



Different shades of blue:

The influence of gender and ethnicity on attitudes towards the police in The Netherlands

Bachelor Thesis Sociology

Abstract

This research is focusing on the influence of gender and ethnicity on the attitudes towards the police. More specifically, this study aims to discover to what extent gender and ethnicity interact regarding the attitudes towards the police by analysing data from the European Social Survey (ESS). The sample consisted of 1563 Dutch respondents and SPSS was used to execute three multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA). The results show that ethnic minorities, older people, the least educated and people with a high level of general trust have the most positive attitudes towards the police whilst gender and previous contact with the police are non-significant. Moreover, the interaction effect is significant and the following ranking order, from least to most positive attitudes towards the police, can be derived: minority females, majority males, majority females and minority males.

Keywords: attitudes towards police; procedural fairness; police effectiveness; intersectionality; European Social Survey.

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Introduction

In the last week of January 2021, the Dutch government instituted a curfew from 21.00 to 04.30 to stem the Covid-19 pandemic (Rijksoverheid, z.d.). People stimulated each other on social media to revolt against this measure (Henley, 2021). As a consequence, multiple groups with different intentions came together which resulted in violent riots all across the country (Henley, 2021). Shops were looted, hospitals were attacked, and the Dutch police warned on Twitter to stay away from the riots (Trouw, 2021; Volkskrant, 2021a). Several police officers were assaulted with rocks and fireworks and were forced to use tear gas in order to try to contain the crowd (Volkskrant, 2021a). The mayor of Eindhoven declared that the demonstrations were a cover-up to justify the primary goal of the rioters; being violent towards the police (Volkskrant, 2021b). This particular day clearly shows the consequences of citizens' negative attitudes towards the police; the rioters not only disobeyed the police but also attacked the law enforcers (BBC, 2021; Volkskrant, 2021c). As seen in this example of the curfew riots, a negative attitude towards the police could thus have far-reaching consequences.

In 2019, research showed that 56% of the Dutch citizens were satisfied with the functioning of the police, against 11% that were unsatisfied (CBS, 2019). Public support and trust for the police are needed to accomplish their duty (Schaap, 2020; Tyler, 2004; Mbuba, 2010). As research shows, the attitudes that citizens have towards the police in matters of trust influence their behaviour in conforming to the law and the eagerness to help the police (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Koster, 2017).

A factor that influences satisfaction with the police is ethnicity. Skogan (2005) found that in Chicago White citizens are almost always more satisfied with the police than Black citizens or Latino citizens. Wu (2014) concluded the same: Black Americans held a more negative attitude towards the police than White Americans. Strikingly, females, another group that experienced inequality for years (Neve, 1995), were more satisfied with the police than males (Skogan, 2005). Taylor, Turner, Esbensen and Winfree (2001) found the same relationship between females and attitudes towards the police among juveniles. Females thus seem to have more positive attitudes towards the police than males, while minority groups have more negative attitudes towards the police than the majority group. It is therefore enriching to explore how those attitudes emerge.

Besides those main effects, it is interesting to look at the intersectionality of gender and ethnicity. Weldon (2008, p. 193) describes intersectionality as "*the interaction between systems of oppression*". It refers to a situation in which people experience multiple forms of suppression. For example, a minority female will not only have experiences and problems based on

belonging to the minority but also has experiences and problems with being a female. It is important to research this intersectionality because otherwise, as Weldon (2008, p. 195) states, “(...) *we systematically overlook the experiences of many different groups (...)*”. Collins and Moyer (2008) showed the importance of researching intersectionality in their research on the characteristics of judges and how that may influence their judicial conclusions. The outcome suggested that when intersectionality was included, a more suitable explanation was provided than by simply looking at the main effects. Previous research has also shown the importance of examining intersectionality when researching crime (Bell, 2013; Peguero & Popp, 2012).

Despite the fact that the link on the main effects of ethnicity, gender and attitudes towards the police is broadly researched (Lai & Zhao, 2010; Mbuba, 2010), this has not been done with data on Dutch citizens. This is particularly important when there appears to be the aforementioned negative link which results in people having less support for, and less obedience towards the police. It is therefore enriching to understand this link so that the Dutch government and the Dutch police know in which areas there are gains to be made in order to increase the trust of citizens. Furthermore, researching intersectionality will give us a more overall explanation on how the two main effects interact and influence the attitudes towards the police. The effects of gender, ethnicity and the interaction of gender and ethnicity will be explained using procedural justice theory, group threat theory, the police contact hypothesis, the chivalry hypothesis, the concept of the ideal victim and the social condition model. As research has shown that outcomes on police attitudes could differ on the conceptual definition (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek & Kaminski, 2015), the attitudes towards the police will be measured in this research as the trust in (1) the procedural fairness of the police and (2) the police effectiveness. Data from the European Social Survey (2005) is used to analyse the following research question: To what extent do ethnicity and gender interact and influence attitudes towards the police in the Netherlands?

Theory

Procedural justice theory

The theoretical argument that is generally used in research regarding attitudes towards the police, is the procedural justice theory (Gau, 2010; Reisig & Lloyd, 2009). Tyler (1988, 2011) first developed the theory in his work in order to research how the attitudes of citizens towards the police derives. The procedural justice theory suggests that those attitudes towards the police can be improved if the police enforce the law in a procedural fair form (Tyler, 2011). A procedural fair form consists of the police being transparent, clarifying decisions and treating

people with respect (Tyler, 2011). Tyler's argument has gained much support by, for example, Reisig, Bratton and Gertz (2007). Their research has shown that the opinions on the procedural fairness of the police influenced the perceived police legitimacy. Moreover, Murphy (2009) has shown that the perceived procedural justice of the respondents is the best predictor for satisfaction with the police regarding police-initiated contacts whilst the performance of the police is the best predictor for satisfaction with the police regarding the citizen-initiated contacts. Since this distinction is found by several researchers (Nix et al., 2015; Murphy, 2009), it is interesting to measure the attitudes towards the police in those separate concepts: procedural fairness of the police and the police effectiveness since those outcomes may differ.

However, the procedural justice theory also received criticism. Scrase (2020) discussed a gap in the theory; it does not explain why do those feelings of (un)fairness lead to the perceptions of (il)legitimate police. In addition, Harkin (2015) addresses issues with the concept of police legitimacy. In his opinion, the concept cannot fully explain “(...) *the unpredictable and peculiar reactions to police malfeasance*” (Harkin, 2015, p.608). In order to fill the gaps in this theory and to build a strong theoretical framework, I will make use of different theories, besides the procedural justice theory, to explain the effects of gender and ethnicity on attitudes towards the police.

Ethnicity and attitudes towards the police

As mentioned earlier, previous research shows that race and ethnicity play an important factor in attitudes towards the police. Among college students, Mbuba (2010) found that students who belonged to the minority group had more negative attitudes towards the police than White students overall. In addition, Wu, Sun and Triplett (2009) have shown the same type of relationship; Afro-Americans feel less satisfied with the police than Whites. However, the neighbourhood composition happened to play an even more important role in explaining attitudes towards the police. Wu et al. (2009) concluded that people who live in merely White neighbourhoods or racially mixed neighbourhoods had more positive attitudes towards the police than neighbourhoods that mostly consisted of Afro-Americans. Belonging to a minority group thus seems to have a negative influence on attitudes toward the police (Lai & Zhao, 2010; Engel, 2005; Avdija, 2010)

A theoretical framework that explains the relationship between ethnicity and attitudes towards the police, assuming that the police can be viewed as a mirror of society which will be discussed later on, is the group threat theory. This theory is based on the work of Blalock (1967) and Blumer (1958). They hypothesized that relationships between the majority and minority

group were not so much based on individual characteristics or beliefs, but more on macro explanations. Group threat theory states that enmity between racial groups and prejudices are a result of the minority group getting bigger and seeking a better social position. This is the case in The Netherlands since the number of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands has almost doubled since the late '90s (CBS, 2020b). Moreover, the death of George Floyd in March 2020, as a consequence of illegitimate police violence, triggered a new series of Black Lives Matters protests around the world (Taylor, 2021), as well as in the Netherlands (Vissers, 2020). Thousands of Dutch people demonstrated in the summer of 2020 in order to get attention and recognition for institutional racism (Meershoek, 2020). As such, ethnic minorities are seeking a better social position. Therefore, the majority group feels threatened due to the desire to stay dominant and maintain their current social position (King & Wheelock, 2007). This is confirmed by several researchers who found that there is resistance and rejection between the majority group and the minority groups in the Netherlands (Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers & Verkuyten, 2008; McGinnity and Gijssberts, 2016; Tolsma, Lubbers & Coenders, 2008).

The social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1978) gives us an explanation of the consequences of this ethnic competition. It states that when one is disadvantaged by the ethnic majority, this will cause a greater identification with the own ethnic minority group which can lead to hostility (Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey, 1999). Research in the Netherlands has found evidence for this line of reasoning; feelings of exclusion from one ethnic group created hostility towards the other ethnic group (Schaafsma & Williams, 2012). This hostility influences the attitudes towards the police, given that the police is a reflection of society. In 2020, 23% of the Dutch society belongs to an ethnic minority (CBS, 2020a). The majority and minority groups within the police are as clearly distinguishable as in society. In 2018, 87% of the employees at the police belonged to the majority group against 13% who belonged to the minority group (CBS, 2018). The hostility from the minority group towards the majority group, as a consequence of the ethnic competition, will cause more negative attitudes towards the police, since the police consist mainly of people from the majority group. This causes ethnic minorities to experience hostility towards the police which in turn causes them to have more negative attitudes towards the police.

This is also in line with the aforementioned procedural justice theory; if one group, in this case, the minorities, feel like they are not treated fairly, this has a negative effect on the cooperation with the justice system and aggression towards the organizational structure (Vermunt & Steensma, 2016). The police-contact hypothesis clarifies these attitudes towards the police even more. It proposes that the way in which contact with the police is interpreted

influences how the police are perceived (Taylor, Turner, Esbensen and Winfree (2001). Negative confrontations cause negative feelings towards the police and positive confrontations cause positive feelings towards the police. In 2019, Dutch people with a western- and non-western migration background experienced contact with the police more negatively than Dutch people without a migration background (CBS, 2020c). Following the police contact hypothesis, the Dutch people with a western and non-western migration background will have less positive attitudes towards the police than Dutch people without a migration background will have. Therefore, the following hypothesis can be derived:

H1: Ethnic minorities have less positive attitudes towards the police than ethnic majorities.

Gender and attitudes towards the police

Next to ethnicity, gender also seems to play an important role in shaping attitudes towards the police. Cheurprakrobkit (2002) found that being a male has a negative influence on perceiving all aspects related to the police, such as 'fairness' 'helpfulness' and 'ability to prevent crime'. This is in line with the research of Schafer, Huebner and Bynum (2003) in which males not only had a negative effect on the overall attitudes towards the global police but also on community police. Females are thus likely to perceive the police more positively than males (Skogan, 2005).

Combining the earlier mentioned police-contact hypothesis with the chivalry hypothesis will present an adequate explanation on why there is a difference between males and females regarding the attitudes towards the police. The chivalry hypothesis states that females obtain a more indulgent treatment than males in the criminal justice system (Grabe, Trager, Lear & Rauch, 2006). Multiple accounts have shown evidence for this hypothesis (Shechory Bitton & Zvi, 2018; Shaw, Vaughan & Vandiver, 2020). This implies that females have more positive contact with the police overall, therefore experience contact with the police in a more positive way which also causes females to have more positive attitudes towards the police than their male counterparts. However, it should be noted that previous research has found that the chivalry hypothesis does not always apply. It was only found to apply to females who conform to the expected sex role (Chesney-Lind, 1978).

The concept of the 'ideal victim' is very relevant and provides an explanation of why females receive a more lenient treatment than males. The term was used by Christie (1986) in order to define the group that, according to society, deserves the term 'victim' the most. The

author defined the ideal victim as: “(...) a person or a category of individuals who -when hit by crime- most readily are given the complete and legitimate status of being a victim” (Christie, 2018, p.12). It is mostly based on stereotypes (Christie, 1986). Research has found that being a female is for many a vital part of their perception of the ideal victim (O’Brien, 2013; Islam, 2016; Bosma, Mulder, Pemberton & Vingerhoets, 2018). When women are often perceived as ideal victims, and not so much as perpetrators, this can explain why females receive a more indulgent treatment than males. Furthermore, research has shown that police officers can be afraid to get accused of misconduct when stopping females, which also could result in females getting a more positive treatment than males (Lundman & Kaufman, 2003).

In addition to the above theoretical framework, the procedural justice theory provides the same explanation. If females feel like the police treat them favourable and fair, then they should experience more positive attitudes towards the police than males. According to the aforementioned theoretical concepts, females will experience contact with the police more positively than males, which will result in a more positive attitude towards the police than their male counterparts. Following this line of reasoning, the following hypothesis can be derived.

H2: Females have more positive attitudes towards the police than males.

Gender x ethnicity and attitudes towards the police

Besides the main effects, it is interesting to look at how a possible interaction could influence the attitudes towards the police. Previous research on sanctioning crime has shown that there is to some extent an interaction effect; ethnicity has a negative effect on sanctioning among male offenders but not among female offenders (Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006). This is in line with the research of Doerner and Demuth (2010). They found that Black and Hispanic males received longer sentences than White males, whereas there were no statistically significant ethnic differences for females. According to Steffensmeier, Ulmer and Kramer (1998), the total effect of ethnicity is smaller on females than on males, considering minority males getting an overall rougher sentence. However, Spohn, Welch and Gruhl (1985) did find a significant effect of ethnicity between females. The authors concluded that whilst Black females were less likely to be imprisoned and received less harsh punishments than Black males, they differed significantly from White females and more closely matched the ‘levels’ of White males. The intersectionality between gender and ethnicity thus appears to be an ambiguous statement.

Individual police behaviour could be explained by the social condition model. Smith and Alpert (2007) described police behaviour as a consequence of unintended stereotyping “*and the illusory correlation phenomenon*” (p. 1262). In other words, police officers may overestimate unfavourable actions that are associated with minority group members. Therefore, ethnicity and gender are both important factors to look at, since they are more visually noticeable factors than for example, socio-economic status or educational level. Following this theoretical framework and combining this with the aforementioned police contact hypothesis, we can derive a ‘ranking order’ from having the most negative attitudes towards the police to having the most positive attitudes towards the police.

Freiburger and Hilinski-Rosick (2013) found the chances that an offender was sentenced to probation, instead of jail, were ranked from high to low as follows; white females, followed by black females, white males and black males. This suggests that males, in general, receive harsher sentences than females and that ethnicity has a less strong effect than gender. Although the earlier discussed research has found that Black females and White males were at somewhat the same ‘level’, Nowacki (2017) states, like Freiburger and Hilinski-Rosink (2013), that females always receive less harsh sentences than males. In addition, much research on this topic revealed that the interaction effect is stronger among males than among females (Steffensmeier, Painter-Davis & Ulmer, 2017; Spohn & Brennan, 2011; Doerner & Demuth, 2010; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2006). This could be due to the “blameworthiness” of females, which is relevant since females are seen as less blameworthy than males (Doerner & Demuth, 2010). This would suggest that being a female plays a bigger role than ethnicity, considering females are often perceived as ideal victims and therefore deserve less ‘blame’.

According to the police contact hypothesis, the type of treatment experienced will influence the attitudes towards the police. Moreover, the groups who experience more negative contacts with the police (minority males and majority males) have more negative attitudes towards the police. The following hypothesis on the interaction of gender and ethnicity on attitudes towards the police can be derived from the theoretical framework.

H3: Minority males experience the most negative attitudes towards the police, followed by majority males. Minority females have more positive attitudes towards the police than minority and majority males, but less positive attitudes than majority females.

Methods

Data and selections

Data from the European Social Survey (EES) (2010) has been used in order to research the main question. Since 2001, the ESS takes face-to-face interviews every two years to measure opinions, perspectives and behaviour among citizens in more than thirty countries. Until 2021, 9 waves were conducted. To analyse the attitudes towards the police, I will use wave 5, which was conducted in 2010 and 2011. Specific items on attitudes in the police, such as trust, legitimacy and effectiveness, were included in this wave. The participants are all selected through random probability methods and in every country, there were at least 1500 citizens examined, or 800 in countries with less than 2 million citizens, to achieve an effective sample size. The minimum response rate was targeted at 70%. Out of the 27 countries, 6 countries were non-European Union and the minimum age to participate was 15 years old, there was no maximum age. The total N is 52.458. To specify the data on this research, I selected only data collected in the Netherlands which resulted in the N of 1829. The response rate for the Netherlands was 60%.

Operationalization of the dependent variables

The dependent variable *attitudes towards the police* is operationalised, based on earlier arguments, as two scales which can be distinguished in the following themes; (1) trust in the police effectiveness and (2) trust in the procedural fairness of the police. The European Social Survey already made a distinction between those two and therefore the items have different answer categories. By including both scales in the analysis, an overall image of attitudes towards the police can be derived. The respondents should have answered all questions in order to get a score on each scale. The items were recoded in such a way that a higher score on the scale indicated a higher level of trust in the effectiveness or the procedural fairness of the police.

To begin with, *the trust in the police effectiveness* is measured by two questions. First, the respondents were asked how successful the police are at preventing crimes in the Netherlands. Respondents answered this by an 11-points scale, starting from 0=extremely unsuccessful to 10=extremely successful. The second question related to the success of the police in catching house burglars in the Netherlands and was answered the same way as the previous question; an 11-points scale, which was answered the same way as the scale above, from extremely unsuccessful=0 to extremely successful=10. The scale on trust in the effectiveness of the police has a Cronbach's α of 0.715 which indicates that these variables are coherent and that the scale is reliable. On this scale, 84 of the 1829 (4.6%) respondents were

excluded because they did not meet the requirement of answering both questions. Therefore, 1745 respondents remained, which is a loss of 4.6% of the total N.

Second, *the trust in the procedural fairness* of the police is based on three questions. To start with, the respondents were asked on their opinion how often the police treat people with respect. There were four possible answers: from not often at all=1 to very often=4. The second question related to how often the police make impartial, fair decisions. This was also answered on the previous mentioned 4-point scale. Finally, the respondents were asked how often they think the police explain their decisions and actions when asked. This was also answered on a 4-point scale: from not often at all=1 to very often=4. The respondents who answered that no one ever asks the police to explain were recoded as missings (n=23). The total scale has a Cronbach's α of 0.67 and 218 respondents were excluded from the scale because they failed to meet the requirement of answering all questions. Without these respondents, there is a total N of 1611 respondents which is a loss of 11.9%.

Operationalization of the independent variables

The independent variable *gender* was measured by the question whether the respondent was a male or a female, which was then recoded in male=0 and female=1. This question was answered by all 1829 respondents and the percentage of lost cases is therefore 0.00. *Ethnicity* was measured by the following question: do you belong to an ethnic minority in the Netherlands? Which was then recoded in ethnic minority=1 and ethnic majority=0. There were 3 missings on this variable which equals a loss of 0.2%.

Operationalization of the control variables

Besides the dependent and the independent variable, there will three control variables. To begin with, there will be controlled for *having contact with the police*, initiated by the police. This variable is relevant because being in contact with the police could influence the attitudes towards the police (Huebner, Schafer & Bynum, 2004). Research has shown that females, as well as White people, experience more satisfaction with police-initiated encounters than African American males or Latino males (Skogan, 2005). The question which is used to measure the contact was: In the past 2 years, did the police in the Netherlands approach you, stop you or make contact with you for any reason? With 1=yes and 0=no. The percentage of lost respondents is 0.3% because there were 5 missings. 1824 respondents answered this question.

Second, there will be controlled for *age*. This will be relevant because research has shown that age could influence attitudes towards the police positively (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005). The variable age was conducted by recoding the question in which year the respondent was born. The answer represents the age of the respondent in 2010 and was recoded further into categories. This is necessary for the readability of the analysis which will be conducted later. Age was recoded in three categories: adolescents (15 until 30 years), adults (31 until 64 years) and elder people (65 until 96 years). All 1829 respondents answered this question and thus 0% of the cases were lost.

Furthermore, there will be controlled for *educational level*. Research has shown that a higher educational level has a negative influence on the attitudes towards the police (Hinds & Murphy, 2007). The variable that is used to control for this effect is the highest level of education as indicated by the respondent. The question: “what is your highest level of education?” originally had 18 answer categories which were, based on the International Standard Classification of Education (Unesco, 2011), reduced to four categories; 1=primary education or no education, 2= lower secondary education, 3= upper secondary education and 4= higher professional or tertiary education. This was also done based on previous research (Begall & Mills, 2013). Only 6 respondents failed to answer this question which equals a percentage of 0.3. The question was thus answered by 1823 respondents.

Finally, there will be controlled for *general trust in other people*. This is relevant because the overall trust in people could influence the attitudes towards the police. Previous research has shown that trust in the police is also influenced by trust in the neighbourhoods (Sun, Hu & Wu, 2012). It is therefore interesting to control for trust in people in general. This variable was conducted with an 11-point scale on which the respondent has answered if most people can be trusted=10 or you cannot be too careful=0. 1825 respondents succeeded in answering this question and therefore, 0.2% of the cases were lost.

After we equalized the N for the dependent, independent and control variables, there were 1563 cases left. The percentage of lost cases compared to the total N=1829 at the start of the recoding process is 14.5%. The descriptive statistics are in Table 1.

Descriptive statistics

The respondents in this research are average regarding the trust in the effectiveness of the police. The mean score is 4.95 on a scale from 0 to 10. What sticks out is that no respondent has rated the effectiveness of the police as perfect (10). The trust in procedural fairness is slightly more positive. On average, the respondents score 2.81 on a scale of 1 to 4.

The variable gender is equally distributed; there are slightly more females than males, but they are to some extent equal with a mean of 0.52. This is not the case with ethnicity. The mean of this variable with 1=ethnic minority is 0.05 or 5%. This is not representative for the Dutch society (CBS, 2020a) and can be caused by response bias.

The average educational level is high = 2.95. There are more respondents with a higher educational level than a lower educational level. The mean of the respondents belongs to the second age category (adults). On average, the respondents have a high level of trust in people in general; 6.07 on a scale from 0 to 10, which means that respondents feel more like most people can be trusted than that you should be careful trusting people. Last, the average of being in contact with the police the past two years is less than half (0.43) which means that the majority of the respondents have not been in contact with the police.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Dependent (Trust in...)				
Effectiveness	0.00	9.50	4.95	1.52
Procedural fairness	1.00	4.00	2.81	0.45
Independent				
Female	0.00	1.00	0.52	0.50
Ethnic minority	0.00	1.00	0.05	0.22
Control				
Educational level	1.00	4.00	2.95	0.92
Age	1.00	3.00	2.06	0.60
Trust in general	0.00	10.00	6.07	2.00
Contact with police	0.00	1.00	0.43	0.50

N = 1563

Analysis

In order to test the hypotheses, there will be three multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) conducted. A MANOVA analysis is an extended version of a linear univariate analysis and is used to analyse outcomes on multiple dependent variables (Field, 2013, p.737). Since there are two dependent variables in this research, several models using a MANOVA will be tested. In the first model, the MANOVA is examined to test the effects of the two independent variables (female and ethnic minority) on the two dependent variables (trust in the police effectiveness and trust in the procedural fairness of the police). In the second model, the control variables (educational level, age, trust in general and contact with the police) will be added to the model. In the third model, I examine a MANOVA in order to check if there is an interaction effect for the variables gender and ethnicity.

Because there is a large N in this research, we will look at Wilks' Lambda (Λ) which will tell us the percentage of variance explained by the variables. Besides that, the partial eta squared ($P\eta^2$) will be used to obtain the variance that is associated with the examined relationship, with the corresponding error variance taken into account.

In this paper, the Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices will be disregarded because the sample size in this research is large (Field, 2013, p. 753). This will also be done with Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances, mainly because our large sample size could indicate a problem with the test, even if that problem is small and irrelevant (Field, 2013, p. 248).

To test the significance of all variables, the dependent variables will first be jointly examined in a MANOVA. If there appears to be a significant effect, there will be checked if this significant effect holds up only for the trust in the procedural fairness of the police or for the trust in the police effectiveness (or both). If this effect is also significant, I will look further into the means of the different groups in order to determine the direction of the significant relationship. An alpha level of 0.10 is used to determine the significance.

Results

Model 1: main effects

First, the main effects of gender and ethnicity on the trust in the effectiveness of the police and the trust in the procedural fairness will be analysed jointly using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (Model 1 in Table 5). The effects show that there are no significant differences between females and males regarding the trust in both aspects ($\Lambda=0.997$, $F(2, 1559)=1.98$, $P\eta^2=0.003$, $p=0.138$). There will be no further post hoc analyses because the

variable female has no significant effect on attitudes towards the police and therefore, there cannot be any conclusions drawn on the different groups. The mean score of each value on the variables can be seen in table 2. There is also no significant difference between people who belong to an ethnic minority and people who belong to an ethnic majority regarding the attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda = 0.998$, $F(2, 1559) = 1.5$, $P\eta^2 = 0.002$, $p = 0.224$).

Table 2. Mean scores of Model 1; the main effects

		Trust in the procedural fairness	Trust in the effectiveness
Gender	Male	2.78	4.97
	Female	2.79	5.12
Ethnicity	Majority	2.81	4.93
	Minority	2.77	5.16

⁺ $p < 0.10$, ^{*} $p < 0.05$, ^{**} $p < 0.001$,

Model 2: control variables

In Model 2 (Table 5), the control variables were added to see the effects of age, educational level, previous contact with the police and general trust on the main effects. The mean scores of each value on the variables can be seen in table 3. There is still no significant effect of gender on attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda = 0.997$, $F(2, 1543) = 2.1$, $P\eta^2 = 0.003$, $p = 0.123$), which means that there are still no differences between males and females on attitudes towards the police.

However, there is a small, but significant difference between respondents who belong to the ethnic minority and respondents who belong to the ethnic majority on attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda = 0.997$, $F(2, 1543) = 2.32$, $P\eta^2 = 0.003$, $p = 0.099$). This effect holds up only for the trust in effectiveness ($p = 0.042$) and not for the trust in procedural fairness ($p = 0.869$). By looking at the means (Table 3), we can conclude that people who belong to an ethnic minority have a more positive attitude towards the trust in the police effectiveness ($M_{\text{minority}} = 5.15$) than people who belong to the ethnic majority ($M_{\text{majority}} = 4.8$). It should be noted that this is a very small effect ($P\eta^2 = 0.003$).

Furthermore, age appears to have a significant effect on attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda = 0.987$, $F(4, 3086) = 5.02$, $P\eta^2 = 0.006$, $p < 0.001$). However, the effect is only significant for the trust in effectiveness ($p < 0.001$) and not for the trust in procedural fairness ($p = 0.466$). By looking at the means (Table 3), we can conclude that older people have the most positive

attitude ($M_{elderly}=5.19$), followed by the adolescents ($M_{adolescents}=4.93$). The adults have the least positive attitudes regarding the trust in the effectiveness of the police ($M_{adults}=4.81$). However, age also has a very small effect on the attitudes towards the police ($P\eta^2=0.006$).

A significant effect was also found for general trust in people ($\Lambda=0.935$, $F(20, 3086)=5.26$, $P\eta^2=0.003$, $p<0.001$). This effect was found for the trust in the effectiveness of the police ($p<0.001$) as well as for the trust in the procedural fairness of the police ($p<0.001$). By looking at the means (Table 3), we can conclude that people who have a high level of trust in people in general ($=9$), also have the most positive attitudes towards the police regarding the trust in the procedural fairness ($M_{high\ general\ trust}=2.95$) and the trust in the effectiveness ($M_{high\ general\ trust}=5.61$) (Table 3). On average, a higher level of general trust in people indicates a higher level of trust in the effectiveness of the police. This is also the case for the trust in procedural fairness; a higher level of general trust in people indicates a higher level of trust in the procedural fairness of the police. The effects for the trust in the effectiveness, as well as for the trust in the procedural fairness are small to medium ($P\eta^2=0.033$).

Previous contact with the police, which is initiated by the police, has no significant effect on the attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda=1.00$, $F(2, 1543)=0.21$, $P\eta^2=0.000$, $p=0.812$). The people who have been in contact with the police do not significantly differ from the people who have not been in contact with the police on their attitudes towards the police. For this reason, there will not be looked further into the differences between the groups.

Lastly, the educational level has a significant effect on attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda=0.984$, $F(6, 3086)=4.15$, $P\eta^2=0.008$, $p<0.001$). However, the effect of educational level is only significant for the trust in effectiveness ($p=0.002$) and not for the trust in procedural fairness ($p=0.241$). For that reason, we will look more in-depth only for the trust in effectiveness. By looking at the means (Table 3), we can conclude that people who are the least educated have a more positive attitude ($M_{least\ educated}=5.27$) than the highest educated people ($M_{most\ educated}=4.72$). This ascending scale also applies to the groups in between the lowest and the highest educated (see Table 3). However, it should be noted that this effect is small ($P\eta^2=0.008$).

Table 3. Mean scores of Model 2; the main effects and control variables

		Trust in the procedural fairness	Trust in the effectiveness
Gender	Male	2.74	4.90
	Female	2.75	5.05
Ethnicity	Majority	2.75	4.80 ⁺
	Minority	2.73	5.15 ⁺
Age	Adolescents	2.732	4.93**
	Adults	2.76	4.81**
	Older people	2.73	5.19**
General trust in people	0 = lowest trust	2.63**	4.21**
	1	2.61**	4.19**
	2	2.64**	4.64**
	3	2.72**	4.43**
	4	2.69**	5.15**
	5	2.73**	5.19**
	6	2.73**	5.42**
	7	2.83**	5.42**
	8	2.85**	5.40**
	9	2.95**	5.61**
	10 = highest trust	2.76**	5.06**
Previous contact with police	Yes	2.75	4.99
	No	2.73	4.96
Educational level	Primary/none	2.70	5.27*
	Lower secondary	2.74	4.99*
	Upper secondary	2.75	4.92*
	Higher professional	2.78	4.72*

⁺p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.001.

Model 3: interaction variable

In Model 3 (Table 5), the interaction variable is added to the analysis to see the effects on the attitudes towards the police. As also seen in the previous models, the main effect of gender when ethnicity=0 is not significant on attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda=0.998$, $F(2, 1542)=1.55$, $P\eta^2=0.002$, $p=0.213$). Moreover, by adding the interaction variable, ethnicity does not have a significant effect on attitudes towards the police any longer when gender=0 ($\Lambda=0.997$, $F(2, 1542)=2.25$, $P\eta^2=0.003$, $p=0.106$).

The interaction variable of ethnicity and gender has a small, but significant effect on the attitudes towards the police ($\Lambda=0.997$, $F(2, 1542)=2.35$, $P\eta^2=0.003$, $p=0.096$). However, this effect is only found for the trust in the procedural fairness ($p=0.036$) and not for the trust in effectiveness ($p=0.291$). By looking at the mean scores (Table 4), we can conclude that minority females have the least positive attitudes towards the trust in procedural fairness ($M_{\text{minority females}}=2.63$), followed by majority males ($M_{\text{majority males}}=2.74$) and majority females ($M_{\text{majority females}}=2.75$). Minority males have the most positive attitudes ($M_{\text{minority males}}=2.83$) towards the procedural fairness. This effect is small ($P\eta^2=0.003$).

Every control variable has the same significant effect in Model 2 as in Model 3. The values hardly changed and there were no striking differences between the second and the third model. Therefore, the specific mean scores will be not discussed any further but can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Mean scores of Model 3; the main effects, control variables and interaction

		Trust in the procedural fairness	Trust in the effectiveness
Gender	Male	2.78	4.97
	Female	2.69	4.96
Ethnicity	Majority	2.74	4.80
	Minority	2.73	5.14
Age	Adolescents	2.73	4.92**
	Adults	2.76	4.80**
	Older people	2.72	5.18**
General trust in people	0 = lowest trust	2.63**	4.21**
	1	2.61**	4.19**

	2	2.64**	4.63**
	3	2.71**	4.42**
	4	2.69**	5.14**
	5	2.73**	5.19**
	6	2.72**	5.41**
	7	2.83**	5.41**
	8	2.85**	5.39**
	9	2.94**	5.60**
	10 = highest trust	2.75**	5.04**
Previous contact with police	Yes	2.74	4.99
	No	2.73	4.95
Educational level	Primary/none	2.70	5.26*
	Lower secondary	2.73	4.98*
	Upper secondary	2.74	4.91*
	Higher professional	2.78	4.72*
Gender*ethnicity	Male majority	2.74 ⁺	4.71
	Male minority	2.83 ⁺	5.23
	Female majority	2.75 ⁺	4.89
	Female minority	2.63 ⁺	5.04

⁺p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.001.

The effects on the dependent variables when considered jointly in all three models of the MANOVA are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. MANOVA of main effects on attitudes towards the police, controlled for multiple variables

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Λ	$P\eta^2$	Λ	$P\eta^2$	Λ	$P\eta^2$
Main effect						
Female	0.997	0.003	0.997	0.003	0.998	0.002
Ethnic minority	0.998	0.002	0.997 ⁺	0.003 ⁺	0.997	0.003

Control

Age	-	-	0.987**	0.006**	0.987**	0.003**
General trust	-	-	0.935**	0.033**	0.957**	0.043**
Contact police	-	-	1.00	0.00	0.999	0.001
Educational level	-	-	0.984*	0.008*	0.980*	0.020*

Interaction

Female*ethnic minority	-	-	-	-	0.997 ⁺	0.003 ⁺
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⁺p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.001.

Note: total N of respondents is 1563.

Conclusion

The aforementioned consequences that a negative attitude towards the police could have, makes scientific research important. By following and substantiating multiple theories, different hypotheses were formulated to examine the relationship of gender and ethnicity in relation to attitudes towards the police. In this research, a negative relationship was expected between ethnic minorities and attitudes towards the police whilst a positive relationship was expected between females and attitudes towards the police. By theorizing the interaction effect, it was expected that the ranking order, from least positive to most positive, is as follows: minority males, majority males, minority females and majority females.

The first hypothesis of ethnic minorities having more negative attitudes towards the police than ethnic majorities must be rejected. In the first and the third model, the effect was not significant. In the second model, there is a significant effect but only for the trust in the police effectiveness. However, the mean scores of the second model (table 3) show that the relationship between ethnicity and attitudes towards the police turns out the other way around; ethnic minorities have more positive attitudes towards the police than ethnic majorities. Although this effect is significant, ethnicity explains little of the variance among attitudes towards the police. The influence of ethnicity on attitudes towards the police is unexpected. This could be due to the group threat theory being an insufficient explanatory argument for explaining the influence of ethnicity on the attitudes towards the police. Criticism of the group threat theory mostly derives from proponents of the contact hypothesis which argues that more

contact with an ‘other racial group’ than one belongs to, will reduce prejudice (Williams, 1947; Allport, Clark & Pettigrew, 1954). However, this theoretical argument provides an explanation on why ethnic minorities experience the same positive attitudes as ethnic majorities, it still does not explain why ethnic minorities have more positive attitudes than ethnic majorities. Since the effect of ethnicity is small, one may wonder whether ethnicity has an effect at all. This will be elaborated more in the discussion.

The second hypothesis of females having more positive attitudes towards the police than males must be rejected too. The effects of gender on attitudes towards the police were in the first model, as well as in the second and third model non-significant. This analysis shows that in this research, there are no significant differences between males and females on their attitudes towards the police. The result of gender having no significant effect is also unexpected. This could be due to the dataset being outdated because the interviews were conducted in 2010 and since then, multiple historical events have happened that could have influence outcomes. In particular, one could think about the #MeToo movements that started in 2017 (Jaffe, 2018). Allegations of misconduct were made informally and the trial by media played a big role (Tuerkheimer, 2019). In this perspective, the theoretical argument that was made of females getting treated more lenient than males because the police officers are scared of getting a complaint of misconduct seems to be more relevant in this era. In this way, it could be the case that the theoretical argument does provide an explanation, but the data being relatively old influence the results. This will be discussed further in the discussion.

The third hypothesis on the interaction variable, where a ranking order was derived from the theoretical framework, must also be rejected. The interaction variable was significant, yet this only holds up for the trust in the procedural fairness of the police and not for the trust in the police effectiveness. The effect of gender on the procedural fairness of the police is moderated by ethnicity. However, the ranking order was not as suspected, and the effect is small. According to the means from the interaction variable on the trust in the procedural fairness of the police, the ranking order from least to most positive attitudes towards the police, is as follows: minority females, majority males, majority females and minority males. This is unexpected because the group that were expected to have the least positive attitudes towards the police, appears to have the most positive attitudes: minority males. This could be due to the operationalization of the variable ethnic minority. It is still a very broad category, and, in this research, there was no further distinction made between ethnic minorities. For example, it could be the case that within this ethnic minority group, there are Western as well as non-Western

ethnic minorities. This diversity may have resulted in a distorted picture of the influence of ethnicity on the attitudes towards the police. This will be discussed further in the discussion.

Apart from the above findings, another fact that stands out is the difference in significance on the distinction between trust in the procedural fairness of the police and trust in the police effectiveness. In the third model, the level of general trust in people and the interaction effect seem to be the best predictor for the trust in the procedural fairness, whilst age, educational level and general trust in people were the best predictors for trust in the police effectiveness. This means that the trust in the procedural fairness of the police and the trust in the police effectiveness are two different concepts. People can thus see the police as ineffective but fair, as well as effective but unfair.

Discussion

Although this research provides insights on which factors play a role in shaping attitudes towards the police, there are limitations. First of all, most findings are contradictory to what was expected. This could be due to the earlier mentioned operationalization of ethnic minorities and majorities which was measure by asking the respondent if they belong to an ethnic minority. This could have caused too much heterogeneity among the ethnic minority group. In much of the literature used for this research, authors make a distinction between skin colour (Skogan, 2005; Wu, 2014). This could be useful since this is a very visual characteristic of the appearance of human beings. By distinguishing ethnic minorities from majorities, instead of focusing more on appearance characteristics, the visual characteristics between the ethnic minorities in this research can be far apart. For example, people who have an African American background can have different experiences with the police than people with a Western background but are in this research both treated as ethnic minorities. Skogan (2005) has shown that characteristics of appearance have a strong effect on how people are treated by the police. Further research should thus focus more on making a correct operationalization of ethnicity as a variable by distinguishing groups based on visual characteristics as, for example, skin colour. In addition, the total N of the minority group was small which could be the result of a response bias.

Next to that, the effects in this research that were significant, were almost all small. The level of general trust is the only variable that seems to predict more than the other variables but still has a relatively small effect. This could be due to the operationalization of some of the variables. For example, having previous contact with the police does not explain any variance in the second model. Considering this, it could be due to the fact that this is a very neutral variable. It does say whether there was contact (police-initiated), but not how that contact was

interpreted. This could be problematic and provides an explanation of why the effects on some variables are small. Further research has to make sure that the variables that are used, also have substantive information about what that variable entails.

Furthermore, the data used in this research was collected in 2010/2011, which can be outdated, as mentioned earlier. Since then, the debate on misconduct, discrimination, ethnicity and illegitimate police violence has gained momentum (Taylor, 2021; Vissers, 2020). This does not mean that people did not experience negative contact with the police 10 years ago, but it could have caused shifts in people's behaviour and mentality. As mentioned above, the #MeToo movement has caused major attention on (mostly) females who experience sexual violence (Tambe, 2018). According to Pipyrou (2018, p.415), the movement created a break in "*decades of silence*". This silencing could also be of influence regarding the discussion on ethnicity and experiences with the police. The Black Lives Matter protests could have raised awareness of facts people assumed earlier for 'normal' or 'part of life' but has now gained more attention which could result in people open up about their experiences. However, the other side is also true, the awareness of these sensitive subjects could also cause a response bias as a result of all the attention regarding the earlier mentioned subjects. Nonetheless, future research with more recent data could provide more information on the possible shifts in behaviour, opinions and attitudes.

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