

# Putting the “Social” Back in Legal Socialization: Procedural Justice, Legitimacy, and Cynicism in Legal and Nonlegal Authorities

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Traditionally, legal socialization theory and research has been dominated by a cognitive developmental approach. However, more recent work (e.g., [Fagan & Tyler, 2005](#)) has used procedural justice to explain the legal socialization process. This article presents 2 studies that expand this approach by testing a procedural justice model of legal socialization in terms of legal and nonlegal authority. In Study 1, participants completed surveys assessing the degree to which they perceived 3 authorities (police officers, parents, and teachers) as procedurally fair, the degree to which they perceived the authorities as legitimate, how cynical they were about laws, and the extent of their rule violation during the past 6 months. Across all 3 authorities, legitimacy and legal cynicism mediated the relation between procedural justice and rule violation. Study 2 examined the model with the same 3 authority types using experimental methods. Participants read 3 scenarios describing an interaction between an adolescent and an authority figure where a rule is enforced. Within each scenario, we manipulated whether the adolescent had a voice and whether the authority enforced the rule impartially. After reading each scenario, participants rated the authority's legitimacy, their cynicism toward the authority's rule, and the likelihood they would violate the rule. Again, legitimacy and rule cynicism mediated the relation between impartiality, voice, and rule violation. In addition, impartiality had a stronger effect in the parent and teacher scenarios, whereas voice had a stronger effect in the police scenario. Results are discussed in terms of expanding legal socialization to nonlegal contexts and applying legal socialization research to prevention and intervention strategies.

**Keywords:** legal socialization, procedural justice, legitimacy, authority, delinquency

Efforts to explain and reduce rule-violating behavior would benefit from research examining legal socialization, the process by which individuals develop their understanding of laws or rules within society, the institutions that create those laws or rules, and the people within those institutions that enforce the laws or rules ([Hogan & Mills, 1976](#); [Tapp & Levine, 1974](#)). This socialization process, ultimately, affects individuals' decisions to either violate or obey rules. Past legal socialization scholars have emphasized the role of cognitive developmental factors in explaining the legal socialization process ([Cohn, Bucolo, Rebellon, & Van Gundy, 2010](#); [Cohn & White, 1990](#)). However, more recently scholars have argued that legal socialization is primarily driven by fair, procedurally just, social interactions with legal authorities ([Fagan & Piquero, 2007](#); [Fagan & Tyler, 2005](#); [Piquero et al., 2005](#)), rather than people's reasoning ability that forms the basis of the cognitive developmental approach.

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Despite this work, more is needed to better understand the role of procedural justice in legal socialization. For instance, there needs to be more work in nonlegal domains, especially in those areas (e.g., parents and teachers) most important to adolescence, a critical period for legal socialization ([Tapp & Levine, 1974](#)). To date, work specifically examining procedural justice's influence on legal socialization has been restricted to the legal system (e.g., [Fagan & Tyler, 2005](#)). Although there has been research on procedural justice in nonlegal contexts more generally, it has focused on adult populations or domains (e.g., [Folger & Konovsky, 1989](#)) or has not been aimed at understanding legal socialization ([Fondacaro, Jackson, & Luescher, 2002](#)). In addition, the few researchers that have examined the role of procedural justice on adolescent legal socialization ([Piquero et al., 2005](#)) typically used participants processed by the legal system. By definition these individuals have different experiences with legal authorities than those not being processed. The goal of this article was to address these gaps in two studies testing a procedural justice model of legal socialization in terms of three distinct authority figures: police, parents, and teachers.

## Conceptualizing Legal Socialization

In her pioneering work, [Tapp \(1976, 1991; Tapp & Levine, 1974\)](#) identified two important processes that occur during legal socialization. The first involves the internalization of the social norms in society that inhibit behavior and form the basis of the legal system in the form of laws. In internalizing the norms that underlie those laws, the individual develops their sense of right and

wrong. The second is the development of positive orientations toward legal authority. Authority figures are the lynchpin of legal socialization as they come into direct contact with individuals and facilitate legal socialization through responsible rule enforcement. When individuals have a positive orientation toward authorities, they are more receptive to these efforts. It is the interplay of these two processes that form the backbone of legal socialization.

Legal socialization scholars have mostly focused on how individuals come to understand laws, the legal system, and criminal behavior, hence the name *legal* socialization. However, it is important to note that law-related norms are encoded within the rules of a multitude of different social institutions, each featuring their own socializing agents (e.g., the family and parents) (Levine & Tapp, 1977; Tapp & Levine, 1974). In this regard, individuals acquire their notions about laws, rules, and authorities from a number of “extralegal” sources (Tapp, 1991). For example, parents create family rules for their children and teachers have standards that students must follow at school. In light of this, it is essential to recognize that the way in which individuals interface with the legal system is only a piece of the legal socialization process. Individuals develop their understanding of rules and rule systems in a dynamic process incorporating information from a variety of areas throughout their lives.

### Procedural Justice Model of Legal Socialization

Theoretically, legal socialization has been dominated by a cognitive developmental approach (Cohn et al., 2010, 2012; Cohn & White, 1990; Tapp & Levine, 1974). From this perspective, individuals develop increasingly more complex cognitive abilities as they mature (i.e., legal reasoning). The development of cognitive ability is the primary driver of legal socialization because it shapes the perception and interpretation of information from the legal world. Views about laws or norms and legal authorities are determined by the complexity of one’s reasoning capacity (Tapp & Levine, 1974). However, more recent scholars have taken a fundamentally different approach by focusing on interactions with legal authorities as opposed to the development of cognitive ability (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et al., 2005). Building on decades of organizational (e.g., Folger & Konovsky, 1989) and social psychological research (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988), they emphasize a model in which the nature of the interactions between individuals and legal authorities are responsible for the internalization of law-related norms and the development of positive orientations toward authority. More specifically, they argue that procedurally just behavior on the part of legal authorities leads individuals to believe in the legitimacy of those authorities and to be less cynical about laws. In turn, legitimacy and cynicism influence individuals’ rule violation.

Procedural justice is the perception that the processes used to make and enforce a decision or rule are fair and just (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Past research has shown it to be a major factor in developing individuals’ understanding of rules and rule violation (Tyler, 2006b). When authorities enforce rules or make decisions in a fair manner, people are more likely to show support for and cooperate with them (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003) and are more likely to obey their rules (Sherman, 1993). Procedural justice is also a primary predictor of whether individuals will perceive authorities as legitimate (see Tyler, 2006a, 2006b for

review) and be cynical about rules and laws (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Sherman, 1993).

Legitimacy is a multifaceted concept that can generally be defined as a psychological property of an authority or institution that leads individuals to believe it is appropriate and proper (Tyler, 2006a). When a person is perceived as a legitimate authority, people feel that person is supposed to be in a position of power and, by extension, feel it is their duty or obligation to obey the authority’s rules. Legitimacy has two major components: the extent to which people trust an authority and their feelings of being obligated to obey the authority’s directives (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Legitimacy is an important part of the legal socialization process, because it directly influences how individuals view legal actors and institutions. For example, citizens who perceive the police as legitimate are more likely to support police policy, be satisfied with police interactions, and notify the police when a crime is committed. More importantly, legitimacy has a direct influence on individuals’ rule violation (Tyler, 2006b).

Legal cynicism is built on Durkheim’s (1897/1997) conception of anomie. Although it is highly related to legitimacy in that the two invariably work in tandem (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011), the procedural justice model of legal socialization argues that legal cynicism is a theoretically distinct construct. Whereas legitimacy has been conceptualized in terms of one’s trust and obligation toward an authority figure or institution, legal cynicism refers to an individual’s attitudes toward the social norms underlying laws (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). When individuals are cynical toward laws or rules, they do not accept the social norms that give rise to them nor do they consider the laws or rules binding in their everyday lives (Kapsis, 1978). As a result, people feel that acting in ways that are outside of or contrary to the law is not only reasonable, but appropriate behavior (Piquero et al., 2005). In other words, legal cynicism is focused on one’s internalization of law-related norms; whereas legitimacy is focused on one’s orientation toward authority figures. This distinction can also be seen in the way that the two constructs have been measured with the former utilizing items assessing attitudes toward the normative basis of laws and the latter assessing attitudes toward legal actors specifically (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Piquero et al., 2005). Although research examining the relation between cynicism and procedural justice is relatively sparse in comparison to procedural justice and legitimacy, the evidence indicates that the two are positively related (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Sherman, 1993).

### Gaps in the Procedural Justice Model of Legal Socialization

The procedural justice model of legal socialization draws from a large literature of past research in organizational, legal, and social psychology. However, in terms of its application to the legal socialization literature, there continue to be gaps that must be addressed to further validate the model as a viable alternative to the cognitive developmental approach that has dominated legal socialization theory. Addressing these gaps will lead to a more robust and expansive perspective on legal socialization that accounts for both cognitive developmental (e.g., legal reasoning) and social factors (e.g., authority interactions).

Generally, there needs to be more procedural justice research within younger populations. The majority of past work is based on samples of adults and college undergraduates. As Fagan and Tyler (2005) noted, it is widely recognized that adult law-related attitudes and behaviors have their origins in childhood and adolescence, but researchers have largely failed to examine how procedural justice during that time shapes such attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, the little work that has focused on younger populations usually only examines legal authorities (e.g., Hinds, 2007). This has led to a call for more procedural justice research on younger populations in terms of nonlegal authorities like parents and school administrators (Birckhead, 2009). However, the little research that has examined procedural justice in nonlegal contexts in younger populations (e.g., Fondacaro et al., 2002) has not examined how fair interactions influence the legal socialization process via the internalization of law-related norms (cynicism) and attitudes toward authority (legitimacy).

The lack of research examining the relation between procedural justice, legitimacy, and cynicism in nonlegal contexts is especially problematic for the field of legal socialization. Since Tapp and Levine's (1974) seminal article, it has been theorized that legal socialization begins long before individuals actually encounter the legal system via their experiences with nonlegal authorities. In particular, they identified the home and school as two of the most important environments that shape legal socialization outside of the legal system itself. However, researchers have almost exclusively focused on experiences within the legal system, while failing to assess the influence of nonlegal environments. To be sure, some aspects of the procedural justice model described above (e.g., the link between procedural justice and legitimacy or between legitimacy and rule violation) are well established in a variety of areas (Darling et al., 2008; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Trinkner et al., 2012); however, others (e.g., the link between procedural justice and cynicism or between cynicism and rule violation) are not well established outside the legal system, especially within younger populations. Furthermore, there are no studies that simultaneously examine both legitimacy and cynicism in nonlegal contexts. This is a problem given that the internalization of law-related norms and the development of positive orientations toward authority are primary processes of legal socialization that must be accounted for in any theoretical model (Hogan & Mills, 1976; Tapp & Levine, 1974).

In addition, most of the work examining the role of procedural justice in the legal socialization process in younger populations is based primarily on a longitudinal study of serious adolescent offenders being processed by the criminal justice system (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Piquero et al., 2005). Although it is important to study adjudicated adolescents because they have direct contact with the system, such work should not be a substitute for research with community samples. By definition, adjudicated adolescents are different from nonadjudicated adolescents because, for whatever reason, they have violated some law and are being punished. The majority of adolescents navigate their teenage years without having to appear in court for criminal activity, although they may break some rules (Moffitt, 1993). Thus, by the nature of their experiences, adjudicated adolescents have had fundamentally different interactions with legal authorities and institutions compared with nonadjudicated adolescents. By using an adjudicated adolescent sample to test the procedural justice model, the results poten-

tially may not generalize to nonadjudicated adolescents because of these different experiences.

## Study 1

Study 1 tested the procedural justice model of legal socialization in legal and nonlegal authorities using a community sample of adolescents and young adults. Participants completed measures of procedural justice and legitimacy for parents, police officers, and teachers. Their cynicism toward law-related norms and their delinquent behavior in the previous 6 months were also assessed. We hypothesized that legitimacy and cynicism would mediate the relation between procedural justice and rule violation across all three authority types. More specifically, procedural justice would be positively associated with legitimacy and negatively associated with cynicism. Legitimacy would be negatively associated with rule violation, while cynicism would be positively associated.

## Method

**Participants.** Data come from two cohorts of individuals participating in the New Hampshire Youth Study (NHYS; see Cohn et al., 2010). We used the 2011–2012 collection period because this was the first phase that included measures of procedural justice. The younger cohort consisted of 322 participants in 11th grade ( $M_{age} = 16.39$ ,  $SD = .52$ ). This cohort was mostly female ( $n = 191$ , 59.3%) and White ( $n = 276$ , 86%). The older cohort included 259 participants two years removed from high school ( $M_{age} = 19.24$ ,  $SD = .53$ ). This cohort was mostly female ( $n = 172$ , 66.4%) and White ( $n = 226$ , 87%). Participants received gift certificates for participating.

### Measures

**Demographics.** Participants were asked to report their sex (0 = female, 1 = male), age, and race. In addition, they reported both parents' educational background (1 = *Less than high school*; 6 = *Professional/Graduate Degree*), how much money they believed their family had (1 = *Very little money available*; 5 = *Lots of money available*), how satisfied they were with their family's financial situation (1 = *Not very satisfied*; 5 = *Very satisfied*), and whether they were ever hungry because their family could not afford food (1 = *Not true at all*; 5 = *Very true*). The last item was reverse coded. The responses to these five items were then standardized and averaged to create a measure of socioeconomic status (SES) with higher scores indicating higher SES.

**Procedural justice.** Scales were included for each authority type to measure participants' judgments of fair treatment and decision making (e.g., *"The police in your neighborhood are honest and ethical when dealing with you."*). Ten items were selected from prior literature (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Moorman, 1991) and reworded to reflect police, parents, and teachers. Participants rated their agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged with the higher scores indicating greater perceptions of procedurally fair treatment (Parents:  $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = .87$ ,  $\alpha = .96$ ; Teachers:  $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = .75$ ,  $\alpha = .96$ ; Police:  $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = .85$ ,  $\alpha = .97$ ).

**Legitimacy.** Scales were included for each authority type that measured participants' trust in and obligation to obey each authority figure (e.g., *"You should do what the police tell you to do even*

when you disagree with their decisions.”). The parental legitimacy scale was taken from Trinkner et al. (2012). These 10 items were then reworded for teachers and police. Participants rated their agreement on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 4 = *Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged with higher scores indicating higher legitimacy (Parents:  $M = 2.87$ ,  $SD = .46$ ,  $\alpha = .80$ ; Teachers:  $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = .40$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ; Police:  $M = 2.85$ ,  $SD = .44$ ,  $\alpha = .78$ ).

**Cynicism.** We used a measure of general legal cynicism (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998) because the NHYS does not contain measures of authority specific rule cynicism. This measure assessed participants’ cynical beliefs about laws, rules, and social norms in general, rather than any specific authority (e.g., “*Laws were made to be broken*.”). Respondents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged with higher scores indicating more cynicism ( $M = 2.48$ ,  $SD = .76$ ,  $\alpha = .74$ ).

**Rule-violating behavior.** Participants reported how many times in the past 6 months they engaged in 23 specific behaviors from three areas: property offenses (e.g., “. . . taken something from a store without paying for it?”), violent offenses (e.g., “. . . hit or seriously threatened to hit someone?”), and substance use (e.g., “. . . used marijuana (pot)?”). Responses were first summed to provide a measure of overall frequency of offending. However, the distribution of scores on this frequency measure of rule-violating behavior (RVB) was nonnormal and highly skewed (Skewness = 4.32). To reduce this skewness, we followed prior work (see Trinkner et al., 2012, for full discussion) and recoded each item into “yes” (1) and “no” (0). Participants’ recoded responses were then summed to create a variety measure of RVB. Although this procedure did not eliminate the skew problem, it did alleviate it to some extent (Skewness = 2.73).

**Procedure.** Data collection for this phase of the NHYS began at the end of October, 2011 and continued until July, 2012. Participants were contacted via e-mail with a request to participate and a link to the questionnaire online. Those who did not have an e-mail address (or did not respond to e-mail requests) were sent a letter via postal mail. There were no time restrictions on completing the survey. Participants were allowed to skip and go back to previous questions to change their responses. However, once responses were submitted, they could not change them. After submission, participants were taken to a separate Web site to provide contact information. Those who completed the survey by December were mailed a \$30 gift certificate to a national bookstore or online shopping Web site; after that they received a \$20 gift certificate.

Some participants ( $n = 121$ ) completed paper-and-pencil versions of the survey if they were unable to complete the online version. For students still in high school, researchers went to their schools to administer the questionnaires. A full description of collection procedures is discussed in Cohn et al. (2010). Students out of high school and attending college at the University of New Hampshire were asked to come to the laboratory to complete the questionnaire following a similar procedure. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess if there were differences on the primary variables of interest (procedural justice, legitimacy, legal cynicism, and RVB) as a function of data type (0 = paper-and-pencil; 1 = online). Data type significantly influenced legal cynicism,  $F(1, 579) = 4.23$ ,  $p < .05$  and RVB,  $F(1,$

579) = 11.13,  $p < .01$ . All other variables were not significantly different,  $F$ s(1, 579) = .16–2.75,  $ns$ . Participants that completed paper-and-pencil versions of the questionnaire had higher legal cynicism ( $M = 2.61$ ,  $SD = .68$ ) and reported more RVB ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 2.70$ ) than students who completed the questionnaire online ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = .78$ ;  $M = 1.85$ ,  $SD = 2.39$ ). These differences were controlled for in the analyses described below whenever necessary.

**Analytic Strategy.** Structural equation modeling was used to test the procedural justice model of legal socialization for each authority figure. Because RVB was a positively skewed count variable, we used weighted-least-squares estimation, rather than standard maximum likelihood (see Long, 1997). Following prior work (Rebellon, 2002; Trinkner et al., 2012), a categorical variable was created for RVB where data from any individuals who reported engaging in 10 or more behaviors were collapsed into a single category (1.3% of the entire sample) and all other responses were treated as their own category (i.e., 0 behaviors, 1 behavior, 2 behaviors, etc.).

Similar models were specified for each authority type using AMOS (Arbuckle, 2007). We began by first specifying the procedural justice model of legal socialization where procedural justice was an exogenous observed variable. Legitimacy, legal cynicism, and RVB were added as endogenous observed variables with legitimacy and cynicism acting as mediators between procedural justice and RVB. We controlled for the effects of age, sex, and SES on RVB, as well as the influence of data type on legal cynicism and RVB. A path was also added from age to legitimacy (Darling et al., 2008; Fagan & Tyler, 2005). AMOS calculated the indirect effect of the mediated model using bootstrapping (3,000 bootstrap samples with a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval). AMOS was also set to provide standardized and unstandardized estimates of path coefficients, and the squared-multiple correlation for each endogenous variable. Finally, we examined whether the model varied across cohorts following the procedures outlined by Denis (2010). To do this, a multigroup analysis was performed for each authority figure in which critical ratio  $z$  tests were used to compare the primary paths of interest (those specified by the procedural justice model of legal socialization) between the younger and older cohorts. In these models, age was dropped as a control variable. Chi-square tests were also performed to assess if the multigroup model provided a better fit to the data than the overall model.

## Results

**Police authority.** The initial model did not fit the data well,  $\chi^2(7) = 52.63$ ,  $p < .001$ , Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) = .95, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = .82, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .83, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .11. We were perplexed by the poor fit because the procedural justice model of legal socialization has been supported in terms of police authority by multiple studies. However, those studies typically focused on adjudicated adolescents, which may have explained the discrepancy. We wanted to assess if there was another reason for the poor fit. An examination of modification indices suggested that model fit could be improved by including paths from SES to both legitimacy and legal cynicism. Given the amount of research showing that SES influences the nature of

police-citizen contact (e.g., Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2007), we were confident that including such paths would not be taking advantage of chance variation, but rather were reflective of real associations that should have been taken into account initially. After including these paths, the model,  $\chi^2(5) = 25.81, p < .001$ , AGFI = .96, NFI = .91, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .08, had a significantly better fit,  $\chi^2(2) = 25.81, p < .05$ .

We next examined if this model varied between the two cohorts. This model maintained an adequate fit to the data,  $\chi^2(8) = 30.75, p < .001$ , AGFI = .95, NFI = .87, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .07, but was not significantly different,  $\chi^2(3) = 4.94, ns$ . However, there were significant differences in the parameter estimates between the younger and older cohort models. More specifically, the path from procedural justice to legitimacy was significantly stronger ( $z = -2.00, p < .05$ ) in the younger cohort ( $b = .35$ ) than the older cohort ( $b = .27$ ). In addition, procedural justice was a stronger predictor of RVB ( $z = 2.30, p < .05$ ) for the younger cohort ( $b = -.70$ ) than the older cohort ( $b = -.01$ ). This second model was retained (see Table 1) and interpreted given that it identified important differences between the cohorts without reducing overall model fit.

**Younger cohort.** The younger cohort model accounted for 50% of the variance in police legitimacy. The more participants perceived that police officers behave in a fair manner, the more likely they were to view police as legitimate ( $\beta = .63, p < .001$ ). The model accounted for 12% of the variance in legal cynicism. The more the younger participants believed that the police behave in a procedurally fair manner, the less likely they were to be cynical about rules and laws ( $\beta = -.26, p < .001$ ). Finally, 26%

of the variance in rule violation was accounted for by the model. The more individuals perceived that police officers were procedurally fair, the less RVB they reported ( $\beta = -.23, p < .01$ ). However, neither legitimacy ( $\beta = -.13, p = .08$ ) nor cynicism ( $\beta = .13, p = .06$ ) were significant predictors, although both were in the hypothesized direction and close to significance. The final younger cohort model is shown in Figure 1. For sake of parsimony, the figure only shows the relations among the primary variables of interest and omits error terms. As predicted, police procedural justice was associated with higher perceptions of police legitimacy and lower levels of cynicism in addition to lower rule violation. However, legitimacy and cynicism were only marginally associated with RVB. Despite these trends, however, procedural justice still had a significant indirect effect on RVB ( $\beta = -.12, SE = .05, p < .05, 95\% CI: -.21 < \beta < -.01$ ) via its influence on legitimacy and cynicism.

**Older cohort.** In terms of the older cohort, the model accounted for 40% of the variance in police legitimacy. Again, the more participants in the older cohort perceived that police officers behaved in a fair manner, the more likely they viewed the police as legitimate ( $\beta = .62, p < .001$ ). The model also accounted for 14% of the variance in legal cynicism. The more the older participants believed police officers were procedurally fair, the less likely they were to be cynical about rules and laws ( $\beta = -.29, p < .001$ ). Finally, 15% of the variance in RVB was accounted for by the model. Unlike the younger cohort model, procedural justice was not a significant predictor. However, the more participants perceived police officers as legitimate authorities, the less likely they were to report engaging in RVB ( $\beta = .29, p < .001$ ). On the

Table 1

Study 1 SEM Parameter Estimates Testing the Procedural Justice Model of Legal Socialization Across Three Authority Figures

	Police																
	Younger cohort				Older cohort				Parents				Teachers				
	$\beta$	$b$	SE	SMR	$\beta$	$b$	SE	SMR	$\beta$	$b$	SE	SMR	$\beta$	$b$	SE	SMR	
Predicting legitimacy				.50				.40				.52				.41	
Procedural justice	.63***	.27	.03		.62***	.27	.03		.72***	.38	.02		.65***	.34	.02		
SES	.23***	.04	.03		.08	.04	.03		—	—	—		—	—	—		
Age	—	—	—		—	—	—		-.18***	-.06	.01		-.09**	-.02	.01		
Predicting legal cynicism				.12				.14				.12				.09	
Procedural justice	-.26***	-.24	.06		-.29***	-.23	.06		-.33***	-.28	.04		-.28***	-.28	.05		
Data type	-.07	-.11	.09		-.03	-.06	.14		-.07	-.13	.07		-.09*	-.17	.07		
SES	-.16**	-.19	.07		-.22***	-.20	.06		—	—	—		—	—	—		
Predicting RVB				.26				.15				.23				.19	
Procedural justice	-.23**	-.70	.23		-.002	-.01	.19		-.03	-.07	.20		-.10	-.31	.21		
Data type	-.19***	-1.03	.30		-.07	-.52	.39		-.14***	-.82	.24		-.15***	-.87	.25		
Sex	.15**	.81	.27		.04	.20	.27		.10**	.51	.20		.12**	.58	.20		
SES	-.13*	-.51	.23		-.03	-.10	.16		-.04	-.14	.15		-.04	-.14	.16		
Age	—	—	—		—	—	—		.14***	.22	.06		.18***	.29	.06		
Legitimacy	-.13†	-.73	.42		.18*	-1.05	.45		-.23***	-1.22	.29		-.10†	-.62	.33		
Cynicism	.13†	.43	.23		.29***	.94	.21		.26***	.86	.17		.26***	.29	.06		
$\chi^2(df)$				30.78 (8) ***					24.85 (7) ***				26.20 (7) ***				
AGFI				.95												.97	
NFI				.87												.91	
CFI				.88												.92	
RMSEA				.07												.07	

Note. SEM = structural equation modeling; SE = standard error; SMR = squared-multiple correlation; RVB = rule-violating behavior; SES = socioeconomic status; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; NFI = Normed Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. sex: 0 = women, 1 = men; data type: 0 = paper-and-pencil, 1 = online.

†  $p < .08$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

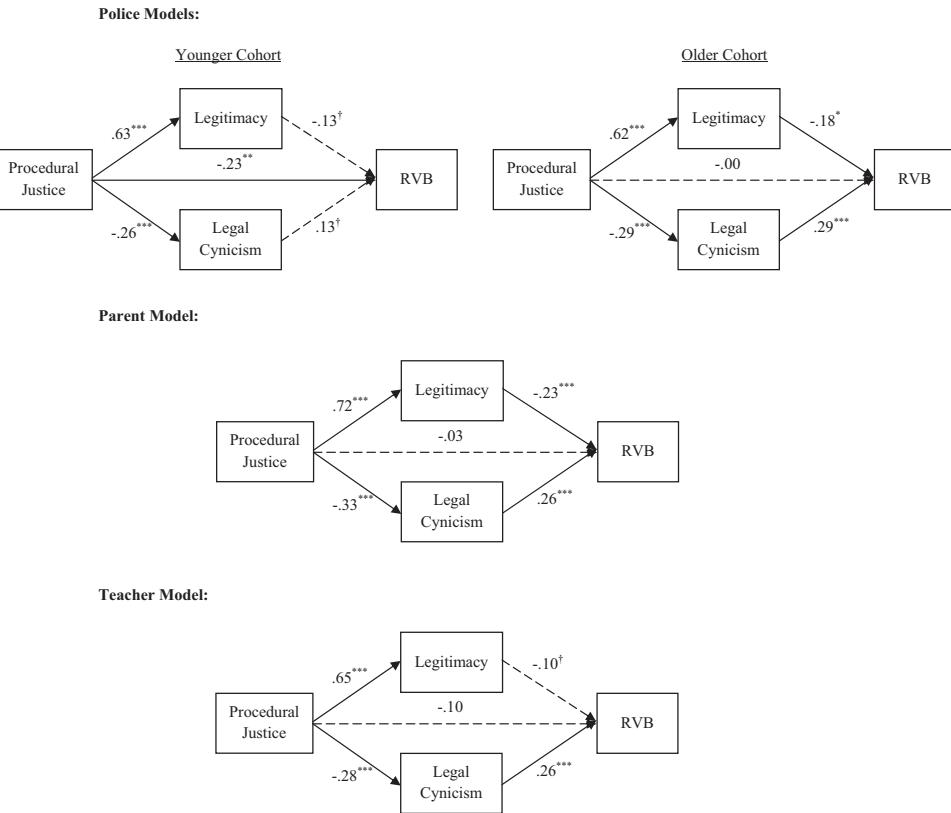


Figure 1. Study 1 structural equation models testing the procedural justice model of legal socialization across three authority figures. Parameter estimates are standardized. Dotted lines indicate paths that are nonsignificant at the .05 level. Error terms, covariances, and control variables withheld to ease presentation. RVB = rule-violating behavior. <sup>†</sup>  $p < .08$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

other hand, the more cynical participants were about rules and laws, the more likely they were to report engaging in RVB ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The final model for the older cohort is presented in Figure 1. As predicted, procedural justice was associated with higher legitimacy and lower cynicism, but was not associated with RVB. In turn, legitimacy was associated with lower engagement in RVB; whereas legal cynicism was associated with higher engagement. Finally, the indirect effect of police procedural justice on RVB ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $SE = .06$ ) via its influence on legitimacy and cynicism was significant (95% CI:  $-.31 < \beta < -.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Parental authority.** A similar path of analysis was followed for parent authority, except that procedural justice and legitimacy reflected participants' perceptions of their parents rather than police officers and there were no paths from SES to legitimacy or cynicism. This model fit the data well,  $\chi^2(7) = 24.85$ ,  $p < .001$ , AGFI = .98, NFI = .93, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07. We next examined if this model varied between the two cohorts. Unlike the analysis of police officers, this model,  $\chi^2(12) = 40.54$ ,  $p < .001$ , AGFI = .96, NFI = .83, CFI = .85, RMSEA = .06, fit the data significantly worse than the prior model,  $\chi^2(5) = 15.66$ ,  $p < .05$ . Moreover, there were no significant differences in path coefficients between the older and younger cohort models ( $zs = -1.45 - 1.88$ , ns). As such, the first model was retained and interpreted (see Table 1).

The model accounted for 52% of the variance in parental legitimacy. The more participants perceived their parents behaving in a procedurally fair manner, the more likely they were to view them as legitimate ( $\beta = .72$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In terms of legal cynicism, the model accounted for 12% of the variance. The more participants perceived their parents behaving in a procedurally fair manner, the less likely they were to be cynical about rules and laws ( $\beta = -.33$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Finally, 23% of the variance in RVB was accounted for by the model. The more participants perceived their parents as legitimate authority figures ( $\beta = -.23$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the less cynical they were ( $\beta = .26$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the less likely they were to violate rules. The final model is shown in Figure 1. As predicted, parental procedural justice was associated with higher parental legitimacy and lower levels of cynicism about laws and rules. In turn, parental legitimacy was associated with lower engagement in RVB; whereas legal cynicism was associated with higher engagement. Finally, the indirect effect of procedural justice on RVB ( $\beta = -.25$ ,  $SE = .05$ ) via its influence on legitimacy and cynicism was significant (95% CI:  $-.34 < \beta < -.16$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Teacher authority.** The model tested was identical to the parent model except procedural justice and legitimacy reflected perceptions of teachers. This model fit the data well,  $\chi^2(7) = 26.20$ ,  $p < .001$ , AGFI = .97, NFI = .91, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .07. We next examined if the model differed between the two cohorts. This model had a worse fit,  $\chi^2(12) = 30.75$ ,  $p < .001$ ,

AGFI = .97, NFI = .84, CFI = .87, RMSEA = .05, but not significantly worse,  $\chi^2(5) = 4.55$ , ns. However, there were no significant differences in parameter estimates between the older and younger models,  $z_s = -.05$ –1.82, ns. As a result, the second model was retained and interpreted (see Table 1).

The model accounted for 41% of the variance in teacher legitimacy. The more participants perceived that teachers behaved in a fair manner, the more likely participants viewed them as legitimate ( $\beta = .65$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The model also accounted for 9% of the variance in legal cynicism. The more participants perceived teachers as procedurally fair, the lower their cynicism ( $\beta = -.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Finally, 19% of the variance in RVB was accounted for by the model. The more cynical participants were about laws and rules, the more likely they were to engage in RVB ( $\beta = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Alternatively, the more participants perceived teachers as legitimate, the less likely they were to report engaging in RVB ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $p = .06$ ). The final teacher model is shown in Figure 1. As predicted, teacher procedural justice was associated with higher teacher legitimacy and lower levels of cynicism about laws and rules. In turn, legitimacy was associated with lower engagement in RVB, whereas legal cynicism was associated with higher engagement. Finally, the indirect effect of teacher procedural justice on RVB ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $SE = .04$ ) via its influence on legitimacy and cynicism was significant (95% CI:  $-.22 < \beta < -.06$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

## Discussion

The results of this study supported the procedural justice model of legal socialization within both legal and nonlegal authorities. Across all authority types, procedural justice predicted higher legitimacy and lower rule cynicism. In turn, perceiving authorities as legitimate was associated with less rule violation, whereas being cynical about rules was associated with more rule violation. Finally, both legitimacy and cynicism mediated the relation between procedural justice and rule-violating behavior. The findings support the argument that procedurally fair interactions with authorities, as opposed to the maturation of reasoning abilities (Cohn & White, 1990), play a vital role within the legal socialization process by shaping the development of positive orientations toward authority and the internalization of the social norms underlying laws. The results of Study 1 add to previous literature calling the cognitive developmental approach into question (Piquero et al., 2005). In doing so, it highlights that legal socialization is also driven by the social environment, in particular the state of relations one has with the authority figures within and outside of the legal system.

However, it should be noted that there was a discrepancy between the two cohorts in terms of police authority. In the younger cohort model, procedural justice retained a significant direct effect on RVB. It is likely that this strong direct relation between procedural justice and RVB resulted in the tentative relations between legitimacy, cynicism, and RVB. Legal socialization researchers have argued that over time procedural justice shapes one's orientation toward authorities and the internalization of legal norms (Piquero et al., 2005). Although procedural justice has a direct influence on RVB initially, one's perceptions of legitimacy and cynicism toward rules eventually subsume this effect over time. In this way, procedural justice ultimately leads to the self-regulation of behavior (Tyler, 2009), which is one of the ultimate goals of the

legal socialization process. The model differences between the two cohorts may be capturing this process. Given that the younger cohort was 16 years old on average and not adjudicated, they likely have had little contact with police officers. Thus, they may have been in a stage where procedural justice was still directly influencing RVB. Although legitimacy and cynicism were being shaped by procedural justice, they were not yet at the point where they would eliminate the direct effect of procedural justice. This would also explain why the models did not differ in terms of parent and teacher authority, because both the younger and older cohort likely had plenty of exposure to those authorities already.

Study 1 also addressed limitations within past work applying procedural justice to the field of legal socialization. For instance, the vast majority of the procedural justice literature is based on adult populations (Fagan & Tyler, 2005). For procedural justice to play a central role in legal socialization theory, more work is needed focusing on adolescence, as this is a crucial period in the legal socialization process (Tapp & Levine, 1974). By utilizing a sample of adolescents and young adults, Study 1 adds to the growing body of literature addressing this concern (e.g., Hinds, 2007). In addition, prior researchers have largely failed to examine how the legal socialization process is shaped by nonlegal forces, despite the importance placed on nonlegal environments (Tapp, 1991). Study 1 supported the validity of this importance. Fair interactions with both legal and nonlegal authorities were associated with two processes that are the foundation of legal socialization: the development of positive orientations toward authority and the internalization of law-related norms. Although some parts of the procedural justice model of legal socialization have been supported in different domains (Darling et al., 2008; Gregory & Ripski, 2008; Tyler, 1997), this is not true for all the pieces. Indeed, this is the first study to show that legal cynicism is not only influenced by fair interactions with legal authorities, but by fair interactions with nonlegal authorities as well.

Although this study addressed some of the previous limitations of prior research, it suffered from some limitations of its own. First, it used correlational methods, making it impossible to establish any causal effects. Second, it measured RVB during the previous 6 months, while the measures of procedural justice, legitimacy, and cynicism were assessed at the time of data collection. As a result, RVB may have influenced the attitudes rather than the attitudes influencing RVB. We do not believe this to be the case given prior work linking procedural justice, legitimacy, and legal cynicism to changes in RVB over time (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Trinkner et al., 2012). However, it does highlight the need to use experimental and/or longitudinal methods in future research. Third, this study did not contain legal cynicism measures that were specific to each individual authority. The procedural justice model of legal socialization proposes that the use of fair procedures by an authority will have a direct effect on individuals' cynicism about that authority's rules specifically. This could not be tested here, because the NHYS does not contain measures assessing cynicism of parental and teacher rules.

## Study 2

Study 1 showed that legal socialization was influenced by fair interactions with authorities in both legal and nonlegal environments. Study 2 used experimental methods to further examine how

these interactions shape the legal socialization process. In particular, we wanted to examine potential differences in the way procedural fairness is judged in legal and nonlegal environments and the subsequent effects on legitimacy and cynicism. Making judgments about procedurally fair treatment is a complex process involving multiple criteria (see [Tyler, 2000](#) for review). Four primary criteria consistently emerge across a range of studies: voice, impartiality, respect, and benevolence ([Lind & Tyler, 1988](#); [Tyler, 2000](#)). The primary importance of each when making procedural justice judgments is largely determined by the nature of the situation ([Barrett-Howard & Tyler, 1986](#)). This study focused on voice and impartiality, because their importance varies depending on the relationship between the authority and the individual ([Cohn, White, & Sanders, 2000](#)).

Voice refers to the degree to which people feel they are given an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns during the decision making process ([Tyler, 2000](#)). When individuals feel they get to "have their day in court," they perceive more procedural fairness, even if they know that expressing their opinion will not actually affect the decision being made ([Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990](#)). Impartiality refers to the neutrality of the decision making process ([Lind & Tyler, 1988](#)). People want authority figures to make objective decisions that are not affected by their own personal biases. When individuals feel decisions are made in an unbiased or evenhanded fashion, they are more likely to perceive procedural fairness ([Tyler, 2000](#)).

These procedural justice criteria are not always equally important. Of particular importance is whether individuals expect to have future contact with an authority. In [Thibaut and Walker's \(1975\)](#) groundbreaking research, they emphasized that control over the decisional process was most important. However, they were primarily concerned with situations in which individuals have short-term limited contact with the decision maker (i.e., court litigation). In these cases, having a voice is vital because individuals only have a single opportunity to present their side of the story. People expect an authority to be focused on "serving the client" ([Mashaw, 1983](#)), whereby the authority's decision is tailored to meet the needs of the client. As a result, individuals are highly sensitive to whether they are given an opportunity to express those needs. Moreover, impartiality rests on the ability of an individual to compare their experience with past experiences or the experiences of others ([Tyler, 1988](#)). This ability can be restricted in a single encounter. In these situations, it will be more beneficial to concentrate on features of the experience that do not rely on such comparisons (e.g., voice).

Control over the decision making process through voice is not always the only important facet of procedural fairness ([Tyler, 1989](#)). Instead, individuals will also value other criteria in those situations where they expect repeated contact and group membership is paramount. Establishing or maintaining long-term bonds to the group (symbolized by the authority) is important because group membership is psychologically rewarding ([Tyler, 1994](#)). In these situations, impartiality increases in importance because unbiased decisions and evenhanded treatment signal to individuals that they are part of the group ([Lind & Tyler, 1988](#)). For example, [Tyler \(1989\)](#) showed that people more committed to the group placed significantly more emphasis on the issue of impartiality than people less committed to the group. As he suggested, if people understand that they will not be in a relationship with the

authority in the future, they may be less inclined to focus on certain procedural justice issues like impartiality. Moreover, when people have repeated contact with an authority, they are better able to do the necessary comparisons between current and past experiences. This would also suggest that impartiality will play a stronger role in situations with repeated contact with an authority.

Given that legal socialization is driven by single and repeated contact with authorities ([Tapp, 1991](#)), these differences in judgment criteria must be taken into account for procedural justice to be applied to legal socialization. Some authority figures (e.g., parents and teachers) typically have repeated contact with individuals. One would expect that legal socialization in these situations would be driven more by whether those authorities treat individuals in an unbiased fashion. Conversely, interactions with other types of authorities (e.g., police officers) usually consist of a single encounter. In these cases, one would expect that legal socialization would be driven more by whether the authority gives individuals a voice.

Study 2 tested these expectations using experimental methodology. Participants read a series of scenarios describing interactions between individuals and different authorities (police, parents, and teachers) in which voice and impartiality were manipulated. Participants rated how legitimate the authority was, how cynical they were about a rule, and whether they would violate the rule. We hypothesized that across all authority types, participants who read scenarios with voice would perceive the authorities as more legitimate and be less cynical about their rules than those who read scenarios with no voice. Similarly, participants who read scenarios with impartial behavior would perceive the authorities as more legitimate and be less cynical about their rules than those who read scenarios without impartial behavior. Third, we hypothesized that voice would have a stronger effect on legitimacy and cynicism than impartiality for the police scenario; whereas impartiality would have a stronger effect than voice on legitimacy and cynicism for the parent and teacher scenarios.

## Method

**Participants.** All participants had previously completed the 2011–2012 phase of the NHYS. Thirteen people were removed from all analyses because they incorrectly answered manipulation check questions (see below). Of the remaining participants, 195 were in the younger cohort ( $M_{age} = 16.36$ ,  $SD = .52$ ) and 208 were in the older cohort ( $M_{age} = 19.34$ ,  $SD = .50$ ). The majority of both cohorts were female (younger:  $n = 128$ , 65.6%; older:  $n = 147$ , 70.7%) and White (younger:  $n = 167$ , 85.6%; older:  $n = 184$ , 88.5%). Upon completing the study, participants received a \$20 gift certificate to a national bookstore or an online shopping Web site.

**Design.** The experiment used a 2 (Voice: Yes, No)  $\times$  2 (Impartiality: Yes, No) design. Participants read scenarios about three different authority figures: a parent, a police officer, and a teacher. Each participant was assigned to a single condition so that they received the same manipulations across all three scenarios. For example, a participant received scenarios in which each authority gave the individual a voice, but did not behave impartially. Scenario presentation order was randomized and counterbalanced following a Latin square design.

**Materials.** In all cases, the scenarios (available upon request) described a situation in which an adolescent requests permission to do something that violates an established rule. The authority always denies this request in either a procedurally fair or unfair manner. The rule featured in each scenario was designed to be specific to each authority. This was done to help isolate any effects to the authority, which would not be possible if the same rule was used for all authority figures. For example, if all the scenarios involved a rule about smoking marijuana, it would be impossible to assess if participants' responses in the teacher scenario were because of how the teacher treated the adolescent or because smoking marijuana was an illegal behavior. Additionally, to control for any potential differences in terms of the sex of the authority or adolescent, sex was held constant (i.e., male). This was only done because an examination of sex differences was beyond the scope of this work. The procedural justice variables of voice (yes, no) and impartiality (yes, no) were manipulated within each scenario. Voice was operationalized as whether the adolescent was given the opportunity to explain why he wanted to violate the rule. Impartiality was operationalized as whether the authority had enforced the rule for other people in the adolescent's social group.

In the police scenario, the actor asks an officer for permission to play a concert in a local park, despite a city rule that prohibits it. The police officer either listens attentively (voice) or cuts him off (no voice) and either has not allowed anyone else to play in the park (impartiality) or allowed other teenagers to play because he knew their parents (no impartiality). In the parent scenario, the actor asks his father for permission to go to an out-of-town party, even though his parents have a rule against their children going to such parties. The father either attentively listens to why his son wants to go (voice) or does not let him explain (no voice) and has either stringently enforced the rule with his siblings (impartiality) or played "favorites" and let some of the actor's siblings go to such parties (no impartiality). Finally, in the teacher scenario, the actor asks for permission to work on a research article with another student, even though the teacher has a rule against it. The teacher either listens attentively (voice) or cuts the student off without allowing him to explain (no voice) and either has not allowed any other students to work together (impartiality) or has allowed his favorite students to work together (no impartiality).

### Measures.

**Demographics.** Demographics were identical to those used in Study 1.

**Manipulation checks.** To identify if participants read the scenarios, they were asked questions about the basic plotline of each scenario: what was requested, who requested it, whether the request was denied or granted, and who denied or granted the request.

**Social desirability.** To address participants potentially responding in a socially desirable manner (Eifler, 2010), a measure of impression management was included (Stöber, 2001). It contained 17 true or false items asking individuals if they engaged in socially desirable, but improbable behaviors, or socially undesirable, but probable behaviors. The latter items were reversed coded. Responses were summed with higher scores indicating greater social desirability ( $M = 10.53$ ,  $SD = 3.46$ ,  $\alpha = .75$ ).

**Procedural justice.** For each scenario, three items were developed to assess judgments of whether the authority behaved in a procedurally fair manner (e.g., "Overall, the way the police officer

treated Edward in making his decision was fair."). Respondents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged with higher scores indicating greater procedural justice (Police:  $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ,  $\alpha = .93$ ; Parent:  $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ,  $\alpha = .93$ ; Teacher:  $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ,  $\alpha = .95$ ).

**Legitimacy.** To assess perceptions of legitimacy in each scenario, we used a modified version of the scale used in Study 1. Items were reworded to reflect the context of each scenario (e.g., "Edward should follow the police officer's decision in this situation, even though he may not agree with him."). Respondents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged with higher scores indicating greater legitimacy (Police:  $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = .72$ ,  $\alpha = .91$ ; Parent:  $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = .71$ ,  $\alpha = .93$ ; Teacher:  $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .80$ ,  $\alpha = .94$ ).

**Rule cynicism.** A measure of cynicism toward the authority's rule in each scenario was developed based on Sampson and Bartusch's (1998) definition of legal cynicism. Their scale measures legal cynicism as an individual's sense that laws, rules, and social norms do not apply to him or her. Using this definition as a starting point, five items were developed for each scenario (e.g., "The city rule overly limits personal freedom."). Respondents rated their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*; 5 = *Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged with higher scores indicating greater cynicism (Police:  $M = 2.41$ ,  $SD = .71$ ,  $\alpha = .80$ ; Parent:  $M = 2.30$ ,  $SD = .71$ ,  $\alpha = .84$ ; Teacher:  $M = 2.09$ ,  $SD = .72$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ ). Follow-up exploratory factor analysis (available upon request) indicated that the cynicism measure was distinct and separate from the measure of legitimacy.

**Rule violation.** To assess participants' beliefs about whether the scenario rule should be violated or not, they rated (1 = *Very Unlikely*; 5 = *Very Likely*) the likelihood that they would violate the rule (e.g., "If you were in the same situation as Edward, how likely is it that you would not follow the rule?"). Higher scores indicated a higher likelihood of violating the rule (Police:  $M = 2.01$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ; Parent:  $M = 2.44$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ; Teacher:  $M = 2.14$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ).

**Procedure.** Data collection began in January (2012) and continued until July. Participants were identified after they completed the most recent phase of the NHYS. They were separated into four groups based on cohort and sex and were then randomly assigned to the experimental conditions. Once assigned, they were invited to participate via e-mail and regular mail. These invitations notified them of the \$20 gift certificate, provided them their NHYS identification number, and contained a link to an online experiment that corresponded with their assigned condition. Upon accessing the survey link, participants had as much time as they needed to complete the experiment. They were allowed to skip questions (except for providing an identification number) and could go back to previous pages to change their responses. However, once participants submitted their responses, they could not change them. Completing the experiment took approximately 30 min ( $M = 32.01$ ,  $SD = 11.97$ ). Upon completion, participants were taken to a different Web site where they provided contact information. Gift certificates were mailed to participants.

## Results

### Preliminary analyses.

**Order effects.** To examine if the scenario presentation order affected legitimacy, cynicism, and rule violation, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted for each scenario type with order as the independent variable and legitimacy, cynicism, and rule violation as dependent variables. There were no order effects in the parent scenario, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .97$ ,  $F(15, 1054.94) = .88, ns$ , teacher scenario, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .98$ ,  $F(15, 1054.94) = .47, ns$ , or police scenario, Wilks'  $\Lambda = .95$ ,  $F(15, 1054.94) = 1.31, ns$ .

**Manipulation checks.** After eliminating participants that answered the narrative storyline questions incorrectly, we next examined if the voice and impartiality manipulations had the desired effect. A 2 (Voice: 0 = No, 1 = Yes)  $\times$  2 (Impartiality: 0 = No, 1 = Yes) MANOVA was conducted with procedural justice for each scenario type as the dependent variable (see Table 2). There were multivariate effects for voice, impartiality, and a significant, although weak, interaction between voice and impartiality. Follow-up univariate tests showed that regardless of authority type, participants rated the authority more procedurally fair when the actor was given a voice than when the actor was not given a voice. The authority was also judged to be more procedurally fair when he behaved impartially as opposed to not behaving impartially. However, in the parent scenario there was an interaction between voice and impartiality. Voice had a greater effect on procedural justice in conditions where the authority also behaved impartially (yes voice:  $M = 4.26$ , no voice:  $M = 3.18$ ) compared with conditions where the authority did not behave impartially (yes voice:  $M = 2.51$ , no voice:  $M = 2.05$ ).

**Primary analyses.** Once again structural equation modeling (AMOS; Arbuckle, 2007) was used to test the procedural justice model of legal socialization within each authority scenario. These tests were similar to Study 1; however, maximum likelihood estimation was used because the dependent variable was normally distributed. Critical ratio tests were used to assess if voice and impartiality had differential effects on legitimacy and cynicism, as well as to assess whether the models differed as a function of

cohort. Age was dropped as a control variable when examining cohort differences. We conducted similar analyses for each authority figure. The procedural justice model of legal socialization was specified where voice and impartiality were included as exogenous observed variables. No interaction terms were included because there were no such effects on legitimacy, cynicism, or rule violation in any of the scenarios. Authority specific legitimacy, rule cynicism, and rule violation were added as endogenous observed variables with legitimacy and cynicism acting as mediators between voice, impartiality, and rule violation. We also controlled for the influence of age, sex, and SES on rule violation, as well as for the effects of socially desirable responding on legitimacy, rule cynicism, and rule violation. Once again, a path was added from age to legitimacy in each model. Finally, given that authority specific legitimacy and rule cynicism are highly related (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011), we added a covariance path between their residual terms to account for this correlation.

**Police authority.** The model from the police scenario fit the data well,  $\chi^2(5) = 12.30, p < .05$ , AGFI = .94, NFI = .97, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .06. We next examined if this model varied between the young and older age cohorts. The fit of this model,  $\chi^2(8) = 14.30, ns$ , AGFI = .92, NFI = .96, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .04, was similar to the first model,  $\chi^2(3) = 2.00, ns$ . None of the parameter estimates were significantly different between the cohorts ( $zs = -1.32$ – $1.01$ ); thus, the overall model was retained and interpreted (see Table 3).

The model accounted for 20% of the variance in police legitimacy. Participants who read scenarios when the actor was given a voice perceived the police officer as more legitimate than those who read scenarios in which the actor was not given a voice ( $\beta = .25, p < .001$ ). Participants who read scenarios featuring impartiality also had higher perceptions of legitimacy than those who read scenarios with no impartiality ( $\beta = .20, p < .001$ ). The effect of voice on legitimacy, although larger in magnitude, was not significantly stronger than the effect of impartiality ( $z = -.79, ns$ ). The model accounted for 8% of the variance in terms of rule cynicism. Participants who read scenarios in which the actor was given a voice were more likely to be cynical about the police rule

Table 2  
Study 2 Tests of the Manipulation of Voice and Impartiality on the Perception of Procedural Justice in Each Scenario

	Mean		<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Effect size	
	Yes	No			$\eta^2$	95% CI
Voice						
Parent scenario	2.62	3.39	62.50***	3, 389	.32	.26
Teacher scenario	2.56	3.54	86.74***	1, 391	.18	.13
Police scenario	2.56	3.67	111.71***	1, 391	.22	.16
Impartiality						
Parent scenario	2.56	3.67	125.49***	1, 391	.24	.18
Teacher scenario	2.28	3.72	149.33***	3, 389	.53	.48
Police scenario	2.23	3.87	304.87***	1, 391	.44	.38
Voice $\times$ Impartiality						
Parent scenario	2.65	3.56	318.07***	1, 391	.45	.39
Teacher scenario	2.28	3.72	90.57***	1, 391	.19	.13
Police scenario	2.23	3.87	4.81**	3, 389	.04	.01
Parent scenario			14.24**	1, 391	.04	.01
Teacher scenario			1.52	1, 391	.00	.00
Police scenario			2.39	1, 391	.01	.02

\*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 3

Study 2 SEM Parameter Estimates Testing the Procedural Justice Model of Legal Socialization Across Three Authority Figures

	Authority type											
	Police				Parents				Teachers			
	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	SMR	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	SMR	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	SMR
Predicting legitimacy				.20					.15			.22
Voice	.25***	.36	.07		.12**	.17	.07		.21***	.33	.07	
Impartiality	.20***	.29	.06		.26***	.37	.07		.37***	.58	.07	
Social desirability	.26***	.06	.01		.24***	.05	.01		.20***	.05	.01	
Age	-.16***	-.07	.02		-.03	-.01	.02		.03	.01	.02	
Predicting cynicism				.08					.11			.14
Voice	-.11*	-.16	.07		-.06	-.09	.07		-.15**	-.21	.07	
Impartiality	-.03	-.04	.07		-.24***	-.34	.07		-.29***	-.42	.07	
Social desirability	-.25***	-.05	.01		-.22***	-.05	.01		-.16***	-.03	.01	
Predicting rule violation				.27					.36			.33
Voice	.07	.16	.11		.03	.08	.11		.001	.002	.11	
Impartiality	.02	.04	.11		.09*	.25	.11		-.02	-.04	.12	
Social desirability	-.14**	-.05	.02		-.21***	-.08	.02		-.08	-.03	.02	
Sex	-.06	-.16	.11		-.02	-.06	.12		-.07	-.20	.11	
SES	.01	.01	.08		-.05	-.10	.08		-.10*	-.20	.08	
Age	.05	.04	.03		.06	.05	.03		-.02	.01	.03	
Legitimacy	-.32***	-.54	.09		-.25***	-.48	.10		-.37***	-.59	.08	
Cynicism	.22***	.37	.08		.32***	.60	.10		.23***	.42	.09	
$\chi^2(df)$		12.30 (5)***				15.01 (5)**				23.62 (5)***		
AGFI		.94				.93				.89		
NFI		.97				.97				.95		
CFI		.98				.98				.96		
RMSEA		.06				.07				.09		

Note. SEM = structural equation modeling; *SE* = standard error; SMR = squared-multiple correlation; SES = socioeconomic status; AGFI = Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index; NFI = Normed Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. sex: 0 = women, 1 = men; voice: 0 = no, 1 = yes; impartiality: 0 = no, 1 = yes.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

than participants who read scenarios with no voice ( $\beta = -.11, p < .05$ ); whether the officer behaved impartially had no effect on cynicism ( $\beta = -.03, ns$ ). Despite this difference, voice did not have a significantly stronger effect on cynicism than impartiality ( $z = 1.27, ns$ ). Finally, the model accounted for 27% of the variation in rule violation. The more participants perceived the police officer as a legitimate authority ( $\beta = -.32, p < .001$ ) and the less cynical they were about the rule ( $\beta = .22, p < .001$ ), the less likely they were to report that they would violate the rule.

The final model is shown in Figure 2. Again, the figure only shows the relations among the primary variables of interest; error terms and covariance are not shown either. As predicted, both voice and impartiality caused higher perceptions of police legitimacy. Voice also produced less cynicism, while impartiality had no effect. Legitimacy was associated with lower rule violation, while being cynical of the rule was associated with higher rule violation. Finally, the indirect effect of voice ( $\beta = -.10, SE = .02$ ) on rule violation was significant ( $p < .001, 95\% CI: -.15 < \beta < -.06$ ), as was the case for impartiality ( $\beta = -.07, SE = .02, p < .001, 95\% CI: -.11 < \beta < -.03$ ).

**Parent authority.** A similar analysis was followed for the parent scenario. The initial model fit the data well,  $\chi^2(5) = 15.01, p < .01$ , AGFI = .93, NFI = .97, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .07. Next, we assessed if the model varied between the younger and older cohorts. This model,  $\chi^2(8) = 21.72, p < .01$ , AGFI = .88, NFI = .96, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .07, had a similar fit,  $\chi^2(3) = 6.42, ns$ . Comparisons of the two cohorts revealed that the path from im-

partiality to legitimacy was significantly stronger ( $z = 2.28, p < .05$ ) in the older cohort ( $\beta = .38$ ) than in the younger cohort ( $\beta = .15$ ), although both were significant and in the same direction. None of the other paths were significantly different between the two cohorts ( $zs = -.59\text{--}.72$ ). The initial model was retained (see Table 3) because both models had similar fit and the only difference in parameter estimates had little influence on the overall interpretation of the model.

The model accounted for 15% of the variance in parental legitimacy. Participants who read scenarios with voice perceived the parent as more legitimate than participants who read scenarios with no voice ( $\beta = .12, p < .01$ ). Parental legitimacy was also higher among participants who read scenarios with impartiality compared with those who read scenarios with no impartiality ( $\beta = .26, p < .001$ ). The effect of impartiality on legitimacy was significantly stronger than the effect of voice ( $z = 2.14, p < .05$ ). In terms of rule cynicism, the model accounted for 11% of the variance. Although voice had no effect on cynicism ( $\beta = -.06, ns$ ), participants who read scenarios in which the parent behaved impartially were less cynical about the rule than those who read scenarios without impartiality ( $\beta = -.24, p < .001$ ). As was the case with parental legitimacy, the impartiality effect on rule cynicism was significantly stronger than the voice effect ( $z = -2.66, p < .05$ ). Finally, the model accounted for 36% of the variance in rule violation. The more participants perceived the parent as legitimate ( $\beta = -.25, p < .001$ ) and the less cynical they were ( $\beta =$

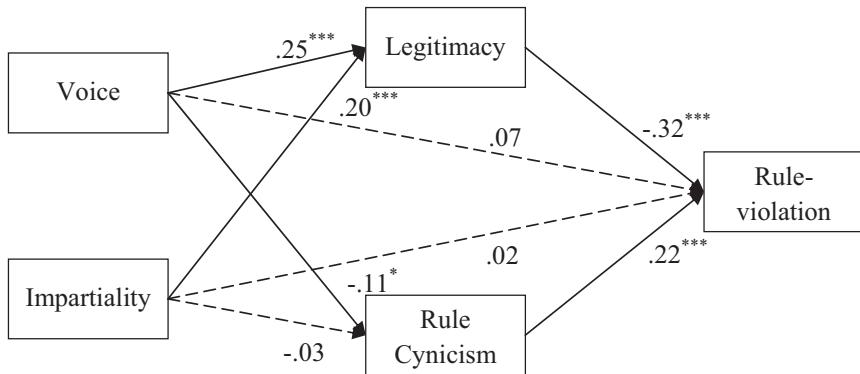
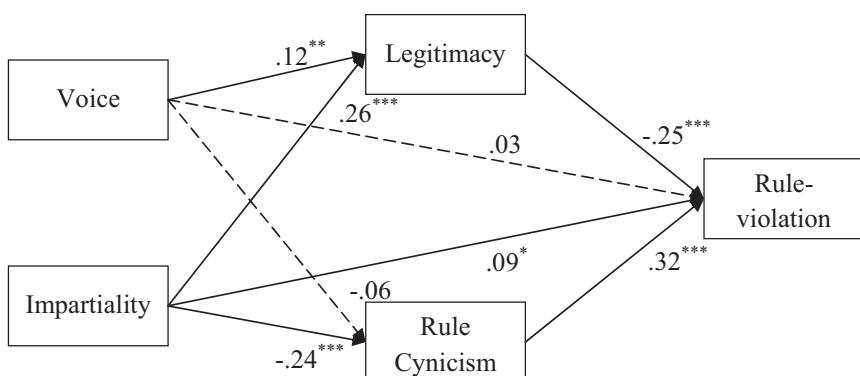
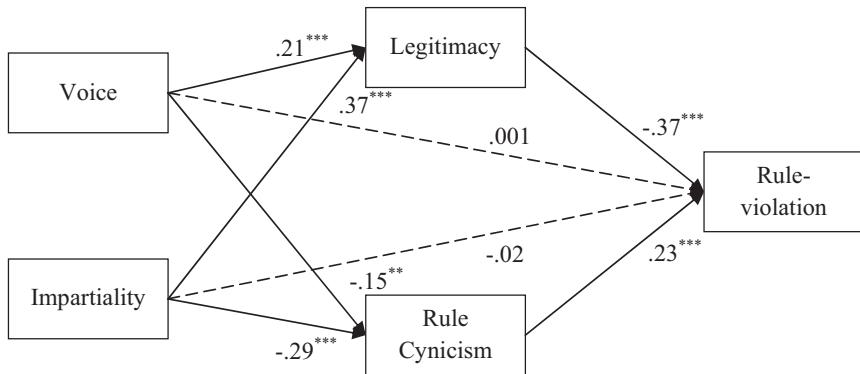
**Police Model:****Parent Model:****Teacher Model:**

Figure 2. Study 2 structural equation models testing the procedural justice model of legal socialization across three authority figures. Parameter estimates are standardized. Dotted lines indicate paths that are nonsignificant at the .05 level. Error terms, covariances, and control variables withheld to ease presentation. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

.32,  $p < .05$ ), the less likely they were to report that they would violate the rule.

The final model is shown in Figure 2. As predicted, both voice and impartiality caused higher perceptions of parental legitimacy. In regards to rule cynicism, impartiality caused more cynicism; whereas voice had no effect. In addition, the effect of impartiality on both legitimacy and rule cynicism was stronger in comparison with the effect of voice. Both parental legitimacy and cynicism predicted rule violation in the expected directions. Finally, both

voice ( $\beta = -.05$ ,  $SE = .02$ ,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI:  $-.10 < \beta < -.01$ ) and impartiality ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ , 95% CI:  $-.20 < \beta < -.09$ ) had significant indirect effects on rule violation.

**Teacher authority.** The first model specified for the teacher scenario had an adequate fit to the data,  $\chi^2(5) = 23.61$ ,  $p < .001$ , AGFI = .89, NFI = .95, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .09. The fit of the second model,  $\chi^2(8) = 27.66$ ,  $p < .001$ , AGFI = .85, NFI = .94, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .08, assessing cohort differences was not significantly different,  $\chi^2(3) = 4.05$ , ns. There was only a single

difference in parameter estimates between the two cohorts. The path from rule cynicism to rule violation was significantly stronger ( $z = 3.07, p < .05$ ) in the younger cohort ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ) than in the older cohort ( $\beta = .09, ns$ ; there were no other differences between the cohorts ( $zs = -1.03-.10$ ). The overall model was retained to reduce redundancy (see Table 3).

The model accounted for 22% of the variance in teacher legitimacy. Participants who read scenarios with voice ( $\beta = .21, p < .001$ ) or impartiality ( $\beta = .37, p < .001$ ) perceived the teacher as more legitimate than those who read scenarios with no voice or no impartiality. Impartiality also had a stronger effect than voice ( $z = 2.56, p < .05$ ). In terms of rule cynicism, the model accounted for 14% of the variance. Similar to legitimacy, participants who read scenarios with voice ( $\beta = -.15, p < .01$ ) or impartiality ( $\beta = -.29, p < .001$ ) were less cynical than participants who read scenarios with no voice or no impartiality. Once again, impartiality was a stronger predictor than voice ( $z = -2.24, p < .05$ ). Finally, the model accounted for 33% of the variance in rule violation. The more participants perceived the teacher as legitimate ( $\beta = -.37, p < .001$ ) and the less cynical they were ( $\beta = .23, p < .001$ ), the less likely they were to report that they would break the rule.

The final model is shown in Figure 2. As predicted, both voice and impartiality caused higher perceptions of teacher legitimacy and lower cynicism toward the rule. Moreover, impartiality had a stronger effect than voice on both legitimacy and cynicism. Teacher legitimacy and cynicism toward the rule predicted whether participants would violate the rule. Finally, both voice ( $\beta = -.11, SE = .02, p < .01, 95\% CI: -.16 < \beta < -.06$ ) and impartiality ( $\beta = -.20, SE = .03, p < .001, 95\% CI: -.26 < \beta < -.15$ ) had significant indirect effects on rule violation.

## Discussion

The results of Study 2 supported the procedural justice model of legal socialization in legal and nonlegal authority. Overall, both voice and impartiality caused higher perceptions of legitimacy and less cynicism toward the rule across authority figures. In turn, both legitimacy and cynicism mediated the influence of voice and impartiality on intention to violate the rule. These findings provide additional evidence that the fairness of authority interactions plays an important role in the legal socialization process via the development of positive orientations toward authority and the internalization of law-related norms. In doing so, they support the argument that legal socialization is not driven solely by the development of cognitive reasoning abilities (Tapp & Levine, 1974), but rather is also driven by the experiences individuals have with the rule enforcers in their social environment (Fagan & Tyler, 2005).

Although the relation between procedural justice and legitimacy is well established (see Tyler, 2006a for review), there has been much less work examining the relation between procedural justice and rule cynicism. Study 2 addressed this by linking procedural justice to cynicism across a variety of authorities; however, that relation was inconsistent. Only voice predicted cynicism in the police scenario; alternatively, only impartiality predicted cynicism in the parent scenario. Although we hypothesized that voice would be a stronger predictor than impartiality in the police scenario and vice versa in the parent scenario, we still expected both to be significant predictors.

There are a number of potential reasons for these inconsistent results. First, it could be a measurement issue given that prior work (e.g., Fagan & Tyler, 2005) used a global measure of legal cynicism rather than one focused on a specific law or rule as was done here. However, the cynicism items factored together with good internal consistency and bivariate correlations (available upon request) indicated that cynicism was associated with all variables in expected directions, making a measurement problem improbable. Alternatively, it may be that rule cynicism functions differently in terms of one's global cynicism compared with cynicism toward a specific rule. Although if this was the case, then it seems likely that neither impartiality nor voice would have predicted cynicism in any of the scenarios, which was not the case. On the other hand, it may be that people actually expect impartiality from police or voice from parents. As a result, the presence or absence of these qualities may not influence their view of rules. This explanation also seems unlikely. If this were the case, then one would expect similar nonsignificant findings in terms of predicting legitimacy. Regardless, this inconsistency points to the need for additional work examining the role of procedural justice on rule cynicism, especially as it applies to the legal socialization process.

Study 2 also adds to the growing body of literature examining the role of procedural justice in nonadult populations, a vital area of concern if procedural justice research is going to be applied to legal socialization. Contrary to Study 1, the results showed few differences between the cohorts. However, it is important to note that Study 1 assessed global perceptions of legitimacy and cynicism that have been shaped by previous experiences, whereas Study 2 assessed reactions to a specific situation. Together, these studies suggest that single interactions with authorities affect legal socialization similarly for adolescents and emerging adults (Study 2), but that the overall legal socialization process is influenced by the totality and frequency of such experiences which likely vary by age (Study 1).

Finally, Study 2 offers further support that legal socialization is shaped by both legal and nonlegal environments (Tapp, 1991), although important differences did emerge in terms of how the model functioned. These differences resulted from whether individuals have a single or repeated contact with the authority. As expected, impartiality was a stronger predictor than voice in situations where long-term contact with the authority (parents and teachers) was likely. Alternatively, voice was a stronger predictor than impartiality in situations where short-term contact (police) was likely. Although the differences between voice and impartiality in this case were not statistically significant, they were in the expected direction.

While the present study addressed limitations from Study 1, it contained some of its own. First, rule violation was measured as an intention rather than actual behavior. This is problematic because intentions do not always translate into actual behavior (Eifler, 2010). In particular, people tend to overestimate their intention to engage in socially desirable behavior and vice versa (Ajzen et al., 2004). We controlled for social desirability in response, but this likely did not completely eliminate the problem. However, Study 1 findings linked legitimacy and cynicism to behavior. As a result, the primary goal in Study 2 was to examine the causal relations between procedural justice, legitimacy, and cynicism. The use of behavioral intention did not affect this examination. Second, the scenarios involved a rule that varied across each scenario. Future

work should examine the model in different authorities using the same or a similar rule. Third, voice and impartiality had differential effects based on expectations of future authority contact, which were operationalized in terms of authority type (e.g., parent). However, it could be that the different results are actually because of something specific to each authority, rather than differences in expectations of future contact. This can be addressed by using scenarios where authority type does not change, but rather the expectation for single or repeated contact is manipulated (e.g., the teacher is either permanent or a substitute).

## General Discussion

### Implications for Legal Socialization

The studies presented here further validate a procedural justice approach to legal socialization that emphasizes the role of interactions with authorities present in individuals' everyday lives. In doing so, they make a number of contributions to the legal socialization literature. First, they highlight that legal socialization is not solely influenced by the development of increasingly sophisticated reasoning processes, as has been argued by the cognitive developmental approach (Tapp & Levine, 1974). Instead, they show that the development of positive orientations toward authorities and the internalization of law-related norms are also driven by one's social environment. In particular, they show the important role of "rule enforcers" in the legal socialization process (Piquero et al., 2005). While authority figures played a vital role in early legal socialization theory (Levine & Tapp, 1977; Tapp & Levine, 1974), their importance was mostly in terms of producing more complex reasoning. This may explain why past legal socialization work has largely ignored their role until recently (Cohn et al., 2012). When individuals develop their understanding of rules, the interactions they have with the people that create and/or enforce those rules matter in shaping that understanding.

Perhaps most importantly, our findings emphasize that legal socialization, despite its name, is driven by both legal and nonlegal environments. Developing one's understanding of rules is an extensive process that occurs throughout an individual's daily experiences, not just from experiences with legal authorities and the criminal justice system. This ubiquitous nature of legal socialization that was a cornerstone of early theory (Hogan & Mills, 1976; Tapp & Levine, 1974) has, to some extent, been lost in more recent research. However, it is important to note that, while both legal and nonlegal authorities have a powerful influence on the legal socialization process, it would be a mistake to assume that different environments influence the process in the same way. Study 2 indicated that legal socialization functions differently depending on the environment. Future work should embrace this understanding by delineating the ways in which the many diverse areas of the social environment differentially and interactively impact legal socialization. Such work will go a long way toward developing a more comprehensive perspective and sophisticated understanding of legal socialization.

### Implications for Prevention and Intervention

Community members, scientists, and politicians have long sought ways to reduce criminal behavior, especially among

younger individuals. Early attempts at using a legal socialization framework to reduce rule violation among youth largely failed, mainly because of the reliance on the cognitive developmental approach (Morash, 1981). The present findings suggest that a legal socialization framework grounded in authority interactions could help shape public policy in devising more effective interventions. As established by a large amount of previous work (Howell, 2003), improving relations between youth and authority is an important part of any prevention or intervention strategy. The present findings suggest that a procedural justice-based program may be a particularly effective way to improve such relations, as procedural justice is vital to the individual-authority relationship (see Tyler, 2000, 2006b).

Recently there have been successful attempts to improve police-citizen interactions via procedurally fair treatment (Mazerolle et al., 2013). For example, the Chicago Police Department has recently initiated a procedural justice training program for their officers (Lipman & Sedevic, 2013). The present findings highlight the potential utility of these new programs in reducing youth offending, while also suggesting the inclusion of strategies to improve the relationships between youth and parents or teachers. For example, community centers could include programming for parents on developing approaches to enforce rules through procedurally fair means. Alternatively, teachers could learn about procedurally fair student management during training sessions. On the other hand, strategies could be developed that attempt to make procedurally fair behavior on the part of authorities more salient to adolescents.

At a more macro level, the present findings emphasize that any public policy of prevention or intervention should focus on multiple spheres of adolescents' lives. Until recently, most strategies have tended to focus on a single arena of a child's life, such as strengthening the family unit or changing the climate within a school (Howell, 2003). However, it is becoming increasingly clear that rule-violating behavior is not the result of a single aspect of one's life, but is collectively driven by a dynamic relation between the individual, the family, and the community (Mulvey et al., 2010). This understanding has increasingly led to calls for a more comprehensive approach in developing programs that utilize multiple fields of research (Howell, 2003). Such programs would use evidence-based best practices to develop strategies where the entire community is involved in the reduction of rule-violating behavior. The present results support these calls by showing the importance of both legal and nonlegal environments in shaping youth rule violation.

### Limitations and Future Directions

Despite addressing a number of limitations in past work applying procedural justice to legal socialization, the present article has limitations of its own. First, a true test of the influence of procedural justice on legal socialization would need longitudinal methodology. At the heart of legal socialization are the development of positive orientations toward authority and the internalization of law-related norms over time. Because this article used cross-sectional methods, it was unable to examine longitudinal changes in either of these. However, given the paucity of research on legal socialization during the last 20 years, the present article provides

new questions and areas to explore in a field that is in need of good scholarship and fresh ideas.

Second, previous work applying procedural justice to legal socialization primarily utilized samples of adjudicated adolescents (Fagan & Piquero, 2007; Piquero et al., 2005). This concern was addressed to some extent by using community samples of adolescents and emerging adults. However, future research could provide a better examination of the generalizability of the procedural justice model by using samples containing adjudicated and non-adjudicated individuals to test if the model operates differently. Although there were probably some adjudicated individuals in the NHYS, they are not identified, making such a comparison impossible.

In addition, we utilized samples with a relatively restricted age range. Although legal socialization is thought to occur across the life span (Tapp, 1991), research has generally examined adolescents and emerging adults (e.g., Cohn et al., 2010, 2012). Thus, it is unclear how the legal socialization process unfolds outside of this age group. Tapp (1976, 1991) suggested a critical period occurred when individuals aged and became the actual agents of legal socialization (e.g., became a parent). She suggested that this would shift people's understanding of laws or rules and the institutions that create or enforce them. While criminologists have identified important changes that occur after young adulthood that influence criminal activity (Sampson & Laub, 1993), it is an open question whether the changes result from legal socialization pressures.

Finally, this article exclusively focused on procedural justice, while ignoring cognitive developmental factors. Most likely, the cognitive developmental approach and the authority relations approach capture different aspects of the same process. For example, it may be that the complexity of legal reasoning influences the perception of authorities' behavior in terms of fairness. On the other hand, chronic unfair treatment at the hands of authority figures may systematically influence the development of reasoning capacities. Understanding this interplay may be the future of legal socialization research as it would provide a vehicle to bring together research from a diverse set of fields on how individuals develop their understanding of laws and legal institutions.

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