

## Trust and Legitimacy in Policing and Criminal Justice

Dear readers, it is a great pleasure to introduce the latest special issue of the journal *Criminal Justice and Security* published in English and focused on *trust and legitimacy in policing and criminal justice*.

Due to constant changes in the democratic political system and the (legal) state, modern society is becoming increasingly attentive to problematic aspects of the modern paradigm of trust in formal social control institutions and in legitimacy of their operations. Trust in supervisory institutions, their actions and fairness in procedures, authority, integrity and coherence of values between citizens and social controllers, effectiveness and legitimacy of their operations, and the belief that these institutions are also required to act in the interest of the state and all citizens represent the normative aspects of empirical research in the field of modern criminology. This issue focuses mainly on the studies of trust and legitimacy in policing and judicial institutions. The number of empirical studies in the European area is slowly increasing, and the papers in this special issue represent an important contribution to the study of trust and legitimacy in the countries of Southeast Europe and beyond. Some papers in this special issue were prepared within the framework of the basic research project *Legitimacy and legality of policing, criminal justice and execution of penal sanctions (J5-5548)* that was launched in August 2013 at the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security, University of Maribor. The three-year national research project is funded by the Slovenian Research Agency. One of the project's aims is to discuss legitimacy, legality, and integrity of responding to crime and of enforcement of criminal sanctions in Slovenia, other European countries, and globally.

The present issue of the *Journal of Criminal Justice and Security* focuses on the issues of compliance with laws and lawful functioning of formal social control institutions and on the beliefs of people that law enforcement authorities are able and willing to carry out supervisory activities in accordance with the principles of democratic policing, while placing special emphasis on legality and legitimacy. The papers represent studies and discussions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, Poland, Slovenia, and the United States of America, all addressing questions about legitimacy, legality, and integrity of policing in a democratic society. The findings indicate that legitimacy and trust in police are related to the level of democratization, for authority is most vividly reflected in contacts with uniformed police officers enforcing in practice the laws designed to control crime and disorder in society. Among other, the papers show that despite differences between individual countries, the variables including procedural justice, police efficiency, police authority, and legal cynicism have an impact on trust in police and, partly, on legitimacy, as well. Despite the different forms of development and implementation of police reforms in these countries, all police forces should strive to improve their efficiency, procedural justice, authoritativeness, and distributive justice.

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We hope that you will find the papers interesting, instructive, and useful for the development of empirical research on trust and legitimacy in policing and criminal justice. However, it should be noted that different researchers use different concepts of trust and legitimacy. Tyler (1990), on the one hand, one of the first founders of the concept legitimacy, comprehends trust as the present and legitimacy as a variable consisting of trust and willingness to obey police and legal compliance, while Bottoms and Tankebe (2012), on the other, explain the willingness to obey police as a result of legitimacy (i.e., the conviction that the police act lawfully, fairly, and efficiently) and trust stemming from the positive experience. The latter is of outstanding importance for the understanding and interpretation of the results of studies on trust and legitimacy presented in the papers published in this special issue of the *Journal of Criminal Justice and Security*, as well as for the general social developments associated with public opinion on fairness, legitimacy, credibility, effectiveness, efficiency, and authority of formal social control agencies.

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Guest Editors

Bottoms, A., & Tankebe, J. (2012). Beyond procedural justice: A dialogic approach to legitimacy in criminal justice. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 102(1), 101–152.

Tyler, T. R. (1990). *Why people obey the law*. New Haven: Yale University Press.