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Perceptions of Police-Civilian Encounters: Intergroup and Communication Dimensions in
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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of perceived police accommodation on police-civilian interactions. Elaborating theoretically beyond a range of cross-cultural studies, we examine the cultural impact of accommodative communication in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and United States of America (USA), as the prior context demonstrates socio-cultural parallels and differences including the influence of Sharia law. Between-country comparisons evaluate the mediating role of trust, affect and intergroup orientation on various civic outcomes.

Accommodative communication was the strongest predictor of trust for both nations and demonstrated a direct impact on moral alignment and willingness to help only in the UAE.

Keywords: Police and Civilian Communication, Accommodation, Intergroup, Compliance, United Arab Emirates

Introduction

Communication is an integral part of law enforcement and public safety (Choi & Giles, 2012; Giles, 2002). Many communities continue to maintain negative images of local enforcement, and experience problematic communication with associated agencies. These negative perceptions place significant strain on the relationship and hinder civilians' willingness to assist law enforcement in combating crime (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Ultimately, police officers and community members must work together to create a crime-reduced society, but due to the communicative difficulties surrounding this context, cohesiveness is not often achieved between these groups. In the current state of police-civilian relations in the USA, with respect for example to the Black Lives Matter movements, the need for effective communication is ever more pressing (Dart, 2016). Research has documented alleged police abuses of power, such as unnecessary use of force and verbally coercive tactics (Solan & Tiersma, 2005). Particularly in the USA, tensions between police and civilians are high, and communities are compelled by the lack of progress in these interactions. The concern for police behaviors exists to the extent that citizens in many American communities have established review systems to monitor police conduct (Giles, 2016). These systems of accountability continue to regulate perceptions of inappropriate police behavior. Further investigation of both the USA context and abroad provides opportunities to alleviate miscommunication and increase community coordination.

This study considers the relationship between police and civilians as an *intergroup* process (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014) and examines the factors that determine the communicative nature of such interactions. Here, a holistic communication model is tested that articulates the crucial connections in this dynamic. Guided in many ways by communication accommodation theory (CAT: e.g., Giles, 2016; Giles, Gasiorek, & Soliz, 2015), this study explores the linkages

between the perceptions of the accommodative or nonaccommodative behaviors of police officers and, for the first time, additional mediating variables and civic outcomes. The perceptions of civilians toward police officers influence the tensions between the parties and act as a starting point for the overall interaction (Choi & Giles, 2012). Notably, few civilians have much direct contact with law enforcement officials, and it is the influence of media and anecdotes that create and develop impressions of police officers (Miller, Davis, Henderson, Markovic, & Ortiz, 2004). Schuck, Rosenbaum, and Hawkins (2008) describe how attitudes toward police officers are formulated through both direct and indirect contact, and how these perceptions significantly impact the police-civilian dynamic.

The present study locates itself within a cross-cultural program of research that has empirically explored the perceived role of officers' accommodation across cultures. In previous studies focusing on the perceptions of young adults (e.g., USA, Mongolia, Armenia, and Bulgaria), findings indicated that perceived officer accommodation predicted trust which then mediated reported compliance with police officers. Historical, regional, and cultural differences further complicate the role of perceived accommodation in police-civilian encounters. The current analysis compares the communicative patterns of two contexts: The United States of America (USA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE provides a unique setting that has gained international attention and criticism for its human rights record (Vikor, 2000), and the socio-cultural characteristics are investigated in comparison to the USA context.

There are numerous aspects of the police-civilian dynamic that warrant further investigation (see Choi & Giles, 2012) and this study offers to provide a deeper understanding by testing an elaborated model (see Figure 1). The model articulates the crucial relationships between the perceived accommodative practices of police officers and other pressing qualities of

the police-civilian dynamic presented in the literature. In what follows, we discuss the factors that influence attitudes toward police officers, and the cultural and contextual characteristics that determine the outcomes of these interactions. Those qualities include the mediating role of reported trust in police officers, the affect toward police officers, and the intergroup context made salient by the distinctions between police and civilians. The civic outcomes under investigation are the alignment of moral values, compliance to officer requests, and a willingness to help police officers.

Communication in Law Enforcement: The Role of Intergroup Orientation, Trust, and Affect

Empirical investigations of police-civilian interactions support the view that the majority of police work involves communicating with the public (Womack & Finley, 1986). The need for community members and law enforcement to work cooperatively is a key factor in preventing criminal activity (Bayley, 1994). Tyler and Huo (2002) note the importance of gaining compliance in the police-civilian interaction, and how the treatment of community members can impact the overall dynamic. However, communication skills are given limited attention in many agencies' police officer training (Thompson, 1983; Tyler, 2005). Recent events in the USA have demonstrated a need to investigate police-civilian tensions. Following several videotaped police shootings of Black civilians (Buchanan et al., 2015; Schmadede & Meisner, 2015) police actions are now under additional scrutiny, and the salience of intergroup differences (e.g., race and ethnicity) are seen to be major influences.

While the situational context in which police-civilian interaction occurs is important to consider, generally, officers and the public interact in terms of their social category memberships (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014); such interactions are considered “intergroup” (see, for example, Giles, 2012; Harwood & Giles, 2005). Civilians are likely to perceive—and communicate with—

police officers in terms of their social category membership, and identity markers are likely to engender strong feelings of intergroup boundaries. Those identifying markers (e.g., uniform, weaponry) make the group distinctions salient and immediately alter the police-civilian encounter (Durkin & Jeffrey, 2000). Investigations have pointed to additional socio-demographic factors in predicting intergroup oriented judgments which vary greatly by community. In general, older, female, urban, better educated, higher-incomed, married, and Caucasian respondents consistently manifest more positive views of law enforcement (e.g., Eschholz, Sims Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Olsen, 2005) as do those who reside where the crime level is relatively low (Hennigan, Maxson, Sloane, & Ranney, 2002). Research on police-civilian interactions in the USA has highlighted officers' inequitable treatment of minoritized citizens (e.g., Jacobs & O'Brien, 1998; Norris, Fielding, Kemp, & Fielding, 1992) and their communicative accommodativeness, or lack thereof (Dixon, Schell, Giles, & Drogos, 2008; Giles, Linz, Bonilla, & Gomez, 2012). The minimal contact between police and civilians, coupled with these intergroup markers mentioned above, limit the opportunity for interpersonal relationships to develop and hinder the potential for collaborative efforts. However, accommodative communication on the part of the police officer can counter the stronger intergroup perceptions of civilians and allow for a more amiable, interpersonal dynamic (Giles, 2016).

Research on communication accommodation (e.g., Giles, 2016; Giles & Soliz, 2014) explores how individuals vary their behavior to accommodate toward where they *believe* an outgroup member to be communicatively (see Thakerar, Giles, & Cheshire, 1982). The communicative actions that Tyler and Huo (2002) refer to as dignified and respectful is regarded here as features of communication accommodation. Individuals can regulate their communication behavior toward or away from each other to satisfy their affective or cognitive

needs for social inclusion or differentiation. The process of regulating one's communication is referred to as accommodation when accentuating similarity, or nonaccommodation if accentuating distinctiveness. Individuals select one of three strategies: convergence, maintenance, or divergence, with the ultimate goal of enhancing self-esteem (Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). The level of accommodation used, has been proposed as one reason an interaction can be perceived as either communicatively satisfying or dissatisfying (Giles & Soliz, 2014). Dissatisfying conversations are those where conversational partners display underaccommodative behaviors, such as being inattentive and/or close-minded.

Communicating in an accommodative manner is challenging for officers who communicate with "numerous people whose backgrounds, needs, points of view, and prejudices vary dramatically, moment to moment" (Thompson, 1983, p. 9). However, young adults consider officers' accommodative practices as potent predictors of civilians' attributed trust in police (e.g., Giles et al., 2006; Hajek et al., 2006). Similarly, Tyler (2005) found that cooperation with the police derives from the trust and confidence that citizens place in them. Previous research indicates that perceived officer accommodativeness indirectly predicts civilian compliance through attributed trust, and where police-civilian interactions were more volatile, a direct path between accommodation and compliance was observed (Barker, Choi, Giles, & Hajek, 2008; Hajek, Giles, Barker, Makoni, & Choi, 2008; Pearce, Giles, Hajek, Barker, & Choi, 2011). Practically speaking then, it is important for law enforcement officials to be knowledgeable about how to create trusting relationships.

Related to trust is the concept of affect, referring to the emotional tone of interactions with police officers. The power dynamic found in police-civilian interactions can make the experienced affect more heightened in the interaction. Positive affect refers to the extent a person

feels enthusiastic and alert, while negative affect describes distress and/or unpleasurable experiences (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Research shows that positive and negative affect are empirically separable (Lucas & Diener, 2008) and a person can experience both feelings simultaneously. The affect experienced by civilians can impact the evaluation of police officers, and the research suggests that interactions can be managed to ameliorate negative outcomes (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Huo, 2002). Positive communication behaviors (e.g., accommodation) may contribute to a more positive affect toward the police outgroup, thereby providing a context for collaboration. In contrast, anger and hostile thoughts triggered by negative affect can shape the afflicted person's decisions and cause them to respond aggressively (Berkowitz, 2000).

As mentioned, a prime purpose of this study is to further analyze the nuances of police-civilian encounters and determine other mediating and outcome variables. Specifically, we look beyond trust as a mediating factor (i.e., intergroup orientation and affect as already described above) and identify outcomes beyond compliance (i.e., moral alignment and willingness to help).

Outcome Variables: Moral Alignment, Compliance, and Willingness to Help

A willingness to defer to legal authorities is dependent on how civilians are treated, and it is becoming imperative that civilians see officers' behaviors as fair, and their motives as benevolent. The model tested in this analysis (see Figure 1 below) addresses some of the civic outcomes that are necessary for an effective partnership between police and public. These include an evaluation of whether police officers' efforts morally align with the behavioral guidelines of civilians, the overall reported compliance with officers' directives, and a willingness to help police officers.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Moral alignment. The evaluation of moral alignment is important when considering the level of authority and power held by police officers. In order for the police to have legitimate authority, civilians must be able to assess a match in moral values (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Here again, the perception that civilians have of police officers play a pivotal role in the actual interaction. According to Tyler and Jackson (2014), “moral alignment...embodies a sense of normative justifiability of power and authority in the eyes of the citizens” (p. 6). Huq, Tyler, and Schulhoffer (2011) reason that the obligation to obey the law comes from, “identification with the police based on shared moral values” (p. 13). When civilians feel moral solidarity and similarity with the police, they identify more closely with that outgroup.

Furthermore, Tyler and Jackson (2014) state that moral alignment and trust are related in developing healthy interactions between police and civilians. Police officers can demonstrate moral alignment by showing procedural fairness and embodying the community’s values. The researchers indicate that, “people identify with the group that the authority represents and internalize the belief that they should follow the rules of the group and the directives of authorities” (p. 13). Moral alignment is a strong predictor of cooperation in most contexts (Hough, Jackson, & Bradford, 2013), and therefore, it is an important outcome of how police officers are perceived. When citizens believe officers have appropriate morals, they are willing to accept the authority of the police. It is not simply the belief that it is morally just to obey the law, nor solely the belief that a particular act is wrong, but that compliance can be achieved because people morally identify with the police (Jackson et al., 2012).

Compliance. Within the complicated police-civilian relationship, the perception of law enforcement held by civilians impacts whether collaboration can be achieved. Compliance to the requests of police officers can be defined as the process by which influence is accepted (Kelman,

1958). The compliance described here and supported in the literature, is an attempt toward cooperation and support. Miller et al. (2004) suggest that public support for the police can come in the form of voluntary compliance and stress its importance for successful policing.

The inclination of a civilian to comply is linked to the perceived intentions of the police officer. Tyler and Huo (2002) indicate that individuals' willingness to defer to legal authorities is shaped by motive-based trust, and Huo (2003) suggests that people place importance on fair treatment because it communicates important information about the quality of the relationship. Similarly, Murphy, Hinds, and Fleming (2008) find a correlation between an individual's view of procedural justice and the likelihood a person will comply with police orders. When the activities of police officers are seen as justified and appropriate, civilians are more likely to come alongside police officers in their requests. Tyler and Huo (2002) note that compliance can be gained from community members by treating them fairly and demonstrating that the authorities' motives are benevolent. In other words, the public's perception of police treating civilians fairly and professionally affects compliance.

Willingness to help. As is the case with the other outcomes evaluated so far, a civilian's willingness to help police officers impacts the potential for collaborative community policing. This altruistic response stems from a perception of accommodativeness, and how a community member feels about the police can have an impact on whether or not he/she is willing to help in a given situation. In the research, a willingness to help is linked to one's empathy toward another individual. Davis (1996) argues that people are more likely to help those they feel empathetic toward. Empathy for a person in need produces a motivation to help that person, in contrast to helping simply to benefit oneself (Batson et al., 1988).

Positive communication behaviors (e.g., accommodation) can be utilized to encourage altruistic behaviors in response. Berkowitz (1987) explored the effect of mood on willingness to help and suggests that feeling pleasant leads to a greater willingness to help others. Tam, Hewstone, Kenworthy, and Cairns (2009) support these findings by explaining how trust in another person increases the willingness to act in a cooperative manner. One's willingness to help can be reciprocal in nature, and people are more willing to help those that they perceive to be helpful to others (Alexander, 1987). As civilians perceive the behavior of police officers to be accommodative, the positive assessment should determine a willingness to collaborate with members of law enforcement.

Related to social identity, Baldry and Pagliaro (2014) found that people are more willing to help if they identify the other as an ingroup member. Individuals tend to have more positive feelings about those within their own group and this can directly lead to one's willingness to help. According to the authors, "referential group norms influence group members' willingness to help" (p. 343). In contrast, an outgroup assessment can hinder the willingness to collaborate (Giles, 2016). How the various civic outcomes differ across cultural settings warrants further investigation, and it is to these and related issues that we now turn to the UAE.

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has experienced significant socio-historical changes in the last several decades. Specifically, the country has seen economic growth, increased immigration, and similar to the USA, the population now exhibits much more diversity in race and ethnicity. Additionally, there are pervasive cultural influences in this context, and both the inherent collectivistic values, as well as Sharia law, can affect how police officers are perceived by

civilians. The UAE government has considered these characteristics and have made proactive adjustments in an attempt to positively influence police-civilian interactions.

The UAE received its independence from Britain in 1968 and the country's economy transformed after oil exportation by the Abu Dhabi emirate in 1962. According to Hopkyns (2014), the oil boom caused the UAE's economy to skyrocket and several significant changes in the infrastructure took place (e.g., healthcare and education). The change to the economy was followed by an influx of expatriates (non-citizens) who entered the country to fill in jobs made vacant by the economic boom (Boyle 2011). The population rose from 200,000 in 1968 to more than one million by the beginning of the 1980s (Al-Awadhi, 2007), and then reached 9,577,000 in 2015 with less than 20% being native citizens. Thus, like the USA, the UAE is an increasingly multicultural and multilingual country. The ethnic and social disparity in the UAE adds to the presence of group power distinctions, which are then heightened by citizenship status and language barriers between groups.

Changing demographics and police abuse. The aforementioned socio-economic changes introduced new patterns of interaction between diverse groups in the UAE. As a result, the general sentiment toward police officers became defined by the reported experiences of expatriates who currently make up the majority of the UAE population. Non-citizens, who mostly comprise of migrant workers, endure bias as police officers abuse their power in these interactions (Keane & McGeehan, 2008). As in many other contexts throughout the world, racial and ethnic difference is a factor that also affects the police-civilian dynamic in the UAE.

Although the UAE constitution states that all persons are equal before the law, and while there should be no discrimination between civilians in regard to race, nationality, religious belief, or social status (Al Abed, 1997), expatriates in the UAE report concern for discrimination from

police officers (Al Mansour, 1989). Relatedly, 56% of surveyed Arab expatriates in the emirate of Sharjah expressed fear of being arrested based on race or ethnicity, and even being deported from the country (Abdell Muttaleb, 2007). UAE citizens, or Emarti people, are given preferential treatment, hold more influence in the legal system (police and judiciary), and are perceived more favorably by law enforcement (Keane & McGeehan, 2008).

Traditionally, unnecessary physical use of force was regarded as unacceptable and shameful, but there are still instances where the police in the UAE are engaged in harassment and discrimination (Al Shaali & Kibble, 2000). While there is an absence of documented empirical evidence, there are several factors that indicate the likelihood of negative police behaviors toward non-citizens (e.g., the basic education of street officers, the lack of police training in human relations, the relatively low social and economic status of police officers, and the vague definition of the police role). Others maintain that varying levels of accountability throughout the UAE government contribute to the abuses in power (Abdel Muttaleb, 2007; Al Abed, 1997).

Cultural factors. Police-civilian interactions are influenced by the cultural characteristics of those involved. The UAE is a collectivistic society that places emphasis on being positive members of a community by maintaining honor and avoiding shame (Raddawi, 2015). In other words, collectivism is a form of social organization in which an individual's self-construal is connected to the well-being of the community and mutual dependence of individuals. The social behaviors attributed to collectivism can be characterized by a sense of belonging to the group, and concern about the needs of the society (Hall, 1981). Conformity to accepted behavior is a feature of collectivistic cultures where behavioral norms are made clear and sanctions are imposed on deviant conduct (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988). Therefore, in

comparison to the USA, the collectivistic features of the UAE result in stronger ideas of adherence to the law and compliance to law enforcement.

Another cultural attribute of the UAE that adds to the police-civilian dynamic is the ubiquitous influence of Sharia law (Khedr & Alnuaimi, 2010). Sharia law is the moral code and religious law of Islam based on the Quran (the central religious text of Islam), and constitutes a living reality in contemporary societies which influences state law (Dupret, 2007). Although the principles of Sharia provide a basis for all of the country's laws, the UAE's establishment of specific civil and criminal laws has decreased its role, and Sharia law is now primarily applied to social laws, such as family law, divorce or succession (Al Abed, 1997). However, some emirates still expand its Sharia courts to include serious criminal offenses, and in the absence of clear federal law, the UAE Supreme Court considers the overtones of Sharia law to help make judicial decisions (Mahmoud, 2013). The common adherence to and understanding of Sharia law impacts the legal system, in general, and plays a significant factor in the way police and civilians interact with one another. (Baldry, Pagliaro, & Porcaro, 2013).

Positive changes. The UAE continues to make significant investments in the police domain. Reforms in supervision and accountability, demilitarization, and police training are seen as essential in meeting the growing challenge of crime while protecting civilians against police misconduct (Al Shaali & Kibble, 2000). The UAE supports a community police structure that reflects the government belief that police-civilian interactions are a major factor in maintaining a safe and secure society. Since 2005, the Abu Dhabi Community Police have worked to transform traditional policing by bringing together officers and different segments of the community. The efforts are intended to prevent crime and increase awareness about self-responsibility. In 2008, the Community Police achievements were described by the delegation of the United Nations

Development Program as "a role model that should be emulated by other countries" (Abu Dhabi Digital Government 2018, p.1). Additional efforts include police visits to hospitals, offering gifts for patients and their families on official holidays, attempts to use social media to foster connections between police officers and youth civilians, and the placement of body-cameras on officers to ensure transparency and protection to all concerned parties (Kakande, 2013; Mukhallati, 2015).

The Present Study

In research submitted to the United States Department of Justice, Miller et al. (2004) found that gaining public support for the police would be a function of increasing positive encounters with police officers. Law enforcement works best when there is voluntary compliance by community members as well as a willingness to cooperate. The perceived communicative behaviors of police officers when encountering civilians is an important factor to obtain this necessary support. This study moves the inquiry beyond the normative requirement of enforced consent and offers instead a communication-focused approach to police-civilian interactions providing insight into the intergroup and policing literature. Specifically, a police-civilian interaction construed as highly intergroup in orientation and negative in affect should lead to less collaborative interactions between police and civilians. Given the literature and the communicative pathways proposed by Choi and Giles (2012), the contribution of this study is to assess how civilians are willing to cooperate with police officers and the factors that may lead to such behavior.

This study also investigates further the implications of communication and compliance across cultures. The UAE offers a parallel context to the racial and ethnic diversity represented in the USA, while still possessing unique characteristics that stem from the cultural and religious attributes of the region. Due to the changing demographics of the UAE context, proactive efforts

are being made to ameliorate the racial and ethnic tensions between working class immigrants and the police authority (Abu Dhabi Digital Government, 2018). While the process of civilian attitude formation toward law enforcement should hold true in various contexts, the findings should demonstrate cultural differences, and the comparison potentially offers evidence of how socio-cultural factors influence the important police-civilian dynamic. The examination of these mediating and outcome variables distinguishes the implications of perceived accommodation and the function of those variables. Finally, further investigation is warranted in this Middle-Eastern context as the UAE is an intercultural setting that remains as an underrepresented or quasi-absent research subject in the Gulf region.

Given the past findings from three continents (Barker et al., 2008; Hajek et al., 2008; Pearce et al., 2011) this analysis tests a model (see Figure 1) which demonstrates how perceived accommodativeness impacts several outcomes in the police-civilian interaction and the factors that mediate them. Hence the model proposes the following:

H1: In the USA, all three outcomes of moral alignment, reported compliance, and willingness to help the police, are mediated by (a) perceived trust in the police, (b) positive and negative affect, and (c) the intergroupedness of police-civilian encounters.

RQ1: How do these same indirect relationships compare in the UAE?

RQ2: How does police accommodative communication directly affect the outcomes?

H2: Given the cultural influences of the UAE context, the three outcomes of moral alignment, reported compliance, and willingness to assist the police are more positively perceived in the UAE compared to the USA.

RQ3: What differences, if any, will emerge between USA and UAE in evaluation of police

officers' accommodativeness with both the abovementioned mediators and overall outcomes?

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students ($N = 516$) from universities in UAE and the USA participated in the study. The USA sample ($n = 245$; 159 females) was drawn from communication undergraduates at a Western university who received extra course credit for their participation. Data collection occurred in the spring of 2016, as the media reported on growing tensions between police and civilian communities. The majority of these participants were Caucasian (51%), the remainder being Latino/a (13%), Asian/Pacific Islander (10%), African-American (5%), and "Other American" (21%). Their ages ranged from 17 to 27, with a mean reported age of 19.74 ($SD = 1.64$). In the UAE sample ($n = 271$; 143 females) participants self-classified as Levant/Mashreq (31%), North African/Maghreb (16%), UAE citizens (13%), Gulf region (8%), Pakistani (7%), and other various classifications (25%). The age ranged 17 to 44, with a mean reported age of 21.07 ($SD = 3.55$). The participants were mainly undergraduate students located in three separate emirates from different universities in the UAE.

Measurement Instruments

The 50-item instrument measures perceptions of police officer accommodation, trust in police, affect toward police, the intergroup nature of the interaction, moral alignment, reported compliance, and willingness to help police officers. Due to the samples' proficiency in English in both countries, the questionnaire was administered in English to all participants in the study. Participants evaluated their perceptions of police officers by showing their agreement with the items on a five- or seven-point Likert type scale ranging from never to always. The questionnaire

also consisted of a number of demographic items. The internal consistency of the scales for both nations assessed through Cronbach's alpha are shown in Table 1, and a brief description of each scale is given in the following sections.

Insert Table 1 about here

Accommodation, trust, and compliance. In order to assess participants' evaluation of police officer accommodation, trust, and compliance, an instrument was adapted from previous studies of attitudes toward local law enforcement (e.g., Hajek et al., 2006, 2008).

Accommodation was measured with five items, and a sample item includes, "How polite are police officers." Trust was measured with six items, and a sample item includes, "I trust the police to make decisions that are good for everyone in the community." Compliance was measured with three items, and a sample item includes, "I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do."

Affect. Affect was measured using the International Positive and Negative Affect Schedule Short Form (I-PANAS-SF) developed by Thompson (2007). The shortened version derives from the original PANAS scale (Watson et al., 1988) and was created for competent non-native English speakers while fully encompassing the content domain of the original scale. The scale used in this study included 10 items evaluating both positive (5) and negative (5) affect. Sample items include, "Upset," or "Inspired."

Intergroup. The intergroup nature of the interaction was measured using a variation of a previous instrument from this line of research (e.g., Hajek et al. 2006). In order to increase validity, a total of six items were created to determine the level of intergroup orientation that may be experienced in this interaction. A sample item is, "When I meet police officers, I feel we are two distinct communities with differing values."

Moral alignment. In order to assess participants' moral alignment with police officers, Tyler and Jackson's (2014) scale uses six items to evaluate the level of moral alignment participants have with police officers. A sample item is, "The police usually act in ways consistent with your own ideas about what is right and wrong."

Willingness to help. To measure the participants' willingness to help police officers, Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, and Tobin's (2007) scale was adapted to describe interactions with police officers. Participants evaluated four items describing situational vignettes and asked to show their agreement to help. A sample item is, "Imagine a situation where you're driving and a police officer on foot asks for your vehicle. How likely would you help this officer?"

Results

Multiple Group Analyses of UAE and USA Samples

A measurement invariance test was used to check whether the two nations had the same perceptions of the items. Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MGCFA) was run using Mplus 6.1 software. Three levels of measurement invariance were examined, configural, metric, and scalar. In the configural test, all parameters are allowed to vary freely to test the overall structure. A metric invariance test was performed where only the factor loadings are equal across groups but the intercepts are allowed to vary between groups (Van de Schoot, Lugtig, & Hox, 2012). Finally, a scalar invariance test was used where the intercepts are equal across the groups. To confirm invariance across two groups, Satorra-Bentler (S-B) scaled chi-square difference test was used. Significant S-B χ^2 difference between two nested models indicates that there is lack of invariance at the tested level. In addition to χ^2 , a change in CFI (Δ CFI) was also used where the cut-off point of .010 or less suggests invariance across groups (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

The measurement invariance test was examined for perceived police accommodation, reported trust in police, PANAS scale, intergroup scale, moral alignment, attitudes about compliance, and willingness to help (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

As Table 2 indicates, configural invariance was observed for all variables. Regarding metric invariance, although $\Delta\chi^2$ was significant for accommodation and trust, ΔCFI was small ($<.01$) and goodness-of-fit indices were all acceptable. Therefore, metric invariance was also supported for all variables. Finally, scalar invariance was examined, and except for PANAS and intergroup the significant $\Delta\chi^2$ was obtained and ΔCFI was not smaller than .01; scalar invariance was also supported by the data. Configural and metric invariance were supported for all variables implying that the UAE and USA participants conceptualize the variables in the same way.

Descriptive statistics for all variables can be seen in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

Test of Research Questions and Hypotheses

To answer the research questions pertaining to the differences found in the UAE (H2 and RQ3), a 2 (nation: USA and UAE) \times 2 (gender: male and female) MANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of gender and nation on accommodation, trust, positive affect, negative affect, intergroup orientation, moral alignment, compliance, and willingness to help. Results of the MANOVA showed significant effect only for nation $\lambda = .79$, $F(9, 444) = 12.84$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .20$. No significant effects were found for gender $\lambda = .97$, $F(9, 444) = 1.31$, $p = .227$, $\eta^2 = .02$ and gender \times nation interaction $\lambda = .98$, $F(9, 444) = .88$, $p = .535$, $\eta^2 = .01$.

Regarding the third research question to identify differences between USA and UAE in evaluation of police officers' accommodativeness and the mediators (perceived trust in the

police, positive and negative affect, and intergroupedness of police-civilian encounters), univariate tests showed a significant effect of nation on accommodation $F(1, 452) = 40.15, p < .001, \eta^2 = .082$ ($M_{USA} = 4.42, M_{UAE} = 5.17$) indicating that UAE participants found police to be more accommodating than USA participants. A significant effect of nation on trust was found $F(1, 452) = 36.04, p < .001, \eta^2 = .074$ ($M_{USA} = 5.06, M_{UAE} = 5.69$) indicating more reported trust in police among UAE students than USA students. A significant effect of nation on intergroup was found $F(1, 452) = 9.69, p = .002, \eta^2 = .021$ ($M_{USA} = 4.53, M_{UAE} = 4.80$) indicating more intergroup orientation towards police among UAE students than USA students. An effect of nation on negative affect was significant $F(1, 452) = 36.13, p < .001, \eta^2 = .074$ ($M_{USA} = 2.64, M_{UAE} = 2.19$), showing that USA participants feel more negative emotions while interacting with the police than UAE participants. An effect of nation on positive affect was significant $F(1, 452) = 7.19, p = .008, \eta^2 = .016$ ($M_{USA} = 2.51, M_{UAE} = 2.75$), indicating that UAE participants feel more positive emotions while interacting with the police than USA participants.

Moreover, to test our second hypothesis that three outcomes of moral alignment, reported compliance, and willingness to assist the police are more positively perceived in the UAE compared to the USA. An effect of nation on moral alignment was found significant $F(1, 452) = 6.20, p = .014, \eta^2 = .014$ ($M_{USA} = 4.74, M_{UAE} = 5.02$) indicating more moral alignment among UAE students than USA students. An effect of nation on willingness to help was significant $F(1, 452) = 7.41, p = .007, \eta^2 = .016$ ($M_{USA} = 4.50, M_{UAE} = 4.84$) showing that UAE participants are more willing to help the police than USA students. However, no effect of nation on compliance was observed $F(1, 452) = .623, p = .430$. Therefore, our H2 was partially supported. In sum, reactions towards police in terms of moral alignment and willingness to assist the police, are more positively perceived in the UAE compared to the USA.

Structural Equation Models

In order to test the proposed model (H1, RQ1 and RQ2), structural equation modeling was used. The proposed model showed good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 2944.72$, $df = 1452$, $CFI = .91$, $TLI = .91$, $RMSEA = .04$, $SRMR = .07$). As Figure 2 indicates, accommodation was positively related to moral alignment ($\beta_{UAE} = .37$, $p < .001$) and willingness to help ($\beta_{UAE} = .34$, $p < .001$) only for the UAE group. Accommodation was a positive predictor of trust for both nations ($\beta_{USA} = .77$, $\beta_{UAE} = .79$, $P < .001$). Moreover, reported trust was a positive predictor of moral alignment ($\beta_{USA} = .65$, $\beta_{UAE} = .27$, $p < .001$), attitudes about compliance ($\beta_{USA} = .59$, $P < .001$, $\beta_{UAE} = .24$, $p < .001$) for both groups, and willingness to help the police ($\beta_{USA} = .45$, $p < .001$) only for the USA group.

Accommodation was a positive predictor of positive affect ($\beta_{USA} = .38$, $\beta_{UAE} = .37$, $p < .001$) and a negative predictor of negative affect ($\beta_{USA} = -.52$, $\beta_{UAE} = -.27$, $p < .001$) for both nations. Moreover, positive affect was a positive predictor of moral alignment ($\beta_{USA} = .12$, $p < .05$, $\beta_{UAE} = .20$, $p < .001$) and willingness to help the police ($\beta_{USA} = .35$, $\beta_{UAE} = .26$, $p < .001$) for both groups. Negative affect was negatively related to moral alignment ($\beta_{UAE} = -.22$, $p < .001$) only for the UAE group and to willingness to help ($\beta_{USA} = -.26$, $p < .05$, $\beta_{UAE} = -.14$, $p < .01$) for both nations. Accommodation was a negative predictor of intergroup for both nations ($\beta_{USA} = -.33$, $\beta_{UAE} = -.29$, $p < .001$). Moreover, intergroup was a negative predictor of attitudes about compliance only for the UAE group ($\beta_{UAE} = -.43$, $p < .001$).

To see whether there is a significant difference between the structural paths for two nations, multi-group SEM using Wald test was run. Results of the analysis showed that there is a significant difference for the two nations with regard to accommodation to negative affect (Wald test $\chi^2 = 5.69$, $p < .05$), trust to moral alignment (Wald test $\chi^2 = 8.61$, $p < .01$), and trust to attitudes about compliance (Wald test $\chi^2 = 7.37$, $p < .01$) In other words, the relations between

accommodation and negative affect, trust and moral alignment, and trust and attitudes about compliance are stronger for the USA participants.

Insert Figure 2 about here

The role of reported trust, positive and negative affect, and intergroup as mediators between accommodation and outcome variables was tested for both nations. Mediation analysis with 5000 bootstrapped samples was performed (see Tables 4 and 5). Bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval showed that trust significantly mediates the relationship between accommodation and moral alignment, and accommodation and compliance for both nations. Trust mediates accommodation and willingness to help only for the USA group.

The role of positive and negative affect as a mediator between accommodation and the outcome variables showed a significant mediational role of positive affect between accommodation and moral alignment, and accommodation and willingness to help for both nations. Negative affect was a significant mediator between accommodation and willingness to help for both nations and accommodation and moral alignment only for the UAE group (see Tables 4 and 5). Finally, the mediation effect of intergroup between accommodation and the outcome variables showed that the mediation is significant between accommodation and compliance only for the UAE sample.

Insert Table 4 & 5 about here

Discussion

The relationship between police and civilians can be tenuous, and the intergroup salience triggered through this interaction is entrenched with longstanding mistrust (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). While strong-arm tactics assure measurable levels of enforced compliance, communication efforts can more successfully generate voluntary participation (Dart, 2016). This

study considered the relationship between police and civilians as an intergroup process and explores the linkages from accommodative strategies on police and community communication. Therefore, a communication model tested some of the crucial linkages in this dynamic, and the analysis provides an international comparison between the UAE and the USA.

Trust as a Mediator

Much attention has been given to the rising tensions between police and civilians (Giles et al., 2006). Specifically, that police officers have it in their power to either escalate or de-escalate a given situation through the function of their communication. Huo (2003) emphasizes the importance of more relational efforts within intergroup encounters because fair treatment (e.g., accommodation) conveys positive intentions and enhances the overall relationship. As expected, accommodative behaviors had the strongest relationship to trust for both nations. When the police are perceived as accommodative it communicates that they will not exploit civilian vulnerabilities, and that the officer is willing to behave in a cooperative manner (Tam et al., 2009).

UAE participants found police to be more accommodating than the USA participants, and subsequently, the UAE students reported more trust in the police. The findings seem to align with the cultural characteristics of the UAE and its classification as a collectivistic culture (see Raddawi, 2015). A collectivistic society is concerned with the interest of the group at large and considers members of their communities as a part of an ingroup (Darwish & Huber, 2003). Collectivistic cultures also place a high emphasis on the harmony among members of its societies, and this is partly achieved through the adherence to an authoritative hierarchy where power distance is significant. This pre-existing familiarity with authority may explain the higher rates of UAE student trust and positive affect toward police officers.

Prior research on police legitimacy indicate strong correlations between trust and moral alignment (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). When police officers demonstrate procedural fairness, and embody the community's values (e.g., accommodative behavior), civilians are more likely to support the moral authority of the police and voluntarily comply to their requests (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). The theoretical paths stemming from perceived accommodative communication were investigated here, and consequently, trust made a significant impact on moral alignment for both nations.

Interestingly, the USA sample relied more heavily on the development of trust, and it was only through trust that the outcome variables were significant. In contrast, the findings in the UAE demonstrated the greater importance placed on accommodative behavior and cooperation. Only in the UAE sample were direct paths observed between police accommodation and both moral alignment and willingness to help. The differences between samples may represent the high levels of mistrust in the USA that is not necessarily mitigated by accommodative communication alone.

The importance of police accommodation in the UAE can also be explained by the influence of Sharia law. The cultural emphasis placed on love and solidarity for others (Dupret, 2007) may encourage civilians to assume stronger alignment in moral values with police officers and motivate civilians to be more willing to help. Higher rates of moral alignment in the UAE sample may represent the cultural collectivism present in the police-civilian dynamic.

Affect as a Mediator

The communication behaviors of an interaction contribute to positive affect toward the police outgroup, thereby providing a context for collaboration (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Huo, 2002). The overall attitudes of UAE citizens toward police officers were more positive than

those of their USA peers. Prior research in this area indicate a noticeable change in UAE residents' attitudes toward police officers over the last decade or more (Abdel Muttaleb, 2007; Al Maala, 1999; Al Mansour, 1989). The feeling of positive affect is most likely nurtured by the increased level of safety and prosperity in the UAE (Hopkyns, 2014).

Conversely, the tenuous relationship between police officers and civilians (Giles et al., 2006), coupled with the recency of the data collection, may contribute to the negative evaluations of police officers in the USA. The USA participants felt more negative emotions while interacting with the police and reported less observed accommodation by police officers. Also, the lack of accommodative communication was more likely to predict negative affect than in the UAE, and the findings reinforce the notion of a strained relationship between police and civilians in the USA.

Affect did not significantly predict compliance in either context, which reveals that compliance to the demands of police officers can be separated from how civilians feels about them. However, the findings show that the affect toward the police is related to the likelihood that civilians would be willing to help police officers. The results confirm previous findings that anger and hostile thoughts triggered by negative affect can cause people to respond in an unfriendly manner, while feelings of pleasantness lead to a greater willingness to help (Berkowitz, 1987; 2000). Additionally, the alignment of values, as demonstrated by the societal adherence to Sharia law (Baldry et al., 2013) may contribute to an increase in willingness to help, but the cultural characteristics of the UAE seem to accentuates the potential for ingroup orientation (Raddawi, 2015).

Intergroup as a Mediator

Tyler and Huo (2002) suggest that a willingness to defer to legal authorities can be accomplished when their motives are perceived to be benevolent. However, the nature of police-civilian interactions themselves make group membership distinctions salient and can cause implicit bias within this intergroup encounter (Giles, 2012). The findings highlight the importance of accommodative communication as it negatively predicted the salience of intergroup orientations toward police officers in both contexts. Accommodative communication was especially critical in the UAE as an increase of the intergroup orientation significantly predicted less likelihood of compliance. When police officers in the UAE exhibited accommodative behaviors, the intergroup distinction between police and expatriates were lessened.

Compliance took a different path in the USA and relied, instead, more on perceived trust in police officers, rather than the alleviation of an intergroup orientation. The current state of police-civilian relations in the USA is already filled with tension and high intergroup distinction (Choi & Giles, 2012). The group distinctions between police and civilians seem more constant than in the UAE, and it may be more difficult to completely assuage those outgroup evaluations. However, accommodative behaviors by police officers are seen in the USA to be an important influence on levels of trust, and thus provides a unique avenue toward mutual collaboration. Trust in police officers acted as an important mediator between perceived accommodation and reported compliance in the USA. Tam et al. (2009) explains how trust in another person increases the willingness to act in a cooperative manner. Similarly, Barker et al. (2008) found that perceptions of officer accommodativeness shaped the views of officer trustworthiness and predicted overall compliance with law enforcement.

It is important to note that the UAE sample displayed a higher intergroup orientation toward police officers. The majority of the UAE sample were non-citizens, and they are at greater risk of deportation due to the sponsorship policy (Abdel Muttaleb, 2007). Sponsors (employers/schools) of expatriates can dismiss non-citizens at any time without accountability, and hence the latter are vigilant to be lawful as even the simplest violation can lead to arrest and possible deportation.

Limitations and Future Agenda

The law enforcement context heavily involves communication and the findings highlight significant implications that can be directly applied to policing practices. As the UAE undergoes restructuring in policing, the important changes in socio-demographics (e.g., race and socioeconomics) should be more carefully considered as major factors in this reform. Additional analysis is necessary on other Middle Eastern countries with the wide variety of culture represented, and the various manners in which Sharia law is implemented.

As for the USA, the police-civilian dynamic is only minimally explained through the positivistic methodology represented here. There is also a need for more naturalistic studies to examine how these processes are discursively managed, thereby capturing the subtler nuances of influence and outcomes. Methodological variation could help investigate actual police-civilian interactions and move away from the limitations that exist with a young adult sample self-reporting on perceptions of police behaviors. An interpretive focus could provide further detail of minority perspectives (e.g., racial or ethnic), as the sample in this current study was mostly Caucasian. Additional insight into communicative strategies can help both police and civilians avoid violence or wasted time in their interactions and may lead to a more effective style of policing (Dart, 2016).

Finally, as described in Choi and Giles (2012), all of the outcomes could potentially feed back into all other components of the model here. Future studies should explore the possibility of a cyclical pattern that makes this intergroup relationship so difficult. The model in this study offers paths of the intergroup and communication dimensions within a police-civilian encounter, but more investigation is needed on the interrelated nature of these variables.

Conclusion

Contact between police and civilians occur by a variety of means and result in wide-ranging levels of collaboration. The communication between law enforcement and civilians requires careful consideration to facilitate a more secure, safe, and lawful society. Specifically, an intergroup dynamic assures the presence of implicit bias and reduces the level of trust between groups, and within police-civilian interactions, outgroup designations are often perceived as a threat (Yamagashi & Yamagashi, 1994). Therefore, civilians are less likely to trust police officers because of the distinct differences in group membership.

This study assessed the degree in which civilians are willing to cooperate with police officers and the factors that hinder this effort. By comparing USA and UAE participants, the findings consider the influence of a multiethnic environment and the socio-cultural influence of these unique legal systems. Consistent with previous research, the findings indicate the importance of trust between groups and how accommodative communication contributes to its development. In summary, this study examined the predictors of civic outcomes based on perceived police accommodation and highlight the role of communication in the police-civilian interactions.

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Figure 1 Proposed model of perceived accommodation, mediating variables and outcomes.

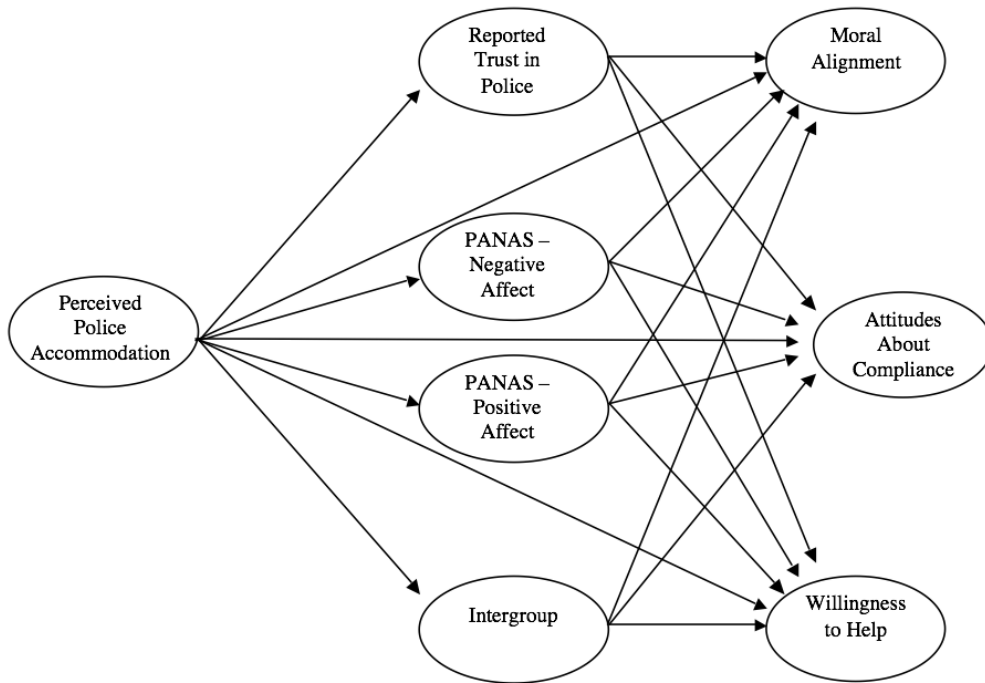
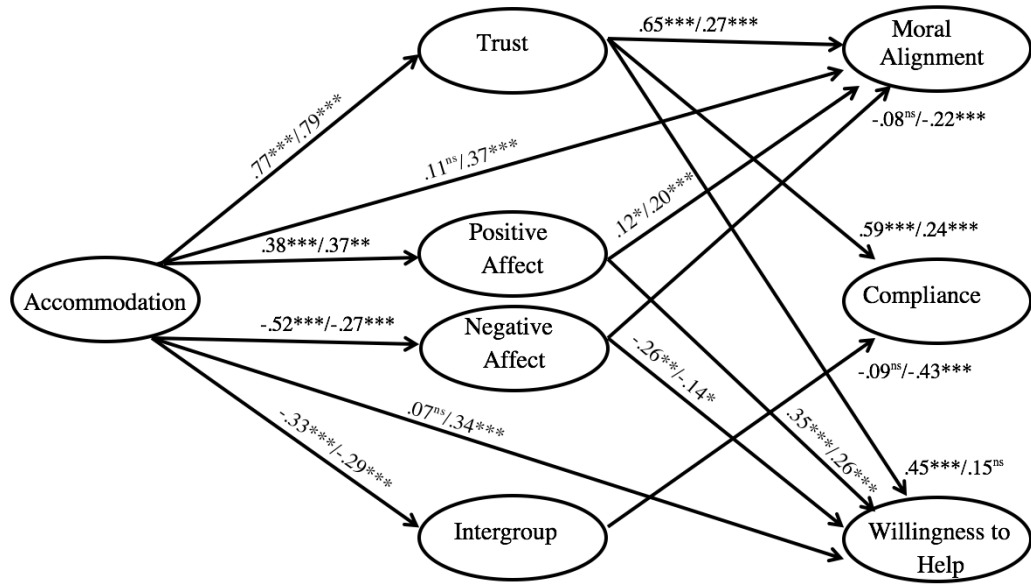


Figure 2 The final model for USA (left) and UAE (right) participants



* p < .05
 ** p < .01
 *** p < .001

Table 1 Internal Consistency of the Scales

Variable	Cronbach's alpha for UAE	Cronbach's alpha for USA
Accommodation	.89	.92
Trust	.91	.92
Negative affect	.75	.76
Positive affect	.75	.70
Intergroup	.66	.73
Moral	.90	.91
Compliance	.79	.76
Willingness to help	.73	.68

Table 2 Results of Measurement Invariance Test

Model	S-B χ^2	df	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ CFI
Accommodation						
Configural	15.84	6	.990	.07		
Metric	32.29	10	.981	.07	17.25**	.009
Scalar	37.22	14	.977	.07	3.62	.004
Trust						
Configural	21.44	16	.995	.03		
Metric	33.11	21	.990	.04	11.94*	.005
Scalar	41.37	26	.987	.04	8.36	.003
PANAS						
Configural	184.76	48	.958	.07		
Metric	184.53	55	.966	.07	3.42	.008
Scalar	224.10	62	.932	.07	40.68***	.034
Intergroup						
Configural	32.26	16	.946	.06		
Metric	37.93	21	.944	.05	5.35	.002
Scalar	56.09	26	.900	.06	25.82***	.044
Moral alignment						
Configural	37.17	16	.979	.07		
Metric	45.25	21	.976	.06	7.35	.003
Scalar	59.17	26	.967	.07	15.00**	.009
Compliance ¹						
Configural	52.46	26	.958	.06		
Metric	64.77	32	.949	.06	12.32	.009
Scalar	74.23	37	.941	.06	9.38	.008
Willingness to help						
Configural	52.46	26	.958	.06		
Metric	64.77	32	.949	.06	12.32	.009
Scalar	74.23	37	.941	.06	9.38	.008

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for USA and UAE Participants

Variables	USA		UAE	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Trust	5.06	1.16	5.69	1.04
Intergroup	4.53	.94	4.80	.88
Moral	4.74	1.19	5.02	1.13
Accommodation	4.42	1.27	5.17	1.12
Willingness to help	4.50	1.25	4.84	1.27
Negative affect	2.64	.80	2.19	.76
Positive affect	2.51	.93	2.75	.93
Compliance	4.42	1.34	4.59	1.39

Table 4 Mediation Test for USA Sample

Independent	Mediator	Dependent	Bootstrapping	
			Estimate	95% CI
Accommodation	Trust	Moral	.958*	.609, 1.440
Accommodation	Trust	Compliance	.611*	.314, 1.059
Accommodation	Trust	Willingness	.568*	.303, .963
Accommodation	Positive affect	Moral	.153*	.039, .308
Accommodation	Positive affect	Compliance	.085	-.38, .218
Accommodation	Positive affect	Willingness	.271*	.055, .552
Accommodation	Negative affect	Moral	.075	-.018, .222
Accommodation	Negative affect	Compliance	.020	-.086, .172
Accommodation	Negative affect	Willingness	.213*	.076, .440
Accommodation	Intergroup	Moral	.055	-.001, .171
Accommodation	Intergroup	Compliance	.000	-.075, .066
Accommodation	Intergroup	Willingness	.099	-.032, .241

Table 5 Mediation Test for UAE Sample

Independent	Mediator	Dependent	Bootstrapping	
			Estimate	95% CI
Accommodation	Trust	Moral	.408*	.168, .696
Accommodation	Trust	Compliance	.211*	.052, .521
Accommodation	Trust	Willingness	-.208	-.070, .505
Accommodation	Positive affect	Moral	.110*	.041, .225
Accommodation	Positive affect	Compliance	.021	-.050, .109
Accommodation	Positive affect	Willingness	.115*	.045, .227
Accommodation	Negative affect	Moral	.088*	.022, .201
Accommodation	Negative affect	Compliance	-.047	-.130, .004
Accommodation	Negative affect	Willingness	.045*	.012, .128
Accommodation	Intergroup	Moral	.032	-.011, .159
Accommodation	Intergroup	Compliance	.132*	.004, .324
Accommodation	Intergroup	Willingness	.014	-.029, .136