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American and African Interethnic Data

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Abstract

Research in the American West, China, and Taiwan has shown that officers' communication accommodative practices (and attributed trust in them) can be more potent predictors of satisfaction with the police than are the socio-demographic characteristics of those judging. With Black and White respondents, this study continues this line of work in Louisiana and South Africa and tests a new model about the relationships among perceived officer accommodation, trust in the police, and reported voluntary compliance from civilians. In addition to an array of differences that emerged between nations and ethnicities, officer accommodativeness indirectly predicted civilian compliance through trust. The hypothesized model was partially supported and culturally-sensitive.

Keywords: South Africans, Louisianans, law enforcement, police, police-civilian relations, communication accommodation, trust, African Americans, Black South Africans, safety, obey, intergroup contact

Communicative Dynamics of Police-Civilian Encounters:

American and African Interethnic Data

Of the applied issues that currently engage the public across many countries, safety and

crime rank as major concerns. In the United States, these issues have figured prominently in

headlines and polls due to statistics indicating erratic patterns for crime since the late 1980s

(Gallup Poll, 2003), the aftermath of the infamous events in the USA of September 11, and more

recently the tragedies that have continued to unfold in the Gulf States following Hurricane

Katrina (Nossiter, 2005). While social psychology in particular (e.g., Eberhardt, Goff, Purdie, &

Davies, 2004; Wells, 2001), as well as sociolinguistics (e.g., Gibbons, 2001; Heydon, 2005) and

criminology (e.g., Solan & Tiersma, 2005), have expended sporadic attention to some of the

communicative parameters of policing, the discipline of communication itself has not focused in

any programmatic sense on such matters, and much less so cross-culturally. It is intuitively

obvious from television news and film content that police agencies around the world differ

dramatically not only in the nature of their uniforms, demeanors, and equipment, but also, and

perhaps more importantly, in practices of corruption, abuses of power, and thresholds for the use

of force, lethal or otherwise. Clearly, cultural attitudes toward such authorities vary in tandem.

When such attitudes are held by recently-immigrated communities (e.g., from Vietnam and

Mexico into the USA), host culture police may be perceived in a biased fashion because of

immigrants' conceptions of police in their countries of origin (see AUTHORS in press-a). It has

been clear for years that in order to prevent criminal activity, police need civilians working

cooperatively and proactively with them (Bayley, 1994). However, if communities sustain negative images of local enforcement and experience problematic communication with them, then their willingness to assist law enforcement in combating crime will be severely hindered (National Research Council, 2004; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a).

Despite communication scholars' contributions to this area (e.g., Giles, 2002; Gundersen & Hopper, 1984; Kidd & Braziel, 1999; Oliver, 1994; Perlmutter, 2000), there is a paucity of empirical data attending it. This is surprising given estimations that, in many settings, 97% of police work involves communicating with the public (Thompson, 1983). Indeed, Womack and Finley (1986) argued that communication is "the central most important commodity that the officer has at his [or her] disposal" (p. 14). The current study is part of a cross-cultural program of research aimed at solidifying empirically applied advances in this area (AUTHORS, in press-a, b). We report here on a comparative study conducted in South Africa and the USA, both with Black and Caucasian samples.

Attitudes Toward Police

Many civilians can hold "contradictory perceptions of the police" (White & Menke, 1982, p. 223), with their being almost revered—and yet despised—at the same time (Molloy & Giles, 2002). This ambivalence is but one of the contributors making street police work an emotionally stressful occupation (Howard, Tuffin, & Stephens, 2000; see also, Toch, 2003) and one in which the vast majority of officers concede that they have an image problem (Oberle, 2004). Negative representations of police on fictional drama, reality shows, and news programs are not foreign to TV viewers (e.g., Eschholtz et al., 2002; Van den Bulck, 1998) with attention often being focused on alleged police abuses of force (e.g., Lawrence, 2000; Ross, 2000).

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Pertinent to our examination here of both indirect (e.g., parasocial via media, or witnessing others' contact) and direct contact with police, Hennigan, Maxson, Sloane, and Ranney (2002) found in four areas of Los Angeles that, while 35% of respondents believed the mass media held the greatest influence on their opinions of local law enforcement, 65% believed that personal experience was the most influential factor (see also, Tyler & Huo, 2002). However, in a Chicago study, Rosenbaum, Schuk, Costello, Hawkins, and Ring (2005) found that vicarious contact with police was more important in predicting attitudes than was personal contact. In particular, and especially for African Americans, a positive experience reported by someone the respondent knew in the last year was associated with less negative images of law enforcement.

Although no empirically-robust meta-analysis of documented attitudes toward the police across cultures exists, many Western investigations have pointed to the role of socio-demographic factors in predicting such judgments, albeit these vary greatly from community to community (e.g., Klyman & Kruckenberg, 1974). Older, female, urban, better educated, higher-incomed, married, and Caucasian respondents in comparison to their social counterparts consistently manifest more positive views of law enforcement (e.g., Eschholz, Sims Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Olsen, 2005; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Yates & Pillai, 1996) as do many of those who reside in communities where the level of criminal disorder is purportedly low (Hennigan et al., 2002). Ethnic perceptions of law enforcement in the West, as alluded to above, have received widespread empirical attention. Taylor, Turner, Esbensen, and Winfree (2001) found that Caucasians and Asians had the more favorable views of police, followed by Hispanics and Native Americans, and then African Americans' views. These results, particularly as they

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relate African Americans' trust in law enforcement (Huo & Tyler, 2000; Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Huo, 2002), have been confirmed by many others (e.g., Parker, Onyekwuluje, & Murty, 1995; Prine, Ballard, & Robinson, 2001; Smith & Hawkins, 1973; Wortley, 1996). Importantly, whereas most research in this arena has regarded citizens' attitudes and trust in law enforcement as an end point of consideration, the present study furthers this agenda by examining trust as a mediating variable to a more critical outcome—civilian compliance—that has more relevance to community policing across cultures.

Cross-Cultural and Intergroup Parameters of Police-Civilian Interaction: Theory and Data

Other than general prescriptions that officers' styles should be respectful of the communities they serve (Miller, 1999; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b), no empirical data are available pertaining to the types of communicative acts civilians in different cultures expect or experience when encountering police officers that can work to engender positive or negative attitudes towards the latter. One wide-ranging framework—communication accommodation theory (CAT: e.g., Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991; Giles, Mulac, Bradac, & Johnson, 1987; Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005) —is relevant to unraveling the intergroup stakes of an encounter (Gudykunst, 1986; Harwood & Giles, 2005). Many civilians are likely to perceive—and hence communicate with—police officers in terms of their social category membership and unique roles rather react to them than as idiosyncratic individuals (let alone as co-citizens); indeed the badge, uniform, visible equipment, and even hairstyle are likely to have engendered strong feelings of intergroup boundaries since childhood (Durkin & Jeffrey, 2000; Giles, Zwang-Weissman, & Hajek, 2004; Singer & Singer, 1985).

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CAT explores the ways in which individuals vary their communicative behavior to accommodate others given where they believe others to be (see Thakerar, Giles, & Cheshire, 1982), their motivations for so doing, and the social consequences arising. For instance, accommodative moves from person A to B which attenuate social distance as well as enhance perceived similarity can often increase the likelihood that B will feel more positively toward A (e.g., Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1973). An accommodative climate is one in which conversational partners listen to one another, take the other's views into account, desire to understand their conversational partner's unique situation, and explain things in ways that "sit right" with their partner. An accommodative climate also features pleasantness, politeness, and respect. Creating such a climate is challenging for officers who, probably more than most, communicate with "numerous people whose backgrounds, needs, points of view, and prejudices vary dramatically, moment to moment" (Thompson, 1983, p. 9).

In an attempt to empirically explore the perceived role of officers' accommodation across cultural and ethnic groups within the United States, AUTHORS (in press-a) studied three fairly large samples of Californian respondents who were asked in a variety ways and contexts about their attitudes toward specified local law enforcement in southern California. Specifically, middle-income Hispanic residents of a small city were interviewed in Spanish after church services. Additionally in that city, a door-to-door survey was conducted in English across neighborhoods of the same city representing a variety of socio-economic groups. Finally, data was collected that assessed local university students' perceptions of their campus police force. In general, ratings of satisfaction with local police agencies were

significantly above the neutral mid-point, with males, non-Caucasians, and younger people

being less positive in these regards. In addition, and invoking separate structural equation

models for the three quite different populations, socio-demographic factors had no direct

effects on assessments of local officers and rated satisfaction with them. However, officers'

communication accommodation skills very strongly predicted assessments of officers—and

to a much greater extent than did rated trust in the police. Interestingly, from the survey

administered to Spanish-speaking Hispanics (mostly Mexican immigrants), it was found that

the less people reported police as having been accommodating in their country of origin, the

less accommodating they found them in the host community.

Whether the potent role of officers' perceived accommodativeness in predicting attitudes

toward law enforcement is context-specific or more universal in a global sense is an empirical

question. To engage this challenging issue but this time targeting "police in general" rather than

specifying a local agency, AUTHORS (in press-b) examined the generality of our structural

equation models with students in quite contrasting settings from the foregoing; one being in

another region of the USA (viz., in the Midwest, Kansas) and the other two in the People's

Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan. Besides the large ethnolinguistic differences between the

American locales and the latter, these three (in contrast to the agencies in southern California)

also had prior histories of police misuse of force and/or corruption. In summary, structural

equation models for the three settings had much in common. Perceived accommodation and

trust were co-determinants of attitudes towards the police, and both shaped respondents'

expressed obligations to obey them. Nonetheless, important cross-cultural differences did

emerge. In the Taiwanese model, whereas trust in the police was influential in predicting

satisfaction with the police, officer accommodation was perceived to be more influential. In the Kansan and PRC models, while perceptions of officers' accommodation largely determined trust in them and vice-versa, it was only the trust factor in these settings that predicted the outcomes.

The Present Investigation

The current study continues the pursuit of cross-cultural understandings in this domain and inquires about the role of communicative accommodation in attitudes toward police. Locations for analysis were selected to meet the goal of assessing potential similarities and differences within and across cultures in disparate geo-political regions. Additionally, locations were desired that, in their unique ways, possessed long-standing histories of interethnic oppression. Therefore, Black and White students were surveyed in the southern USA (viz., Louisiana) and South Africa. Little research in major scholarly journals has been devoted to police-civilian relationships in these contexts and, hence, little scholarly work is available upon which to draw.

Although there is much sociolinguistic work on the status of English and French in Africa (e.g., Mazrui, 2004; Omoniyi, 2003), the rise of urban vernaculars (e.g., Githiora, 2002; Ngom, 2005), and the decline of indigenous languages (e.g., Batibo, 2005; Brenzinger, 1992) that is of the utmost communicative relevance, communication research per se emerging out of this continent is quite limited. When it does surface, it does so mostly with respect to health communication campaigns (e.g., Snyder, 2002) on the one hand, and the origins of African American communication patterns on the other (see Johnson, 2000). Even in intercultural texts, African themes and contexts are alluded to only in passing (e.g., Lustig & Koester, 1999),

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including those devoted to non-Western approaches (Kim, 2002). In other words, the current data are somewhat unique.

Indeed, South Africa is a fascinating context for studies of intergroup communication as it has garnered world-wide attention for its radical social and political changes and, as a function of this, policing policies have altered radically over the past few decades (Shearing, 2001). Although South African society has been afflicted with discrimination among Whites, Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians, most research attention has been focused on that between Blacks and Whites. During the apartheid years, the police largely played a military role, quelling popular protests and supporting the White dominating regime in discriminatory fashion (Louw, 2001; Rauch, 2001). Not surprisingly, there was extreme alienation among Black people toward the police and resentful perceptions of its legitimacy. In parallel and during the apartheid era, policing was considered, even by many Whites, to be a low status occupation (see Taiwanese case, AUTHORS, in press-b). Since the first democratic elections in 1994, however, there has been a significant increase in the number of Black officers patrolling the streets and rural areas, the percentage of Black officers now comprising 68% of the entire force (see Annual Report, 2003/2004).

There has also been a shift to managing criminal, rather than political, violence and unrest (Barbarin, Richter, De Wet, & Wachtel, 1998). As a consequence, and after the passing of the South African Police Service Act in 1995, emergent policing paradigms have been strongly linked with efforts to experiment with new ideas relating to governance. Alternative modes of policing have been based on: an awareness that safety is not the monopoly of the police; reducing the amount of police-initiated violence; enhancing the police's sense of respect for the

public as well as the importance of restorative justice (Shearing, 2001). Toward these ends, so-called "community police forums" were established at every police station across the nation (Pelser, 1999); however, there has been no formal recognition of the role of communication in policing activities (see Cartwright & Jenneker, 2005).

In the post-apartheid years, national surveys concerned with attitudes toward law enforcement have been conducted in 1999 and 2003 (see Burton et al., 2004; Humphries, 2000). In brief, although gender and age (unlike the USA) were non-predictive of such attitudes, income level and socio-geographical location were. For example, those with higher salaries and living in the Western Cape had less negative attitudes and considered officers more effective in controlling crime than those with lower salaries and living in KwaZulu-Natal (the locations of the White and Black samples herein, respectively). Ethnicity has, predictably, been a vital factor in this attitudinal mosaic and Blacks recently feel the safest and contend that the police are doing a better job than Whites report. The latter, in turn, have less negative attitudes than Indians, and especially Coloreds (Burton et al., 2004). That said, even poor communities that express dissatisfaction with the police indicate a strong willingness to work with the police in combating crime. In general, unwillingness to report crimes—which was not uncommon—was attributed to a lack of trustworthiness in the police (Burton et al., 2004). In sum, despite Black representation in the police force, the adoption of community policing practices, and the acceptance of the police in South Africa having improved over the years due to changes in the governmental power structure, attitudes toward the police have room for further change.

Our USA sample derived from the southern state of Louisiana. Most of the students surveyed were from parishes that were predominantly African American. However, in sharp

contrast to the South African context, the ethnic make-up of the police there is only 31% African American. Not surprisingly given American history, ethnic issues again figure large in terms of attitudes towards authority, such as institutions like the police. Parsons, Shinhoster, and Kilburn (1999) found, in a reasonably large survey, that 85% of African American respondents in Louisiana felt harassed by police because of their ethnicity and also considered the criminal justice system unfair to them. Media reports also document a long history of police having problems with their image (e.g., Gwynne, 1995; Halbfinger, 2003) and point regularly to police officers violating civil rights and liberties (e.g., Rogers, 2003). Positive stories do, nonetheless, emerge by way of reports of successful community policing efforts and outreach projects and their supposedly causal effects on reductions in crime.

Prior research has been somewhat equivocal regarding the relative predictive weight afforded perceived trust and communicative accommodation in determining attitudes towards police. Furthermore, given that trust in, ratings of, and satisfaction with the police have been highly correlated, we turned our attention to a different outcome variable, namely, civilians' reported voluntary compliance with police directives (see Tyler & Huo, 2002). Not only has this construct enjoyed a long history in interpersonal communication research (e.g., Anderson, Dillard & Knobloch, 2002; Wilson, 2002), it is also extremely potent to officers themselves. Indeed, officers look to their communication skills to effect voluntary compliance wherever possible rather than having to resort to physical coercion to gain it. Based on our prior findings regarding perceptions of accommodation in the law enforcement context (see above), we proposed to test a new model (see Figure 1) which articulated that perceived officer

accommodativeness would predict two paths to reported civilian compliance; one direct and the other indirect through trust (see H3 below).

INSERT FIGURE 1

This new model, together with the importance of assessing contact with police, what we know about the U.S. and South African cultures, and highlighting the belief that public safety (historically for Blacks and more recently for Whites) could well be a fairly salient issue in South Africa, a research question (**RQ**) and a parsimonious set of hypotheses (**H**s) are posed as follows:

RQ: Generally, what differences (if any) will emerge between South Africa and the USA, and among Black and White ethnic groups in these countries, in perceived officer accommodativeness, trust, voluntary compliance, and contact (overall, police-initiated, citizen-initiated, and others' contact witnessed)?

H1a: Specifically, in the USA, Whites and females will perceive police in general more positively (e.g., trust and accommodation) than will African Americans and males.

H1b: Specifically, in South Africa, Blacks and females will perceive police in general more positively (e.g., trust and accommodation) than will Whites and males.

H2: Americans will report feeling safer than South Africans.

H3: Perceived officer communication accommodation will directly, as well as indirectly through trust, predict perceived voluntary compliance with police in South Africa and the USA.

Method

Sample

Participants were undergraduate students (n = 363) from universities in South Africa and the USA. The South Africa sample (n = 177; 130 females) was comprised of Blacks (n = 72) and Whites (n = 105) who ranged in age from 19 to 35, with a mean reported age of 20.44 (SD=1.58). The Black students came from a small Black university in KwaZulu-Natal, comprising 98% first-language Zulu speakers (the remainder being Sotho and Venda). The White students hailed from a medium-sized university in Cape Town where 17.5% of the students are Black (42.4% are White and the rest are Colored, Indian, or international). The USA sample (n = 186; 112 females) was comprised of African-Americans (n = 104) and Whites (n = 82) who ranged in age from 17 to 47, with a mean reported age of 20.88 (SD=3.78). The Whites as well as 40% of the Black sample derived from a large university in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where African Americans constitute about 11% of the student body. The remainder (and majority) of the Black sample derived from a somewhat smaller college in the same city where African Americans constitute about 98% of the students there. At each location, participants were volunteers knowing the topic of the study. Questionnaires were distributed in class and completed under the supervision of research assistants. These data were collected prior to the Hurricane Katrina disaster in the USA and before the television documentaries in South Africa on police brutality and corruption at the Booysens police station in Gauteng Province; the latter were called "Third Degree," broadcast on *SABC3* during September 2005.

Procedure and Materials

The survey utilized a between-subjects design to examine participants' attitudes toward law enforcement between the ethnic groups in the two countries. The 28-item instrument was

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comprised of 21 items using seven-point scales, as well as a number of demographic items. All questionnaires were in English, as that was the language of instruction in all locations. Questionnaire items were adapted from previous surveys of attitudes toward local law enforcement, and included items about reported voluntary compliance with, trust in, and accommodation from, officers, as well as general feelings of safety (see AUTHORS, in press-b). Other measures were used to assess how much police-initiated contact participants had experienced, how much they themselves had initiated, and how much contact they had witnessed others experience. Likert-type items anchored by "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" were used to assess accommodation, whereas bi-polar semantic differential scales were used (e.g., "very unpleasant" to "very pleasant") to assess trust and compliance (see Table 1 for questionnaire item wordings).

Given previous research findings, all items of interest for a model of police officer communication accommodation (i.e., the accommodation, trust, and reported voluntary compliance items) were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis using an equamax rotation. This yielded three factors: police officer accommodation (5 items), trust of police (6 items), and reported voluntary compliance (3 items). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy for the factor analysis was .911, indicating that the data were, indeed, suitable for this procedure. The questionnaire items are listed by factor structure and Cronbach alpha reliabilities appear in Table 1. Factor loadings appear in Table 2 (together with eigenvalues and percent of variance accounted for). Additionally, the three Likert-type items that assessed participant feelings of safety at three times of the day were combined into one overall measure of safety (alpha .801) for the subsequent analyses.

INSERT TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE

Results

Cross-National, Ethnic, and Gender Comparisons

To answer the research question, and to test H1a, H1b, and H2, a 2 (nation: South Africa vs. USA) x 2 (ethnicity: Black vs. White) x 2 (gender) MANOVA was conducted for accommodation, trust, reported voluntary compliance with police, and the safety items. Respondent gender was included due to emergent effects in some previous studies on attitudes toward law enforcement (see above). The multivariate test indicated significant and robust effects for all three independent variables: nation, $\Lambda = .63$, $F(1, 361) = 25.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .37$, ethnicity, $\Lambda = .91$, $F(1, 361) = 4.37$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$, and gender, $\Lambda = .79$, $F(1, 361) = 11.93$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$. Means and standard deviations for each measure by nation and ethnicity are provided in Table 3, and univariate follow-up tests on the three model factors (as well as the safety and contact items) are reported below.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The MANOVA also yielded a very modest interaction effect for nation by ethnicity, $\Lambda = .94$, $F(1, 361) = 2.73$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$. Subsequent tests showed that this was due to differences in overall, $F(3, 362) = 7.70$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$, and police-initiated, $F(3, 362) = 23.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$, contacts. In essence, these showed that Caucasian Americans reported significantly more of these types of contact than any of the other three groups.

Nation effects. An analysis of the means indicates that South African participants initiated moderate amounts of citizen-initiated contact, $F(1, 362) = 9.23$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$, and more of it than American students. In contrast, the American participants witnessed more of

others' contact with the police, F (1, 362) = 34.18, p < .001, η^2 = .09, experienced more police-initiated contact, F (1, 362) = 33.95, p < .001, η^2 = .09, than South Africans. In addition, and although South African participants found police to be more accommodating than did those in the USA, F (1, 362) = 8.47, p < .01, η^2 = .02, they were also less likely to report voluntary compliance with the police, F (1, 362) = 13.34, p < .001, η^2 = .04, trusted them less F (1, 362) = 7.86, p < .01, η^2 = .02, and felt less safe in their living environment, F (1, 362) = 84.89, p < .001, η^2 = .19, than did participants in the USA, regardless of ethnicity or gender.

Ethnicity effects. Caucasian participants from both countries experienced low-to-moderate amounts of contact, and more overall contact, F (1, 362) = 6.00, p < .05, η^2 = .02, citizen-initiated contact, F (1, 362) = 6.39, p < .01, η^2 = .02, and police-initiated contact, F (1, 362) = 10.67, p < .001, η^2 = .03, than African-American or Black South African participants. In addition, Caucasian participants perceived the police to be more accommodating, F (1, 362) = 4.00, p < .05, η^2 = .01, trusted police more, F (1, 362) = 8.50, p < .01, η^2 = .02, reported a greater likelihood of complying with police orders, F (1, 362) = 8.07, p < .01, η^2 = .02, and felt safer in their community, F (1, 362) = 5.07, p < .03, η^2 = .01, than did either African-Americans or Black South Africans.

Gender effects. Univariate tests indicated that males in both countries experienced low-to-moderate amounts of contact, yet more overall contact, F (1, 362) = 16.70, p < .001, η^2 = .05, police-initiated contact, F (1, 362) = 41.20, p < .001, η^2 = .10, and others' contact witnessed, F (1, 362) = 6.51, p < .01, η^2 = .02, than females. In addition, females perceived the police to be

more accommodating than did males, F (1, 362) = 5.90, $p < .02$, $\eta^2 = .02$, whereas males felt

significantly safer in their community than females, F (1, 362) = 37.73, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$.

Structural Equation Models

As a means of examining factors predictive of reported voluntary compliance with police

requests, and to test H3, separate structural equation models were tested for each of the four

samples (South African Blacks, South African Whites, African Americans, and White

Americans). In some cases, sample sizes were moderate; however, the ANOVA tests as well as

early tests of the composite models (comparing by nation only) indicated ethnic differences of

interest. Also, as research in this area is in its infancy, a test of separate models appeared both

theoretically feasible and statistically sound, particularly as the fit statistics and Hoetler tests for

adequate sample size were acceptable. Therefore, the models tested for the influence of

perceived officer accommodation on participants' trust in police officers as well as the influence

of trust in police officers on reported voluntary compliance with police requests. The direct

relationship between perceived officer accommodation and participants' reported voluntary

compliance with police requests was also tested. Again, the hypothesized relationships are

illustrated in Figure 1.

As in the factor analyses, a test of the measurement model showed that all of the indicator

variables posted relatively high path coefficients from their latent factors in each

ethnicity/nation. The outcomes for the theoretical model tests were very similar for each

ethnicity/nation with the exception of that for South African Whites. For South African Blacks,

African Americans, and White Americans there was a very strong direct relationship between

perceptions of police accommodation and trust in police and moderate to strong predictive

relationships between trust in police and participants' reported voluntary compliance with police requests. In each of these models, the direct path between perceptions of police accommodation and reported voluntary compliance with police requests was not statistically significant. These findings and the regression weights are illustrated in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The test of the model for South African Whites showed a very strong relationship between perceptions of police accommodation and trust in police as well as a strong direct relationship between perceptions of police accommodation and reported voluntary compliance with police requests. However, the path from trust in police and reported voluntary compliance was not statistically significant. This outcome is illustrated by Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

The goodness of fit statistics for each model are summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

The findings from the conventional multivariate analyses, as they relate to variance explained, underscore the value of examining nation and ethnicity in studies of this nature. As Klyman and Kruckenberg (1974, p. 219-220) reported some time ago, "…the tasks of the policeman vary from urban to the rural setting, from large cities to small cities, and from district to district with each of these jurisdictions. Each precinct has its own unique problems…" as, of course, has each nation with its own socio-historical climates. That said, few interactions between nation and ethnicity emerged as was expected from previous research and in terms of the ways in which H1a and b were articulated.

In summarizing the findings, and regarding our research question, South African participants initiated more police contact and found police to be more accommodating than did those in the USA. In contrast, the latter witnessed more police interactions with others and were more often the recipients of police-initiated contact. Additionally, students in the United States reported a greater inclination to obey police than their South African counterparts. These data lend interesting answers to the RQ which inquired after whether national differences (if any) would emerge in attitudes towards policing. On the one hand, the American sample conveyed more positive views of police officers in terms of overall ratings of, satisfaction with, and inclinations to obey, them than South Africans. In this last respect of compliance, we do not know, as yet, whether this was obligated from fears of recriminations or borne out of desires to maintain civic order. That notwithstanding, South Africans are prepared to open up more contact with law enforcement (for what ends we cannot, as yet, document either) and found officers to be more accommodating than in the United States. Perhaps this is a reflection of both law enforcement and civilians working toward a negotiative, yet cautious, response to new paradigms of policing being on offer.

As Oberle (2004) argued, "…creating a long-term positive image of law enforcement in the minds of the public rests with the support of individual officers and their ability to create a positive image on a daily basis within the communities they serve" (p. 27). Clearly and for whatever reason, South African law enforcement is creating a better communicative demeanor via their accommodative stances than Louisianan officers. An additional explanation for this finding might be located in the fact that South Africa is a country where eleven languages are recognized and where civilians have the right to be served by the public

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sector in their language of choice. Put another way, South Africans—officers and citizens alike—are comfortable with accommodation. For instance, an officer who speaks Zulu will be able to speak/understand Xhosa, as would an officer who speaks North Sotho be able to speak/understand South Sotho. It is also important to mention that post hoc American comparisons between the current White data and that of AUTHORS (in press-b) showed that, while informants in Kansas reported more contact with police ($p < .028$) and felt much safer ($p < .0001$), perceptions of the Kansan and Louisianan police did not differ significantly on any characteristic (e.g., perceived accommodativeness of police).

In terms of ethnicity, White participants experienced more contact than did either African Americans or Black South Africans. Whites also found police to be more accommodating, trusted them more, had more of a tendency to obey them, and felt safer in their community than did African Americans or Black South Africans. Turning to gender, males in both nations experienced more police contact and felt safer, whereas females perceived the police to be more accommodating. In terms of H1a and b, which cumulatively predicted interaction effects, H1a was supported in that Whites and to a lesser extent females in the USA perceived police in general more positively than their ethnic and gender counterparts. H1b, which in large part was built on Burton et al.'s (2004) findings above, was not supported. In accord with the main effects just reported, South African Whites, and females, too, were more favorably disposed toward police officers than Blacks and males. H2 was supported in that Americans reported feeling safer in their communities than South Africans.

H3 was, arguably, our most important prediction and related to the roles of perceived accommodation in determining civilian reported compliance as modeled in Figure 1. However,

this was not endorsed per se by any of the four ethnic-national groups, albeit accommodation predicted trust in all instances. Three of them (i.e., African and White Americans and South African Blacks) indicated no direct predictive relationship between perceived accommodation and reported compliance. Nonetheless, accommodation was key in predicting perceived trust in (and attitudes toward the police) which, in turn, influenced reported compliance. While the strengths of the paths from accommodation to trust were virtually identical (and actually for all four groups), it is noteworthy that the strengths of the pathways from trust to reported compliance differed between groups in the Figure 2 model. Given the lack of such a path at all for White South Africans (see Figure 3), it is interesting to see that the least robust path was South African Blacks. Nonetheless, an important structure—the indirect path—has been corroborated in three of the groups and even a direct relationship from accommodation to compliance was found for White South Africans.

The different solution emerging in this latter case is interesting. In a lawful society, it is essential that the custodians of the law are obeyed. In the Figure 2 model settings—which will be tested in upcoming studies in other cultural contexts (and with older and new democracies) — trust is necessary but perhaps not sufficient for a lawful society. In South Africa, perhaps the trust only occurs when people identify with the police—as could be the case with Black people identifying with their mainly Black police force. For Whites, this identification may not be present, simply because "their people" have been retrenched in great numbers from police duties. Furthermore, and given apartheid era history, South African Whites, who may have traditionally perceived of police as being merely a tool for keeping Blacks and Coloreds "in their place," expect more accommodation from police officers (especially considering the aforementioned

point that law enforcement is considered to be a low-status job in South Africa). Related to this perspective, South African Whites may trust the police to serve them, yet may not feel a sense of vulnerability that could explain the link between trust and compliance for their Black counterparts and those in the United States who may be more likely to fear law enforcement.

From an applied perspective, whether perceptions of officers' accommodativeness have direct or indirect effects in predicting compliance with the police, albeit a fascinating question to tease apart cross-contextually in its own right, is perhaps moot. The data herein show that vicariously observing and/or directly receiving accommodation from officers—maybe consistently from very different ones and over a reasonable period of time—will engender trust in police in general and likely relieve stress and frustration in the immediacy of an encounter. This might be especially the case for civilians in potentially negatively-valenced, emotionally-charged interactions with officers—such as traffic stops—in which outgroup membership may become communicatively-salient (see Gallois & Giles, 1998) and uncertainty and anxiety are particularly high (Gudykunst, 1995).

Obviously, and building on limitations inherent in our procedures already mentioned, we need to determine from police-civilian encounters (see Solan & Tiersma, 2005) what can be coded (verbally and nonverbally) and discursively analyzed as accommodative and confirming actions on the one hand, and nonaccommodating and disconfirming actions on the other (see Sieburg, 1976). For instance, and concerning differences between the two nations studied herein, future explorations may benefit from qualitative methods such as group-focused interactions to further unpack the social meanings and relationships between satisfaction with the police and characteristics of the target(s) that respondents had in mind (see Mastrofski, Willis, &

Snipes, 2002). Future investigation may also address the extent to which sexual orientation, age,

gender, and ethnic make-up of the police officer and civilian impact their drawing upon their

accommodative-nonaccommodative resources as well as a myriad of respondent variables (non-

student, political orientation, prior nature of contact with police, ethnic identification, etc.).

Indeed, a person's accommodative armory and flexibility may make up a hitherto

unrecognized statement about individuals' communicative competences (see Burleson & Greene,

2003) and, in this way, CAT has the potential to be associated with a very wide range of

individuals' uses of communicative actions in both interpersonal and intercultural settings (see

Gallois, 2003). In terms of CAT, and in light of our findings, we again suggest that a key motive

for officer convergence is the desire to gain compliance. Such motives underlying convergence

are central to communication in other service contexts and organizations as well. For example,

Sparks and Callan (1992) applied CAT to the hospitality industry and showed how much a

convergent style of communication with consumers is important for customers' satisfaction.

This has been observed in a number of settings where, for example, a travel agent accommodated

her pronunciation to the different socio-economically-based language styles of her Welsh

clientele (Coupland, 1984) and, in Taiwan, where salespersons converged more to customers

than vice-versa (van den Berg, 1986). Whatever, the work herein highlights the value in further

developing CAT—theoretically as well as empirically—so as to incorporate consequences of

accommodating in terms of attributed trust (including satisfaction) and anticipated compliance,

as well as longer-term institutional goals such as intergroup cooperation, and in our case,

effective community-policing.

<div align="center">Epilogue</div>

Paradoxically given the above findings, communication skills are given short shrift in police officer training (see however, Thompson, 1983). In fact, 98% of most of it in the USA is devoted to officer safety through acquiring arrest, control, defensive, and weapon techniques. It is an empirical question as to what extent invoking the latter techniques could be avoided, or at least attenuated in terms of level of force delivered, if appropriate accommodative skills—as prescribed by CAT—were engaged (McLusky, 2003). While the importance of officer safety through re-learning perishable physical skills and muscle memory cannot be under-estimated, our findings regarding the importance of officers' accommodative practices in determining trust in and compliance with them (new developments for CAT) suggest that far more attention should be directed at developing communication skills in general, and accommodative ones in particular (Huang, Flanagan, Longmire, & Vaughn, 1996).

Toward this end, police agencies in many cultures should be encouraged to expend more effort in training their officers in interpersonal as well as intergroup communication skills. Such programs would be devised so as to guide officers to act—and also to insure wherever possible that they are being perceived as acting—more accommodatively. Such accommodations would be manifest in respect and address forms, listening skills, empathy, explanations, and nonverbal skills (e.g., smiling) where situationally-appropriate. These tactics should be sensitive to the values, customs, and needs of a wide variety of civilians within a given culture (foreign, immigrant, mentally disturbed, elderly, homeless, executives, and so forth) without being stereotypical or adversarial. While civilians often see "the badge" rather than the person behind it, officers, too, should be person-centered rather than over-categorically oriented, especially in ethnically-charged environments such as South Africa and Louisiana, USA.

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Conversely, accommodation practices can be downright dysfunctional in certain life-threatening circumstances. The fine line of detecting cues to know when to accommodate or "code-switch" to another more controlling and assertive style is a critical communicative commodity unique to police officers' roles and has considerable currency for their safety. While statistics are gathered regarding officers' number of arrests and citations, little formal credit is afforded warnings or appropriate accommodative behavior.

This is not to conclude that communication interventions in this sphere should be a one-way street. The public, in tandem, require educating about the sometimes necessary but perceptually under- or nonaccommodating stances that officers need to take for their own (as well as others') safety. These situations include most traffic stops, wherein officers have no idea whether those stopped have just committed felonious activities, possess weapons, and are impending "third-strikers". Such a civilian awareness program could include citizens role-playing as officers (with uniform and simulated equipment) in a dangerous and or ambiguous call to service. It has been found that citizens having engaged in role-plays, and audience observers of them, report having significantly more confidence in officers and find them more accommodating, behaving more appropriately, and more trustworthy after being closely involved in this experience than before (AUTHORS, in press-c). These kinds of interventions should be sensitive to, and combat, the histories of immigrant minorities who (as cited above) often have had distressing and frightening experiences with non-accommodating (and even lawless) officers in their culture.

Finally, if community-oriented policing and collaborative efforts to reduce crime are going to take off in any meaningful way—especially in cultures with troubled histories—

intergroup boundaries between law enforcement and the community need to be dissolved. One

approach to this is to improve the quality of communication occurring between these parties

through accommodative practices that have herein been shown to promote trust and compliance.

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Table 1. Questionnaire Items and Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Police Officer Accommodation (.892)

How pleasant overall are the police?
In general, how accommodating are police officers? (i.e., how well do you think they listen to people, take their views into account, and want to understand their needs and unique situations?)
In general, how respectful of students are police officers?
How polite are police officers?
How well do police officers explain things to people (i.e., talk to people in ways that "sit right" with them, and that they understand)?

Trust in Police (.900)

I trust the police to make decisions that are good for everyone in the community.
To what degree do you feel you should support the police?
To what degree do you feel the police protect citizen rights?
I have confidence that the police department can do its job well.
How satisfied are you with the services provided by the police?
Overall, how would you rate the police department?

Inclinations to Voluntarily Comply with Police (.789)

People should obey the police even if what the police officers say or do goes against what they think is right.
I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do, even if I thought it was wrong.
Overall, the police are a legitimate legal authority, and people should obey the decisions that police officers make.

Table 2. Factor Loadings for Police Assessment Items.

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
How pleasant are police?	.115	**.804**	.070
How accommodating are police?	.227	**.745**	.157
How respectful of students?	.268	**.821**	.195
How polite are police?	.276	**.767**	.137
How well do they explain?	.422	**.522**	.214
You should support the police.	**.448**	.294	.263
Police protect citizen rights.	**.742**	.193	.237
Does police do its job well?	**.737**	.244	.222
Trust police to make good decisions.	**.713**	.292	.242
How satisfied are you with police?	**.740**	.263	.264
How would you rate the police department?	**.728**	.294	.310
People should obey police.	.207	.101	**.821**
I always follow what police officer says.	.115	.104	**.847**
Police legal authority and people should obey officer decisions.	.343	.139	**.472**
Eigenvalue	6.76	1.80	1.23
	48.25%	12.86%	8.79%

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for all Factors and Additional Measures by Ethnicity and Nation.

	Black		White	
	USA	South Africa	USA	South Africa
Factors				
Accommodation	3.43 (1.20)	3.69 (1.19)	3.58 (1.22)	4.03 (1.02)
Trust	4.07 (1.20)	3.82 (1.13)	4.64 (1.15)	4.06 (1.18)
Voluntary Compliance	4.07 (1.45)	3.39 (1.18)	4.58 (1.51)	3.88 (1.27)
Additional Measures				
Safety	4.81 (1.39)	3.42 (1.34)	5.34 (1.32)	3.65 (1.36)
Contact with Police	3.07 (1.71)	3.07 (1.51)	4.07 (1.67)	3.27 (1.44)
Police-initiated Contact	2.49 (1.55)	1.72 (1.38)	3.51 (1.68)	2.03 (1.25)
Citizen-initiated Contact	2.17 (1.31)	2.43 (1.44)	2.61 (1.15)	2.92 (1.41)
Others' contact (witnessed)	4.52 (1.80)	3.56 (1.78)	4.74 (1.55)	3.26 (1.34)

Table 4. Structural Equation Model Goodness of Fit Statistics

	N	χ^2	p	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	Hoelter .05 Index
Models							
SA Blacks	72	102.34	< .05	.99	.98	.07	66
SA Whites	105	113.30	<.01	.99	.99	.08	85
African Americans	104	107.07	<.01	.99	.99	.06	93
US Whites	82	106.21	< .05	.9.9	.99	.07	74

Figure 1

Hypothesized Model: The Influence of Perceived Police Accommodation and Trust in Police
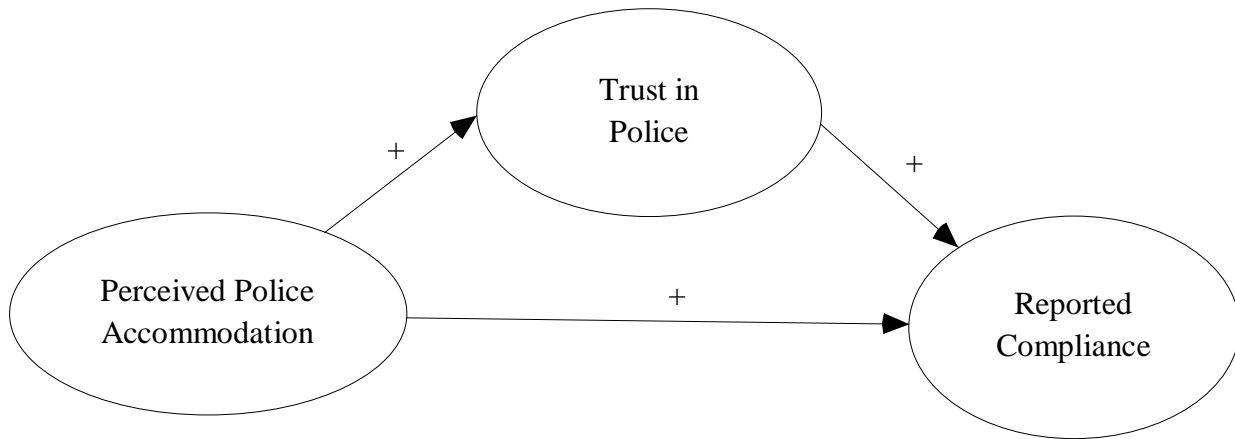on Reported Compliance with Police Requests

Figure 2

The Influence of Perceived Police Accommodation and Trust in Police on Reported Compliance
 with Police Requests

SA Blacks .72

African Americans 70

US Whites .71

Trust in
Police

SA Blacks .38

African Americans .56

US Whites .67

Perceived Police
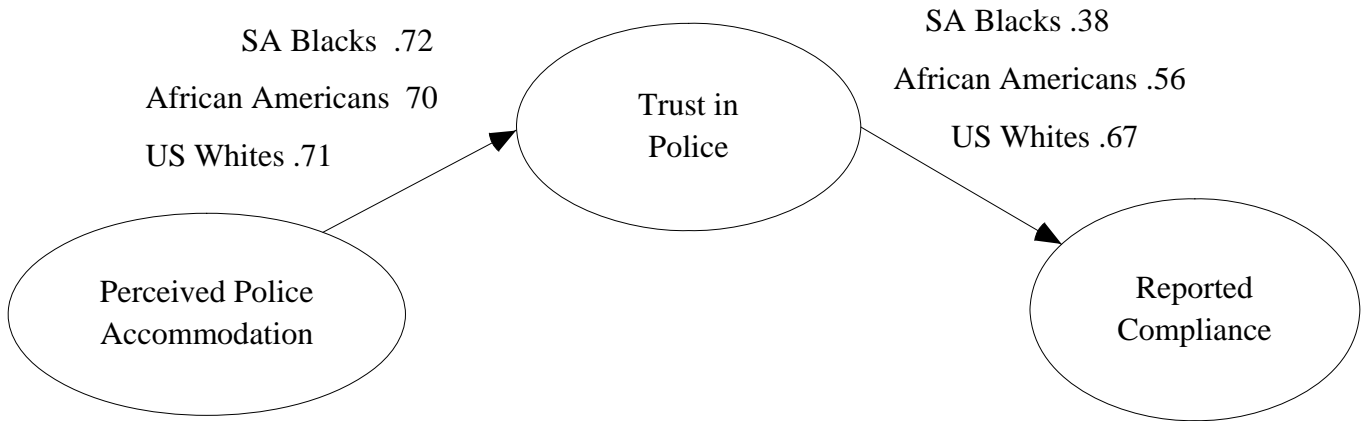Accommodation

Reported
Compliance

Figure 3

South African Whites: The Influence of Perceived Police Accommodation and Trust in Police on Reported Compliance with Police Requests