 19 also felt that the group was disrespected by police, but from a somewhat different perspective:

I think it's how they (the police) see us as activists in a protest . . . they think we are a bunch of spoiled, childish anarchists, everything about their behavior shows that. They think to themselves, “who are these children who have the time and money not to go to work, to be at demonstrations all day, wasting everybody's time?”

Some interviewees (8) described more traditional expressions of disrespect. They were directed, however, toward protestors as a whole rather than to specific individuals. For example: “. . . who in the police decided . . . that it was OK to shout at us . . .” (Inter. 27); “They (the police) were yelling at us, using words that were humiliating and degrading . . .” (Inter. 7); “They (the police) treated us like shit, pushing and screaming . . .” (Inter. 11). It should be noted, however, that few interviewees felt that their group and cause were recognized and valued by the police: “At one point I really felt like this officer was seeing us, understanding our cause . . . You could see he appreciates the fact that we care, that we were taking action . . .” (Inter. 41). Interviewee 15 had a similar experience:

. . . I think it's because of the social protest that they value, they know that we are on their side, that it's not politics . . . because in the end we want the same thing . . .

PARTNERSHIP: “TALK TO US, LISTEN TO US, WORK WITH US”

This theme was demonstrated in half (14) of the interviews in which reference to group-level treatment was made, and is very much in line with the “partnership” principle of COP (Gill et al., 2014). Statements in this theme reveal disappointment with the police for not treating the protestors as partners. This was expressed in unwillingness to negotiate the details of the demonstration in advance and ambiguity about what is permissible. Protestors also complained that during the event, the police would not communicate with them—they were denied voice and explanations about what the police are doing and why. This theme is illustrated well in the words of Interviewee 12:

Beyond anything else, I think that the police are just not communicating with “Occupy.” We tried, but they wouldn’t. We said, “let’s make it easier for all of us, we’ll let you know exactly what we plan to do, and we’ll work together to maintain public order [at the demonstration].” But the message we received was—this is a one-way [street] here, you have to tell us what you plan to do, but we’ll do (say) nothing. So during the demonstration, you never know what’s coming—it can be completely peaceful for one moment, and in the next people are being arrested for no reason . . .

Interviewees also focused on lack of communication during the event:

I mainly felt that we had no partner . . . there was no one [from the police] to talk to during the demonstration. We tried to approach them, to talk, but it was like talking to a wall. They have to communicate with us if they want things to work . . . (Inter. 23)

The worst thing was that they didn’t listen to us. From the moment the demonstration began there was no one to speak to. We tried with the commander, we tried with his deputy, it didn’t work . . . they gave us this feeling that for them we are not a partner . . . (Inter. 17).

Furthermore, protestors complained that the police were unclear about their expectations from them and decisions during the event:

At one [protest] event they came and told us, you can’t move even a centimeter, you have to stay exactly where I decided you can be. But in the next event, they follow us quietly [as we march] . . . we’re not sure how to behave anymore . . . at no point did they say do so and so . . . you cannot understand what they want . . . (Inter. 31)

We agreed [prior to the demonstration] that we are moving forward [in a particular route] and suddenly they come and block [the route] like this . . . this is without explaining anything, without saying a word. I understand that things change, but why like this? (Inter. 51)

YASAM (Special Patrol Units) were surrounding us, they blocked the way and every protester approaching was stopped, no explanations given. They kept pushing people back, without talking. When we couldn’t stop anymore, they started arresting people, throwing them in the back of the van, still no explanations given . . . (Inter. 9)

RECOGNITION OF THE INDIVIDUAL WITHIN THE GROUP: “DON’T JUST TREAT ME AS PART OF THE GROUP, SEE THE INDIVIDUAL I AM”

The third issue raised by seven interviewees was the desire to be seen and treated as an individual, despite being part of the group of protestors. In other words, they ask to be treated in the context of their particular circumstances (i.e., with individual-level PJ), rather than as a stereotypical group member. This issue was voiced, for example, by Interviewee 4:

Police officers treat us as terrorists . . . They don’t see us as individuals, to them we are all the same, just a bunch of anarchists . . . You clearly see that they don’t see you as an individual, but as a part of a group that they perceive to be the enemy . . .

The tension between being an individual and being one in a group of protestors was clearly described by Interviewees 16 and 22:

The way she (the officer) was treating me was confusing . . . you could see that on the one hand she got that I'm just a nice girl, that I'm not posing any threat to her, and on some level I think she could even, like, relate to the resemblance between us . . . but then on the other hand, it was also clear that for her I was part of this group of crazy hooligans, and that as a group—as a whole—we were definitely a threat. For a few minutes there she looked like she was torn between the two . . . at the end, she pushed me behind the line and shouted: Shut up! Just shut your f**ken mouth! There was no question how she was seeing me now. (Inter. 16)

In demonstrations it is completely different from “civilian life.” On the street [or] at home I could meet a police officer—theoretically, yes? And he would see me . . . I'm a nice girl, well dressed . . . a good girl from ****, and it is clear to everyone that I'm OK and I'm a university student and the officer would see it in a second . . . When it's just me I fall on [their] good side, there is no question. But in demonstrations you see the way they treat you, the way they talk to you, this violence . . . this contempt comes from how they see us as a group. They don't see me, they don't see **** anymore . . . they see a group of vandals, of people who are a threat to them, of people who are not worthy of their respect. (Inter. 22)

Referring to an incident where an officer yelled at him “I'll break all your (plural) bones,” Interviewee 34 reflects: “. . . he (the officer), from his perspective, didn't see me, he saw the 5,000 people who were there, who came to ruin his Saturday . . . that's what he saw.” Interviewee 13 agrees:

I don't feel that I did anything wrong in that demonstration and that I deserved anything from the treatment the officers gave me on Saturday. I don't think it has to do with me, that I could have done anything differently. I think that once I came to demonstrate, then for them (the police) I'm part of the protestors and then it is OK to spit at me, to swear, to “flip the bird.”

MOTIVATION: “SHOW US THAT YOU CARE FOR OUR SAFETY AND WELLBEING”

Statements in this theme, which was voiced by six interviewees, reveal beliefs that group-level treatment by the police was not founded in the right motives—allowing freedom of speech and keeping protestors safe. For example, interviewee 41 states:

It was clear that our safety was the last priority for these officers . . . There was a counter-demonstration, and things were getting violent, but you could see the officers just standing there . . . I don't think they see our interest as part of their role. They are there to protect citizens, and to them we are activists, not citizens.

After describing lack of transparency (see last quote in the “partnership” theme), Interviewee 9 reflects: “By then we got that this is the way it is with them, they give you this feeling—we don't work for you. You're the enemy, and we're here to keep you quiet.” Few interviewees believe that not only do the police not have their best interest in mind, but that “. . . the police are making a deliberate effort to de-legitimize protestors as a group . . .” (Inter. 28). Interviewee 11 agrees:

I believe that the real justification for the actions of MAGAV (Border Guard police units) is de-legitimation . . . you don't do such things without thinking, you do it on purpose. To me it's obvious that their approach comes from a desire to destroy the protest, to hurt us as a movement,

to isolate us from one another and not allow a community to establish here, a community that would have the legitimacy of the public.

Reflecting on ambiguous police requirements, Interviewee 31 adds:

You can't understand what they want, and I don't think they want us to understand, it is not in their interest. They want to keep us confused, to weaken us this way, so we would stop trusting ourselves and our leaders.

One unique example describes a positive experience with the police prior to the demonstration, where police motives appear to be very much in line with the notion of "reconciliatory gestures" (O'Brien et al., 2020):

At the meeting before the demonstration . . . he (the officer) said: "we are going to do everything possible to avoid violence, we know that things weren't smooth in the past, but it's our joint responsibility to make it work . . ." (Inter. 49)

OUTCOMES OF GROUP-LEVEL PROCEDURAL JUSTICE/INJUSTICE

The final theme emerging from the interviews does not concern expressions of group-level PJ, but rather its outcomes. Eleven interviewees directly linked the type of group-level treatment they experienced to emotional and behavioral outcomes. For example, Interviewee 4 felt that the police do not respect the broad objective of the protestors, view them as "anarchists" and "terrorists," and do not see the individual within the group. The end result was losing hope for future partnership with the police:

Police officers treat us as terrorists. There is no other way to describe it. They don't see us as individuals, to them we are all the same, just a bunch of anarchists worthy of nothing but violence . . . You clearly see that they don't see you as an individual, but as part of a group that they perceive to be the enemy . . . to them, we are all terrorists, so we should be treated as such, and that's what you see at demonstrations . . . this is why we don't really expect anything from them anymore . . . We do things our way, do what we think is right, without expecting too much.

Interviewee 19 also felt that the police disrespect protestors and their cause, and see them as "childish" and "spoiled" (see "respect" theme). He concludes: "This is why we don't stand a chance with them (the police), that's what it taught me. The way I see it, it's a waste of time with them. The way they think of us, it's a lost [case]." After describing lack of partnership and transparency during the demonstration (see "partnership" theme), Interviewee 12 asks: "Why would we even try to listen to them after that?" In the same context, interviewee 31 concludes her description of vague expectations and decisions (see "partnership" theme) by noting: "That's why, in my opinion, it's not worth listening to them." Following statements regarding undesirable police motives (see "motivation" theme), Interviewee 41 concludes: "We can only rely on ourselves." Interviewee 9 also ends her description of lack of transparency and benevolence (see "partnership" and "motivation" themes) by noting: "Since then, when we see special [police] forces (units), we're immediately shifted to a state of attack." In the same context, interviewee 28 explains that deliberate efforts to delegitimize protestors (see "motivation" theme) is ". . . a two-edge

sword: it de-legitimizes police actions in the eyes of protesters. It makes them (the police) irrelevant.” It should be noted that Interviewee 49, who had a positive experience coordinating the demonstration with the police (see “motivation” theme), ends on an optimistic note: “This kind of behavior really makes you see them differently, we felt there was someone to work with . . .”

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that group-level PJ (the intergroup extension of the traditional, intragroup, individual-level PJ) is made up of four constituent elements: respect for the very existence and cause of the group; partnership with the group (which includes listening to the needs of the group and providing information about intentions, expectations, and decision); recognition of the individual within the group; and, finally, displays of the “right” motivation—true concern with the well-being and safety of group members as they engage in their communal activities. Thus, to be perceived as fair and strengthen their legitimacy, it appears that the police need to do more than treat individuals with neutrality, transparency, politeness, and dignity, while allowing voice and showing care and concern, as suggested by the vast literature on individual-level PJ. This type of treatment is clearly important, but the police also need to recognize the significance of the messages they convey to the community as a whole.

Two of the concerns identified in this study echo elements in the individual-level PJ model, but they take a different form at the group level. “Respect,” which at the individual level includes various expressions of social niceties (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015), at the group level means respecting the very existence and cause of the group. “Trustworthy motives” at the individual level may include various displays of care and concern for the individual and her or his well-being (Jonathan-Zamir et al., 2015). At the group-level, the focus shifts to enabling the group to safely carry out its shared activities, and avoiding acts that suggest attempts to delegitimize the group. The remaining elements—working in partnership with the group (which, as already noted, is a key principle of community policing) and recognizing the individual within the group—are unique to group-level PJ. Interestingly, this last element appears to reflect a desire to be treated with individual-level PJ despite the group-level context. It calls the police to remember that, for example, even in situations like demonstrations, there is a great deal of variance in individual behavior. Relying on stereotypes or treating all protesters the same regardless of their individual action does not promote the message of fair treatment. Given the tendency of police officers to view crowds as a homogeneous, unified front (Hoggett & Stott, 2010), this element of group-level PJ appears to be particularly challenging.

Regarding the elements of group-level PJ proposed by O’Brien et al. (2020), “reconciliatory gestures” (which is concerned with the motivation to build trust with the community) appears to reflect a specific case of the broader “motivation” theme identified here, which captures the motivation to ensure the safety and well-being of group members. Nevertheless, since this theme appeared in only six interviews, it may be that theoretical saturation, that is the stage when nothing new is being added (Bowen, 2008), has not been reached, a task left for future research. The “participation” component suggested by O’Brien et al. (2020) refers to involving the community in the creation and implementation of policies and rules that affect its members, and thus parallels the “partnership” theme identified here.

The implications and significance of these findings stem from the shift from an individual-level approach to PJ, to a two-layer model accounting for variance at both the individual and community levels. O'Brien and colleagues (2020) proposed this model and provided theoretical justification for its merit, but offered limited information on the precise content of group-level PJ. By illuminating the constituent elements of group-level PJ, the findings of this study pave the way for more exhaustive modeling of the fairness embedded in police treatment and its outcomes. In addition, as noted earlier, the concept of group-level PJ can assist in disentangling the black box between community-based police interventions and outcomes of satisfaction and legitimacy. The present findings suggest that these outcomes are more likely when community-focused programs incorporate elements that show respect for the existence and cause of the group/community, work in partnership with the group/community, match responses to individual circumstances even when persons are encountered as part of a group, and, finally, show that the police are guided by the "right" motivation—allowing the group to safely carry out its activities. Thus, these findings offer a framework for characterizing COP programs, but also practical guidance for police agencies seeking to develop various types of community-based interventions.

Taking a broader perspective, the implications of this study (and of the idea of group-level PJ more generally) may extend beyond policing to other key areas of research and practice in criminal justice, where authorities interact with people as both individuals and groups. A natural example would be prisons, where prisoners may be treated by authorities with PJ (or injustice) as individuals, but also as groups, based, for example, on the cell/wing/facility to which the prisoner is assigned or her or his affiliation with a particular racial/ethnic/religious group or gang (Skarbek, 2014). A related example is the treatment of immigrant detainees, where individual-level PJ while in detention was found to be associated with willingness to obey U.S. immigration authorities (Ryo, 2017). Group-level PJ is also relevant to other settings where dishonesty or violation of regulations are of concern, such as working environments (Greenberg, 1990, 1994) and universities (Reisig & Bain, 2016). Researchers have identified important, favorable outcomes for individual-level PJ in these settings, but have not considered treatment at the group level.

Before concluding, the limitations of this study should be acknowledged. This study uses in-depth interviews carried out as part of a larger study on protest policing. Protestors are clearly a social group, but it may be that other settings of authority-group interactions would reveal additional concerns people have with group-level treatment, or that the elements identified here would be expressed somewhat differently. Thus, future inquiries into the components of community (group)-level PJ in various contexts are encouraged, as are replications in different "communities" (defined by their geography, social fabric, culture, socio-demographic characteristics, or roles and use of space; see Gill et al., 2014) and in countries with different models of policing. Finally, while the qualitative approach is useful for illuminating underdeveloped constructs, an important next step is to validate the components of group-level PJ identified here using quantitative methods, such as surveys and observations.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to disentangle the recently advanced concept of community (group)-level PJ (O'Brien et al., 2020; O'Brien & Tyler, 2020). Four concerns individuals have

when engaging with the police as a social group/community were identified: respect for the very existence and purpose of the group, partnership with the group, recognition of the individual within the group, and showing true concern for the well-being and safety of group members as they engage in their collective activities. These findings provide the first step to more exhaustive modeling of PJ and its outcomes, both in policing and in other areas of research and practice in criminology. They suggest that whether measured as citizen evaluations or authority action, the characterization of the fairness embedded in authorities' treatment is not complete unless both levels of PJ are accounted for. The four components of group-level PJ also provide the police and other authorities with practical guidance on the specific issues they should focus on when interacting with communities or social groups as a whole.

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