

Procedural justice, police legitimacy and public cooperation with legal authorities

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The procedural justice model posits that judgments regarding how fairly the police exercise their authority shape perceptions of police legitimacy, which, in turn, largely determines people's willingness to cooperate with the police and other legal authorities. Much of the empirical support for this theoretical argument comes from studies conducted in the United States. Research from developing countries, however, shows that the impact of legitimacy is more modest and that other factors (i.e. police effectiveness) have a more powerful influence on public cooperation.

This study assesses whether it is possible to generalise the procedural justice model using survey data from a high school-based sample of young adults surveyed in autumn 2011 in Slovenia (N = 683). A total of 275 respondents have had experiences with the police (40%) in various police procedures. The results from the regression analyses reveal that procedural justice has a strong correlation with police legitimacy, and that the latter influences confidence in and willingness to cooperate with the police. Overall, these research findings confirm the procedural justice model on a sample of young people in Slovenia.

Key words: procedural justice, police legitimacy, policing, Slovenia

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