

Title:

Promoting a culture of fairness: Police training, procedural justice and compliance

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Abstract

Objectives: Academics and practitioners alike are concerned about the potential “double edged sword” of procedural justice. In the organizational context, procedural justice is expected to increase compliance with supervisors. However, blind, unthinking, or “hard” compliance with supervisors, may lead to anti-organizational behavior and misconduct. The present study examines the moderating effect of a police recruit cultural training program on the relationship between procedural justice and compliance with police supervisors. We expect that providing cultural training will moderate the relationship between procedural justice and “hard” compliance.

Methods: Participants were police recruits at the Queensland Police Academy who were randomly assigned to an experimental (Voice 4 Values) or control condition (business-as-usual training) upon entry into the academy. Recruits in both groups were surveyed pre- and post- training to capture perceptions of procedural justice and compliance with supervisors.

Results: Results suggest that procedural justice mattered less for predicting “hard” or unthinking compliance among the recruits who received the Voice 4 Values cultural training package, compared to those who did not receive the training.

Conclusions: We conclude that while procedural justice may be of interest to policing organizations, it is important that it is not used as a tool to encourage unthinking compliance. We find cultural training reduces the effect of procedural justice on unthinking or “hard” compliance.

Keywords: compliance; organizational justice; police training; procedural justice.

Police organizational culture is a unique and challenging phenomenon. Defined as the “core skills, cognitions, and affect” making up “good police work” (Manning 1977: 143), police organizational culture is also associated with cynicism, misconduct, racism, misogyny, and solidarity (Chan 1996). The very culture that allows police officers to work in a high-pressure, and often highly-discretionary, environment can also lead to subcultural beliefs which can be a barrier to implementing positive organizational change (Bradford et al. 2014; Skolnick 2002, 2005; Wolfe and Piquero 2011). As the President’s Taskforce on 21st Century Policing (2015: 11) recently highlighted, organizational culture is particularly relevant in policing because regardless of what new policies or programs are implemented into a policing organization, “organizational culture eats policy for lunch”. One example of this is the so-called “code of silence”, which is symbolized by police officers’ reluctance to report the misbehavior or wrongdoing of their colleagues and supervisors (Rothwell and Baldwin 2007). As Skolnick (2005: 302) explains, the “unique demands that are placed on police officers, such as the threat of danger as well as scrutiny by the public, generate a tightly woven environment conducive to the development of feelings of loyalty”. This sense of loyalty promotes the code of silence and, subsequently the upending of any resulting misconduct requires organizational change.

Organizational justice has been pitched as a way of managing or repairing police organizational culture (Wolfe and Piquero 2011). Organizational justice refers to fair and just organizational behavior that results in pro-organizational outcomes (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001). Organizational justice may include elements of distributive justice (outcome justice), procedural justice (process justice) and interactional justice (information and interpersonal justice) (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001; Colquitt et al. 2001). A long tradition of organizational psychology literature demonstrates the efficacy of organizational justice in encouraging pro-organizational outcomes (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001;

Colquitt et al. 2001). In the policing context, scholars find that perceptions of organizational justice are predictive of extra-role behavior and compliance among police officers (Bradford et al. 2014), and reduced engagement with negative aspects of police culture such as the code of silence (Wolfe and Piquero 2011). Increasing compliance is often viewed as particularly important to changing police culture, because organizational change will require that police officers comply with supervisors and organizational policies and procedures.

Studies find that one element of organizational justice – procedural justice – is consistently associated with organizational compliance or compliance with supervisors (e.g. Bradford et al. 2014; Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001; Colquitt et al. 2001). Lind and Tyler (1988: 191) suggest that procedural justice is important for compliance because it will encourage a strong sense of identification with the authority and therefore “make individuals more willing to subordinate their own short-term individual interests to the interest of a group or organization”.

Theory and research predict that if police supervisors use procedural justice within the policing organization, they can encourage subordinate officers to comply with organizational goals and promote organizational change (Bradford et al. 2014; Lind and Tyler 1988). There is however an alternative perspective on the efficacy of procedural justice in contributing to pro-organizational behavior. MacCoun’s (2005: 171) conceptualization of the “double edged sword” of procedural justice, highlights the potential dangers of a procedurally just approach. Procedural justice may, on the one hand, encourage compliance with positive cultural changes within the policing organization, yet on the other hand, it may also encourage blind or unthinking compliance with directives which may further exacerbate the negative features of police culture such as solidarity and the code of silence (MacCoun 2005). Research by Bradford et al. (2014) provides initial support for this thesis.

In this paper we build on recent research conducted in the US and the UK to examine the organizational justice model of compliance in an Australian policing organization. This paper adds to prior research by examining the relationship between procedural justice within the work environment (one element of organizational justice) and organizational compliance, or compliance with supervisors within the context of a police recruit cultural training program. Using data collected in a unique experimental evaluation of police recruit training, we consider the way that organizational training may moderate the relationship between procedural justice and unthinking or blind compliance (Bradford et al. 2014). By doing so, we consider the way that cultural training may supplement the use of procedural justice within the policing organization. We begin with a review of organizational justice and procedural justice models, and contextualize these theoretical perspectives within policing organizations. We then present our methodological approach, and conclude with a discussion of our results in the context of the organizational justice literature, making suggestions for research and policy.

Organizational justice, procedural justice and compliance

A long literature in organizational psychology has sought to understand the impact of different forms of organizational justice on a range of outcomes including compliance and helping behaviors (Colquitt 2001). Organizational justice is broadly defined as “people’s perceptions of fairness in organizations along with their associated behavioral, cognitive, and emotional reactions” (Greenberg 2011: 271). There are three types of organizational justice: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. In the organizational context, distributive justice refers to the fairness of outcomes, while procedural justice refers to the fairness of processes. Interactional justice is positioned as an extension of procedural justice focusing on the “human side of organizational practices” including informational and interpersonal elements (Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001: 281; Colquitt et al. 2001).

Evidence supports a distinction between the three types of organizational justice and the outcomes they predict. For example in their meta-analysis of 183 organizational justice studies, Colquitt and colleagues (2001) found a clear distinction between the elements of organizational justice, and variations in the strength of the relationship between each justice type and outcomes such as satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, and evaluations of authority. In a similar meta-analysis of 190 organizational justice studies, Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) found subtle differences in the relationships between each form of justice and outcomes such as job performance, counterproductive work behaviors, organizational commitment, satisfaction, and trust. Despite these differences, they also found that procedural justice consistently predicted each of these outcomes. Further, Colquitt (2001), in a study of university and employment settings, found that these various elements of organizational justice are conceptually distinct and that only procedural justice is important for encouraging rule compliance. In the broader organizational justice literature, procedural justice is therefore found to be particularly important (when compared to distributive justice and interactional justice) in promoting pro-organizational behavior including compliance with superordinate authorities.

Encouraging compliance is a key concern of policing agencies both externally, in dealings with citizens, and internally within the policing organization. The majority of the literature on this topic within the policing context has focused on external procedural justice. A plethora of research, beginning with the work of Tom Tyler and his colleagues, has tested the effect of procedurally just policing on citizen perceptions and behaviors (see for example Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 1990; Tyler and Fagan 2008; Tyler and Folger 1980; Tyler and Huo 2002). The relationship between procedural justice and compliance can be understood within the Group Value Model (Lind and Tyler 1988). The Group Value Model explains how group or organizational membership can shape attitudes and behaviors.

According to the Group Value Model members of organizations are more likely to comply with rules when they feel they belong to the organization. Here, procedural justice is the proverbial “golden ticket” for encouraging compliance, as the use of procedural justice is said to enhance feelings of identity, belonging, and self-worth which, in turn, results in compliance with group authorities (Blader and Tyler, 2009; De Cremer and Tyler, 2005; Tyler and Blader, 2000; Tyler and DeGoey, 1995).

Procedural justice theory describes the way that prescribed behavior in interactions can influence group identity and subsequent trust in, and compliance with, group authorities (Tyler 1989). The procedural justice prescription or “recipe” includes four key “ingredients” (Goodman-Delahunty 2010). These are: trustworthiness (demonstrating trustworthy motives when making decisions), respectful treatment (dignified and respectful treatment), neutrality (unbiased decision making) and voice (allowing all parties a “voice” or “a say” when making decisions). When treated with procedural justice by an authority, people are more willing to trust the authority and cooperate and comply with their directives (for a summary see Tyler et al. 2015). Based on this theoretical perspective, police organizations are now recognizing the importance of incorporating procedural justice in their dealings with the public and their dealings with each other (Martin and Mazerolle, 2016; Van Craen and Skogan, 2016).

External to the organization, the link between procedural justice and citizen cooperation or compliance with police has been affirmed in empirical research. In their narrative meta-review of 28 studies of procedural justice in police-citizen relations, Donner and colleagues (2015) concluded that citizen’s perceptions of police procedural justice improve assessments of the police on a range of outcomes including: police effectiveness, trust in police, satisfaction with police and the willingness to cooperate with police. Moreover, in a UK study, Jackson and colleagues (2012) found that trust in the procedural fairness of police had an indirect effect on citizen compliance with the law. Research support

for the use of procedural justice in police interactions with the public has been so influential that President Obama's Taskforce on 21st Century Policing (2015) recently recommended procedurally-just policing be implemented as one of the key pillars of modern policing.

In addition to its utility in police-citizen interactions procedural justice can, and perhaps should, be used within police organizations. If police officers perceive their supervisors treat them with procedural justice (fair treatment and fair decision-making processes), we would expect that junior police officers would, in turn, learn to be procedurally fair when interacting with others, including citizens (Bradford et al. 2014; Bradford and Quinton 2014; Haas et al. 2015; Myhill and Bradford 2013; Van Craen and Skogan 2016; Tankebe 2014). Procedural justice may also benefit police organizational culture. Procedural justice used within the policing organization is expected to promote compliance with organizational directives (see Bradford et al. 2014; Colquitt 2001). The strong tradition of organizational justice research supports the idea that procedural justice can increase organizational commitment and citizenship behaviors in organizations more broadly (see Colquitt et al. 2001 for a review). In a discretionary environment, such as a police department, organizational compliance is highly desirable. Any attempt to achieve officer "buy-in" to new policies and practices requires officers to be committed to the organization and compliant with directives. In the context of police organizational culture, procedural justice may therefore allow for cultural change, in that directives promoting organizational change may be more likely to be adhered to.

A few studies have tested the organizational justice model within policing organizations, finding procedural justice has positive effects on organizational culture. In their narrative meta-review Donner and colleagues (2015) identified 18 studies related to the use of procedural justice in policing organizations. Donner and colleagues (2015) concluded that the extant research supports the idea that procedural justice leads to positive outcomes in

policing organizations including: organizational commitment and job satisfaction (e.g. Morris et al. 1999; Myhill and Bradford 2013; see also Bradford and Quinton 2014; Tankebe 2010), as well as compliance with decisions and reduced misconduct (e.g. De Angelis and Kupchik 2009; Wolfe and Piquero 2011). Specifically, De Angelis and Kupchik (2009) surveyed 648 police officers in a western US city, and found that trust in the procedural justice of command staff was associated with increased willingness to comply with command staff. Wolfe and Piquero (2011: 332) found that a belief in organizational fairness meant police officers were less likely to “adhere to a code of silence” and found that perceptions that managers are procedurally fair lead to greater organizational commitment among police officers in Philadelphia. Moreover Ivković and Shelley (2010) found procedurally just disciplinary processes were negatively predictive of adherence to the code of silence in misconduct scenarios among police officers in the Czech Republic (see also Ivković and Sauerma 2013 for a similar study in South Africa). These studies suggest, on the whole, that procedural justice and compliance should be beneficial for police culture.

However there is an alternative view point, one critique of procedural justice theory more broadly, is the potential negative consequences of its use (MacCoun 2005). While we have seen an exponential growth in research about procedural justice in policing, as MacCoun (2005, p. 190) notes: “the procedural justice community has been reticent about exploring the darker side of the fair process phenomenon”. Writing in the context of the relationships between authorities and citizens, MacCoun (2005) suggests that the use of procedural justice by authorities in their interactions with citizens might distract citizens, causing them to ignore the importance of appropriate or fair outcomes of the interaction. Similarly, Tyler (2003, p. 285) points out that in the legal context of procedural justice the theory “does not address normative issues concerning whether people ought to defer to legal authorities and generally obey the law”, nor does it comment on the quality of the legal

system itself (Tyler, 1990). The implication here is that procedural justice might be used as a tool by legal authorities to encourage citizens to comply with laws and rules that may or may not be fair or just. Taking this one step further, we suggest legal authorities may use procedural justice to encourage compliance with requests – regardless of the quality, legality or the inherent fairness of those requests.

These concerns are relevant to the use of procedural justice within policing organizations as well as to aspects of police organizational culture. On the one hand, employing the principals of procedural justice to encourage compliance with organizational goals may promote a positive police culture. For example, if police managers/supervisors are to effect positive organizational change they require their subordinates to comply with organizational values, policies, and procedures (Eitle et al., 2014).

On the other hand, promoting compliance with supervisors could be problematic if subordinates comply with requests that promote a negative police culture. In their study of organizational culture, Bradford et al. (2014) explain that procedural justice has the potential to encourage “unthinking compliance”. Bradford et al. (2014: 116) imply that procedural justice could lead to negative consequences because strongly identifying with a group authority may have the potential to “deaden individuals’ critical moral faculties and lead them to undertake actions that they might, in other circumstances, view as wrong and morally repugnant” (see also Kelman and Hamilton 1989).

This type of “blind” compliance or “blind” obligation to obey one’s superiors could be problematic in the context of police organizational culture. We know that policing organizations have been criticized in the past for having a “blue code of silence” (Skolnick 2002: 7), which can be defined as “keeping quiet in the face of misconduct by others” (Weisburd et al. 2000: 3). That is, solidarity (one element of police culture) can lead to

misconduct if unethical behavior occurs and goes unreported. In this way, unthinking or “blind” compliance could be a bad thing for police culture. For example, if a police supervisor uses procedural justice when interacting with a subordinate, the supervisor may be able to encourage the subordinate to comply with their directives regardless of the nature or content of these directives. In the case of misconduct, procedural justice may encourage “blind” compliance with the “code of silence” and thus exacerbate the negative aspects of police culture.

Bradford et al. (2014) examined this contention. They tested whether procedural fairness within the organization may lead to this type of “blind” compliance. They defined two types of compliance in their paper: 1) “soft compliance” or “adherence to instructions and procedures” and 2) “hard compliance” (akin to this notion of blind compliance), that is, compliance with supervisors instructions “irrespective of their substantive content” (Bradford et al. 2014: 116). Utilizing a cross-sectional survey design, they found that supervisory procedural fairness was predictive of both hard and soft compliance, although they observed a stronger effect for soft compliance compared to hard compliance. They concluded that “procedural fairness can indeed foster a certain level of unthinking compliance with instructions” (Bradford et al. 2014: 124). These findings suggest that procedural justice can impact both kinds of compliance with supervisory directives.

The Current Study

In the current study, we seek to further examine the relationship between procedural justice and compliance by introducing the effect of a police recruit values training program. That is, we hope to extend the examination of this relationship, previously only studied within a cross-sectional survey design, within the context of a randomized controlled trial. The Voice 4 Values training program was designed to encourage extra-role behavior among police recruits, that is, certain behaviors of employees which are not part of their formal job role but

that benefit the organization (Van Dyne, Cummings and Mclean-Parks 1995). The specific focus of the training was to encourage recruits to stand up against, intervene in, and report against racist and sexist behavior in the policing organization (Platz 2016)). We examine the way that this type of organizational training may impact on how police recruits view “unthinking” compliance, and consider whether such training can affect the impact of supervisory procedural fairness on this “hard” compliance.

Aims and Hypotheses

Our first aim was to replicate, using a pre-post survey within an experimental design, the findings of Bradford et al. (2014), who found that perceptions of procedural justice were related to both soft and hard (or “unthinking”) compliance; with procedural justice related to soft compliance to a greater extent than hard compliance. We further predict that the experimental treatment will moderate the relationship between perceptions of supervisory procedural justice and various forms of compliance with supervisors. Specifically, we predict that this treatment would reduce this effect of supervisory procedural justice on compliance, and in particular, on hard compliance. We expect that the cultural training would encourage police recruits to be more critical, particularly when considering whether or not to “unthinkingly” comply. As such we anticipate that the training will have a stronger moderation effect on the relationship between procedural justice and “unthinking” or “hard” compliance.

Method

Study Site and Sample

The study site was the Queensland Police Service Training Academy (QPS Academy) in Oxley, Queensland, Australia. The QPS Academy delivers training to around 800 police recruits per year. Recruits undertake a 25-week training program at the QPS Academy before graduating as a Constable and completing further training in the field. Recruits involved in

the current study were those inducted into the academy in three intakes in 2015. Each intake accommodated between 48 and 96 police recruits.

As part of the study, 240 recruits from three recruit intakes (representing the entire intake group) were randomly assigned within their intake group to either an experimental or control group or “squad”. Random assignment was undertaken by researchers at the University of Cambridge prior to the intake group starting training. There were five experimental squads and six control squads. Recruits completed their regular 25-week recruit training program in their assigned squad. Experimental squads received the Voice 4 Values program in addition to their recruit training, where the control squads received business-as-usual training. The Voice 4 Values training program was designed by the QPS Training Academy, in conjunction with Courage to Care (Platz 2016)).

The Voice 4 Values training program was evaluated by researchers at the University of Queensland. To evaluate the program the 240 police recruits were invited to take part in a survey. In the survey, recruits were asked to respond to a variety of different questions relating to their opinions of, and attitudes toward, the QPS and various aspects of their job and training. Table 1 details the basic demographics of the control and experimental conditions.

[Insert Table 1]

Participants in both the experimental and control conditions were surveyed pre- and post-intervention to examine whether or not their perceptions and attitudes changed as a result of the training program. In particular, recruits were surveyed on their perceptions of their supervisors. Recruits were prompted to understand their supervisor as “your squad facilitator or instructor at the Academy or your immediate supervisor.” The pre-intervention survey took place two weeks before the treatment, the post-intervention survey took place

immediately following the treatment. The survey was administered online during class time and responses were de-identified. The response rate for the pre-treatment survey was 98.75% and post-treatment was 96.65%. While the survey was voluntary, the high response rate can be attributed to the fact that recruits were given time to complete the survey during class.

Treatment

The experimental group received the Voice 4 Values training program while the control squads received the business-as-usual 25-week recruit training program (i.e., they did not receive the additional Voice 4 Values training program). The Voice 4 Values training program seeks to instill in police the ability to recognize and acknowledge the harms of prejudiced, racist and sexist behavior in the workplace as well as the willingness to intervene in such behavior. The program consists of four components whereby recruits: 1) watch a video; 2) listen to a presentation; 3) meet with and listen to the story of a Holocaust survivor/rescuer; and 4) participate in a facilitated discussion (Platz 2016).

During the video presentation, police recruits observe scenarios of a variety of poor behaviors in a policing workplace (based on a list of regular complaints made to the Queensland Police Service). The scenarios contain examples of sexual discrimination, bias, and racist and prejudicial language. Following the video, an historian narrates a brief history of World War 2 and the methods used by leaders to ensure compliance by law enforcement officers during the Holocaust. The narration includes photographs of real life situations of the Holocaust, and stories of people who recognized and had the courage to intervene in wrong doing. Participants consider how police could commit atrocities and how likely that it could happen today.

A Holocaust survivor from a death camp then describes his experiences with law enforcement, including stories of how police officers aided and hindered his family's survival. Role-playing, by seeing situations through the eyes of a survivor from a death camp,

puts the recruits into the scene and through skilful group facilitation they are guided to see how they would react in similar circumstances. Drawing on the story of the Holocaust and policing scenarios, recruits were reminded of the importance of individual behavior and encouraged to speak up and intervene in incidences of prejudice (specifically focused on racism and sexism) in the workplace.

In sum, the program focuses on instilling knowledge about the harms caused to victims of prejudice, as well as to actively encouraging police recruits to stand up and have a “voice” in response to prejudice and discrimination (see Platz 2016) for further information). A key focus of the Voice 4 Values program is the idea of “blind obligation” to obey orders and the methods used to extract compliance during the Holocaust. The Voice 4 Values program is therefore expected to impact upon the incidence of “unthinking compliance” among police recruits, and encourage recruits to consider more carefully their obligation to obey their supervisors.

Measures

Predictors

There were two predictor variables included in the analyses. The first was the *experimental condition* (whether they received the Voice 4 Values training or not) which was measured as a dichotomous variable (1=experimental condition, 0=control condition). The second was *supervisory procedural justice*. This measure was based on that employed by Bradford et al. (2014). To measure supervisory procedural justice, police recruits were asked to report on their perceptions of supervisory fair treatment and decision making (e.g., “My supervisor treats me with respect”). Recruits were prompted to understand their supervisor as “your squad facilitator or instructor at the Academy or your immediate supervisor.” Items were measured on a five point Likert-scale ranging from Strongly Disagree=1 to Strongly Agree=5, and were combined as a scale of supervisory procedural justice.

Outcomes

Outcome measures employed in the analyses were “hard” and “soft” compliance. Where “soft” compliance involved discretionary decision-making, and “hard” compliance involved blindly obeying orders (Bradford et al., 2014). Our measures of hard and soft compliance were designed to differentiate the willingness of police recruits to obey orders and the willingness to police recruits to obey orders without considering or questioning those orders. These measures were based on those employed by Bradford et al. (2014). Items measuring hard compliance (e.g., “I follow my supervisor’s instructions, even when I think they are wrong”) and soft compliance (e.g., “I do what my supervisor asks me to do”) were measured on five point Likert scales ranging from Strongly Disagree =1 to Strongly Agree = 5.

Results

Analyses

To test for discriminant validity, Principal Components Analysis utilizing an oblique rotation was conducted with all items using the pre-intervention survey¹. A three factor solution was obtained (see Table 2), with all items loading on their predicted factors. In particular, we note a clear distinction between our two measures of compliance (as indicated by the lack of cross-loadings of items of scales). Scales were subsequently created by calculating a mean score of the relevant items on each scale.

[Insert Table 2]

Bivariate relationships were explored to examine whether the experimental treatment or perceptions of supervisory procedural justice were related to attitudes towards different types of compliance with supervisors, at both time points. Moderated regression analyses

¹ A very similar pattern matrix emerges when using the post-intervention survey data. For simplicity only the pre-intervention analysis is presented in Table 1. Cronbach’s alphas for both waves are presented in Table 1.

were then conducted, using 1000 bootstrap resamples as per Hayes (2013), to test the hypotheses that the experimental treatment would moderate the effect of perceptions of supervisory procedural justice and both hard and soft compliance, such that the officers who received the training would show a lesser relationships between supervisory procedural justice and compliance.

To prevent problems with multicollinearity and to facilitate the interpretation of effects in the interaction model, the continuous predictor variable perceptions of supervisory procedural fairness was mean-centered (Aiken and West 1991). The interactions were created by multiplying the centered supervisory procedural fairness variable and the experimental condition variable (0 = control, 1 = experimental treatment) leading to a two-way interaction term entered into each of the regression models. For all moderated regressions on ratings of compliance (either hard or soft compliance), individually, the centered supervisory procedural fairness variable and the experimental condition variable were entered into the regression equation in Model 1, with the two-way interaction entered in Model 2. Pre-intervention measures of the compliance variables, along with squad numbers, were also entered in Model 1 as controls. Table 3 displays descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations for all variables in these regressions and Table 4 shows the regression results of the effects of perceptions of supervisory procedural fairness and the experimental condition (and their interaction) on ratings of compliance.

[Insert Table 3]

[Insert Table 4]

As can be seen in Table 3, there was a significant negative relationship between the experimental condition and hard compliance ($r(212) = -.207, p = .002$), which indicated that recruits who received the treatment (the training) were significantly more likely to have lower levels of hard compliance following their training ($M_s = 3.687$ for control and 3.391 for

treated recruits). Replicating the findings of Bradford et al. (2014), we found that perceptions of procedural justice were more strongly related to soft compliance than hard compliance at both time points (see Table 3), inasmuch as perceptions of supervisory procedural justice was not significantly related to hard compliance at the post-intervention time point. There was also a general decline in compliance scores (both hard and soft compliance) between the pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys.

Soft Compliance

Table 4 shows that, after controlling for baseline attitudes relating to compliance (of which, only soft compliance baseline scores were predictive; $\beta = .250, p < .001$), post-intervention perceptions of supervisory procedural justice significantly predict soft compliance attitudes at the end of the recruit training period ($\beta = .499, p < .001$), and the addition of the interaction between supervisory procedural justice and the experimental condition was also significant ($\beta = -.198, p = .029$). Analysis of the simple slopes (see Figure 1) reveals that the relationship is significant for both control and experimental treatment conditions, but slightly weaker for the experimental condition than control (Control $b = .645, t(206) = 6.417, p < .001$; Experimental treatment $b = .389, t(206) = 4.188, p < .001$).

Hard Compliance

In relation to hard compliance, Table 4 shows that, after controlling for baseline attitudes relating to compliance (of which, only hard compliance baseline scores were predictive; $\beta = .571, p < .001$), post-intervention perceptions of supervisory procedural justice did not significantly predict hard compliance attitudes at the end of the recruit training period ($\beta = .085, p = .242$) but (as was the case for the bivariate relationships) the experimental treatment did significantly predict hard compliance ($\beta = -.229, p = .042$). Again, the addition of the interaction between supervisory procedural justice and the experimental condition was also significant ($\beta = -.214, p = .014$), and the inclusion of this interaction rendered the

experimental treatment alone non-significant ($\beta = -.200, p = .073$). Analysis of the simple slopes (see Figure 2) reveals that the relationship between procedural justice and hard compliance is only significant for the control condition; there is no significant relationship between perceptions of supervisory procedural justice and hard compliance for officers who received the training treatment (Control $b = .296, t(206) = 2.527, p = .012$; Experimental treatment $b = -.046, t(206) = -0.426, p = .670$).

Discussion

The benefits of procedural justice are often pronounced. Researchers and practitioners advocate for the use of procedural justice in policing organizations both externally in police dealings with citizens, and internally in police dealings with their subordinate officers. There is, however, some reason to be cautious about the use of procedural justice. Just as it may be used to improve relationships between authorities and their subordinates, procedural justice may potentially be used to manipulate or coerce cooperation and compliance (MacCoun 2005). In the context of police organizational culture the “double-edged sword” of procedural justice means that procedurally just organizational behavior has the potential either to a) improve compliance with organizational policies and thus improve police organizational culture or b) encourage unthinking compliance with supervisors and therefore foster negative aspects of police organizational culture such as the “code of silence”.

In this study we examined the role of police recruit values training in moderating the relationship between procedural justice and compliance with supervisors. In doing so we questioned whether organizational training could help counteract the potential negative effect of procedural justice in eliciting unthinking compliance or the blind obligation to obey supervisors. Essentially, we were testing whether or not values training would increase police recruits level of scrutiny when complying with their supervisor’s instructions. We found that

recruits who participated in the police cultural training (designed to increase intervention in acts of prejudice in the workplace) were less likely to “hard comply” with their supervisor’s directives. Thus, recruits who underwent police training were less likely to “unthinkingly” or “blindly obey” supervisors directives. We also found that while there was no direct effect of supervisory procedural justice at baseline on “hard” or “soft” compliance, there was an interaction effect. Simple slopes show that supervisory procedural justice had a stronger effect on both “soft” and “hard” compliance for the control group compared to the treatment group. These results suggest that the police training reduced the effect of supervisory procedural justice on compliance, and particularly on “hard” compliance where we saw a greater difference in the slopes, and a non-significant relationship between procedural justice and hard compliance for the experimental group.

So why would we want to reduce the effect of procedural justice on compliance? Supervisory compliance is, in most cases, beneficial for an organization. Managers surely desire employees to commit to their organization and comply with organizational policies and procedures. Within the policing organization compliance is particularly important as compliance with directives can be a serious business. In high-pressure situations, following directives may, in fact, be a matter of life or death. Moreover, complying with policies and procedures are a matter of law, and disobeying directives can have serious consequences. In this regard, it is desirable to policing organizations that subordinates comply with the directives of their supervisors. Here procedural justice may be a tool to enable police officers higher up in the chain of command to elicit cooperation and compliance from their subordinates.

“Unthinking” compliance within the policing organization can however have a downside. Take for example the “code of silence”. The “code of silence” can be defined as “police reluctance to inform on one another even in the midst of a serious criminal

wrongdoing” (Rothwell and Baldwin 2007: 605). If a police officer is willing to unthinkingly obey their supervisor, it is unlikely that this officer will stand up to or report their supervisor during an incident of wrongdoing. In the case of the Voice 4 Values training program, police recruits were taught to stand up, take action, and report on colleagues or supervisors who engage in unethical behavior including racism and sexism in the workplace. In these types of incidences, we want police recruits to intervene, even if it means standing up to and possibly disobeying a supervisor.

There is currently a push for the use of procedural justice training within policing organizations and research does find that this approach can be beneficial for police culture (Saare 2016). Indeed, Wolfe and Piquero (2011) show, procedural justice may help to actually break down the “code of silence” in policing organizations and that developing an environment of fairness and “voice” has the potential to reduce internal corruption. At the same time Bradford et al. (2014) argue procedural justice can increase “unthinking” compliance, which may be detrimental to any attempts to bring about a positive police culture. Our study builds on these findings to show that cultural training can buffer against the relationship between procedural justice and unthinking compliance.

Limitations and Future Research

Before outlining the implications of our research for policy and practice it is necessary to consider the limitations of our study. First, we surveyed a sample of police recruits, and their perceptions of their supervisors at the police academy. Whilst still an integral part of police activities, it is important to acknowledge the context of the police academy may differ to the “real world” context of police culture and police supervisor-subordinate dynamics. Second, we note that we only consider the effects of the Voice 4 Values training program over a short period of time. It is possible that the effects of the 2-3 hour training program during the academy may wear off over time. It may be that refresher training is needed once recruits

leave the police academy. Future research should examine the way in which police culture, perceptions of supervisors and compliance operate once police recruits enter the workforce. Third, we note that peers may also play an important role in shaping police organizational commitment (Tankebe, 2010), as well as occupational deviance (Barker, 1977). We do not discount this possibility, however, it falls outside the scope of the current study which focused on the effects within the police academy context. Future research should consider the way in which police peers impact on their sense of loyalty and identity within the policing organization, and how this relates to the efficacy of values training (such as the example examined here) and compliance with supervisors and organizational policies and procedures.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Police trainers want to develop police recruits who can both perform their job well, and behave in an ethical manner. Reducing the incidence of misconduct is a particular focus of policing organizations. Indeed, evidence shows that police recruit training and supervision practices can contribute to reduced incidents of misconduct in the long term. For example, in a study of New York City police officers, Fyfe and Kane (2006) found that police recruits who performed better during their recruit training were less likely to be terminated due to misconduct later in their careers (see also Ivković 2005; Skolnick and Fyfe 1993). In a national US sample, Weisburd et al. (2000: 6) found the role of front-line supervisors in the prevention of misconduct was crucial, finding that 90 percent of those surveyed “believed that good first-line supervisors were effective in preventing police officers from abusing their authority”.

One possible correlate of misconduct may be unthinking compliance. The organizational justice literature suggests procedural justice is useful in encouraging rule-compliance within organizations. The reason procedural justice operates in this way can be

understood through the Group Value Model. In this model, members of organizations are more likely to comply with rules when they feel they belong to the organization, and procedural justice enhances feelings of belonging and self-worth (Blader and Tyler, 2009; De Cremer and Tyler, 2005; Tyler and Blader, 2000; Tyler and DeGoey, 1995). As a consequence “when employees are dissatisfied with the fairness of procedures, they are more likely to violate organizational norms and commit acts of deviance” (Aquino et al., 1999, p. 1076).

While procedural justice is no doubt important for organizations, our studies suggest that the use of procedural justice in policing organizations should be supplemented with values training. Policing organizations want police recruits to obey the directives of their supervisors, at the same time, police recruits should be accountable for their own behaviors and be warned against unthinking compliance. We suggest that cultural values training, such as that employed in the Voice 4 Values program is an important addition to police recruit training, and ongoing professional development of police officers in modern policing organizations.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1.

Officer Demographics

| | Control (n = 122) | Experimental (n = 115) | Total (N = 237) | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|----------|
| Age range | 19 - 50 years | 20 - 47 years | 19 - 50 years | – |
| Average age | 28.265 years (<i>SD</i> = 6.897) | 28.605 years (<i>SD</i> = 6.966) | 28.430 years (<i>SD</i> = 6.918) | .707 |
| Gender (<i>n</i>) | 85 male 36 female 1 missing | 83 male 32 female | 168 male 68 female 1 missing | .775 |
| Education Level (<i>n</i>) | 3 post-grad 22 university/college 39 trade/tech 53 completed Yr 12 4 completed Yr 10 1 missing | 6 post-grad 30 university/college 37 trade/tech 41 completed Yr 12 1 completed Yr 10 | 9 post-grad 52 university/college 76 trade/tech 94 completed Yr 12 5 completed Yr 10 1 missing | .243 |
| Country of Birth (%) | 87.705% Australia | 77.391% Australia | 82.700% Australia | .036 |

Table 2.

Factor loadings for scale items – pre-intervention (N = 220).

| <i>Items</i> | Component 1 | Component 2 | Component 3 |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Supervisory Procedural Justice | Hard Compliance | Soft Compliance |
| My supervisor treats me with respect. | .894 | | |
| My supervisor listens to my opinions about decisions that affect me. | .892 | | |
| My supervisor gives me the chance to voice my opinion about decisions that affect me. | .876 | | |
| My supervisor's decisions are consistent. | .754 | | |
| My supervisor's decisions are based on facts, not personal prejudice. | .731 | | |
| I follow my supervisor's instructions, even when I think they are wrong. | | .929 | |
| I comply with police policies, even when I think they are wrong. | | .747 | |
| I do what I am told by my supervisor without question. | | .690 | |
| I ignore my supervisor's instructions. (reversed) | | | .923 |
| I do what my supervisor asks me to do. | | | .566 |
| % variance | 42.395 | 16.934 | 10.583 |
| Eigenvalues | 4.240 | 1.693 | 1.058 |
| Cronbach's Alpha (pre-intervention) | .897 | .708 | .538 |
| Cronbach's Alpha (post-intervention) | .932 | .736 | .606 |

Note: Only loadings >.40 for each factor are presented.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the Study Variables.

| Variables | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|-------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. Experimental Condition | -.082 | -.017 | -.018 | .035 | -.068 | -.207** |
| 2. Supervisor PJ – pre-intervention | | .641*** | .415*** | .293*** | .268*** | .200*** |
| 3. Supervisor PJ – post-intervention | | | .355*** | .510*** | .108 | .118 |
| 4. Soft Compliance – pre-intervention | | | | .388*** | .293*** | .179** |
| 5. Soft Compliance – post-intervention | | | | | .137* | .142* |
| 6. Hard Compliance – pre-intervention | | | | | | .591*** |
| 7. Hard Compliance – post-intervention | | | | | | |
| <i>M</i> | 4.281 | 4.197 | 4.659 | 4.348 | 3.744 | 3.543 |
| <i>SD</i> | .532 | .547 | .440 | .546 | .689 | .677 |
| <i>n</i> | 219 | 213 | 219 | 213 | 219 | 213 |

Note: Significance levels are *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

Table 4.

Regression results (N = 213)

| | Soft Compliance (post) | | | | Hard Compliance (post) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | Model 1 | | Model 2 | | Model 1 | | Model 2 | |
| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> |
| Constant | 1.217** | .384 | 3.297*** | .451 | 1.124* | .432 | 1.371** | .527 |
| Squad | .002 | .020 | -.003 | .020 | .016 | .024 | .009 | .024 |
| Experimental Condition | .033 | .129 | .063 | .129 | -.309* | .042 | -.270 | .150 |
| Supervisor PJ – pre | -.148 | .085 | -.129 | .084 | -.042 | .099 | -.017 | .098 |
| Supervisor PJ – post | .500*** | .077 | .523*** | .077 | .105 | .090 | .136 | .090 |
| Soft Compliance – pre | .315*** | .082 | .312*** | .081 | -.005 | .096 | -.001 | .094 |
| Hard Compliance – pre | .045 | .053 | .045 | .053 | .597*** | .062 | .597*** | .061 |
| Experiment x Supervisor PJ – post | | | -.259* | .118 | | | -.342* | .138 |
| R^2 | .316*** | | .332*** | | .380*** | | .398*** | |
| ΔR^2 | | | .016* | | | | .018* | |

Note: Significance levels are *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

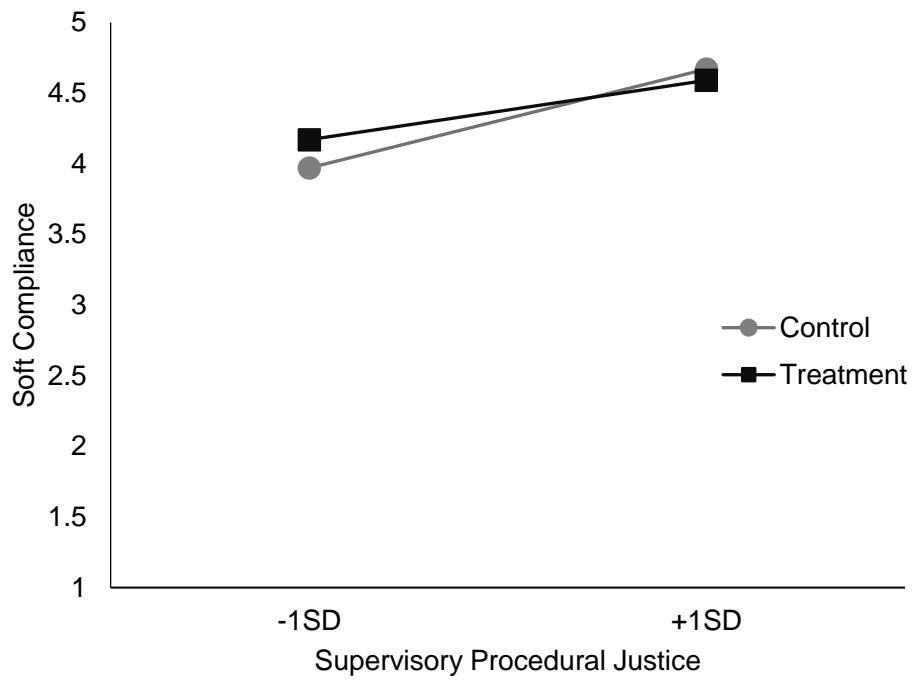


Figure 1. Simple slopes of the relationship between supervisory PJ and soft compliance (“post”) by experimental conditions.

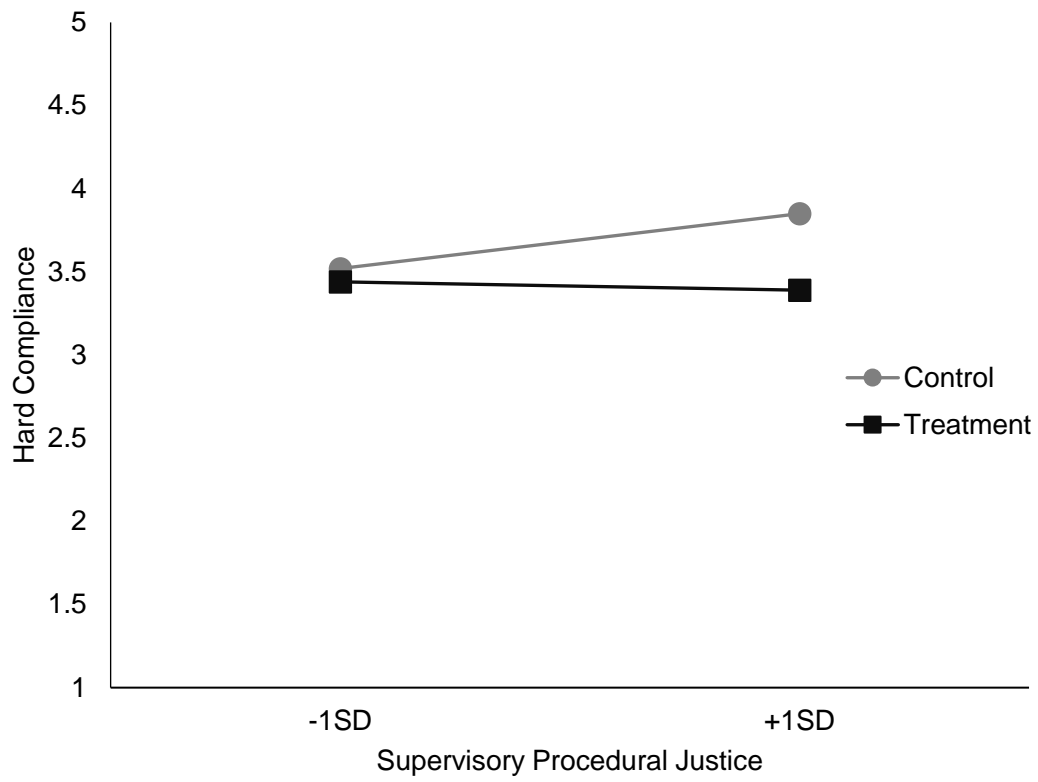


Figure 2. Simple slopes of the relationship between supervisory PJ and hard compliance (“post”) by experimental conditions.