

Stay Cool, Hang Loose, Admit Nothing¹: Race, Intergroup Contact, and Public-Police Relations

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Drawing on the contact hypothesis of Allport (1954) and Pettigrew (1998) we examined whether public-police contact, among White and Black university students in Britain, mediated between participant race and perceived racism of police and cooperation with police, respectively. Study 1 ($N=105$) showed this to be the case for quality, but not quantity of contact. High-quality contact mitigated the negative effects of being Black on greater perceived racism and lower cooperation. Study 2 ($N=130$) assessed a general view of police and desired closeness to police as dependent variables and investigated the moderating potential of racial identification. Higher-quality and lower quantity of contact were associated with a more positive view of police and higher desired closeness. Identification moderated the effects of race on quantity of contact, view of police, and desired closeness, with negative effects driven by high identification.

The police are often depicted as racist, as highlighted by salient instances of unfavorable treatment by police of minority groups. Police racism is problematic in several multiracial societies, including the UK, United States, and Australia (Banton, 1994; Byron, 2001; Wortley & Homel, 1995). For example, in the USA “racial profiling”, the stopping and searching of people from particular racial groups, has become so pervasive that it is commonly referred to as walking, driving, or even breathing “while black or brown” (Shuford, 2005). This

targeting of minority groups has arguably even been intensified in the wake of post-9/11 legislation, such as the Patriot Act (Biemer & Brachear, 2003). In England and Wales, during 2002/2003 Black people were six times more likely to be “stopped and searched”² by the police than White people (Home Office, 2004). In 1993 Stephen Lawrence, a Black teenager, was murdered by a group of youths in South London. The subsequent Macpherson inquiry (Macpherson, 1999) concluded that London’s police service was riddled with “pernicious and persistent institutional racism” (par. 6.46). Since then other inquiries have reached similar conclusions (Stevens, 2004).

It appears that racism and differential treatment of minority groups exist on an institutional level in America’s and Britain’s police forces. This is clearly perceived

¹This refers to Basement 5, arguably *the* first black punk-inspired rock band, often described as hugely influential and groundbreaking. Starting out in London around 1978, ‘*The Basements*’ were an innovative and highly original post-punk group who created a kind of politically charged, futurist dub. The lyrics were an attempt to reflect the situation of young people in Britain in the era of Thatcherism, high unemployment, strikes, racism, and working-class poverty (<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=137956540>).

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²In the UK, the police have special powers to ‘stop and search’ individuals who they suspect of having committed a crime. In principle, the police can only detain members of the public in order to carry out a search when certain conditions have been met (Home Office, 2004).

by minority group members, and particularly, Black people, themselves (Havis & Best, 2004).³ In general, the Black community reports less positive experiences of interacting with the police than do Whites.⁴ Consequently and not surprisingly, Black people have less voluntary contact with the police than people of other ethnic groups (Clancy, Hough, Aust, & Kershaw, 2001). This lack of positive contact may have detrimental effects on Black people's attitudes towards the police and may make them less willing to cooperate. Research has shown that Black people are less willing to give witness statements, identify culprits, or give evidence in court than Whites (Smith, 1983; Jefferson & Walker, 1993).

Given that the police and the criminal justice system depend on public co-operation in order to be effective (cf. Wood & Viki, 2004), the above findings are a cause for great concern. A vicious circle might be operating here, with Black people perceiving police to be racist, leading to less positive contact between Black people and police and less cooperation, which reinforces the police's negative view of Black people. The current research examines the role of the quantity, and particularly, the quality of people's contact with the police with respect to the reported racial differences in view of the police and the willingness to cooperate with criminal investigations.

Public-Police Contact and Relations

In 1954, Gordon Allport conceptualized the *contact hypothesis*, which holds that in order for contact between members of different social groups to yield positive effects in terms of a reduction in prejudice and intergroup bias, four basic conditions should be present: equal status (both within the specific contact situation and on a societal level), common goals, intergroup cooperation, and institutional support. Of course, volunteering to engage in contact is an aiding factor, particularly with respect to the second and third conditions. In his reformulation of the contact hypothesis, Pettigrew (1998) added a fifth key condition: the potential for the members of the different groups to become friends. Allport's original four conditions provide the basis for this last condition: if contact takes place between members of unequal status groups who do

not have common goals and do not cooperate, it is unlikely that these people will form friendships (cf. Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Intergroup contact between the police force and members of the public ostensibly violates most of these conditions. By "intergroup contact" we mean contact occurring among members of different groups, not necessarily contact during which group memberships are salient (cf. Brown & Hewstone, 2005). The perceived salience of group memberships during public-police contact is likely to be determined by situational/contextual factors, e.g., it is probably high when a suspect is being arrested by the police force. During these interactions there are practically always substantial status differences, with the police holding most of the authority. Moreover, contact with police is often not voluntary, particularly for Black people. For example, contact is non-volitional in "stop and search" situations but is often voluntary when people report crimes to the police. The police and members of the public may have divergent goals (e.g., when a suspect is arrested). In these situations intergroup interactions are not cooperative, but conflict-ridden. Clearly, one would not expect intergroup friendships to form under these circumstances. Finally, among Black individuals public-police contact is often low quality because it is not characterized by institutional support, but by the prospect of racism and discrimination instead (Macpherson, 1999).

These facts notwithstanding, one may ask whether Allport's key conditions are necessary for contact to render beneficial effects. In a meta-analysis of the contact literature including 516 studies with 715 independent samples from 38 nations, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006), considering many different types of intergroup contact, including interethnic contact (e.g., Eller & Abrams, 2003), concluded that although optimal contact conditions yielded significantly greater reductions of prejudice ($r = -.29$), even suboptimal conditions (i.e., those lacking Allport's key conditions) can reduce prejudice to a meaningful degree ($r = -.20$).

The present research examines racial differences, but in terms of contact with a professional group, the police force, adding to a body of research making up only 5% of samples in Pettigrew and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis (in the category of "other" target groups). Sims, Hooper, and Peterson (2002) analyzed results from the Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) Citizen Survey—1999 to test if attitudes towards the police could be predicted by citizens' perceptions of physical and social incivilities, their fear of crime, and contact with police. Contact had no impact on people's attitudes towards the police. However, contact was operationalized poorly, using a one-item measure of the amount of citizen-initiated contact (number of times citizens contacted the police six months prior to the telephone survey), regardless of the reasons for, and quality of,

³We should note here that it has been suggested (e.g., Hurwitz & Peffley, 2005) that Black people might actually overestimate levels of racism in the police force and unfairness in the criminal justice system while Whites tend to underestimate them.

⁴It should be noted that there are currently only 7.4% of officers in the Metropolitan Police Service in London that are Black or Asian (Metropolitan Police Service, 2006). Hence, most public-police contact appears to be White police officers having contact with Black members of the public. The crossing of the two intergroup relationships of race and police-public are examined in more detail in Eller, Abrams, Imara, Viki, and Green (2006).

contact. Cheurprakobkit (2000) found that those members of the public in Texas who initiated contact with the police had more positive views of police than those whose contacts were initiated by the police.

Hurst and Frank (2000) showed that citizen-initiated positive contact was positively related to young people's attitudes towards police whereas police-initiated positive contact and citizen-initiated negative contact had no significant associations, and police-initiated negative contact was negatively related to attitudes towards police. Finally, Brown and Benedict (2002) reviewed over 100 articles on perceptions of and attitudes towards the police and conclude that these are predicted most effectively by age, race, neighborhood, and contact with the police.

The current research focuses on race differences in people's amount and quality of contact with the police, their views of police, and their likely cooperation in criminal investigations in Britain. Jefferson and Walker's (1993) survey of 641 Black, Asian, and White men of relatively low socio-economic status in Leeds, UK, revealed significantly higher disapproval ratings of the police among Black than White participants. Furthermore, the results showed that Black participants were significantly less willing than White participants to report hypothetical incidents (robbery, vandalism) to the police, to help identify the culprit, and to give evidence in court. Direct experience with the police did not predict attitudes towards the police.

The present research builds on the above literature and extends it with respect to several issues. First, we work with a theory-based approach, using intergroup contact theory to examine the links between participant race, contact with and views of the police, and intentions to cooperate with police. Second, we assess public-police contact not only in terms of its quantity, but also in terms of its quality, using a more fine-grained measure than previous research. As revealed by the review of the public-police contact literature, quality of contact is often ignored by researchers. However, theoretically, high-quality contact should influence outcome variables more than quantity of contact per se. Thirdly, whereas the typical outcome measures in the contact literature have been intergroup attitudes, prejudice, or affect, the present research (Study 1) supplements these by assessing participants' likely cooperation in criminal investigations, i.e. their intentions to perform certain *behaviors*. This broadens the range of dependent variables examined as a function of intergroup contact and constitutes a variable with immediate practical implications for fighting crime. Finally, in the current research (Study 2) we investigate the moderating role of racial identification: Does the effect of race on contact and outcome variables depend on whether participants identify strongly or not so strongly with their racial group?

STUDY 1

Participants in Study 1 were Black and White university students, who completed measures of quantity of contact, quality of contact, perceived racism on the part of the police, and willingness to cooperate in terms of reporting an incident to the police, providing a witness statement, and testifying in court. With respect to race differences, we predicted that Blacks participants would report higher quantity (cf. Home Office, 2004), but lower quality (cf. Clancy et al., 2001) of contact with police. Black people were also expected to perceive more racism on the part of the police (cf. Havis & Best, 2004) and to be less willing to cooperate with criminal investigations (Jefferson & Walker, 1993). Further, we hypothesized that quality of contact, more than mere quantity, would mediate the relationships between race and perceived racism and race and cooperation, respectively. Higher quality of contact should be associated with less perceived police racism and higher willingness to cooperate. However higher quantity of contact, perhaps being initiated by police suspicions, could well have detrimental effects, and could be associated with perceptions of higher levels of police racism and lower willingness to cooperate (cf. Eller & Abrams, 2004).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 105 (48 men, 57 women) students from Universities in the South-East of England. There were 58 White and 47 Black participants with a mean age of 22.8 years (range = 18–31 years).⁵

Measures

Predictor variable. Our predictor variable was race (Black or White people). In the UK, the term *Black* applies to people who may have cultural and geographical origins either in Africa or the Caribbean.

⁵Unfortunately, for Studies 1 and 2, we did not keep records of participant refusal rates. Neither did we allow participants the option to indicate that they were bi-racial. The racial composition of the two samples is not representative of the student populations at the universities at which data were collected. Rather, we over-sampled Black participants. However, the universities are integrated into the City of London, where 29% of residents are classified as non-White, according to the 2001 census. Hence, participants were city dwellers rather than campus students. The recruitment process did not focus on race (participants were simply approached and asked whether they would participate in a questionnaire study), such that it is unlikely that respondents' race was made salient through the recruitment as such. Data were collected as part of the last two authors' MSc dissertations, hence the sample sizes were limited by time constraints.

Mediating variables. The items assessing quantity and quality of contact were adapted from Islam and Hewstone (1993). Quantity of contact was measured, firstly, by asking about the amount of contact with the police in daily life. Scaling ranged from *not at all* (1) to *very often* (7), with higher scores denoting quantitatively more contact. The second question asked, “If you have any contact with police, how often does it take place?” (*1–6 times a year, once or twice a month, once a week, daily*). We constructed an index of quantity of contact using standardized values of these two measures (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$). An index of *quality of contact* ($\alpha = .87$) was constructed from the following items: whether contact with the police was perceived to be “involuntary or voluntary” (very involuntary–very voluntary), “pleasant” (not at all–very much), and “competitive or cooperative” (very competitive–very cooperative). Responses were scored on 7-point scales, with higher scores representing higher quality of contact.

Criterion variables. These were *perceived racism of the police* and *cooperation with the police*. Perceived racism of the police was assessed by means of three questions on 7-point scales. Participants were asked whether they thought “that the police treat Black people better, worse or the same as White people” (*much worse—much better*), “that the police are more likely to use physical force against Black people, or against White people or do you think there is no difference” (*more likely against Blacks—more likely against Whites*), and “that individual police officers are racist people” (*yes, definitely—no, definitely not*). Responses were reverse-scored, such that higher scores represent more perceived racism and an index score was created ($\alpha = .74$).

Cooperation with the police was assessed by means of participants’ responses to a hypothetical criminal act (adapted from Jefferson & Walker, 1993):

You are walking along a quiet road; there is no one else in sight except for a young Black/White⁶ male. As you get closer, you see him pick up a large stone and throw it at a telephone box. The glass from one of the windows shatters.

Participants were asked three questions of increasing commitment levels about the likelihood that they would “report this incident to the police,” “provide a witness

statement to the police if it were necessary,” and “testify about this incident in court if it were necessary.” Responses were measured on 7-point scales ranging from *very likely* (1) to *very unlikely* (7). Responses were reverse-scored such that higher values represent higher levels of cooperation with the police (index score $\alpha = .82$).

Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaires individually and anonymously. Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time and that all their responses would be treated completely confidentially. Once they had finished, participants were debriefed and thanked.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interrelationships Among Variables

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics and the results of correlation analysis among all variables, overall and separately for Black and White participants. Among Black participants, quantity and quality of contact were highly and positively interrelated. Perceived racism of police was associated with lower-frequency and lower-quality contact and, surprisingly, with higher intentions to cooperate with police. Among Whites, quality and quantity of contact were also positively interrelated, and lower-quality contact was associated with higher perceived racism. Most of these relationships were in line with the predictions. It is perhaps surprising that, particularly for Black participants, quantity and quality of contact were so highly (and positively) correlated when one could have expected a negative relationship. Even less expected is the positive relation between perceived racism and cooperation with police for Black participants. It is conceivable that Black people who perceive police to be racist feel a certain degree of stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) such that they might not want to confirm the negative image society (and the police) holds about their group, such that they are more likely to cooperate in police investigations.

Mediation Analyses

We hypothesized that contact with the police would mediate the relationships between race and perceived racism of police and race and cooperation with police, respectively. Mere amount of contact should be related to increased perception of racism among police and decreased cooperation whereas quality of contact should have the

⁶We included race of offender as a covariate/moderator, counterbalancing White and Black offenders in the scenarios, something that has not been done before. However, race of offender had no significant effects on the two criterion variables and will thus not be discussed further.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero Order Correlations (Pearson's r) Among Variables for Study 1 ($N = 105$, 58 Whites, 47 Blacks)

| Measure | Mean (SD) (Blacks) | Mean (SD) (Whites) | Correlations Split by Race ² | | | | Correlations Overall | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|--------|------|---------|----------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1. Quantity of contact ¹ | 0.18 (0.94) | -0.15 (0.88) | | .70*** | -.20 | .64*** | — | .45*** | -.14 | -.31*** |
| 2. Quality of contact | 3.40 (1.39) | 4.61 (1.27) | .47*** | | .12 | -.60*** | — | .26** | -.52*** | |
| 3. Cooperation with police | 2.38 (1.17) | 3.50 (1.53) | -.00 | .14 | | .56*** | — | — | .22* | |
| 4. Perceived racism | 5.04 (0.89) | 4.54 (1.05) | -.19 | -.38** | .21 | | — | — | — | |

¹These are standardized values. Non-standardized values: amount of contact in daily life: $M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.87$, frequency of contact (4-point scale): $M = 1.91$, $SD = 1.04$ (51% of respondents reported contact at least 1–2 times a month).

²Blacks above diagonal, Whites below diagonal.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; race was coded as 1 = White and 2 = Black.

reverse effects. We conducted regression analyses to test these mediation effects (see Baron & Kenny, 1986).

All significant relationships are in line with the predictions (Figure 1). Being Black rather than White is, marginally significant, associated with greater quantity of contact, $\beta = .18$, $t = 1.84$, $p = .07$, and with lower quality contact, $\beta = -.42$, $t = -4.61$, $p < .001$, with the police, perceiving the police to be more racist, $\beta = .23$, $t = 2.36$, $p = .02$, and showing lower levels of cooperation, $\beta = -.34$, $t = -3.64$, $p < .001$. All results are presented from the vantage point of Black people (e.g., “Being Black is associated with lower cooperation with police”); however, they automatically imply the opposite relationships for Whites (“Being White is associated with higher cooperation with police”). This was done for reasons of parsimony and does not carry any value judgement.

Higher quantity of contact, in turn, is related to lower levels of cooperation, $\beta = -.37$, $t = -3.68$, $p < .001$, whereas higher-quality contact predicts higher cooperation, $\beta = .43$, $t = 4.25$, $p < .001$, and lower

perceptions of racism, $\beta = -.48$, $t = -5.03$, $p < .001$. When the contact mediators are included in the regression equation the race—perceived racism relationship is no longer significant, $\beta = .10$, $t = .91$, $p = .37$, and the race—cooperation relationship is reduced to, $\beta = -.20$, $t = -1.78$, $p = .08$, indicating mediation. The Sobel tests show that the mediating effect of quantity of contact is not significant whereas the mediating effects of quality of contact are significant ($z = 2.85$, $p = .004$ for perceived racism and $z = -2.22$, $p = .03$ for cooperation). This is consistent with the idea that Black people’s perception of higher levels of policy racism, and their lower cooperation with police are statistically entirely attributable to the quality of contact they have with the police.

In summary, in line with previous literature (e.g., Havis & Best, 2004; Jefferson & Walker, 1993), Black participants perceived contact with police to be of lower quality and police officers to be more racist, and they are less willing to cooperate with police than Whites. Despite this bleak picture, there is room for optimism.

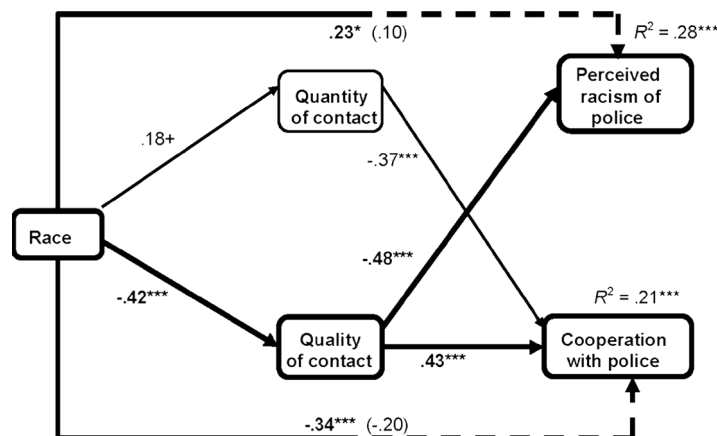


FIGURE 1 Quality of contact as mediator between race and perceived racism of police and race and cooperation with police. Significant paths only are shown; numbers are standardized partial regression coefficients (β). Indirect effects are in bold-face; numbers in parentheses describe total effects. Race was coded as 1 = White and 2 = Black. + $p < .07$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

In line with contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998) the *quality* of contact is particularly crucial for positive intergroup relations. Although typical public-police contact seems to lack all necessary conditions proposed by Allport, inter-individual differences in the experience of this contact still reliably predict differences in perceived police racism and willingness to cooperate. More importantly, quality of contact mediated the race—perceived racism and race—cooperation relationships. This suggests that if the quality of interactions between members of the public and police officers were to improve there may be very favorable outcomes, regardless of people's racial group. Efforts by police to improve the quality of interacting with Black people could potentially reduce and perhaps eliminate racial differences in attitudes, suspicion, and cooperation.

STUDY 2

The aims of Study 2 were two-fold. First, we wanted to replicate the results of Study 1 with a different sample of Black and White students, but in relation to different outcome measures: general view of the police and social distance/desired closeness to police officers. These are more “classic” dependent variables in the intergroup contact literature and our study will show whether these are relevant in a public-police context. Our second goal was to detect whether the effects of race on contact and outcome measures could be modified by the degree to which participants identified with their particular racial group.

Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) proposes a distinction between an individual's *personal* and his or her *social* identity, that is, based on the person's belongingness to certain social categories, such as race, nationality, or gender. Acting as an individual or as a member of a group results in different qualitative behavior. Though subject to debate, strength of social identification has been demonstrated to have effects on certain phenomena, such as intergroup bias (e.g., Brown, 2000), with higher ingroup identification leading to higher bias against outgroups (also see Pettigrew, 1998). It is plausible that while self-categorization as Black or White has an impact on people's reported contact with, view of, and cooperation with the police (as shown in Study 1), their level of identification with that category (i.e., race) moderates these links, with higher identification augmenting the relationships.

In line with Study 1, we hypothesized that Black students would report higher quantity but lower quality of contact with police than White students. Black people were also expected to have a more negative view of police in general and to desire less closeness to police officers than White people do (cf. Clancy et al., 2001;

Havis & Best, 2004). Lastly, because of their numerical and status minority position, we would expect Black participants to identify more strongly with their racial category than White participants (cf. Brown, 2000). In terms of relationships among variables, we predicted that quality of contact, more strongly than quantity of contact, would mediate the relationships between race and view of police and race and desired closeness, respectively. Higher quality of contact should be associated with a more positive general view of police and higher desired closeness. Increased quantity of contact should have negative effects, specifically a more negative view of police and lower desired closeness. Finally, as outlined above, we propose that race will interact with racial identification to predict contact and outcome variables. Black people who identify more strongly with their racial group should be likely to engage in lower quality of contact, hold a more negative view of the police, and express less desired closeness. Much weaker (or non-significant) relationships should occur when racial identification is low and among White participants (for whom police racism is not a focal issue). Quantity of contact is not expected to be affected by the interaction of race and identification.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 130 (76 men, 54 women) students from a university in South London. There were 67 White and 63 Black participants with a mean age of 21.4 years (range = 16–40 years).

Measures

Predictor variable. The predictor variable was race (Black or White).

Moderator variable. Identification with one's racial group (black or white) was measured with eight items, adapted from previous measures of social identification with national and cultural groups (e.g., Abrams, Ando & Hinkle, 1998). This included items such as, “In general, being Black [White] is an important part of my self image” and “Overall, being Black [White] has very little to do with how I feel about myself” (reverse-scored). Responses were scored on 7-point scales ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7), such that higher scores reflect higher identification with one's racial group ($\alpha = .84$).

Mediating variables. Quantity of contact was measured with the same two items as in Study 1, plus a third asking about amount of contact with the police in participants' neighborhoods. The three-item index score had

TABLE 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero Order Correlations (Pearson's r) Among Variables for Study 2 ($N = 130$, 67 Whites, 63 Blacks)

| Measure | Mean (SD) (Blacks) | Mean (SD) (Whites) | Correlations Split by Race ² | | | | | Correlation Overall | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|------|---------|---------|--------|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|----|--|
| | | | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | |
| 1. Quantity of contact ¹ | 0.59 (0.85) | -0.08 (0.51) | | -.14 | .25* | -.18 | .35** | - | | | | | |
| 2. Quality of contact | 3.05 (1.78) | 4.22 (1.44) | .17 | | -.26 | .39** | -.09 | -.18 | - | | | | |
| 3. Negative view of police | 5.07 (0.93) | 4.15 (0.91) | .21 | -.17 | | -.40*** | .23 | .33*** | .34*** | - | | | |
| 4. Desired closeness | 2.50 (1.30) | 3.79 (1.22) | .04 | .26 | -.53*** | | -.38** | -.22* | .44*** | -.56*** | - | | |
| 5. Racial identification | 5.12 (0.91) | 2.74 (1.06) | -.11 | .26 | -.22 | .06 | | .34*** | -.22* | .31*** | -.40*** | - | |

Note. ¹These are standardized values. Non-standardized values: amount of contact in daily life: $M = 2.09$, $SD = 1.51$, frequency of contact (4-point scale): $M = 1.59$, $SD = .86$ (39% reported contact at least 1–2 times a month), contact in neighborhood: $M = 2.70$, $SD = 2.01$ (21% of respondents reported some contact with police in their neighborhood).

²Blacks above diagonal, Whites below diagonal.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$; race was coded as 1 = White and 2 = Black.

a Cronbach's α of .66.⁷ Quality of contact was assessed with the same three items as in Study 1, $\alpha = .80$.

Criterion variables. These were *general view of the police force* and *social distance/desired closeness to police officers*. General view of the police force was assessed by means of 12 items, such as "It is a respectable occupation", "My friends/family would ridicule me if I joined the police force", and "It is a racist institution." Responses were scored on 7-point scales ranging from *agree* (1) to *disagree* (7), with certain responses being reverse-scored, such that higher scores reflect a more negative general view of the police force ($\alpha = .75$).

Social distance/desired closeness to police officers (cf. Bogardus, 1933) was measured by asking, "How much would you like to have a police officer as... (a) a community worker, (b) a fellow student, (c) a personal friend, (d) your best friend, (e) your boyfriend or girlfriend?" Responses were scored on 7-point scales ranging from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (7) such that higher scores indicate more desired closeness ($\alpha = .84$).

⁷The reliability of the quantity of contact composite measure is rather low. However, principal components analysis showed that all three items loaded on a single factor (explaining more than 50% of variance) and the new neighborhood question actually loaded higher on the factor than one of the other items, so the relatively low reliability does not seem to be due to the new item. To check whether the neighborhood item alters the results of the path analyses, we performed a mediation analysis with the three quantity of contact items as separate mediators (and race as predictor variable and negative view of police and desired closeness as dependent variables). These analyses revealed that while race significantly predicted all three quantity of contact variables, the path was strongest for the neighborhood item; moreover, the neighborhood item was the only one to significantly predict both negative view of police (significant mediation) and desired closeness (non-significant mediation).

Procedure

Participants completed the questionnaires individually and anonymously. Participation was voluntary and respondents were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time and that all their responses would be treated completely confidentially. Once they had finished, participants were debriefed, thanked, and paid £2.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interrelationships Among Variables

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics and the results of correlation analysis among all variables, overall and separately for Black and White participants. Among Black participants, higher quantity of contact was related to a more negative view of police and to higher racial identification. Higher desired closeness to police was related to lower racial identification, higher quality of contact, and less negative view of police. Among Whites, the only significant correlation was between holding a more negative view of police and less desired closeness. As in Study 1, the variables were more significantly interrelated among Black than among White participants, indicating perhaps that the attitudes toward and contact with the police are more salient and are of greater concern for Black participants.

Mediation Analyses

All significant relationships are in line with the predictions (Figure 2). Being Black is associated with a higher quantity of contact, $\beta = .44$, $t = 4.47$, $p < .001$, and lower quality of contact, $\beta = -.34$, $t = -3.38$, $p = .001$, with police. Black people also have a more negative view of police, $\beta = .42$, $t = 5.24$, $p < .001$, and desire less closeness than Whites, $\beta = -.42$, $t = -5.25$, $p < .001$. Higher quantity of contact, is related to a more negative view of police, $\beta = .31$, $t = 3.11$, $p = .003$, and to less

desired closeness, $\beta = -.29$, $t = -3.07$, $p = .003$. In contrast, higher-quality contact is associated with a more positive view of police, $\beta = -.28$, $t = -2.86$, $p = .005$, and higher desired closeness, $\beta = .38$, $t = 4.04$, $p < .001$.

Inclusion of the contact measures as mediators in the regression equation reduced the race—view of police relationship from $\beta = .42$ to $\beta = .30$, $t = 2.78$, $p = .007$, and the race—desired closeness relationship from $\beta = -.42$ to $\beta = -.28$, $t = -2.63$, $p = .01$, indicating at least partial mediation in both cases. The Sobel test shows that both indirect effects associated with quantity of contact are significantly different from zero ($z = -2.62$, $p = .009$ for view of police and $z = -2.24$, $p = .02$ for desired closeness). Quality of contact does not mediate significantly between race and view of police ($z = -1.46$, $p = .15$), but does mediate significantly between race and desired closeness ($z = -1.97$, $p = .05$). This means that Black people have higher-quantity, but lower-quality contact with police than White people, which then leads to less positive views of the police and lower desired closeness. Once the effects of contact (quantity more than quality) are statistically accounted for, race is a less powerful predictor of view of police and desired closeness.

Intriguingly, unlike Study 1, in Study 2 quantity of contact had a larger impact than quality of contact, in the sense that quantity mediated effects on both outcome variables. However, this impact was negative: Black people's higher quantity of contact partially explained their more negative view of police and lower desired closeness. This corroborates the contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954), which states that mere contact, unaccompanied by certain conditions, can be less effective and sometimes even detrimental for intergroup relations (but also see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Racial Identification as Moderator

For Study 2, we predicted that the effects of race on quality of contact, view of police, and desired closeness would be augmented when racial identification was high rather than low. In order to examine these potential moderating effects of identification, we added a second step to the analyses reported above, using hierarchical multiple regression. We entered main effects of race and identification (previously centered) at the first step and their interaction at the second step of the regression. There were no significant main effects of racial identification on contact or dependent variables. However, as expected, there were significant interaction effects of race \times racial identification on quantity of contact, $\beta = .28$, $t = 3.05$, $p = .003$, view of police, $\beta = .21$, $t = 2.59$, $p = .01$, and desired closeness, $\beta = -.21$, $t = -2.71$, $p = .008$. Analyses of simple slopes (see Aiken & West, 1991) revealed that when racial identification

was high, being Black was associated with higher amounts of contact, more negative view of the police, and less desired closeness, $\beta = .49$, $t = 2.99$, $p = .003$, $\beta = .70$, $t = 4.35$, $p < .001$, and $\beta = -.56$, $t = -3.54$, $p = .001$, respectively, but when identification was low these relationships were nonsignificant, $\beta = -.26$, $t = -1.45$, $p = .15$, $\beta = .08$, $t = .43$, $p = .67$, and $\beta = .08$, $t = .47$, $p = .64$, respectively (Figure 2).⁸

These findings of Study 2 reveal that the effects of race are qualified by strength of identification with one's racial category. Only high-identifiers showed the detrimental effects associated with being Black on contact, desired closeness, and particularly, view of police; for low-identifiers the effects were non-significant. These results show that it is not one's membership of the racial group of Black people per se that invariably triggers negative contact with and unfavorable opinions of police, but instead the heightened importance of racial

⁸We performed two supplementary moderation analyses. Firstly, we examined the interaction effects of quantity \times quality of contact, expecting high amounts of positive contact to have beneficial intergroup outcomes and high amounts of negative contact to have detrimental intergroup consequences. In Study 1, the quantity \times quality interaction term did not have any significant effects on perceived racism of the police and willingness to cooperate with police (both β s $< .07$, both p s $> .50$). In Study 2, the interaction term did not significantly predict perceived social distance, $\beta = -.10$, $t = -.86$, $p = .39$. However, it predicted negative view of the police, $\beta = -.31$, $t = -2.59$, $p = .01$. Analyses of simple slopes revealed that quantity of contact was associated with a more negative view of the police when quality of contact was high, $\beta = .62$, $t = 3.98$, $p < .001$, but not when quality of contact was low, $\beta = .16$, $t = 1.40$, $p = .17$. This is contrary to the predictions and may seem counter-intuitive at first. However, it is plausible that high quality, close intergroup contact with *individual* police officers not representative of (and probably critical of) an institution that, as a whole, tends to be racist, may be linked to negative views of this institution. In a second, supplementary moderation analysis we examined the interactive effect of race \times sex on contact and outcome variables, expecting Black men to report higher-quantity, but lower-quality contact with police and more detrimental outcome variables than Black women or White men and women. In Study 1, there were no significant main effects of sex on quantity or quality of contact. In terms of the dependent variables, women reported higher perceptions of police racism, $\beta = .19$, $t = 2.03$, $p = .045$, but also higher willingness to cooperate with police investigations, $\beta = .42$, $t = 4.98$, $p < .001$. As expected, there were two significant interaction effects of race \times sex on quantity of contact, $\beta = -.33$, $t = -3.50$, $p = .001$, and willingness to cooperate, $\beta = -.24$, $t = -2.92$, $p = .004$. Analyses of simple slopes revealed that for men, being Black was associated with higher amounts of contact, $\beta = .55$, $t = 4.24$, $p < .001$, while for women race did not have any effects, $\beta = -.15$, $t = -1.15$, $p = .25$. Not quite consistently, for women being Black was related to decreased cooperation with police, $\beta = -.55$, $t = -4.80$, $p < .001$, whereas for men race did not have any effects, $\beta = -.08$, $t = -.68$, $p = .50$. However, this effect was driven by the high willingness to cooperate for White women ($M = 4.19$) relative to the other three groups (M s all below 2.7). In Study 2, there were no significant race \times sex interactions and there was a single significant main effect; women reported higher quality of contact than men.

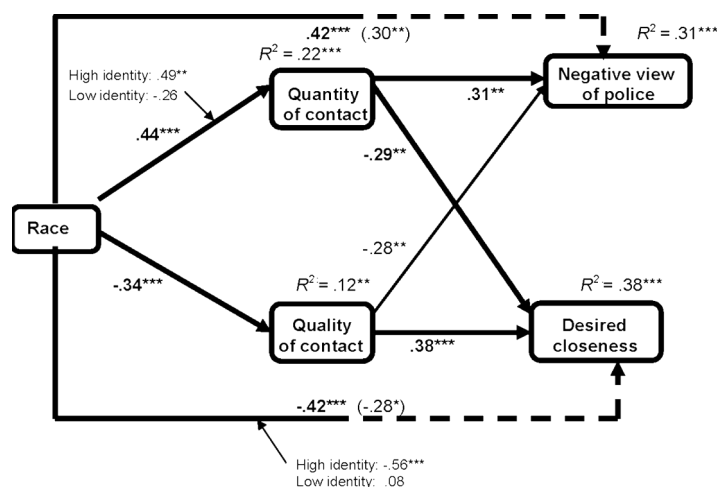


FIGURE 2 Path diagram showing a moderated mediation analysis. Significant paths only are shown; numbers are standardized partial regression coefficients (β). Indirect effects are in bold-face; numbers in parentheses describe total effects. Race was coded as 1 = White and 2 = Black. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

group membership for identity (cf. Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986).

Accordingly, a Black individual who identifies strongly as Black might be more sensitive to potential racism and might interpret incidents as evidence of the endemic racism and mistreatment of Black people by the police rather than as an unfortunate example of police violence, unrelated to race or ethnicity. Black people for whom racial identity is less important may tend to view themselves more as individuals and may not generalize from their personal experiences with the police to those of other Black people, hence these people in Study 2 were found not to have a particularly negative (or positive) view of police and desired neither great distance nor closeness with police. In contrast, Black people who act as members of their social category were revealed to have a rather negative view of police and to favor social distance over closeness to police.

Contrary to our expectations, identification did not moderate the effect of race on quality of contact. Even more surprisingly, the race \times identification interaction term did significantly predict quantity of contact. We can think of two possible explanations for this effect, one cognitive and the other behavioral. On the one hand, Black people who identify strongly with their racial group and who consequently have an unfavorable view of police might overestimate their (negative) encounters with police and thus report more contact. On the other hand, high-identifiers might be more prone to stereotype threat (Steele, 1997) than low-identifiers and might inadvertently behave in ways that attract more suspicion and attention from police (cf. Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; also see Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998). Recent evidence shows that contact can moderate the impact of stereotype threat

on prejudice and behavior (Abrams, Eller, & Bryant, 2006).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present set of studies investigated Black-White race differences with respect to quantity and quality of contact with police, racial identification, perceived racism and view of police, cooperation with police, and desired closeness to police officers in Britain. This research enriched the contact literature by examining an inter-group context, that of a professional group and members of the public, seldom investigated in the inter-group contact literature. Also, one of our outcome measures was the intention to cooperate, a novel variable in the literature. We predicted that contact, particularly its qualitative aspects, would mediate between race and outcome variables (Study 1 and 2), and that identification would moderate the race—contact and race—outcome measures relationships (Study 2). Almost all findings are in line with our hypotheses. Study 1 revealed Black participants to have lower-quality contact with police, perceive higher police racism, and show less willingness to cooperate, while Study 2 showed Black people to have higher-quantity and lower-quality contact with police, stronger racial identification, less positive view of police, and less desired closeness. These results are in line with previous research on public-police contact and relations (e.g., Havis & Best, 2004; Jefferson & Walker, 1993).

In Study 1 quality of contact significantly mediated between race and perceived police racism and between race and cooperation, respectively. In Study 2 higher quantity of contact was consistently related to

increases in intergroup bias and diminished willingness to cooperate whereas higher quality of contact had the opposite effects. This underlines the pivotal role of high-quality contact even when the wider contextual conditions do not appear conducive for such contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998; also see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Study 2 also found that being Black was associated with a higher quantity of contact, a more negative view of the police, and lower desire for closeness only for people who identified strongly with their race category, but not for those who identified only weakly.

In summary, the present research suggests that the substantial and pervasive race differences in terms of public-police relations, revealed by previous research, appear to be mitigated by high quality contact between Black people and the police, and may be modified by strength of racial identification. This leaves room for optimism that relations between Black people and the police can be improved. Pettigrew (1998) already pointed out the potentially negative effects of elevated ingroup identification with respect to intergroup relations, calling for a *deprovincialization* of members of different groups. Obviously, change would be much simpler to implement with regard to intergroup contact rather than group identification, which is not inherently a negative phenomenon. In fact, there is a danger in the proposition that minority group members should aim for a lower identification with their own racial or ethnic group as this might make them even more vulnerable to the negative consequences of racism by mainstream society (cf. Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999). Thus, we believe the present findings support the idea that even if the police maintained the current frequency of contact with Black people, there would be important benefits to be gained by making efforts to improve the quality of their interactions. Our results suggest this could improve overall attitudes, and also the level of cooperation that police can obtain from Black members of the public.

There are some limitations to the present research. Firstly, we used a cross-sectional survey design, which, in contrast to experimental or longitudinal studies, cannot establish causality. Hence, whereas the direction of causality from race to contact and outcome variables is unequivocal, things are not so clear with respect to contact and outcome variables. While it makes sense that, for instance, high-quality of contact leads to lower perceived racism, it is equally plausible that a high perception of racism entails contact being experienced as less favorable. Or, the relationship might even be bidirectional. Similarly, just as racial identification has been shown to moderate the links between race and contact and race and view of police in Study 2, it may also be a consequence of contact because high amounts of

negative contact might heighten identification with being Black.

A second limitation is that all participants were university students in the south of England. A broader, more variable geographical, educational, and socio-economical sample might have produced different overall contact experiences with and attitudes towards police. Specifically, non-students may be more likely to have had some contact with police than university students, increasing variability of reported quantity and quality of contact and possibly heightening the effects of contact on outcome variables. In terms of future research, it would also be interesting to investigate the experience of police contact among specific minority groups in the USA, such as Blacks and Latinos, to see whether similar results might be obtained, particularly with respect to racial identification. Finally, the current research examined public-police contact only from the perspective of the public and not the police. It is clearly very important to investigate how high-quality contact of members of the public with police can improve intergroup relations and heighten collaboration in criminal investigations.

Future research should supplement the few rigorous, theory-informed studies in the literature (e.g., Liebkind, Haaramo, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000) to examine how learning about other cultures and sub-cultures and high-quality contact with relevant individuals during police training might reduce police officers' prejudice against and discrimination of minority group members. A good way to start would be to organize extra-mural, cooperative activities bringing Black and White *police officers* into contact. If these kinds of activities are structured in ways that allow for positive, voluntary, intimate interactions that keep some minimal category boundaries salient, improved intergroup attitudes should generalize beyond these situations to outgroup members (in this case, Black people) in general (Brown & Hewstone, 2005). In addition to rather cognitive measures, such as learning, the generation of positive affect between members of interacting groups, such as empathy, should also result in improved intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). Research has shown that empathy is closely related to perspective-taking (Batson et al., 1997), which helps people understand the predicament (in the form of prejudice, stereotype threat, etc.) of the other group and could be beneficial for police officers as well as (minority group) members of the public.

It is conceivable that these measures might have a beneficial impact on "stop and search" procedures adopted by police, making it potentially less likely that members of minority groups are specifically targeted by police officers. "Stop and search" powers are unlikely to be abandoned completely given that many

people see them as an integral policing tool that facilitates the detection and prevention of crime (Havis & Best, 2004), particularly in an age of terrorism. However, a recent review of “stop and search” practices in the UK has recommended that police issue a copy of the record of the incident to the individual stopped and searched (Home Office, 2004). This formal explanation of the stop may improve understanding of police behavior and may decrease feelings of discrimination among minority group members, which may heighten willingness to cooperate with police investigations.

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