

## OFFICER ACCOMMODATION IN POLICE- CIVILIAN ENCOUNTERS

Reported Compliance with Police in Mongolia  
and the United States

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### Abstract

Recent research has demonstrated that, for young adults, officers' communicative practices are potent predictors of civilians' attributed trust in police, and their perceived likelihood of compliance with police requests. This line of work has important applied implications for ameliorating police-civilian relations on the one hand and promoting a joint law enforcement/community response to crime prevention on the other. The present study continued this line of work in Mongolia and the USA. Mongolia is not only intriguing as little communication research has been conducted in this setting, but is significant as its government (and the law enforcement arm of it) is currently experiencing significant social upheavals. Besides differences between nations, results revealed that, for American participants, officer accommodativeness indirectly predicted civilian compliance through trust. This also emerged for the Mongolian counterparts, although a direct relationship was evident between officer accommodation and compliance as well. The latter finding is unique in that it is the first cultural context where both direct and indirect paths have been identified. The practical significance of these findings is discussed.

Keywords: Mongolia, United States, America, Police, Law Enforcement, Civilian, Intercultural, Cross-Cultural, Intergroup, Accommodation, Trust, Compliance.

Scholars and law enforcement officials have, for years, known that a key factor in the prevention of criminal activity is the degree to which civilians and police work together cooperatively and proactively (Bayley, 1994). However, residents in many communities around the world sustain negative images of local enforcement, and experience problematic communication with associated agencies including government, thus hindering their willingness to assist law enforcement endeavors in their communities (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003a). Tyler and Huo (2002) have suggested that individuals' willingness to defer to legal authorities—such as police officers—is, in part, shaped by motive-based trust. They also note that authorities' ability to gain compliance from community members may be accomplished by treating them in ways that encourage judgments that procedures are fair, and that the authorities' motives are benevolent. What Tyler and Huo refer to as dignified and respectful treatment, we regard as features of communication accommodation. Gaining an understanding of the role of accommodative practices, trust, and compliance in police-civilian encounters is complicated by historical, regional, and cultural differences. This is an important empirical quest if we are to formulate joint responses from specified law enforcement agencies and their allied communities to combat crime and facilitate safety and security in them.

Due to a programmatic commitment to understanding the intercultural dynamics of police-civilian communication, we launched an investigation in Mongolia - a country with a recent history rich in political, economic, and social change - comparing data gleaned from there with that from the USA. In Mongolia, the unsteady shifting of structure and law has created difficulties with regard to police-civilian encounters. The development of a recent democracy in this quite fascinating context offers insights into a police structure that is just now beginning to establish systems of accountability to its government and to the Mongolian people. Interestingly, too, little communication data have emerged from this nation, let alone as it relates to law enforcement - a topic also not having received much published social scientific treatment. As a point of contrast, we incorporate an American sample as well, to test a model of behavioral and attitudinal factors in police-civilian interaction. Previous research in this applied domain (e.g., Choi, Stoitsova, Giles, Barker, & Hajek, 2009; Hajek et al., 2008a, b, c) has uncovered different cross-cultural relationships between perceived police accommodation and citizen compliance and, hence, there is a need to examine more cultural settings with a view to forging a better

understanding of the complex social and historical factors underpinning them. The work to date has included an American comparison and we continue that consistency here with our comparative focus on police-civilian interactions in the United States and Mongolia. A brief review of these contexts will follow, detailing specific aspects of the police-civilian dynamic in each country.

#### The United States

Police officers are asked to maintain law and order and protect the human rights of the people they serve without breaking the rules of conduct and behavior. In a democratic system such as the United States, citizens believe that, as Walker (2001) states, "the police, especially because of their awesome powers of arrest and capacity to use force, are not exempt from this rule" (p. 180). Achieving this goal while using restraint and control is a challenge for law enforcement, as it has been precariously charged with balancing the protection and endangerment of individual rights (e.g., Goldsmith, 1999). Law enforcement must maintain order and, in doing so, requires the consent and cooperation of its citizenry (National Research Council, 2004). Central to the current study, such cooperation may take the form of greater willingness to comply with police orders (e.g., dispersing in a crowd control emergency). If sections of the public have formed negative images of law enforcement due to unfair treatment, for example, or differing views about what should be enforcement priorities, collaborative efforts aimed at combating crime may be reduced significantly or even backfire. Much American research has highlighted officers' inequitable treatment of certain kinds of citizens (e.g., Jacobs & O'Brien, 1998; Norris, Fielding, Kemp, & Fielding, 1992). Other research has documented alleged police abuses of power, such as unnecessary use of force and verbally coercive tactics (see for example, Solan & Tiersma, 2005). The potential for police abuse exists to the extent that, to keep levels in check, citizens in many American communities have established review systems to monitor police conduct (e.g., Dailey, Reid, Anderson, & Giles, 2006). These systems of accountability continue to regulate perceptions of corrupt police behavior.

Compounding these factors and adding to the uniqueness of this context, is the United States' history of racial and ethnic unrest. This history may partially explain why, for many in American society, police officers are almost revered—and yet despised—at the same time (Molloy

& Giles, 2002; see also Roberg, Novak, and Cordner [2005, pp. 42-66] for an overview of American policing and its different phases from colonial through to modern times). Although no comprehensive meta-analysis of attitudes toward the police across cultures exists, many American investigations have pointed to the role of socio-demographic factors in predicting such judgments, albeit these vary greatly from community to community. In general, older, female, urban, better educated, higher-income, married, and Caucasian respondents in comparison to their social counterparts consistently manifest more positive views of law enforcement (e.g., Eschholz, Sims Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Olsen, 2005; Tyler & Huo, 2002) as do many of those who reside in communities where the crime level is relatively low (Hennigan, Maxson, Sloane, & Ranney, 2002). Ethnic perceptions of law enforcement in the United States have also received widespread empirical attention. Taylor, Turner, Esbensen, and Winfree (2001) found that Caucasians and Asians had the most favorable views of police, followed by Hispanics and Native Americans, and then African Americans. These results, particularly as they relate to African Americans' trust in law enforcement (Tyler, 2001; Tyler & Huo, 2002), have been confirmed by others (e.g., Prine, Ballard, & Robinson, 2001; Wortley, 1996). Relatedly, a report in Los Angeles (Ayres & Borowsky, 2008) claimed that African Americans and Latinos are "over-stopped, over-searched and over-arrested".

Yet despite these problems, studies do show majority support for, and positive attitudes towards, police in the USA (Pastore & Maguire, 2007; Schuck, Rosenbaum, & Hawkins, 2008), and this is apparent too in the area providing participants for our investigation below (Giles et al., 2006). Moreover, this is a far cry from the situation described next in Mongolia.

#### Mongolia

At the beginning of the 20th century, Mongolia became part of the Soviet Union. In 1921, the Russian Red Army provided aid to a small group of Mongolian rebels who overthrew the established government and attempted to move away from Chinese control. Mongolia was then declared the Mongolian People's Republic and this government continued for the next 75 years (Ginsburg, 1995). Mongolia depended on Russia, and throughout the reign of communism in Mongolia, the country developed a strong bond with Russia out of fear of renewed Chinese influence (Ginsburg, 1995). The majority of Mongolian trade was with the

USSR, reflecting the intense political ties between the two countries. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) ruled Mongolia from the 1920s through 1996, backed by the Soviet Union (Fritz, 2007).

The MPRP lost power in the 1996 election to the Democratic Union (DU) - which was comprised of the Mongolian Social Democratic Party and the Mongolian National Democratic Party: two relatively new parties established in 1988. The DU initiated progressive change, moving toward a market-based economy (Fritz, 2007). The DU was unable to maintain its power because of disagreements inside of the government, and lost the 2000 election back to the MPRP (Jeffries, 2007). In the 2004 election, no party won a majority of the votes and a coalition government was formed with a split in power between the MPRP and other smaller parties. The coalition government fragmented in January 2006, leading to increased corruption in the political process as well as a sharp decrease in public trust of government institutions (Fritz, 2007).

In June of 2008, Mongolia held an election to determine which political party would hold control over parliament (Wong, 2008). By winning the majority of the seats in this election, the MPRP was given control over parliament and the government of Mongolia. However, quickly after the results of the election, the DU accused the MPRP of vote fraud and a violent protest occurred shortly after in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Despite the controversial accusation, the MPRP held its first session of parliament in August of 2008, and a new government was formed in Mongolia.

Since the advent of a democratic government and the withdrawal of Soviet influence, Mongolia has experienced drastic economic change. As a result of the political transformation, the country lost its traditional trading partners and the laws governing ownership were changed completely. For a long period of time, Mongolia witnessed falling production rates, rising levels of inflation, and declining standards of living (Anderson, 1998). While not all negative, these adjustments in the political structure have also allowed for other changes in daily life in Mongolia. The number of privately owned vehicles has increased considerably with the ability to own private property. Additionally, small "black market" businesses have sprung up to sell consumer goods and make products more accessible to the general public (Anderson, 1998). The news media was liberated from government control in January 1999, allowing reporters to criticize national policy, thereby creating more transparency (Jeffries, 2007). In addition, the number of troops in Mongolia has decreased significantly following a

transition into a democratic government (Landman, Larizza, & McEvoy, 2005).

The term civil society in Mongolian translates to "citizen's society", which implies that the public sector of the country is inherently political and that ideally the rights and interests of the individual outweigh those of the country and government (UNDP, 2005). This demonstrates the perspective that the Mongolian government and police force should have toward the citizens of Mongolia. The structure of this arm of government was created with a citizen-centered focus in mind, and the way in which it is organized reflects this intent. Mongolian security can be broken down into three distinct branches: The Ministry of Defense handles all external security matters, the General Intelligence Agency reports directly to the Prime Minister and deals with internal security, and it is the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs that controls law enforcement (BDHRL, 2002). The Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, as a political institution, makes the police force subject to political pressure (LaMont, 2002), and part of a representative and accountable segment of the Mongolian government (Landman et al., 2005).

The number of police employed by the government has increased since 2001, even though the government has decreased employment of other professionals in the public sector such as education and health officials (Asia Development Bank, 2004). Police are considered members of the special service sector of government employment, and each segment of this sector is regulated by its own rules developed by laws and regulations (Asia Development Bank, 2004). While recent changes to the Mongolian Constitution prevent arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence (BDHRL, 2002), this has been a point of conflict between police and civilians because Mongolia continues to struggle in stabilizing its legal system. Following the advent of the new Constitution, legal professionals and police officers alike, continue to be uneducated in the new standards of law. There are data which lead to the conclusion that certain police agencies (and officers within those) might abuse their appointed power (see Asia Development Bank, 2004).

Police, along with customs, courts, land management, and banking, ranked as one of the most corrupted segments of the Mongolian government (USAID, 2005). According to one study, approximately 71% of the police force is corrupt (UNDP, 2005). While freedom of speech, religion, and belief are generally well protected in Mongolia, there are numerous reports of

arbitrary arrests as well as human rights violations (BDHRL, 2002; Landman et al., 2005). While the fight against human rights violations on paper is strong, the civil government, specifically street policemen and prison guards, have the tendency to violate human rights (Asia Foundation, 2000).

Publically, the Mongolian government's human rights record seems to be relatively good, however, the police often beat prisoners and the conditions in prisons and detention centers are extremely poor (BDHRL, 2002). According to a report completed by the National Human Rights Commission, over 70% of prisoners interviewed in Mongolia reported that the police had forced confessions from them (BDHRL, 2007). Police continue to commit human rights violations, particularly when dealing with arrests, detention and questioning, as well as incidents involving intoxicated suspects (Landman et al., 2005).

Laws and efforts to end police abuse of detainees are inadequate and improvements are not progressing quickly. Although prison personnel are required to receive human rights training and a court is in place to monitor human rights conditions in prisons, these new policies are not widespread and are not well enforced (BDHRL, 2007). The extent of this abuse was most evident as the Mongolian governmental structure experienced radical shifts in the last two decades. During the changes in political power, the police force was free to act aggressively and, arguably, added to the uncertainty of these chaotic times. Although government police agents did not commit any politically motivated killings, several prisoners and detainees died as a result of abuse from police (BDHRL, 2007).

Police corruption is ranked the third most important national problem by the citizens of Mongolia, followed by unemployment and poverty (Fritz 2007). Lower level officials and police claim that they regularly engage in corruption to supplement their low level salaries, and budgets for internal security have been reduced in recent years, also causing increases in corruption among police (BDHRL, 2002). The Mongolian people are aware of the problem that arises from insufficient funding, and 74% of respondents in a Mongolian Chamber of Commerce and Industry survey believe that low salaries are the primary cause of corruption among government agencies and the police. Respondents also strongly recognized that weak implementation of the laws and general unfairness contributes to the ongoing corruption (Asian Development Bank, 2004). Moreover, a common practice is to accept bribes as "fines" for traffic violations (Asian Development Bank, 2004; USAID, 2005). In March of 2007, data suggest

that the police could account for as much as 25.2% of the bribe takers in Mongolia (USAID, 2008).

It is clear that the citizens of Mongolia see police corruption as a serious problem. In March of 2006, police were rated 3.91 out of 5 on a scale measuring corruption (USAID, 2006). Approximately 70% of respondents surveyed believe that the police force is heavily corrupted, and approximately 25% of respondents surveyed believe that the police force is fairly corrupted (Landman et al., 2005). Hence, there is a great deal of mistrust toward the police in Mongolia. Only a small proportion of the population (28%) reported that they trust the police force (UNDP, 2005), and only 13.3% of those surveyed rely on the police to fight corruption (USAID, 2006). structure that 90% of those surveyed had little hope that decision makers would be involved in helping to resolve this problem. Instead, the respondents suggested that responsibility of ending corruption should be placed in the hands of civil movements and non-governmental organizations (USAID, 2008). From a large proportion of respondents, 64.1% agreed and 25.4% somewhat agreed with the statement that police were becoming too corrupt (USAID, 2006). In sum, the picture emerging here is one even more dire than we have encountered elsewhere where law enforcement has been characterized by widespread abuse of its powers (Choi et al., 2009; Hajek et al., 2008a, c).

#### Overview

As the available literature indicates, the tenor of civilians' attitudes toward police officers in Mongolia appears significantly more negative than the sentiments experienced in the USA. Due to the radical changes in governmental structure, the citizens of Mongolia have experienced corruption across the board, including local law enforcement. Indeed, efforts are underway in both countries to raise awareness about alleged police transgressions, and strides forward are beginning to be evident in terms of radical police reforms. However, the accountability structure in Mongolia is relatively new and is still in the process of development. Furthermore, while citizens in Mongolia and the USA both experience varying degrees of occasional abuse and respect from those sworn to protect them, the expectations are, arguably, much lower in Mongolia considering the recent changes in political structure. We ask then, what implications do these, at times contrastive, views carry for expected differences between cultures in perceptions of police officers? Furthermore, what are the effects of these perceptions on civilians' inclinations to assist

officers in performing their duties, such as by complying with officers' requests? Other than general prescriptions that officers' styles should be respectful of the communities they serve (Miller, 1999; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003b) and the data emerging from our own program of scholarship, little empirical data are available pertaining to the types of communicative acts civilians in different cultures expect or experience when encountering police officers. We now explore these questions as we offer a viable theoretical approach to the study of police-civilian interaction in the present cultural settings, and introduce the line of research inspired by it.

The Theoretical Framework, Associated Data, and the Present Investigation

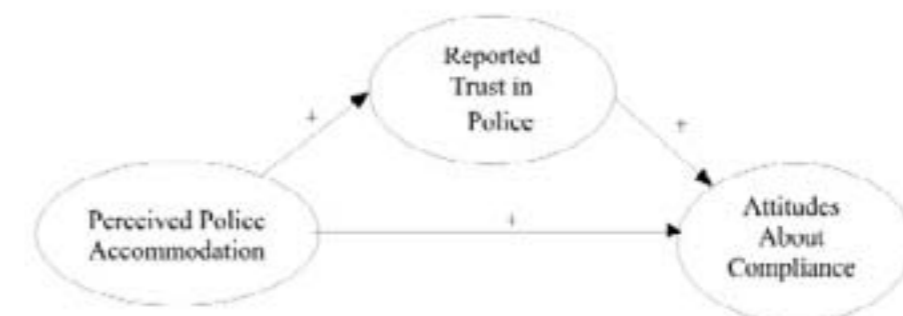
Key aspects of police-civilian interaction can be understood from a communication accommodation theory perspective (CAT: e.g., Giles, Coupland, & Coupland 1991; Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005). The theory has been described as one of the most prominent theories in the social psychology of language (Tracy & Haspel, 2004) and, having been applied in many contexts, it has expanded into an "interdisciplinary model of relational and identity processes in communicative interaction" (Coupland & Jaworski, 1997, pp. 241-242). CAT explores the ways in which individuals vary their communicative behavior to accommodate others given where they believe others to be, their motivations for so doing, and the social consequences arising. An accommodative climate is one in which conversational partners listen to one another, take the other's views into account, desire to understand their conversational partner's unique situation, and explain things in ways that "sit right" with their partner. An accommodative climate also features pleasantness, politeness, and respect and is predictably more positively perceived by the interactants involved (as well as third-party observers) than non-accommodative messages (e.g., Myers, Giles, Reid, & Nabi, 2008).

In addition to being oriented toward interpersonal issues, CAT is also closely linked to the intergroup stakes of an encounter (Harwood & Giles, 2005). For example, many civilians are likely to perceive—and hence communicate with—police officers in terms of their social category membership and unique roles rather than react to them as idiosyncratic individuals (let alone as co-citizens); indeed the badge, uniform, visible equipment, and even hairstyle are likely to have engendered strong feelings of intergroup boundaries since childhood (Durkin & Jeffrey, 2000; Giles,

Zwang-Weissman, & Hajek, 2004). Creating an accommodating climate is challenging for officers who, probably more than most, communicate with "numerous people whose backgrounds, needs, points of view, and prejudices vary dramatically, moment to moment" (Thompson, 1983, p. 9); such interactions may be considered "intergroup" to the highest degree.

The present study locates itself within a cross-cultural program of research that has attempted to empirically explore the perceived role of officers' accommodation across cultural boundaries (see Barker et al., 2008; Choi et al., 2009; Giles et al., 2006; Hajek et al., 2006). Our rationale for the present study originated in our desire to identify differences between two cultural settings that manifest varying degrees of troubled police-civilian relationships and are historically and culturally dissimilar. Again and to this end, we contrasted Mongolia and the United States. Our original theorized model (see Figure 1) articulated two routes from perceived communicative acts from police officers to reported civilian compliance with their directives; that is, a direct path from officer accommodation to compliance as well as an indirect one mediated by attributed trust in law enforcement. Across these studies and even regions of the USA, an indirect path has consistently emerged (see H1 below).

Figure 1.  
Hypothesized Model: The Influence of Perceived Police Officer Accommodation and Reported Trust in Police on Attitudes about Compliance with Police Requests



However in a few settings (Choi et al., 2009; Hajek et al., 2006, 2008c), the other path has been registered. More specifically, and for White South Africans, Black Zimbabweans, and Bulgarians, perceived communication

accommodation has not predicted reported compliance with the police mediated by perceived trust but rather accommodation has had a direct influence on compliance. In countries of low trust in law enforcement and where issues of public safety and political change are vividly and historically apparent, it could well be that officers' overt, and observed, communication patterns more concretely influence reported compliance – and this could be true for Mongolia too. However, we had no firm theoretical grounds for predicting which kind of relationship between accommodation, trust, and compliance would emerge for this cultural sample. Hence, and in line with the foregoing, two hypotheses (Hs) and a research question (RQ) are posed:

H1: In the USA, perceived police communication accommodation, expressed civilian trust in police officers, and reported civilian voluntary compliance will be greater than in Mongolia.

H2: In the USA, perceived officer communication accommodation will predict reported civilian compliance mediated indirectly through trust.

RQ: What will be the relationships between perceived officer accommodativeness, trust, and voluntary compliance in Mongolia?

## Method

### Sample

Undergraduate students (N = 408) from universities in Mongolia and the United States participated in the study. The Mongolian sample (n = 180; 92 females) was comprised entirely of ethnic Mongolians, who ranged in age from 17 to 28, with a mean reported age of 20.16 (SD = 1.95). The participants were mainly undergraduates at the Mongolian University of Science and Technology, Mongolian School of Education, and the Mongolian National University in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The United States sample (n = 228; 100 females) was drawn from communication undergraduates at a Western university who received extra course credit for their participation. The majority of these participants were Caucasian (53.5%), the remainder being of Latino/a (12.8%), Asian/Pacific Island (10.2%), East Indian (2.6%), Middle Eastern (2.2%), African-American (.9%), and "Other American" (2.2%) descent. Their ages ranged from 18 to 34, with a mean reported age of 20.22 (SD=1.85).

### Procedure and Materials

The 38-item instrument was adapted from previous surveys of attitudes toward local law enforcement (e.g., Hajek et al. 2006), and

included items about perceptions of police officer accommodation and trust in police (see Table 1). Three items measured reported compliance with police requests, and these were: "I should always try to follow what a police officer says I should do"; "You should obey the police"; and "People should obey the decisions that police officers make". Likert-type items anchored by "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" were used to assess accommodation, whereas bi-polar semantic differential scales were used (e.g., "very unpleasant" to "very pleasant") to assess trust and compliance. The questionnaire also consisted of a number of demographic items. The original, and previously-adopted English language questionnaire, was back translated in the Mongolian language for administration in that context.

## Results

Structural equation modeling (AMOS, 4.0 - Maximum Likelihood option) (Arbuckle, 1999) was used to test the model depicted in Figure 1. Analyses in prior studies in this program of research have in part involved structural equation modeling (SEM). This is because we have typically taken a hypothesis testing (confirmatory) approach whereby perceived officer accommodation and reported trust in police are assumed to be an antecedent to beliefs about compliance with officer requests. This statistical tool is employed because it allows us to provide a pictorially clearer conceptualization of the theory underlying our research. While traditional multivariate analyses (e.g. regression) may partially do this, SEM outstrips these in terms of being the most easily applied method of statistical modeling which does not ignore error in explanatory variables and is hence much more accurate (Byrne, 2001). In SEM, model testing is a two-step process. First, the measurement model is tested and then the structural model (i.e., relationships between latent factors). The measurement model is the set of connections between observed and unobserved (factors or latent) variables. This takes the form of a (modeled) confirmatory factor analysis to assess the 'value' of the observed variables as indicators of the latent variables in the models. Separate measurement models were tested for each location: Mongolia and USA.

### Model Testing

Test of the measurement models. In the current program of research, the compliance factor typically includes three indicators; however, the item "People should obey the decisions that police officers make" did not

load on this factor for the Mongolian data. Therefore, the two remaining compliance items: "You should obey the police" and "I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do" were included as separate observed variables for both Mongolia and the USA.

For the measurement models then, only assessments of the latent variables for accommodation and trust were made. In these cases the indicator variables showed relatively high standardized path coefficients from their latent variables (with the exception of two Mongolian trust items) and were statistically significant at  $p < .001$  or better. The pattern of results indicated that both models showed good or acceptable fit to the data (Mongolia:  $\chi^2(43) = 60.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.40$ , TLI = .99, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .048; USA:  $\chi^2(42) = 81.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 1.94$ , TLI = .99, CFI

Table 1  
Measurement Models: Cronbach Alphas and Standardized Regression Weights

Latent Variable Indicators	Regression Weights	
	Mongolia	USA
<b>Perceived Officer Accommodation (Cronbach Alpha)</b>	<b>.87</b>	<b>.89</b>
How pleasant are the police officers?	.80	.80
How accommodating are police officers?	.73	.84
How respectful of students are police officers?	.86	.87
How polite are police officers?	.83	.82
How well do police officers explain things?	.53	.60
<b>Reported Trust in Police (Cronbach Alpha)</b>	<b>.72</b>	<b>.93</b>
Do you feel you should support the police?	.39	.74
Do you feel the police protect citizen rights?	.76	.81
Confidence that the police department can do its job well	.69	.90
Trust the police to make decisions that are good for everyone	.35	.83
How satisfied are you with services provided by the police?	.84	.84
How would you rate the police department?	.79	
	.86	

= .99, RMSEA = .072). Although the chi-square statistic for each of these models was statistically significant, by itself, this does not indicate that the models are poorly fitted. This is because as sample size increases the chi-square has a tendency to show statistical significance and it also assumes exact fit (Byrne, 2001; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2000; Schumacker & Lomax, 1996), which is highly unlikely. The other goodness-of-fit statistics for each of the models do show good or moderately good fit. See Table 1 for

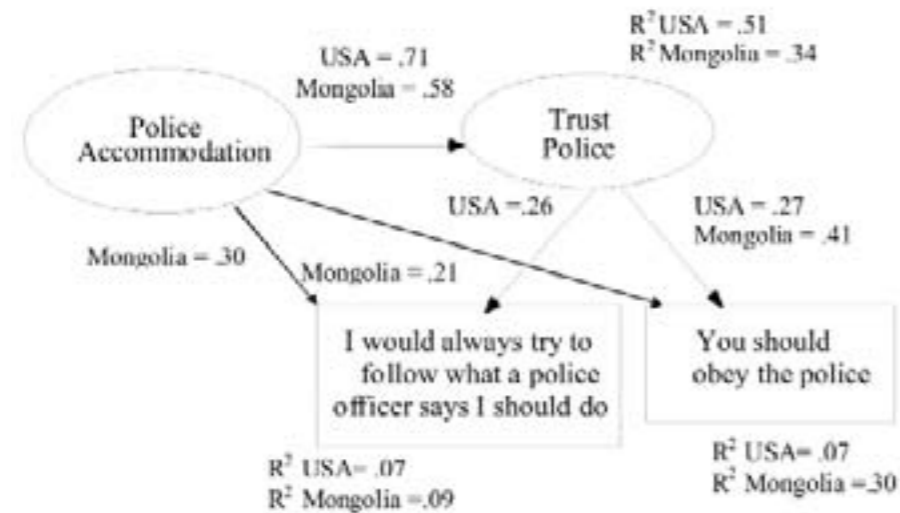
Cronbach alphas for the scales as well as the regression coefficients.

Structural equation models. SEMs were constructed for the two locations and tested for the influence of perceived officer communication accommodation and reported trust in police on attitudes about compliance with police officer requests (i.e. the two remaining observed variables). The outcomes for the tests of the final models were somewhat different. The results from the American sample indicate that H2 was supported. The path from perceived officer accommodation to reported trust posted a strong positive relationship as well as a positive relationship between reported trust in police and the two remaining items measuring attitudes about compliance with officer requests; no direct path between accommodation and compliance was found in the USA. Although this same mediated relationship emerged in Mongolia for one of the compliance items (viz., "You should obey the police"), the paths between perceived officer accommodation and compliance with officer requests were also statistically significant, but for Mongolia only; that said, the direct paths were weaker than the indirect ones. These results are schematized summarily in Figure 2 and the goodness-of-fit statistics for the models for each location are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2  
Structural Equation Models: Goodness of Fit Statistics

Models	c <sup>2</sup> /df	p	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Mongolia	1.28	.07	1.00	1.00	.040
USA	1.59	< .01	.99	.99	.057

Figure 2.  
Emergent Model



As an initial means of examining differences between the two comparison settings, a MANOVA was conducted for accommodation, trust, and the two single-item compliance measures used for our structural equation models. Again, we analyzed the compliance items "You should obey the police," and, "I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do," as separate observed variables, because the third compliance item, "People should obey the decisions that police officers make," did not load on this factor for the Mongolian data. Although respondent gender was found to have little importance in previous studies, and was therefore not currently subject to hypothesis, a check was made in these initial analyses to rule out any effects. The multivariate test indicated significant effects for location,  $\eta^2 = .93$ ,  $F(3, 338) = 6.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .068$ . However, as expected, no effects were found for gender,  $\eta^2 = .99$ ,  $F(3, 338) = 0.25$ ,  $p = .91$ ,  $\eta^2 = .003$ , nor was an interaction effect found for location and gender,  $\eta^2 = .98$ ,  $F(3, 338) = 1.69$ ,  $p = .15$ ,  $\eta^2 = .020$ . Given the non-significant gender finding, no follow-up tests were conducted for this factor. Subsequent univariate tests were conducted to investigate the role of location on these measures, and they indicated significant effects for trust,  $t(349) = 2.05$ ,  $p = .041$ , and the single-item "I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do,"  $t(348) = 2.18$ ,  $p = .03$ . However, results for accommodation,  $t(346) = 1.81$ ,  $p = .071$ , and the single-item "You

should obey the police",  $t(348) = -1.90$ ,  $p = .058$ , were non-significant. Means and standard deviations appear in Table 3. For trust, an analysis of the means indicated that both Mongolian and the American participants trusted police to a moderate extent, and that perceptions of trust were higher in the USA ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ) than in Mongolia ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ),  $p < .05$ . The results for the item "I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do" were similar in that participants in the USA expressed a moderate tendency to comply with police ( $M = 3.99$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ), and more than did Mongolians ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ),  $p < .05$ . Concerning accommodation, both the American ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ) and Mongolian ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ) participants imagined officers as being moderately accommodating,  $p = .07$ . Similarly, both USA ( $M = 3.79$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ) and Mongolian ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = 1.67$ ) participants expressed to a moderate degree their belief that one "should obey the police",  $p = .06$ .

Table 3  
Means, Standard Deviations, and Contrast for the  
Three Factors by Cultural Setting

Factors	Mongolia	USA	t	Sig. p =
Accommodation	3.27 (1.22)	3.51 (1.18)	1.81	.071
Trust	4.05 (1.28)	4.34 (1.30)	2.05	.041
I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do.	3.59 (1.62)	3.99 (1.81)	2.18	.03
You should obey the police.	4.14 (1.67)	3.79 (1.73)	-1.90	.058

Note. Judgments were made on 7-point scales (e.g., 1 = very unaccommodating, 7 = very accommodating). Higher means correspond to higher levels of accommodation, trust, and perceived compliance.

### Discussion

Table 3 means indicate that young adults in both locations are fairly respectful of the authority of police but H1 was confirmed in that American ratings are, for the most part, significantly more respectful than the Mongolian ones. In both cultures then, the police are granted some level of authority to correct aberrant behavior and, as citizens, are expected to comply accordingly. This finding is heartening as it relates to the Mongolian



sample, as the recent literature has suggested a relatively rough history of police-citizen relations in that cultural milieu. One possible reason why Mongolian students showed similar levels of reported compliance to police requests as their American peers might be due to the fact that Mongolian young people formed a generational identity in the wake of Mongolia's recent democratic upheavals; older participants might have expressed less anticipated compliance. Analyses also revealed that the American participants trusted police more, and were more likely to envision compliance with police requests than were those in Mongolia. These results indicate that the Western model of law enforcement, at least as expressed in the USA, may be more likely to encourage generic trust in police than would be evident in Mongolia. In regard to compliance, and as far as our particular American sample was concerned, we do not know, as yet, whether the similar reported likelihood to comply with police was obligated from fears of recriminations, borne out of desires to maintain civic order, or due to other historical factors. Whatever, we may in future research specify kinds of situated compliance as well as explore the conditions necessary for civilians to generate their own, and various, calls for service, assistance, and protection.

Prior cross-cultural work of this genre has consistently found the compliance factor to be constituted by the full three indicators measured for it. However, here and for the first time only, two items loaded together for the Mongolian sample: "You should obey the police" and "I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do". (Subsequently, these were analyzed as separate observed variables for both the Mongolia and the USA samples.) The item that did not load properly for the typical compliance factor (viz., "People should obey the decisions that police officers make") highlights the decision-making process of police officers. It is possible that this then alludes to and evokes the notion that these decisions are based on corruptions. The other two items for compliance simply ask for whether or not compliance is given. Another reason why the item did not load properly can be due to the language and translation of this item. It is possible that based on the wording of the survey, the participants were made more conscious of corrupt police behavior. Indeed, the socio-political meanings of compliance could well differ between the national settings, such that disobeying the police could be seen as personal challenges to the government's (and not only law enforcement's) authority. Needless to say, this is a conundrum worth unpacking in future empirical and measurement work, and this also has implications for model development/elaboration as well as the targeting

of such a social entity in other cultures too.

H2 was supported for the American sample in that accommodation predicted perceived trust in the police, which in turn, influenced the two reported compliance items. As hypothesized, a direct relationship between perceived accommodation and compliance was not found for the American sample.

Turning to Mongolia, the RQ asked whether such an indirect relationship would also exist for that country's participants. The Mongolian findings indicated a significant presence of a path from trust to the compliance item that stated, "You should obey the police". In addition, a direct, yet weaker, relationship between accommodation and the two compliance items was found. This result is intriguing, because it is the first cultural setting in which both an indirect relationship between accommodation and compliance through trust, and also a direct relationship between accommodation and compliance has been identified. Prior studies in this vein have either found solely indirect relationships (e.g., Hajek et al., 2008a), or only direct relationships between accommodation and compliance (Choi et al, 2009; Hajek et al., 2006, 2008c).

There are, arguably, significant differences in the social positions of police and civilians in Mongolia respectively in terms of their tenuous relationships to the government and the mediating roles of their police forces in that dynamic that could, together with ambivalent trust in the latter, account for the pathways of the models emerging. Whatever, it is interesting that this is now a unique context where communication has had a direct effect on reported compliance, and also an indirect effect through trust. What adds to the significance of this finding is that while there is a small direct relationship, the model demonstrates that it really works stronger through trust. In this sense, obviously we need more research that will allow us to predict which model will appear, and where. In a lawful society, it is essential that the custodians of the law be obeyed, and also that their requests for such are themselves lawful. The different paths to that end, as illustrated in Figure 2, suggest that perhaps trust in police is important, but not singularly essential, for a lawful, police order-compliant society. Put another way, whereas Mongolian and American citizens may equally expect accommodation from police officers, and the effects of such accommodation may foster some degree of trust among participants in both countries, perceptions of compliance with officers may be influenced differentially.

What might account for these differences, besides lower trust for the police in Mongolia? As noted earlier, Americans appear to have conflicting sentiments about the police (Molloy & Giles, 2002), and the Mongolian sample may feel that the police are not even-handed and fair arbiters of justice yet. Clearly, items on our trust factor cannot cope with such locally- and historically-grounded ambivalence and, as such, these intricacies should be explored and, where necessary modified, and incorporated into future research designs, here and elsewhere. Furthermore, and in ways less potent than in the USA, the Mongolian police are undoubtedly seen, for many, as a formidable instrument of a mistrusted government (BDHRL, 2007; Fritz, 2007) which could render the pathway between trust and compliance less straightforward in Mongolia. Again, future work needs to explore and unpack complex perceived relationships between government and the police.

Regarding a future research agenda, we first need to develop a taxonomy which specifies between-setting structural factors that can depict meaningful variation among our sites as well as attend to the role of the flows of policing programs, procedures, and media images cross-culturally. Future incisive cross-cultural research in the police-civilian arena cannot properly operate without such specifications. Second, such factors will influence the development of our Figure 2 emergent model from which more intriguing predictions for empirical testing should emerge. Besides elaborating the model by recourse to large-scale contextual factors (such as government), refinements are required so as to: attend to other intergroup factors associated with interacting with the police (e.g., anxiety, perceptions of safety); reconsider other CAT processes (e.g., non-accommodativeness, power differentials, and legitimate authority); and infuse the model with other outcome measures (e.g., willingness to call police for service, act as a witness to a crime, join community policing efforts). This elaborated model can then be tested, ideally on community samples, across a theoretically-specified range of cultural settings.

From an applied perspective, the Mongolian and United States data herein show that vicariously observing and/or directly receiving accommodation from officers will engender trust in police in general and likely relieve stress and frustration in the immediacy of an encounter. Paradoxically given the above findings, communication skills are given short shrift in police officer training. Approximately, 98% of such training in the USA (and seemingly negligible in Mongolia) – because the skills

are considered perishable - is devoted to officer safety through acquiring arrest, control, defensive, and weapon techniques (Thompson, 1983). An interesting empirical question is to what extent the use of physical force could be avoided or attenuated if appropriate accommodative skills were used. The importance of officer safety through training regarding the use of physical skills should not be under-estimated. However, our findings regarding the importance of officers' accommodative practices in easing police-civilian interactions suggest that far more attention should be directed at elaborating communication skills. In addition, if police-community relations are to improve, then intervention programs and training focused on mutual accommodation and trust need to be bilateral. Civilians can benefit from and understand the complexities, tensions, challenges, and emotions involved in police work, as well as the potential consequences of aggressive or distancing communication during interactions with police (see Giles, Willemys, Gallois, & Anderson, 2007).

Individuals' accommodative skills may comprise a hitherto under-appreciated statement about their communicative competences (Burlison & Greene, 2003) and, in this way, CAT has the potential to be associated with a very wide range of their uses of communicative actions in both interpersonal and intercultural settings. In terms of CAT, and in light of our findings, we again suggest that a key motive for officer convergence is the desire to gain compliance. While the strengths of the paths from accommodation to trust were high for both Mongolian and the USA, it is interesting that the strengths of the direct pathways from accommodation or trust, to reported compliance, were generally lower in intensity. Key to our application of CAT, this finding suggests that communication accommodation may foster trust more amply than it does perceptions (or expectations) of general compliance. Of course, we acknowledge that accommodation would be dysfunctional, and therefore ill advised, when officer safety is at issue.

Importantly as evidenced in this line of research, we acknowledge that our findings in any one nation may not generalize to other regions of it. Furthermore, we acknowledge that work is needed in more cultural contexts and with samples other than college students. For future research, we need to determine from police-civilian encounters what can be coded (verbally and nonverbally) and discursively analyzed as accommodative actions on the one hand, and non-accommodating actions on the other (see Dixon, Schell, Giles, & Drogos, 2008). Future explorations may also

address police-civilian communication in multilingual post-conflict settings in which police forces have attempted transitions from aggressive to service-based styles (e.g., Rwanda, Burundi and Angola). In conclusion, the fact that officers in Mongolia were perceived as being moderately trusted and accommodative is perhaps unexpected, yet societally promising, given the tenor of the background literature. How citizens in this country account for current and changing levels of trust and construe police actions as accommodative/non-accommodative is obviously a valued empirical direction to undertake as well. Moreover, while there is a need for behavioral and ethnographic work to be engaged, there is also room for longitudinal studies to be conducted in Mongolia as societal and political changes inevitably ensue in a globalizing world

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