

Crime, Perceived Criminal Injustice, and Electoral Politics

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ISSUES OF CRIME, criminal justice, and incarceration play a crucial role in electoral politics. In the United States, political campaign promises to get tough on crime invariably resonate well with the public, such as when Bill Clinton pledged, during the 1996 presidential campaign, to put 100,000 new, federally funded police officers on the streets of America by the end of the twentieth century (Clinton 1995). Recent Gallup polls reveal that nearly half of Americans view crime as an extremely serious or very serious problem, and more than two-thirds view illegal drugs as an extremely serious or very serious problem. Such polls also reveal that Americans have little confidence in the criminal justice system: only 25% have a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in our legal system.

These findings reveal real and important concerns, but represent only a small portion of a larger set of patterns concerning perceptions of crime, criminal justice, and electoral politics. For any polity to secure and maintain the consent of the governed, it is essential that citizens view conventional institutions as fair, just, and trustworthy. Perhaps the most crucial institution for maintaining the legitimacy of government is the legal system, which, by its very nature, is concerned with administering justice—resolving disputes, maintaining order in civil society, and inflicting state-legitimated punishment according to principles of fairness. If citizens view the system of justice as unjust, the social and political system is likely to be volatile and unstable. In the United States, perceptions of criminal injustice differ markedly by race, ethnicity, and social class (Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005). Indeed, the criminal justice system may be the most salient point of contact with governmental institutions for large segments of the

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population, particularly the disadvantaged, the poor, and minorities. The significance of this contact has increased enormously with the massive growth of incarceration over the last three decades. The lifetime risk of imprisonment for young adult African American males who have not graduated from high school has reached majority levels (Western and Beckett 1999; Western 2006). Research suggests that blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics report elevated perceptions of criminal injustice, which is even higher for those who have had contact with the justice system, while whites and Asian Americans, who have, on average, less contact with the system, tend to express confidence in the system (see, for example, Hagan, Shedd, and Payne 2005). Moreover, regardless of race, citizens' perceptions of the fairness and effectiveness of the criminal justice system, which are shaped in part by their experiences with police, courts, and jails, likely have a substantial impact on political participation. It could be that differences in perceptions of criminal injustice by race and class help explain racial and class differences in voting behavior and other outcomes. These effects are potentially more far-reaching than the more visible—but rare—effects of felon disenfranchisement (see, for example, Manza and Uggen 2006).

The objective of this chapter is to explore the effects of perceived criminal injustice on voting behavior as well as on other important outcomes. Using data from the 2006 ANES Pilot Study, we begin by examining the measurement properties of a set of survey items tapping perceptions of criminal injustice and then incorporate those items into a model of voting behaviors, controlling for demographic characteristics, political efficacy, political ideology, and political partisanship.

CRIMINAL INJUSTICE, LEGITIMACY, AND BEHAVIORAL OUTCOMES

The question of the legitimacy of legal systems can be traced to the sociologist Max Weber's (1978) analysis of the rise of formal legal rationality in modern Western societies, in which universal rules are applied uniformly to all, logical analysis proceeds on the basis of general principles, and judges and lawyers follow impersonal role expectations rooted in the bureaucratic organization of the legal system. The resulting procedural justice helps legitimize the social order, which in turn, increases the likelihood that citizens will see the system as fair and follow its rules. In this spirit, Tom Tyler (1990, 2003) has developed a "process-based," as opposed to an "outcome-based," model of procedural justice, in which the legitimacy of legal authorities is rooted in the "public's judgment that the police and the courts are acting fairly when they deal with community residents" (286). The legitimacy of legal authorities—which Stryker (1994) shows is

constituted through a mix of legal and scientific reasoning—in turn, produces compliance and conformity and reduces defiance and resistance. Tyler and his colleagues have found support for this model in a spate of empirical studies (see Tyler 2003). More broadly, the perceived fairness and legitimacy of the legal system in democratic societies has been implicated in many key outcomes, such as political stability (see, for example, Lipset 1959), subcultural delinquency and violence (Gloward and Ohlin 1960; Anderson 1999), and social protest (see, for example, Gamson 1990). With respect to political participation, political legitimacy is generally found to be associated with political participation (see, for example, Weatherford 1992), and some research suggests that support for regime institutions (including the fairness of the courts) predicts voting and participation in civil society (see, for example, Booth and Seligson 2005). We examine data on the United States and test the hypotheses that perceptions of criminal injustice may alienate people from the political system and reduce their likelihood of voting, and that conditional on voting, such perceptions reduce the probability of voting Republican.

PERCEPTIONS OF CRIMINAL INJUSTICE

A benchmark scale of perceptions of American criminal justice was developed in the mid-1970s by using a nationally representative survey by Yankelovich, Skelly, and White (1977). An early version of this scale, used by Hagan and Albonetti (1982), used ten items referring to the treatment of citizens by the criminal justice system, including police, courts, juries, and judges (see table 18.1). Each item, such as "police who do not treat poor suspects the same as well-to-do suspects," was rated on seriousness and frequency of occurrence by using Likert scales. Both ratings for each item were used to form a composite scale that ranged from 0 to 100. The scale had an α reliability of .91, showed factor loadings (from a single-factor exploratory factor model) ranging from .63 to .78, and was correlated with race and class as predicted by conflict theories. More recently, Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005) revised and simplified the scale to focus on police injustice, with items such as "police treat people from my racial group worse than people from other racial groups," and examined variation across race and ethnicity (see table 18.1; see also Browning et al. 1994). Administering the scale to students in Chicago public high schools, Hagan and his coauthors found a scale reliability of .73, and found that perceived criminal injustice for blacks and Latinos is greater in mixed-race schools. The emphasis on police is warranted, given the contemporary importance of racial profiling and given that, for disadvantaged minorities, contact with police is often their

principal contact not only with the criminal justice system, but also with any conventional social institution.

We build on this research tradition by using four items to measure perceived criminal injustice. We use a percentage scale ranging from 0 to 100 to capture whether respondents believe police treat all people, poor people, white people, and black people fairly (see table 18.1). Conceptually, there are two ways of treating these four items. One creates a single unidimensional scale of police injustice, in which each of the four groups (all, poor, white, black) represents an equally valid domain of unjust treatment. A second treats the items as reflecting two separate dimensions: a dimension reflecting injustice against disadvantaged people (blacks and the poor), and a dimension reflecting majority or overall injustice (all people and whites). In the analyses that follow, we examine these two measurement models of perceived criminal injustice.

ANALYSIS OF THE MEASUREMENT MODELS

The univariate distributions of our four perceived injustice items reveal that respondents used the full scales, that the distributions depart moderately from a normal distribution, and that responses tend to clump at the midpoint (50) of the scale, as found by prior research on percentage scales (see figure 18.1). On average, respondents reported that the police mistreated African American and poor suspects a little less than half the time, all suspects a third of the time, and white suspects only about one-quarter of the time (table 18.2). We estimated a two-factor model that specifies the "poor" and "black" items as one disadvantaged factor, and the "white" and "all" items as a non-disadvantaged factor (figure 18.2). Thus, the former refers to disadvantaged groups and the latter to whites or a global average of all groups. We estimated the models using Jöreskog and Sörbom's (1996–2001) LISREL 8 program, which provides maximum likelihood estimates and likelihood ratio test statistics for identified models for continuous variables. All analyses use the ANES-constructed sample weights, which incorporate sampling, nonresponse, and poststratification factors. The order of response categories for most variables was randomly varied across respondents, and nonsignificant controls for response order suggest that the randomization succeeded.

The parameter estimates for this model (model 1) appear at the top of table 18.3. The measurement error variances, capturing random measurement error in each indicator, are similar in magnitude, and indeed, we cannot reject a model of equal error variances. The metric slopes suggest that respondents use response scales slightly differently. For example, relative to the "all treated fair"

TABLE 18.1
Perceived Criminal Injustice Scales and Items

Items	Factor loadings
Hagan and Albonetti (1982), $\alpha = .91$	
1. Law enforcement officials/police who do not treat poor suspects the same as well-to-do suspects	.73
2. Law enforcement officials/police who do not represent a cross section of a community in which they work	.65
3. Courts that disregard a defendant's constitutional rights	.72
4. Juries that do not represent a cross section of the people in the community	.67
5. Juries that are biased and unfair when it comes to deciding their well-to-do clients	.73
6. Lawyers who do not treat their poor clients the same as their well-to-do clients	.69
7. Judges who are biased and unfair	.73
8. Courts that do not treat poor people as well as well-to-do people	.78
9. Courts that do not treat blacks and other minorities the same as whites	.74
10. Courts that are influenced by political considerations	.63
Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005), $\alpha = .73$	
1. People from my racial group are more likely to be unfairly stopped and questioned by the police	
2. Police treat young people worse than old people	
3. Police treat rich people better than poor people	
4. Police treat people from my racial group worse than people from other racial groups	
5. Police treat males worse than females	
2006 Pilot Study Items, $\alpha = .92$	
1. What percent of ALL the people who are suspected of committing a crime in America do you think are treated fairly by the police? 0–100	.81
2. What percent of the POOR people who are suspected of committing a crime in America do you think are treated fairly by the police? 0–100	.92
2. What percent of the WHITE people who are suspected of committing a crime in America do you think are treated fairly by the police? 0–100	.72
4. What percent of the BLACK people who are suspected of committing a crime in America do you think are treated fairly by the police? 0–100	.89

Note: Reliability estimates based on Chronbach's α . Factor loadings from Hagan and Albonetti (1982) are based on principal components. Factor loadings from Hagan, Shedd, and Payne (2005) are not available. Factor loadings from 2006 Pilot Study are based on confirmatory factor analyses for ordinal indicators.

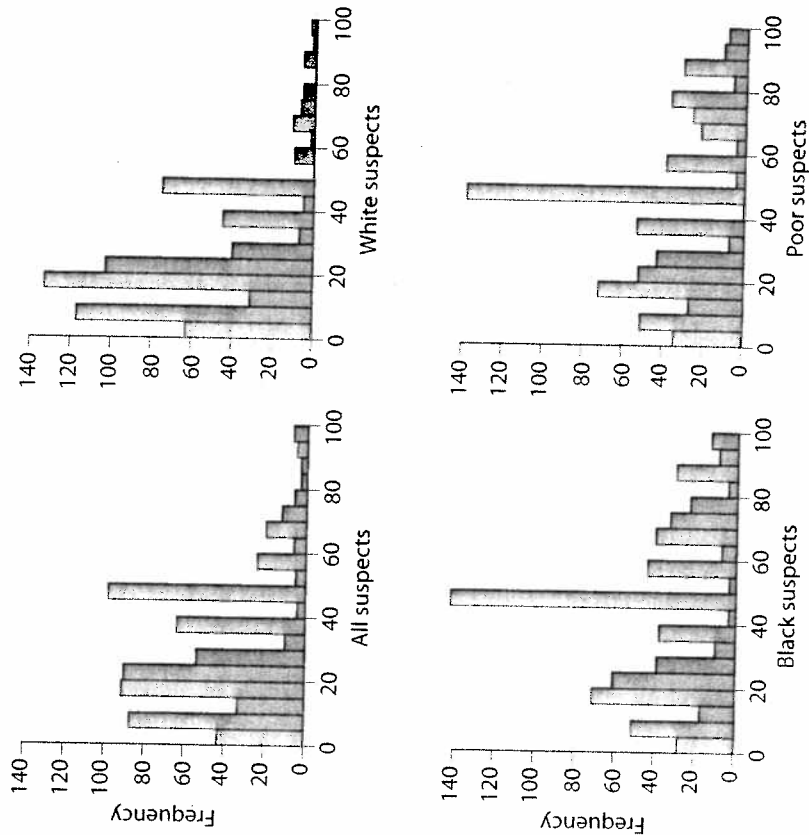


Figure 18.1. Perceived percentage of suspects not treated fairly by police

item, those who score high on police justice overall tend to underestimate “white treated fair,” and vice versa. This effect is less acute for the two “police injustice disadvantaged” items. The factor loadings (standardized slopes), suggest that “all treated fair” is a more reliable indicator of police injustice overall than “white treated fair,” while the two indicators of police injustice overall disadvantaged are equally reliable. With one overidentifying restriction, this model fits the data nearly perfectly ($\chi^2 = .008; df = 1; p = .93$). However, the correlation between the two factors, .92, suggests little discriminant validity between the two constructs.

We, therefore, estimated a single-factor perceived injustice model (figure 18.2), which fits rather poorly ($\chi^2 = 49.57; df = 2; p < .001$) because, as we expected, the measurement errors between “all” and “white” are correlated. We reestimated the model, allowing for a correlation between the measurement error for “all” and “white,” and obtained the identical fit as the two-factor model. This is

TABLE 18.2
Descriptive Statistics of Selected Variables

	M	SD	N
Proportion all suspects treated unfairly by police	.34	.22	662
Proportion white suspects treated unfairly by police	.28	.21	664
Proportion poor suspects treated unfairly by police	.45	.27	663
Proportion black suspects treated unfairly by police	.46	.27	663
Perceived Injustice Index	.38	.22	660
Respondent voted in 2006 election	.74	.44	675
Would vote for G. W. Bush over W. J. Clinton if they ran now	.38	.49	667
Perceived personal political efficacy	.00	1.00	675
Political ideology (highest values: strong conservative)	4.27	1.39	652
Party identification (highest values: strong Republican)	2.62	2.30	667
Partisanship (highest values: strong identification with either party)	3.12	.95	667
African American	.13	.33	666
Other race	.08	.28	666
Female	.53	.50	675
Age (in tens of years)	4.89	1.70	675
SES (average of z-scores for education, income, and occ. prestige)	.06	.74	675
Married	.63	.48	675
Number of children in household	.42	.93	675

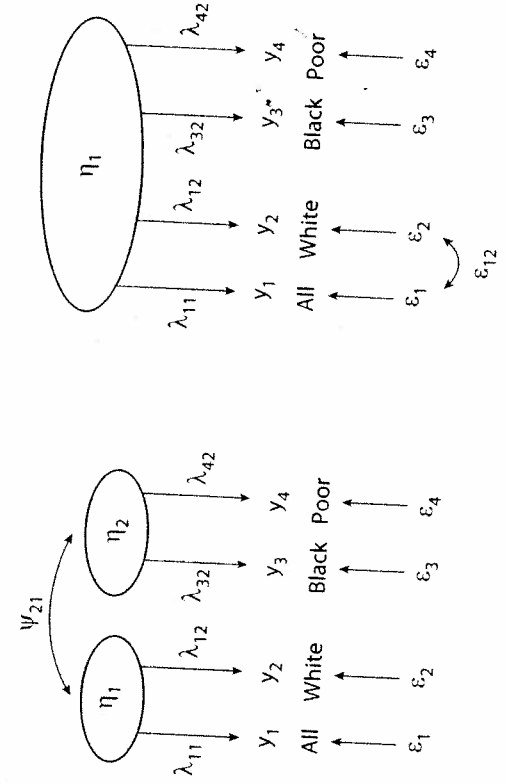


Figure 18.2. Confirmatory factor models of perceived criminal injustice

TABLE 18.3
Parameter Estimates of Measurement Models of Police Injustice

<i>Model 1: Two-Factor Confirmatory Factor Model</i>					
<i>Latent variable</i>	<i>Observed variable</i>	<i>Observed variance</i>	<i>Error variance</i>	<i>Metric slope</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>
Police injustice overall	All treated fair	.05	.01	1.00'	.90
	White treated fair	.04	.01	.83	.81
Police injustice disadvantaged	Poor treated fair	.07	.01	1.00'	.92
	Black treated fair	.07	.01	.97	.89

<i>Model 2: One-Factor Confirmatory Factor Model</i>					
<i>Latent variable</i>	<i>Observed variable</i>	<i>Observed variance</i>	<i>Error variance</i>	<i>Metric slope</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>
Police injustice	All treated fair	.05	.02	1.00'	.81
	White treated fair	.04	.02	.83	.72
	Poor treated fair	.07	.01	1.37	.92
	Black treated fair	.07	.01	1.33	.89

Source: Data are from the 2006 ANES Pilot Study (N = 663).
Note: f indicates a fixed coefficient. For Model 1, the correlation between factors is .91. For Model 2, the measurement error correlation between "All treated fair" and "White treated fair" is .15.

because the single tetrad-difference overidentifying restriction on observed covariances ($\sigma_{31}\sigma_{42} = \sigma_{41}\sigma_{32}$) is identical for the two models, the models are not nested, and they cannot be adjudicated by a statistical test (see, for example, Bollen 1989). Model 2 shows similar measurement error variances, with the exception of "white treated fair," which is somewhat larger than the others (see table 18.3). The metric slopes suggest that respondents use the scales differently across indicators. In particular, respondents use the scales for poor and black similarly, but differently from the others: relative to "all treated fair," those who score high on police injustice tend to overestimate poor and black injustice, and vice versa. The factor loadings are relatively high, but that for "white treated fair" is the smallest. When treated as a unidimensional scale, perceived criminal injustice has a reliability of .92—this is a global reliability estimate for a model that assumes τ -equivalent measures (equal measurement slopes; see, for example, Bollen 1989)—which is similar or higher to those found in previous studies. We conclude that perceived injustice to disadvantaged groups might be tapping

TABLE 18.4
Correlation of Perceived Injustice with Race, Politics, and Construct Validity Measures

	<i>r</i>
Non-Hispanic white	-.24***
African American	.27***
Other race	.03
Conservative	-.32***
Trust the national government	-.28***
Trust the state government	-.28***
Trust people	-.30***
People get what they deserve	-.20***
Want to feel safe from harm	.01
Important to help others in need	.02
Import to get respect of others	.07

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

a meaning slightly different from injustice to all or to majority groups, but that the lack of discriminant validity will preclude disentangling their effects on voting and other outcomes.

We examined the question of criterion validity by estimating correlations between our single perceived injustice factor and three other variables that, on substantive grounds, should be significantly correlated with perceived injustice. For example, as expected, using polyserial correlations, injustice is negatively correlated (-.24) with non-Hispanic white, positively correlated (.27) with African American, and negatively correlated (-.22) with conservative. We expect that respondents who believe our criminal justice system is fair are likely to trust the government. Using the item "trust the government to make fair decisions," we find correlations with injustice are -.28 for both national and state governments (see table 18.4). We expected perceived injustice to be similarly correlated with trust in people in general, and find a correlation of -.30. We also expect injustice to be correlated with "people get what they deserve," and find a modest negative correlation (-.20). Finally, we estimated the correlations between perceived injustice and other variables that we think should not be related to perceived injustice because they do not refer to political legitimacy or racial equality. They do, however, refer to safety, altruism, and conventional success. None of these items (including "want to feel safe or secure from harm," "it is important to help others in need," and "it is important to succeed in getting the respect of others") is strongly or significantly correlated with perceived

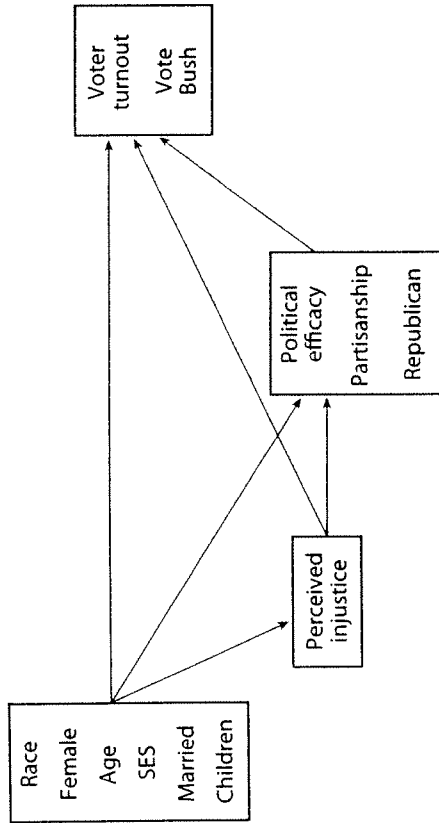


Figure 18.3. Substantive model of perceived injustice, political efficacy, partisanship, and voting behavior

injustice. Thus, we find evidence of criterion validity of our perceived police injustice construct.

SUBSTANTIVE MODELS OF PERCEIVED INJUSTICE AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

We incorporated our measurement model for perceived injustice into cross-sectional multivariate models. Turning to voting behavior, we posit two distinct hypotheses about the relationship between perceived injustice and measures of voting. First, we hypothesize that those who perceive injustice may be less motivated to vote, compared to their counterparts who perceive little injustice, because they question the legitimacy of the government, become alienated from society, and consequently withdraw from political participation. Second, conditional on voting, we expect that those who perceive more injustice will have a higher probability of voting Democrat than Republican, since the Democratic Party has traditionally fought against racial discrimination and injustice.

Our models of perceived injustice and voting behavior take the form of figure 18.3. The models begin by predicting perceived injustice from demographic characteristics of respondents. We expect that perceived injustice will be greater for blacks, males, and members of lower classes. The demographic variables also serve as controls when examining the effect of perceived injustice on subsequent variables. Our measure of perceived police injustice is an index of our four injustice items, rescaled to range from 0 to 10. We expect injustice to be

TABLE 18.5
Coefficients from Linear Regression of Perceived Injustice

	β	SE	Std.
African American	1.27***	.26	--
Other race	.32	.30	--
Female	.53**	.16	--
Age	-.06	.05	-.05
SES	-.32**	.12	-.11
Married	-.40*	.19	--
Children at home	-.16^	.09	-.06
Intercept	3.98***	.29	
R^2	.10		

^ $p < .05$ (one-tailed); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

negatively related to political efficacy and partisan politics. Respondents who believe that institutions are unfair are likely to feel powerless to effect political change. At the same time, they may be less partisan and more apathetic. We measure political efficacy—whether respondents feel they have a say in or can affect what the government does—by using a single item.¹ We measure partisan politics on a single-item four-point scale ranging from independent to strongly Democrat or Republican. We hypothesize that, net of demographics, perceived injustice will reduce the probability of voting (measured by self-reported voting in the 2006 congressional election). We will examine whether the effect of perceived injustice on voting operates directly or indirectly through political efficacy or partisan politics.

We also hypothesize that, conditional on voting, perceived injustice will increase the likelihood of voting Democrat over Republican. Here, we use a measure of how respondents would vote in a hypothetical election of George W. Bush against Bill Clinton. In this model, we examine the effect of perceived injustice on voting Republican and test whether that effect operates indirectly through conservative political ideology and identification with the Republican Party (both measured on seven-point Likert scales).

Table 18.5 reports coefficients from a regression of perceived injustice on demographic characteristics of respondents. Here we find that, as expected,

¹More precisely, two versions of the political efficacy question were used in a split ballot experiment. The items, "People like the respondent have no say in government" and "How much can people like the respondent affect government?" were randomly assigned to sample halves. We combine the two items after transforming each to z-scores.

African Americans perceive greater police injustice than do whites, holding other variables constant. We also find that women and respondents with lower socioeconomic status (SES) perceive more police injustice, controlling for other demographic characteristics.

Table 18.6 presents coefficients of linear regressions in which perceived injustice and demographic characteristics predict selected political outcomes: political efficacy, partisanship, Republican Party identification, and conservative political ideology. Our demographic variables are associated with political outcomes as expected: when controlling for other variables, we find that African Americans and women are more partisan than their white and male counterparts, but less Republican. Older respondents are more partisan and more conservative. Those with higher SES are more politically efficacious, but not significantly more Republican or conservative, when other variables are held constant. Of more importance, perceived injustice is strongly negatively associated with each of our political constructs. Those who perceive the police as unfair perceive less political efficacy, report being less partisan, and identify less strongly with the Republican Party. These findings will help us interpret our models of voting behavior.

Table 18.7 presents coefficients from a logistic regression of voter turnout on demographic variables and our political constructs. Model 1 examines the effect of perceived police injustice on voting, controlling for all demographics except African American and SES. Here, perceived injustice has a small, negative, and marginally significant effect on the probability of voting: a one-point change in the (0-10) perceived injustice scale is associated with a 9% decrease in the odds of voting. Model 2 adds African American and SES, and we see that here the effect of perceived injustice on voting is reduced by two-thirds and is no longer statistically significant, even with a one-tailed test. Perhaps injustice motivates some to vote and induces apathy in others, and the countervailing effects cancel each other out.² This model reveals that voter turnout is driven by age, race, and SES: the odds of voting are associated with a 2.3% increase for each year of age, a 59% decrease for people of other races compared to whites, and a 46% increase for each standard deviation of SES.³

Model 3 adds political efficacy and partisanship as potential mediating variables. Net of other factors in the model, a one-standard-deviation increase in political efficacy is associated with a 28% increase in the probability of voting. As expected, partisanship is also strongly related: A standard deviation increase in partisanship is associated with an 81% increase in the odds of voting. The

²We tested the interaction hypothesis that the effect of perceived injustice is conditional on political efficacy, but failed to reject the null hypothesis of no interaction.

³This standardized effect on the odds is computed as $\exp(\beta s_x) - 1$ (see Long 1997).

TABLE 18.6
Coefficients from Linear Regressions of Perceived Political Efficacy, Partisanship, Republican Party Identification, and Conservative Ideology

	Perceived political efficacy		Partisanship		Republican party identification		Conservative ideology	
	<i>β</i>	SE	<i>β</i>	SE	<i>β</i>	SE	<i>β</i>	SE
African American	.22 ^v	.13	.32 ^{**}	.12	-.14	.27	-.14	.17
Other race	-.04	.14	-.41 ^{**}	.14	-.25	.31	-.07	.11
Female	-.18 [*]	.08	-.22 ^{**}	.07	-.22	.17	-.07	.11
Age	.06 [*]	.03	.07 ^{**}	.02	-.05	.05	-.07	.11
SES	.15 ^{**}	.06	.05	.05	-.03	.05	.14 ^{***}	.03
Married	-.12	.09	-.03	.09	.12	.20	.02	.08
Children at home	.02	.04	-.03	.04	.30	.12	.23 ^v	.12
Perceived injustice	-.05 ^{**}	.02	-.05 ^{**}	.02	-.25 ^{***}	.09	-.10 ^{***}	.03
Intercept	.00	.16	2.87 ^{***}	.15	.35	.04	3.76 ^{***}	.22
R ²	.03		.06		.15		.08	

^v*p* < .05 (one-tailed); **p* < .01, ***p* < .001, ****p* < .001 (two-tailed)

TABLE 18.8
Logit Models Predicting Vote for George W. Bush over Bill Clinton

	Model 1			Model 2		
	β	SE	exp(β)	β	SE	exp(β)
African American	-1.00**	.34	.37	.05	.44	1.05
Other race	-1.41***	.41	.24	-1.31*	.51	.27
Female	.00	.18	1.00	.34	.26	1.41
Age	.01	.06	1.01	.04	.08	1.04
SES	-.21	.13	.81	-.65***	.19	.52
Married	.37^	.21	1.45	.17	.28	1.18
Children at home	.04	.10	1.04	-.16	.14	.85
Perceived injustice	-.29***	.05	.75	-.19**	.06	.83
Republican identity				.82***	.07	2.26
Conservative ideology				.30**	.11	1.36
Intercept	.51	.36		-3.83	.67	

[^] $p < .05$ (one-tailed); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

direct effect of perceived injustice on voting is further reduced and nonsignificant in model 3. Nevertheless, the significant effect of both partisanship and political efficacy on voting, combined with our earlier finding that perceived injustice substantially reduces both partisanship and efficacy, implies an indirect effect of injustice on voting. Perceived injustice reduces the odds of voting slightly, and indirectly, by reducing political efficacy and party identification.

Table 18.8 presents coefficients from a logistic regression of a hypothetical vote for George W. Bush over Bill Clinton. Model 1 regresses voting for Bush on our demographics plus perceived injustice. Among our demographics, we find that race dominates: compared to whites, the odds of voting for Bush is 63% lower for African Americans and 76% lower for members of other nonwhite racial and ethnic groups. Coefficients for other demographic variables are in the expected direction—respondents who are lower in SES, unmarried, and childless are less likely to vote for Bush over Clinton—but not statistically significant. Perceived injustice, however, is strongly associated with voting against Bush: an increase of one point on the 0–10 scale of injustice is associated with a 25% decrease in the odds of voting for Bush over Clinton.

Model 2 adds conservative ideology and Republican Party identification to the model as potential intervening variables. As expected, individuals with a more conservative ideology are much more likely to report they would vote for Bush over Clinton. A one-unit move away from liberalism towards conserva-

TABLE 18.7
Logit Models Predicting Voter Turnout

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	β	SE	exp(β)	β	SE	exp(β)	β	SE	exp(β)
African American	-.48	.32	.62	-.28	.28	.75	-.57^	.30	.57
Other race	-.08	.20	.92	-.90*	.32	.41	-.69*	.34	.50
Female				.02	.20	1.02	-.06	.21	.95
Age	.27***	.07	1.30	.20***	.06	1.23	.15*	.07	1.17
SES				.53***	.15	1.70	.50**	.15	1.64
Married	.51^	.21	1.67	.13	.22	1.14	.14	.23	1.15
Children at home	-.08	.12	.92	.00	.11	1.00	.04	.12	1.04
Perceived injustice	-.09^	.05	.92	-.03	.05	.97	.02	.05	1.02
Political efficacy							.25*	.11	1.29
Partisanship							.64***	.11	1.89
Intercept	.07	.39		.29	.38		-1.53**	.50	

[^] $p < .05$ (one-tailed); * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

tism on a seven-point scale is associated with a 36% increase in the odds of voting for Bush. Republican Party identification also exerts a very strong effect: each unit increase in Republican identification is associated with a 126% increase in the odds of voting for Bush. Such a finding is not surprising, particularly given that voting behavior is a self-report measure to a hypothetical question, and the measure of identification as a Republican or Democrat is a self-report from the same interview. Thus, this effect could be an overstatement: in actual, concrete elections, other contextual considerations, such as successful campaigning, a less-partisan campaign, media coverage, anticipated outcomes of the election, and so on, are likely to intervene between party affiliation and voting. However, even after accounting for both conservative ideology and Republican Party identification, perceived injustice continues to reduce the odds of voting for Bush: an increase of one point on the 0–10 scale of injustice is directly associated with a 17% decrease in these odds. About a third of the effect of perceived injustice on voting for Bush appears to be indirect, through an individual's conservative political ideology and affiliation with the Republican Party. Conservative political ideology and Republican Party affiliation also mediate many of the effects of other variables on voting for Bush. For example, nearly all of the effect of African American racial status on voting Bush operates indirectly through Republican, and more than half of the effect of being married operates indirectly. Neither variable is significant when controlling for Republican. Finally, the effect of SES appears to have been suppressed in its effect on voting for Bush: when controlling for Republican, the coefficient is significant in a negative direction.

DISCUSSION

To summarize, these analyses yield four principal findings. First, perceived police injustice appears to be a unidimensional scale with strong measurement properties, including interitem reliability and criterion validity. Second, as expected, African Americans perceive substantially greater police injustice than do whites and members of other racial categories, and women perceive slightly more injustice than men. Third, perceived injustice is negatively associated with decisions to vote, but this association is largely spurious because of SES and race. Nevertheless, we do find small indirect effects of perceived injustice on the probability of voting through partisanship and political efficacy. Fourth, net of demographic variables, political ideology, and party affiliation, perceived police injustice is strongly negatively associated with voting for Bush over Clinton in a hypothetical election. Some of this effect also operates indi-

rectly through party identification and political ideology: respondents who perceive criminal injustice are more likely to espouse a liberal political ideology and to identify with the Democratic Party and, consequently, are more likely to vote for Clinton.

Thus, we find evidence that citizens' perceptions of injustice in the legal system help shape their political preferences. These results are consistent with those of Matsueda and Drakulich (2009), who focused on perceived racial injustice, symbolic racism, and racial politics. They found that perceptions of police racial bias is negatively associated with symbolic racism, which, in turn, is negatively associated with support for affirmative action and equal opportunity policies and positively associated with support for the death penalty and crime spending.

Future research is needed to expand on the present study in several directions. First, longitudinal data are needed to address the problem of endogeneity in a stronger way than our cross-sectional data allow. Although the causal ordering of variables appears reasonable, and follows from theoretical considerations, that ordering could be examined empirically with dynamic or simultaneous equation models. Moreover, we have controlled for a number of relevant individual characteristics as possible confounding variables, but unobserved heterogeneity could still remain, which could bias parameter estimates. Panel data would provide a little more leverage in dealing with these issues. Second, additional research is needed to parse the association of perceived inequality with political preference into specific causal mechanisms. For example, to what extent is the relationship explained by normative, instrumental, and constitutive mechanisms, and their intersections (see, for example, Stryker 1994)? Third, research is needed to explore the concrete social conditions under which perceived injustice leads to political participation versus other outcomes, such as anger and episodic violence, organized protest and rebellion, or unlawful pecuniary activity. Fourth, research is needed to explore the process by which individuals form their perceptions of criminal injustice. For example, does the process conform to a Bayesian learning principle in which an individual's prior subjective assessment of justice is modified by new information—such as media portrayals of injustice, direct experience with police, and stories from friends and acquaintances—resulting in an updated assessment (see, for example, Matsueda, Kreager, and Huizinga 2006)? Such research would further our agenda by examining the concept of perceptions of injustice and modeling their causes and consequences.

Finally, we recommend the inclusion of these measures of perceived injustice by police and other members of the criminal justice system in future versions of the ANES and other large-scale public opinion and voting surveys. The four

items included here have high interitem reliability and criterion validity, and appear to be important in predicting political behavior. When used in a larger and more diverse sample, they may be able to distinguish between differences in perceived criminal injustice by specific disadvantaged groups. Thus, future studies should consider expanding the objects of potential police mistreatment to include Latinos, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, and immigrants. Furthermore, designation of the potentially offending organization could be broadened to examine perceived injustice within other segments of the criminal justice system, such as the courts, jails, and prisons, as well as broader social institutions, such as the labor market and education. Finally, research is needed to connect incarceration experiences with perceptions of criminal injustice. The experience of incarceration likely increases perceptions of criminal injustice, particularly for the disadvantaged and minorities, and may further alienate ex-offenders from society, increasing the likelihood of negative life circumstances.

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