How Different
Ethnic Groups
React to
Legal Authority

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Foreword

In the 1990s, California experienced a series of events that focused national, and even international, attention on race and society. One of the first events was the March 1991 beating of black motorist Rodney King by Los Angeles police officers. The films of that beating were shown around the world. Just one year later, the decision that exonerated the officers of any wrongdoing ignited rioting in the streets of Los Angeles. Blacks were pitted against Koreans, Latinos participated in looting in alarming numbers, and the world watched on television as stores, shopping centers, and homes burned in Los Angeles as if the city were Beirut or Sarajevo under attack. Race took center stage again in 1994 when O. J. Simpson was handcuffed and taken to jail as the prime suspect in a grisly double murder in West Los Angeles. The racial dimensions of the trial riveted the country for months. In October 1995, a jury acquitted Simpson. The shock of the decision for some was offset by the elation on the part of others who felt, for once, that a man was not convicted for a murder just because he was black. It was clear

from the intensity of conflicting public opinion that California faced racial fissures in its social structure as deep as the San Andreas fault.

Even as the economy began to pick up in the mid-1990s, Californians passed a series of initiatives that further highlighted the racial divide. In 1994, the passage of Proposition 187 and its support by Governor Wilson signaled an emphasis on punitive measures for illegal immigrants that appeared to some to be more racially motivated than a pragmatic approach to fiscal management. Next was the success of Proposition 209, which prohibited preferential treatment of people on the basis of age, sex, or race. Finally, Proposition 227 turned the tide on bilingual education in a state where non-native English speakers may well constitute almost half of the total population. Again, many Californians saw the vote as a racially motivated strategy, this time to assimilate immigrant families in a way that threatens their ethnic identities.

It was in this atmosphere that PPIC asked social psychologists Yuen Huo and Tom Tyler to undertake a study of reactions to legal authority in California by different ethnic groups. At the time Dr. Huo was a Research Fellow at PPIC and Dr. Tyler was a Professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Tyler had previously published work on the perceptions of fairness in the judicial process, and Huo's graduate work led her to the tentative conclusion that different ethnic groups might well have different perceptions of fairness. PPIC and the authors were particularly interested in how members of different ethnic groups experienced face-to-face interactions with legal authorities and how their perceptions of those experiences shaped their evaluations of those authorities. Tyler and Huo offered a paradigm for studying the issue, and PPIC had an interest in launching a series of reports on the growing

ethnic and racial diversity of California and the implications of that diversity for civil society.

The result is *How Different Ethnic Groups React to Legal Authority,* by Yuen J. Huo and Tom R. Tyler. Telephone interviews were conducted with over 1,600 residents of Los Angeles and Oakland about their most recent encounters with a legal authority—from a parking ticket to requesting assistance in emergencies. Three groups were identified: African Americans, Latinos, and whites. The authors conclude that although perceptions of unfair treatment are more prevalent among African Americans and Latinos than among whites, all three racial groups are more concerned about fairness in the process of rendering justice than in the outcomes of that process. The authors also conclude that minorities and whites have a common understanding of what constitutes fair treatment. This shared understanding, they believe, provides the basis for more positive relations between minority groups and the legal authorities in their communities. In particular, that understanding suggests that efforts on the part of legal authorities to act more fairly will lead to more positive reactions and higher rates of compliance among minority residents.

This is good news indeed for a state that is well on its way to having majority minority demography—that is, no one ethnic group will constitute a majority of the state's total population. California is an ongoing experiment in cultural and ethnic diversity without precedent in U.S. history. The nation, and indeed the world, watches California with a fascination that periodically shifts between envy and disbelief—and we provide reasons for both reactions. At PPIC, we feel that it is part of our responsibility to describe, monitor, and explain the emerging cultural mix that is modern California—and to a great degree has always been

California. We intend to do this in an empirical and dispassionate fashion, and in so doing to provide everyone with a better understanding of the changes that are happening all around us. As the first monograph in a new PPIC series on race and ethnicity in California, this report suggests that our differences may not be as great as thought. To quote the authors, "rather than focus on the detrimental effects of strong ethnic identities, public discussion should focus on how to engender stronger identifications with American society." Strong and encouraging words, indeed.

David W. Lyon
President and CEO
Public Policy Institute of California

Summary

Although California has always been home to many ethnic and
cultural groups, the state's population is reaching new levels of diversity.
Demographic projections from the California Department of Finance
indicate that by the year 2020, over 60 percent of the state's residents
will identify themselves as non-white. Given this shift in the state's
ethnic landscape, policymakers and researchers must understand how this
diversity affects the effectiveness and day-to-day functioning of public
institutions. This project represents the first effort by the Public Policy
Institute of California to understand the social relations between
residents and officials who represent public institutions.

This study seeks to understand the influence of diversity on the
functioning of the legal system. We focused on the legal system because
of the tension between its representatives and the state's minority
communities. We were specifically interested in how members of
different ethnic groups experienced face-to-face interactions with legal
authorities (the police, judges, and other court officials) and how their

perceptions of those experiences shaped their evaluations of those authorities. Do members of minority groups report worse outcomes from legal authorities than whites do? Do minorities feel they are treated unfairly? If so, how do those perceptions affect their overall evaluations of their encounters with legal authorities? Do these perceptions affect their willingness to cooperate with decisions made by legal authorities? To answer these and other questions, we conducted telephone interviews with 1,656 individuals about their most recent encounter with a legal authority. The respondents were from one of three ethnic groups (African American, Latino, and white). The survey was conducted between November 1997 and July 1998. The sampling frame included the cities of Los Angeles and Oakland. Below, we highlight some of the study's major findings.

Summary of Major Findings

- Compared to whites, African Americans and Latinos report lower levels of satisfaction with their interactions with legal authorities. They also report less willingness than whites to comply with the directives of the authorities they deal with. This pattern of difference between minorities and whites was especially apparent among those who reported interactions with the police compared to those who reported interactions with authorities in the courts.

- Much of the difference between minorities and whites in their reactions to legal authorities can be accounted for by differences in their perceptions of how fairly or unfairly they were treated. When asked whether the legal authorities involved in their encounters used fair procedures to make decisions, African

Americans and Latinos reported experiencing less procedural fairness than did whites.

- The perception of fair treatment was the most important factor in forming reactions to encounters with the police and courts. It was more important than concerns about the outcomes people received from legal authorities. This pattern held up across different situations and ethnic groups.

- Although both fair treatment and positive outcomes increased self-reported compliance among all ethnic groups, their influences were diminished among Latinos compared to whites.

- The large majority of minorities reported interactions with a legal authority from a different ethnicity. Compared to those who interacted with a same ethnicity authority, those who interacted with a different ethnicity authority paid more attention to outcomes in forming compliance attitudes.

- Compared to minorities strongly identified with American society, those who were less strongly identified paid more attention to the outcome received and less attention to how they were treated in forming compliance attitudes.

- Members of different ethnic groups share similar conceptions about what constitutes procedural fairness. An authority is perceived to have acted fairly if he or she is judged to be unbiased, concerned about the needs of the individual, and respectful of the individual.

Conclusion

The bad news to emerge from our study is that African Americans and Latinos report experiencing more negative treatment from legal authorities than do whites. These perceptions of lower levels of fair treatment have important implications for behavioral compliance rates

among minority groups. The good news is that minorities and whites share similar concerns. They are concerned about receiving favorable decisions from legal authorities, but they are *more* concerned about being treated fairly. Minorities and whites also have a common understanding of what constitutes fair treatment. These findings suggest an optimistic future for more positive relations between minority groups and the police and courts in their local communities. In particular, it suggests that efforts to act more fairly will lead to more positive reactions and higher rates of compliance.

Our findings also indicate that a strong sense of ethnic identity does not diminish the ability of the police and courts to exercise their authority, although a weak sense of American identity does. Legal authorities can enforce laws and manage conflicts in their communities as long as residents, regardless of their ethnic loyalties, have a strong sense of attachment to American society. In fact, as a group, the respondents in this study identified highly with their ethnic group *and* with American society. Rather than focus on the detrimental effects of strong ethnic identities, public discussion should focus on how to engender stronger identifications with American society.

Contents

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgments

Our motive throughout this study has been to illuminate the complex social relations between members of diverse communities and the officials of the public institutions that govern them. The study posed many challenges, some of them unexpected. We are grateful to those who in their unique ways helped us meet those challenges. We are indebted to the Public Policy Institute of California for providing a substantial proportion of the funding for the survey. Special thanks are due to David W. Lyon, President and CEO of PPIC, for his support through the project's extended gestation. Our survey was also funded with a grant from the Law and Social Science Program of the National Science Foundation.

The survey was conducted at the University of California, Berkeley's, Survey Research Center under the supervision of Field Director, Karen Garrett. Karen shepherded the project through its many stages from the development of the instrument to the day-to-day fieldwork. Her professionalism and commitment to the project never wavered even

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1. Introduction

Although California has always been home to diverse peoples, the state's current population is moving toward an unprecedented level of ethnic and cultural diversity. A large influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia coupled with higher birth rates among immigrant groups are changing California's rapidly growing population dramatically. As we move into the new century, the social trends in place today will lead to a California that is best described as a mosaic of different peoples in which no single ethnic group will constitute a numerical majority. Projections from the California Department of Finance (1993) suggest that as early as the year 2020, there will be no majority ethnic group in California. Instead, there will be large numbers of Latinos (41 percent) and non-Hispanic whites (41 percent) complemented by smaller numbers of African Americans (6 percent) and Asians/others (12 percent). Given this shift in the ethnic landscape of the state, it has become crucial for social scientists and policymakers to understand how the population's diversity influences the day-to-day

functioning of the public institutions that serve the people. Evaluating traditional public institutions within the new social context is particularly important because these institutions were developed to serve a population that is very different from the one that exists today.

Recent debates have focused on the extent to which public institutions should adapt to California's changing population. One of these debates concerns bilingual education in the public school system. Although a voters' initiative has outlawed bilingual classrooms in the public schools, there is still continued disagreement about how to accommodate the needs of the growing number of students with limited English proficiency. This question illustrates the importance and complexity of examining the relationship between California's changing populace and its public institutions.

This report focuses on an equally important and perhaps more controversial policy area—how different ethnic groups view the legal institutions in their communities. From the Watts riots of the 1960s to the Los Angeles riots following the acquittal of white police officers charged with beating African American motorist Rodney King, the relationships between law enforcement agencies and minority communities have been characterized by high levels of tension. Although race is a divisive factor in many policy domains in California, nowhere is it stronger than in legal institutions. The fatal police shooting of Tyisha Miller, an African American woman, in Riverside County, also reminds us that race influences the public's perceptions of the police and courts. The controversial practice of racial profiling also fuels the flame of debates about unequal treatment of minorities and whites by legal authorities.

Diversity brings with it two sources of potential problems for legal institutions. One has to do with flexibility: in particular, if and how much institutions should adapt to meet the needs and concerns of people who may differ widely in terms of their values, beliefs, and expectations of authorities. The U.S. legal system assumes that its residents share a set of values and understandings about standards of justice and fairness. As California's population becomes more diverse, it is important to test that assumption. The second source of potential problems arises from the perception that minorities receive worse treatment at the hands of legal authorities than do whites. Law enforcement agencies and the courts will have to find ways to address this perception if they are to continue to function effectively.

In a state consisting of large numbers of immigrants and their children, cultural differences are likely to create communicative barriers between residents and a range of public institutions. Differing values, beliefs, and expectations are likely to contribute to conflict in already tense dealings with legal authorities. Anthropologists have provided ample evidence that different cultures have different ways of handling disputes (Nader and Todd, 1978). Hence, immigrants are likely to have different beliefs about how and when to interact with legal authorities. For example, refugees from nations governed by corrupted officials may be more suspicious about legal authorities and less likely to approach them for help. Also, some cultures emphasize social harmony rather than the adversarial search for justice that is central to the U.S. legal system. This study explores the ways in which members of different ethnic groups express their needs and concerns in their dealings with legal authorities. The results allow us to gauge the extent to which cultural differences pose problems for a legal system founded on Anglo-American

traditions and values. If diversity is indeed a source of problems for legal institutions, then an important policy consideration is whether such institutions should change to better represent the values and beliefs of the people they serve.

The concern about unequal outcomes and treatment has plagued legal institutions for some time. The concern came into the forefront of public discussions earlier this decade with the infamous incident between Rodney King, an African American, and four white officers from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). Since that incident, public opinion polls have indicated that minorities in general are less trusting of the police and the criminal justice system. A national poll conducted in October 1995 by the Gallup Organization found that African Americans were significantly less likely than whites to believe that the police are honest and ethical (GO 105362). Similarly, a *Los Angeles Times* poll of local residents, conducted on July 17, 1991, found that African Americans and Latinos are less likely than whites to give favorable performance ratings to the LAPD. The ongoing investigation into police misconduct in the Rampart division of the LAPD only adds fuel to existing distrust of the police in minority communities. Such evidence points to clear ethnic differences in perceptions of legal authorities. What is less clear is the degree to which these perceptions are shaped by personal experiences with the legal system or by other factors, such as media portrayals of tensions between minority communities and legal authorities. Pinpointing the source of this divergence in opinions about the legal system has important implications for the conduct of affairs in the police force and the courts.

This study was designed to understand the extent to which three aspects of interactions with legal authorities differ across ethnic groups. Those aspects are

- Reactions to the experience, including the levels of satisfaction people report as well as their willingness to comply with authority directives,

- Perceptions of the experience, including reports about outcomes and the ways authorities handled the situation, and

- Expectations of the interaction, including the standards people bring to their dealings with legal authorities.

If ethnic groups differ in their views of legal authorities, are those differences due to different outcomes, different perceptions of their treatment, or different expectations of fair treatment generally? In addressing these and other questions, we relied on data collected from 1,656 African American, Latino, and white residents of Los Angeles and Oakland who responded to a telephone survey conducted between November 1997 and July 1998.

In summary, this study tries to assess the everyday perceptions of and experiences with the police and the courts in two ethnically diverse California cities. It identifies the factors that underlie the public's reactions to their experiences with legal authorities as well as some of the problems that are likely to arise in governing a diverse society. As a report to the California Supreme Court noted (Dockson, 1993), the effectiveness of the legal system depends on its ability to provide equal justice while meeting the needs of a diverse population. We hope that our findings inform discussions among scholars, policymakers, and members of the legal community about how to deal with the challenges associated with governing an ethnically diverse society.

2. Study Rationale and Methodology

This study draws from psychological research on authority relations, which explores the factors that underlie reactions to authorities and their directives. This research covers a range of social contexts, including political, business, educational, and legal institutions. In general, it demonstrates that when responding to institutional authorities and their decisions, people focus on the actions and motives of the decisionmaker (see Tyler and Lind, 1992, and Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, and Huo, 1997, for reviews of the empirical literature). One of the strongest correlates of how people feel about their interactions with particular authorities is how fairly they have been treated. Indeed, perceptions of fair treatment are more important than receiving favorable outcomes, such as winning court cases. The research indicates that people do not view their interactions with authorities in purely exchange terms; that is, they are not necessarily satisfied and willing to support decisions only when they benefit from those decisions. Rather, people are very

relational; they are most likely to form positive impressions of authorities and their decisions when they feel that the authority has dealt with them in a fair and respectful manner. This pattern of response has been dubbed the *procedural justice effect*.

The finding that people are relationally oriented has important implications for the exercise of authority. When people feel that they have been treated fairly and that their relational concerns are satisfied, they are more likely to comply with the authority's wishes, even when following the directives is not in their immediate interest. In contrast, when people feel unfairly treated and that their relational needs have not been met, they are less likely to voluntarily comply with the authority's decisions. In this latter situation, authorities can still elicit compliance but they would have to rely on some form of intimidation or coercion. Hence, authorities benefit from a relational orientation because it allows them to make decisions and take action in the interest of the community without losing the support of those individuals who disagree with their decisions.

Although existing research on authority relations supports the procedural justice effect, most of that research is based on samples of white respondents. The research also suggests that authority relations are more complex in ethnically diverse environments. As a result, it is unclear that the procedural justice effect retains its strength across ethnic groups. Members of these groups may judge the importance of procedural justice differently. They may even disagree about which aspects of an authority's actions are relevant to those judgments.

The design of this study generally follows others we have conducted on authority relations in diverse communities. The earlier findings provide some interesting but preliminary insights into the exercise of

authority amidst diversity. These studies found that people tend to focus less on relational concerns and more on instrumental concerns when they perceive the authority as a member of an outgroup. For example, in a study of teachers in an English-language program in Japan (Tyler, Lind, Ohbuchi, Sugawara, and Huo, 1998), the authors found that the typical procedural justice effect occurred but only in the context of teachers seeking help from a supervisor who shared their nationality. When teachers and their supervisors did not share a nationality, the teachers were more focused on whether they benefited from the interaction than whether they were treated fairly by their supervisors.

In a second study, we interviewed U.S. workers from various ethnic backgrounds about their recent interactions with their work supervisors. Interestingly, the findings of this study suggest that the basis of reactions to authorities depends in large part on the group identification patterns of the respondents. What mattered in the end was not whether the supervisors and the respondents were from different ethnic backgrounds but the extent to which the respondents identified with the organization (Huo, Smith, Tyler, and Lind, 1996). By asking respondents to rate their levels of identification with the organization and with their ethnic group, we distinguished three patterns of social identification: assimilators (high organizational identification, low ethnic identification), biculturalists (high organizational and ethnic identification), and separatists (low organizational identification, high ethnic identification). In reports of interactions with work supervisors who were from a different ethnic group, both the assimilators and biculturalists focused on how fairly they were treated in forming their reactions to authorities. The pattern of findings for the separatists shows a much stronger emphasis on outcomes. The results of this analysis show

that the real question with respect to the person reacting to an authority is one of self-identificaton, rather than one of objective classification. It is the perception of difference, not any objective difference in ethnic group membership, which shapes reactions to authorities. It is interesting to note that strong ethnic identification does not necessarily pose a threat to effective governance. Ethnic loyalty threatens the authority's ability to govern only when it is accompanied by an absence of loyalty to the superordinate group (i.e., society, community, or organization).

We also have data from several preliminary studies that address the relationship between cultural orientation and reactions to authority. One study examined an ethnically diverse college student sample in the United States within the context of hypothetical interpersonal disputes (Lind, Huo, and Tyler, 1994). A second dataset was collected from a sample of college students in Japan using a similar format (Sugawara and Huo, 1994). Findings from both studies suggest that there was very little or no variation across these ethnic and national groups in terms of the importance they placed on fair treatment. To be treated fairly was the most important factor in shaping evaluations of authorities. The procedural fairness phenomenon appears to hold up well across cultures and across subcultures within one country.

Although culture does not seem to influence the importance of procedural fairness relative to outcomes, we do find some evidence that people from different cultural backgrounds define procedural fairness in distinct ways. For example, a study of college students' reactions to conflicts with authorities found that although the Hong Kong Chinese defined a fair procedure primarily in terms of neutrality or the absence of

bias, Americans defined it primarily in terms of dignity and respect (Lind, Tyler, and Huo, 1997).

Following up on this earlier work, we designed the current study to address three issues related to ethnicity and views of legal authority. These are

- Whether perceptions of fair treatment differ across ethnic groups,

- How perceptions of fair treatment affect both the relative satisfaction residents report in their encounters with legal authorities and their willingness to defer to the decisions and requests made by these authorities, and

- Whether the meaning of fair treatment differs across ethnic groups.

These issues are addressed systematically in the subsequent chapters. Although this study builds on previous research, it differs in two significant ways. First, data in the earlier studies were collected in nonlegal settings. Second, they were collected from convenience samples, which are not representative of the general population in California or of subgroups within California. This study, however, draws a random sample of residents from two California communities where minorities are well represented. The findings therefore allow us to draw more confident conclusions about the relationship between ethnicity and legal authority.

With these questions in mind, we designed a study that took advantage of the natural diversity that exists in two California cities: Los Angeles and Oakland. A random digit telephone sampling procedure was used to contact potential respondents between November 1997 and July 1998. The sample was limited to adults who identified themselves

as African American, Latino, or white and who reported that they had a personal encounter with a legal authority in the year or so before the interview. Of those who were eligible for interviews, 1,656 respondents completed the interview (78.9 percent response rate).[1] Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish depending on the preference of the respondent. Table 2.1 shows the distribution of respondents across ethnic groups and cities.

Table 2.1

Number of Respondents, by Ethnicity and City

City	African American	Latino	White	Total
Oakland	281	255	256	792
Los Angeles	280	254	330	864
Total	561	509	586	1,656

Sampling Strategy

The two cities we sampled were Los Angeles and Oakland. Los Angeles was an obvious starting point for our study given its importance in the state, its ethnic and racial diversity, and its reputation for tension between minority groups and the city's legal authorities. Oakland was selected as a second site for our study for comparative purposes. Like Los Angeles, Oakland is a highly diverse community with a history of tension between minorities and the city's legal institutions. However, Oakland has had fewer high-profile cases of police-citizen conflicts. If we find similarities in responses across the two cities, we can be more confident of the validity of our findings. If city differences emerge, attempts to understand the basis of theses differences would provide useful

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[1]For details about the calculation of response rate, see Appendix A.

information about the factors that shape public perceptions of the police and courts.

Our study is a first attempt at understanding the effects of diversity on the public's perceptions of legal authorities in California cities. There have been extensive efforts to understand black-white differences in perceptions of legal institutions (Baldassare, 1994; Sears and McConahay, 1973). A major contribution of our study is to expand this discussion to include Latinos, the fastest growing population in California. Asian Americans were not included in the study because of methodological and cost-related reasons. Telephone surveys typically rely on geographic stratification to target members of minority populations. This method is efficient because it reduces the total number of calls needed to gather a designated sample and hence reduces the overall cost of the survey. Because of patterns of residential segregation, geographic stratification is an effective way to sample African Americans and Latinos. This sampling method does not work as well for sampling Asian Americans because they tend not to concentrate as heavily in particular areas (see Mohadjer, 1988, for a discussion of this issue). Obtaining a sample of Asian Americans equal to the sample for African Americans and Latinos would therefore have increased the cost of the survey prohibitively. Future efforts should focus on developing research methods that would allow for inclusion of Asian Americans in studies of diversity and legal institutions. As the aftermath of the Rodney King riots illustrated, race relations in California today involve not only African Americans and whites but Asian Americans as well.

To reduce the total number of calls made to generate the sample, a list-assisted random digit dialing method was used to eliminate telephone banks consisting solely of businesses. Individuals with family members

who are employed as a police officer, fire fighter, judge, court clerk, or court-appointed mediator in the city of residence were not eligible for participation in the survey.

Respondents were asked to recall and report about a specific interaction they had with a legal authority (police officer, judge, or other court official) from their local community within the last 12 months. The types of incidents reported by our respondents vary widely. They include calling the police to report suspicious activities or to ask for assistance in emergencies. They also include being stopped by the police for suspected traffic violations or for routine questioning. A smaller group of respondents reported their involvement in court proceedings involving either criminal or civil matters. Our goal in this study was to gather a sample that approximates the universe of individuals in a particular community who have had recent contact with the legal system. Because the types of incidents reported ranged from the mundane to the serious, we feel assured that the data reported here are reflective of all the different experiences people have.

We intentionally selected a sampling strategy that ensured a final sample of approximately equal numbers of African Americans, Latinos, and whites. We developed this strategy in an effort to have subgroup sample sizes that were large enough to allow us to evaluate ethnic group similarities and differences confidently. Although this approach helps us to understand how the experiences of one ethnic group compare with the experiences of another group, it does not produce a sample that is representative of the general population from which the respondents were drawn. Unlike public opinion polls that are conducted by professional agencies, our data do not provide population estimates. Instead, our study was designed to collect a dataset that allows us to fully

explore the nature of experiences with legal authorities among African Americans, Latinos, and whites.

Although we relied on a telephone survey of people's self-reports of their personal experiences, there are other approaches for understanding the needs and concerns of different ethnic groups. An alternative method, for example, is to use administrative records such as police reports, court transcripts, and formal complaints against police departments or judges. Although such records may provide more reliable, objective information, we feel that our approach has some advantages. First, in randomly selecting people to be interviewed, we have information about contacts with legal authorities that may not appear in official records. Second, our approach separates the survey from government agencies and legal institutions themselves. In reducing the fear associated with evaluating these institutions directly, the responses we recorded are more likely to reflect the true attitudes and feelings of those we surveyed. For more details about the survey methodology, see Appendix A.

Characteristics of the Sample

Our sample contains people with highly diverse backgrounds. Below, we describe the sample in terms of some basic demographic variables. See Appendix C for the full summary of the sample's demographic characteristics.

Age and Sex

Approximately half the African American and white respondents were under the age of 40. As a group, the Latino respondents tended to be slightly younger with nearly three-quarters reporting that they were

under the age of 40. Among the white respondents, there were approximately equal numbers of males and females (49.1 percent and 50.9 percent, respectively). The Latino subsample included more men than women (57 percent and 43 percent, respectively), and the African American subsample included more women than men (59.5 percent and 40.5 percent, respectively).

Education

White respondents tended to have more years of education than African American and Latino respondents. Whereas most whites reported that they were either college graduates or had some post-college education, less than a fifth of African Americans and just over a tenth of Latinos fell into this category. Over 18 percent of Latino respondents reported that they had an eighth-grade education or less compared to 1.6 percent of African American respondents and less than half a percent of white respondents.

Income and Employment Status

As a group, white respondents reported higher annual household income than minority respondents. Nearly half of Latinos (47.3 percent) reported household income of $25,000 or less. Slightly less than half of African Americans (40.4 percent) reported household income of $25,000 or less. In contrast, only a fifth of whites reported household income of $25,000 or less. Approximately three-quarters of respondents reported that they were employed. This number varied slightly across ethnic groups with Latinos reporting lower employment rates than whites and with African Americans reporting the lowest employment rate of all three groups.

Political Ideology

African American and white respondents tended to be more liberal than Latino respondents. Whereas slightly over 50 percent of African Americans and of whites reported that they leaned toward being liberal rather than conservative or moderate, only about a third of Latinos reported that they leaned toward being liberal.

Foreign Born

Almost all African American and white respondents were born in the United States (95 percent and 86.3 percent, respectively). In contrast, over half (62.7 percent) of Latino respondents were born outside of the United States. Although the percentage of foreign-born Latinos appears to be high, it is comparable to what was found in a recent telephone survey of Los Angeles residents.[2]

Self-Report Measures

We interviewed respondents at one point in time about their most recent encounter with a police officer, judge, or other type of legal authority. Because we measure self-reported attitudes and not observed behavior, errors of measurement need to be considered in the analysis. To develop reliable indicators, we collapsed multiple measures of each variable. The one exception to this approach is our measure of the outcome of the encounter (favorable or unfavorable). In this case, we used a single measure to assess self-reports of whether the encounter led

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[2]D. O. Sears, personal communication, 1998. The 1994 Los Angeles County Social Survey is based on a probability sample of residents of the greater Los Angeles area. Data from that study indicated that 75 percent of the Latino respondents reported that they were foreign-born.

to a positive or negative outcome for the respondent. This measure represents an effort to assess objective outcomes (for example, whether a police officer was successful at resolving a reported problem). Below, we list the variables we used in our analysis.

- Satisfaction with the overall experience with the legal authority,

- Voluntary compliance with the directives of the legal authority,

- Nature of outcome,

- Perceptions of the fairness of treatment, and

- Perceptions of specific aspects of treatment.

Limitations of the Study

Our study is a first effort to look at the effect of diversity on the public's perceptions of legal authorities. Hence, we relied on a cross-sectional survey approach to evaluate the relationship between perceptions of experiences and reactions to those experiences for each of the three ethnic groups included in our study. From a policy perspective, a limiting factor of our study is that it is based solely on individuals' self-reports of their experiences. Stronger policy recommendations can be made in future studies using methodologies that allow tracking of the actual behavior of both individuals and the legal authorities they encounter.

A more substantive limitation of our study concerns our sampling strategy. The most important limitation is that a major ethnic group in California is missing from our sample: Asian Americans. We did not include Asian Americans in our sample because of the prohibitive costs and time commitment required to properly sample this linguistically heterogeneous and geographically dispersed ethnic group. Given our

findings, however, the exclusion of Asian Americans from our sample is less serious than might at first be feared. Although our findings indicate statistically significant ethnic group differences, these differences are remarkably small compared to the similarities documented across ethnic groups. Given the relative absence of differences observed among African Americans, Latinos, and whites, we have little reason to suspect that results for Asian Americans would have been strikingly different. Moreover, other studies based on non-probability samples indicate that the general procedural justice effect holds up among Asians and Asian Americans (Lind, Huo, and Tyler, 1994; Lind, Tyler, and Huo, 1997; Sugawara and Huo, 1994).

A related concern is that our respondents' views do not accurately represent the views of the ethnic groups to which they belong. The absence of a wide ethnic divide appears to be at odds with public conceptions of tumultuous race relations in the legal context. One could argue that the sample's selection biases resulted in underrepresentation of the level of frustration and anger in minority communities. Perhaps those who are most alienated from the legal system are less likely to respond to our survey. Moreover, those who have the most negative encounters with legal authorities may be incarcerated and unavailable to our interviewers.

We propose an alternative interpretation for the absence of an ethnic divide in our sample. It is likely that popular conceptions of minorities' relations with legal authorities are shaped in large part by a few salient and highly publicized events and that the reality of day-to-day encounters between citizens and legal authorities are far less volatile and sensational. Our goal was to represent the views of African Americans, Latinos, and whites in general. We intended to assess these individuals' day-to-day

interactions with legal authorities rather than those of specific subgroups such as incarcerated individuals and political activists. Although our sample may not be completely representative of the targeted groups, it is a much closer approximation than convenience samples or even telephone polls of individuals contacted through random selection processes after a highly publicized event such as the Rodney King riots. Furthermore, modest differences in reports of experiences with legal authorities are consistent with the results of a recent report on racial, religious, and ethnic fairness conducted by the Ninth Circuit Court Task Force (Walters, 1997). The data for that report provided relatively little evidence of group-based bias in the everyday conduct of the Ninth District Court.

3. Levels of Satisfaction and Compliance

One basic question addressed in this study is whether levels of satisfaction with legal authorities and a willingness to comply with their directives differ across ethnic groups. The literature suggests that African Americans are more likely to report less positive opinions of authorities and their decisions than are whites. A related question is how the attitudes of Latinos compare to the attitudes of African Americans and whites. Although Latinos are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in California, we have little information about their experiences with and attitudes toward legal authorities.

Two variables are of interest: overall satisfaction with the encounter with a legal authority and voluntary compliance with the authority's directive. Satisfaction is based on an index of responses to four questions (e.g., "How satisfied were you with the experience?"). Likewise, voluntary compliance is based on an index of responses to four questions (e.g., "How willing were you to accept the decision the [police/court]

made?"). The exact wording of items included in each scale are reported in Appendix D. Each scale could range from a low of 1 to a high of 4 with a midpoint of 2.5. Higher numbers represent greater satisfaction and willingness to go along with the legal authority's directives.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present the group means on levels of satisfaction and compliance. In general, the group means were just above the scale midpoint of 2.5, indicating that our respondents, on average, were generally satisfied with their experience and were willing to comply with authority directives. A comparison of means across different groups reveals that Latinos did not differ from African Americans in their self-report of either satisfaction or compliance. For this reason, we collapsed
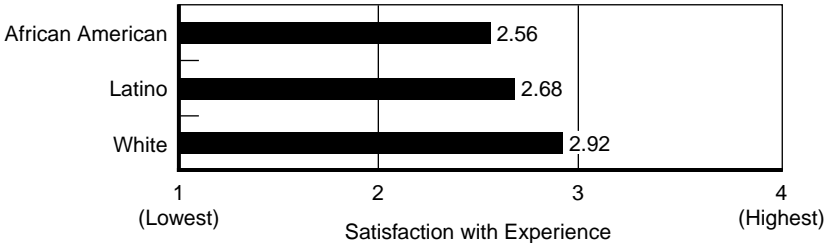
Figure 3.1—Satisfaction with Experience Across Ethnic Groups

Figure 3.2—Voluntary Compliance Across Ethnic Groups

the group means and compared them to the group means for whites. That comparison indicates higher levels of satisfaction and compliance among whites than among minorities.

Reports from both public opinion polls and media outlets suggest that minorities are more likely than whites to hold negative attitudes about the legal system and its representatives. Although this pattern is clearly replicated in this dataset, the factors that shape it are less clear. One explanation is that these negative opinions are based on personal experiences. Another is that these opinions reflect other factors such as political ideology or media representations of minority-police relations.

Unlike other datasets, this one is based on interviews with individuals about their actual experiences with the police and courts. Although other contributing factors cannot be ruled out, we can be more confident that the attitudes expressed by the respondents are based on the nature of their encounters with legal authorities. Interestingly, the data from the current study are consistent with the conclusions drawn from past analysis of group differences in attitudes toward legal authorities. The data suggest that African Americans and Latinos hold less positive attitudes about their encounters with legal authorities than whites. However, African Americans and Latinos do not appear to differ from each other in their reactions to encounters with legal authorities. This finding suggests that, notwithstanding their very different histories in America, African Americans and Latinos share similar experiences when they deal with the police and the courts.

The findings presented in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show that minorities and whites clearly differ in their levels of satisfaction with the reported experience and their willingness to comply with authority directives. However, this pattern may depend on the type of interaction the

respondent was interviewed about. For example, it is important to examine whether these different levels of satisfaction depend on whether the respondents initiated their contacts with the police. It may be that minorities have more negative experiences than whites when stopped by the police but similar ones when they call the police for help or to report a crime.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 show the means for levels of reported satisfaction and compliance across each type of interaction for both minority respondents and white respondents. These figures indicate that, among those who reported being stopped by the police, minorities are less satisfied with their experience and less willing to go along with the directives of the authority. A similar pattern emerged for those who reported initiating contact by calling the police. Again, minorities were less satisfied and less compliant. For those who reported that they were participants in court, however, there were no differences between minorities and whites on either level of satisfaction or compliance.
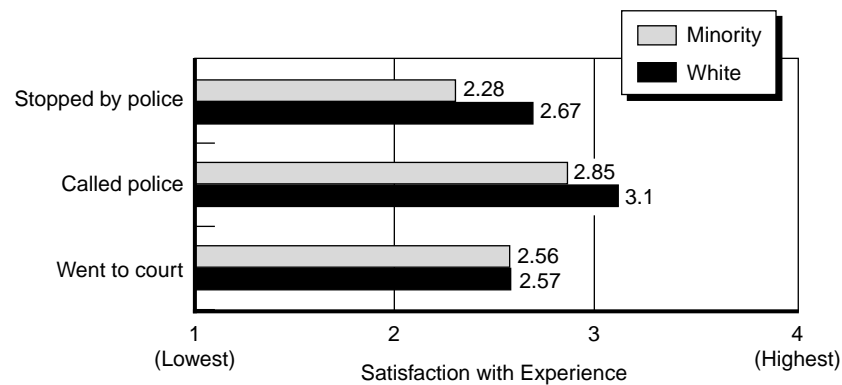
Figure 3.3—Satisfaction Across Types of Encounters and Ethnic Group Membership
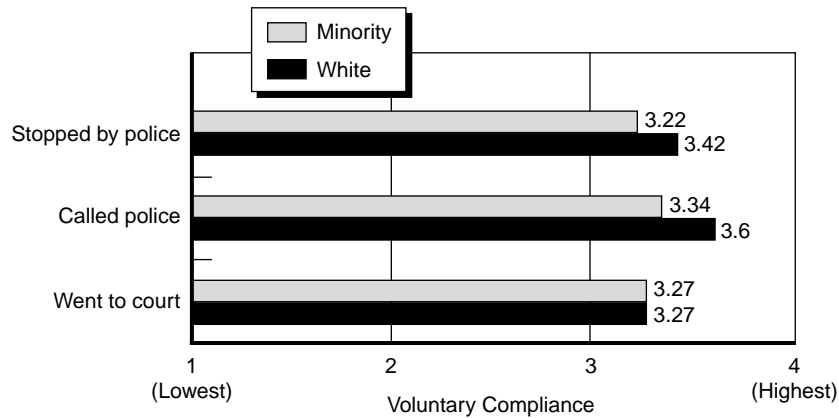
Figure 3.4—**Voluntary Compliance Across Types of Encounters and Ethnic Group Membership**

Even after controlling for age, income, city of residence, education, and sex, the ethnicity effect remains for both indicators of attitudes toward the legal authority. This finding suggests that the ethnicity effect that appeared in the table of means is meaningful and is not simply an artifact of some other factor correlated with ethnicity. Our analysis also revealed that women report higher levels of satisfaction than men, and that higher income is associated with greater satisfaction and compliance.

In summary, the primary finding of the analysis presented in this chapter is that both African Americans and Latinos expressed less positive attitudes about their experiences with the legal authority they dealt with than did whites. Moreover, these two groups did not differ from each other in terms of their level of satisfaction and willingness to comply with authority directives. The observed difference between minorities and whites occurs for both those who called the police and for those who were stopped by the police. No such difference occurred for those who reported participating in court proceedings. Even after controlling for a

range of demographic variables correlated with ethnic group membership, the minority-white difference in satisfaction and compliance held.

4. Perceptions of Outcome and Treatment

This chapter deals with perceptions of, rather than reactions to, experiences with legal authorities. In particular, it focuses on whether authorities were thought to have acted fairly in specific encounters. It also focuses on whether the outcomes of these encounters were perceived to be positive or negative. For example, those who reported calling the police for help were asked whether the police actually resolved the problem they called about. Likewise, those who reported being stopped by the police were asked whether they were cited for a violation. Finally, individuals who reported going to court were asked whether they won or lost their cases. Responses to these questions were used to form a measure of self-reported outcome. Procedural fairness was assessed using two questions that were combined to form a scaled index (e.g., "How fair were the procedures he/she used to make decisions about how to handle the situation?"). The scale ranges from 1 (very unfair) to 4 (very fair)

with a midpoint of 2.5. The exact wording of items used to measure outcome favorability and procedural fairness is reported in Appendix D.

Figure 4.1 presents the group means on reported outcomes. The figure illustrates a remarkable similarity across ethnic groups in self-reported outcomes of encounters with legal authorities. About 50 percent of encounters resulted in a favorable or positive outcome for our respondents. This pattern replicated across each of the three ethnic groups included in the study. Although Latinos as a group reported slightly lower rates of positive outcomes relative to African Americans and whites, the differences across groups were not statistically significant.

Following the logic laid out in the previous chapter, group differences in outcome favorability may depend on the type of experience reported. Perhaps these differences are more pronounced when people are stopped by the police than when they call the police or go to court. Statistical tests of group differences were conducted for each type of encounter. The results suggest that the general pattern observed in Figure 4.1 holds up. There were no statistically significant group differences in self-reported outcome for any of the three types of encounters. No matter what the nature of the encounter with legal
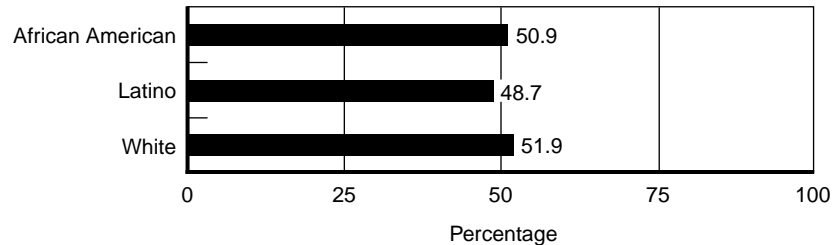
Figure 4.1—Percentage of Respondents Receiving Positive Outcomes from Legal Authorities

authorities, African Americans, Latinos, and whites report similar levels of positive or favorable outcomes.

Before we conclude that minorities and whites receive equal outcomes in the legal system, we should further examine the nature of interactions different ethnic groups have with legal authorities. Table 4.1 shows the percentage of people in each ethnic group who reported one of the three types of experiences the interview asked about: calling the police for help, being stopped by the police, and going to court. The table shows that the most common type of experience reported across all ethnic groups was calling the police for help, followed by being stopped by the police, and then going to court. Although this pattern held up across ethnic groups, a careful examination of the table shows that the proportions are slightly different for whites compared to the proportions for African Americans and Latinos. Whites reported a higher percentage of calling the police relative to being stopped by the police than either African Americans or Latinos. These data suggest that minorities and whites may not receive equal outcomes from the legal system, since more minorities report being stopped by the police (a negative experience in and of itself regardless of actual outcome) than do whites. However, our data as a whole show that within each type of encounter, there are no

Table 4.1

**Percentage of Individuals Reporting an Encounter,
by Ethnic Group**

Encounter	African American	Latino	White
Called police	52.4	48.7	60.4
Stopped by police	33.2	33.8	27.8
Went to court	14.4	17.5	11.8

significant differences in reports of the nature of outcomes received by minorities versus whites.

Similar analyses were conducted on perceptions of procedural fairness. Figure 4.2 shows clear differences in perceived procedural fairness across different ethnic groups. Comparison of the different groups indicate that African Americans and Latinos did not differ in their self-reports of how they were treated by legal authority. However, minorities as a group did report lower levels of procedural fairness than whites. Because Latinos and African Americans did not differ significantly in terms of their perceptions of how fairly they were treated, we collapsed their responses in the subsequent analysis.

Again, we were interested in whether the observed group differences between minorities and whites were more or less pronounced in different situations. Analyses were conducted to evaluate whether group differences exist across each of three types of encounters: being stopped by the police, calling the police, and going to court. The results indicate that minorities were less likely than whites to feel that they were treated fairly in their encounters with the police—both when they were stopped for questioning and when calling the police. In contrast, minorities who
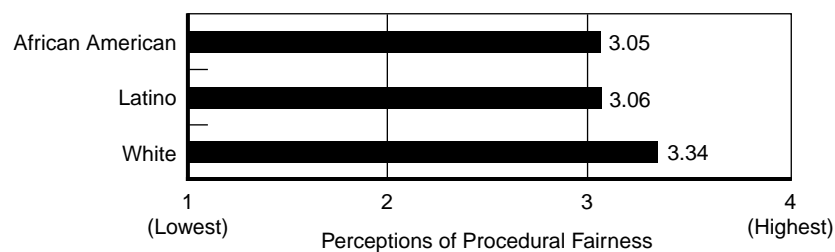
Figure 4.2—Perceptions of Procedural Fairness Across Ethnic Groups

went to court reported slightly higher levels of procedural fairness than whites, although this difference was not statistically reliable.

Even after controlling for related variables, the differences between whites and minorities shown in Figure 4.2 remained significant. Regardless of age, income, city of residence, education, or gender, minorities report lower levels of procedural fairness than whites. The analysis also showed that higher-income individuals report higher levels of perceived procedural fairness.

In summary, we found significant differences in perceptions of procedural fairness across ethnic groups. African Americans and Latinos report lower levels of procedural fairness than whites. This pattern exists in situations involving the police, both when respondents were stopped by the police and when they called the police for help. However, of those who reported going to court, the perception of procedural fairness did not differ for minorities and whites. Surprisingly, we did not find any evidence of ethnic group differences in perceptions of outcome favorability. African Americans, Latinos, and whites report receiving similar outcomes. These findings suggest that the primary complaint minorities have with the legal system has to do with the quality of their treatment rather than the outcomes they receive. In the next chapter, we explore this idea in greater depth by examining how perceptions of procedural fairness and outcome favorability shape reports of satisfaction and voluntary compliance.

5. Explaining Group Differences in Satisfaction and Compliance

The findings presented in Chapters 3 and 4 suggest that African Americans and Latinos report more negative reactions than do whites. Minorities report lower levels of satisfaction and less willingness to comply with decisions made by legal authorities. This effect remains even after controlling for other demographic variables that are correlated with ethnicity, such as household income and educational attainment. However, the effect appears to be especially pronounced among those who report experiences with the police compared to those who report court experiences. The goal in this chapter is to examine alternative explanations for *why* the minorities interviewed for this study report more negative reactions than do whites.

One possible explanation is that minorities are less satisfied with their experiences and less willing to go along with legal decisions because the outcomes they receive are more negative. Studies have shown that minorities receive less favorable outcomes from legal institutions than

whites, including longer sentences and a higher likelihood of being questioned, arrested, and convicted (Monahan and Walker, 1994). An alternative explanation based on a psychological model of authority relations suggests that minorities report lower levels of satisfaction and compliance because they perceive that they are treated unfairly and disrespectfully by legal authorities (Tyler, 1990; Tyler and Lind, 1992).

A growing body of research summarized in the introduction supports this relational explanation for the observed ethnic differences in reactions to the police and the courts. The idea underlying the relational model is that people care about their status in their communities. Furthermore, they infer their status in part by observing how important community representatives, such as the police and the courts, treat them. Fair treatment indicates that they are valued members of the community; unfair treatment indicates that they are viewed as marginal. If the relational explanation is correct, perceptions of treatment should fully account for the observed differences across ethnic groups. Minorities are less satisfied and less willing to comply with legal decisions because they report more unfair treatment than whites.

If the instrumental explanation is correct, however, perceptions of outcome favorability should account for the observed ethnic difference. Minorities are less satisfied and less willing to comply with legal decisions because they receive less favorable outcomes than whites.

These competing explanations were tested in four regression models, the results of which are presented in Table 5.1. The first model regressed ethnicity (minority or white) on satisfaction. The second model added relevant demographic variables into the regression. The third model added outcome favorability, and the fourth model added perceptions of procedural fairness. The results of the regression analysis indicated that

Table 5.1

**The Effect of Ethnicity, Outcome Favorability, and Fair Treatment
on Satisfaction**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Ethnicity (minority or white)	0.13**	0.13**	0.11**	0.03
Income		0.06	0.06*	0.01
Education		0.04	0.02	0.04
Age		0.01	0.01	0.03
Gender		0.06*	0.04	0.02
City		0.03	0.02	0.00
Outcome favorability			0.48**	0.30**
Procedural fairness				0.66**
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	1.6[a]	1.9[a]	24.8[b]	63.9[c]

NOTES: N = 1,656. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Superscripts that are different from each other indicate that the regression model explains a significant amount of variance beyond what is explained by the previous model. All models explain a significant amount of variance in satisfaction.

*$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$.

ethnicity had a significant effect on satisfaction. In particular, minorities (African Americans and Latinos) were less satisfied with their experiences than were whites. This ethnicity effect remained even when related demographic variables were controlled for, suggesting that differences in income and educational attainment, for example, do not fully explain the observed ethnicity effect. Similarly, when outcome favorability was added to the equation, the ethnicity effect was reduced but still remained significant. When perceptions of procedural fairness were added to the equation, however, the ethnicity effect disappeared. This set of results suggests that the observed difference in satisfaction between ethnic minorities and whites can be best explained by differences in their perceptions of how fairly or unfairly they were treated.

Table 5.2

**The Effect of Ethnicity, Outcome Favorability, and Fair Treatment on
Voluntary Compliance**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Ethnicity (minority or white)	0.12**	0.10**	0.09**	0.02
Income		0.06*	0.07*	0.02
Education		0.00	0.01	0.00
Age		0.05	0.05*	0.06*
Gender		0.03	0.02	0.00
City		0.00	0.00	0.03
Outcome favorability			0.31**	0.16**
Procedural fairness				0.52**
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	1.4[a]	1.6[a]	11.0[b]	37.6[c]

NOTES: N = 1,656. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Superscripts that are different from each other indicate that the regression model explains a significant amount of variance beyond what is explained by the previous model. All models explain a significant amount of variance in voluntary compliance.

*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$.

A similar analysis was conducted on self-reports of voluntary compliance. The results shown in Table 5.2 are remarkably similar to what was generated from analysis of satisfaction. Ethnicity had a significant effect on compliance even after controlling for related demographic variables. Again, the ethnicity effect was reduced when outcome favorability was added to the equation, but it remained statistically significant. As was the case for satisfaction, the ethnicity effect disappeared when perceptions of procedural fairness were added to the regression equation. These results indicate that for both aspects of reaction to legal authority—satisfaction with experience, and voluntary compliance—the observed difference between minorities and whites can best be accounted for by differences in perceptions of treatment. As a group, minorities feel less fairly treated by legal authorities than do

whites. This difference in perceptions of treatment best explains why minorities are less satisfied with their experiences and less willing than whites to comply with legal decisions.

In addition to demonstrating that perceptions of procedural fairness account for ethnic group differences in satisfaction and compliance, the results in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide an additional insight into the dynamics of how people form opinions about the legal authorities they deal with. A careful examination of Model 4 in both tables indicates that both outcome favorability and procedural fairness explain variations in satisfaction and compliance. In both cases, however, procedural fairness is a more important indicator of reactions to legal authorities than outcome favorability. This finding is consistent with the pattern of results documented in past research (for a review, see Tyler and Lind, 1992). It also suggests that if authorities want to elevate levels of satisfaction and compliance, they need to pay particular attention to issues of procedural fairness.

Our analysis assumes that reactions to encounters with legal authorities are largely shaped by judgments about the immediate situation. Although favorable outcomes and perceptions of fairness are important factors, it is possible that people enter these encounters with preconceptions based on prior experience and beliefs. In particular, it is possible that beliefs about the likelihood of unfair or discriminatory decisions will shape responses to specific encounters with authorities. To test this idea, we added the variable of discrimination beliefs to the full model. The variable of discrimination beliefs was created by averaging responses to five questions, such as "In the past, I have been discriminated against in my dealings with the police" (see Appendix D for the exact wording of all items). When included in the regression,

discrimination beliefs produced a significant effect on satisfaction with the experience. Those who strongly endorsed the likelihood of discrimination by legal authorities were more likely to say that they were less satisfied with the encounter they reported. However, procedural fairness remained the strongest predictor, followed by outcome favorability and discrimination beliefs. Discrimination beliefs also produced a significant effect when it was included in an equation predicting voluntary compliance. Again, procedural fairness remained the strongest predictor followed by outcome favorability and discrimination beliefs.

6. Testing the Procedural Justice Effect

The findings presented in the previous chapters suggest that perceptions of fair treatment strongly influence two different evaluations of authorities: overall satisfaction with the experience and voluntary compliance with directives. They also indicate that many of the observed differences in satisfaction and voluntary compliance can be traced to perceptions of fair treatment. African Americans and Latinos are less positive about their experiences with legal authorities not so much because the outcomes they receive are unfavorable, but because the procedures authorities use do not meet their expectations of fairness. This set of findings is consistent with past research on authority relations. It resonates particularly well with the primary conclusion of a similar study conducted in Chicago in the late 1980s (see Tyler, 1990). That study showed that reactions to the local police and courts in Chicago were driven primarily by perceptions of treatment. The sample in the Chicago study, however, consisted primarily of white respondents

complemented by a relatively small proportion of African American respondents. It therefore did not examine how ethnicity might influence the procedural justice effect.

As we noted above, ethnic diversity in the community may complicate this pattern. This chapter explores the effects of diversity on reactions to legal authorities by addressing three questions:

- Do ethnic groups assign different weights to procedural fairness in forming their evaluations of their encounters with legal authorities?

- Do concerns about procedural fairness differ in interactions with legal authorities who share one's ethnicity versus those who belong to a different ethnic group?

- Do group loyalties (to America and to one's ethnic group) affect the level of concern about procedural fairness?

As we have suggested, the procedural justice effect has important implications for effective authority relations. Legal authorities often make decisions that affect people negatively. The police are obligated to issue citations or to make arrests when laws have been violated. Similarly, judges often hand down negative rulings. Even in situations where the police are called to assist residents, they may not be able to resolve the problem. For example, police usually do not recover goods stolen during home burglaries. If legal authorities are judged more by how they make decisions rather than by outcomes, they can maintain high levels of satisfaction and compliance by fulfilling procedural concerns. If the concern for procedural fairness does not hold up across ethnic groups or in cross-ethnic interactions, however, authorities will be challenged in their ability to resolve conflicts and uphold the law. Using

data from our study, we evaluate which of these scenarios best describes two ethnically diverse cities in California.

Ethnic Group Membership

Do members of different ethnic groups differ in the weight they assign to procedural fairness when forming reactions to their encounters with legal authorities? We ran two regression models for each variable of interest, satisfaction with experience and voluntary compliance.[1] Table 6.1 shows the results for overall satisfaction with the experience. Although both factors turned out to be statistically significant, the results indicate that procedural fairness is more important in shaping satisfaction with the experience than outcome favorability. Subsequent analysis shows that compared to whites, Latinos assign less weight to outcome favorability. African Americans did not differ from whites in the weight they assigned to procedural concerns and outcome concerns. In each case, both factors were important in forming judgments of satisfaction, with procedural fairness being given more weight than outcome favorability.

Table 6.2 shows the results of similar analysis for voluntary compliance. This set of findings indicates significant group differences. Compared to whites, Latinos assign less weight to both outcome and procedural concerns. From a policy perspective, it would be a concern if Latinos placed relatively less emphasis on procedural fairness and more

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[1]The first model includes the effects for perceptions of fair treatment and favorable outcomes along with dummy codes that represent the comparisons between Latinos and whites ("Latino") and between African Americans and whites ("African American"). The second model includes four interaction terms that test whether Latinos and African Americans differ from whites in the importance they place on fair treatment and on favorable outcomes.

Table 6.1

**The Effect of Outcome Favorability and Fair Treatment
on Satisfaction, by Ethnic Group**

	Model 1	Model 2
African American vs. white	0.05*	0.00
Latino vs. white	0.02	0.05
Outcome favorability	0.30**	0.36**
Procedural fairness	0.66**	0.68**
African American by outcome favorability		0.06
African American by procedural fairness		0.01
Latino by outcome favorability		0.07*
Latino by procedural fairness		0.02
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	64.0[a]	64.1[a]

NOTES: N = 1,656. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. The first model includes the effects for perceptions of fair treatment and favorable outcomes along with dummy codes that represent the comparisons between Latinos and whites and between African Americans and whites. The second model includes four interaction terms that test whether Latinos and African Americans differ from whites in the importance they place on fair treatment and on favorable outcomes. Both models explain a significant amount of variance in satisfaction with experience. Demographic variables (income, education, age, gender, city) are controlled for in the regression equation although not presented.

*p<0.05; **p<0.01.

on outcomes. In that case, legal authorities would be more likely to experience difficulty when dealing with Latinos than when dealing with other ethnic groups. However, we find that Latinos are slightly less concerned about both procedural fairness *and* outcome favorability than are whites. Although differences exist across groups, procedural fairness is still the primary concern for all three groups.

Table 6.2

**The Effect of Outcome Favorability and Fair Treatment
on Voluntary Compliance, by Ethnic Group**

	Model 1	Model 2
African American vs. white	0.03	0.03
Latino vs. white	0.02	0.03
Outcome favorability	0.18**	0.21**
Procedural fairness	0.54**	0.61**
African American by outcome favorability		0.02
African American by procedural fairness		0.02
Latino by outcome favorability		0.10*
Latino by procedural fairness		0.10*
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	38.0[a]	39.0[b]

NOTES: N = 1,656. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Superscripts that are different from each other indicate that the regression model explains significant amount of variance beyond what is explained by the previous model. The first model includes the effects for perceptions of fair treatment and favorable outcomes along with dummy codes that represent the comparisons between Latinos and whites and between African Americans and whites. The second model includes four interaction terms that test whether Latinos and African Americans differ from whites in the importance they place on fair treatment and on favorable outcomes. Both models explain a significant amount of variance in voluntary compliance. Demographic variables (income, education, age, gender, city) are controlled for in the regression equation although not presented.

$*p<0.05; **p<0.01.$

Intra-Group vs. Inter-Group Interactions

Do the dynamics of authority relations change when respondents and legal authorities belong to different ethnic groups? In this chapter, we compare two situations: one in which respondents and legal authorities share the same ethnic background and one in which they do

not. The theory suggests that procedural concerns should be most relevant when dealing with an ingroup authority. In this situation, the individual is particularly attentive to the actions of the authority in an effort to seek information about his or her status within the community. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that ethnicity is an important social cue by which people categorize themselves and others. The theory predicts that responses to authorities will change when interactions cross ethnic boundaries *if and only if* people perceive ethnicity as a salient dividing line that leads to the labeling of same-ethnicity authorities as "one of us" and different ethnicity authorities "as one of them."

The possible effects of ethnicity are examined through regression analysis (see Tables 6.3 and 6.4)· Because we are most interested in the relationship between minority group members and a largely white police force and court system, we limit our analysis to respondents who indicated that they were either African American or Latino.[2] Contrary to expectations, the findings suggest that ethnicity has no effect on whether people are satisfied with their experiences with legal authorities. The findings for voluntary compliance, however, are in line with previous research (see Table 6.5). When people deal with authorities from a different ethnic group, they care more about outcomes than when they deal with authorities from their own ethnic group. Although we observed a difference in the weight assigned to procedural fairness in intra-ethnic interactions compared to inter-ethnic interactions, the

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[2]Two models were tested. The first model includes the effects for perceptions of fair treatment and favorable outcomes along with a dummy code that represents the ethnicity match of the respondent and the authority he or she dealt with (within ethnic group versus across ethnic groups). The second model includes two interaction terms that test whether individuals placed different importance on fair treatment and on favorable outcomes depending on whether they were dealing with an authority whose ethnicity matched theirs.

Table 6.3

**The Effect of Outcome Favorability and Fair Treatment
on Satisfaction, by Ethnicity Match, African Americans
and Latinos Only**

	Model 1	Model 2
Ethnicity match	0.03	0.01
Outcome favorability	0.28**	0.34**
Procedural fairness	0.66**	0.63**
Ethnicity match by outcome favorability		0.08
Ethnicity match by procedural fairness		0.04
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	61.0[a]	61.0[a]

NOTES: N = 879. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Two models were tested. The first model includes the effects for perceptions of fair treatment and favorable outcomes along with a dummy code that represents the ethnicity match of the respondent and the authority he or she dealt with (within ethnic group versus across ethnic groups). The second model includes two interaction terms that test whether individuals placed different importance on fair treatment and on favorable outcomes depending on whether they were dealing with an authority whose ethnicity matched theirs. Both models explain a significant amount of variance in satisfaction. Demographic variables (income, education, age, gender, city) are controlled for in the regression equation although not presented.

*$p<0.05$; **$p<0.01$.

difference is not statistically significant. The pattern was such that when individuals deal with a same ethnicity authority, they assign more weight to procedural fairness than when they deal with an authority of different ethnicity.

Effects of American Identity and Ethnic Identity

We suggested above that people who perceive authorities as members of outgroups would put less weight on procedural fairness when forming judgments about those authorities. We also argued that this pattern

Table 6.4

**The Effect of Outcome Favorability and Fair Treatment
on Voluntary Compliance, by Ethnicity Match,
African Americans and Latinos Only**

	Model 1	Model 2
Ethnicity match	0.02	0.07
Outcome favorability	0.15**	0.00
Procedural fairness	0.52**	0.53**
Ethnicity match by outcome favorability		0.19**
Ethnicity match by procedural fairness		0.01
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	32.0[a]	34.0[b]

NOTES: N = 879. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Superscripts that are different from each other indicate that the regression model explains significant amount of variance beyond what is explained by the previous model. Two models were tested. The first model includes the effects for perceptions of fair treatment and favorable outcomes along with a dummy code that represents the ethnicity match of the respondent and the authority he or she dealt with (within ethnic group versus across ethnic groups). The second model includes two interaction terms that test whether individuals placed different importance on fair treatment and on favorable outcomes depending on whether they were dealing with an authority whose ethnicity matched theirs. Both models explain a significant amount of variance in voluntary compliance. Demographic variables (income, education, age, gender, city) are controlled for in the regression equation although not presented.

*p<0.05; **p<0.01.

would negatively affect the ability of those authorities to elicit voluntary compliance and hence would make it more difficult to execute their responsibilities. Our analysis used the respondent's and authority's ethnicity to test the idea that procedural fairness concerns would diminish when interactions cross ethnic group boundaries. The findings suggest that procedural fairness considerations are the main basis on which people form their responses to authority directives regardless of

Table 6.5

**The Effect of Outcome Favorability and Fair Treatment on
Voluntary Compliance for Same Ethnicity and Different
Ethnicity Interactions, African Americans
and Latinos Only**

	Same Ethnicity	Different Ethnicity
Outcome favorability	0.01	0.20**
Procedural fairness	0.53**	0.51**

NOTES: N = 872. The numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Demographic variables (ethnicity, income, education, age, gender, city) are controlled for in the regression equation although not presented.

**p<0.01.

whether they share common ethnic group membership with the authority.

One could argue that using the objective ethnic group membership of the respondent and the authority as the basis for categorization is not the best way to test our idea that group boundaries matter. That analysis was based on the assumption that ethnicity is a social cue that people use to divide their world into "us" and "them." However, people differ in the degree to which they view the world through the lens of ethnicity. A range of other factors—such as family, peers, neighborhood culture, social trends, and psychological needs—influence the degree to which people rely on ethnicity to understand their relations with others (Cross, Clark, and Fhagen-Smith, 1998). A more sensitive test may be to use ethnic identification along with national identification—that is, the extent to which one's identity depends on being American—to delineate psychologically meaningful boundaries. If an African American is strongly attached to his ethnic group and not identified with being

American, then his interaction with a white police officer or a white judge is likely to be perceived as one that occurs across groups. On the other hand, if an African American is strongly attached to America as a whole and only weakly attached to his ethnic group, he is likely to perceive the police officer or judge as an ingroup member regardless of the ethnic group membership of that legal authority.

Research on the acculturation of minorities in multi-ethnic societies suggests that at least two forms of social identity may be important: that with an ethnic group and that with the larger society (Azzi, in press; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki, 1989). Depending on their feelings toward these two reference groups, people may adopt one of four acculturation orientations: assimilation, separation, biculturalism, and alienation (see Table 6.6). Those who adopt an assimilation orientation are strongly attached to the larger society but weakly attached to their ethnic community. In contrast, individuals who adopt a separation orientation have strong loyalties to their ethnic community and only weak attachments to the larger society. Although debates about the pros and cons of various acculturation strategies have implicitly assumed an inverse linear relationship between attachment to the larger society and attachment to one's ethnic group (Schlesinger, 1992; Steinberg, 1981), a large body of psychological research suggests that becoming more attached to the larger society need not correspond with becoming less

Table 6.6

Typology of Acculturation Orientations

Identification with Ethnic Group	Identification with American Society	
	High	Low
Low	Assimilation	Alienation
High	Biculturalism	Separation

attached to one's ethnic group and vice versa (LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton, 1993; Phinney, 1990). A third strategy is possible: biculturalism (having strong attachment to both the larger society and one's ethnic group). Last, people who are weakly attached to both the larger society and their ethnic groups are characterized as having adopted an alienation orientation. Because policy debates about acculturation assume that individuals have strong attachment to either American society or their ethnic group, the first three strategies are of most interest. The fourth strategy, that of alienation, is of less interest because this strategy involves neither strong attachment to American society nor to the ethnic group. Hence, our analysis will focus on the first three strategies.

Before we test the acculturation orientation hypothesis, we first evaluate the degree to which the respondents in our sample identify with being American and with being a member of an ethnic group. We assessed group attachment by asking respondents to indicate their degree of agreement with two sets of statements: one set about America and a similar set about their ethnic group (African American, Latino, or white). The exact wording of the questions can be found in Appendix D (e.g., "What America stands for is important to me"; "I am proud to be [respondent's ethnic group])." The respondents in our sample reported a strong sense of attachment both to America and to their own ethnic groups (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). For attachment to America, all three ethnic groups indicate high group identification. Compared to whites, African Americans reported similarly high levels of attachment to America. In contrast, Latinos reported slightly higher levels of attachment to America compared to African Americans and whites. For
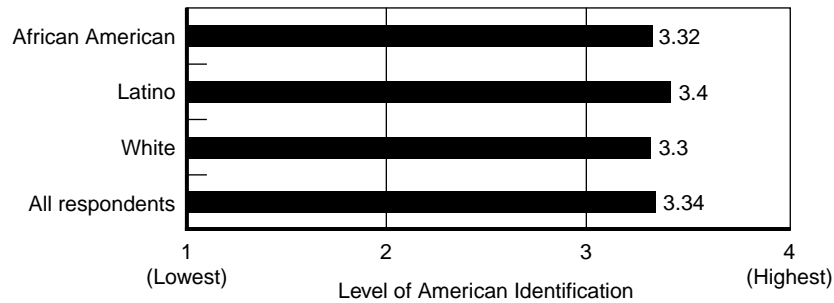
Figure 6.1—Level of American Identity Across Ethnic Groups
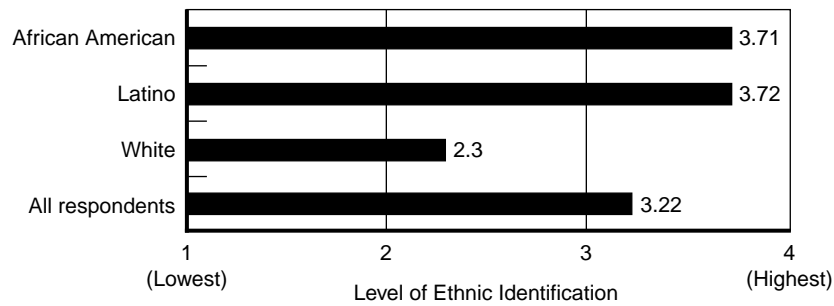
Figure 6.2—Level of Ethnic Identity Across Ethnic Groups

ethnic group identification, all three groups again indicated strong levels of identification. African Americans and Latinos reported similarly high levels of ethnic group identification and whites reported lower levels of ethnic group identification. Contrary to popular images of alienated African Americans and unassimilated Latinos, our findings suggest that both groups report remarkably high levels of attachment to American society. At the same time, they also report strong attachment to their ethnic group.

The next step in our analysis was to evaluate the degree to which American identity and ethnic identity influence the basis of evaluations of experiences with legal authorities.[3] First, regression models were run to evaluate whether identification with America moderated people's reliance on procedural fairness in evaluating authority directives. The results presented in Table 6.7 indicate that identification with America

Table 6.7

The Effect of American Identity on Satisfaction and Voluntary Compliance

	Satisfaction	Voluntary Compliance
American identity	0.07*	0.16**
Outcome favorability	0.27**	0.19**
Procedural fairness	0.65**	0.51**
American identity by outcome favorability	0.04	0.11**
American identity by procedural fairness	0.01	0.06†
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	62.0	35.0

NOTES: N = 692. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Criteria for including cases in the regression models: (a) reported an interaction with a legal authority with whom they did not share common ethnic group membership; (b) reported own ethnicity as either African American or Latino. Both regression models explain a significant amount of variance. Demographic variables are controlled for in the regression models.

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; †p<0.10.

_____

[3]The analysis was limited to respondents who reported their ethnicity as African American or Latino. In our discussions of acculturation and American versus ethnic group identification, these are the two primary groups of interest. The analysis excluded interactions between individuals and authorities from the same ethnic group. Analysis based only on cross-group interactions allows us to evaluate how acculturation orienation changes the way one perceives interactions with authorities who are from a different ethnic group. The degree to which one thinks of oneself as part of the superordinate group would lead to the blurring of ethnic group boundaries and the perception that others belong to the ingroup regardless of their ethnic background.

did not affect the way in which people formed impressions of how satisfied they were with their experiences with legal authorities. Regardless of their level of American identification, respondents assigned similar importance to fair treatment and to outcomes. However, American identification did affect the way in which people formed judgments of how willing they were to comply with authority directives. Table 6.8 shows that those with weak identification with America relied more on outcome favorability than those who identified strongly with America. Table 6.8 also shows that high American identifiers cared more about procedural fairness than did low American identifiers; this difference approached statistical significance. As we speculated, it appears that ethnic boundaries are blurred for those who are highly identified with American society. For these people, legal authorities are viewed as part of the larger group of Americans, regardless of their ethnicity.

Table 6.8

The Effect of High American Identity Compared to Low American Identity on Voluntary Compliance

	High American Identity	Low American Identity
Outcome favorability	0.17**	0.21**
Procedural fairness	0.56**	0.49**

NOTES: N = 690. Numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Criteria for including cases in the regression models: (a) reported an interaction with a legal authority with whom they did not share common ethnic group membership; (b) reported own ethnicity as either African American or Latino. Demographic variables are controlled for in the regression models. Respondents were organized into two groups based on a median-split on reports of American identification.

$**p < 0.01$.

We conducted a similar set of analyses to evaluate the influence of ethnic identity on reactions to legal authorities. In contrast to the findings for American identity, the results shown in Table 6.9 indicate that people respond in similar ways to authority directives regardless of the strength of their ethnic group attachment.

The results suggest that people's reliance on outcome information is increased and their reliance on procedural information is reduced when they do not identify strongly with the superordinate group that encompasses the various ethnic subgroups. Because the patterns were similar for those who reported strong and weak ethnic identities, it appears that a source of potential problems lies in the weak identification with the superordinate group rather than a strong identification with an ethnic group. Again, we argue that authorities are better off when they

Table 6.9

**The Effect of Ethnic Identity on Satisfaction and
Voluntary Compliance**

	Satisfaction	Voluntary Compliance
Ethnicity identity	0.02	0.09*
Outcome favorability	0.29**	0.24**
Procedural fairness	0.66**	0.51**
Ethnicity identity by outcome favorability	0.02	0.07
Ethnicity identity by procedural fairness	0.01	0.02
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	61.0	35.0

NOTES: N = 692. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Criteria for including cases in the regression models: (a) reported an interaction with a legal authority with whom they did not share common ethnic group membership; (b) reported own ethnicity as either African American or Latino. Both regression models explain a significant amount of variance. Demographic variables are controlled for in the regression models.

*p<0.05; **p<0.01.

are evaluated on how fairly they treat people than on favorable outcomes. Our findings suggest that the procedural approach is less effective with those who are alienated from the larger community.   Although this finding shows that effective governance and law enforcement do not require that people forgo their ethnic loyalties, they do require attachments to the larger society. This point is illustrated by Table 6.10. Depending on responses to questions about attachments to American society and ethnic groups, we assigned respondents to one of three categories: assimilation, biculturalism, and separation.[4] As the table illustrates, assimilationists and biculturalists focused somewhat less on outcome favorability and more on procedural information than did separatists.

Table 6.10

The Basis of Voluntary Acceptance, by Acculturation Orientation

	Assimilation	Biculturalism	Separation
Outcome favorability	0.14**	0.16**	0.22**
Procedural fairness	0.58**	0.55**	0.47**

NOTES: N = 73 (assimilation), N = 262 (biculturalism), N = 350 (separation). Numerical entries represent standardized regression coefficients. Criteria for including cases in the regression models: (a) reported an interaction with a legal authority with whom they did not share common ethnic group membership; (b) reported own ethnicity as either African American or Latino. Demographic variables are controlled for in the regression models.

**p<0.01.

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[4]Numerical entries in Table 6.10 represent standardized regression coefficients. Assimilation orientation (American identification is stronger than ethnic group identification)—N = 73; biculturalism orientation (American and ethnic group identifications are equally strong)—N = 262; and separation (ethnic group identification is stronger than American identification), N = 350. Although in theory, individuals can develop a fourth form of acculturation orientation—alienation—our sample precluded an analysis of individuals with this type of orientation. As Figures 6.1 and 6.2 show, our respondents expressed high levels of identification with one or both forms of group identification that are relevant.

7. The Components of Fair Treatment

Our findings so far indicate that people are deeply concerned about being treated fairly by authorities. Perceptions of fair treatment are closely related to overall satisfaction with encounters with legal authorities and to willingness to comply with directives. This concern cuts across the three ethnic groups included in this study. It also applies whether or not residents and legal authorities belong to the same ethnic group. The only exception to this pattern involves those who report weak identification with American society. All in all, the findings suggest a rather optimistic outlook for legal authorities and their ability to resolve conflicts and enforce the law. In particular, the findings suggest that residents will respond positively to the actions and decisions of the police and courts so long as they feel that they have been treated fairly.

What is unclear up to this point is what people mean when they refer to procedural fairness. The group-value model of procedural justice (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989) proposes that people are attentive

to three aspects of the process when forming procedural justice judgments: neutrality, benevolence, and status recognition. Neutrality refers to evaluations that the authority acts without bias and makes decisions based on facts (e.g., "He/She treated me the same as he/she would treat anyone else in the same situation"). Benevolence refers to the individual's judgment that the authority's motives are honorable and can be trusted (e.g., "He/She cared about my concerns"). Status recognition refers to the authority's regard for the individual as a full member of the community ("He/She treated me with dignity and respect"). These relational judgments are thought to underlie judgments of procedural fairness (see Appendix D for the complete text of the different questions used to assess each of these judgments).

To specify what people mean by fair treatment, we evaluated the degree to which the different relational judgments can account for variations in perceptions of procedural fairness. Ratings of procedural fairness were regressed on judgments of neutrality, benevolence, and status recognition along with ratings of outcome favorability and key demographic variables similar to those included in previous analyses (see Table 7.1). The first model shows that all three relational judgments as well as outcome favorability ratings were related to procedural fairness judgments. However, all three relational judgments were more important in explaining variations in procedural fairness than was outcome favorability. These findings are consistent with the predictions of the group-value model. When people said they were treated fairly, they meant that their standards of neutrality, benevolence, and status recognition had been met.

In multi-ethnic communities, it is possible that different worldviews, values, and beliefs lead to different definitions of fairness (Miller and

Bersoff, 1992). To evaluate the degree to which our three ethnic groups hold disparate definitions of procedural fairness, we ran a second regression model (see Table 7.1).[1] The results indicate that African Americans and Latinos did not differ from whites in the weight they assigned to each of the relational judgments in making procedural fairness ratings. Regardless of ethnicity, respondents defined procedural fairness primarily in terms of relational judgments. This consensus suggests that authorities do not have to adopt different approaches when

Table 7.1

The Effect of Ethnicity on Antecedents of Procedural Fairness

| | Procedural Fairness | |
	Model 1	Model 2
Neutrality	0.27**	0.24**
Benevolence	0.24**	0.26**
Status recognition	0.42**	0.45**
Outcome favorability	0.04*	0.06*
Neutrality by African American		0.01
Neutrality by Latino		0.06
Benevolence by African American		0.03
Benevolence by Latino		0.01
Status recognition by African American		0.00
Status recognition by Latino		0.06
Outcome favorability by African American		0.01
Outcome favorability by Latino		0.03
R^2 (% of variance accounted for)	0.76	0.76

NOTE: N = 1,656. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical entries refer to standardized regression coefficients. Both models explain a significant amount of variance. Demographic variables are controlled for in the regression models.

$*p<0.05; ** p<0.01$.

_____

[1]The second model includes interaction terms that test whether African Americans and Latinos differed from whites in the way they defined procedural fairness.

dealing with members of different ethnic groups. It also reinforces the overriding importance of evenhanded treatment, attending to personal concerns, and respecting the dignity of individuals.

8. Conclusions and Implications

This study provides information about people's everyday experiences with the police and the courts in two ethnically diverse cities—Los Angeles and Oakland, California. Our findings are consistent with ethnic group differences documented in broader public opinion polls. Compared to whites, African Americans and Latinos reported more negative reactions to all types of experiences with the police. Regardless of whether they initiated contact with the police or were stopped by the police, African Americans and Latinos reported lower levels of satisfaction than whites. Interestingly, all ethnic groups were equally satisfied with their experiences in the courts. This same pattern emerged in terms of the respondents' reports of their willingness to go along with the directives of the authority in question. Regardless of the type of experience reported, minorities were less willing than whites to comply with directives from the police. However, all ethnic groups were equally willing to comply with court directives.

More important, our study examined the basis of people's reactions to their encounters with legal authorities. The instrumental model of authority relations, which is derived from social exchange theory (Homans, 1974; Thibaut and Walker, 1975), suggests that people tend to pursue their self-interest. They are therefore more satisfied and more willing to comply with decisions that benefit them. An alternative model of authority relations suggests that in addition to their interest in outcomes, people are concerned about how they are treated by authorities (Tyler and Lind, 1992). In particular, they care about whether the authorities treat them fairly in their encounters.

Our findings support both the instrumental and relational perspectives. Respondents indicated that they cared about favorable outcomes as well as procedural fairness. But the findings show clearly that people cared *more* about fair treatment than outcomes. This pattern was consistent across different types of encounters and all three ethnic groups. The findings also show that although African Americans and Latinos indicated lower levels of satisfaction and voluntary compliance than did whites, all three groups use a common set of criteria for judging fairness.

Although studies of the legal system have shown that minorities often receive worse outcomes than whites (Monahan and Walker, 1994), our study found that minorities and whites do not differ in their reports of the outcomes they receive. We must be careful, however, about drawing conclusions from these similarities. Once contact between a person and a legal authority has been initiated, there are no observable group differences in reported outcomes; but our data also show that minorities are more likely than whites to report being stopped by the police. As recent discussions of racial profiling suggest, group differences

in rates of traffic stops is an important form of outcome inequality. Also, African Americans and Latinos are less satisfied with their experiences with legal authorities and less willing to comply with authority directives. However, much of the observed differences in satisfaction and voluntary compliance can be attributed to corresponding differences in perceptions of fair treatment rather than to differences in perceptions of outcomes received.

Previous studies have linked perceived procedural fairness to actual behavior. A reanalysis of data from the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment, for example, showed that procedural fairness perceptions actually suppressed subsequent violence among individuals who were arrested for domestic abuse (Patternoster, Bachman, Brame, and Sherman, 1997). The analysis was based on suspects' perceptions of how fairly the police treated them during an arrest and their subsequent behavior. Suspects who perceived that the police treated them fairly had lower subsequent arrest rates than suspects who did not.[1] In short, data from the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment demonstrate the causal link between perceptions of procedural fairness and actual behavior. Our study, which demonstrates a link between perceived procedural fairness and subjective evaluations of encounters with legal authorities, complements the Milwaukee study by showing that African Americans and Latinos perceive that legal authorities treat them with less procedural fairness than they do whites. Taken together, the two sets of

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[1]Perceived procedural fairness in the Milwaukee Domestic Violence Experiment was a composite variable based on responses to three questions: "Did the officers take the time to listen to your side of the story?"; "When the officers came, did you expect to be arrested?"; and "Did the officers take the time to listen to your side of the story as well as the victim's side of the story?" These questions were designed to measure relational judgments as described in Chapter 7.

findings suggest that group differences in perceived procedural fairness may lead to group differences in compliance with legal directives. Because African Americans and Latinos report less fair treatment than whites, their behavior in the legal system may also reflect this difference.

The bad news to emerge from our study is that African Americans and Latinos report experiencing more negative treatment from legal authorities than do whites. These perceptions of lower levels of fair treatment have important implications for behavioral compliance rates among minority groups. The good news is that minorities and whites share a common understanding of standards of fairness in legal institutions. They are concerned about receiving favorable decisions from legal authorities, but they are *more* concerned about being treated fairly. This finding suggests an optimistic future for more positive relations between minority groups and the police and courts in their local communities. In particular, it suggests that efforts to act more fairly will lead to more positive reactions and higher rates of compliance.

We also explored the different ways in which this procedural fairness effect is attenuated. We found that its effect on voluntary compliance is weaker among Latinos and among minorities who reported low identification with American society. These two exceptions notwithstanding, we found that people are generally more concerned with procedural issues than they are with the pursuit of favorable outcomes. Moreover, members of all three ethnic groups included in the study define procedural fairness in a similar way. This sense of fair treatment, in turn, is related to more positive reactions to their encounters with legal authorities.

One interesting implication of this research stems from the finding that respondents' strong sense of ethnic identity does not impede the

ability of the police and courts to exercise their authority. Scholars and social commentators have expressed concern that a society's failure to assimilate minorities will inevitably lead to higher levels of social conflicts and thereby threaten social cohesion (Glazer, 1997; Schlesinger, 1992). Ethnic loyalty and attachment are considered detrimental to the formation of positive social relations. Our findings suggest instead that legal authorities can enforce laws and manage conflicts in their communities as long as the residents have a strong sense of attachment to American society. Furthermore, these authorities can govern effectively regardless of the residents' levels of attachment to their ethnic groups. People who identify strongly with American society express a very strong relational orientation toward their encounters with legal authorities. They focus on whether authorities have met their expectations of fairness rather than on the pursuit of favorable outcomes. This orientation allows authorities to act on decisions they feel are necessary to protect the interests of the larger community without losing the support of its members.

Our findings suggest that the public debate should focus on engendering stronger attachments to American society rather than on the detrimental effects of strong ethnic identities. Authorities are best able to carry out their roles when community members feel that they share a common identity as members of American society. The large majority of respondents identified highly with their ethnic group *and* American society. Part of the fears associated with the rise of multiculturalism stems from the assumption that loyalty to America and loyalty to one's ethnic group are negatively correlated. Much recent research in the behavioral sciences and our own findings support a different conclusion, namely, that people can be bicultural—attached to American society and

to their ethnic groups at the same time. Moreover, people who adopt a bicultural orientation are as focused on the importance of fair treatment as are people who adopt a traditional assimilation orientation. The fear should lie in the consequences of disidentification with American society rather than strong identification with an ethnic group.

In conclusion, the changing nature of California's population brings to the forefront important issues about the relationship between the people and the public institutions that govern them. To serve a multi-ethnic population effectively, public institutions need to understand and recognize the needs and concerns of the diverse peoples living in the state. The focus of our report has been on how diversity affects people's perceptions of and reactions to legal authorities, in particular, police officers, judges, and other court officials. We hope that the findings reported here will stimulate further discussions among scholars, policymakers, and community leaders about how to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population and encourage positive social relations within multi-ethnic communities.

Appendix A

Sample Design

Definition of the Target Population

Our overall goal was to secure a sample of individuals of diverse ethnic groups in the cities of Los Angeles and Oakland, California, who had face-to-face contact with the law enforcement system in the past year. The ideal method to obtain such a sample is to select a large probability sample of the general population and then screen on the basis of the desired characteristics. However, that would have been very costly because the ethnic distributions of the two cities are quite uneven. Since it is important to base the study on a probability sample, we decided to use a dual frame approach, where one frame consists of exchanges targeted for the ethnic group with the lowest proportion in the city, and the other frame is the cross-section of the whole city. A linguistic limitation of the target population should also be noted. The residents of our designated cities are mostly English- or Spanish-speaking African

Americans, Latinos, and whites, and we hence limited our target population to persons who speak either English or Spanish. To summarize then, those in our survey population

- Were residents of the cities of Los Angeles and Oakland (defined by the census tracts),

- Were African American, Latino, or white,

- Had face-to-face contact with the law enforcement system in the past year, and

- Were English- or Spanish-speaking.

With these criteria, 41.5 percent of respondents who were successfully enumerated were also eligible for participation in the study. Table A.1 shows the percentage of respondents who were eligible by city, sampling frame within city, and ethnic group.

Table A.1

Percentage of Eligible Respondents, by City, Sampling Frame Within City, and Ethnic Group

	Los Angeles			Oakland		
	Targeted Exchanges	Cross-Section	Overall	Targeted Exchanges	Cross-Section	Overall
African American	43.3	47.6	45.5	48.9	51.6	50.3
Latino	31.5	32.7	32.1	32.1	36.5	34.3
White	39.3	43.4	41.4	43.1	39.8	41.5

General Design of the Sample

There are two samples in each of the cities for this study: a cross-section sample and a targeted sample. Since telephone exchanges cut across city boundaries, the exchanges that are included in the cross-section sample and targeted sample are defined differently in Oakland and Los Angeles. In Oakland, the cross-section sample includes all

telephone exchanges in the city of Oakland, at least 70 percent of whose listed numbers fall within the city limits. This gives 99 percent coverage for the city of Oakland. The targeted sample includes those exchanges from the cross-section sample that have 15 percent or more Latinos (determined by overlaying the exchanges with 1990 census statistics). In Los Angeles, the cross-section sample includes all telephone exchanges in the city of Los Angeles, at least 50 percent of whose listed numbers fall within the city limits. This gives 92 percent coverage for the city of Los Angeles. The targeted sample includes those exchanges from the cross-section sample with 10 percent or more African Americans (determined by overlaying the exchanges with 1990 census statistics).

Both samples of telephone numbers for this survey were generated using a procedure called list-assisted random-digit sampling. This recently developed methodology preserves the characteristics of a simple random sample but takes advantage of the availability of large computer databases of telephone directory information to make the sample more efficient. This method allows us to reduce the number of unproductive calls to nonworking telephone numbers and to obtain a higher proportion of households in our sample than we would achieve by simple random-digit dialing.

Briefly, the method works in the following way. All possible telephone numbers in a set of area codes and exchanges are divided into two strata—telephone numbers from a series of 100 numbers with no residential listings in the telephone directories, and telephone numbers from a series with at least one such listing. The sample of telephone numbers to be included in a project is then generated with random numbers, to include unlisted telephone numbers. Both samples for this study are drawn exclusively from the stratum containing the series of

telephone numbers with at least one residential listing (for a detailed description of this sampling method, see Casady and Lepkowski, 1993).

Field Outcome and Response Rates

Field Research Corporation conducted the screening process for this project. The Survey Research Center (SRC), University of California, Berkeley, conducted the in-depth interviews that followed the screening interviews. The disposition of each telephone number and each eligible person is summarized in this section. We account first for the selected household and then for the eligible persons identified.

There were a total of 49,843 telephone numbers associated with our target population. Of the eligible phone numbers (i.e., belonging to households), 52.7 percent were successfully enumerated—that is, an interviewer was able to determine whether any eligible persons resided there and, if so, how many there were. Some households had more than one person who was eligible for the interview. Only one eligible person was selected for the interview. Of the selected persons, 25.2 percent refused to let Field Research forward their names to SRC for the in-depth interview. Of all cases forwarded to SRC, 21.1 percent either refused or did not participate for some other reason; some of the latter simply moved away before we could interview them. The remaining 78.9 percent completed the interview.

Appendix B

Verbatim Introductions to Interviews

The following are the statements made by interviewers when introducing the two phases of the study to respondents.

Pre-Screening Interview

"Hello. I'm _____ from Field Research Corporation, a national opinion research firm. We're conducting a survey for the University of California about the public's attitudes toward different city services, and particularly, attitudes toward law enforcement in your area. The survey will take only a few minutes of your time and your responses will be kept completely confidential."

Main Interview

"Hello. I'm _____ and I'm calling from the University of California at Berkeley's Survey Research Center. You may recall that you

recently told an interviewer from the Field Research Corporation that it was okay for us to call you about a study we're conducting for the National Science Foundation and the Public Policy Institute of California. It's about people's attitudes toward and personal experiences with different city services. The interview usually takes about 30 minutes, but it can vary depending on how much you have to tell me. At the end of the interview, we'll send you a check for $10 as a thank you for your time. The interview is completely voluntary, but we hope that as many people as possible will agree to participate. If there are any questions you'd rather not answer, just tell me and I'll skip those. Most people tell us that they enjoyed talking with us. Is this a convenient time for us to begin?"

Appendix C

Summary of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Table C.1

Summary of Demographic Characteristics of the Sample
(in percent)

Characteristic	African American	Latino	White
Age			
18–29	28.2	40.7	22.5
30–39	23.9	33.6	27.1
40–49	23.9	17.3	24.2
50–59	13.7	5.9	16.6
60 and up	9.6	2.6	9.2
No response	0.7	0.0	0.3
Sex			
Male	40.5	57.0	49.1
Female	59.5	43.0	50.9
Education			
Eighth grade or less	1.6	18.5	.3
Some high school	7.0	15.1	3.2
High school graduate	28.9	36.0	12.6
Some college	44.4	18.1	27.6
College graduate	10.9	10.0	31.4
Post-college education	7.3	2.4	24.7
Income			
$25,000 or under	40.4	47.3	20.0
$25,001 to $35,000	16.6	17.2	11.6
$35,001 to $50,000	17.1	17.8	20.0
$50,001 to $75,000	14.5	12.4	19.2
$75,001 and above	11.4	5.3	29.2
Employment status			
Employed	68.0	72.6	76.5
Looking for work	8.4	8.2	5.2
On layoff from a job	1.7	2.4	1.6
Going to school	9.7	6.4	6.0
Retired	8.4	2.0	6.4
Keeping house	3.8	8.2	4.3
Political ideology			
Liberal	51.6	36.9	51.8
Conservative	18.4	33.6	14.7
Moderate	30.0	29.5	33.5
Foreign born			
Born in the USA	95.0	37.3	86.3
Born elsewhere	5.0	62.7	13.7

NOTE: Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Appendix D

Text of Survey Questions and Supplementary Statistics

Because there are unavoidable measurement errors associated with subjective responses, we take the approach of combining responses to multiple questions into a scale. Below, the verbatim questions that form a scale are presented along with the scale's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is an index measuring the reliability of a multi-item index (Judd, Smith, and Kidder, 1991, pp. 51–53). It provides an indication of the internal consistency of the items. A scale is internally consistent if responses to items that measure the same construct follow a similar pattern. For example, a scale of ethnic identity would be internally consistent if people who say they are proud to be a member of their ethnic group also say that being a member of their ethnic community is important to them. An alpha of 0 indicates that the items have no joint correlation and the scale has no internal consistency. An alpha of 1 indicates that

items are perfectly correlated and that responses to the items are identical. Within that range, higher values indicate a more internally consistent scale. Cell means are presented along with cell standard deviations in parentheses.

Satisfaction with Experience	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	2.72 (1.13)	2.56 (1.18)	2.68 (1.10)	2.92 (1.07)
Alpha	0.89	0.89	0.87	0.91

Taking everything into consideration, how satisfied were you with your experience?
Overall, how satisfied were you with the outcome?

Voluntary Compliance	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	3.37 (0.86)	3.28 (0.95)	3.30 (0.80)	3.51 (0.79)
Alpha	0.55	0.59	0.43	0.65

I willingly accepted the decision [he/she] made.
I considered going to someone else to try to change the situation. (Reverse coded.)

Outcome Favorability

NOTE: Outcome favorability was measured with a single question designed to measure self-reports of the objective outcome of experiences with legal authorities. The question posed to respondents differed depending on the type of encounter they reported about. Responses to each of the three versions of the question were combined to form a single measure of outcome favorability.
Version asked if reported about being stopped by the police:
When you were stopped by the police, were you personally given a ticket or cited for a violation of the law?

Version asked if reported about calling the police for help:
So far as you know, did the police resolve the problem you spoke with them about?
Version asked if reported about going to court:
Was the case settled in favor of you or the other party involved in the case?

Procedural Fairness	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	3.17 (1.00)	3.05 (1.07)	3.06 (1.01)	3.34 (0.89)
Alpha	0.91	0.92	0.90	0.89

Overall, how fairly were you treated by [him/her]?
How fair were the procedures [he/she] used to make decisions about how to handle the situation?

Neutrality	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	3.13 (0.87)	3.05 (1.07)	3.06 (0.84)	3.35 (0.73)
Alpha	0.79	0.81	0.78	0.77

[He/She] treated me the same as [he/she] would treat anyone else in the same situation.
[He/She] was basically honest.
[He/She] made decisions based on the facts.
[He/She] didn't find out the whole story. (Reverse coded.)

Benevolence	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	2.85 (1.09)	2.72 (1.16)	2.78 (1.07)	3.03 (1.01)
Alpha	0.94	0.95	0.93	0.93

[He/She] considered my views.
[He/She] tried to do the right thing by me.
[He/She] tried to take my needs into account.
[He/She] cared about my concerns.

Status Recognition	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	3.21 (0.99)	3.10 (1.07)	3.13 (1.01)	3.41 (0.86)
Alpha	0.92	0.92	0.91	0.92

[He/She] treated me politely.
[He/She} showed concern for my rights.
[He/She] treated me with dignity and respect.

American Identification	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	3.34 (0.68)	3.32 (0.71)	3.40 (0.63)	3.30 (0.67)
Alpha	0.75	0.75	0.70	0.80

I am proud to be an American.
What America stands for is important to me.
When someone praises the achievements of other Americans, it feels like a personal compliment to me.

Ethnic Identification	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	3.22 (0.90)	3.71 (0.43)	3.72 (0.45)	2.30 (0.83)
Alpha	0.88	0.54	0.69	0.84

I am proud to be [respondent's ethnic group].
What [respondent's ethnic group] community stands for is important to me.
When someone praises the achievements of other [respondent's ethnic group], it feels like a personal compliment to me.

Perceived Discrimination	Overall	African American	Latino	White
Mean (SD)	2.35 (0.88)	2.88 (0.72)	2.57 (0.78)	1.64 (0.59)
Alpha	0.86	0.80	0.84	0.77

In the past, I have been discriminated against in my dealings with the police.
In the past, I have been discriminated against in my dealings with the court.
These days, most [respondent's ethnic group] are discriminated against.
Most [respondent's ethnic group] are discriminated against in their dealings with the police.
Most [respondent's ethnic group] are discriminated against in their dealings with the court.

The findings presented in this report are based on the analysis of a subset of questions from the Law and Ethnicity Study. Questions measuring a particular type of judgment are generally grouped together. The survey instrument began with questions designed to screen

respondents for eligibility followed by questions about views toward the legal system. The major section of the survey included questions about the specific encounter with legal authority that the respondent reported about in the screening section. This section began with questions about the outcome of the encounter, followed by questions about their evaluations of their experience (e.g., satisfaction, compliance, and procedural fairness). The last section of the survey included questions about group identification and demographic characteristics.

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