Original Research Article

Crime & Delinquency
1–29

DOI: 10.1177/00111287221150422
journals.sagepub.com/home/cad
SAGE

Procedural Fairness and Fear of Crime: Extending the Procedural Justice Theoretical Model Under the Chinese Context

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between procedural fairness and fear of crime in the context of China. Based on original data collected from a random sample of 2,245 residents in a southeast city in China, this study reveals a salient influence of procedural fairness on fear of crime, reflected by its significant positive effects on not only emotional-based fear but also cognitive fear (perceived risk of victimization). Results also suggest that perceived neighborhood cohesion and police trustworthiness partially mediate the relationship between procedural fairness and the outcome variable. The findings of this study demonstrate broad consequences of procedural fairness (a meaningful social impact *within* the community) that go beyond its implications for legitimacy and compliance.

Keywords

Procedural fairness, fear of crime, perceived risk of victimization, social cohesion, police trustworthiness, China

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Introduction

Since Tyler (1990) developed the theory of procedural justice, the procedural justice model (also called the process-based model of regulation) has become an important theoretical framework that has deeply influenced thinking in criminal justice about police legitimacy and citizens' compliance behavior. Specifically, this theoretical perspective proposes that if citizens perceive criminal justice officials as treating them in a procedurally just way, they are more likely to develop favorable perceptions of the legitimacy of the criminal justice officials, which in turn increases their voluntary deference to legal authorities and the law in the future (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

In the past three decades, considerable scholarly efforts have been made to test this theoretical framework across differential social and cultural contexts and populations (see Bradford et al., 2015; Jackson et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2014; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009; Sun et al., 2017; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; G. Wu & Liu, 2021). Much of the literature has focused on the implications of procedural justice for police legitimacy and legal compliance, which falls within the standard procedural justice framework, while studies examining the potential broader consequences of procedural justice on community outcomes including citizens' feelings of safety are rare. This is worrisome given that scholars have noted that procedural fairness likely has wider implications going beyond its influence on the link *between* police and community (a focus for most prior research)—it may also affect social outcomes *within* a community (e.g., promoting social cohesion and collective efficacy by activating social identities, see Bradford et al., 2015). On this account, procedural justice may play an important role in community building, which is arguably tied to residents' perceptions of crime control and safety.

China is an ideal research site to investigate the relevance of procedural justice to community outcomes, especially its potential influence on citizens' safety perceptions, in that China has been categorized as a communitarian society (rather than an individualistic society), featuring a collective culture of Chinese community, high frequencies of social interaction, interdependence among residents, and a sense of mutual obligation (Troyer et al., 1989; Zhang et al., 1999). This distinct sociocultural context with an emphasis on community bonds and informal forms of social control shapes Chinese people's thinking and behavior related to crime and safety, as well as their attitudinal behaviors toward the police (G. Wu & Liu, 2021). As such, China provides a useful empirical context to explore the social outcomes of procedural justice in police behavior, including its implications for the community's safety perceptions.

This study contributes to the literature by extending explorations of the procedural justice model of regulation into the understudied area of the consequences of procedural justice for community life, with a special focus on its relevance to citizens' safety feelings/fear of crime. Considering the theoretical mechanisms through which procedural justice may influence fear of crime and the distinct features of the Chinese context, this study also examines the mediation role of police trustworthiness and social cohesion, respectively, on the relationship between procedural fairness and fear of crime. This is a significant advancement of the procedural justice theory, as it moves beyond the traditional empirical investigation emphasizing the linkage between procedural justice, police legitimacy, and citizens' legal compliance and cooperative behavior, largely restricted within the realm of police-community interactions/relations. This effort is based on the recognition that procedural justice may have broader implications for community well-being that go beyond its impact on citizens' behavioral orientations toward the police. Using survey data from a large random sample consisting of 2,245 responses from citizens living in a city in southeast China, this study provides empirical findings that can inform discussions of procedural justice theory and urban police practice.

The Procedural Justice Model and Its Relevance to Fear of Crime

According to Tyler (2014), citizens' cooperation with legal authorities (e.g., the police) and compliance with the law are a function of their legitimacy judgment, reflected by "shared feelings of obligation and responsibility to obey rules and trust and confidence in authorities" (p. 80). This legitimacy judgment is further shaped by their views about whether the legal authorities have used their power in a procedurally fair manner. As such, the procedural justice model emphasizes the normative basis of public reactions to authority, with special attention paid to the role of police legitimacy—reflected by two dimensions as Tyler suggested, trust in authorities and obligation to obey—in bridging procedural fairness and compliance.

The theoretical relationship between procedural fairness and trust in legal authorities is of high relevance to the current study, as it points to a potential way in which procedural fairness may influence public feelings of safety. As procedural justice scholars reasoned, the experience of fairness at the hands of the police promotes individuals' identification with the group that the police represent (Bradford et al., 2015). This is the case because procedural fairness conveys identity-relevant information that recognizes and reaffirms

an individual's membership in a positive social group—the law-abiding majority (Bradford, 2014). This group identification as a function of procedural fairness encourages the internalization of group norms and values, and consequently develops individuals' favorable behavioral orientations toward the police, including their trust in police. Procedural justice and police legitimacy studies conducted in the last two decades have produced substantial evidence documenting the positive link between procedural fairness and citizens' assessment of police trustworthiness (Murphy et al., 2014; Tyler, 2005). This is also true for the studies specifically examining police legitimacy issues in the Chinese context before or during the COVID-19 pandemic, which revealed a positive connection between procedural justice, police trustworthiness, and public compliance/cooperation (see Lin et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2020).

Trust in legal authorities may provide a bridge between procedural fairness and fear of crime. As Bahn (1974) reasoned, when people believe formal social control is strong and have confidence and trust in the police, they will feel more protected in public space. This perspective finds support in a considerable body of research suggesting the positive association between trust in police and feeling of safety/fear of crime (Reisig & Parks, 2004; Skogan, 2009). Addressing concerns about the causal ordering of the relationship, Skogan (2009) employed panel data and found that confidence in the police affected concern about crime, rather than vice versa. Given the aforementioned theoretical perspective, the empirical evidence suggesting the positive influence of procedural fairness on perceived police trustworthiness, and the well-established relationship between trust in police and feelings of safety, it is reasonable to expect a connection between procedural fairness and fear of crime, possibly via the function of perceived police trustworthiness.

The other possible way in which procedural fairness may affect citizens' feelings of safety is through the development of social cohesion associated with experience of fair treatment by the police. As Bradford et al. (2015, p. 185) noted, given that procedural fairness enhances social identity on the part of individuals, this policing approach would not only promote compliance and cooperation with the police, but also encourage people to "take more account of others around them and moderate their behavior to avoid harm." As such, individuals' experience of procedural fair treatment at the hands of police officers likely strengthens their "affective links with others who are not police but with whom they feel they share social group membership." Said another way, procedural fairness may affect social cohesion and collective efficacy *within* the community, pointing to potential broader social consequences beyond its effects on citizens' behavioral orientations toward the

police. Decades of research has demonstrated the relevance of neighborhood context factors, such as community cohesion and collective efficacy, to crime control and residents' sense of safety (Gibson et al., 2002; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). Inasmuch as social cohesion, manifested by shared values and trust among community residents, increases the readiness of residents to take actions against crime (Zhao et al., 2015), individual perceptions of social cohesion should arguably have an inhibiting effect on fear of crime. Here, we can see that procedural fairness is likely to be a factor influencing fear of crime, given its relevance to social cohesion. Despite these perspectives, little work has been done to empirically assess the relationship between procedural fairness and fear of crime and the roles of police trustworthiness and social cohesion in that relationship. Indeed, as mentioned previously, scholarly exploration on this issue would contribute to the theoretical growth of the procedural justice theory, as it expands the consequences of procedural justice to new dimensions (e.g., public feelings of safety) that go beyond its impact on police legitimacy and citizens' cooperation and compliance.

In the past few decades, there have been extensive scholarly efforts to explore the determinants of fear of crime, revealing that fear of crime is subjected to the influence of a range of factors related to physical and social vulnerability, victimization experience, and neighborhood disorder (Gibson et al., 2002; Liu et al., 2009; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Zhang et al., 2009). It appears that procedural fairness cannot be conveniently attributed to any of these groups of factors. However, as discussed earlier, procedural fairness could arguably influence fear of crime, possibly via the function of trust in police and community cohesion (Bradford et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2014). In effect, it has been found that citizens' perceptions of procedural fairness by the police influence their overall attitudes toward the entire criminal justice system (Bradford, 2011). This global judgment about the legal system that is tied to perceptions of procedural fairness may have a broader impact on individuals' emotional and behavioral responses to crime, including their sense of safety and fear of crime. It should be noted that fear of crime may have multiple dimensions. As scholars (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987) have pointed out, research examining determinants of fear of crime needs to consider both the cognitive dimension of fear, reflected by perceptions of victimization risk, and the emotional dimension of fear, concerning psychological or physiological reactions of individuals (an affective state related to worry about personal safety; see Furstenberg, 1971). Indeed, it is necessary to distinguish between emotional fear and risk perception, as prior research has suggested that the influences of predictor variables may vary across these two dimensions of fear (Hinkle, 2015).

Context of Urban China: Crime, Fear of Crime, and Neighborhood Social Control

The economic reform beginning in the late 1970s has substantially changed the social and economic landscape of this country, with a profound impact on "levels of, concern about, and responses to, criminal behavior" (Zhang et al., 2007, p. 961). In fact, China has experienced a dramatic increase in crime rate during the post-reform era based on official statistics (see Liang, 2005; Zhang et al., 2009). According to China Statistical Yearbooks (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2015), the total number of criminal cases recorded by public security agencies reached approximately 7.2 million in 2015, up from around 1.6 million in 1997. Although today's China still has relatively low crime rates compared with other countries, decades of increasing crime levels have resulted in heightened fear of crime and concerns about personal safety among Chinese people, especially urban residents (Y. Wu et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2007).

As mentioned previously, one contextual condition that may affect Chinese people's safety perceptions and their attitudinal behaviors toward the police is China's traditional approach of relying upon community cohesion and informal social control to maintain social order and prevent crime. This approach was manifested by the "mass line" principle, which sought to "transform public security work to the work [of] the whole people" (as cited in Wong, 2003, p. 208) via extensive involvement of community residents in crime control. Scholars noted that in the reform era, the mass line principle remains central to China's urban social/crime control (Dai, 2008).

In addition to the emphasis on informal control, the social control system in urban China also includes components of semi-public control (reflected by the activities of community residents' committees) and public control (reflected by the activities of neighborhood police stations). As scholars noted, community residents' committees (*ju-wei-hui*) are quasi-official agencies that perform various functions including addressing residents' needs, explaining governmental policies and regulations, mediating neighborhood disputes, and organizing community activities. While these committees reflect residents' self-governance, they receive financial support from the street affairs offices (*jie-dao-ban-shi-chu*, grassroots-level governmental agencies), and their operation is directed by the street affairs offices. Hence, community residents' committees essentially function as a form of semi-public control at the neighborhood level (Zhang et al., 2007). Neighborhood police stations (*pai-chu-suo*) are the lowest level of police operation in China. Officers in these local police agencies work closely with the street affairs offices and community residents' committees to prevent

crime and resolve disputes among residents (Messner et al., 2017). As such, China's urban social control is implemented through an interwoven network of such social institutions as families, schools, neighborhood-based groups, and the police (Zhang et al., 2007). This community context is relevant to the understanding of Chinese people's behavioral orientation toward the police and their perceptions of neighborhood safety, and suggests the need to consider the roles of social cohesion and different forms of social control when examining these issues.

Drawing upon prior research, the current study extends the procedural justice theory to the context of China, with an emphasis on the broader consequences of procedural fairness for fear of crime (reflected by emotional fear of crime and perceived risk of victimization). Given the theoretical perspectives, as described earlier, suggesting a potential mediating role of police trustworthiness and social cohesion, this study also examines the relevance of these two variables to the relationship between procedural fairness and fear of crime. Specifically, we explore the following two research questions:

RQ 1: Does citizens' perception of procedural fairness influence their fear of crime (two dimensions considered: fear of crime and perceived risk of victimization)?

RQ 2: Is the influence of procedural fairness, if any, on fear of crime mediated by police trustworthiness and social cohesion?

Data and Method

Data Collection

Data for this study originated from a survey of approximately 2,500 residents conducted in a southeast city in China in Fall 2018. This city is one of the four cities that were first assigned the status of "economic special zone (ESZ)" by China's central government in the early 1980s. In the last few decades, the city has achieved impressive economic success and has also experienced rapid social changes. Paralleling these trends, the city population has become increasingly diverse, due to an influx of immigrants from other parts of China seeking work opportunities and better living conditions. The data were collected from one of the city's three administrative districts. The research team selected this district for data collection because it was the primary district in the city even before the city obtained its ESZ status and contains not only long-standing neighborhoods but also newly developed neighborhoods. According to the 2020 Chinese census, this district had a population of approximately 1.1 million, with males accounting for approximately 52% and people aged 15–59 years accounting for approximately 73%.

For people aged 15 or older, they had an average of 12 years of education. These sociodemographic attributes in the district of interest were largely similar to those for the entire city (in the city general population, males accounted for 53%; people aged 15–59 years accounted for 74%; and people aged 15 or older had an average of 12 years of education). As such, focusing on this district would help produce a sample with a better representation of the overall city population.

We used a multistage sampling approach to administer the survey. We first randomly selected five out of 145 neighborhoods in the district. Of the five neighborhoods selected, four were long-standing urban neighborhoods (with 3,998, 2,200, 1,513, and 5,640 households, respectively), and the fifth was a new suburban neighborhood (with 1,108 households) developed in an originally rural area. Considering the population sizes of these neighborhoods, 600 households were randomly selected from the largest neighborhood (the one with 5,640 households), and 400 households were randomly selected from the smallest neighborhood (the one with 1,108 households). Specifically, in selecting these households, we used lists of addresses provided by neighborhood committees. Using the same approach, 500 households were selected from each of the remaining three neighborhoods. Finally, one member of each sampled household who was 18 years of age or older and was willing to participate in this study was interviewed. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, in that they could decide whether to participate and they could also refuse to answer any questions in the survey. In total, 2,245 residents completed the survey, with a response rate of 89%. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for all variables included in the regression analysis.

Measures

As this study examines the relationship between procedural fairness and fear of crime and the potential mediating role of police trustworthiness and social cohesion, variables concerning the procedural justice model, the two dimensions of fear of crime, and neighborhood context were included in the study. Specifically, the variables related to the procedural justice model were Procedural Fairness, Police Trustworthiness, and Police Effectiveness; fear of crime was reflected by Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization; and variables concerning neighborhood context included Social Cohesion, Perceived Crime and Disorder, Guanxi, Semi-Public Control, and Public Control. Guanxi, defined as a personal network involving instrumental and affective bonds of individuals, was considered in the

Table 1. Univariate Descriptive Statistics ($N = 2,245$).

Variables	%/Mean (*SD*)	Range	α
Emotional fear of crime	8.59 (2.35)	4–16	.81
Perceived risk of victimization	4.12 (1.23)	2–8	.72
Procedural fairness	21.92 (4.35)	10–30	.83
Police trustworthiness	15.11 (3.12)	4–20	.84
Perceived social cohesion	10.31 (2.04)	3–15	.68
Police effectiveness	16.16 (3.82)	5–24	.81
Age	40.42 (13.87)	18–88	—
Gender (female)	54.0	0–1	—
Marital status (married)	58.7	0–1	—
Education (college degree or above)	40.9	0–1	—
Local born	34.9	0–1	—
Hukou (registered urban residents)	74.3	0–1	—
Having police relatives	21.1	0–1	—
Employment status			
Employed for wages	46.7	—	—
Self-employed	22.8	—	—
Unemployed/looking for work	5.2	—	—
Homemaker	5.6	—	—
Students	8.6	—	—
Retired	11.1	—	—
Monthly family income (RMB)			
Up to 1,999 (US$311)	14.50	—	—
2,000–3,999 (US$625)	15.60	—	—
4,000–5,999 (US$937)	16.20	—	—
6,000–7,999 (US$1250)	11.10	—	—
8,000–9,999 (US$1562)	8.30	—	—
10,000–11,999 (US$1870)	6.40	—	—
12,000–13,999 (US$2179)	10.30	—	—
14,000 (US$2180) or above	17.60	—	—
Religious belief			
Nothing in particular	67.4	—	—
Buddhist	22.1	—	—
Christian	3.8	—	—
Other religion	6.7	—	—
Victimization experience (being victimized)	6.7	0–1	—
Self-defense capability	2.38 (.82)	1–4	—
Perceived crime and disorder	18.69 (5.96)	8–40	.85
Guanxi	13.06 (3.12)	4–20	.76
Semi-public control	3.38 (.91)	1–5	—
Public control	3.23 (1.05)	1–5	—

analysis given that prior research suggests it is an important feature of Chinese society and has demonstrated its influence on fear of crime (Zhang et al., 2009). In addition, other variables theoretically relevant to fear of crime (as suggested by the vulnerability, victimization, and social disorder perspectives on fear of crime) were considered in the analysis, including those reflecting sociodemographic characteristics, victimization experience, and self-defense capability.

The two dependent variables (DV)—Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization, reflecting the two dimensions of fear of crime, are summative scales based on Likert-type items (see Table 2) with values ranging from 1 (*very safe* or *never worry about [personal safety issues]*) to 4 (*very unsafe* or *often worry about [personal safety issues]*) for Emotional Fear of Crime, and from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 4 (*very likely*) for Perceived Risk of Victimization. As Table 2 displays, Emotional Fear of Crime was measured by four items, and Perceived Risk of Victimization was measured by two items (items were developed following Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987). The items used to measure these two constructs overall show good internal consistency. Higher values reflect greater emotional fear of crime and higher perceived risk of victimization.

The key independent variable (IV)—Procedural Fairness—and the two mediator variables—Police Trustworthiness and Perceived Social Cohesion—are also multiple-item scales (see Table 2), with response options ranging from "strongly disagree" (coded as 1) to "strongly agree" (coded as 6) for the items measuring Procedural Fairness ($\alpha = .83$, items primarily drawn from Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), and from "distrust them greatly" (coded as 1) to "trust them greatly" (coded as 5) for the items measuring Police Trustworthiness ($\alpha = .84$, items adapted from Sunshine & Tyler, 2003, with a consideration of the structure of the Chinese police). For the three items used to measure Social Cohesion ($\alpha = .68$, items adapted from Sampson et al., 1997), response options were adjusted based on the questions asked. Specifically, responses ranging from 1 (*very unwilling*) to 5 (*very willing*) were provided to the question asking about respondents' assessment of their neighbors' willingness to help each other; and responses ranging from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*most residents*) were provided to the other two questions asking about respondents' assessment of the proportion of residents in their neighborhood with similar moral values to them and those they can trust. For these composite measures, higher values suggest respondents' positive views about police procedural fairness, trustworthiness, and neighborhood cohesion.

Likert-type items were also used to measure other variables related to the procedural justice model and neighborhood context. As is shown in Table 2, Police Effectiveness (items primarily drawn from Sunshine & Tyler, 2003),

Table 2. Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix for Items Measuring Key Variables in the Study (Principal Component Analysis).

Factors	Factor loadings							
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8
Factor 1—*Perceived crime and disorder* (responses: 1 = never, 5 = always; $\alpha = .85$)								
1. How often you have seen people fighting and arguing in your neighborhood	.70							
2. How often you have seen people drinking alcohol in public in your neighborhood	.76							
3. How often you have seen litter and trash in the streets and vacant lots in your neighborhood	.55							
4. How often you have seen damaged public facilities left unfixed in your neighborhood	.65							
5. How often you have seen people being pickpocketed in your neighborhood	.71							
6. How often you have seen people being mugged in your neighborhood	.74							
7. How often you have seen people being assaulted in your neighborhood	.76							
8. How often you have seen people being involved in drug activities in your neighborhood	.63							
Factor 2—*Procedural fairness* (responses: 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree; $\alpha = .83$)								
1. When police make decisions, they consider facts, rather than their personal opinions		.70						
2. The police provide opportunities to correct the decisions that are regarded as unfair		.77						
3. The police treat you with respect in their interaction with you		.78						

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Factors	Factor loadings							
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8
4. The police clearly explain to people about why they took such actions		.71						
5. The police provide opportunities for citizens to explain their situations		.68						
Factor 3—*Police trustworthiness* (responses: 1 = distrust them greatly, 5 = trust them greatly; $\alpha = .84$)								
1. How much trust do you have in the police in general			.81					
2. How much do you trust the officers in the city police bureau			.74					
3. How much do you trust the officers in the city district's police bureau			.83					
4. How much do you trust the officers in the neighborhood police station			.81					
Factor 4—*Emotional fear of crime* (one dimension of fear of crime; $\alpha = .81$)								
1. How safe do you feel when you walk alone in your neighborhood at night (1 = very safe, 4 = very unsafe)				.62				
2. How often do you worry about the crime problem in your neighborhood (1 = never, 4 = often)				.83				
3. How often do you worry about being attacked or beaten up by someone (1 = never, 4 = often)				.85				
4. How often do you worry about your property being vandalized or stolen (1 = never, 4 = often)				.79				
Factor 5—*Police Effectiveness* (responses: 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree; $\alpha = .81$)								
1. The police respond rapidly to calls about crime					.75			
2. The police are doing well in solving crime					.82			

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Factors	Factor loadings							
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8
3. The police are doing well in preventing crime					.76			
4. The police do a good job in helping the victim					.66			
Factor 6—*Guanxi* (responses: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree; $\alpha = .76$)								
1. I have many friends in my neighborhood						.70		
2. I know many neighbors quite well in my neighborhood						.74		
3. I frequently spend time with my neighbors and friends living in my neighborhood						.76		
4. When I spend time with my neighbors and friends living in my neighborhood, typically such gatherings involve many people						.75		
Factor 7—*Perceived social cohesion* ($\alpha = .68$)								
1. To what extent are the residents in your neighborhood willing to help each other (1 = very unwilling, 5 = very willing)							.70	
2. Please indicate how many residents in your neighborhood possess similar moral values to you (1 = none, 5 = most residents)							.69	
3. Please indicate how many residents in your neighborhood you can trust (1 = none, 5 = most residents)							.76	
Factor 8—*Perceived risk of victimization* (one dimension of fear of crime; $\alpha = .72$)								
1. In the year ahead, how likely are you to become a victim of a violent crime (1 = very unlikely, 4 = very likely)								.80
2. In the year ahead, how likely are you to become a victim of a property crime (1 = very unlikely, 4 = very likely)								.80

Perceived Crime and Disorder (items adapted from Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999), and Guanxi (items developed following Zhang et al., 2009) were measured by four, eight, and four items, respectively. Overall, items used to measure these variables show high internal consistency, and thus a composite index was created for each of these variables, with higher values suggesting greater police effectiveness, and higher levels of perceived neighborhood crime/order and guanxi. For the additional two forms of neighborhood social control, Semi-Public Control was measured by a single item, "Do you think members of your community residents' committee are effective in conducting their work," with responses ranging from 1 (*very ineffective*) to 5 (*very effective*). Public Control was captured by the question: "How often do you see police officers in your neighborhood?" Responses fell onto a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very frequently*).

We also included two variables reflecting the vulnerability and victimization perspectives in the analysis. Specifically, Self-Defense Capability was based on responses (ranging from 1 [*poor*] to 4 [*very good*]) to the item "How would you rate your capability for self-defense about personal safety?" The response options. Victimization Experience was measured by a single question asking respondents to indicate if, within the 2-year period, they themselves or their family members had experienced victimization associated with violent crime or property crime. The variable was dichotomously coded, with 1 for experiencing victimization and 0 for not experiencing victimization.

In addition, several variables reflecting socio-demographic characteristics were included in the study: age, gender, educational attainment, marital status, income, employment status, religious belief, hukou (registered rural or urban residents), local born, and having police relatives. Gender, marital status, educational attainment, hukou, local born, having police relatives are dummy variables with 1 representing individuals who are female, married, college graduates, registered urban residents, born in the city, and those having police relatives, respectively. Age is a continuous variable (in years). Income is an ordinal variable, and employment status and religious belief are categorical variables (see Table 1 for the categories considered).

Analytical Strategy

We first performed principal component analysis (PCA) to check the factor loadings of all items used to measure the key constructs in this study, including the two dimensions of fear of crime (Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization), Procedural Fairness, Police Trustworthiness, Police Effectiveness, Perceived Social Cohesion, Perceived Crime and

Disorder, and Guanxi. This step is necessary given the concern that concepts related to the procedural justice model such as procedural fairness and police legitimacy (e.g., police trustworthiness) sometimes lack convergent and discriminant validity (Gau, 2011).

The results of factor analysis showed that all items loaded stronger on their associated constructs than on other constructs, suggesting they were different constructs based on the data (see Table 2). Building upon the results of factor analysis, we performed a series of multivariate analyses to examine the relationship between Procedural Fairness and the two dimensions of fear of crime—Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization. Recognizing the structure of our data was hierarchical (individuals nested in neighborhoods), it seemed reasonable to use multilevel modeling (MLM) to analyze the data. However, the use of MLM is based on the observation of significant between-group variability (clustering effect). If between-group variability is nonsignificant, then MLM would not be necessary. In this case, the traditional ordinary least squares (OLS) model would be an effective tool for estimating the parameters of a regression model (Garson, 2019).

To determine if MLM was needed, we conducted a variance component test to assess if values associated with the outcome variables—Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization—clustered by neighborhood. Specifically, we used a null (or no predictor) model to assess if the grouping variable at level 2 significantly influenced the intercept (mean) of the dependent variables at level 1. The null model showed that the between-groups variance component was not significant, meaning there was little to no variance in the two dimensions of fear of crime between the neighborhoods in the sample. Given the results from the variance components test suggesting a nonsignificant clustering effect, we employed OLS regression, rather than MLM, to analyze the data. The use of OLS regression was also based on the consideration that the outcome variables were continuous (composite measures).

Specifically, our analysis of the influences of the explanatory variables on the outcome variables involved two steps. First, a hierarchical modeling strategy was used to explore the association between Procedural Fairness and the two dimensions of fear of crime and the potential mediating effects of Police Trustworthiness and Social Cohesion. In this step, we developed four models associated with each of the outcome variables. Model 1 included only the IV (Procedural Fairness) and sociodemographic variables. In Models 2 and 3, the hypothesized mediators, Police Trustworthiness and Social Cohesion, were added. If Procedural Fairness became insignificant in predicting the outcome variables with the addition of these two variables, then the mediating effect was suggested. Model 4 was a full model in which all

other covariates were added. This full model allowed the assessment of the influence of the IV on the outcome variables, netting the effects of other theoretically relevant factors. Second, as our results from the first step suggested that the addition of the two hypothesized mediators did not render the IV insignificant, we conducted a further mediation analysis using the bootstrapping approach suggested by Hayes (2017) to determine if a partial mediation effect existed.

Results

Tables 3 and 4 report the results of multivariate analyses on Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization, the two dimensions of fear of crime, respectively. Multicollinearity was not an issue in these analyses, as across all models the variance inflation factor (VIF) scores for the predictor variables were lower than 4.0, and all tolerance scores were higher than 0.2, the cut-off points commonly used in determining multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010).

As Table 3 suggests, Procedural Fairness had a salient negative influence on the DV across the four models (Model 1: $\beta = -.17$, $p < .001$; Model 2: $\beta = -0.15$, $p < .001$; Model 3: $\beta = -0.10$, $p < .001$; Model 4: $\beta = -0.11$, $p < .001$), meaning an increase in citizens' perception of procedural fairness used by the police was associated with a decrease in their emotional fear of crime. Given that Procedural Fairness remains a significant predictor of the DV after controlling for effects of other theoretically relevant variables (as suggested by Model 4), the result essentially demonstrates that procedural fairness perceptions can independently predict citizens' emotional fear of crime. However, it should be noted that the two hypothesized mediators—Police Trustworthiness ($p < .001$ for all the three models in which it was included) and Perceived Social Cohesion ($p < .001$ for the two models in which it was added)—were also found to be significant predictors of emotional fear of crime, and the addition of these two variables led to some decrease in the standardized correlation coefficient of procedural fairness (decreasing from −0.17 to −0.15 from Model 1 to Model 2, and from −0.15 to −0.10 from Model 2 to Model 3), suggesting a partial mediation effect associated with them may exist.

For other control variables, Perceived Crime and Disorder (Model 4: $\beta = 0.05$, $p < .05$) and Public Control (Model 4: $\beta = 0.05$, $p < .05$), as two variables capturing neighborhood dynamics, were positively related to the DV. A significant relationship was also detected between such factors as victimization experience and self-defense capability and the DV. Specifically, while the experience of victimization increased emotional fear of crime (Model 4: $\beta = 0.08$, $p < .001$), a favorable assessment of self-defense capability reduced the fear (Model 4: $\beta = -0.10$, $p < .001$).

Table 3. OLS Regression Results on Emotional Fear of Crime ($N = 2,245$).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Predictors	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*
Procedural justice model variables								
Procedural fairness	−.17 (0.01)	−7.70***	−.15 (0.01)	−6.68***	−.10 (0.01)	−4.43***	−.11 (0.01)	−4.10***
Police trustworthiness	—	—	−.11 (0.02)	−4.66***	−.08 (0.02)	−3.32***	−.09 (0.02)	−3.78***
Police effectiveness	—	—	—	—	—	—	.03 (0.02)	1.05
Neighborhood dynamics								
Perceived social cohesion	—	—	—	—	−.22 (0.03)	−9.73***	−.23 (0.03)	−9.64***
Perceived crime and disorder	—	—	—	—	—	—	.05 (0.01)	2.20*
Guanxi	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.02 (0.02)	−.76
Semi-public control	—	—	—	—	—	—	.04 (0.06)	1.87
Public control	—	—	—	—	—	—	.05 (0.05)	2.43*
Demographic characteristics								
Age	−.03 (0.01)	−.89	−.03 (0.01)	−.74	−.02 (0.01)	−.63	−.03 (0.01)	−.88
Females	.04 (0.11)	1.89	.04 (0.11)	1.84	.04 (0.10)	1.88	.02 (0.11)	.72
Married	−.01 (0.12)	−.48	−.01 (0.12)	−.52	−.02 (0.12)	−.62	−.002 (0.12)	−.08
College degree or above	−.003 (0.12)	−.13	−.01 (0.12)	−.35	.00 (0.12)	−.01	.01 (0.12)	.23
Monthly family income	−.11 (0.02)	−4.65***	−.11 (0.02)	−4.57***	−.11 (0.02)	−4.86***	−.11 (0.02)	−4.50***
Having police relatives	.07 (0.13)	3.03**	.07 (0.13)	3.20**	.07 (0.13)	3.09**	.07 (0.12)	3.23**
Local born	−.12 (0.12)	−5.11***	−.11 (0.12)	−4.77***	−.11 (0.11)	−4.73***	−.11 (0.11)	−4.50***
Hukou (registered urban resident)	.06 (0.13)	2.72**	.07 (0.13)	2.80**	.06 (0.12)	2.65**	.06 (0.12)	2.49*

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

Predictors	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*
Employment status (reference category: employed for wages)								
Self-employed	.01 (0.15)	.47	−.004 (0.15)	−.16	.004 (0.14)	.17	−.001 (0.14)	.05
Unemployed/looking for work	.02 (0.25)	.96	.02 (0.25)	.80	.01 (0.24)	.29	.01 (0.24)	.23
Homemaker	−.02 (0.24)	−.98	−.03 (0.24)	−1.09	−.01 (0.24)	−.41	−.02 (0.24)	−.81
Students	.01 (0.21)	.58	.01 (0.21)	.41	.01 (0.20)	.50	.01 (0.20)	.43
Retired	−.02 (0.24)	−.59	−.02 (0.24)	−.47	−.01 (0.24)	−.37	−.03 (0.23)	−1.02
Religious belief (reference category: nothing in particular)								
Buddhist	−.01 (0.13)	−.28	−.001 (0.13)	−.06	−.001 (0.13)	−.05	−.001 (0.13)	−.06
Christian	−.07 (0.27)	−2.73**	−.06 (0.27)	−2.60**	−.06 (0.26)	−2.52*	−.06 (0.26)	−2.55*
Other religion	−.03 (0.22)	−1.51	−.03 (0.22)	−1.40	−.01 (0.21)	−.48	−.02 (0.21)	−.66
Victimization experience (being victimized)	—	—	—	—	—	—	.08 (0.20)	3.55***
Self-defense capability	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.10 (0.07)	−4.49***
Model fit								
F	8.83***		9.64***		14.55***		12.71***	
R^2	.07		.08		.13		.15	

Note. Entries are standardized coefficients and standard errors from OLS regression.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Table 4. OLS Regression Results on Perceived Risk of Victimization ($N = 2,245$).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Predictors	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*
Procedural justice model variables								
Procedural fairness	−.33 (0.01)	−14.73***	−.32 (0.01)	−14.30***	−.30 (0.01)	−13.08***	−.26 (0.01)	−10.02***
Police trustworthiness	—	—	−.02 (0.01)	−.71	−.002 (0.01)	−.11	.02 (0.01)	.81
Police effectiveness	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.02 (0.01)	−.69
Neighborhood dynamics								
Perceived social cohesion	—	—	—	—	−.09 (0.01)	−4.09***	−.07 (0.01)	−2.84**
Perceived crime and disorder	—	—	—	—	—	—	.16 (0.01)	6.69***
Guanxi	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.10 (0.01)	−4.42***
Semi-public control	—	—	—	—	—	—	−.01 (0.03)	.81
Public control	—	—	—	—	—	—	.05 (0.03)	2.13*
Demographic characteristics								
Age	−.04 (0.003)	−.99	−.03 (0.003)	−.96	−.03 (0.003)	−.93	−.01 (0.003)	−.17
Females	−.02 (0.05)	−.76	−.02 (0.05)	−.77	−.02 (0.05)	−.78	−.01 (0.05)	−.56
Married	−.02 (0.06)	−.91	−.02 (0.06)	−.92	−.02 (0.06)	−.96	.01 (0.06)	.19
College degree or above	−.02 (0.06)	−.85	−.02 (0.06)	−.89	−.02 (0.06)	−.74	−.01 (0.06)	−.41
Monthly family income	−.03 (0.01)	−1.16	−.03 (0.01)	−1.14	−.03 (0.01)	−1.21	−.04 (0.01)	−1.63
Having police relatives	.01 (0.07)	.58	.01 (0.07)	.61	.01 (0.07)	.52	.02 (0.06)	.78
Local born	−.03 (0.06)	−1.10	−.02 (0.06)	−1.05	−.02 (0.06)	−.95	−.02 (0.06)	−.97
Hukou (registered urban resident)	.06 (0.06)	2.38*	.06 (0.06)	2.39*	.05 (0.07)	2.26*	.06 (0.07)	2.65**

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

Predictors	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*	β (*SE*)	*t*
Employment status (reference category: employed for wages)								
Self-employed	.02 (0.08)	.72	.02 (0.08)	.61	.02 (0.08)	.75	.01 (0.07)	.39
Unemployed/looking for work	.002 (0.13)	.08	.001 (0.13)	.05	−.004 (0.13)	−.19	−.01 (.13)	−.29
Homemaker	.02 (0.13)	1.03	.02 (0.13)	1.01	.03 (0.13)	1.31	.02 (0.12)	.96
Students	−.04 (0.11)	−1.77	−.04 (0.11)	−1.79	−.04 (0.11)	−1.76	−.04 (0.11)	−1.85
Retired	.01 (0.12)	.27	.01 (0.12)	.29	.01 (0.12)	.34	.000 (0.12)	−.02
Religious belief (reference category: nothing in particular)								
Buddhist	−.03 (0.07)	−1.20	−.03 (0.07)	−1.16	−.03 (0.07)	−1.17	−.04 (0.07)	−1.82
Christian	−.06 (0.14)	−2.51*	−.06 (0.14)	−2.50*	−.05 (0.14)	−2.47*	−.05 (0.14)	−2.42*
Other religion	.03 (0.11)	1.25	.03 (0.11)	1.26	.03 (0.11)	1.64	.04 (0.11)	1.61
Victimization experience (being victimized)	—	—	—	—	—	—	.13 (0.11)	6.24***
Self-defense capability	—	—	—	—	—	—	-.02 (0.03)	−.95
Model fit								
F	14.96***		14.16***		14.40***		15.32***	
R^2	.12		.12		.13		.18	

Note. Entries are standardized coefficients and standard errors from OLS regression.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Several sociodemographic variables were also detected to be significant predictors of the DV. Specifically, the results suggest that individuals tend to have reduced emotional fear of crime if they are local born ($p < .001$ for all models), Christians ($p < .01$ for Models 1 and 2, and $p < .05$ for Models 3 and 4), registered rural residents ($p < .01$ for Models 1–3, and $p < .05$ for Model 4), or members of a family with high monthly income ($p < .001$ for all models), or if they have no police relatives ($p < .01$ for all models).

Table 4 presents the results associated with the other dimension of the outcome of interest: Perceived Risk of Victimization. As in the results for Emotional Fear of Crime, Procedural Fairness was also found to be a significant predictor of Perceived Risk of Victimization across the four models (Model 1: $\beta = -0.33$, $p < .001$; Model 2: $\beta = -0.32$, $p < .001$; Model 3: $\beta = -0.30$, $p < .001$; Model 4: $\beta = -0.26$, $p < .001$). Notably, as the standardized coefficients suggest, Procedural Fairness essentially had the strongest association with the DV among all predictors considered in the study. The negative relationship demonstrates that an increase in procedural fairness perceptions was associated with a decrease in individuals' perceived risk of victimization. Still, as found in the models related to emotional fear of crime, Procedural Fairness was shown to independently predict the DV given its linkage to the DV remained significant with the addition of other covariates. However, the strength of its association with the outcome variable did attenuate to a certain degree after Perceived Social Cohesion was added into the model (a reduction of the standardized correlation coefficient from 0.32 in Model 2 to 0.30 in Model 3), indicating a possible partial mediating effect of Perceived Social Cohesion on the relationship between Procedural Fairness and the DV. As the results demonstrate, for the two hypothesized mediators, while Perceived Social Cohesion was a significant predictor of the DV (Model 3: $\beta = -0.09$, $p < .001$; Model 4: $\beta = -0.07$, $p < .01$), Police Trustworthiness was not. Specifically, individuals perceiving a high level of neighborhood social cohesion tended to have a low perceived risk of victimization.

For other covariates, similar to the results related to the dimension of Emotional Fear of Crime, Perceived Crime and Disorder (Model 4: $\beta = 0.16$, $p < .001$) and Public Control (Model 4: $\beta = 0.05$, $p < .05$) were found to be positively associated with Perceived Risk of Victimization. Individuals tended to perceive a high risk of victimization if they were registered urban residents (significant for all the four models) and had prior victimization experience (Model 4: $\beta = 0.13$, $p < .001$). Those identifying as Christians reported a lower perceived risk of being victimized than their unreligious

Table 5. Total Effects and Indirect Effects of Procedural Fairness on Emotional Fear of Crime and Perceived Risk of Victimization Using the Bootstrapping Method ($N = 2,245$).

	Emotional fear of crime		Perceived risk of victimization	
Variables	Estimate (*SE*)	95% CI	Estimate (*SE*)	95% CI
Police trustworthiness				
Total effect	**−0.093** (0.011)	[−0.115, −0.070]	**−0.088** (0.006)	[−0.099, −0.076]
Direct effect	**−0.080** (0.012)	[−0.103, −0.058]	**−0.086** (0.006)	[−0.098, −0.074]
Indirect effect	**−0.013** (0.003)	[−0.019, −0.007]	−0.002 (0.001)	[−0.005, 0.001]
Social cohesion				
Total effect	**−0.091** (0.011)	[−0.114, −0.069]	**−0.086** (0.006)	[−0.098, −0.075]
Direct effect	**−0.047** (0.012)	[−0.071, −0.024]	**−0.075** (0.006)	[−0.087, −0.063]
Indirect effect	**−0.044** (0.005)	[−0.055, −0.034]	**−0.012** (0.002)	[−0.016, −0.007]

Note. Bold entries denote the coefficients are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (confidence intervals do not contain zero).

counterparts ($p < .05$ for all the four models). Interestingly, Guanxi was found to be negatively associated with the DV (Model 4: $\beta = -0.10$, $p < .001$), suggesting that individuals with a high level of guanxi in the neighborhood were likely to perceive a lower risk of being victimized than those with a low level of guanxi.

To further explore the mediating effects of police trustworthiness and social cohesion on the linkage between procedural fairness and the two dimensions of the outcome variable, we adopted the bootstrapping approach suggested by Hayes (2017). Specifically, this approach involves the use of a bias-corrected bootstrapping method with 5,000 bootstrap samples to estimate confidence intervals (CI) for model parameters addressing the total, direct, and indirect effects. The results of the mediation analyses are presented in Table 5. As shown in Table 5, the relationship between Procedural Fairness and Emotional Fear of Crime was found to be partially mediated by Police Trustworthiness ($b = -0.013$, CI [−0.019, −0.007]) and Perceived Social Cohesion ($b = -0.044$, CI [−0.055, −0.034]). In addition, Perceived Social Cohesion also had a significantly partial mediating effect on the relationship between Procedural Fairness and Perceived Risk of Victimization ($b = -0.012$, CI [−0.016, −0.007]). It should be noted that, these mediation analyses overall suggest that the direct effects of Procedural Fairness on the outcome variables were larger than its indirect effects, revealing a pronounced influence of procedural fairness perceptions on individuals' fear of crime.

Discussion

This study reflects the first scholarly efforts to examine the influence of procedural fairness on fear of crime. Using a random sample of over 2,200 Chinese urban residents, this study extended this enquiry to the context of China and found that citizens' perceptions of fair treatment by the police did exert a salient influence on both emotional and cognitive dimensions of fear of crime. The findings of this study demonstrate broad consequences of procedural fairness that go beyond its impact on police legitimacy and compliance.

As the results suggest, procedural fairness has a salient influence on the two dimensions of fear of crime. This finding reveals that the implication of procedural fairness is broad and profound, in that it not only encourages citizens to cooperate with police and defer to the law (a beneficial impact on the relations *between* the police and the community, see Jackson et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2014; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), but also plays a key role in shaping citizens' sense of safety and their perceptions of the neighborhood environment. Procedural fairness judgment, hence, shows its meaningful social impact *within* the community. The finding essentially points to a new direction of research on the procedural justice model, with a focus on the extended consequences of normative considerations of procedural justice on community-safety-related outcomes, including residents' feelings about crime and safety. Certainly, this new line of research should involve efforts to explore the mechanism by which procedural fairness influences these outcomes.

As mentioned previously, reasonably procedural justice may affect fear of crime because of its positive effect on trust in police and social cohesion, both of which have well-established link to citizens' feelings of safety. However, our data demonstrate that police trustworthiness and perceived neighborhood cohesion only partially mediate the relationship between procedural fairness and certain dimensions of fear of crime, suggesting that procedural fairness' influence on fear of crime is pronounced and largely independent. As scholars have noted, the police are viewed by citizens as representatives of law and order, and there have been prevailing "structures of feeling" that the police "figure as central to the production and reproduction of order and security" (Loader, 1997, p. 3). Jackson et al. (2012, p. 8) further noted that the police are essentially the "physical embodiment of social control activities." As such, people would naturally develop a positive sense of neighborhood safety when they see "good cops" and good policing, manifested by officers treating citizens with fairness and dignity, and accordingly have less fear of crime.

This study also confirms the findings of prior research demonstrating that fear of crime was shaped by neighborhood contextual factors such as social cohesion, local ties (the related measure in this study is guanxi), neighborhood disorder, and public control. As scholars have reasoned, social cohesion and local ties foster mutual trust among residents of a community and thus reduce their fear of crime (Jackson, 2004). Conversely, social and physical disorder, as an element associated with neighborhood disadvantages, weakens neighborhood ties and trust, and reduces informal social control, which consequently increases fear of crime (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). Notably, the results demonstrate a positive linkage between police presence and fear of crime, a finding that is in line with the argument that police presence may send a message that crime has increased in the neighborhood, thus increasing fear of crime (Hinkle & Weisburd, 2008). Notwithstanding the mixed results obtained from previous research regarding the effects of victimization experience (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981), our data suggest that prior victimization is positively associated with fear of crime. This finding makes intuitive sense in that previous victimization may develop the belief on the part of individuals that they are at greater risk of becoming victims in the future. One direct measure of vulnerability—self-defense capability—was found to have a negative influence on emotional fear of crime. This finding is in line with those obtained from two related studies examining the dynamics of fear of crime in Chinese societies (Liu et al., 2009; Zhang et al., 2009), and echoes the common findings in Western studies (Baumer, 1985; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981).

Policy Implications

This study demonstrates the critical role of procedural fairness judgment on fear of crime, a finding that has important policy implications. The finding suggests that fear reduction programs and policies should include implementing procedural justice by the police. That is, the police could be more effective in improving feelings of safety in the community if they act fairly in dealing with community residents. To promote procedural justice, the police should treat citizens with dignity and respect, convey trustworthy motives, be neutral and transparent in decision making, and whenever appropriate, allow citizens to voice their concerns prior to making decisions that will affect them. Indeed, police use of procedural justice is of high relevance to the Chinese policing, given that China is an authoritarian state in which the police are empowered with excessive authorities and tend to rely upon coercion and repression in their interactions with the public (Sun et al., 2018). The results of this study suggest that a shift to the procedural justice model of policing likely generates fear reduction benefits within the community.

Additionally, considering the important influence of neighborhood dynamics such as social cohesion and local social ties on public fear of crime, Chinese police are suggested to continue their efforts to promote neighborhood cohesion and informal social control through active engagement with community residents' committees and other neighborhood-based groups. Given the existence of a delicate social control network in China's urban neighborhoods that incorporates such social institutions as families, schools, neighborhood groups, and the police (Zhang et al., 2007), Chinese police can leverage additional support from this network to shape community life and neighborhood conditions.

Limitations

As with all research, it is worth noting the limitations of this research. First, although this study used a large random sample, the data were collected from a single city in southeast China, a region with better social and economic conditions than the rest of China. Given the substantial regional differences in levels of social and economic development and culture in China, future research is suggested to collect data from other regions such as the west, middle, and northeast of China, and examine the impact of procedural fairness and citizens' feelings of safety/fear of crime. Second, the data used in this study were cross-sectional in nature, not allowing a causal inference. Future research is suggested to utilize longitudinal data to examine this issue in order to determine the causal relationship between procedural fairness and fear of crime. In addition, given the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on police behaviors and the interactions between the police and public, further research using data covering the pandemic period is needed to explore if the findings of this study could be replicated in the new pandemic context.

Conclusion

Based on a large sample of over 2,200 Chinese urban residents, this study revealed the salient influence of procedural fairness on fear of crime. This finding suggests the consequences of procedural fairness are broad and profound, extending beyond its implications for legitimacy and compliance. As a first attempt to examine the relationship between procedural fairness and the two dimensions of fear—cognitive fear and emotion-based fear—this study contributes to the literature by opening a new direction for procedural justice research, that is, a direction focusing on broader consequences of procedural justice for citizens' feelings of safety. Given that fear of crime is a common public concern across countries and has detrimental impact for both

individuals and communities (e.g., damaging individuals' psychological well-being, eroding collective trust and cohesion; see Jackson & Stanford, 2009), the findings of this study demonstrate a potential effective way to lower public fear of crime—through police officers' procedurally just treatment of citizens.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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