

The Scottish Community Engagement Trial

The challenges of replication in experimental studies of policing

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The Scottish Institute
for **Policing Research**



Background

- Scottish Government 'Strategy for Justice'
 - Priority: Increasing public confidence in justice institutions and outcomes
 - Approach: 'Reassuring the Public' programme
- Little Scottish-based evidence to inform development of programme
- Funding made available through SIPR to address this evidence gap

Background to ScotCET

- Contact with the CJS - one of the strongest influences on trust, confidence and satisfaction
- Queensland Community Engagement Trial (QCET) provides evidence that the quality of interaction between public and police has a direct effect on:
 - Satisfaction
 - Perceptions of police fairness
 - Respect for the police
 - Trust and confidence in the police
 - Willingness to comply with police directives
- Adhering to principles of *procedural justice* as key

Principles of procedural justice

- Respect
- Dignity
- Fair, neutral decision making
- Citizen participation, openness and explanation

QCET

- Random allocation of 60 roadside breath test operations to experimental or control groups
- Baseline encounters very short (c. 30 seconds)
- Officers in experimental group given script to follow – adhered to key principles of procedural justice
- Experimental encounters longer (c. 90 seconds)
- Significant effect on key outcomes (e.g. perceptions of PJ, satisfaction, compliance etc.)

The ScotCET project

- ScotCET aimed to test applicability of QCET findings in the Scottish context:
 - Replication of the randomised control trial methodology
 - Examining high volume routine encounters between public and roads police
 - Provision of 'script' to officers, and a leaflet to give to motorists

Limitations of replication

- Initial phase of ScotCET was information gathering and planning
- Qualitative fieldwork (observation and focus group) undertaken with road police officers
- Key findings:
 - Nature and focus of Scottish roadside encounters is very different
 - Local differences in practice, and in underlying public opinion
 - Level and quality of interaction between officers and public already high

Final design of ScotCET

- Implemented during national Festive Road Safety Campaign 2013/14
 - Preventing drink driving and improving vehicle/ driver safety in winter conditions
- Estimated 20,000 stops over campaign period
 - Conducted by 20 road policing units, generally geographically-based
- Pre-post design – randomization at level of RPU, using matched-pairs design
 - Minimal risk of treatment migration

The experimental condition

- 'Business as usual' in Scotland differs from Australia
- Encounters in experiment condition emphasized procedural justice:
 - Ensure verbal communication of *all* of a series of 'key messages'
 - Include leaflet distribution reinforcing key messages
- Key messages - Respect, equality, trustworthy motives, dignity, neutrality, citizen participation, openness and explanation



POLICE SCOTLAND

Keeping people safe

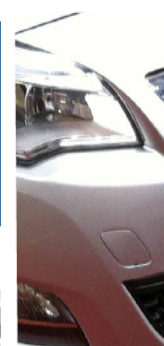
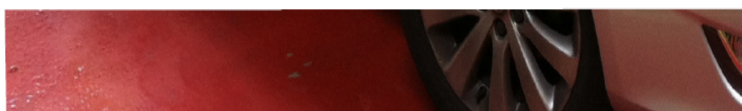
Thank you for your time today.

We welcome your views on all aspects of policing in Scotland. Details of our latest initiatives, local policing teams and how to contact us can be found at:

www.scotland.police.uk



FESTIVE ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN 2013/14



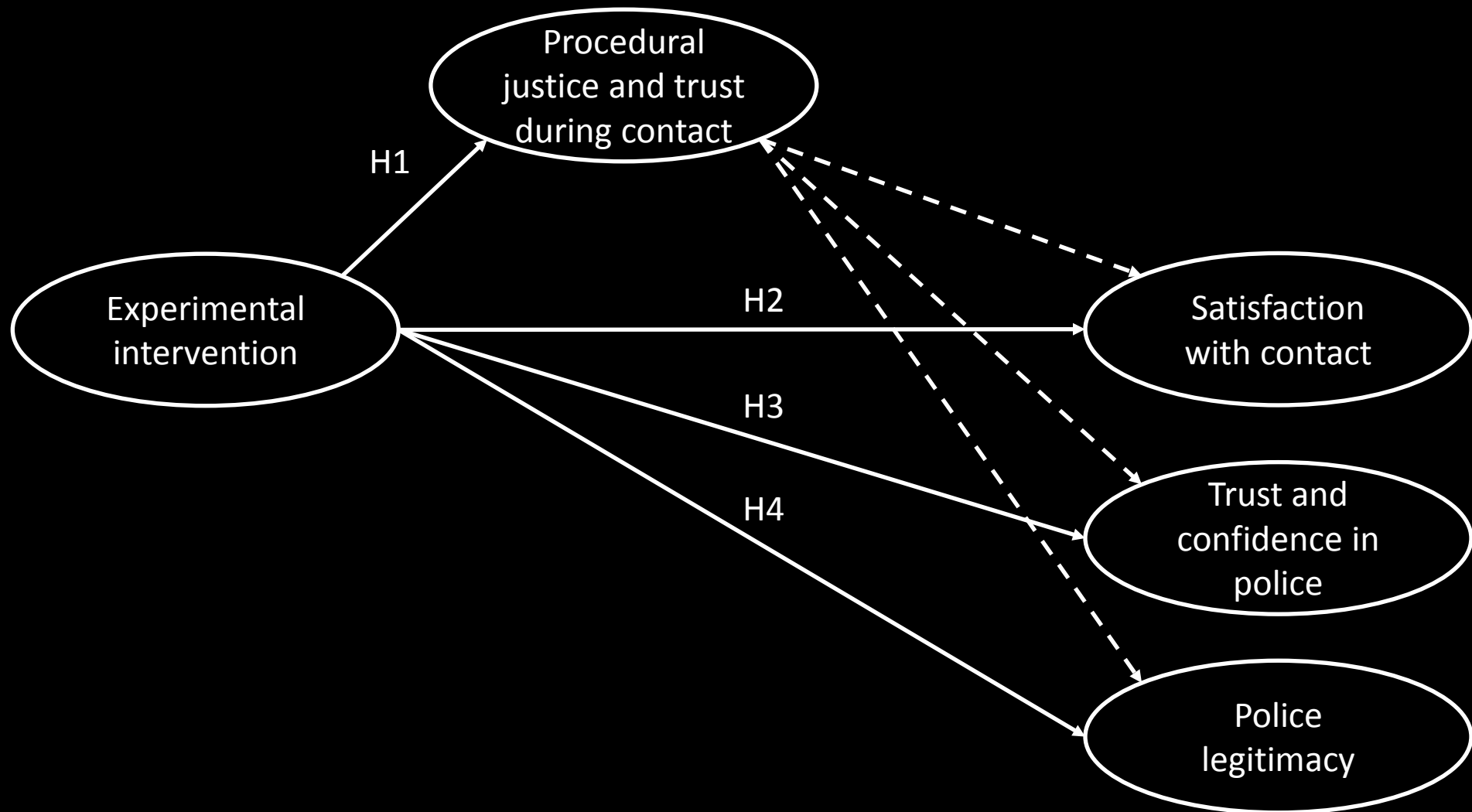
Police Scotland is committed to keeping people safe on the roads. We seek to influence driver behaviour in positive ways and reduce the number of casualties by helping to prevent road accidents. While reported casualty figures are the lowest for over 60 years there is much more work to be done.

Last year, 174 people lost their lives in traffic collisions in Scotland, and a further 1,974 were seriously injured. Road stops and vehicle checks, such as the one you experienced today, are vital in ensuring that the roads are kept as safe as possible for everyone. Most people use Scotland's roads safely and legally but there are still too many who choose not to.

Every week an average of 1,700 drivers are caught speeding and a further 120 arrested for driving under the influence of drink or drugs. Highly visible patrolling is a key element of our road safety strategy. One of the most effective ways to influence road user behaviour is to make clear that the risk of being caught is high and that the consequences can be serious. Yet we also rely upon the public's support. We need you to report poor driving behaviour or illegal drivers such as those who are disqualified, drunk/drugged, or uninsured.

You can help us keep people safe by calling our national non-emergency telephone number 101 or Crimestoppers Scotland on 0800 555 111.

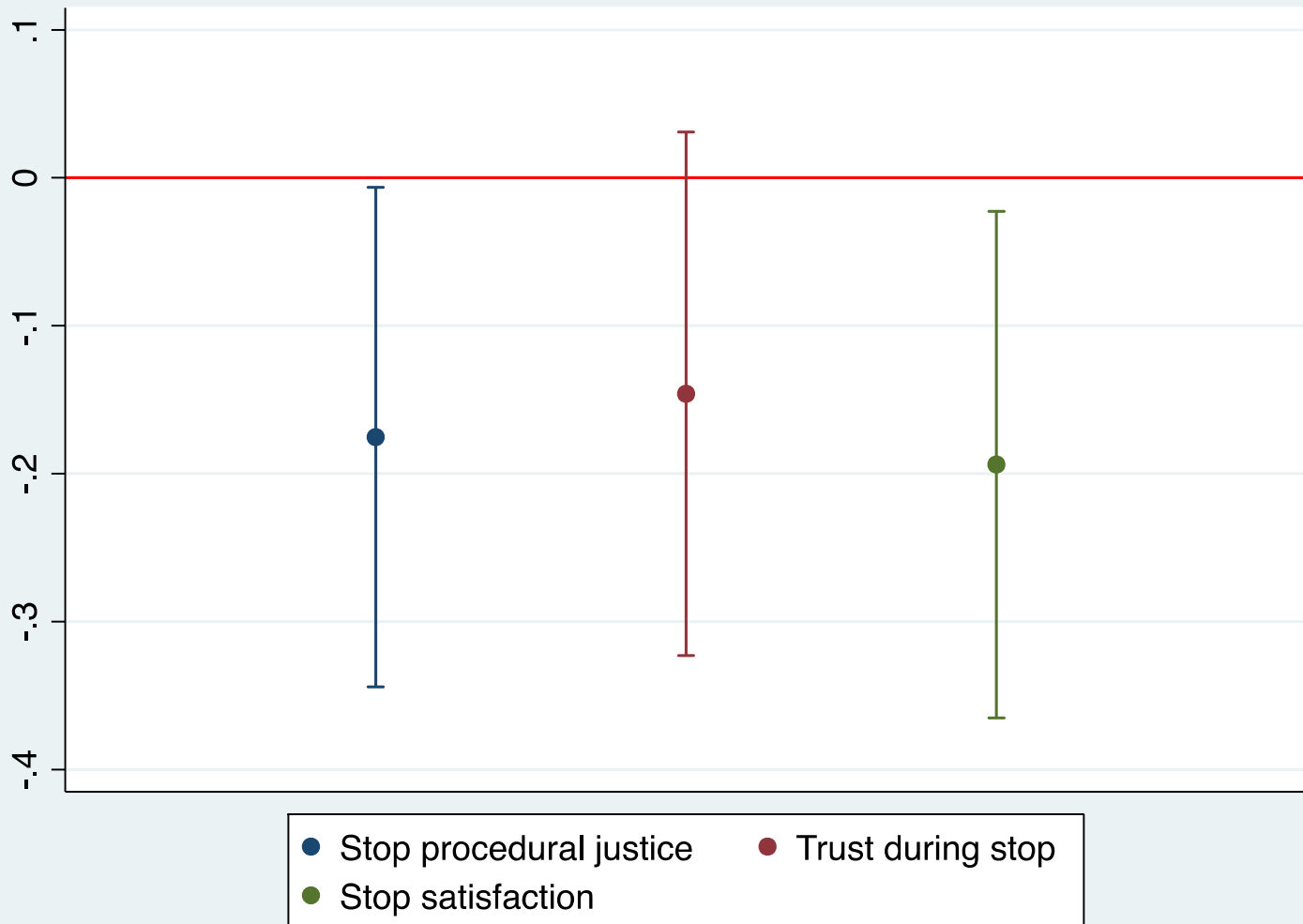
Hypotheses



Response rates

- 12,431 questionnaires issued
- 816 questionnaires returned
- Overall rate of 6.6% (7.2% pre, 6.2% post)
- Response rate dropped in experiment and control groups
- Lower response rate in experiment group (pre and post) than control, but response rate did not fall by more in experiment group

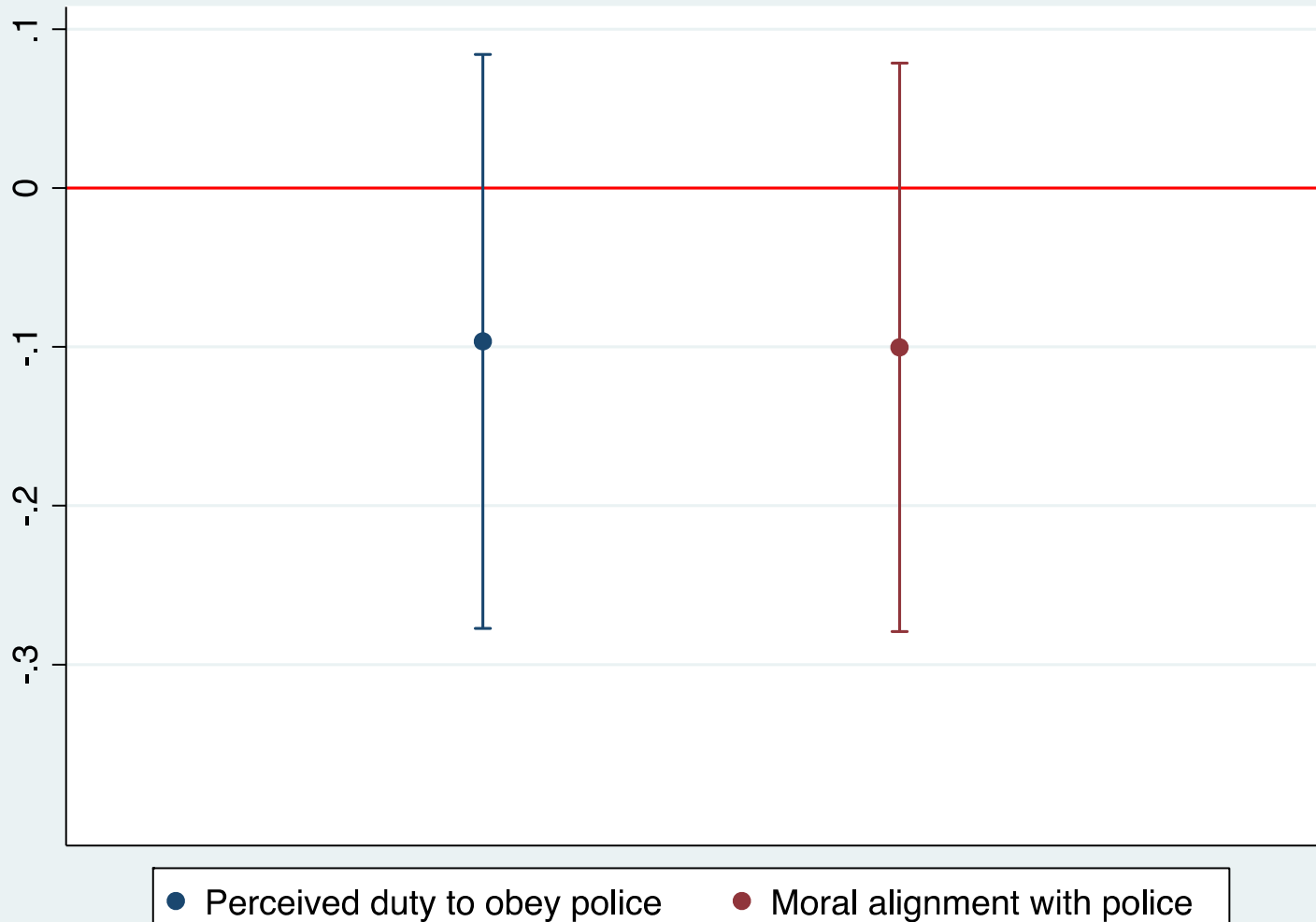
Results – the encounter



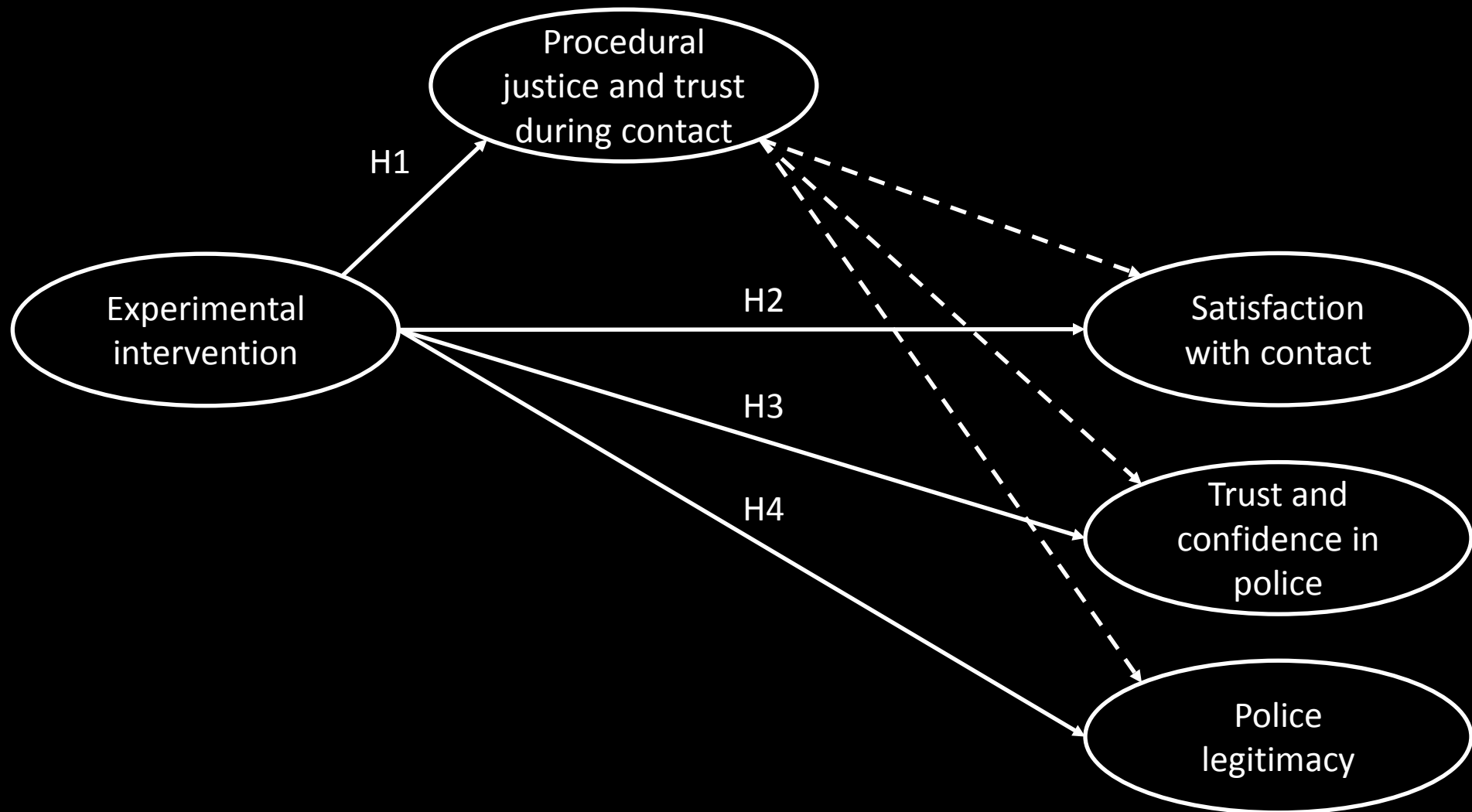
Results – overall trust



Results – legitimacy



Revisiting the hypotheses



What went wrong?

- Findings are unexpected ... and puzzling
- No obvious problems with design and implementation (e.g. distribution of leaflets)
- Negative effects seem to be result of intervention?
- Why?

Follow up study

- Focus groups with officers in experiment group suggest following types of problems:
 - Bureaucratized encounters
 - Cultural resistance
 - Organizational (in)justice
 - Some failures of communication
 - Leaflet?

Conclusions

- Did we replicate QCET?
 - Probably not
- Did we need to replicate QCET?
 - Arguably not
 - Enhancing public perceptions of fairness and legitimacy is difficult; more so when starting from a relatively high base
- Ran into some important issues in relation to police culture and organizational justice

Conclusions

- Replicating even simple RCTs in policing contexts is difficult
- Local social and cultural factors always come into play
- Difficult to separate the intervention from the organization delivering it

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