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Police-Civilian Interaction, Compliance, Accommodation, and Trust in an Intergroup Context: International Data

Dr Valerie Barker , Howard Giles , Christopher Hajek , Hiroshi Ota , Kimberly Noels , Tae-Seop Lim & LilnaBeth Somera

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Police-Civilian Interaction, Compliance, Accommodation, and Trust in an Intergroup Context: International Data

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Prior cross-cultural research has produced models of police-civilian interaction that highlight the effect of officers' communication accommodation and reported trust in police on attitudinal outcomes. The present study, conducted in Korea, Japan, Guam, and Canada and involving 684 university students, continued this program of research by testing a theoretical model exploring the influence of perceived police officer communication accommodation and reported trust in police on attitudes about compliance with police requests. Findings indicated that across study locations perceived police officer communication accommodation predicted trust in police which, in turn, predicted attitudes about compliance with police requests.

Keywords: Communication Accommodation Theory; Trust; Compliance; Police-Civilian Interaction; Korea; Japan; Guam; Canada

Recent trends in police-civilian research suggest that cooperation with the police flows from trust and confidence in them (e.g., Tyler, 2005). Unfortunately, many members of the American public lack trust in local law enforcement, and a significant proportion of these voice concerns about their experiences with police officers and other representatives of the law. This in turn has led civilians to an unwillingness to

Valerie Barker is affiliated with San Diego State University; Howard Giles, Center on Police Practices and Community, University of California, Santa Barbara; Christopher Hajek, University of Texas, San Antonio; Hiroshi Ota, Aichi Shukutoku University; Kimberly Noels, University of Alberta; Tae-Seop Lim, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; and LilnaBeth Somera, University of Guam. Correspondence to: Dr. Valerie Barker, School of Journalism and Media Studies, SDSU, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA 92182, USA. Email: valeriebarker@valeriebarker.net. The authors wish to express their thanks to the editor and the three anonymous reviewers for their most helpful and comprehensive comments on this article.

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assist legal authorities in combating crime (National Research Council, 2004; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Providing further support for this view, Tyler and colleagues (e.g., Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Tyler, 1990, 2001, 2005; Tyler & Huo, 2002) have shown that people's interpersonal experiences with police officers influence heavily their levels of trust in law enforcement per se as well as collaboration, and inclinations to comply, with the law. In these studies, the desire for respectful behaviors on the part of police was articulated among adults and adolescents of different ethnicities in both high and low crime communities.

With regard to behaviors that may engender trust and by extension cooperation and/or compliance, a study of the residents of two Texas communities found that reported police friendliness, politeness, concern, helpfulness, fairness, and honesty were antecedent to satisfaction with the police (Cheurprakobkit & Bartsch, 2001). Tyler and Huo (2002) add 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. Clearly, such attributes are associated with the way that police officers *communicate* with members of the general public (Griffiths & Winfree, 1982; Langan, Greenfeld, Smith, Durose, & Levin, 2001; see also, Wortley, 1996). For example, Tyler (2005) suggests that "people value having the police talk to citizens and cooperate with citizens to solve community problems" (p. 327). What Tyler and Huo have referred to as dignified and respectful treatment, we regard here as communication strategies addressed by accommodation theory (see below).

Indeed, one of the most common complaints about the police's dealings with the public has been that they are guilty of rudeness, arrogance, unfriendliness, and overcasual treatment (Skogan, 1994). Tellingly, data from an extensive study of police-civilian encounters (Sykes & Clark, 1975), in which the process of interaction was coded, showed that officers were consistently less deferent than civilians were to them, and especially so when the latter were of low socioeconomic status (SES). Relatedly, Giles et al. (2006) found that a prime complaint or concern about police behavior from a large, community-wide urban sample was that of poor communication skills of officers. Accordingly, and first and foremost, matters for improvement were the need for officers to show increased respect for and understanding of their public. Interestingly and as regards issues currently approved of, by far the greatest asset of officers was deemed when they expressed a good attitude towards those whom they served. Illustrating the potential outcomes for certain of these behaviors, Giles, Zwang-Weissman, and Hajek (2004), in a vignette study, found that the extent to which a police officer patronized an elderly woman was linearly related to more negative judgments of him by third party witnesses.

Although sociodemographic factors (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, SES, age) have consistently been found to predict attitudes to the police (e.g., Eschholz, Sims Blackwell, Gertz, & Chiricos, 2002; Olsen, 2005; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Yates & Pillai, 1996), it appears that when officers are willing on a daily basis to communicatively accommodate noncriminal and nonbelligerent elements of the public, they are more likely to engender trust—and hence cooperation with, and compliance from, them.

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Prior research (discussed below) has lent support to these expectations in a variety of national and international contexts (see Giles et al., 2006, 2007a; Hajek et al., 2006). However, gaining an understanding of the role of accommodative practices, trust, and compliance in police-civilian encounters is complicated by regional, cultural, and historical differences. It is intuitively obvious from television news and film content that police agencies around the world differ dramatically not only in the nature of their uniforms, demeanors, and equipment, but also in alleged practices of corruption, abuses of power, and thresholds for the use of force. Given our interest in understanding the extent to which these differences influence attitudes toward law enforcement, we offer the current analysis—part of a cross-cultural program of research aimed at solidifying empirically applied advances in this area (Giles et al., 2006, 2007a; Hajek et al., 2006). One wide-ranging framework—communication accommodation theory (CAT: e.g., Gallois, Ogay, & Giles, 2005; Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991)—is relevant to unraveling these dynamics.

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Communicative Parameters of Police-Civilian Interaction

CAT explores the ways in which individuals vary their communicative behavior to accommodate others given their social status (see Thakerar, Giles, & Cheshire, 1982), their motivations for so doing, and the social consequences arising. For instance, accommodative moves from person A to B which attenuate social distance and can often increase the likelihood that B will feel more positively toward A (e.g., Giles, Taylor, & Bourhis, 1973). For example, Buller and Aune (1992) found that by converging towards another's speech rate, a speaker would be judged as socially more attractive which, in turn, increased the likelihood that the listener would comply with any request from the accommodator for assistance (see also Buller & Aune, 1988). In other words, this study demonstrates an indirect link between accommodation and compliance. Nonaccommodative moves in contrast, such as diverging one's dialect, will likely evoke more negative feelings in and reactions from the recipient of them.

CAT, however, embraces accommodative strategies *beyond* those of convergence on the one hand, and divergence on the other (called "approximation strategies," see Giles et al., 1991). For instance and as manifest in our own measures herein, accommodation-nonaccommodation is also evident in the extent to which a speaker takes into account another's understanding of a situation they have found themselves in as well as their communicative needs as a consequence of it. This raises the issue (see below) as to whether members of the public will voluntarily comply with the directives of an accommodating officer more than a nonaccommodating counterpart.

Generally speaking, by the very nature of their work, police officers communicate with people who possess a wide variety of backgrounds, attitudes, wants, and preconceptions. These differences present challenges with regard to communication accommodation (and particularly perhaps nonaccommodation). Officers are required to adjust their communication practices to both suspected or convicted felons, other members of the public who hold a negative view of them, and those who appear to exhibit anxiety and uncertainty when interacting with them (see Gudykunst,

1995). Therefore, many officers have developed a type of code-switching which allows them to exhibit empathetic (accommodative) behavior under some circumstances and controlling, authoritative (nonaccommodative) behaviors in others (Giles, 2001).

Support for this code-switching ability is offered by Stoutland (2001) who concluded that many citizens recognize that respect from the police might compromise police competency. In other words, people do not expect police officers to be friendly all of the time or to behave in the same way to everyone. In this regard, noting the potential costs of accommodation by a police officer, Giles (2001) adds that an accommunicative stance "can be dysfunctional ... under certain life-threatening circumstances" (p. 217). Therefore, often times it can be a type of balancing act for officers who while wishing to represent authority and induce compliance may also seek to show concern, empathy, and respect.

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Prior Research: Police Accommodation and Trust

In an earlier attempt to empirically explore the perceived role of officers' accommodation, Giles et al. (2006) studied three samples of Southern California respondents who were asked in a variety of ways and contexts (e.g., after church in Spanish, a community door-to-door survey in English, and at a campus on-line survey) about their attitudes to police. In general, ratings of satisfaction with local police agencies were significantly above the midpoint of the seven-point measure. In addition, separate structural equation models for each sample confirmed that officers' communication accommodation skills very strongly predicted assessments of officers—and to a much greater extent than did rated trust in the police. However, in a further study conducted in Kansas (USA) and the People's Republic of China, trust in the police in general was a better predictor of attitudes to police than officer accommodation which itself predicted trust (Giles et al., 2007a).

These findings were mirrored in a study comparing Black and White respondents, in Louisiana and South Africa (Hajek et al., 2006) where accommodation predicted trust in all instances. The data from three of the samples (i.e., African and White Americans and South African Blacks) indicated no direct predictive relationship between perceived police officer accommodation and willingness to comply with police requests. Nonetheless, accommodation was key in predicting perceived trust in police which, in turn, influenced willingness to comply. The exception was the finding for South African Whites where accommodation was directly related to both trust and compliance. Clearly, both perceived police communication accommodation and the level of trust in police have a role to play in participants' willingness to comply with police requests in all of these study locations.

The valuable role of trust in shaping the legitimacy of police authority in the minds of the community has been well acknowledged (e.g., Tyler, 2001, 2004, 2006). Trust is an important mediating factor in establishing peaceful and favorable relations between members of different groups (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006) because of its association with empathy (i.e., perspective taking), positive attitudes, self-disclosure, and reciprocity (Hewstone, Cairns, Voci, Hamberger, & Niens, 2006; Kenworthy,

Turner, Hewstone, & Voci, 2005). Trust involves highly complex cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes which are sensitive to contextual and cultural differences (e.g., Tanis & Postmes, 2005; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). With regard to police-community interactions, trusting members of different groups may be cognitively and affectively taxing, as dissimilar others may be perceived to be a threat, embracing different worldviews from one's own (Brewer, 1981). Typically, people tend to accord less trust or greater distrust (e.g., less faith, perceived reliability and truthfulness) to outgroup members than ingroup members (Tanis & Postmes, 2005; Yuki, Muddux, Brewer, & Takemura, 2005).

Nevertheless, the availability of personal information (Tanis & Postmes, 2005) and the expectation of relationship development (Yuki et al., 2005) can help override perceived group differences and contribute to the attainment of higher trust. Individuating information of outgroup members, such as their names and pictures, may significantly lead to an increase in their perceptions of trustworthiness, expected reciprocity from them, and likelihood of trusting behaviors during social interaction with them (Tanis & Postmes, 2005). Also, personal connectedness with outgroup members may be conducive to the attainment of higher trust to outgroups.

Brown and Hewstone (2005) argue that establishing a personal and intimate relationship with outgroup members is one condition that may help bear positive attitudes toward the group. When one has an outgroup friend or even acquaintance, higher trust and empathic attitudes to outgroup members may be achieved (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006), leading to greater exchange of personal information and potentially positive overall attitudes toward outgroup members. All of these findings then underscore the importance of establishing trust during police-community interactions.

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The Present Investigation

Prior research in this area has been somewhat equivocal regarding the relative predictive power of trust and communication accommodation in determining attitudes towards police. In the current program of research, the findings so far have indicated that perceived police accommodation is one important factor with regard to compliance. As well, these and a variety of interdisciplinary studies have demonstrated the importance of trust in police in gaining compliance and cooperation from community members (see Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Huo, 2002). The concepts of compliance and compliance-gaining have long been central in interpersonal communication research (see, e.g., Wilson, 2002), and are also extremely important to officers themselves. Indeed, officers look to their communication skills to affect voluntary compliance wherever possible rather than having to resort to physical coercion to gain it. Therefore, the first goal of the present study was to investigate across four new locations (Canada, Guam, Japan, and Korea) the extent to which perceived police accommodation and trust in police affect reported beliefs about compliance with police requests. The second goal was to assess differences between these locations with regard to levels of perceived police accommodation,

reported trust in police and beliefs about compliance with police requests. The study participants and locations are overviewed next.

Participants, all university students, were recruited from different national locations, representing two Eastern and two Western cultures, namely, South Korea, Japan, Canada, and Guam. Demographic characteristics for each sample are provided below; most of these students were around 21-years-old and just over half were female. These participants cannot be deemed representative of the wider populations of which they form a part. However, we have reason to believe that student populations—while not being generally involved in criminal activity—do come into contact with the police in their respective locations for a variety of reasons (at concerts, downtown bars over the weekends, or festivals).

One important occurrence of student contact with police is the traffic stop, which is the most frequent form of police-civilian contact (see, e.g., Langan et al., 2001). In a study of citizen expectations of police traffic stop behavior, Johnson (2004) found that 84% of the 245 college students he surveyed had been stopped by a police officer for a traffic violation (64% received a ticket). These students articulated that "they prefer the officer to smile, use a friendly tone and are not offended by a professional yet unemotional demeanor" (p. 495). Overall, the students expected a respectful manner and did not appreciate a harsh and angry tone from the officer. The way that the officer communicated was often more important than the outcome of the communication. These responses were in line with Tyler's research (see, e.g., 2001) with noncollege student samples.

Other examples of police-student contact might be curfew issues, underage drinking, involvement in political activities, and calls for help. College students are likely, perhaps, to have as much if not more contact with police officers than other sectors of the population. Students are then qualified to report their experiences and attitudes within such contexts; therefore, our decision to sample them for the present study was consistent with that of other studies undertaken in this program of research thus far. However, we did expect levels of contact to vary and so respondents were asked not only about their own contact with police but contact they knew about between other people and the police. As well, cultural differences pertain to the nature and history of police authorities and these are briefly described next.

The Four Cultural Settings

Japan. The police in Japan are members of the National Police Agency, a special arm of the National Public Safety Commission. In the past, Japan has been depicted as one of the safest countries in the world because of the very real commitment on the part of the Japanese police to maintaining law and order. That said, some popular publications (e.g., Sasa, 1999) argue that this image of Japan is a myth, and others criticize the police for their involvement in undesirable social actions (Hokkai-doshinbun, 2005). As well, groundbreaking research reported by Miyazawa (1992) indicated that Japanese police detectives are under intense pressure to clear cases quickly and that this has led to intensive, lengthy and (some might say) unfair interrogation of suspects in order to gain confessions. Against this backdrop, the

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existing academic studies suggest that the police in Japan have an increasing awareness of the need to work harder to fulfill the public's expectations. This is evidenced in the 2004 Police White Paper, which lists cooperation with the local community as one of the most important issues of the year. Members of the public who have indicated their dissatisfaction with police services may have played an important part in this regard (Nakai, 1972).

The Japanese police force is organized hierarchically. In direct contact with the people and lowest in this structure are the kobans (police boxes in urbanized areas). A koban typically services 0.22 square miles with a population of 8,500. Koban officers patrol the neighborhood (on foot or bicycle), respond to calls for help, and assist detectives or national agents. Koban officers also act as neighborhood councilors and direction finders. While on patrol, koban officers engage in casual conversation with community members. By establishing this friendly atmosphere, the koban officers attempt to ease concerns that citizens may have and establish an environment where individuals are more willing to assist in criminal investigations.

That said, according to Nishimura (1989), Japanese police officers are more likely to judge themselves as "unapproachable," "authoritative," "formal," "introverted," and "old-fashioned" than are community members, although police officers have in general positive views of themselves on personal traits (e.g., generous, permissive). A content analysis of newspaper articles reporting citizen's contact experience with the police, Nakai (1972) found consistent use of a set of negative adjectives (e.g., domineering, unpleasant, violent) to describe police officers. It was argued that in order to ameliorate public perceptions, local police officers should make themselves more visible and available to the community, create more opportunities to *communicate* with them, lend a hand to those who are in need, and engage in speedy action to help (see also Kobayashi & Suzuki, 1994; Miki, 2002). This may be in part a cultural issue since people in Japan are less likely to trust others than do their American counterparts (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994) but are more likely than Americans to accord trust to an outgroup member with whom a relationship may potentially be developed.

Korea. Korea's modern police system was established by the Japanese when the country was occupied by Japan from 1910 to 1945. The police, which was composed mainly of Japanese colonialists, was a symbol of oppression and persecution. Even after Independence, Korea's own police inherited the tradition of Japanese policing and kept a strict rule over the people. Particularly during the authoritarian governments of Lee, Park, and Chun, the police was the main force that suppressed democratic movements.

In the early 1990s and as totalitarianism waned in the country, Korea's police was reconstituted as the so-called "democratic police" especially with the "Police Grand Reform" of 2000. After a decade of promoting the image of "kind public servants," the relationship between the police and the public has improved significantly, but the relationship still, arguably, has a long way to go. Choi's (2002) study of citizens' views about the image of the police paints a very negative picture. Respondents reported that police *should be* kind, friendly, fair, incorruptible, and trustworthy in order to

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improve their standing with the public. However, participants in the study felt that the Korean police typically do not possess these attributes. Also, fully 44% of the sample said that they would not report a fatal traffic accident they had witnessed because they expected that the police would do little to solve the crime and would unduly inconvenience the witness. Similarly, 40% of the respondents said that they would not report a crime for the same reason. Further, 49% said they would not report a crime of which they were victims, and 52% said that they would not report a robbery that they had witnessed because they thought that the police either would not or could not solve the crime.

Also, in a more recent survey of public satisfaction with police involving 11,500 randomly selected South Korean citizens, Hwang, McGarrell, and Benson (2005) found that citizens in urban areas who had contact with police reported a heightened perception of police corruption or negative ratings of service. As well, any positive relationship between prior encounters with police and satisfaction disappeared when measures of perceived corruption and ratings of police services were entered into the regression equations.

Canada. Many studies of citizens in large and small Canadian cities over the last couple of decades have found that attitudes towards police performance were generally favorable (e.g., Sprott & Doob, 1997; Zamble & Annesley, 1987). Stein (2001) reported that 84% of Canadians have confidence in the police and that they are accorded a high status among professionals (see also, Mason, 1999; Roberts, 2001). Canadians seem to be happier with their police force than people in many other countries. A 1997 Angus Reid Group poll conducted in 14 countries found that only 35% of Canadians felt that "police corruption is a serious problem" compared to between 60% and 88% of Americans, Australians, Russians, and Ukrainians (Wilson-Smith, 1997). Moreover, Fife (2003) reported that 78% of Canadians felt safe walking in their neighborhoods at night (see also Schuller & Ogloff, 2001).

Our study was conducted in Alberta, one of the more conservative regions in Canada where support for the police tends to be somewhat higher than in the rest of the nation. A 1997 Angus Reid Poll indicated that 90% of Albertans felt confident or very confident in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and 94% felt similarly about the local police force—which was the highest response level in Canada (Alberta Justice, 1999). Stein (2001) reported that 80.5% of Albertans have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in the police. An informal review of local newspaper articles published during the semester the present data were collected suggests that the public expressed considerable faith in the police force. Despite a string of murders of local women, increased crime rates, and the presence of organized crime, the police force was described as being at their most responsive, doing their best to provide practical solutions to these problems, acknowledging the public's fear, and following through with their objectives.

Guam. Unfortunately, at the time of writing, there is no empirical research on attitudes to police in Guam. However, a search of the on-line news archives from *KUAM* (the only commercial television station in Guam until January 2006) revealed

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several negative stories about the police. These included a series on an investigation of corruption involving a former police chief who was ultimately convicted; allegations of police brutality and subsequent trials; concerns about evidence either tampered with or missing; an inexperienced officer assigned to head the Criminal Investigation Division; and the arrest of an officer for family violence.

An search of the on-line archives of the *Pacific Daily News* (the leading daily newspaper in Guam) resulted in 4,842 articles which comprised news items, letters to the Editor, as well as editorials. Most of the news articles' references to the police were neutral, and were in the context of stories related to law enforcement and judicial processes. There were also some positive references to the police academy, promotions, and awards. However, negative references to the police were also fairly prevalent throughout. Most of these negative references paralleled accounts in the KUAM archives, and included incidents of police brutality, family violence, personnel shortages, and management problems in the police department. There were also accounts of politically motivated arrests, allegations of favoritism, a case of criminal sexual conduct, and corruption.

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Hypotheses

With the exception of Canada, the above indicates fairly negative attitudes to police in the other three locations under study. However, previous research has suggested that perceived police officer communication accommodation may help to encourage more positive attitudes and trust in the officers with whom the public interact and, therefore, may elicit greater cooperation. Based on such findings, two hypotheses were advanced:

H1: Perceived police officer accommodation will directly predict trust in police.
H2: Trust in police will mediate the influence of perceived officer accommodation on attitudes about compliance with police requests.

The hypothesized relationships are summarized in Figure 1.

In addition, and given the foregoing, a third hypothesis and research question were posed:

H3: Canadian respondents will perceive police in general more positively (in terms of trust, accommodation, and compliance) than will respondents from the other three locations.
RQ: What differences (if any) will emerge between Japanese, South Korean, and Guamanian respondents with regard to perceived accommodation, trust, and perceived compliance?

Method

Sample

Undergraduate students ($n = 684$) from universities in four regions or locations participated in the study. *Korean* participants ($n = 138$; 54 females) ranged in age from

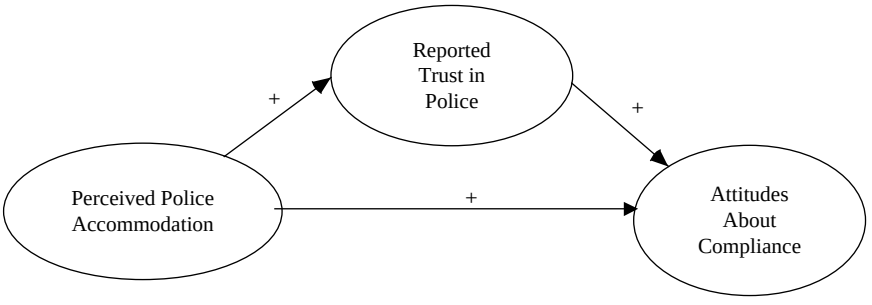

Figure 1. Hypothesized model: The influence of perceived police officer accommodation and reported trust in police on attitudes about compliance with police requests.

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20 to 30, with a mean reported age of 23.12 ($SD = 1.99$). The participants were all self-identified Koreans, and students at a university in Seoul. *Japanese* participants ($n = 102$; 71 females) ranged in age from 19 to 26, with a mean reported age of 20.70 ($SD = 1.28$). They were all Japanese, and students at a university in central Japan. *Canadian* participants ($n = 267$; 138 females) were recruited from a large university in Alberta. Their ages ranged from 17 to 45, with a mean reported age 19.45 ($SD = 2.79$). The majority of these participants were Caucasian (66.3%), the remainder being of Asian/Pacific Island (20.2%), African-American (3%), Middle Eastern (4.9%), and East Indian (5.6%) descents. *Guamanian* participants ($n = 177$; 114 females), considered to hold primarily Western cultural values (given it has been an unincorporated territory of the USA since 1899), were recruited from the only university on that island. Their ages ranged from 17 to 42, with a mean reported age of 20.84 ($SD = 5.25$). The ethnicities of these participants were as follows: Chamorro/Guamanian (40%), Filipino (41.1%), Asian/Pacific Islander (5%), Caucasian (6.7%), Micronesian (3.9%), and "Other" (3.3%).

Procedure and Materials

The 38-item instrument was largely comprised of seven-point Likert-type items assessing attitudes toward police in general as well as a number of demographic items. Assessment items were anchored by *strongly agree* and *strongly disagree*, or by bi-polar semantic differential items (e.g., *very unpleasant* to *very pleasant*). Questionnaires in Canada and Guam were administered in English, as that was the language of instruction (the vast majority of participants in Guam were native English speakers). In Korea, a teaching assistant translated the questionnaire from English. This translation was checked by a senior researcher who discussed any discrepancies with the assistant to settle differences. In Japan, a communication researcher translated the questionnaire from English to Japanese, back translated, and then repeated this procedure two more times over two additional weeks in support of internal validity. It should be underscored that the Japanese and Korean back-translations (available on request) were not simply such, but were undertaken by experienced cross-cultural scholars who took into account cultural nuances in terms used between settings.

Questionnaire items were adapted from previous surveys of attitudes toward local law enforcement (Giles et al., 2006, 2007a; Hajek et al., 2006), and included items about perceptions of police officer accommodation, trust in police, and attitudes about compliance with police requests (see Table 1). 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.

Results

Structural equation models were tested for each of the four locations and tested for the influence of perceived officer communication accommodation and reported trust in police on attitudes about compliance with police officer requests. A test of each measurement model showed that all the indicator variables posted consistently high path coefficients from their latent factors in each location. See Table 1 for Cronbach alphas for the scales as well as the regression coefficients.

The outcomes for the final models were very similar across all locations. The statistics for each location are summarized in Table 2.

H1 was supported. The path from perceived officer accommodation to reported trust posted a strong positive relationship. The path between perceived officer accommodation and attitudes about compliance with officer requests was not significant in all locations. Therefore, H2 was confirmed in that there was a strong,

Table 1 Measurement Models: Cronbach Alphas and Standardized Regression Weights.

	Regression Weights			
Latent Variable Indicators	Korea	Japan	Guam	Canada
Perceived officer accommodation (Cronbach alpha)	.86	.86	.87	.88
How pleasant are the police officers?	.75	.70	.66	.76
How accommodating are police officers?	.76	.69	.79	.79
How respectful of students are police officers?	.79	.76	.78	.92
How polite are police officers?	.70	.81	.87	.88
How well do police officers explain things?	.64	.76	.70	.48
Reported trust in police (Cronbach alpha)	.89	.86	.93	.91
Do you feel you should support the police?	.48	.57	.73	.66
Do you feel the police protect citizen rights?	.74	.82	.83	.73
Confidence that the police department can do its job well.	.77	.70	.85	.81
Trust the police to make decisions that are good for everyone.	.78	.78	.83	.75
How satisfied are you with services provided by the police?	.71	.53	.88	.88
How would you rate the police department?	.84	.77	.88	.91
Attitudes about compliance (Cronbach alpha)	.80	.78	.76	.77
You should obey the police.	.72	.85	.85	.81
I would always try to follow what a police officer says I should do.	.77	.64	.77	.79
People should obey the decisions that police officers make.	.78	.73	.54	.60

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positive relationship between reported trust in police and attitudes about compliance with officer requests ($p < .001$) (see Figure 2).

As an initial means of examining differences among the four regions and to examine H3 and the RQ, a MANOVA was conducted for accommodation, trust, and compliance. The multivariate test indicated significant and robust effects, $\Lambda = .748$, $F(9, 1645) = 23.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$. Follow-up ANOVAs were conducted, and indicated significant effects for all dependent measures. Means and standard deviations appear in Table 3. The test for accommodation, $F(3, 679) = 47.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$, suggested that Canadians found police to be moderately accommodating, and significantly more accommodating than Japanese and Guamanian participants found their respective police forces to be. Korean participants found police to be significantly less accommodating than did those in any other region. The ANOVAs for trust, $F(3, 680) = 72.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$, and perceived compliance, $F(3, 679) = 21.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$, were also significant. Patterns for both of these variables were identical. That is, Canadians significantly trusted, and perceived compliance, more than did participants in any other region. There were no significant differences between Japan, Guam, and Korea in regard to either of these measures. In sum, H3 was supported. Answers to the RQ were such that only perceived officer accommodativeness differentiated between participants in the non-Canadian settings on the three dependent variables, Koreans perceiving their officers to be the least accommodating.

Discussion

The findings from the present investigation indicate that perceptions of officer accommodativeness do not affect expressed compliance directly but do, nonetheless, shape views of officer trustworthiness, which then predicts beliefs in compliance with law enforcement. This study deliberately engaged very different cultural contexts where officers are seen, and are structurally positioned, in extremely different lights (the modeling of which is a priority for future theoretical work). The Canadian context would be the most pro-police case here, and the Korean setting is one wherein students are, possibly, the most involved in political demonstrations, yet nonetheless the findings and emergent model are remarkably similar. As Klyman and Kruckenberg (1974) reported some time ago, "the tasks of the policeman vary from urban to the rural setting, from large cities to small cities, and from district to district with each of these jurisdictions. Each precinct has its own unique problems"

Table 2 Structural Equation Model Regression Weights and Goodness of Fit Statistics.

Models	Betas Accom/Trust	Betas Trust/Comply	χ^2	p	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Korea	.83	.74	118.04	<.01	.99	.99	.066
Japan	.76	.40	104.71	<.05	.99	.99	.064
Guam	.81	.45	153.82	<.01	.99	.98	.077
Canada	.76	.44	177.51	<.01	.99	.99	.072

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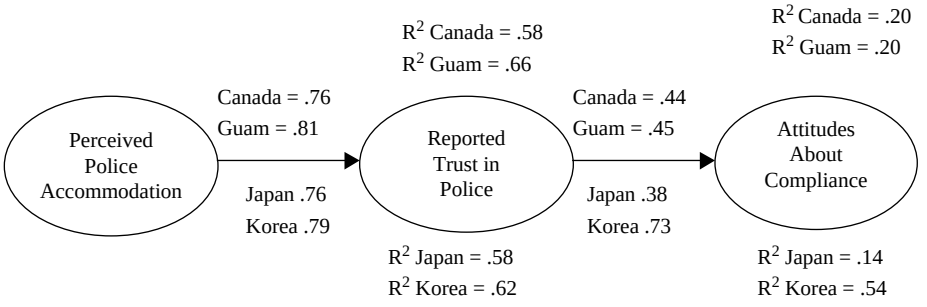

Figure 2. Final model: Reported trust mediates influence of perceived officer communication on attitudes about compliance with police requests.

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(p. 219–220). Indeed, a challenge for future comparative work will be to concoct typologies that will allow researchers to comprehensively articulate the structural factors that differentiate between communities and, consequently, determine the kinds of police-civilian communication that might be a function of them.

The findings here underscore the value of examining nation and ethnicity in studies of this nature. As Oberle (2004) has argued, "creating a long-term positive image of law enforcement in the minds of the public rests with the support of individual officers and their ability to create a positive image on a daily basis within the communities they serve" (p. 27). Results of the current study (as well as from comparable data we are analyzing from Africa; Hajek et al., 2006) highlight the perhaps *universal* importance of trust in police and officer accommodation in maintaining a positive image of law enforcement. Obviously, we make no claims for all of our findings in any one context to generalize to other regions of it, and indeed we have acknowledged that the setting of Alberta is sociopolitically different from other Canadian provinces, the fact that our model holds up across very different cultural milieux is testimony to its robustness. Furthermore, work is obviously needed in other cultural contexts (wherein locally grounded focus group discussion is necessary to mine relevant cultural dimensions) and with samples other than college students and on socially critical dimensions (such as civilian sexual orientation, to name but one).

From an applied perspective, whether perceptions of officers' accommodativeness have direct or indirect effects in predicting compliance with the police is perhaps

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations for the Three Dependent Variables by Cultural Setting.

Factors	Canada Mean (*SD*)	Japan Mean (*SD*)	Guam Mean (*SD*)	Korea Mean (*SD*)
Accommodation	4.44 (1.08)	3.57 (0.97)	3.63 (1.09)	3.28 (0.93)
Trust	5.09 (1.03)	3.88 (0.91)	3.97 (1.29)	3.76 (0.87)
Compliance	4.26 (1.23)	3.50 (1.17)	3.54 (1.40)	3.38 (1.16)

moot. These data show that vicariously observing and/or directly receiving accommodation from officers—maybe from different officers over time—will engender trust in police in general and likely relieve stress and frustration in the immediacy of an encounter. This might be especially the case for community members in potentially negatively valenced, emotionally charged interactions with officers—such as traffic stops (see Cox & White, 1988; Johnson, 2004)—in which outgroup membership may become communicatively salient (see Gallois & Giles, 1998) and uncertainty and anxiety are particularly high (Gudykunst, 1995).

Obviously, building on limitations inherent in self-report procedures, we need to determine from observations of actual ongoing police-community members encounters (see Solan & Tiersma, 2005) what can be defined (verbally and nonverbally) as accommodative, confirming actions on the one hand, and nonaccommodating, disconfirming actions on the other (see Sieburg, 1976). Qualitative methods such as focus groups could be used to further unpack the social meanings and relationships between officers' behaviors and community members' satisfaction with the police (see Mastrofski, Willis, & Snipes, 2002). Such work may also address the extent to which sexual orientation, age, gender, and ethnic make-up of the police officer and community members (as well as a myriad other attributes and experiences—political orientation, prior nature of contact with police, ethnic identification, etc.) influence accommodative-nonaccommodative behaviors.

Indeed, possession of an accommodative skill and flexibility may feed into assessment of communication competence (see Burleson & Greene, 2003) and, in this way, CAT has the potential to be associated with a very wide range of communication practices in both interpersonal and intercultural settings (see Gallois, 2003). 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. Such motives underlying convergence are central to communication in other service contexts and organizations as well. For example, Sparks and Callan (1992) applied CAT to the hospitality industry and showed how much a convergent style of communication with consumers is important for clients' satisfaction. This has been observed in a number of settings where, for example, a travel agent accommodated her pronunciation to the different socioeconomically based language styles of her Welsh clientele (Coupland, 1984) and, in Taiwan, where salespersons converged more to customers than vice versa (van den Berg, 1986).

These contexts aside, the present findings highlight the value in further developing CAT—theoretically as well as empirically—not only to incorporate consequences of accommodating to gain trust and compliance, but also longer term institutional goals such as intergroup cooperation, as in this case, effective community policing. Furthermore, the model tested here should now be elaborated to include within its purview the potential roles of related constructs such as situational anxiety and uncertainty levels and beliefs about local neighborhood and city safety. In addition, and besides including attention to the well-trodden sociodemographic variables of gender, age, and ethnicity, the model could be further developed to take into account not only more ambitious outcome measures (e.g., citizen complaints and community

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policing successes) but also different kinds of compliance situations. In addition, beyond community members' experiences and communicative perceptions, the other side of the theoretical/applied coin needs formulating and testing with respect to officers' insights regarding the utility of accommodative and in some cases nonaccommodative practices.

Accommodative practices should be sensitive to the values, customs, and needs of a wide variety of community members within a given culture (foreign, immigrant, mentally disturbed, elderly, homeless, executives, and so forth) without being stereotypical or adversarial. While community members often see "the badge" rather than the person behind it, officers, too, should be person-centered rather than overcategorically oriented (see Harwood & Giles, 2005, for the complexities of intergroup communication dynamics), especially in emotionally charged multicultural environments. Conversely, accommodation practices can be downright *dys*functional in certain ambiguous and, especially, physically or life-threatening circumstances. The fine line of detecting cues to understand and know when to accommodate or code-switch to another more controlling and assertive style is a critical communicative commodity unique to police officers' roles and has considerable currency for their safety.

Relatedly, Barker and Giles (2003) suggested that effective communicators understand when a particular group identity is salient, and also when recognition and accommodation of that group identity is apposite. They are *mindful* (Langer, 1989) of differences and able to act accordingly: Mindfulness can be characterized best as the process of making distinctions. Interactants who communicate mindfully are more aware of context and the perspective of their actions. Making mindful distinctions can lead to greater sensitivity to environment, and greater openness to new information. As Langer et al. (1990) pointed out:

> different concerns may make different forms of behavior rational in the same setting. Similarly, identical behaviors do not necessarily arise from common bases, nor do they necessarily convey the same information. What may be desirable to younger persons may be undesirable or uninteresting to an elderly person. (p. 118)

What appears to be significant then in effective communication, is the ability to accommodate *optimally*. This does not mean that one interactant should "mimic" another. Research has shown this to be counterproductive (see Giles & Smith, 1979). It does require interactants to be sensitive to differences and open to them. Ineffective or incompetent communicators (particularly those in a position of power) operate on the basis of a "cookie-cutter" approach that relies on one stereotyped perception of group salience. That said, communication interventions in this sphere should not be a one-way street. The public, in tandem, requires educating about the sometimes necessary but perceptually under- or nonaccommodating stances that officers need to take for their own (as well as others') safety. These situations include most traffic stops, where officers have no idea whether individuals stopped have just committed a felony, possess weapons, and (in the American context) are impending "third-strikers." One way of learning to empathize in such situations is role-play. It has been

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found that citizens who have engaged in role-plays, as well as audience observers of them, report significantly more confidence in officers, find them more accommodating, and more appropriate in their behavior, after the role-play experience than before (Giles, Willemyns, Gallois, & Anderson, 2007b). Interventions should be responsive to, and combat, the histories of immigrant minorities who often have had distressing and frightening experiences with nonaccommodating (and even lawless) officers in their culture.

Finally, if community-oriented policing and collaborative efforts to reduce crime are going to take off in any meaningful way—especially in cultures with troubled histories—intergroup boundaries between law enforcement and the community need to be dissolved. In discussing issues of how social science can impact communicating with the public in general, Silver commented that "if the messages are not *appropriately framed*, if they're not seen as *trustworthy*, if they're not tied to something people can do, I think they will be dismissed or not attended to appropriately" (our italics, quoted in Munsey, 2006, p. 21). One approach to this is to increase the quality of communication occurring between these parties through accommodative practices that have herein been shown to promote trust and compliance. Indeed, explicating the nature of effective communicative accommodations fitting the specific historical setting may be the key to building trust across a whole range of intergroup contact situations (see Nagda, 2006).

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