

Instrumental and affective influences on public trust and police legitimacy in Spain

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ABSTRACT

Two approaches to the nature and sources of public trust and police legitimacy can be distinguished: the instrumental and the affective. On the first account, people trust in police when they judge it effective in enforcing the law and fighting crime; and they hold police more legitimate when they believe these things to be true. On the second account, trust and legitimacy are bound up with relational concerns about the quality of police behavior, and expressive factors relating to the perceived ability of communities and police to maintain and reproduce social cohesion and order. Studies in Anglophone contexts tend to conclude that this 'affective' account provides greater explanatory power. This paper explores these ideas in a new context. Using data from a nationwide survey conducted in Spain we examine: (a) the relative strength of instrumental or affective predictors of trust; and (b) whether trust in police fairness is a more or less important predictor of legitimacy than trust in police effectiveness. Adding to the weight of international evidence concerning the ways people think about and experience policing, evidence for the primacy of the affective account is presented.

Keywords: Police; trust; legitimacy; public opinion; Spain



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1. Introduction

Over the last two decades there have been concerted efforts by criminologists, politicians and police organizations in many countries to measure and better understand the relationship between the public and police, resulting in a large corpus of empirical work. As demonstrated by recent edited collections (Mesko and Tankebe, 2015; Tankebe and Leibling, 2013) and pan-European surveys (Hough et al, 2012, 2013), this is a dynamic and increasingly international field, which is now applying well-established theories and methodologies to lesser-explored policing contexts. A primary research concern has been identifying the key ‘drivers’ of trust and legitimacy, and in an attempt to further develop and expand the boundaries of this scholarship, the current paper explores the issues of trust and police legitimacy in the hitherto under-studied context of Spanish policing.

Trust is a complex concept, but most definitions concur that it involves tacit or explicit expectations of how other people will behave, and that it fosters stability and coherency in our everyday lives (Giddens, 1991). Trust rests on two key elements (Hardin, 2006). First, *efficacy*; we trust when we believe the trustee can deliver on their claim or promise of action or outcome. Second, placing trust in another, be it a person or an organisation, rests on an understanding that they have the right *intentions* towards us. Trust is thus a product of social relationships that enable the trustee to grasp what the trustor’s interests are. On some accounts, trust arises out of a process of knowledge formation – we place trust in others when we have sufficient knowledge of their ability and intentions (Hardin, 2006). On other accounts, trust is emergent from our moral commitments to others in our social environment – particularly those we judge to be like us in important ways (Uslaner, 2002). In both cases it can often make sense to envisage that trust is, in the final analysis, based on a ‘leap of faith’ (Möllering, 2001), since it involves placing our interests in the hands of others in the absence of full knowledge of their abilities and intentions (if we had such knowledge, then trust would not be necessary).

What does this notion of trust mean within the practical context of policing? The relational nature of trust suggests that public trust is in an important sense born out of dynamics of specific encounters with police. To the extent that officer behaviour conforms to accepted notions of what police can and should do, and to the extent police appear effective and well-intentioned, trust will be garnered and/or reproduced. Yet, any conception of trust-generating processes which relies purely on face-to-face interactions cannot do justice to the complexity of people’s relationships with the police. Relatively few of us are regularly placed in a situation to make judgments about the behaviour of individual officers or units, but many people are still prepared to make the leap of faith to trust the police. Beyond personal contact with officers people will draw on a range of sources to inform their trust judgements, such as their perceptions of crime, the quality of their local environment, the media and so on (Jackson et al. 2013).

The dual component concept of trust, concerned with both efficacy and intentions, also has important implications in terms of the legitimacy police command. On most accounts trust in police feeds into legitimacy – when people believe police

have the right intentions and are competent in the tasks assigned to them, they are more likely to grant it legitimacy. A key question is therefore whether, when making legitimacy judgements, people pay more attention to the instrumental effectiveness of policing, or whether they attend more to the intentions of the police and the quality of the relationship between police and public. A second, antecedent, and equally important question is whether trust judgements are themselves based more on instrumental or affective factors. In answering these questions, research regularly finds that affective factors that concern the quality of policing are most important in shaping trust (Bradford and Myhill, 2014); and a sense that the police have the right intentions towards those they police – in particular, that they use fair and ethical processes when dealing with citizens – is most important in shaping legitimacy (Jackson et al. 2013; Hinds and Murphy 2007; Tyler and Huo, 2002).

These findings are important because studies have consistently shown that trust and legitimacy are linked to people's propensities to cooperate with and assist officers (Murphy et al., 2008 Tyler and Huo, 2002; Van Damme et al., 2013). In the absence of such cooperation, the job of the police, as it is envisaged in most capitalist democracies, would be very much harder, more expensive and more reliant on coercive means of achieving compliance. Understanding what promotes, or inhibits, trust, legitimacy and cooperation is thus a key policy question. If affective factors are indeed more important, for example, this would suggest police interested in enhancing public cooperation should expend more efforts on improving the quality of their relationships with the communities they serve.

Yet the nature of public trust in the police, and its consequences in terms of the legitimacy of the police, has been explored primarily in Anglophone contexts – see Van Craen and Skogan (2015) for a recent overview – although there are of course exceptions, including Van Craen and Skogan's own contribution as well as others (e.g. Dirikx and Van den Bulck, 2014; Kääriäinen 2008; Kwak et al. 2012; Sun et al. 2013; Tankebe 2009; Van Damme 2015). Most recent work suggests broad support, in European countries at least, for the process-based model of police legitimacy outlined above. In this paper we seek to broaden understanding of the role played by affective and instrumental factors in fostering trust and police legitimacy by considering a less-well known context, Spain. Using data from a telephone survey of 2000 people conducted in 2013, we ask two key questions: is it instrumental or affective factors that are the most significant drivers of trust in police; and, is trust in police fairness a more important factor shaping legitimacy than trust in police effectiveness?

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 2 we provide more detail on the distinction between the instrumental and affective factors in generating trust and legitimacy, before locating our inquiry within the Spanish policing context in section 3. Having established our research questions in section 4, section 5 describes our data and methods, while section 6 presents the research findings. Section 7 pulls together the central strands of the paper to discuss what the findings might mean for trust and legitimacy in the context of Spanish policing, as well as for developing future research in this area

2. The instrumental and affective aspects of trust and legitimacy

Trust within social relationships has (at least) two components: efficacy or competency; and intentions or right motives (Hardin, 2006). To trust is to believe that these things are true, or are characteristic, of a potential trust object (whether an individual or an organization). This is therefore a cognitive understanding of trust; as Hardin stresses, “*we do not choose to trust*. Rather, once we have relevant knowledge (of another) ... that knowledge *constitutes* our degree of trust or distrust. To say “we trust you” means that we know or think we know relevant things about you” (2006: 17-18, emphasis in original).

This dual component understanding of trust has been adopted, and adapted, by current thinking about the ways public trust in the police is generated and reproduced (Freiberg, 2001). On one account, trust is primarily *instrumental*, and factors such as experience of victimization or fear of crime are considered the most important ‘drivers’ of trust in the police. Here, the competency aspect of trust is the paramount consideration, although instrumental factors may also affect judgements about intentions: the experience of victimization, for example, may lead an individual to believe the police do not care about their safety or rights, and are thus ill intentioned toward them.

An alternative account stresses the *affective* nature of trust and is more closely connected to the intentions and motives of the police. Here, instrumental concerns are thought to be less important than, first, perceptions of the way the police treat people and, second, the extent to which police embody social order, stability and community cohesion. On this account, trust is generated, first, by procedural fairness (Tyler and Huo, 2002; Tyler, 2006), and second by the affective links people draw between the police and the community, and the apparent success of both in reproducing normative social order (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007; Jackson and Bradford, 2009).

Theories of group identity and engagement are central in understanding the significance of procedural fairness in shaping affective forms of trust in the police. As developed by Tyler, Blader, (2000, 2003), and others, the central premise here is that people involve themselves in groups because these provide *means of constructing, developing and maintaining favourable identities* (Tyler and Blader, 2003: 353). Police officers, as ‘proto-typical representatives’ (Sunshine and Tyler, 2003) of a social group most people find important (the nation, state or community), communicate via their behaviour powerful messages of inclusion and status within this group. Procedurally fair policing informs citizens that they are included and belong in the group the police represent; unfairness indicates denigration and exclusion. When people feel included in the group, they are inclined to believe it and its representatives have the right intentions toward them, generating what Tyler and Huo (2002) call motive-based trust. Equally, inclusion, status and pride within groups, and a sense that group representatives share the values of group members, may motivate people to believe they are effective in their allocated tasks (Earle and Siegrist, 2006; Lipshitz et al., 2001).

Behaving in a procedurally fair way also *demonstrates* that the police have the right intentions towards citizens (that they believe them worthy of dignity and respect); while unfairness communicates, at the very least, an indifference towards those being policed. Despite the centrality of group identity in the procedural justice model, then, evaluative as well as affective processes are in play, linking procedural fairness to more instrumental conceptions of trust. Fairness may make people *feel* police are trustworthy by activating shared group identities, but notions of fair treatment also provide a standard against which police behaviour and intentions are judged; and citizens have a material interest in being governed by fair, neutral and balanced authorities.

On both instrumental and affective accounts personal contacts with officers are key moments in which trust is formed – or undermined. Research has consistently demonstrated the relevance of mundane, everyday interactions between police and public (Skogan, 2006; Tyler 2011; Guzy and Hirtenlehner, 2015) in terms of shaping trust, precisely because such encounters tend to be experienced through the lens of procedural justice. Personal contacts with officers also allow people to make judgements about the efficacy and competency of the police. How are officers perceived when conducting their work, for example, when responding to a road traffic accident? What do people make of the information police provide about ongoing inquiries and investigations, for instance during updates at community meetings?

The associations between personal contact with police, fairness and trust are well supported in the literature. Why, though, should concerns about community cohesion be associated with trust in the police, and particularly with trust in fairness and intentions? Again, the argument here starts with the notion that police are proto-typical group representatives and, furthermore, an embodiment of a particular vision of moral order (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007). When order and community are seen as successfully maintained – largely, of course, by subtle, informal social controls rather than the actions of formal justice agents – trust in the police *as representatives of this order* is enhanced. When people feel that they live in strong, cohesive communities this indicates to them that police are effective and well intentioned (that they do the right thing in the course of their work). Conversely, impressions of community breakdown diminish trust in policing because “they undermine the narrative of policing – they suggest that there is a *failure* to maintain order and cohesion, and the police are implicated in this failure” (Bradford and Myhill, 2014: 5).

This latter idea resonates strongly in, for example, the British context. Here, the police, as an organisation, have come to “provide an iconography of the *nation state*” (Loader and Walker, 2001: 20, original emphasis), expressing a collective national identity which is strongly linked to community and belonging (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). However ‘imagined’ the notion of traditional British policing may have become, Loader’s (1997) positioning of the police as a ‘condensation symbol’ for wider sensibilities and fears has found empirical support in recent studies, which reveal that perceptions of the police are shaped by public evaluations of the condition of social and moral order (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007; Jackson and Bradford, 2009). Most recently, Bradford and Myhill’s (2014) panel study showed

that collective efficacy (Sampson, 2012), the most obviously ‘expressive’ explanatory indicator they tested in their models, was a consistent predictor of overall confidence in the police.

2.1. Trust engenders legitimacy

Trust has consistently been linked with legitimacy. The legitimacy of the police *from the perspective of the policed* can be characterized as: (a) the extent to which people believe that the police have a valid right to power and influence; and (b) the types of opinions and actions such a belief engenders (Jackson *et al.*, 2013). Following recent pan-European work (Jackson *et al.*, 2011), in this paper we assume that the police can be considered legitimate when, and to the extent that, first, individuals perceive police officers act in morally valid ways and, second, they voluntarily offer their consent to police authority because they believe they have a moral duty to do so. Seen in these terms, legitimacy is located partly in people’s judgements about the behaviour of the police (e.g. they make assessments of whether or not the police follow the rules and act in normatively justifiable ways) and partly in their motivations or behaviour in relation to the police (e.g. they act in ways that indicate their consent to the role of the police).

Recent work has shown that the association between trust and legitimacy has, again, important affective aspects. Bradford *et al.* (2014a) found, for example, that some of this association was mediated by social identity – when people in their Australian sample believed the police to be fair, their identification with the group the police represented, characterized as ‘citizens in good standing’, was strengthened, motivating greater legitimation of the police: people are motivated to legitimate authorities of groups to which they feel, or are encouraged to feel, they belong. They also found, however, a separate, direct, link between trust in police fairness and legitimacy, which they interpreted as being more evaluative in nature. For the purposes of the current paper, this latter pathway might be explained in terms of the extent to which police fairness communicates to people that police have the right intentions, triggering a reciprocal legitimation of the police by those involved. Police behaviour is measured against a set of norms that revolve around the importance of fairness, people infer from their experience of fair policing that police are well-intentioned toward them, and, in response, this motivates a particular set of intentions *toward* police among those who experience such policing.

Naturally procedural fairness and the trust and sense of shared group identity it engenders will not be the only factors shaping public perceptions of police legitimacy. Most obviously for current purposes perceptions of police effectiveness may also shape legitimacy judgements – indeed, research in developing countries has shown that effectiveness can be a more important driver of legitimacy than perceptions of fairness (Bradford *et al.*, 2014b; Tankebe, 2009). Believing the police to be effective may communicate to people that they operate to an appropriate set of values – one that, for example, does not allow offenders to ‘go free’ – and at the same time activates a reciprocal sense of duty to obey the instructions of police officers.

Should trust in police effectiveness be a more important driver of legitimacy in a particular context this would of course suggest primacy of the instrumental over the affective. However affective factors appear to be consistently more salient to trust *and* legitimacy judgements than instrumental concerns. Indeed, reviewing the large body of research on public trust and police legitimacy, Tyler and Jackson (2013: 11) remark “what is striking in these studies is the degree to which performance issues are not central to public evaluations”.

Yet, as noted above, these established connections between trust and legitimacy, the relative importance of affective over instrumental determinants and the theories of procedural justice and group membership remain relatively less well-researched in non-Anglophone countries. At least in terms of the *levels* of trust in police, the results from round five of the European Social Survey, which asked citizens in over twenty European countries about trust in criminal justice institutions, reveal significant national variation and the potential impact of country-specific factors, such as welfare regimes and political economies, on perceptions of police (Hough et al, 2012).

One persistent concern has been the extent to which British, American and Australian police might represent something quite different to the populations they serve compared with police elsewhere, who may operate to different models of policing and be associated less with local communities and more with a remote, ‘faceless’ state. In the absence of an affective bond between police and community – particularly if police are not considered ‘proto-typical’ group representatives – one might expect instrumental concerns to be relatively more important. People may take a more rational-choice oriented stance, which places greater emphasis on questions of efficacy and success in ‘fighting crime’, when they experience police as ‘just another’ state agency. Moreover, if police do not constitute a symbol around which citizens can construct and interpret their sense of self, procedural justice and trust in police fairness may be relatively less important.

While Lobnikar et al (2015: 190) have warned that in the relative absence of research in Central and Eastern Europe there is a risk that governments and police “lack awareness that their performance is based not only on the effective investigation of criminal offenses and maintenance of public order but also on the adoption, support and trust that citizens show toward the police”, what European research that has been conducted cautions against either blindly applying or dismissing the oft-cited work from Anglophone contexts. For instance, while Hough et al (2013) suggest that trust in police and police fairness are important drivers of police legitimacy across European countries, surveys conducted by Mesko and Eman (2015) identify police effectiveness as an important predictor of police legitimacy across Slovenia, Russia, Romania, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. As the picture of police legitimacy in lesser studied countries and regions of Europe has begun to be sketched out in recent years, what has become clear is the need to better appreciate and incorporate the contexts of national policing into models of trust and legitimacy, and to consider how local contexts may shape the salience of instrumental or expressive concerns.

3. Policing in Spain

Police officers on the streets and the police as an institution are ideas familiar to all modern societies. Yet understandings of what policing is, how it is done and the nature of police organisations vary between different countries, and are a product of particular social and political histories (Mawby, 2011). To inform and contextualise the research findings in the proceeding sections, we will briefly introduce policing in the Spanish context by adopting Mawby's (2011) framework, which distinguishes police agencies in terms of their structure, function and legitimacy.

There are three main forces which each provide a layer in the overall *structure* of Spanish police, although some autonomous regions, such as the Basque Country and Catalonia, have their own police forces. Most closely aligned to the notion of a centralised state police is the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard). Founded in 1844, historically the Guardia Civil served to protect the political status quo established during the Franco dictatorship, with its paramilitary appearance accurately reflecting close links with the Spanish army, from where its senior officers were drawn. Nowadays the Guardia Civil is constitutionally reformed, with the Organic Law on the Security Corps and Forces moving the force from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Interior, dissolving the major part of its military connections (though not all – ranks and uniforms bear the remnants of a military past, for example) and injecting democratic principles of governance such as greater accountability through judicial oversight and the role of public prosecutors. The *Guardia Civil's* contemporary role is primarily patrolling Spain's highways and rural areas, conducting vehicle checks and attending road traffic accidents. The second main force is the *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía* (the National Police Force), which is the national police service operating in larger towns and cities. It is located within the Ministry of Interior and is tasked with responding to a whole range of policing issues, from investigating everyday crimes, such as thefts and assaults, to public order policing and border security. Finally, the third force is the *Policía Local* (Local Police), which can also be seen in towns and cities, and is responsible for addressing lower level offences, such as parking infringements and bylaw issues. Its officers are employed by, and responsible to, local councils and their elected mayors.

In exploring the *function* of police in Spain it is instructive to visualize an ideological continuum established by two contrasting models of policing: the public service model of police (or, at least, a community-oriented police service); and the professional or bureaucratic model of police (Guillén, 2012: 61-66). The community police model is based on the proximity between police and those they serve. Here, policing has a preventive character and is focused on the causes of crime, which requires police to rely on the help and involvement of citizens and the community in the 'fight against crime' (Torrente, 1999: 89-90; Vidales, 2010:481). In broad-brush terms, this is the primary model of policing in the Anglophone world. In England and Wales, for example "eulogised as the home of 'community policing'" (Mawby, 2011: 20), the police, in addition to crime control, have come to perform a much broader welfare and service role. This broad mandate is encouraged by an enduring romanticism surrounding the notion of policing by consent in Britain: the police

officer on the beat, working with the people and for the people, a citizen in uniform. Despite increasing centralization through government performance measurements, national bodies, codes of practice and legal regulations, this insistence that policing is local and deeply embedded in the community still persists. Witness, for example, the survival of independent local constabularies, and the introduction of Police and Community Safety Officers and Police and Crime Commissioners (Mawby, 2011: 20). The endurance of this model of policing (or police ideology), premised on close links between police and citizens, may go some way to explaining the primacy of affective aspects of trust often found in British research.

By contrast the professional and bureaucratic model is based on efficacy and the ascendancy of the police in the 'fight against crime', and emphasizes the role of police in enforcing law and order. This model positions the police as performing a more reactive function, dealing with the consequences of crime, detection, investigation and conviction, rather than targeting underlying causes (Torrente, 1999; following Bayley, 1994). It is this model that better represents policing in Spain and in some ways defines the Guardia Civil and the Cuerpo Nacional de Policía, in the sense that they are instruments of executive power that operate under the rule of law in closely pursuing the goals and priorities set by the Government. Police reports always focus on crime resolution, statistics about victimization and the number of cases solved, as illustrated by the annual reports published by the Ministry of Interior and other regional police such as the *Mossos d'Esquadra* (the national police of Catalonia). Instrumental rather than affective factors appear to play the major role in Spanish police activity.

However, just as there are limitations to the idea of localism within policing in England and Wales, so there are exceptions too to the centralized organisation and management of the police in Spain. There are, in the form of the 'Policía Local', local town and city police forces that have a greater awareness of, and interest in, local problems and policing needs. The cities of Barcelona and Madrid for example, have large, locally drawn forces, and the autonomous regions enjoy the recruitment and management of their own forces. Spanish policing should not be located too far toward the professional/bureaucratic end of the policing spectrum.

Our consideration of police *legitimacy* in Spain should also to be set within the context of the bureaucratic model. In this paper we are concerned with a notion of legitimacy that revolves around the normative assessments of citizens as to whether, from their perspective, an authority can lay 'claim to correctness' (Alexy, 1988). Can the authority be considered to be right, just and proper and should its requests, rules and practices ought to be voluntarily complied with (Tyler, 2006)? This resonates with our focus on trust in the police as a factor shaping legitimacy, in as much as trust helps citizens form judgements concerning the normative desirability of police action. This established notion of legitimacy places citizens as the main audience (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012) for the police's claims to be right and proper holders of power, and it suggests that it is important for police and policy-makers to pay attention to what the public thinks of the police. In England and Wales, for example, recognition of the salience of public trust in the police is demonstrated by concern among politicians and police to measure, and then improve, public perceptions of

the police (problematic as such attempts can be – Myhill et al. 2011). The idea that the police exist to serve, and in some senses represent, the public carries a strong ideological charge, and people’s experiences of policing are recognized as important factors shaping trust and legitimacy

In the bureaucratic policing model, however, police authority is, at least in ideological terms, derived from the rule of law, judicial power, and the state. This model does not grant either responsibility or control mechanisms to citizens, since the police function is not to serve the community but to follow the orders of legitimately constituted state authorities and to respect the constitutional and legal frameworks when exercising their duties (Guillén, 2012: 64). As a consequence of this bureaucratic police model citizens may perceive police as an element of state power, intimately linked to the executive, and rather distant from the communities in which they live. The police, in turn, perceive citizens as “deferred clients” (Guillén, 2012: 71; 62) rather than partners with a shared set of aims and interests. In Spain, the way citizens experience and process the legitimation claims of police may be based in important ways in the position of the police within constitutional frameworks and the history of institutional power. If this idea is correct, we might expect the links between public trust and legitimacy to be weaker in Spain than in Anglophone contexts. We should also expect affective factors that rely on links between police and community – and the idea that police are proto-typical group representatives – to be less important in generating trust and legitimacy; people’s experiences of policing may also be relatively less important in, especially in as much as legitimacy is granted to police by dint of their location within broader structures of authority.

4. Research Questions

To summarise the discussion thus far, research in Anglophone countries commonly finds that there is a primacy of affective (relational and expressive) factors in generating trust in police, and that trust in police fairness – itself primarily an affective concern – is the most important predictor of legitimacy. Explanations for such findings rely heavily on the notion that the police represent and embody local communities and the values of those living in them (or fail to do so, of course), and are answerable to the public in a relatively direct sense. The situation in Spain, with a different ideology of policing, would seem to suggest that trust and legitimacy will have rather different sources and relationships.

Against the backdrop of the structure, nature and function of policing in Spain, this paper tests the relative weight of affective versus instrumental factors in shaping public perceptions of the police. Do citizens in a country with a policing ideology that pays relatively little attention to questions of community and service, and where policing is managed, organised and held to account by central executive and judicial authorities to a greater degree than is the case in the US or UK, still emphasise affective factors when it comes to trust and legitimacy? Using data from a population representative telephone survey conducted in 2013, we ask, first, whether recent crime victimization – a key *instrumental* variable – is a more or less

important predictor of trust in the police than perceptions of social cohesion and collective efficacy, which have been identified as important *affective* predictors of trust in other contexts. Second, we query the extent to which personal experiences of police influence trust and feed into legitimacy. Third, we ask whether trust in police fairness is a more or less important predictor of legitimacy judgements than trust in police effectiveness. Fourth, we explore the extent to which social identity mediates the association between trust and legitimacy.

5. Data and Methods

The data used in this paper come from a survey carried out by the Spanish company Metroscopia in 2013. As described by Añón et al. (2013), the primary purpose of this survey was to analyse differences in the experience of police stops between the ethnic majority population and ethnic or immigrant minority populations living in Spain. The survey data comprise a random sample of the general (adult) population, surveyed via computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI). Sampling was via a national database of telephone numbers; two random selection probability frames were used to sample 500 cellular phone only users and 1,500 landline telephone users (screening was used to avoid sample overlap). Numbers were selected and dialled until 2,000 respondents were gathered; therefore no meaningful overall response rate can be calculated, although it should be noted that the cooperation rate was low, around 10 per cent.

The survey sample seems a good reflection of the overall population. Spain had 46.6 million inhabitants in 2013 (INE, 2014a): 51 per cent were female; 24 per cent were aged between 18-34, and 29 per cent were over 55. Some 10 per cent were born outside of Spain, and 26 per cent were unemployed (INE, 2014b). By contrast 54 per cent of the sample were female; 24 per cent aged 18-34 and 35 per cent aged over 55. Exactly one in ten were born outside Spain, while 24 per cent indicated they had a 'non-Caucasian-European' ethnic appearance. Some 23 per cent were unemployed (41 per cent were in employment). Regarding respondents' experiences of the police, 27 per cent had been stopped or otherwise contacted by the police in the past two years, while 11 per cent had initiated contact with the police themselves over the same period.

5.1. Key measures and constructs

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to derive and validate the key measures for this study – see Table 1 for question wordings. The two central measures were *trust in police fairness* (measured by items such as 'How often do police treat people with respect') and *trust in police effectiveness* (measured by items including 'Do you believe police are effective in preventing crimes of violence'). We label these measures 'trust' based on Hardin's (2006) definition of trust – to trust someone is to believe they have the right intentions toward us and are competent to do what we trust them to do, and such belief *constitutes* trust. It is important to note that

while one measure, fairness, relates more to (right) intentions, and the other, clearly, to efficacy, as noted above we assume that instrumental and affective concerns may shape both. Note also that a specific police force was not mentioned, leaving respondents free to refer to whichever ‘police’ seemed most salient to them given the question. This may be important given the variety of police organizations operating in Spain, and we return to this point in the discussion.

The ultimate response variables are two measures of legitimacy. We suppose here that the empirical or subjective legitimacy of the police is founded in an important sense on the extent of citizens’ trust. Legitimacy is something of a slippery concept, and significant debate exists about how to measure it (compare Jackson et. al., 2013 with Tankebe, 2013). However, following the European Social Survey (Jackson et. al., 2011), the survey used here contained questions designed to capture two distinct components of police legitimacy: respondents’ sense of ‘*moral alignment*’ with police (their sense that the police operate according to shared set of norms and values); and their perceived ‘*duty to obey*’ police (their sense that they have a duty to abide by the decisions of police officers).

A measure of *social identity* was also created from two survey items (agreement/disagreement with two statements, ‘Living in this country determines the way you think about yourself’ and ‘You are proud to live in this country’). The intention here was to tap into an identity the Spanish police might plausibly be said to represent – ‘the nation’ – in a context marked by significant national division. Basques and Catalans, for example, might recoil from the notion of a ‘Spanish’ nation (Herranz de Rafael 1996, 2005), while at the same time affiliating themselves with a different notion of ‘this country’ and, perhaps, police. Measures of this kind have been found in Anglophone countries to correlate with perceptions of the police, and to mediate some of the association between trust and legitimacy, and our intention here is to explore whether such correlations can, in a general sense, be identified in the Spanish context.

The final latent construct was *collective efficacy*, measured by items that assessed perceived social cohesion (e.g. ‘The values of the majority in your neighbourhood are similar to yours’) as well collective efficacy more narrowly defined (e.g. ‘Local people and authorities have control over public space’). These loaded strongly onto one underlying factor, which we labelled collective efficacy as it combines respondents’ assessments of the extent to which their local community can and will act to maintain social order and their perception that there is widespread agreement on what this order should look like (Sampson, 2012). This measure comprises an important affective predictor of trust in police (Jackson et. al., 2013). By contrast, to assess the effect of instrumental concerns we used recent victimisation, entered into our models as a dummy variable.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they had had contact with the police in the previous two years and, on the last occasion that they did, whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the police handled the matter. To represent these contacts, six dummy variables were entered into the model. These comprised both ‘self-initiated’ and ‘police-initiated’ contacts (e.g. encounters triggered by the respondent and police, respectively), and whether the respondent judged the contact satisfactory, unsatisfactory or neither.

*Table 1: Key constructs and measures.
 Standardized factor loadings from SEM shown in Figure 1*

Trust in police fairness (4-point scales)	
How often do police treat people with respect?	0.77
Do police make fair and impartial decisions?	0.75
How often do police explain decisions and actions?	0.70
Trust in police effectiveness (11-point scales)	
Do you believe police are effective in preventing crimes of violence?	0.81
To what degree are police effective in detaining people who commit burglary?	0.77
How quickly would police arrive at the scene of a crime?	0.66
Moral alignment with police (4-point scales)	
The police have the same sense of right and wrong as you	0.76
The police stand up for values that are important to people like you	0.87
Generally, you support the way in which the police act	0.81
Perceived duty to obey police (11-point scales) Is it your duty as a citizen to ... ?	
Respect the decisions made by police, including when you disagree with them	0.83
Do what the police ask of you, including if you do not understand or are not in agreement with the reasons they give	0.81
Do what the police ask of you, including when you do not like the way in which they treat you	0.72
Social identity (5-point scales)	
Living in this country determines the way you think about yourself	0.60
You are proud to live in this country	0.68
Collective efficacy (4 point scales)	
The values of the majority in your neighbourhood are similar to yours	0.66
You are proud to live in your neighbourhood	0.87
You feel like you belong in your neighbourhood	0.83
People in your neighbourhood treat each other with respect	0.73
Local people and authorities have control over public space	0.61
If you had problems, local people would help you	0.75
If young people are causing problems local people will tell them to stop.	0.61

6. Results

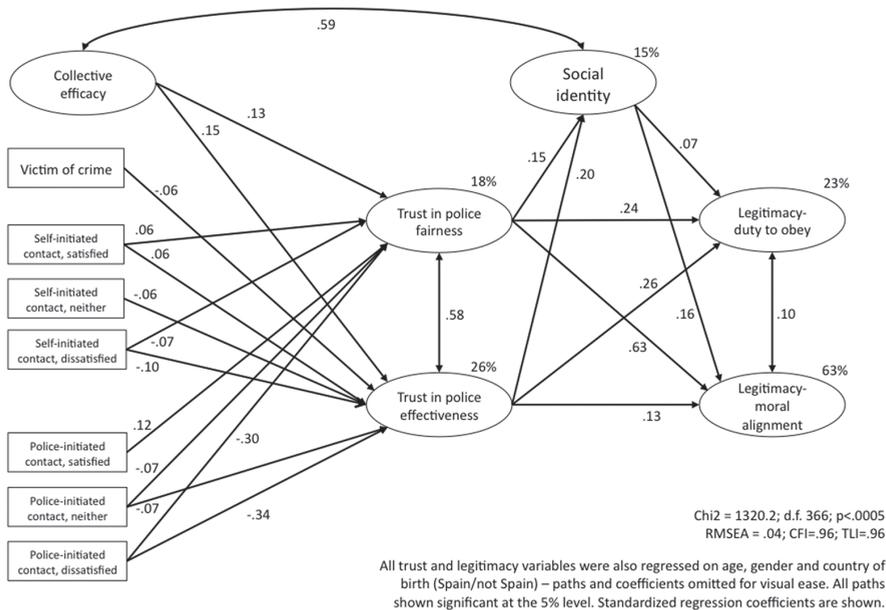
Structural equation modelling in Mplus 7.1 (with indicators set to categorical as appropriate) was used to address our research questions. This technique allows all our research questions to be explored simultaneously. The final fitted model is shown in Figure 1 – the approximate fit statistics suggest an adequate fit to the

data (Hu and Bentler, 1999). Table 1 shows the factor loadings from the individual measures of the latent constructs. Note that paths from all the contact and other variables on the left hand side of the model to the trust variables were allowed – for visual ease only those significant at the 5 per cent level are shown in the diagram.

Taking each part of the model in turn we find, first, that perceptions of collective efficacy had a statistically significant association with trust in police fairness and effectiveness. When people in Spain believe their local communities are cohesive and effective in reproducing order they tend to trust the police more – suggesting, of course, an affective link between police and community. Second, taking the other variables in the model into account, recent victimisation was only weakly correlated with trust in police effectiveness (and was not associated with trust in police fairness), a finding which would seem to suggest that, again as in the UK, instrumental factors are relatively less important predictors of trust.

Third, recent contact with officers – particularly encounters initiated by police – was quite strongly predictive of trust. Notably, contacts experienced as unsatisfactory had strong negative correlations with both components of trust (of a similar magnitude for self- and police-initiated contacts). Satisfactory contacts had a weaker, but still significant, positive association with trust – in these Spanish data we find that the association between contact and trust is asymmetrical (Skogan, 2006), but not completely so, and positive encounters did seem, on average, to be associated with higher levels of trust in police.

Figure 1. Structural equation model predicting the empirical legitimacy of the police in Spain



Fourth, we find that both aspects of trust were predictive of legitimacy judgements. While effectiveness and fairness had a similar association with perceived duty to obey, trust in police fairness was a far stronger predictor of respondent's sense of moral alignment with police. Fifth, we also find that some of the association between trust and legitimacy was mediated by social identity. On average, respondents who trusted in police fairness and effectiveness identified more strongly with their 'country', and a stronger sense of identification was linked with greater legitimacy (note that the association between social identity and moral alignment was twice as strong as that between social identity and duty to obey). The indirect statistical effects of trust in police fairness, via identity, on moral alignment was weak but significant ($\beta=.02$; $p=.01$), and that of fairness on duty to obey verged on significance at the conventional level ($\beta=.03$; $p=.07$). The indirect effects of trust in effectiveness, again via social identity, on moral alignment ($\beta=.01$; $p<.01$), and duty to obey ($\beta=.02$; $p=.07$), were similar in nature.

Finally, contact with police also had a significant indirect statistical effect on legitimacy. For example, the indirect effect of satisfactory self-initiated contact on moral alignment was $\beta=.05$ ($p=.03$), and on duty to obey it was $\beta=.03$ ($p=.02$). Unsatisfactory police-initiated contact had substantively quite large, negative, indirect associations with both moral alignment ($\beta=-.25$; $p<.005$) and duty to obey ($\beta=-.17$; $p<.005$). It seems that in Spain, as elsewhere, personal encounters with officers may be one factor shaping the legitimacy of the police in the eyes of the policed.

7. Discussion and conclusion

In summarising the results of the model shown in Figure 1, it seems reasonable to suggest that in Spain, as in many Anglophone contexts, affective (relational and expressive) factors are more important than instrumental factors in shaping public perceptions of trust and police legitimacy. Collective efficacy and personal contact with officers were strongly correlated with trust judgements, while trust in police fairness was a somewhat stronger predictor of legitimacy than trust in police effectiveness. The present study therefore concurs with other recent research in European contexts that has also found procedural justice to be an important – and often the most significant – predictor of police legitimacy (e.g. Dirikx et al. 2014; Van Damme 2015; Van Damme et al. 2013; Hough et al. 2013). Moreover social identity, in relation to a group the Spanish police might plausibly be said to represent, was also linked to both trust and legitimacy judgements. These results suggest that Spanish lawmakers should consider community oriented police models more closely than has been the case in the past, as these may be received well by citizens. Indeed, such models have started to be implemented, with some success, by some pilot schemes at the local police level (Schmitt and Pernas 2008; OSI 2009)

Nevertheless it is notable that in these Spanish data instrumental concerns were also important, particularly in relation to the extent to which trust in police effectiveness predicted both aspects of legitimacy; there are also strong associations between contact experiences and trust in police effectiveness. It is possible that

instrumental factors loom larger in the minds of Spanish people than is often the case in, for example, the USA (Tyler and Jackson 2013). To this extent, our findings are consistent with those of other recent studies, particularly in developing countries, that have underlined that instrumental concerns can, in some circumstances, be important and even central in shaping public trust and police legitimacy (Bradford et al 2014b; Tankebe 2009). Notably, this research has shown that in contexts where the state, security and/or social cohesion are fragile people may place more emphasis on the outcomes police are able to secure. In the Spanish context, though, the significance of instrumental concerns could perhaps be partly explained by the dominant legitimacy claim of the police, hinted at in Section 3, which has shaped the terms of the legitimacy ‘dialogue’ (Bottoms and Tankebe 2012) and encouraged ‘audience’ assessments of policing based on law and order and the ‘fight against crime’.

Indeed, given the context of Spanish policing the importance of affective factors is arguably something of a surprising result, particularly because it suggests, *from the perspective of citizens*, a relatively strong association between police and community, on the one hand, and between police and country, on the other. While the concept of national identity is widely used in the UK and elsewhere to study the relationship between police and citizens, this idea is problematic as far as Spain is concerned. Previous research (Spanish Sociological Research Centre CIS, 2006) has shown that the Spanish population identify themselves with diverse local, regional and national categories. For example, 47% of the Spanish people identified strongly with the town/city in which they live, 48% with the autonomous region, and 49% with Spain as a state (there was thus a significant overlap between these categories – see also Elzo 2000, 2005). Moreover, Vicente et al (2009) have shown that people’s sense of belonging to Spain as a state is connected with other factors, like the language they use (the official autonomous community languages or Spanish). Undoubtedly significant variation in identity judgements will also be found in Anglophone countries, but this seems a particularly pertinent issue in the Spanish context.

Spanish citizens may, therefore, have a different approach to national and regional identities than citizens in many Anglophone contexts. This might affect their relations with police officers as representatives of the state, particularly if they see the police as a force that does not represent their particular vision of identity and community. Moreover, with three distinct police forces making up ‘Spanish policing’, operating in different parts of the country, assigned with their own roles and affiliated with different levels of government, notions of national identity must surely become heavily refracted when projected onto ‘the police’ as an institution. Yet, in our data we find that perceptions of collective efficacy in local areas had a significant association with trust in police (effectiveness *and* fairness), suggesting a relatively strong association between perceptions of police and the social quality of people’s neighbourhoods. More strikingly, respondent’s trust in the police was linked to their identification with their country, which itself predicted legitimacy judgements. As in the UK (Bradford, 2014), Australia (Bradford et. al., 2014a) and USA (Huo, 1998), public trust and police legitimacy in Spain are linked with identities that revolve around the nation as well as the neighbourhood.

In attempting to explain why affective factors influence trust and legitimacy to a greater extent than might have been expected given the nature, structure, the function of Spanish policing, it is worth reflecting on the methodology of the study and how it might be developed when pursuing similar research questions in other lesser-studied policing contexts. First, our analysis does not take into account two variables that may be important when analysing public opinions of the police in Spain: social class and race/ethnicity. For some researchers social class is an important predictor of people's behaviour during police actions (Torrente, 1997) and thus attitudes toward police. Race and/or ethnicity are similarly found to be important predictors of trust and legitimacy in many contexts (see Añón et al. 2013 for a discussion of this latter issue in Spain).

Five further provisos should also be considered and factored into future research. First, we only have limited measures of instrumental and affective predictors of trust – if more variables had been available the story recounted above might have been different. Second, our measures of contact with the police are broad-brush, at best. We do not know why respondents judged encounters with police satisfactory or unsatisfactory, for example: were instrumental or affective concerns more important to those having contact with the police? While Añón et al. (2013), working with the same dataset, show that in Spain police stops are judged on the basis of procedural justice, we do not know on what basis people who initiated contact with police themselves judged the ensuing encounters. Equally, we are unable to distinguish the specific type of encounter involved. It may be, for example, that an enforcement encounter initiated by police is experienced by citizens in a quite different way to an encounter instigated by an officer looking for information.

Third, the survey did not specify to respondents which police organization they should think about when answering the trust and legitimacy questions. It is most likely that when stimulated to do so by the survey questionnaire they accessed the type of police most salient to them, which might, or course, vary from person to person and from place to place. It would be instructive for future research to consider whether people in countries with multiple police services think about different organizations in different ways (having, for example, a more instrumental relationship with one rather than another).¹ Fourth, and similarly, we did not specify the country involved in the identity questions. If we had specified this as 'Spain' we may have found different associations with the trust and legitimacy judgements, particularly among some respondents living in the Basque Country or Catalonia.

Finally, we should note that survey methodologies are inherently limited when it comes to investigating trust. Most pertinently we have measured here 'trust as attitude' (Li 2015); whether this translates into 'trust as choice', or action, (ibid.) remains uncertain. We do not know, that is, whether respondents who indicated they thought the police effective and/or well-intentioned were more likely than others to act in ways – such as reporting crimes or assisting police – that would

¹ Medina (2003: 17) concluded that attempts to improve people's trust in police officers (as an attempt to counteract fear of crime) were ineffective because citizens drew distinctions between the different police forces present in Spain.

instantiate such trust and ‘make real’ its presence within specific social settings and relationships.

Notwithstanding these limitations the results described above provide quite consistent evidence in terms of reflecting on the principal aims of this paper. We set out to explore whether citizens in Spain base their trust and legitimacy judgements primarily on efficacy and success in fighting crime, or whether they too care about affective and relational factors; and we tentatively conclude the latter have primacy over the former. Research in Anglophone countries has tended to find that affective and relational factors, like concerns about police fairness and community cohesion, are more important predictors of trust in the police rather than instrumental factors like victimization. Trust in police fairness is usually found to be a stronger predictor of police legitimacy than broadly instrumental concerns about police effectiveness. According to this body of work citizens consider police as representatives of a particular vision of moral order and community. When order and community are found to be strong and cohesive, trust is enhanced; yet when cohesion is lacking trust in the police is undermined. Likewise, people are more likely to hold police legitimate when they feel a sense of ‘shared group membership’, promoted by the experience of procedural justice, with the police that encourages an overall sense of trust and shared aims.

While the results suggest that in Spain instrumental concerns are relatively more important than often seems to be the case in the USA or UK, overall the nature and quality of local order and community, and the ways in which police wield their power, seem more important in shaping public trust and legitimacy than instrumental factors, such as victimization and the ability of the police to deal with crime. Despite what may seem like a different ideology surrounding policing in Spain, and what is certainly a different national/political context, it seems that Spanish citizens share comparable expectations and make similar judgments of the police as do their British or American counterparts.

If police legitimacy is to be sustained and enhanced in Spain it might then be argued that the policing model should be shifted toward one based on cooperation between police and public, along with a better operational response from police forces to public priorities and crime prevention. Since the distance between police and public is not as great as the dominant ideological model would suggest, there may be space for greater collaboration between police and citizens, and a style of policing based on working with the public in order to generate trust and legitimacy.

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