

**Police-Citizen Relations Across the World: Comparing Sources and Context of Trust and Legitimacy.** Edited by Dietrich Oberwittler and Sebastian Roché. New York, NY: Routledge. 2018. 308pp. £105 (hbk) £41 e-book. ISBN: 978-1-138-22286-1 (hbk).

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This collection of essays on police-citizen relations around the globe adeptly emerges at a time in which the procedural justice model has become, without a doubt, one of the most supported explanations for how citizens' perceptions of the police develop. How fair the police are perceived to be when they come into contact with citizens has been now widely recognized as the main driving mechanism behind police-citizen relations, especially in regard to the levels of trust and legitimacy that citizens place on the police (Gau, 2010). Although most of the research on procedural justice has been concentrated around Western societies such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the model continually appears to be generalized to a wider range of contexts. This is where *Police-Citizen Relations Across the World* finds its place. In this edited volume, Oberwittler and Roché provide a timely challenge to the generalizability of the procedural justice model and its impact on both legitimacy and trust in the police, placing critical emphasis on how the model does or does not work in a variety of different settings.

The key goal of this volume is to increase the scope of the literature on trust and legitimacy in the police by empirically testing some of the better-established hypotheses in the literature while accounting for the effect of macro perspectives from settings and societies that have perhaps received less attention from scholars. Oberwittler and Roché emphasize how overlooked macro-level conditions have been in determining what influences police legitimacy and citizens' trust in the police from a comparative perspective, and this gap in the literature is effectively tackled by each chapter in this text.

The book is divided into four parts: an introduction, a section on the impact of neighborhoods and states, another section focusing on minorities and religions, and a final section looking at procedural justice as cause and consequence. Throughout the various essays featured in this book, the generalizability of the procedural justice model is empirically scrutinized in light of the context in which it is examined, and the role of certain elements of trust and legitimacy is also

explored comparatively. At least three major themes emerge from the readings in this text, which make repeated appearances throughout the essays: (1) the importance of taking individual level predictors of legitimacy and trust in the police into context given their variability, (2) the impact national identity or a latent sense of belonging have on how police are perceived by the public, and (3) the extent to which police-citizen contacts shape public perception of the police. What the reader will find in these chapters is that factors such as political systems, religion, and even the composition of the population can effectively explain variations in levels of trust in the police across states, even when they seem somewhat comparable in many aspects (see Roché et al.'s comparative analysis of France and Germany in chapter 8). From these readings, an argument can be made that each state's individual and unique set of factors and conditions can potentially determine how trust, legitimacy, and procedural justice result in societies.

The chapters complement each other very well, with some of the findings interweaving and supporting other work found in the text, making the case for the need to include macro level components to the research on police legitimacy and public trust in the police much stronger. The overall consensus in most of the studies found in this volume is that macro level factors must be considered when looking at police trust and legitimacy, implying that the procedural justice model should not work in a vacuum focusing only on individual level perceptions.

This volume provides an answer to the question asking *under what conditions can one expect for procedural justice to have an effect on how the public perceptions of the police?* And one of its important contributions is that each essay provides depictions of the mechanisms of trust, legitimacy, and procedural justice in action, and allows the reader to not only grasp the idea that context matters, but rather *how* context matters. A wide range of methods and techniques are used throughout the text, which allow for an in-depth exploration and analyses of trust in the police and police legitimacy in their corresponding regions. While most of the research featured in this volume was conducted in Europe, a few chapters stand out as interest backdrops of police-citizen relations. Of relevance are Sato's analysis of Japan as an outlier of the procedural justice model (chapter 5), Oluwagbenga and Akinlabi's examination of cooperation with the police in Nigeria (chapter 6), and Roché et al.'s take on how police-citizens relations act as a proxy of citizen-state relationships in Turkey (chapter 10).

Although the book does explore trust and legitimacy in several European states as well as the US, the book could have benefitted from a wider reach of regions. Whether or not the findings from the studies in this book apply to Latin America, for instance, remains unclear (see Sato's argument of lack of general applicability of procedural justice theory in chapter 5). The authors in these chapters make a strong case for the need to understand how the elements that influence public perceptions of the police react to the context they are in, which is why a broader range of regions would make this case even stronger. Another point to highlight is that, although the book's main themes are trust and legitimacy, they are predominantly featured in relation to the procedural justice model, with the exception of a few chapters.

Nevertheless, the findings from the chapters in this text do provide an interesting contrast to most of the research conducted on procedural justice and bring the question of *how appropriate it is to take the results from the procedural justice model and generalize them to other contexts* to the forefront. Contextual differences (particularly in terms of crime, corruption, violence, and culture) shape the way in which citizens experience and interpret behaviors, making this volume much more relevant at a time in which trust, legitimacy, and the procedural justice model are all becoming more prominent and their generalization more problematic. Essentially, context helps explain why some police-citizen relations work, and why others do not. This questioning of the current status quo in the police-citizen relations research is, perhaps, the strongest contribution of this edited volume. Obertwittler and Roché also do a good job of bringing aboard work and theories from other fields and disciplines such as psychology, to explain some of the mechanisms behind people's perceptions of the police, giving it breadth and expanding the scope even further.

This book will be an ideal read for all scholars researching procedural justice who are looking to go beyond the current literature, and especially for those who are interested in comparative research. This volume will also provide a good resource for scholars and students aiming to expand the reach of the literature on trust in the police and the legitimacy of institutions in general. Ultimately, this volume provides a refreshing and renewed view of the dynamics behind police-citizen relations in comparative settings, and emphasizes the importance of interpreting findings with caution, particularly when extrapolating these results to other contexts and regions.

## Reference

Gau, J.M., 2010. A longitudinal analysis of citizens' attitudes about police. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 33(2), pp.236-252.