



# Do Attitudes Toward Police Mediate the Relationship between Judgment Response Times and Judgments of Police Use of Force?



Kali Goldman & Alex Fusee  
Melissa Baker, Research Mentor  
Department of Psychology | Coastal Carolina University

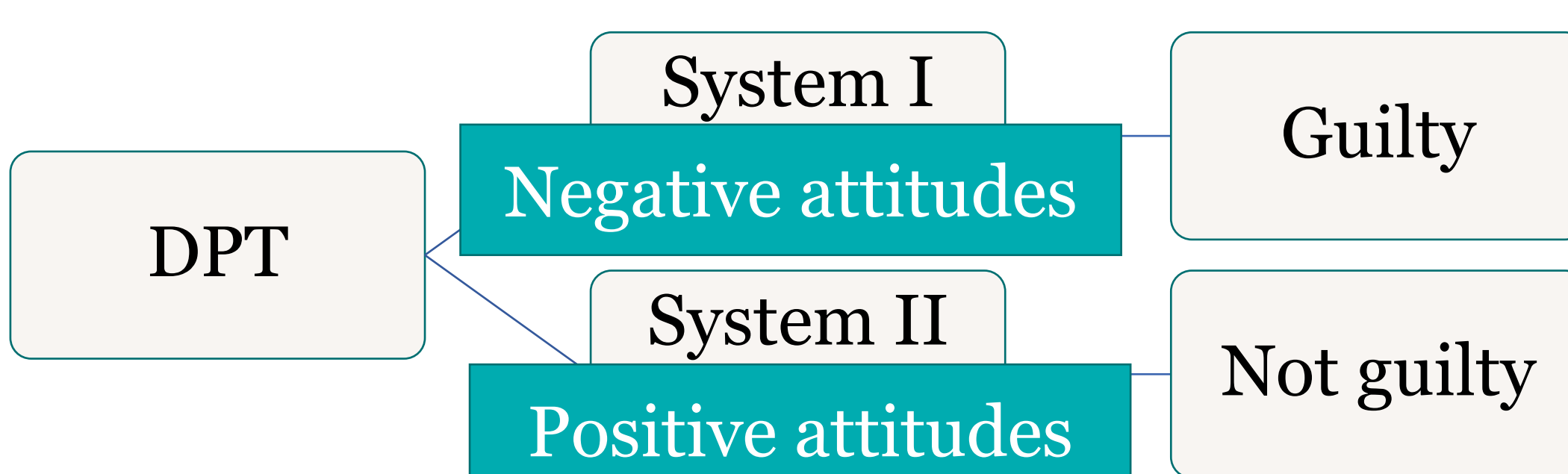
## Background

### Dual Processing Theory

Research on dual processing theories (DPT) of decision-making suggests that people rely on their attitudes toward police when making determinations of police officer behavior, such as use of force (Bornstein & Greene, 2011; Na, 1999). Based on DPT, we assumed that mock jurors might use their attitudes toward police to render verdicts.

### Mock Juror Judgments

Research suggests that mock jurors (e.g., Ewanation et al., 2022) who have negative attitudes toward police might make “snap” judgments based on System I processing: faster and more likely to render a guilty judgment. Additionally, mock jurors who have positive attitudes might make “deliberate” judgments based on System II processing: slower and more likely to render a not guilty judgment.



## Research Question

Do mock jurors’ attitudes toward police mediate the relationship between mock jurors’ verdict response times and their verdict of guilt regarding an officer’s use of excessive force?

### Hypothesis

We hypothesized that faster verdicts would be associated with guilty verdicts and would be affected by more negative attitudes toward police. Additionally, we expected that slower verdicts would be associated with not guilty verdicts and would be affected by more positive attitudes (Na, 1999).

## Method

### Participants, Materials, & Procedure

<b>Participants</b>	$N= 88$ , Female = 68.4%, $M_{age} = 19.5$ , White = 76.1% CCU students completed the study in a lab.	<b>Attitudes</b>	<i>I like police.</i> <i>I think police treat everyone equally.</i> <i>I do not trust police.</i>	<b>Trial</b>		<b>Verdict</b>	<i>How do you find the defendant, the police officer of violating an arrestee’s civil rights?</i>
		Agree	Disagree			Guilty	Not guilty

## Results

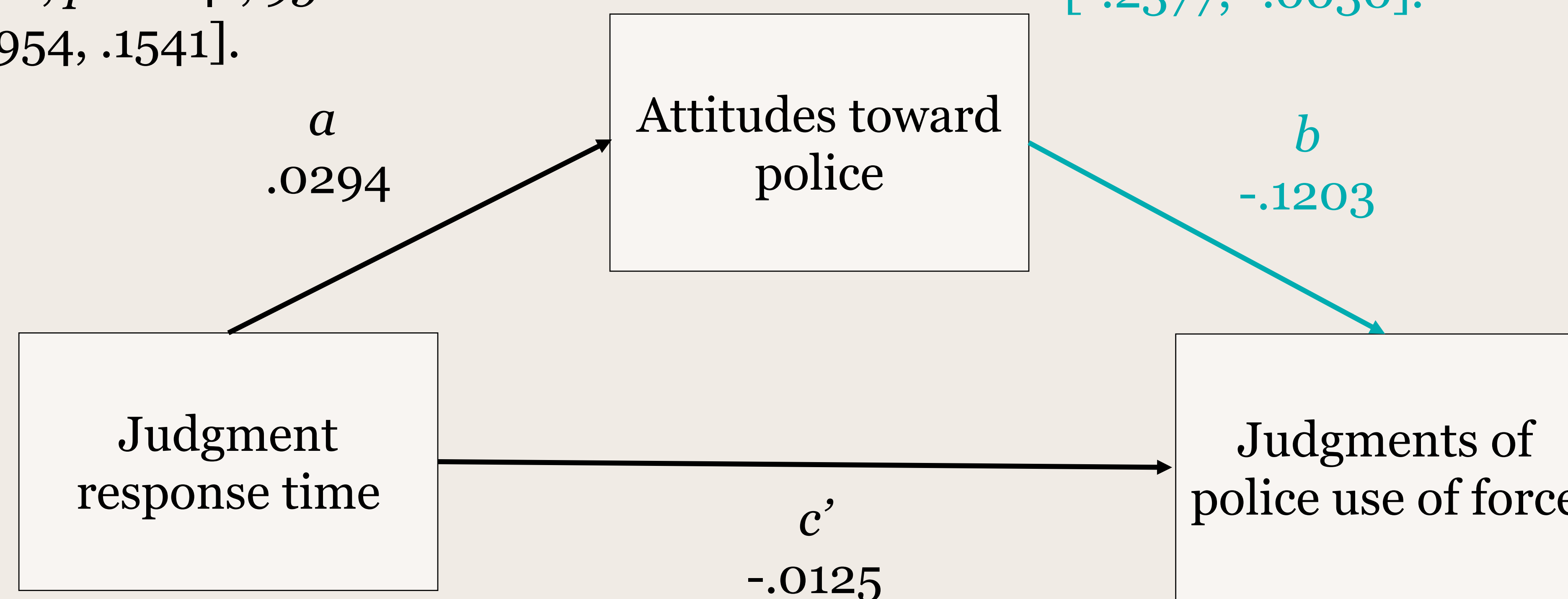
### Analysis

Test examine whether attitudes toward police mediated the relationship between verdict response time and verdict PROCESS mediation was used (Hayes, 2013).

### Findings

The path from judgment response time to attitudes toward police was not significant ( $b=.0294$ ,  $se=.0628$ ,  $p=.641$ , 95%CI [-.0954, .1541]).

The path from judgment response time was negative and significant ( $b=-.1203$ ,  $se=.0599$ ,  $p=.044$ , 95%CI [-.2377, -.0030]).



The path from judgment response time to judgments of police use of force was not significant ( $b=-.0125$ ,  $se=.0336$ ,  $p=.7110$ , 95%CI [-.0784, .0535]).

The indirect effect ( $ie=-.0035$ ) was not significant, 95%CI [-.0363, .0128].

## Discussion

### Conclusion

We believe that we found partial support for the DPT in the context of rendering verdicts in police use of force criminal cases. We failed to find that attitudes mediated the relationship between verdict response times and verdict. But, we found that attitudes toward police were related to verdict. Participants who had more negative attitudes towards police were more likely to render guilty verdicts than participants who had more positive attitudes toward police.

### Limitations

Data collection is still ongoing. We may not have sufficient power to detect a mediating effect,  $N=88$ .

## References

Bornstein, B. H., & Green, E. (2011). Jury decision making: Implications for and from psychology. *CDPS*.

Ewanation et al. (2022). Mock juror decision-making in a self-defense trial involving police use of force. *CJBS*.

Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Press.

Na, E.-Y. (1999). Is biased processing of strong attitudes peripheral? An extension of the dual process models of attitude change. *PR*.

## Contact Me

For more information contact me, Kali, at [kgoldman@coastal.edu](mailto:kgoldman@coastal.edu).

