Self-legitimacy, police culture and support for democratic policing in an English Constabulary

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Abstract
When do police officers feel confident in their own authority? What factors influence their sense of their own legitimacy? What is the effect of such 'self-legitimacy' on the way they think about policing? This paper addresses these questions using a survey of police officers working in an English constabulary. We find that the most powerful predictor of officers' confidence in their own authority is identification with their organization, itself something strongly associated with perceptions of the procedural justice of senior management. A greater sense of self-legitimacy is in turn linked to greater commitment to 'democratic' modes of policing. Finally, we find that this sense of legitimacy is embedded in a matrix of identities and cultural adaptations within the police organization.

Introduction

What influences police officers' perceptions of their own legitimacy, and when do they have confidence in the authority vested in them? While much is known about what shapes the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the public, much less is known about the factors that may shape the 'self-legitimacy' of the police. Yet this aspect of legitimacy may have important effects on the way officers behave and, through this, on the types of policing they are able to deliver. An officer, organizational unit or force that lacked confidence in their own legitimacy might, for example, develop a very different set of values and practices, and relationships with those they policed, than people or units more certain of the authority vested in them and, consequently, of their place within the criminal justice system and indeed wider society. More broadly, work on democracy and policing (and democracy *in* policing) has suggested that organizational configurations – officers' sense of their place in their organization and the relationships they have with both it and external stakeholders – can serve to either promote or inhibit normatively desirable modes of policing, which, in turn, may have implications for the maintenance and reproduction of democratically viable modes of order maintenance (Loader and Walker 2007; Manning 2010; Sklansky 2005, 2008; Tankebe 2014).

Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) recently challenged those working on legitimacy in criminal justice settings to consider the issue of 'power-holder legitimacy', in particular "the degree of self-belief … (law enforcement officers) have in [the] moral rightness of their own claims to exercise power" (ibid: 141). They identified a number of potential correlates of such legitimacy, including: the relationships between officers themselves, between line officers and managers, and between police and public; issues of social identity; and the position of the police with broader sets of power relations. Many other factors might be added to this list, such as the idea that the legitimacy of the police stems from its legal status (as enforcer of the law), and the widespread notion, within and without the police service, that it is the 'thin blue line' separating order from chaos (ibid).

In this paper we describe results from a survey designed to test some of these ideas. Officers and police staff working in Durham constabulary were surveyed on-line in the summer of 2012, in part as a follow up to a similar study conducted a year previously (Bradford et al. 2013). Analysis suggests that, in this constabulary at least, police officers' sense of their own legitimacy was premised in a fundamental manner on the extent to which they felt a positive identification with their police organisation, with such identification itself founded in assessments of organizational justice. Officers confident in their own legitimacy tended to have more positive attitudes toward procedurally just policing, and have more favourable views about the importance of suspects' rights and the use of force. By contrast, those officers who were more cynical and authoritarian in their attitudes, which we describe below as a particular cultural adaptation within the police organization, were less certain of their own legitimacy, and less inclined to support procedurally just, rights based policing.

Democratic policing and organizational justice

The huge range of tasks police undertake (Brodeur 2010) necessitates that officers feel confident in the authority vested in them, not least because such confidence may enable them to use their discretion to maximum effect. Police need to feel able, and willing, to utilise their extensive powers to provide the kind of proximate solutions to the exigent, multifarious social dilemmas (Bittner 1970; Manning 2010) they face when doing their job. Officers' sense of the moral basis of their authority and the rectitude of their monopolization of legitimate force, for example,[1] may be important factors shaping such confidence, providing a firm basis of justification for the often difficult decisions they must make (Bottoms and Tankebe 2012). Yet, it is important that this discretion is regulated by organisational rules, the law and wider

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[1] For all that this monopolization may be increasingly notional (Brodeur 2010).

ethical and social values. The solutions offered by the police should respect the rights of those affected; physical force should be used proportionately and only when necessary; and, as increasingly apparent from research on procedural justice, policing should be delivered in as open, honest, and respectful manner as possible. Not only is such policing desirable in ethical terms, it is also likely to garner greater public cooperation, deference and compliance (Jackson et al. 2012; Mazerolle et al. 2013; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002).

The internal structures of police organizations are important because they condition the ability, and indeed desire, of officers to deliver such styles of policing, and it is argued that police organizations structured along democratic lines will be better placed to do this (Sklansky 2008). Internal democracy makes for a happier, more confident workforce, with a greater support for organizational programmes and goals. Democratic processes within police organizations may also have the effect of 'teaching' police officers – encouraging them to internalize – democratic values. As Sklansky (ibid: 122-123) notes:

> "The police are often placed in positions where they can actively support or actively threaten democratic activities: they can protect political protesters, for example, or they can attack them; they can help create a climate of respect for individual privacy and autonomy, or they can make privacy insecure and nonconformity difficult; they can enforce norms of tolerance, or they can reinforce bias and prejudice; they can teach citizens that authority may safely be challenged, or they can teach the opposite".

In essence, the claim here is that police organizations that are internally democratic will operate in ways likely to foster or reinforce democratically desirable modes of policing. This begs two questions, though. What does democratic policing 'look like' and what do democratic police organizations 'look like'?

The first question is, for present purposes, rather easier to answer than the second. Among the set of criteria provided by Manning (2010: 65-66) a number stand out. As hinted above, democratic policing respects the rights of all those who come into contact with officers, and, in such a context, the latter behave in as procedurally fair manner as possible. Democratic police organizations are careful not to use excessive force, and exercise physical force proportionately and only when it is absolutely necessary to do so. They are also accountable and responsible for their actions within systems of governance based on principles of citizen participation, equity, responsiveness and a prioritisation of service, a wide distribution of power, the provision of information and clear avenues for redress (see also Jones et al. 2012).

The nature of democratic police *organizations* is much less clear. Indeed is workplace democracy possible, or even desirable, within such a hierarchical, quasi-military organization? More prosaically, it seems unlikely that British police organizations, at least, will any time soon switch to significantly flatter organizational structures, direct (democratic) employee involvement in corporate decisions, or similar organizational configurations (Sklansky 2008). Yet, there is a significant affinity between the ideas put forward by Sklansky and others (e.g. Manning 2010), on the one hand, and research on organizational justice that has begun to receive attention in the criminological literature, on the other. Recent studies have suggested that procedural justice could be just as important *within* policing organizations as it is in the relationship between police and public. Corresponding with the wider organizational justice literature (Colquitt et al. 2001; Greenberg 2011), this work has suggested that police officers' perceptions of organizational justice in their relationships with managers – particularly concerning the fairness of procedures and how they are applied, and the quality of interaction and communication – are linked to their compliance with organizational regulations and goals, and to 'organizational citizenship behaviours' that might enhance their willingness to engage with members of the public in positive and constructive

ways (Bradford et al 2013; Myhill and Bradford 2013; Tankebe 2014; Wolfe and Piqueuro 2011; cf. Tyler 2011; Tyler and Blader 2000).

The notion of social identity is central to this literature. Just as procedural fairness indicates shared group membership to individuals when they are dealing with police officers (Bradford 2012; Jackson et al. 2012), it is claimed that organizational justice – the use of fair procedures, neutral, transparent and consistent decision-making, polite, dignified and respectful interpersonal interactions, transparent decision-making and effective two-way communication (Blader and Tyler 2003, Colquitt 2001, Greenberg 2011) – provides for a sense of value and integration among police officers, generates pride in and identification with the organization, enhances the legitimacy of internal structures and processes, and encourages positive orientations toward service-oriented policing (Bradford et al. 2013; Myhill and Bradford 2013). Furthermore, a positive social identity in relation to an (occupational) group can serve several important psychological functions for the individual, such as fostering self-worth, helping make sense of people and situations, and satisfying the need to belong (Blader and Tyler, 2009). A strong social identity, encouraged by positive justice perceptions, may also assist individuals in dealing with workplace uncertainty concerning outcomes, status, trustworthiness and morality, since it provides for emotional stability and a sense of mutual interest and support (Colquitt, 2008). Unfair organizations, by contrast, are unlikely to encourage such attitudes among their staff, and organizational *in*justice may lead to the development of a different set of cultural adaptations typically associated in the policing literature with occupational sub-cultures (see below).

Self-legitimacy and commitment to democratic policing
Police officers' self-legitimacy may also be an important influence on their ability to do their job in socially and normatively desirable ways. Yet, what *is* self-legitimacy? Drawing on the argument developed by Bottoms and Tankebe (2012), we suggest that police officers' self-legitimacy can be seen as comprising their sense that their roles and actions as police officers are justifiable, that the relation between police and policed is founded on a congruence between organizational means and ends and those of wider society, and that, as police officers, they occupy a special place in that society (see Bottoms and Tankebe's (131) discussion of Wrong, 1979).

Defining what Bottoms and Tankebe also term 'power-holder' legitimacy in this way positions it as the mirror image of police legitimacy from the perspective of the policed. The empirical legitimacy of the police has been theorized as comprising apprehension and validation, on the part of the public, of a shared moral, behavioural and evaluative framework that guides police activity and a set of reciprocal duties consequently placed on both police and community. That is, from the perspective of both police and policed, a legitimate police service has a duty to behave in a certain way and the public has a corresponding duty to support it when it does (Beetham 1991; Jackson et al. 2012a, 2012b). Police officers' sense of their own legitimacy is likely to be an important factor in this equation, and Bottoms and Tankebe (2012) argue self-legitimacy is an important aspect of a dialogue, between police and policed, by and through which the legitimacy of the police is established and reproduced. Seen in this light, legitimacy is an emergent property of the relationship between police and community, and an important aspect of that relationship is the claim police make to legitimacy.

Barker (2001: 24) would characterize these claims as *legitimations*, defining legitimation, distinct from legitimacy, as the set of activities in which power-holders engage while seeking to establish their right to rule, govern, or, more appositely, police. Yet, *legitimacy* is 'actual', subjectively real to the participants within a power relationship and subject to a constant process of production, challenge, and change. Legitimations, beliefs and actions that lead a power-holder to be viewed, and to view themselves, as legitimate, thus feed

into empirical, 'actual', legitimacy as a characteristic of a particular set of social relationships.

Barker goes on to note two particularly pertinent aspects of legitimation processes. First, that there is an intrinsic link between legitimation and identification: "The principle way in which people issuing commands are legitimated is by their being identified as special, marked by particular qualities, set apart from other people" (2001: 35). Identification *as* police may thus be an important factor in shaping the extent to which officers view themselves as legitimate. Second, and relatedly, legitimations enable people to command, providing structure to a power-holder's decision-making processes that assist in the shift from 'raw' power to authority by making exercise of the former seem non-random and coherent. Commands come to be seen part of a larger 'plan of action', conforming to existing norms and values when, and to the extent that, they are premised on legitimations (identifications) that simultaneously position the power-holder in relation to those over whom they have authority and provide a narrative that justifies *to both parties* the relationships involved. The ability of police to exercise authority, as opposed simple, naked, power, may thus be premised in large part on the success of processes of legitimation that allow officers to conceive of their use of power as justifiable, ethical, and moral. Equally, exercising power in this way is required if police are to convince the public of their claim to legitimacy.

If self-legitimacy is indeed constituted by a set of legitimations, linked on the one hand to identity and, on the other, to the exercise of authority, police officers' confidence in their own legitimacy may affect the way they go about their job. Greater self-legitimacy may make them more able to engage in difficult decisions in constructive ways, less ready to reach for force to re-establish order solve problems, and more willing to allow members of the public a say during processes of interaction: legitimations provide an over-arching account of their role and place as police officers against which any particular slight or negative encounter can be offset. Such policing styles also position officer activity within a particular narrative of policing. In a context such as the UK, for example, procedurally just policing that relies on reasonable use of force *is itself a claim to legitimacy*[2]: that is, procedural justice constitutes both a particular normative account of police activity and also a claim that, to the extent to which police operate in this way, they are legitimate.

A weaker sense of their own legitimacy may, alternatively, make officers more sensitive to problems and provocations, more vulnerable to challenges to their authority, more ready to use physical force (as they are less certain their authority can be asserted and maintained in other ways), and less willing to engage in processes of interaction that may throw up difficult questions or challenges to their authority (see Tankebe 2009: 16).

The correlates of self-legitimacy
Theories of organizational justice therefore provide a conceptual bridge linking the quality of police organizational structures, the notion of self-legitimacy, and officers' attitudes toward democratic modes of policing. When officers feel fairly treated by their organization, their sense of positive identification with it is enhanced (Bradford et al. 2013). Such identification may be linked not only to internalization of organizational goals (Tyler and Blader 2003), and a sense that they are supported and 'enabled' by the organization (Bradford et al. 2013), but also, and relatedly, to a belief they are legitimate holders of the power vested in them. Self-legitimacy may stem from identification with the police organization and internalization of the values it represents; officers who feel confident in their identity as members of the police service may develop a strong sense of their own legitimacy, something which in turn could influence their attitudes and behaviours 'on the street'.

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[2] This is perhaps best represented by the rhetorical claims associated with the police in England and Wales not being routinely armed.

Naturally, personal identification with their organization is unlikely to be the only source of such self-legitimacy. At least three alternatives can be suggested. The first is public support. Police may feel they are legitimate when and to the extent that they believe they have the support and consent of the policed. Relevant here may be the idea that organizations are legitimated partly via the authorization and mandate of external agencies and stakeholders (Zelditch 2001), whether this be by superordinate bodies (such as, here, the government or parliament), partner organisations (such as the courts), or clients groups (the public). Second, police may garner a sense of self-legitimacy in a more functional sense, from the extent to which they believe they are agents in the 'fight against crime' and the wider societal project to maintain order.

Third, and in a sense combining the above, police may gain legitimacy from the idea that they are different to, and apart from, others in society. The role of the police in enforcing the law serves in many ways to set it apart from the public (see Bottoms and Tankebe's (2012) discussion of Herbert's (2006) notion of separation), and a sense of legitimacy may flow from this distinction between 'police' and 'policed'. On the one hand, for example, the 'thin blue line' ideology (Reiner 2010), the seemingly widespread sense among police officers that they are a small force standing between order and chaos, suggests an affective gap between police and public: here, legitimacy might spring from the protective role of police. On the other hand, there is a legal separation between police and public that may also have important consequences for officers' conceptualization of their role and position, something which itself may related to the idea that the law grants police legitimacy. In other words, the police have a legal duty to enforce the law and is empowered to do so, irrespective of public approval.

The police occupational sub-culture
Notions of identity, around which much of the discussion has thus far resolved, have of course long held a privileged place in police sociology; and these identities have often been very different to the type of positive organizational identification outlined above. The police occupational sub-culture has repeatedly been described as having a number of core characteristics, key elements of which include suspicion and cynicism (particularly towards the policies, procedures and leadership senior management), a clear sense of mission, prejudice, authoritarianism, as well as a rigid distinction between 'them' and 'us' coupled with in-group solidarity (Waddington, 1999; Reiner 2010). Loftus (2009) has argued that the occupational sub-culture endures and that its core characteristics are "timeless qualities" which "remain virtually untouched by initiatives aimed at changing everyday assumptions and behaviours" (2009: 17) because the police role has remained broadly constant across time. Ironically perhaps, these features have also been blamed for the failure to introduce police reforms, the success of which often hinge on challenging and changing aspects of traditional occupational sub-culture (Skogan, 2008). To take just one example, a willingness to engage in partnership working with citizens is a fundamental aspect of community policing programmes (Cordner, 2000; Skogan 2006), yet provides a direct challenge to a worldview that defines the police role narrowly in terms of 'crime fighting' and emphasizes separation from the rest of society (Fielding 1989; Reiner, 2010; Skogan, 2008). The way such conflicts have tended to play out has lead to a conclusion that 'the sensibilities that comprise the police identity can... undermine reform endeavors' (Loftus, 2010). More broadly, such an occupational sub-culture seems likely to be inimical to the notion of democratic policing described above.

Waddington (1999) has however argued that the characteristics typically described as the enduring core of the occupational sub-culture are not neutral in tone or affect. Drawing on Chan (1996), he suggests instead that these are normative descriptions, which act as 'convenient labels' that simultaneously draw attention to, simplify and condemn the *negative*

beliefs, attitudes and practices of police. Waddington also argues that the concept of a police occupational sub-culture does not help explain the complexity and fluidity of officers' views and behaviour. Fielding (1989) similarly suggests that a stereotyped view of the police occupational sub-culture has often predominated, and officers do not always think and act in the way dictated by the label. He points out that culture is not a "static entity" (ibid: 80) but is actively constituted and reconstituted by those in the organisation, and his study of police socialisation highlighted that officers would variously embrace or resist prevailing norms and other influences on their attitudes and behaviour. While primacy may often be given to influences in the work setting, particularly when making decisions that are visible to others, the individual officer acts as the final arbiter and mediator of these influences (see also Fielding 1985). Thus, "the occupational culture is not itself undifferentiated but comprises several cultures formed around adjustments to the job" (Fielding, 1989: 81). This situation is further complicated as a result of differential experiences of the workplace, and by individual position and status within the organisation and in relation to other communities. Nevertheless, despite these adaptations, Fielding argues that consistencies in police attitudes and practice are discernible over space and time, and that these patterns in often reflected in the descriptions of 'ideal typical' officers.[3]

It seems to us that the cultural adaptations officers make might shape their self-legitimacy in potentially conflicting ways. On the one hand, an inward looking, cynical adaptation might *strengthen* officers' sense of their own legitimacy, for example by providing a reservoir of fellow-feeling and identity (Waddington 1999) that justifies the separation between police and public outlined above. On the other hand, those who embrace an oppositional sub-culture might also adopt a sceptical or negative stance toward the wider authority of the police. They may, for example, begin to see themselves as just 'the biggest gang on the streets': not as an institution imbued with a legitimate mandate to maintain social order, but as one of a number of bodies competing for control over the 'street'.

Under what conditions, then, might officers make particular cultural adaptations? While much research has concentrated on the role of informal socialisation, Fielding (1988; 1989) points to a range of formal *and* informal sources of influence. Theories of organizational and procedural justice, for example, remind us that the way officers are treated in the workplace, will be an important factor shaping their identities and ways of 'being' police. There may well be "reasons to think that [the existence of] unhappy police officers can be blamed in part on the rigid, top-down management of policing … Police officers regularly complain, and often bitterly, that their views are never consulted, that they are subject to arbitrary and irrational directives from above and without, and that the rules under which they operate are absurdly unrealistic (Sklansky 2008: 121). On this account, discernible patterns in officers' cultural adaptations are not *sui generis*, or formed only via peer-group interaction, but are produced and reproduced in part by their relationships with immediate supervisors and senior managers. The stereotyped features of the occupational sub-culture may therefore be the affective other of the kind of positive organizational identity described above, associated with perceptions of organizational *in*justice, low self-legitimacy, and negative orientations toward democratic policing norms.

Research hypotheses
A number of hypotheses can be adduced from the discussion thus far. The first two cover the relationship between organizational justice and social identities in police organizations. As found in earlier studies, we expect that identification with the police organisation will be positively associated with perceptions of organizational justice (H1). Second, we expect that organizational justice will be negatively associated with a cynical cultural adaptation (H2); i.e.,

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[3] For example, Reiner's (2010) typology includes four broad categories of officer: the 'bobby'; the 'new centurion'; the 'uniform carrier'; and the 'professional'.

when officers feel unfairly treated by their organization, they are likely to become more distrustful and inward looking.

The second set of hypotheses cover the relationships between social identity and self-legitimacy. We expect that identification with the police organisation will be positively associated with self-legitimacy (H3). We also expect to find an association between a cynical cultural adaptation and self-legitimacy (H4), although we do not at this stage suggest a direction for this relationship – as noted above, it could go either way. We also expect that self-legitimacy will be association by a range of other attitudes: public support (H5a), the thin blue line ideology (H5b) and lawful separation (H5c).

A final hypothesis relates to the association between self-legitimacy and support for the principles of 'democratic' policing. We expect officers' sense of their own legitimacy to be positively associated with their orientations toward democratic policing (H6). When they are confident in their own authority this may facilitate positive policing modalities.

Data and methods
The study reported here is based on a survey of police officers carried out in collaboration between Durham Constabulary and the College of Policing. Durham is a relatively small, non-metropolitan police force in the north of England, covering County Durham and Darlington. Durham's organizational priorities were articulated to staff in 2011 via its 'plan on a page'. Overall, the force aimed to "inspire confidence in victims and communities", which it sought to do so by "protecting neighbourhoods", "tackling criminals" and "solving problems". Underpinning these goals, there was a commitment to working together, motivating and developing staff, communicating effectively, and reinforcing a culture of "excellence".

Durham therefore had a strong interest in understanding what might motivate its staff to embrace community policing and develop service delivery. At the time of the study, however, and like many other forces in England and Wales, Durham was going through a period of significant organizational change – as a result of budget cuts – which involved a major change in structure, and an overall reduction in staff numbers. This change programme was one of the main reasons why Durham approached the College to help them develop an organizational survey. There was a concern about how the programme was perceived by officers and staff and how change had affected people within the organization, but also an interest in developing a focus on issues of staff motivation and the relationship between organizational structures and the way policing 'on the ground'.

While the survey was fielded to both sworn officer and police staff, only the officer data are used here. The survey was sent to all those employed by Durham constabulary in the spring of 2012; the officer response rate was just over 30 per cent. Like a similar sample drawn the previous year (Bradford et al. 2013), the final sample was broadly representative of the workforce at that time (see Dhani 2012). Some 70 per cent of respondents were Constables (compared with 77 per cent in the force as a whole) and a further 18 per cent Sergeants; 71 per cent were male (compared with 72 per cent in the force as a whole); 20 per cent were aged 26-35 and 80 per cent were aged 36-55 (there were very few younger or older officers). Finally, 20 per cent had 6-10 years service, 23 per cent 11-15 years, and 21 per cent 16-20 years.

Methods
Variables for analysis were in most cases generated via latent variable modelling in the package Mplus 7.0. Utilising a range of survey items, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to simultaneously estimate and validate a number of measures: Appendix table 1 gives question wordings and factor loadings. The model achieved was an adequate fit to the data, and factor scores were extracted for use in regression modelling (using Stata 12.0) to address the hypotheses outlined above. Note that full-information maximum-likelihood estimation

was used in Mplus, meaning that cases with some missing variables were not dropped from the analysis. This gave a final sample for analysis of 438. The variables generated are described below.

Police identities and legitimacy
Three variables covered identity and self-legitimacy. The first was a measure of *self-legitimacy*. It captured respondents' confidence in their own authority and their sense that they occupy a special position in society. The second was *organizational ID*, measured by survey items relating to attachment and loyalty to the force (that is, Durham Constabulary), while the third was *cynical cultural adaptation*, measured by items relating to both in-group loyalty (whether officers should report colleagues) and authoritarian concern for declining respect (or perhaps more accurately a sense of cyncism about the same). It may be more accurate to think of this variable as representing not so much an identity as the extent to which people 'buy in' to opinions stereotypically associated with the police canteen culture.

Appendix Table 2 shows a correlation matrix of all the variables used in the analysis. Note that all three measures of policing identities were highly correlated. In particular, the correlation between *self-legitimacy* and *organizational ID* was very high (.87). While further analysis suggested that these are best seen as two distinct constructs (models which allowed all four observed indicators to load onto one latent factor fitted the data less well, according to the exact fit statistics, and the factor loadings of some observed indicators were unacceptably low, that is, below .4), the strength of this correlation may be an important finding in and of itself. It seems respondents drew little distinction between their sense of their own legitimacy and the extent to which they identifed with (felt proud of and attached to) Durham Constabulary. By contrast, *cynical cultural adaptation* was strongly negtively correlated with both *self-legitimacy* and *organizational ID* – officers who were cynical and inward looking tended not to identify with the organization, nor feel confident of their own legitimacy. Retaining all three indices as separate measures, we explore these issues in more depth below; but the associations between social identity and self-legitmacy serve, at the threshold, to underline the importance of identities within police organizations, and may be important conceptually and empirically, a point we return later in the article.

Organizational justice
Three variables represented the key organizational factors that might shape officers' identity beliefs and, through these, their authority judgements. These covered the core aspects of organizational justice, and comprised measures of respondents' assessments of: *supervisory procedural justice*; *managerial procedural justice*; and *distributive justice* within the organization. We assume, therefore, that officers make distinct assessments of the procedural fairnesss of their immediate supervisors and of senior managers, and that both sets of judgements are themselves distinct from perceptions of distributive justice, and the CFA model confirmed these are distinct factors

Other influences on assessments of self-legitimacy
A number of factors represented other potential influences on officers' self-legitimacy. We developed measures tapping into: (a) respondents' assessments of the extent to which the *public support* the police in a general sense; and (b) their experience of willing *public cooperation* while doing their job. Two observed (single-item) indicators were also used. One represented what might be termed *lawful seperation* (responses to the survey item 'As long as we act lawfully, it doesn't matter what people think of us', entered as an dummy variable coded 1 if the respondent agreed with this statment); the idea here being that police may draw legitmacy from the extent that they are seperate from those they police. The other represented officers' paternalistic sense that the police *protect* the public and are essential for

an orderly society. This was represented by a dummy variable based on the survey item 'Without the police, there would be more crime'. Most respondents strongly agreed with this claim, and this item was coded such that one equalled strongly agree and zero equalled all other responses.

Commitment to 'democractic' policing
Finally, three variables covered different aspects of commitment to democratic policing principles. The first, and possibly most important, represented respondents' commitment to *procedurally just policing.* These variable in a sense closes the circle started by Tyler's work on public perceptions of police procedural justice, and in essence we are asking here: what might encourage police officers to behave in ways that are procedurally fair? However, procedural justice is not the only aspect of police practice associated with democractic policing, and we also included measures for: respect for *suspects' rights*; and attitudes about the police not making greater *use of force*.

Results
The first task was to assess the association between organizational justice and police identities. Table 1 shows results from two regression models predicting first, organzational ID, and second, *cynical cultural adaptation*. As all other models below, these controlled for gender, age and rank. Taking organzational ID first, we find that there is a very strong positive association between perceptions of senior management procedural justice and this aspect of officers' social identities; net of this association, supervisory procedural justice and distributive justice had no significant statistical effect. From theory, and earlier work (Bradford et al 2013) we might expect all three aspects of organizational justice to have unique associations with identity – one explanation of this finding may be the change programme Durham was going through at the time of the suvey. An inevitably top down process, this may have had they effect of making the fairness of senior managers much more salient to officers at this particular point in time than other aspects of organizational justice.

Table 1: Linear regression models predicting police identities

	Organizational ID		Canteen Culture	
	B	se(B)	B	se(B)
Gender (ref: male)				
Female	0.1	-0.05	-0.07	-0.04
Age (Ref: 18-35)				
36-45	0.07	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05
46-65	0.17*	-0.07	-0.1	-0.05
Rank (Ref: Senior)				
Constable	-0.04	-0.07	0.14**	-0.05
Sergeant	0.12	-0.08	-0.01	-0.06
Organizational justice				
Supervisor procedural justice	0.02	-0.03	-0.07**	-0.02
Senior leader procedural justice	0.60***	-0.04	-0.28***	-0.03
Distributive justice	0.02	-0.04	-0.16***	-0.03
Constant	-0.09	-0.08	-0.04	-0.06
R^2	0.49		0.50	
n	438		438	

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Turning to the measure of cynicism, we find completely the reverse. All three aspects of organizational justice were negatively associated with this measure, with senior management procedural justice having the largest statsistical effect. It is interesting, though, that distribtive as well as procedural justice was significant in this model.

Few of the control variables were significant in either model, although older officers tended to express a slightly stronger organizational ID, while, police constables were significantly more likely to make cynical cultural adaptations.

Table 2 turns attention to the correlates to self-legitmacy. Model 1 contains demographic, organizational justice and 'other' predictors of self-legitimacy, while models 2 and 3 add the two identity measures in turn (due the high correlation between these continuous explanatory variables it was not possible to place use both as predictors in the same model).

Model 1 shows that both senior management procedural justice and distributive justice were positively associated with self-legitimacy, as were assesments of public support for the police, the extent that respondents felt they experienced public cooperation, and the idea that the police are effective in reducing crime. By contrast, the lawful seperation variable was not significant in the model. Older officers tended to have more confidence in their own legitiamcy than their younger counterparts.

Many of these associations remained on addition of organizational ID, which was itself, unsurprisingly, very strongly predictive of self-legitmacy (note that the R^2 jumps to .84). Perhaps most importantly, the statistical effect of senior management procedural justice on self-legitimacy, seen in Model 1, appears to be entirely mediated via organizational ID. Indeed, in Model 2 the coefficient for senior management procedural justice is negative, and statsitically significant; at a given level of organizational identification those who felt senior management were fairer tended to be slightly less confident in their own legitimacy, although substantively this effect is dwarfed by the strenght of the general positive correlation between the three variables. Note that the association between the other sources of self-legitimacy and the response variable are largely unchanged – despite the strong correlation between organization ID and self-legitmacy other variables still had a (statistical) effect.

When officer cynicism was added in Model 3 something very similar occured. Controlling for all the other variables in the model, this factor was very strongly *negatively* associated with officers' sense of their own legitmacy, while elsewhere in the model existing patterns were generally maintained (one exception being that supervisory procedural justice now attained significance, and again in an unexpected negative direction – again, this 'residual' effect was dwarfed in substantive terms by other aspects of the model). Note also that the association between distributive justice and self-legitamcy, seen in Model 1, appears to be completed mediated by cynicism, reinforcing the idea that there is an important link between distributive justice and cynical cultural adaptations in the police.

Finally, to investigate further the associations between the 'police identities' and self-legitimacy, we created two new dummy variables. These were generated by splitting each of the original identity variables at the median (so all scores at the median and above were coded as one, which then represented a 'postive' score on the original variable). A cross tabulation of the two new variables showed most respondents scored scored one on only one of these new variables (on this account 38 per cent expressed an Organizational ID and 40 per cent a cynical cultural adaptation), but signicant numbers scored one on both (12 per cent), or neither (11 per cent). We could therefore add both to the same regression model, as shown in Model 4 in Table 2. The results show that Organizational ID was still positively and significantly associated with self-legitimacy, while officer cyncism retains its negative association with the response variable. Yet, the coefficient for Organizational ID is twice as large, suggesting that this is somewhat the dominant aspect of identity in relation to influencing self-legitimacy. Note also in this regard that the R^2 for model 3, which includes

only canteen culture, is smaller (.72) than the R^2 for the model that contains organizational ID (.84).

Table 2: Linear regression models predicting self-legitimacy

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	se(B)	B	se(B)	B	se(B)	B	se(B)
Gender (ref: male)								
Female	0.01	-0.04	-0.05*	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
Age (Ref:18-35)								
36-45	0.05	-0.05	0.03	-0.03	0.04	-0.04	0.03	-0.04
46-65	0.18***	-0.05	0.09**	-0.03	0.14**	-0.05	0.13**	-0.04
Rank (Ref: Senior)								
Constable	-0.07	-0.05	-0.05	-0.03	0	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04
Sergeant	0.04	-0.07	-0.04	-0.04	0.02	-0.05	0	-0.05
Organizational justice								
Supervisor procedural justice	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.02	-0.07**	-0.02	-0.05*	-0.02
Senior leader procedural justice	0.26***	-0.04	-0.07**	-0.03	0.10**	-0.03	0.11***	-0.03
Distributive justice	0.15***	-0.03	0.15***	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	0.11***	-0.03
Factors shaping self-legitimacy								
Public cooperation	0.18***	-0.04	0.09***	-0.02	0.14***	-0.03	0.14***	-0.03
Public support	0.21***	-0.05	0.15***	-0.03	0.22***	-0.04	0.19***	-0.04
Lawful separation	0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	-0.07*	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
No police more crime	0.15**	-0.05	0.05	-0.03	0.10*	-0.04	0.05	-0.04
Police identities								
Organizational ID			0.63***	-0.02				
Cynical adaptation					-0.63***	-0.04		
Dummy variables								
Organizational ID (ref: no)							0.42***	-0.04
Cynical adaptation (ref: not)							-0.22***	-0.04
Constant	-0.18*	-0.08	-0.03	-0.05	-0.12	-0.06	-0.15*	-0.07
R^2	0.59		0.84		0.72		0.72	
n	438		438		438		438	

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

In sum, the key messages from Table 2 seem to be that (a) identity judgements are key predictors of perceptions of self-legitimacy with organizational ID arguably the most important factor, (b) most of the statistical effect of organizational justice judgements on self-legitimacy are mediateed by identity judgements, and (c) police do draw on 'external' informal sources when thinking about their own legitimacy, notably from perceptions and experiences of public suppert.

Finally, table 3 shows models that examine the associations between self-legitimacy and support for democratic policing. Three models predict suspects' rights, use of force, and procedurally just policing. We find that self-legitmacy has broadly similar, postive associations with all three response variables, although the associations between self-

legitimacy and support for suspects' rights and procedurally just policing appear to be particularly strong.

Table 3: Linear regression models predicting commitment to democratic policing

| | Suspects' rights | | Use of force | | Procedurally just policing | |
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Gender (ref: male)						
Female	0.10*	-0.05	0.11	-0.07	0.07	-0.04
Age (Ref:18-35)						
36-45	-0.03	-0.05	0.06	-0.08	-0.04	-0.05
46-65	-0.02	-0.06	0.03	-0.09	-0.01	-0.06
Rank (Ref: Senior)						
PC	-0.18**	-0.06	-0.19*	-0.08	-0.11*	-0.05
Sergeant	-0.05	-0.07	-0.07	-0.1	-0.07	-0.07
Organizational justice						
Supervisor procedural justice	0.05	-0.03	-0.07	-0.04	0.06*	-0.03
Senior procedural justice	0.02	-0.04	0.28***	-0.06	-0.16***	-0.04
Distributive justice	-0.12**	-0.04	0.04	-0.05	0.01	-0.03
Self-legitimacy	0.52***	-0.05	0.24***	-0.07	0.66***	-0.04
Constant	0.14*	-0.07	0.10	-0.1	0.09	-0.06
R^2	0.35		0.24		0.46	
n	438		438		438	

* p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Elsewhere in the models we find rather inconsistent associations between the organizational justice variables and commitment to democratic policing styles. Perhaps perplexingly, distributive justice was negativley associated with respect for suspects' rights, while senior leadership procedural justice was negatively associated with procedurally just policing. However, further analysis suggested these negative associations only emerged once self-legitimacy was included in the models – they can thus be seen again as largely as 'residual' statistical effects that emerge conditional on self-legitimacy, the positive effect of which was far more important in the models (this supports the idea that self-legitmacy may be an important mediator between organizational structures and democratic policing). Finally, note that constables score consistently lower on all three democratic policing scales than more senior officers.

Additional analysis
Recall that the self-legitimacy, organizational ID and officer cyncism variables were very strongly inter-correlated, one implication of this being that they cannot all be included in the same regression model without significant problems of multi-collinearity. To expand on the results presented above we estimated six additional regression models, two predicting each of democratic policing variables, each of which themselves included either organizational ID and officer cyncism as an explanatory variable. The results are shown in Appendix Table 3. Unsurprisingly, organizational ID was strongly postively associated with each dependent variable, while cynical cultural adaptation was strongly negatively associated with each

dependent variable. In other words, both aspects of police identity, and self-legitmacy, were not only highly correalted with each other but had similar associations with other variables.

This analysis supports the idea that self-legitmacy is implicated in a nexus of police identites and cultural adaptations, strongly associated with a postive identification with the organization and strongly negatively associated with a cynical cultural adaptation. While almost certainly multi-dimensional (police officers have multiple, cross-cutting and possibly contradictory identities and beliefs, which is one reason we have kept the three measures seperate here) this 'nexus' might also be conceptualised as a continuum, with a positive organizational identity and a strong sense of self-legitimacy at one pole and negative aspects of the police occupational culture at the other. The 'positive' end of this continuum is consistently associated with democratic policing styles. While in this paper we have privileged the notion of self-legitmacy, as it seems to offer a conceptually robust understanding of *why* commitment to democratic policing may vary across a police organization, it is important to remember that it may actually be (positive) organizational identities that are the main factor influencing such commitment (c.f. Bradford et al. 2013; Myhill and Bradford 2013).

Discussion

Returning to the hypotheses laid out above, we can conclude, first, that strong support was found for H1 and H2. Identification with the police organisation was positively associated with perceptions of organizational justice, and organizational justice was negatively associated with a cynical cultural adaptation (H2). Second, identification with the police organization was positively, and very strongly, associated with self-legitimacy; hypothesis H3 found overwhelming support. When it came to H4, concerning the potential association between officer cynicism and self-legitimacy, we found equally overwhelming support for a negative association between these variables.

Self-legitimacy also appeared to be influenced by a range of other factors. Most notably, officers who felt they had the support of the public consistently expressed more confidence in their own authority (H5a); there was also some support for the idea that police draw a sense of legitimacy from the idea that they are essential in the fight against crime (H5c). What we have called here organizational ID does not determine self-legitimacy. By contrast, we found little support for the notion that separation between police and public is a source of legitimacy (H5b).

The final hypothesis (H6) related to the association between self-legitimacy and 'democratic' policing styles. We found strong support for this hypothesis – officers who were more confident in their own authority were more likely to indicate their support for procedurally just policing, were more supportive of suspects' rights, and were less likely to believe more force was needed in policing.

Taken together, these findings provide significant support for the idea that when police officers feel fairly treated by their organization they identify more strongly with it and, consequently, establish a firmer sense of their own legitimacy. These factors may facilitate positive policing modalities. By contrast oppositional, cynical and inward-looking stances were strongly associated with experiences of organizational *in*justice and a diminished sense of self-legitimacy, and were unlikely to be associated with positive policing styles. Moreover, it seems police draw a sense of legitimacy from the extent to which they believe the public supports them, and from the extent to which they experience public cooperation while doing their job, suggesting positive feedback loops may be set up when democratic (procedurally just) styles of policing generate public cooperation, which in turn enhances officers' sense of authority and encourages even greater emphasis on such positive styles. Alternatively, when public cooperation is fragile police self-legitimacy may be undermined, encouraging a

downward spiral of engagement in less desirable and perhaps aggressive styles that trigger further public anger and resistance.

The analysis presented here has also generated some significant questions. Perhaps most importantly we found barely a distinction between officers' occupational identities and their sense of their own legitimacy. While we have retained organizational ID and self-legitimacy as separate constructs, it would have been possible – at least statistically – to combine them into one measure. What, though, would such a measure have represented? There is a clear conceptual distinction between organizational identification and self-legitimacy, and it seems reasonable to suggest the former in some sense shapes the latter. To use the language of Barker (2001), it may be that organizational justice and social identity constitute and mediate processes of *legitimation*, which lead to the 'condition' of *legitimacy* as subjectively experienced by police officers; this is, in essence, the argument we have advanced here. Future research might profitably address this issue in more depth, both by fielding more detailed banks of survey items and using research designs – longitudinal or experimental – that allow better identification of causal processes.

Yet, while the idea that social identities and cultural adaptations are shaped by organizational justice, and in turn shape self-legitimacy, is appealing both analytically and normatively, one could equally argue that these should in fact be seem as two aspects of the same thing (and therefore that the distinction we have maintained in this paper is a false one). Perhaps it is simply 'being' a police officer – in as much as this is expressed via positive identification with their organization – that makes people feel they are legitimacy power holders. Indeed, this is an alternative reading of the argument put forward by Barker (2001: 34), who sees identification and legitimation as "inextricably linked".

If this latter idea finds purchase there follow some intriguing, and not entirely reassuring, implications. Most notably, if legitimacy in policing is 'inextricably' linked to social identity, then does self-legitimacy attach not to the role of 'police' in a general sense (engagement in normatively justifiable formal social control activity) but to local, specific forces or agencies, which, for example, may equally or more interested in boundary maintenance work (Giacomantonio 2013) that circumvent or subvert overarching policing aims? Could there be structural differences in assessments of legitimacy between police organizations in the same jurisdiction? Are there competing 'versions' of legitimacy across different police organizations within and across jurisdictional borders? Similarly, while we found here that organizational identification and self-legitimacy have positive antecedents (organizational justice) and consequents (greater commitment to democratic policing), will this necessarily be the case elsewhere? Could police officers' sense of their own legitimacy in other contexts be shaped by other, less desirable criteria and processes – in particular, might identification with the organization be linked with destructive forms of self-legitimacy that diminish, not promote, democratic policing practice?

These questions retain pertinence whichever formulation of the social identity/self-legitimacy association finds most conceptual and analytic purchase, although they would seem to be particularly acute if these factors do indeed collapse into one another; if they do not, this would seem to open up greater space for other influences on self-legitimacy. We should note that these issues did not seem particularly salient in Durham. In this particular context a positive identification with the organization, predicted by organizational justice, seems to have promoted officers' confidence in themselves and, perhaps, in their sense that their organization is 'doing the right thing'.

Weaknesses of the present study
This paper has, inevitably, a number of shortcomings. Like much other work in this area it is reliant on a cross-sectional 'snap-shot' survey, and thus can only uncover statistical associations, rather than causal processes; we also have little idea of processes of change in a

more general sense. We have discussed at some length the limited nature of the survey items available - this may, for example, have caused us to over-estimate the correlations between the police identity and self-legitimacy measures. Finally, in terms of the ultimate response variables, we have measured only expressed commitment to democratic policing styles, rather than actual behaviours.

Some weaknesses are more specific to the issues at hand. Perhaps most importantly, given the centrality here of both social identity and ethical beliefs (in relation to the 'right way' do do policing) we have no measures of the identities and ideals officers bought with them into the organization. How were these altered or modulated by, for example, organizational justice? Conversely, our measure of 'cynical adaptation' includes one survey item which is essentially a measure of conservative authoritarianism which may or may not be amenable to influence via organizational processes. Another issue is that we have little idea about the concrete or instrumental factors that may have been affecting officers attitudes. Was the threat of disciplinary action for treating suspects unfairly, for example, a factor? Longitudinal surveys, linked to administrative data, would be one important way to address these and related issues.

Conclusion
The results from the survey described here suggest that organizational justice is an important factor shaping police officers' assessments of their own legitimacy. Officers who felt fairly treated by management and organization were more likley to identify with the organization and more likely to be confident in their own authority and in their position as authority figures in society. When officers experienced a sense of organizational *in*justice these positive associations were weakened and, conversely, their identification was stronger with a problematic, rather cynical and authoritarian sub-culture. This, in turn, appeared to weaken their sense of their authority as police officers.

These findings suggest an important role for organizational practices and processes in shaping officer commitment to democratic policing. This commitment seems to stem in this UK context from, first, a strong organizational commitment to 'doing' policing in an ethically desirable way and, second, by promoting organizationally just practice that encourages positive workplace identities and internalization of organizational priorties and practices. If people are to internalize desirable means and ends they need to know what these are, and it seems likely that both a clearly expressed central mandate (such as Durham's 'Plan on a page') *and* fair and open management practices will be needed in order to promote 'democractic' policing.

Naturally, such a situation is a desirable goal for which to aim. Yet the Durham data also contains two important warnings. First, unfair organizational practice may encourage oppostional sub-cultural identities inimical to democratic policing. The way officers are treated by their managers may find negative, as well as postitive, echoes in their behaviour on the street. Second, it seems self-legitiamcy in policing contexts may be intimately, and possibly intrinsically, linked with identity. While this is, by and large, a postive in a place like Durham, this may be much less so in other contexts where the idea that the police serve the public, and should do so according to principles of fairness and justice, is less well established. In other contexts self-legitimacy, if it so closely caught up with identity, may take very different forms and have different consequences.

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Appendix Table 1: Constructs and measures

	Factor loadings
Supervisory PJ	
My supervisor listens to my opinions about decisions that affect me	0.91
My supervisors decisions are based on the facts	0.93
My supervisors treats me with respect	0.91
Leadership PJ	
I'm happy with the level of communication I receive from senior managers	0.78
Senior managers are open and honest with staff	0.91
Decisions are made fairly by senior managers in Durham Constabulary	0.94
Distributive justice	
I am rewarded fairly for the work I do	0.90
The amount of work I am expected to do is fair	0.65
Canteen culture	
Nobody has respect for people in authority these days	0.56
If you want to get by in the police, you should report a colleague for doing something wrong (reversed)	0.54
Organizational ID	
I have no emotional attachment to the force (reversed)	0.77
I feel a sense of loyalty to Durham constabulary	0.90
Public cooperation	
The people I deal with tell me about suspicious activity	0.66
The people I deal with willingly provide me with information about suspects	0.93
The people I deal with willingly assist me when asked	0.77
Public support	
The public agree with the tactics we use	0.70
The public think we go about the job in the right way	0.70
Self-legitimacy	
I am confident in using the authority that has been vested in me as a police officer	0.71
As someone who works for the police, I believe I occupy a position of special importance in society	0.43
Suspects' rights	
People lose the right to be treated with respect by the police when they decide to break the law	0.61
The ends justify the means when we know someone is clearly guilty of a serious offence	0.71
We should be fair to people suspected of committing a crime (reversed)	0.61
Use of force	
Overall, the police should use more physical force to control members of the public	0.81
The police should be allowed to use greater force to deal with confrontational situations	0.79
Procedurally just policing	

It's important for the police to take the time to explain decisions to members of the public 0.65

We should allow members of the public to voice their opinions when we make decisions that affect them 0.55

We should treat everyone with the same level of respect by the police regardless of how they behave 0.70

Model fit statistics

Chi square	499.1
Degrees of Freedom	268
P-Value	<.00005
RMSEA	0.04
CFI	0.98
TLI	0.98

Results from an 11 factor solution with no cross-loadings

Appendix Table 2: Correlation matrix of key variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Supervisory PJ (1)	1										
Leadership PJ (2)	0.44	1									
Distributive justice (3)	0.44	0.65	1								
Public cooperation (4)	0.18	0.28	0.20	1							
Public support (5)	0.32	0.59	0.56	0.56	1						
Organizational ID (6)	0.31	0.68	0.47	0.36	0.53	1					
Cynical adaptation (7)	-0.39	-0.64	-0.60	-0.28	-0.48	-0.80	1				
Self-legitimacy (8)	0.30	0.63	0.58	0.45	0.64	0.87	-0.76	1			
Suspects' rights (9)	0.19	0.35	0.24	0.30	0.21	0.56	-0.86	0.56	1		
Use of force (10)	0.13	0.43	0.33	0.16	0.35	0.51	-0.80	0.41	0.72	1	
Procedurally just policing (11	0.21	0.32	0.36	0.31	0.24	0.44	-0.61	0.65	0.73	0.41	1

Appendix Table 3: Linear regression models predicting commitment to democratic policing

	Suspects' rights		Use of force		Procedurally just policing	
	Model 2	Model 3	Model 5	Model 6	Model 8	Model 9
Gender (ref: male)						
Female	0.06	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.02
Age (Ref: 18-35)						
36-45	-0.01	-0.03	0.05	0.03	0	0
46-65	0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.05	0.09	0.07
Rank (Ref: Senior)						
PC	-0.19***	-0.04	-0.19*	-0.02	-0.14*	-0.06
Sergeant	-0.08	-0.04	-0.1	-0.07	-0.07	-0.04
Organizational justice Supervisor procedural justice	0.04	-0.03*	-0.07	-0.16***	0.05	0
Senior procedural justice	-0.05	-0.13***	0.12	-0.02	-0.09	-0.11**
Distributive justice	-0.03	-0.22***	0.08	-0.13***	0.14***	0.03
Police identities						
Organizational ID	0.44***		0.40***		0.29***	
Canteen culture		-1.23***		-1.38***		-0.70***
Constant	0.14*	0.05	0.12	0.02	0.07	0.01
R^2	0.34	0.88	0.30	0.70	0.25	0.39
n	438	438	438	438	438	438

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$, *** $p<0.001$