

International Survey about Perceptions of Courts' Role in Addressing Social Issues through Problem-Solving Courts

M. Katie Cunius, Monica K. Miller*, Evan Murphy and Sarah A. Kruger

Sociology Department and Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program, USA

Abstract: *Purpose of the study:* Community sentiment is a collective group of attitudes toward an object—such as problem-solving courts—which could differ between populations. This study addresses community sentiment regarding whether the courts should address social problems and whether community sentiment differs based on the type of problem-solving court. It also investigates whether the perceived responsibility of courts to address social issues differs based on country (United States, Australia, and Canada) or individual differences, as well as whether group or individual differences are more predictive of support for problem-solving courts. *Method:* We surveyed citizens in the U.S., Australia, and Canada using an online survey. *Results:* We found that participants had positive community sentiment toward all four (drug, homelessness, mental health, tribal wellness/Aboriginal) problem-solving courts and community sentiment did not differ between countries. We also found that endorsement of therapeutic jurisprudence was the largest predictor for community sentiment toward all four courts. *Conclusion:* We found that sentiment was positive but similar in all countries. Individual differences (e.g., authoritarianism, support for justice principles, and attributions for crime) were stronger predictors than country of residence. This study can help encourage the creation of specialty courts to address social issues.

Keywords: Problem-solving courts, community sentiment, specialty courts, cross-cultural, social issues, United States, Canada, Australia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Recent research (Miller, 2019) indicates that countries around the world differ in their perceptions of whether courts should address underlying social issues (e.g., drug use, mental health, homelessness) that sometimes lead to crime. Such perceptions might relate to the social mind-set of the country (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). Social mind-sets are attitudes, attributions, and beliefs that shape the country's sentiment toward things such as social issues, crime, and solutions to crime. Countries have different social issues and can even differ in whether they perceive something as a social issue (e.g., prostitution, gambling, cultural differences of aboriginal peoples). To complicate matters further, countries differ in their legal systems and rights afforded to citizens (e.g., the right to rehabilitation). Thus, it is no surprise that countries might also differ in whether they believe that courts should take on the role of helping offenders overcome the underlying contributors to their crime.

For instance, a country might not experience a great deal of legal discourse related to cultural differences that could lead to legal inequities for Aboriginal people; or the country's people might believe that these inequities exist but are not a problem; or the country's lawmakers might not give the courts there sources or

ability to help with this problem. Other countries provide all people with the right to be rehabilitated, and thus the courts (and broader legal system) are specifically tasked with helping the offender overcome the social issues related to their crime—including cultural differences related to being an Indigenous/Aboriginal person (Miller, 2019; Miller and Westbrook, 2021).

One method of addressing social issues is through problem-solving courts (see Miller *et al.*, 2020 for review of various types). Problem-solving courts are founded on justice principles such as therapeutic jurisprudence and procedural justice (Miller *et al.*, 2020). These courts do not simply punish offenders; they also explore and address the underlying issues, such as mental illness, drug use, or homelessness that might have contributed to a crime. Ideally, this alternative approach would be more effective than incarceration at helping the wrongdoer address their problems and abstain from reoffending.

Despite a growing understanding of the factors associated with the development of problem-solving courts (Miller, 2019), there has been little research on community sentiment toward such courts. Specifically, it is not well known how strongly people agree that the courts have a role in addressing social issues. Having the community's support for legal actions—including problem-solving courts—is important, especially in a representative democracy in which legislators are to represent their constituents' desires when deciding how to spend their tax money (See Fishkin and Luskin,

*Address correspondence to this author at the Sociology Department and Interdisciplinary Social Psychology Ph.D. Program, USA; E-mail: mkmiller@unr.edu

2005; Miller and Chamberlain, 2015). Additionally, there is even less *comparative* research across countries. Research that directly compares different countries can begin to illuminate the reasons that community sentiment and the adoption of problem-solving courts might differ. For instance, do citizens of one country have different social mind-sets (e.g., attributions for the causes of crime or drug use), different expectations of the legal system, different experiences with social issues (e.g., Aboriginal people, homelessness), or different individual characteristics (e.g., attitudes toward justice principles)?

The purpose of this article is to investigate the community sentiment toward four problem-solving courts (drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts) in three countries (United States, Australia, and Canada). Specifically, it addresses community sentiment regarding whether the courts should address social problems. Our research questions include: (1) To what extent do people believe it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues? And do these beliefs differ by type of problem-solving court? (2) Does the perceived responsibility of the courts to help solve social issues differ among people in the United States, Australia, and Canada? (3) What individual differences are associated with the belief that it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues? (4) Are group differences or individual differences more predictive of the belief that it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues?

2. PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS

In response to burgeoning dockets, overcrowded prisons, and drug-related recidivism, Miami-Dade County, Florida started the first drug court (*i.e.*, problem-solving court) in 1989 (Fulton Hora, 2002). This drug court was the first of many problem-solving courts that would be established in the United States and across jurisdictions around the world. As of 2021, the United States has created over 3,500 drug courts (U.S. Department of Justice 2021), and hundreds of other problem-solving courts that address social issues such as mental health, domestic violence, and homelessness (See Strong *et al.*, 2016). Internationally, the movement toward problem-solving courts has advanced as well, with countries such as England, Scotland, Ireland, Canada, and Australia adopting various problem-solving courts in their justice systems (Nolan, 2009).

Problem-solving courts, also referred to as specialty courts, address a wide range of issues that contribute to crime (Miller *et al.*, 2020). Some problem-solving courts address specific social issues thought to be underlying causes of crime, such as drug use, mental health, and homelessness. Other problem-solving courts exist to address the needs of specific groups of people, such as juveniles, veterans, and Indigenous populations. Although there is great variation in the purposes, participants, philosophies, and methods used in different problem-solving courts (See Kaplan *et al.*, 2018; Nolan 2009, 2010), they all employ the authority of the courts to address the underlying problems of justice-involved offenders, the structural problems of the justice system, and the social problems of communities (Berman and Feinblatt, 2001). In the U.S., problem-solving courts often share five common features: (1) close and ongoing judicial monitoring, (2) a multidisciplinary or team-oriented approach, (3) a therapeutic or treatment orientation, (4) the altering of traditional roles in the adjudication process, and (5) an emphasis on solving the problems of individual offenders (Nolan, 2009).

Although there are many different types of problem-solving courts, the present study investigated community sentiment toward drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts. These courts were chosen because they are common (e.g., drug courts), represent a wide range of social issues (e.g., mental health and homelessness courts), or they serve a specific population (e.g., Indigenous/Aboriginal people). This approach allows community sentiment to be gauged for a wide range of court types. Drug courts employ a program designed to reduce drug use relapse and criminal recidivism among offenders through risk and needs assessments, judicial interaction, monitoring and supervision, graduate sanctions and incentives, and treatment and various rehabilitative services (U.S. Department of Justice, 2021). Mental health courts use a specialized program which diverts offenders with mental illness, traumatic brain injury, or developmental disabilities into judicially supervised, community-based treatment with individualized incentives and sanctions (Strong *et al.*, 2016). Homeless courts use a comprehensive, systematic approach to address the needs of homeless offenders through multidisciplinary strategies that include mental health treatment, vocational training, life-skills education, and substance abuse treatment under the coordination of members from criminal justice, health, social service, and education systems

(American Bar Association n.d.). Finally, tribal wellness courts, also called Aboriginal courts in Australia and Canada, are a form of wellness court that addresses alcohol and drug abuse by establishing more structure and accountability for offenders through a system of comprehensive supervision, drug testing, treatment services, sanctions, incentives, team-based case management, and community support (Tribal Law and Policy Institute, 2003). These courts also address problems using their culture's traditional dispute resolution techniques not used in regular courts (see Miller, 2019; Miller *et al.*, 2020). Further, these courts were chosen because each of these problem-solving courts are prevalent in the United States, Australia, and Canada (Nolan, 2009).

Over the years, there have been many evaluations showing the success of various individual problem-solving courts (e.g., Frailing, 2010; Goldkamp *et al.*, 2001; Shanahan *et al.*, 2004; Somers *et al.*, 2012). However, there has been little research systematically evaluating problem-solving courts' efficacy across numerous court studies. (Miller *et al.*, 2020) collected published evaluations of problem-solving courts in order to draw conclusions as to the cumulative success of the courts. They found that the overall success rate¹ for six types of problem-solving courts was 82%, with drug courts (81%) and mental health courts (92%) showing high levels of success (Miller *et al.*, 2020). Along with highlighting the need for more rigorous court evaluation methodologies, this study provided evidence for the efficacy and success of various problem-solving courts.

Despite the growing evidence of the efficacy of problem-solving courts, there is little research on the general community sentiment toward these courts. More specifically, the extent to which people agree that courts should have a role in addressing social issues of those involved in the justice system is unknown. Investigating community sentiment toward drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts can provide insight on whether the general public agrees courts should play a part in addressing social issues in the justice system.

3. COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

On an individual level, sentiment can be understood as a person's attitude toward or opinion about some

attitude object. Sentiment can be shaped by many things such as a person's personality, values, beliefs, emotion, and experiences. However, *community* sentiment is broader than just one person's attitude—it represents a collective attitude (Miller *et al.*, 2015; Miller and Chamberlain, 2015). Community sentiment can be defined as the collective attitudes or opinions of a given population about some attitude object. The population can be any group of people such as doctors, parents, or a country's citizens. Community sentiment can be shaped and influenced by social movements, media, lawmakers, and moral panic (Miller and Chamberlain, 2015).

Understanding community sentiment toward problem-solving courts is important because it has implications for the perceived legitimacy of the legal system. When policies in the legal system are consistent with community sentiment, the public's perceptions of government legitimacy increases and compliance with the law is strengthened (Tyler, 2006). More specifically, when courts are seen as fair, the legal system is perceived as more legitimate (*i.e.*, has the proper authority to govern; Tyler and Rasinski, 1991). On the other hand, when people believe policies are unfair or unrepresentative of their sentiment, they will develop negative impressions of the legal system and be less likely to obey the law (Huang and Wu, 1994). Simply put, when laws are enacted that are out of line with community sentiment, the legal system is undermined because citizens believe the law should represent their preferences (Reichert and Miller, 2017). This is particularly true in representative democracies (Fishkin and Luskin, 2005).

A person's social mind-set and subsequent community sentiment can differ between cultures because of cross-country differences. As discussed earlier, a social mind-set is a community's attitudes, attributions, and beliefs which can shape their attitude toward social issues, crime, and solutions to crime (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). Further, a person's beliefs and sentiments are often formed through individual differences (Chomos and Miller, 2015). These individual differences can be associated with numerous factors, such as race, religion, or political affiliation (Chomos and Miller, 2015), that are often associated with a person's country (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). Cultural beliefs, such as honor violence and individualism/collectivism, also shape a person's social mind-set (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). For example, people from collectivistic cultures often have an authoritarian mind-set and encourage harsher

¹"Success" was operationalized as either positive or mixed recidivism outcomes.

punishment of people who deviate from the norm (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). In contrast, people from individualistic cultures might emphasize personal freedoms. Thus, a person's individual and cultural differences help form a person's social mind-set which then affects their beliefs toward social issues.

Community sentiment can differ at the country level or the individual person level (Chomos and Miller, 2015). Many factors could affect community sentiment toward the responsibilities of problem-solving courts to address social issues. There could be group-based differences in community sentiment between people from different countries. Additionally, individual differences in authoritarianism, attributions for causes of crime, and support of justice principles could affect community sentiment. Both considerations are discussed further below.

4. DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNITY SENTIMENT TOWARD PROBLEM-SOLVING COURTS BETWEEN COUNTRIES: WHY WOULD THESE COUNTRIES DIFFER?

The three countries we investigated (*i.e.*, U.S., Australia, Canada) all originated from English rule; however, they differ in many ways. For instance, despite Australia and Canada having more liberal health-care and social services systems than the U.S., all three countries have established mental health courts.

4.1. Mental Health Courts

Mental health courts in the U.S. work with non-violent offenders who are diagnosed with a mental health disorder to connect the offender with social functioning resources and employment, housing, and treatment services (U.S. Department of Justice n.d.). Mental health courts in Australia decide whether the defendant was of sound mind when the offense occurred and whether they are fit to stand trial (Queensland Health, 2016). In Canada, mental health courts address the underlying issue for why a person commits crimes and helps the offender receive necessary resources to help address their issues (Alberta Court of Justice n.d.). The courts can also approve community treatment for the offender. Thus, if social mind-set reflects the community's support for mental health courts, these countries likely have a mind-set that it is the government's role to help people—which might extend to the courts too.

4.2. Drug Use Courts

Some social issues that might form a person's social mind-set and affect their perceptions of problem-

solving courts are the government's response to drug use, homelessness, and treatment of Indigenous/Aboriginal people. One example can be demonstrated using a country's response to the drug-use crisis. The U.S. and Canada differ on their strategies, with the U.S. focused on drug treatment and harm reduction (*e.g.*, rehabilitation), and Canada's strategy is centered in policies regarding the possession of and use of drugs (*e.g.*, legal regulations; Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, 2022). Compared to Australia, who punishes people using illicit drugs through incarceration at the state level, the U.S. incarcerates people at both the state and federal level (Remington, 2019). Further, all three countries using drug courts—although Australia and Canada embrace a harm reduction philosophy and the U.S. supports a “total abstinence” policy (Nolan, 2009).

4.3. Homeless Courts

The countries also can be compared on the population's perception of people who are unhoused. Australians perceive homelessness to be largely caused by drug or alcohol addiction in which the solution is to increase housing and create a safer temporary living situation for people and families (Wesley Mission, 2018). These suggestions occur at both the state level (*e.g.*, building more shelters) and the federal level (*e.g.*, creation of Department of Housing and Homelessness; Wesley Mission, 2018). Community members in the U.S. attribute the current homelessness crisis to high housing costs and lack of affordable housing options, which most Americans believe it is the federal government's job to fix (Torres, 2023). Canadian citizens believe homelessness is an increasing issue and although local government leaders are attempting to address the issue, many Canadians believe the government is not trying to improve the issue, and at times is making the issue worse (Hopper, 2022). Thus, all three countries are looking toward their government to help resolve this issue.

4.4. Indigenous/Aboriginal Courts

Finally, the treatment of Indigenous/Aboriginal people and their respective tribal land differs between countries as well. The United States is one of the first nations to recognize Indigenous peoples' right to their land; however, the U.S. heavily regulates what Indigenous people can do with their land (Durham, 2022). In comparison, Australia is still developing their relationship between the government and Aboriginal

people (Durham, 2022). For example, Aboriginal people in Mabo have a native title recognized by Australia's government which gives Aboriginal people rights to their land. However, not all Aboriginal people have the same rights over their land because of the Native Title Act—which does not allow rights to urban land (Durham, 2022). Canada's policies appear more progressive than the U.S.'s largely due to Canada's government recognizing the historical wrongs they have caused Indigenous people (Zhao, 2021). However, unlike the U.S., Canada does not recognize political autonomy or self-determination of Indigenous people over their land. Thus, the U.S., Australia, and Canada all differ in their federal or state level of involvement in social issues.

4.4. Attitude toward Problem-Solving Courts

More broadly, community sentiment might also differ between countries in their attitude toward problem-solving courts and whether it is the government's job to address social issues. For example, Miller, (2019) found that many countries do not have problem-solving courts because they have other systems (e.g., social services, churches) that address social issues. Regarding the U.S., community members support the idea of problem-solving courts, specifically the rehabilitative nature of these courts (Theilo *et al.*, 2019). These courts are strongly supported for numerous social issues, ranging from drug and alcohol courts to some people even supporting a problem-solving court for offenders of domestic violence (Thielo *et al.*, 2019). There is a lack of research investigating community sentiment toward problem-solving courts in Canada, but in general the public supports mental health courts and the government funding this type of court (McDougall *et al.*, 2012). Due to Canadians' positive attitude toward the government's response in solving other social issues (e.g., homelessness) and their emphasis in rehabilitation toward drug and alcohol issues, it is likely community sentiment in Canada would be positive toward problem-solving courts as well. Further, despite limited research regarding problem-solving courts as a whole in Australia, Australians believed drug courts would reduce drug related recidivism and were relatively supportive of this type of court (Jordan, 2015). However, prior knowledge about the existence of these courts is lacking. Further, offenders are also satisfied with their experience with problem-solving courts, although improvement to the courts are still needed (Payne, 2006). Despite the lack of knowledge specifically about drug-courts, peoples' positive

community sentiment toward rehabilitation and the government addressing social issues would likely be associated with a positive community sentiment toward problem-solving courts.

In sum, the U.S., Canada, and Australia are likely to be relatively supportive of the implementation of problem-solving courts. However, each country's execution of and current state of resolving social issues differs. Thus, it is likely that the implementation and perceived responsibility of each court might differ based on which country a person lives in.

4.5. Individual Differences in Community Sentiment Toward Problem-Solving Courts

Many factors could impact community sentiment toward the responsibilities of problem-solving courts to address social issues. These include individual differences in authoritarianism, attributions for causes of crime, and support of justice principles.

4.5.1. Authoritarianism

Community sentiment toward the role of problem-solving courts to address social issues could be affected by individual differences in authoritarianism. People high in authoritarianism exhibit high degrees of deference to established authority, aggression toward out-groups, and support for traditional values when those values are endorsed by authorities (Altemeyer, 1981). Authoritarianism has consistently been associated with prejudice, discrimination, and hostility against members of out-groups. Altemeyer, (1981) proposed two characteristics of people who are high in authoritarianism which cause them to be prejudiced. First, people high in authoritarianism tend to organize their worldviews in terms of in-groups and out-groups and perceive members of out-groups as threatening traditional values authoritarians hold dear. Second, people high in authoritarianism see themselves as more moral than other people and, therefore, feel justified in looking down on anyone defined by authority figures as less moral than themselves (Altemeyer, 1981).

The extent to which people are authoritarian could impact their sentiment toward problem-solving courts. Because problem-solving courts address the underlying social issues of justice-involved offenders, those high in authoritarianism could view problem-solving courts as a system which helps subordinate group members attenuate intergroup differences. Additionally, problem-solving courts could be viewed as

a threat to the established authority of traditional justice procedures. Therefore, those high in authoritarianism should have less favorable sentiment toward the responsibility of problem-solving courts to help address social issues when compared to people low in authoritarianism.

4.5.2. Attributions for Causes of Crime

Community sentiment toward problem-solving courts could also be influenced by how people make attributions for the causes of crime. Attribution theory asserts that people seek to make sense of their worlds by attributing actions to internal or external causes (Heider, 1958). When a person makes an internal attribution, the cause of the behavior is attributed to the disposition or internal characteristics of the person being judged. On the other hand, when a person makes an external attribution, the cause of the behavior is assigned to the situation (Heider, 1958). When making attributions for the causes of crime, people who make internal attributions will attribute crime to the offender's *character*, whereas people who make external attributions for crime will view the offender's *environment* as influencing criminal behavior (Grasmick and McGill, 1994).

People who endorse an internal attribution believe that crime is a state of mind (Unnever et al., 2010). From this perspective, criminals are said to perpetrate by choice, rather than from situational pressures, and therefore deserve punishment (Cochran et al., 2006; Jacobs and Carmichael, 2002; Young, 1991). Conversely, those who make an external attribution for crime believe that crime originates from external causes such as inequitable social arrangements (Unnever et al., 2010).

The way in which people make attributions for the causes of crime affects their view about rehabilitation. People who made internal attributions for crime believe deterrence is more important than rehabilitation, whereas those who made external attributions believe rehabilitation is more important than deterrence (Tempelton and Hartnagel, 2012). Additionally, people who endorse internal attributions are more likely to support punitive crime control attitudes, whereas people who endorse external attributions are more likely to hold progressive crime control beliefs (Grasmick and McGill, 1994; Hawkins, 1981; Tyler and Boeckmann, 1997; Young, 1991). Given that problem-solving courts are more rehabilitative than traditional courts, people who make external attributions should

be more supportive of problem-solving courts compared to those who make internal attributions.

4.5.3. Support for Justice Principles

In addition to attributions for causes of crime, support for justice principles, such as procedural justice and therapeutic jurisprudence, could impact community sentiment toward problem-solving courts. Procedural justice is concerned with the fairness of processes used by those in positions of authority to reach outcomes and decisions (Tyler, 2006). Producing feelings of procedural justice is a key aspect of problem-solving courts and has been suggested as a crucial factor in explaining success among these courts (Rossman et al., 2011). The success of problem-solving courts might be because procedural justice directly promotes people's willingness to cooperate with authorities (Murphy et al., 2015). People who are more supportive of procedural justice should have more favorable sentiment for problem-solving courts compared to people with low support for procedural justice.

Another justice principle that could influence community sentiment for problem-solving courts is support for therapeutic jurisprudence. Therapeutic jurisprudence is concerned with the degree to which legal systems and actors yield therapeutic outcomes for criminal justice participants (Wexler, 2000). The goal of therapeutic jurisprudence is to enable practitioners to enhance aspects of the law to be more therapeutic while comporting with other justice principles, such as due process (Wexler, 2000). Problem-solving courts exemplify therapeutic jurisprudence given their focus on producing therapeutic outcomes for their criminal justice participants (Fulton Hora, 2002). People who are more supportive of therapeutic justice might be more supportive of problem-solving courts than people who are less supportive of therapeutic justice.

5. THE PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of this article is to investigate community sentiment toward four problem-solving courts (drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts) in three countries (U.S., Australia, and Canada). Specifically, it addresses community sentiment regarding whether the courts should address social problems that contribute to crime. We also investigate community sentiment toward problem-solving courts at a country level and an individual level. The present study serves as a partial

test of the SocialMind-Set model (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). Regarding the Social Mind-Set Model, we investigated whether different countries' socialmind-set is associated with community sentiment toward problem-solving courts. It also expands on community sentiment research by investigating whether individual differences (authoritarianism, attributions for cause, support for therapeutic jurisprudence, support for procedural justice) predict community sentiment toward problem-solving courts, as well as whether community sentiment differs by the community (*i.e.*, country) itself.

Our research answers the following questions: (1) To what extent do people believe it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues? And, do these beliefs differ by type of problem-solving court? (2) Does the perceived responsibility of the courts to help solve social issues differ among people in the United States, Australia, and Canada? (3) What individual differences are associated with the belief that it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues? (4) Are group differences or individual differences more predictive of the belief that it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues?

6. METHOD

6.1. Participants

Participants ($n = 394$) were recruited and compensated for their time taking the survey. Participant compensation reflected the minimum wage in their respective country. There were 126 participants from the United States, 127 from Australia, and 141 from Canada. No participants were removed from the analysis. The sample was 72% white, 16% Asian, 3% black, and 9% some other race. Participants were 59% female and were an average age of 47 years old.

6.2. Procedure and Measures

Participants were recruited online through Cloud Research's Prime Panels and were directed to an online survey administered through Qualtrics. The survey consisted of three sections.² The first section provided participants a short description of our problem-solving courts (see Appendix). After each description, participants indicated to what extent they believe it is the responsibility of these courts to address

social issues that contribute to crime. The second section measured individual differences in authoritarianism, attributions for causes of crime, support for therapeutic jurisprudence, support for procedural justice, and political ideology. In the third and final sections, participants reported demographic information. Each of these measures is briefly detailed below.

6.2.1. Need for Courts to Address Social Issues

Need for courts to address social issues was measured using two items for each of the four problem-solving courts: drug courts, homeless courts, mental health courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts. Participants indicated to what extent they agree with two statements on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This measure was used as a method to understand community sentiment toward problem-solving courts.

1. [Drug use/abuse; homelessness, mental health, cultural differences of Indigenous people], contributing to criminal behaviors, is a problem that the courts should help solve.
2. It is the responsibility of the courts to help solve [drug use/abuse; homelessness, mental health, cultural differences of Indigenous people] contributing to criminal behavior.

6.2.2. Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism was measured using a 6-item scale (Bizumic and Duckitt 2018; $\alpha = .66$). Examples of questions asked included: "Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today," and "Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people." Responses were measured on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

6.2.3. Attributions for Causes of Crime

Attributions for causes of crime was measured using an adapted version of Grasmick and McGill's scale (1994). The scale consists of two subscales, the dispositional attribution for causes of crime subscale ($\alpha = .80$) and the situational attribution for causes of crime subscale ($\alpha = .69$). The dispositional attribution subscale asks participants to report to what extent they agree with statements such as, "Offenders commit crimes because they have bad character." The

²The survey had additional sections outside the scope of this study and not discussed here. All data reported are original to this report.

situational attribution subscale asks participants to report to what extent they agree with statements such as, “Offenders commit crimes as a way of coping with the condition of poverty in which they live.” Responses were measured on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

6.2.4. Support for Therapeutic Jurisprudence

Support for therapeutic jurisprudence was measured using two items we developed ($\alpha = .69$). Participants indicated to what extent they agree with two statements on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

1. Courts should focus on the ways they can help, not only the ways they can punish.
2. Courts should help offenders solve their problems.

6.2.5. Support of Procedural Justice

Support for procedural justice was measured using an adapted scale from Grootelaar and van den Bos (2018, $\alpha = .73$). The five-item scale asks participants to what extent they agree with statements such as, “Offenders should be treated in a just manner,” and “Judges should carefully study an offender’s case.” Responses were measured on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

6.2.6. Demographics

Finally, participants answered several questions about their demographics. Participants reported their age, gender, race, and political ideology. Political ideology was measured on a seven-point scale from 1 (*very liberal*) to 7 (*very conservative*).

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. The responsibility of Courts to Help Solve Social Issues

In research question one, we investigated to what extent people believe it is the courts’ responsibility to help solve social issues, and whether these beliefs differ by the type of problem-solving courts (*i.e.*, drug courts, homeless courts, mental health courts, and tribal wellness/ Aboriginal courts). On a seven-point Likert scale in which higher numbers represented stronger beliefs in the courts’ responsibility, participants reported fairly positive sentiment for drug courts ($M = 4.94$, $SD = 1.37$), homeless courts ($M = 4.81$, $SD = 1.34$), mental health courts ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.31$), and

tribal wellness courts ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.34$). A repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were differences in the perceived responsibility of the court to help solve social issues across different types of problem-solving courts. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between drug courts, homeless courts, mental health courts, and tribal wellness courts ($F(3,1179) = 2.23$, $p = .084$, $\eta^2 = .06$).

Collapsed across country, we found fairly high community sentiment for drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts. All four types of problem-solving courts had a mean score above the midpoint (*i.e.*, 4), showing evidence that people believe the government has a role in addressing social issues that contribute to crime. Thus, it could be inferred that the social mind-set of the community is positive toward the use of problem-solving courts and prioritizes the use of all four courts. Interestingly, there was no significant difference in community sentiment between the different types of problem-solving courts. This could be because these four types of problem-solving courts address high profile social issues that are prevalent in all three counties. If we had included a lesser known problem-solving court which addressed a more niche social issue (*e.g.*, animal courts), we might have seen a less positive sentiment or a significant difference in community sentiment among countries.

7.2. Differences between Countries in the Perceived Responsibility of Courts

In research question two, we also investigated whether perceived responsibility of the courts to help solve social issues differ among people in the United States, Australia, and Canada. We conducted four one-way ANOVAs for each type of problem-solving court investigated in the present study. Results indicated that people in the United States, Australia, and Canada did not differ in their beliefs that drug courts ($F(2, 391) = .42$, $p = .66$), homeless courts ($F(2, 391) = .69$, $p = .50$), mental health courts ($F(2, 391) = .89$, $p = .41$), or tribal wellness courts ($F(2, 391) = .71$, $p = .50$) should help address social issues. See Table 1 below for means, standard deviations, and results from our one-way ANOVA analyses.

Despite the differences in purpose, philosophies, and procedures of problem-solving courts between the United States, Australia, and Canada (Nolan, 2009), we found that the country of residence had little impact

Table 1: Belief in the Court's Responsibility to Help Solve Social Issues

Measure	United States		Australia		Canada		F(2, 391)	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Drug Courts	5.03	1.41	4.93	1.43	4.88	1.27	.42	.66
Homeless Courts	4.86	1.38	4.88	1.34	4.70	1.31	.69	.50
Mental Health Courts	5.04	1.30	4.82	1.38	4.90	1.26	.89	.41
Tribal Wellness Courts	4.97	1.23	4.80	1.41	4.81	1.37	.71	.50

on the perceived responsibility of courts to address the underlying social issues that contribute to crime. Thus, this finding might not support the Social-Mindset Model, which predicted that each country would reflect a different community and thus the attitudes toward these court would differ (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). This might have occurred because of the countries shared history, such that all four countries originated from English rule and thus might have similar sentiments. Instead, these results imply that participants from each country perceive it is the court's responsibility to address social issues, and perceive all four social issues as contributing to crime.

We averaged together the two dependent variables of sentiment and responsibility to create a community sentiment variable and investigated the differences between countries. Although we found no statistical differences between countries, there were some trends worth discussing. Participants from the United States had more positive community sentiment across all four problem-solving courts when compared to Canada and across three problem-solving courts when compared to Australia. Although these differences did not reach statistical significance, it suggests that participants from the United States might have somewhat higher expectations of their courts to address social issues when compared to participants from Canada and Australia. This finding could be because of the higher prevalence of problem-solving courts in United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 2021), or it could also be because of differences in other government systems to address the underlying issues contributing to crime. For example, there are distinct differences in the healthcare systems between the United States, Australia, and Canada, and participants could view issues related to drug abuse and mental health as being the responsibility of some other government entity to address.

7.3. Individual Differences in the Responsibility of Courts to Help Solve Social Issues

Our third research question investigated what individual differences were associated with the belief

that it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues. Our fourth research question investigated whether *group* differences or *individual* differences were more predictive of the belief that it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues. Because there was no statistically significant difference among countries, we collapsed the findings across countries. In order to determine which individual differences were associated with the belief that courts are responsible to help address social issues, a series of Pearson's correlations was conducted (see Table 2). Community sentiment for drug courts was significantly correlated with individual differences in situational attribution ($r = .23$), support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($r = .48$), support for procedural justice ($r = .38$), and gender ($r = .17$). Community sentiment for homeless courts was significantly correlated with individual differences in situational attribution ($r = .29$), support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($r = .41$), support for procedural justice ($r = .33$), political ideology ($r = -.12$), and gender ($r = .12$). Community sentiment for mental health courts was significantly correlated with individual differences in situational attribution ($r = .33$), support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($r = .48$), support for procedural justice ($r = .43$), political ideology ($r = .11$), and gender ($r = .14$). Further, community sentiment for tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts was significantly correlated with individual differences in situational attribution ($r = .32$), support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($r = .48$), support for procedural justice ($r = .37$), political ideology ($r = -.17$), and gender ($r = .24$).

Regarding gender specifically, we found females were more supportive of tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts compared to males. In sum, individual differences matter more than group differences in determining whether it is the courts' responsibility to help solve social issues. However, it is important to note that individual differences (e.g., political ideology, authoritarianism) are often associated with a person's country/culture (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). Thus, although group differences did not affect peoples'

Table 2: Pearson Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Drug Courts	—										
2. Homeless Courts	.71**	—									
3. Mental Health Courts	.72**	.69**	—								
4. Tribal Wellness Courts	.59**	.54**	.61**	—							
5. Authoritarianism	.05	.04	.03	-.01	—						
6. Dispositional Attribution	.06	.09	.04	.00	.30	—					
7. Situational Attribution	.23**	.29**	.33**	.32**	.00	.28**	—				
8. Therapeutic Jurisprudence	.48**	.41**	.48**	.48**	-.18**	-.08	.34**	—			
9. Procedural Justice	.38**	.33**	.43**	.37**	-.09	-.02	.39**	.58**	—		
10. Political Ideology	-.10	-.12*	.11*	-.17**	.46**	.23**	.01	-.22**	-.13**	—	
11. Gender ^a	.17**	.12*	.14**	.24**	.07	-.15**	.09	.16**	.13**	-.1	—

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

^a 0 = Male and 1 = Female.

perceived responsibility of courts to address social issues, these individual differences still might be influenced by their country.

Based on the results of the correlations, situational attribution for causes of crime, support for therapeutic jurisprudence, support for procedural justice, political ideology, and gender were used as predictors in four regression models. Each regression model predicted the perceived responsibility of each problem-solving court to help solve social issues. Given that there were no significant differences between participants from different countries, we collapsed all regression models across countries.

The first regression model predicted the belief that drug courts have the responsibility to help address drug use and abuse contributing to criminal behavior. The drug courts model was significant ($F(5,385) = 27.44$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .25$). Individual predictors were examined further and support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$, $CI[.02, .20]$), support of procedural justice ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$, $CI[.049, .362]$), gender ($\beta = .11$, $p < .05$, $CI[.045, .54]$), and support for dispositional attribution ($\beta = .105$, $p < .05$, $CI[.01, .20]$) were significant predictors in the model such that females were more supportive of drug courts than males. Specifically, as support for therapeutic jurisprudence and procedural justice increased, beliefs that it was the court's job to address drug use and subsequent crimes committed also increased. Further, as people's belief that dispositional attributions are the cause of crime increased, support for drug courts also increased. Thus, a social mind-set

surrounding procedural justice and therapeutic jurisprudence was associated with participants' attitude toward and beliefs regarding drug courts, specifically for the female community members.

The second regression model predicted the belief that homeless courts are responsibility to help address homelessness contributing to criminal behavior. The homeless courts model was significant ($F(5,385) = 20.43$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .20$). Individual predictors were examined further and situational attribution for causes of crime ($\beta = .12$, $p = .03$, $CI[.01, .27]$), support for procedural justice ($\beta = .12$, $p = .05$, $CI[.00, .32]$) and support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$, $CI[.21, .47]$) were significant predictors in the model. Specifically, as support for situational attributions causing crime, support for procedural justice, and support for therapeutic jurisprudence increased, beliefs that it is the courts' job to address and remedy the homelessness crisis also increased.

The third regression model predicted the belief that mental health courts have the responsibility to help address mental health issues contributing to criminal behavior. The mental health courts model was significant ($F(5,385) = 31.34$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .28$). Individual predictors were examined further and situational attribution for causes of crime ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$, $CI[.04, .28]$), support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$, $CI[.26, .48]$), and support for procedural justice ($\beta = .18$, $p = .001$, $CI[.10, .39]$) were significant predictors in the model. Specifically, as support for therapeutic jurisprudence, procedural

justice, and belief in situation attributions causing crime increased, beliefs that it is the courts' job to address drug use and subsequent crimes committed also increased.

The fourth and final regression model predicted the belief that tribal wellness courts have the responsibility to help address cultural differences contributing to criminal behavior. The tribal wellness courts model was significant ($F(5,385) = 31.29$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .28$). Individual predictors were examined further and situational attribution for causes of crime ($\beta = .15$, $p < .01$, $CI[.06, .30]$), support for therapeutic jurisprudence ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$, $CI[.28, .52]$) and gender ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$, $CI[.19, .67]$) were significant predictors in the model. Specifically, as support for situational attributions causing crime and therapeutic jurisprudence increased, beliefs that it was the court's job to address cultural differences associated with crime also increased. Further, females were more supportive than males of considering cultural differences when addressing criminal behavior in tribal wellness courts.

When examining the significant individual difference variables across all four regression models, support for therapeutic jurisprudence was a significant predictor in each model. Therapeutic jurisprudence is concerned with the degree to which legal systems and actors yield therapeutic outcomes for criminal justice participants (Wexler, 2000) and is a key consideration for problem-solving courts. Participants who were supportive of therapeutic jurisprudence were significantly more likely to believe that these courts have a responsibility to address the underlying social issues that contribute to crime.

In addition to support for therapeutic jurisprudence, situational attributions for causes of crime was a significant predictor for community sentiment for homeless courts, mental health courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts. People who make situational attributions for causes of crime recognize the role that the environment has on influencing criminal behavior (Grasmick and McGill, 1994) and believe that crime originates from external causes such as inequitable social arrangements (Unnever *et al.*, 2010). Results showed a direct relationship between making situational attributions for the causes of crime and believing the courts have a responsibility to address social issues such as homelessness, mental health, and cultural differences of Indigenous people. Surprisingly, this relationship was not significant for

drug courts. This could be because participants were less likely to make situational attributions for drug abuse when compared to other social issues. Instead, participants might view drug abuse as an issue that should be attributed to offender's character (*i.e.*, internal attribution), rather than their situation or environment (*i.e.*, external attribution).

In sum, participants across countries showed strong community sentiment for the government, in the form of courts, addressing societal issues. Regarding drug courts, social mind-set was most dependent on participants' attitude toward procedural justice and therapeutic jurisprudence, especially for female community members. This infers that across countries peoples' social mind-set regarding drug use believes that although the drug use itself might be internally attributed, it is still courts' responsibility to help the offender explore the underlying issue for their behaviors instead of strictly punishing the offender (Miller *et al.*, 2020). Peoples' social mind-set regarding drug courts differs from the mind-set toward homelessness courts and mental health courts. For the homelessness and mental health crisis, the community might believe a person's environment is affecting their behavior (*e.g.*, inequitable social arrangements; Unnever *et al.*, 2010) and thus it is the courts duties to address this issue. In addition, social mind-set regarding mental health courts could also be associated with peoples' desire for judges in their country to be fair and unbiased when rendering their decisions. Regarding support for tribal wellness courts, results demonstrate a social mind-set exists, particularly for females, which desires courts to consider the environment of these Indigenous/Aboriginal offenders and the use of therapeutic outcomes instead of punishments.

7.4. Limitations and Future Research

Similar to all studies, this study is not without limitations. One limitation is that participants might not be knowledgeable enough about problem-solving courts to provide information in order to gain an accurate understanding of community sentiment toward this topic. However, we did provide all participants with a brief description of each type of problem-solving courts before we asked them to respond to questions (see Appendix). Future research could address this issue by providing a preliminary survey to measure participants' pre-existing knowledge about problem-solving courts. Another limitation is community sentiment toward problem-solving courts was only

measured using a few short items. Future studies can expand the number of questions asked, or also ask short-response questions about participants' attitudes and beliefs toward these courts, in order to obtain a more thorough and accurate understanding of participants' community sentiment toward problem-solving courts.

8. CONCLUSIONS

Community sentiment reflects the attitude of the general public toward a specific attitude object (Miller and Chamberlain, 2015). This article investigated community sentiment toward four problem-solving courts (drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts) in three countries (U.S., Australia, and Canada). We found participants had fairly high community sentiment for all four types of courts. All four types also had a mean score above the midpoint (*i.e.*, 4), showing evidence that people believe the courts have a role in addressing social issues that contribute to crime. This support for problem-solving courts did not significantly differ between participants from different countries.

We also found partial support for the Social Mind-set Model (Miller and Westbrook, 2021). Specifically, we found that individual differences (*i.e.*, attributions, gender, political ideology) and justice principles (*i.e.*, therapeutic jurisprudence, procedural jurisprudence) predicted community sentiment. Although individual differences affected community sentiment, group differences associated with the person's country of origin did not affect a person's attitude toward problem-solving courts. The effect of individual differences and justice principles on community sentiment did vary based on the specific problem-solving court. However, therapeutic jurisprudence was the most significant predictor for community sentiment across all four types of problem-solving courts (*i.e.*, drug courts, mental health courts, homeless courts, and tribal wellness/Aboriginal courts). Thus, perhaps increasing community support for problem-solving courts is reliant on increasing support for therapeutic jurisprudence in the justice system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was funded by College of Liberal Arts/Reynolds School of Journalism Travel Grant Program from the University of Nevada, Reno. We acknowledge the assistance of Jeff Pfeiffer, Evelyn Maeder, and Tanya Kaplan.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interests to report.

Ethics approval was obtained through the University of Nevada, Reno Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX

Drug Court Description

A Drug Court is a problem-solving court which handles cases involving substance-abusing offenders through comprehensive supervision, drug testing, treatment services, and immediate sanctions and incentives. Drug Courts offer individuals facing criminal charges an opportunity to enter a substance abuse recovery program in lieu of straight jail time. Drug Court requirements are strict and clients must be drug tested frequently, attend substance abuse recovery meetings, and make regular court appearances.

Homeless Court Description

Homeless Courts are problem-solving courts which handle minor criminal offenses by emphasizing the treatment and rehabilitation of homeless offenders. Homeless Courts use progressive plea bargaining, alternative sentencing structures, and program activities to address homelessness as a contributing factor to criminal behavior.

Mental Health Court Description

Mental Health Courts are problem-solving courts which aim to promote public safety and reduce recidivism among mentally ill offenders through an intensive program of evaluation, treatment, and frequent monitoring of compliance. The purpose of Mental Health Courts is to bring long-term stability, sobriety, and safety to mentally ill offenders while ensuring the security and safety of the community.

Tribal Wellness/Aboriginal Court Description

Tribal Wellness/Aboriginal Courts bring together community healing resources with the tribal justice process to promote healing of the participant and the well-being of the community. These courts provide access to substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation services that incorporate culture and tradition. Participants of these courts receive progressive consequences and rewards to encourage participant compliance with program requirements such as drug testing, judicial interaction, and program cooperation.

REFERENCES

- Alberta Court of Justice. n.d. "Mental Health Courts" [online]. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://albertacourts.ca/cj/areas-of-law/criminal/mental-health-court>
- Altemeyer, Bob. 1981. *Right-Wing Authoritarianism*. University of Manitoba Press.
- American Bar Association, n.d. "Homeless courts: Taking the court to the street" [online]. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/homelessness_poverty/one-pagers/homeless-court-one-pager.pdf
- Berman, Greg, and John Feinblatt. 2001. "Problem-Solving Courts: A Brief Primer." *Law and Policy* 23(2):125-140. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9930.00107>
- Blagg, Harry. 2013. "'A Problem Shared...?' Some Reflections on Problem-solving Courts and Court Innovation in Australia." *Plymouth Law and Criminal Justice Review* 5:24-38.
- Canadian Drug Policy Coalition. 2022. *Legal Regulation* [online]. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://drugpolicy.ca/our-work/issues/legal-regulation/>
- Chomos, Juliana C., and Monica K. Miller. 2015. "Understanding how individual differences are related to community sentiment toward safe haven laws using a student sample." Pp. 83-97 in *Handbook of Community Sentiment*, edited by M.K. Miller, J.A. Blumenthal, and J. Chamberlain. New York, NY: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-1899-7_6
- Cochran, John K., Denise Paquette Boots, and Mitchell B. Chamlin. 2006. "Political Identity and Support for Capital Punishment: A Test of Attribution Theory." *Journal of Crime and Justice* 29(1):45-79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2006.9721217>
- Durham, Rebekah. 2022. "Comparing Property Rights of Native Americans and Indigenous Australians." [online]. *University of Cincinnati Law Review Blog*. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://uclawreview.org/2020/11/10/comparing-property-rights-of-native-americans-and-indigenous-australians/>
- Fishkin, James S. and Robert C. Luskin. 2005. "Experimenting with a Democratic Ideal: Deliberative Polling and Public Opinion." *Acta Politica* [online] 40:284-298. Accessed on September 26, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500121>
- Frailing, Kelly. 2010. "How Mental Health Courts Function: Outcomes and Observations." *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 33(4):207-213. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ilp.2010.06.001>
- Fulton Hora, Hon. Peggy. 2002. "A Dozen Years of Drug Treatment Courts: Uncovering our Theoretical Foundation and the Construction of a Mainstream Paradigm." *Substance Use and Misuse* [online] 37(12-13):1469-1488. Accessed on September 26, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1081/JA-120014419>
- Goldkamp, John S., Michael D. White and Jennifer B. Robinson. 2001. "Do Drug Courts Work? Getting Inside the Drug Court Black Box." *Journal of Drug Issues* 31(1):27-72. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002204260103100104>
- Grasmick, Harold G. and Anne L. McGill. 1994. "Religion, Attribution Style, and Punitiveness Toward Juvenile Offenders." *Criminology* 32(1):23-46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9125.1994.tb01145.x>
- Hawkins, Darnell F. 1981. "Causal Attribution and Punishment for Crime." *Deviant Behavior* 2(3):207-230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.1981.9967554>
- Heider, Fritz. 1958. *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations*. New York: Psychology Press. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10628-000>
- Hopper, Tristin. 2022. "Canadians fed up with homelessness and governments" [online]. *National Post*. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/canadians-fed-up-with-homelessness/wcm/c1f5b611-80a5-4059-8fde-38ff9651377a/>
- Huang, Peter H. and Ho-Mou Wu. 1994. "More Order without More Law: A Theory of Social Norms and Organizational Cultures." *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 10(2):390-406.
- Jacobs, David and Jason T. Carmichael. 2002. "The Political Sociology of the Death Penalty: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis." *American Sociological Review* 109-131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240206700106>
- Jordan, Dominic. 2015. "Public Perceptions of the Perth Drug Court as a Mechanism for Dealing with Drug Related Crime." Bachelor's Thesis, Department of Criminology and Justice, Edith Cowan University. Available at: https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses_hons/1464
- Kaplan, Tatyana, Monica K. Miller and Emily F. Wood. 2018. "Looking Backward, Looking Forward: How the Evolution of Specialty Courts Can Inform the Courts of Tomorrow." *Court Review* 54:14-24.
- McDougall, Ainslie, MaryAnn Campbell, Teresa Smith, Angela Burbridge, Naomi Doucette, and Donald D. Canales. 2012. "An Analysis of General Public and Professional's Attitudes about Mental Health Courts: Predictors of a Positive Perspective." *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health* 11(3):203-217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2012.723666>
- Miller, Monica K. 2019. "A Qualitative Analysis and Eleven-Factor Typology of Factors Encouraging or Discouraging the Development of Problem-Solving Courts in Various Countries." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 16:79-100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11292-019-09368-z>
- Miller, Monica K., Jeremy A. Blumenthal and Jared Chamberlain, eds. 2015. *Handbook of Community Sentiment*. New York: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-1899-7>
- Miller, Monica K. and Jared Chamberlain. 2015. "'There Ought to Be a Law!': Understanding Community Sentiment." Pp. 3-28 in *Handbook of Community Sentiment*, edited by M. K. Miller, J. A. Blumenthal, and J. Chamberlain. New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4939-1899-7_1
- Miller, Monica K. and Amber Westbrook. 2021. "The Social Mind-set Model potentially explains varying societies' responses to social and criminal behavior." *Oñati Socio-Legal Series* 11:S404-S424. <https://doi.org/10.35295/osls.iisl/0000-0000-0000-1250>
- Miller, Monica K., Lauren M. Block and Alicia DeVault. 2020. "Problem-Solving Courts in the United States and Around the World: History, Evaluation, and Recommendations." Pp. 301-371 in *Advances in Psychology and Law*. Vol. 5, edited by M. K. Miller and B. H. Bornstein. New York: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54678-6_9
- Murphy, Kristina, Elise Sargeant and Adrian Cherney. 2015. "The Importance of Procedural Justice and Police Performance in Shaping Intentions to Cooperate with the Police: Does Social Identity Matter?" *European Journal of Criminology* 12(6):719-738. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370815587766>
- Nolan, James L. 2009. *Legal Accents, Legal Borrowing: The International Problem-Solving Court Movement*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400830794>
- Nolan, James L. 2010. "Harm Reduction and the American Difference: Drug Treatment and Problem-Solving Courts in Comparative Perspective." *Journal of Health Care Law and Policy* 13:31-47.

- Payne, Jason. 2006. "Specialty Courts: Current Issues and Future Prospects" [online]. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/specialty-courts-current-issues-and-future-prospects>
- Queensland Health. 2016. "Mental Health Court" [online]. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/444961/mental-health-court-fact.pdf
- Reichert, Jenny and Monica K. Miller. 2017. "Social Cognitive Processes and Attitudes Toward Legal Actions: Does Receiving Information Affect Community Sentiment?" *Applied Psychology in Criminal Justice* 13:70-95.
- Remington, Paige. 2019. "Drug Decriminalisation in the United States and Australia" [online]. *United States Studies Centre*. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ussc.edu.au/analysis/drug-decriminalisation-in-the-united-states-and-australia>
- Rossman, Shelli B., John K. Roman, Janine M. Zweig, Michael Rempel and Christine H. Lindquist. 2011. *The Multi-Site Adult Drug Court Evaluation: The Impact of Drug Courts* [online]. Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/412357-The-Multi-site-Adult-Drug-Court-Evaluation-The-Impact-of-Drug-Courts-Pre-Production-.PDF>
- Shanahan, Marian, Emily Lancsar, Marion Haas, Bronwyn Lind, Don Weatherburn and Shuling Chen. 2004. "Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of the New South Wales Adult Drug Court Program." *Evaluation Review* 28(1):3-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193841X03257531>
- Somers, Julian M., Lauren Currie, Akm Moniruzzaman, Faith Eiboff and Michelle Patterson. 2012. "Drug Treatment Court of Vancouver: An Empirical Evaluation of Recidivism." *International Journal of Drug Policy* 23(5):393-400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2012.01.011>
- Strong, Suzanne M., Ramona R. Rantala and Tracey Kyckelhahn. 2016. "Census of problem-solving courts, 2012" [online]. United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpsc12.pdf>
- Templeton, Laura J. and Timothy F. Hartnagel. 2012. "Causal Attributions of Crime and the Public's Sentencing Goals." *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* 54(1):45-65. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cjccj.2010.E.29>
- Thielo, Angela J., Francis T. Cullen, Alexander L. Burton, Melissa M. Moon and Velmer S. Burton Jr. 2019. "Prisons or Problem-Solving: Does the Public Support Specialty Courts?" *Victims and Offenders* [online] 14(3):267-282. Accessed on September 26, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2019.1595243>
- Tribal Law and Policy Institute. 2003. United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance [online]. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/bja/188154.pdf>
- Torres, Francis. 2023. "U.S. Opinions on Homelessness: A BPC/Morning Consult Poll" [online]. *Bipartisan Policy Center*. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/us-opinions-homelessness-poll/>
- Tyler, Tom R. 2006. "Psychological Perspectives on Legitimacy and Legitimation." *Annual Review of Psychology* 57:375-400. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.57.102904.190038>
- Tyler, Tom R. and Robert J. Boeckmann. 1997. "Three Strikes and You Are Out, but Why? The Psychology of Public Support for Punishing Rule Breakers." *Law and Society Review* 31(2):237-265. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3053926>
- Tyler, Tom R. and Kenneth Rasinski. 1991. "Procedural Justice, Institutional Legitimacy, and the Acceptance of Unpopular U.S. Supreme Court Decisions: A Reply to Gibson." *Law and Society Review* 25(3):621-630. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3053729>
- U.S. Department of Justice. 2021. "Drug Courts" [online]. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/238527.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Justice, n.d. "Mental Health Courts Program: Overview" [online]. Bureau of Justice Assistance. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/mental-health-courts-program-overview>
- Unnever, James D., John K. Cochran, Francis T. Cullen and Brandon K. Applegate. 2010. "The Pragmatic American: Attributions of Crime and the Hydraulic Relation Hypothesis." *Justice Quarterly* 27(3):431-457. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820902855362>
- Wesley Mission. 2018. "Perceptions of Homelessness in Australia: How to Make our Compassion Count" [online]. *Wesley Mission*. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://www.wesleymission.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Perceptions-of-Homelessness-Report.pdf>
- Wexler, David B. 2000. "Therapeutic Jurisprudence: An Overview." *Thomas M. Cooley Law Review* 17:125-134.
- Young, Robert L. 1991. "Race, Conceptions of Crime and Justice, and Support for the Death Penalty." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 54(1):67-75. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2786789>
- Zhao, Selena. 2021. "A Progressive Facade: Comparing the U.S. and Canada's Treatment of Indigenous Peoples" [online]. *Harvard Political Review*. Accessed on September 26, 2025. Available at: <https://harvardpolitics.com/a-progressive-facade-comparing-the-u-s-and-canadas-treatment-of-indigenous-peoples/>

Received on 10-08-2025

Accepted on 09-09-2025

Published on 14-10-2025

<https://doi.org/10.6000/2817-2302.2025.04.07>

© 2025 Cunius et al.

This is an open-access article licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.