

Institutional Legitimacy & Offending Behaviour

*Can police behaviour affect the contexts within
which people think about crime*

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**Tuesday 3rd May 2011
4-5.30pm**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, ROOM G.07a,
INFORMATICS FORUM, CRICHTON STREET, EDINBURGH**

The procedural justice model developed by Tyler and colleagues suggests that people who feel that legal authorities are fair, trustworthy and legitimate are less likely to break the law. The police in particular represent a social group that is important to people. Police actions powerfully communicate membership of or exclusion from that group, and those who feel part of a group are more likely to follow its rules.



Yet the fairness of legal authorities cannot be the only factor involved in people's decisions to uphold or break the law. This talk examines the

association between perceptions of the police and self-reported offending: it also uses multi-level modelling to locate individuals within the social contexts in which they live. In particular, it tests the idea that structural disadvantage and low collective efficacy are associated with higher levels of offending, and asks whether police legitimacy may have implications for offending at the area as well as individual levels.

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