

Attitudes towards the police in European Social Survey round 5 (2010): comparing Belgium and its neighbours

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This contribution explores the idea of measurement equivalence in researching the concepts of trust and legitimacy in the Round 5 module Trust in the Police and the Criminal Courts of the European Social Survey (ESS). Although ESS offers the highest available quality in cross-national and cross-cultural research, a contextual exploration and comparison of the levels of trust in and legitimacy of the police across different countries can only be valid if cross-national equivalence of the measures of trust and legitimacy is established. After presenting the instruments at stake, explaining the principle of equivalence, and assessing the measurement equivalence of the concepts of trust and legitimacy, we proceed with comparing and exploring (the levels of) trust in and legitimacy of the police in five countries, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK.

In the Preface of their International Handbook of Survey Methodology, de Leeuw, Hox & Dillman (2008) suggest that we 'are entering a new era of survey research design'. By this, they mean that researchers 'must think about the fundamentals of survey data collection' and at the same time explore and invest in 'methods of turning answers to questions into meaningful results'. In order to fulfil the challenges of this 'new era', we therefore not only need high quality data such as the ESS, but also and moreover researchers asking the right questions. This brings us to Paul Ponsaers, the celebrated object of this volume. Jaak met Paul as a young researcher and criminologist in Leuven; at that time, these contacts were already based on common interests in both methodology and the sociology of crime. Our more formal mutual professional relation with Paul goes back to the former APSP (Algemene Politie Stuurdienst) and the early days of the Veiligheidsmonitor, where we had an advisory task on methodology in general and sampling in particular. Paul has been and still is one of those researchers who not only has seen 'asking the right question' as a task or obligation, but made it into a form of art. The questions Paul raises are, as we aimed for in this contribution, often of a methodological nature, but in essence always oriented towards answers and solutions that allow us to improve our understanding – Verstehen – of

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research. In that way, his questions were never obvious, easy-going, straightforward... but, as it should be, stubborn and recalcitrant: tegenstrands!

1. Introduction

The *European Social Survey (ESS)* is a biennial survey that was organized the first time in 2002. It combines a fixed module administered in each round and two rotating modules that vary over the rounds. Round 5 (organized in 2010) contains a large (rotating) module on *Trust in the Police and the Criminal Courts (TPCC)*, and was held in 32 European countries. The questions that have our attention here are several sets of questions and statements about the police. In view of the claim for equivalent measurement in comparative surveys (see below), it is a demanding (and time consuming) task to assess the equivalence of a set of measurement instruments for 32 countries. For that reason not only a subset of items has been selected but also a number of country samples. For this study Belgium (BE) and its direct neighbours are selected: the Netherlands (NL), France (FR), Germany (DE), and United Kingdom (UK).

The *ESS* is characterized by its unusual methodological rigour¹ (Jowell et al., 2007, p. 4-9 & Stoop et al., 2010). The methodological decisions in each *ESS* round are fully documented. Round after round considerable resources are spent to obtain the highest possible quality in cross-national survey measurement. High standards and optimal comparability, as well as the evaluation and improvement of response have from the outset been a very important focus in the *ESS* (Jowell et al., 2007, p. 6-9). The comparability of the obtained samples and measured concepts between subgroups always cause problems for surveys, but these are major obstacles to success in cross-national surveys. The credibility of comparative quantitative surveys depends on the principle of *equivalence* (Jowell, 1998, p. 169). Care for comparability covers all stages in the research process in cross-nation research: the design and implementation of random samples in all participating countries, questionnaire construction, the translation process and the documentation of it, response enhancement during the fieldwork stage, estimation of and adjustment for non-response bias, and the study of measurement error of the obtained measures. In view of correct interpretation of the data by future users, it even relates to the collection of events and contextual information in the participating countries, and the transparency, documentation and easy access of the data files. The whole enterprise which is performed by several task forces and research teams could only succeed thanks to a firm coordination of the whole² in accordance with the basic rules for cross-nation survey research that are set up by Jowell (1998, p.173-176).

¹ The *ESS Central Coordination Team* was in 2005 rewarded with the *European Descartes Prize* for its pioneering work on innovations in comparative measurement and for setting the standards in the domain of comparative surveys.
² Information of the central research teams and task force can be found on *ESS* web page: <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/>

This chapter starts with a presentation of the content of the *TPCC* module and the theoretical concepts behind the sections in this module. In light of the selection made for this contribution, special attention will be paid to the questions and items dealing with trust in the police. The precise wording of the questions analysed here can be found in Appendix 1. Given the comparative character of this chapter, we then move to the methodological part in which the concept of equivalence is briefly explained, and in which the equivalence of the measures of the multiple indicator variables is assessed and shown. This is followed by comparative analyses of the obtained measures on trust in the police in the countries under study, and allows us to situate Belgium among its immediate neighbours. Finally, we explore whether trust and legitimacy can be explained by some relevant background variables and previous experience with and perceptions of the police. The chapter concludes with some questions for further research using the *TPCC* module.

2. Theoretical background and data used of the *TPCC* module

The module *Trust in the Police and the Criminal Courts (TPCC)* in Round 5 of the *ESS* is the outcome of the Euro-justis project funded under the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme for Research (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 269; Sato & Hough, 2011). Central to this research project, with nine partners from seven different European member states³, was the observation that there is a need for valid and reliable indicators in order to gain insight in levels of perceived legitimacy and trust in police (and justice) in and across European countries. Monitoring trust and legitimacy in the population is not only important as such but is also crucial in achieving 'balanced and effective crime policies' (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 269). If, as argued, people trust the police (and other criminal justice actors), police will gain legitimacy which results in increased compliance and obedience with the law and cooperation with the (criminal) justice system (Sato & Hough, 2011).

The argumentation outlined in the above is central to one of the major theories in this field of research, namely Tom Tyler's procedural justice model (Tyler, 2011, 2006, 2003). According to Tyler, research has consistently shown that obedience to the law and cooperation with legal authorities increases if people view legal authorities, such as the police, as legitimate. Furthermore, legitimacy is 'a product of how the police treat people and make decisions when they are exercising their regulatory authority - that is, procedural justice' (Tyler, 2011, p. 257). In many ways, these perceptions of the 'quality of treatment' when encountering the police

The project coordinator of the Euro-justis project is the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) at Birkbeck College London (UK), with partners at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (Grenoble, France), the Center for the Study of Democracy (Sofia, Bulgaria), the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (Helsinki, Finland), the Institute for Political Sciences (Budapest, Hungary), the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (London, UK), the Center for Crime Prevention (Vilnius, Lithuania), the University of Parma (Italy) and the University of Sheffield (UK).

are more important than the objective outcome of that encounter as such (Hough et al., 2010, p. 205).

Both the Euro-Justis project and the TPCC module in the European Social Survey, as developed within the Euro-Justis project, are to a large extent inspired by these ideas on procedural justice, legitimacy and compliance with the law. The module not only offers the instruments to measure these central concepts in order to allow scholars to empirically test these theoretical ideas, it also contains the indicators to 'inform careful and long-term policies to restore legitimacy, instead of short-term 'electioneering' strategies that offer quick fixes without addressing the underlying issue' (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 269; Hough & Sato, 2011). In the long run, the police and criminal justice system could be more efficient and cost-effective when treating people with respect and in a fair manner, rather than pushing a 'tough on crime' law and order policy (Jackson & Bradford, 2010; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Hough et al., 2010).

In the TPCC module 'trust' and 'legitimacy' are focal concepts. 'Trust in the police' is seen as the belief that the police have the right intentions and is competent in doing what people expect them to do. 'Legitimacy' is defined as expressed consent, normative justifiability and legality of police actions (Jackson et al., 2011, p. 273). More specifically, the overall concept of 'trust in the police' is measured using three sub-concepts, namely 'trust in police effectiveness', 'trust in police procedural fairness', and 'trust in police distributive fairness'. The 'perceived legitimacy of the police' is constituted by the willingness 'to obey the police' on the one hand, and 'moral alignment with the police' on the other hand (Jackson et al., 2011 & Hough, 2011).

What is interesting is that research using the procedural justice framework has mainly focused on English speaking countries; in that sense, and above the aforementioned arguments, the European Social Survey offers a unique opportunity to explore the level of trust in the police and the mechanisms leading to that trust, in a variety of European countries using high quality instruments (Hough et al., 2010). One of the questions that come to mind is whether trust, legitimacy, compliance to the law and willingness to cooperate with the police, and the mechanisms between those concepts, will work in a similar way in other contexts. Not only does one have to consider the fact that these concepts and mechanisms are pressured by larger social, political, cultural and economic transformations, there are also some fundamental differences in how police and criminal justice systems are organized in different countries. Hough et al. (2010, p. 207), for example, raise the question whether the Anglo-Saxon common law legal system would have a different impact on the concepts at stake, compared to continental Europe where legal systems and the position of the police are very different. Trust in the police in Britain could also be inspired by the British archetype police officer, the 'Bobby', who is thought to symbolize particular values such as decency, fair play... (Hough et al., 2010, p. 208). Furthermore, it would be interesting to see whether and how the huge and fast transformations in law and justice in some Eastern European countries that recently joined the EU, has affected trust and legitimacy.

Hough et al. (2010) conclude that perceptions on trust and legitimacy could have divergent levels and very different drivers across European countries. However, in order for such cross-national or cross-cultural comparisons to be meaningful, the instruments used to measure the (sub)concepts of 'trust' and 'legitimacy' have to exhibit adequate measurement equivalence (Billiet, 2003; Pleysier, Vervaeke & Goethals, 2004; Pauwels & Pleysier, 2005). According to Jackson & Kuhn (2011, p. 40), the question and a key concern indeed is 'whether the measures are measuring equivalent 'things' and the scales 'work equally well' across all countries surveyed in the ESS.⁶

3. Equivalent measurement of the 'trust in police' items

We will focus now on the measurement equivalence of two subconcepts of 'trust', namely 'trust in police effectiveness' [POLeff] and 'trust in police procedural fairness' [POLpf], and two sub-concepts of 'legitimacy', namely the willingness 'to obey the police' [POLobey] and 'moral alignment with the police' [POLmoral]. These four concepts (or latent variables) are each composed by three observed indicators that applied to all respondents, and that are measured using (quasi) metric or ordinal response scales. Equivalence testing of the measurement models is applied to the samples of Belgium (BE, n = 1704) and its immediate neighbours, being the Netherlands (NL, n = 1889), France (FR, n = 1728), Germany (DE, n = 3031), and United Kingdom (UK, n = 2422).⁷

Measurement equivalence was tested for using *Multi Group Structural Equation Modelling* for ordinal scaled variables (Jöreskog, 1990). Special attention was paid to measurement validity and to factorial invariance of the indicators (Cheung & Rensvold, 1999 & Billiet, 2003). Top-down modelling has been performed starting from a full invariant measurement model over the five groups. This is a model with invariant slopes (metric equivalence) and invariant intercepts (scalar equivalence) in the measurement part, and invariant error variances, variances and covariances

⁶ Based on a pilot preceding the TPCC module in Bulgaria, Italy and Lithuania, Jackson & Kuhn (2011:40) found 'some yet not too large differences' with respect to the equivalence of some of the measures.

⁷ Because no respondents were excluded because of they had no past personal experience with police actions.

⁸ The response rates are 60% (UK), 56% (NL), 53% (BE), 47% (FR) and 31% (DE). The lower percentage rates in some of these countries may produce bias. It is not very likely that this effects the conclusions about equivalent measurement, but it may effect the differences in latent means, composite scores, and percentage between the countries. Based on previous studies, we expected an underestimation of positive attitudes if non-response rates are high (Stoop, et al., 2010). A way of detecting bias is to compare the cooperative respondents with the reluctant respondents, i.e. those who initially refused and later cooperated (Billiet et al., 2007). It was possible to compare the differences in means of composite scores of the trust variables in four countries (BE, FR, NL, UK). Note of the differences in means was significant at the 0.05 level. Most mean scores were even somewhat higher among the reluctant respondents. It was however not possible to perform this analysis for the German sample which is the most problematic because of the very large non-response rate. There is actually no indication that differences in trust scores between country samples are artificial because of non-response.

of the latent variables in the structural part of the model. The latent means of the latent variables are fixed to zero in the reference country (Belgium) and are freely estimated as deviations from these in the four other countries. This completely invariant model fits very well with the observed data⁹ and no further theoretically meaningful improvements are recommended in the measurement part. The parameters of the estimated full equivalent measurement model are shown in Table 1.

The measurement quality of the variables measured is very high given the high slope values. Only two of these are lower than 0.70 and all are higher than 0.57. This means that the common variance in the sets is largely explained by the latent variables they are intended to measure. The correlations between the four latent variables are as expected. Trust in the effectiveness of the police [POLeff] goes hand in hand with trust in the procedural fairness of the police [POLpf], and with the willingness to obey the police [POLobey] and 'moral alignment with the police' [POLmoral]. The correlation between the procedural fairness and moral alignment with the police is very strong (0.721).

Table 1. Standardised λ -parameters (and *t*-values) of the full factorial invariant measurement model for five countries (BE, DE, FR, NL, UK) of ESS Round 5 (2008).

Items	POLeff		POLpf		POLobey		POLmoral		
	λ	<i>t</i> -value	λ	<i>t</i> -value	λ	<i>t</i> -value	λ	<i>t</i> -value	
D12, crime prevent.	0.775	(fixed)							
D13, catch thieves	0.751	(58.334)							
D14, fast intervent.	0.570	(47.966)							
D15, respect treatm.			0.796	(fixed)					
D16, fair treatment			0.785	(58.947)					
D17, explain actions			0.669	(49.266)					
D18, support decs.					0.746	(fixed)			
D19, obey police					0.919	(74.802)			
D20, follow police					0.859	(77.324)			
D21, sense of rights							-0.748	(fixed)*	
D22, defend values							-0.836	(-67.039)	
D23, support police							-0.841	(-67.456)	
Correlation latent Variables (<i>t</i> -values)		POLeff		POLpf		POLobey		POLmoral	
POLeff	1.000	(44.186)							
POLpf	0.565	(35.159)	1.000	(39.026)					
POLobey	0.366	(25.647)	0.461	(31.753)	1.000	(47.948)			
POLmoral	0.597	(39.212)	0.721	(42.992)	0.386	(26.048)	1.000	(40.689)	

Model fit: Chi-square = 1703.609; *df* = 392; RMSEA = 0.044; *p*(value of close fit) = 1.0; CFI = 0.948

* The indicators for moral alignment have in the questionnaire a response scale in which a positive attitude is related to a low score (completely agree = 1 — completely disagree = 5). That is the reason for the negative loadings with the latent variable POLmoral which is positively correlated with the other latent variables. The response scales for this set are reversed when composite scores are used.

⁹ Chi-square = 1678.515; *df* = 392; RMSEA = 0.045; *p*(value of close fit) = 1.0; CFI = 0.952

It is possible to improve the selected completely invariant model slightly¹⁰ by relaxing some covariances of latent variables. This is the case for the correlation between moral alignment and procedural fairness in Germany ($r = 0.61$), the correlation between effectiveness and moral alignment in France ($r = 0.673$), and the correlations of moral alignment with effectiveness (0.552) and the willingness to obey (0.530) in the UK. These changes in correlations are minor and do not change the conclusions, as one can see by comparing the free correlations with the invariant correlations in the bottom of Table 1.

4. Trust in the police and legitimacy: Belgium and its neighbours

Let us now consider whether the populations in the five countries differ in their attitudes towards the police. It is possible to compare the latent means since the measurement model is scalar invariant over the five countries. The latent mean of Belgium is set to zero and the means of the other countries are expressed as deviations from zero (see Table 2). Negative scores refer to less positive attitudes towards the police than in Belgium, positive deviations from zero mean that the attitudes are more favourable, given that these deviations are significant as is indicated by the *t*-values.

Table 2. Latent means of the dimensions of trust in the police and legitimacy of the police in Belgium and its neighbours: deviations from the latent means (zero) of Belgium.

	POLeff		POLpf		POLobey		POLmoral	
	mean	<i>t</i> -value	mean	<i>t</i> -value	mean	<i>t</i> -value	mean	<i>t</i> -value
BE	0.000	(fixed)	0.000	(fixed)	0.000	(fixed)	0.000	(fixed)
DE	0.238	(13.880)	0.178	(10.689)	0.298	(24.889)	0.253	(10.428)
FR	0.021	(ns)	-0.454	(-23.660)	-0.005	(ns)	-0.140	(-5.020)
NL	-0.070	(-3.797)	-0.088	(-4.955)	0.142	(10.924)	0.006	(ns)
UK	-0.052	(ns)	0.134	(7.558)	-0.021	(ns)	0.034	(ns)

The strongest and significant negative deviation from Belgium is in procedural fairness of the police in France. The French are in average less convinced than the Belgians that the actions and procedures used by the police are respectful and fair. They also score somewhat lower on the moral alignment dimension which is closely related to procedural fairness. The French and Belgians are not significantly different concerning the belief in the effectiveness and the legitimacy (obey and support) of the police.

The differences between the Germans and the Belgians are all significant and in the same direction. The latent means on the four dimensions are significant higher in Germany. This means that trust in the police is in general higher in Germany. As was mentioned in footnote 7 on non-response bias, comparison

¹⁰ Chi-square = 1599.697; *df* = 385; RMSEA = 0.043; *p*(value of close fit) = 1.0; CFI = 0.951

of cooperative respondents and reluctant respondents who originally refused to cooperate, did not show significant differences in the four target variables (trust in, and legitimacy of the police) in Belgium and in three of its neighbour countries. The analysis was however not performed in Germany because of unavailability call-record data. We cannot exclude the possibility that the trust and legitimacy estimates are somewhat inflated because of the very high non-response in the German sample. This is however not very likely in the light of the findings in the other countries.

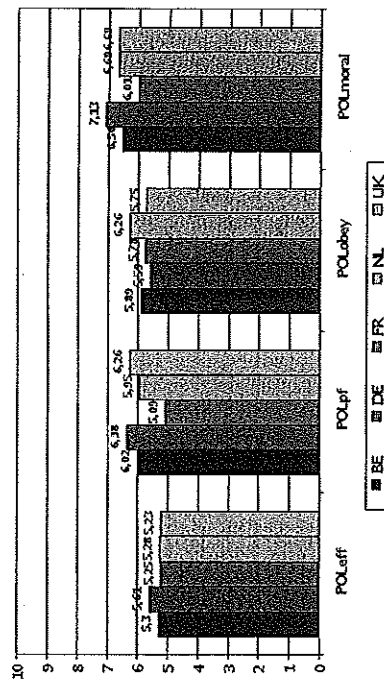
The Dutch do not differ significantly from the Belgian respondents concerning moral alignment, and they have slightly lower means concerning their beliefs in the effectiveness of the police and their view that the procedures used by the police are respectful and fair. The Dutch are at the other hand more ready than the Belgians to accept the decisions made by the police and to do what is ordered by the police.

The latent means on three of the four dimensions are not significantly different from Belgium in the UK. The respondents of UK score however significant higher on the procedural fairness dimension, and are thus also more positive on this dimension than the French and the Germans.

The latent means only test differences from the reference country, and do not provide information about the dimensions that score highest and lowest in each country. In order to compare the dimensions within and between countries, and in view of further analysis, composite scores based on the indicators are computed for each of the four dimension. These were transformed in 11-point scales (range 0-10) in which higher scores are associated with more trust in the police. This made it possible to compare the dimensions not only between countries but also within the countries since the latent variable has now an identical response scale. Figure 1 shows the differences between both dimensions and countries.

The scores are in all countries highest for moral alignment with the police. All scores are significantly higher than 5.5 (the middle of the scale). This means that the inhabitants of the five countries have in majority the feeling that the police officers share their values and have the same view on what is right and wrong, and therefore support the actions of the police. The Germans are most positive in this respect. As was already mentioned, the French score lower on this dimension, although still at the positive side of the scale. The lowest scores deal with the effectiveness of the police. There is not much difference between countries, but the Germans score also highest on this dimension. There is somewhat more variation concerning obedience to the police where the Belgians and the Dutch score slightly better. Most variation between the countries is observed in the opinions on procedural fairness where, as was already mentioned, the French score lowest on this dimension.

Figure 1. Means of the dimensions of trust in, and legitimacy of, the police in Belgium and its neighbours: composite scores 0-10 (ESS Round 5)



5. Explaining the variance in trust-in-the-police

How much of the variance in the two trust variables and the two legitimacy variables can be explained by relevant social-background variables and by previous experience with and perceptions of the police? In order to answer this question, exploratory regression analyses were performed for each of the five countries. Two kinds of social background variables were included in the exploration, the 'classic' social background variables that are often related to social attitudes and values on the one hand, and a number of variables related to ethnic and national origin on the other hand.

The classic social background variables are: education level (ordinal variable), gender (a dichotomous variable), age (in years), urban environment (ordinal variable), professional activity (never/else = reference), employment (ever employed/never = reference), experience of past long periods of unemployment (long time/other), ever unemployed (ever/never), and a proxy variable of the respondent's wealth (how easy he/she can get by).

The variables related to ethnic or national origin are: subjective feeling of belonging to discriminated minority group (yes/no), belonging to a discriminated group (yes/no), foreign origin (yes/no), citizenship of country (yes/no), and belonging to ethnic minority (yes/no).

These two kinds of explanatory variables are included in a first step (Model 1) and a model with only significant predictors for each of the four explained variables has been selected in each of the four countries. In a second step (Model 2) two explanatory variables related to experience with the police are added: satisfaction about contact with the police in past twelve months (10-point scale), and the respondent's perception of corruption among the police (10-point scale).

Our exploratory analysis results in no less than 50 selected regression models (4 dependent variables x 2 models x 5 countries). This is clearly too much for extensive reporting of all parameters in all details. We therefore describe the general trends in the data with a summary table of the total explained variance in the first (Model 1) and second step (Model 2) in each of the four explained variables in each country. The information of these models is reported in Table 3.

The predictive power of Model 1 with only social-background variables is very low in all five countries. It is still low when indications of foreign origin, belonging to ethnic minority groups or groups who feel discriminated, are included. These are characteristics that in the discourse about the police in the media are often related to the idea of trust in the police and the legitimacy police interventions have. The global predictive power of Model 1 is lowest in Belgium, followed by the Netherlands, and is somewhat larger in Germany, France and the UK. The legitimacy dimension of obedience to the police and support of the measures [POLobey] has in all five countries the lowest predictive power. This means that the variation of this variable only to a very small extent depends on the social characteristics in the model. The predictive power of this dimension of legitimacy remains low even when the two police related traits of the respondents are included.

Table 3. Explained variance (R^2) of the two dimensions of trust and the two dimensions of legitimacy of the police.

	POLeff	POLpf	POLobey	POLmoral
Belgium				
Model 1	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.01
Model 2	0.10	0.12	0.04	0.18
Increase in R^2	0.07	0.09	0.03	0.17
Germany				
Model 1	0.06	0.04	0.03	0.09
Model 2	0.11	0.12	0.05	0.17
Increase in R^2	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.06
France				
Model 1	0.08	0.03	0.02	0.07
Model 2	0.15	0.13	0.03	0.16
Increase in R^2	0.07	0.10	0.01	0.09
Netherlands				
Model 1	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.05
Model 2	0.06	0.14	0.05	0.16
Increase in R^2	0.03	0.11	0.02	0.11
UK				
Model 1	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.07
Model 2	0.13	0.17	0.08	0.19
Increase in R^2	0.08	0.10	0.04	0.12

The predictive power of the three other trust/legitimacy variables increased substantially in all five countries when the police related predictors are included (Model 2). This means that the attitude towards the police relates more to personal perceptions or stereotypes than to social and personal characteristics of respondents.

The predictive power in both models is highest (16% to 19%) for moral alignment with the police [POLmoral], and is somewhat lower but of the same order for police effectiveness [POLeff] and procedural fairness [POLpf]. The effect of the two police related variables on these dimensions of trust and legitimacy is comparable in all five countries. Our exploratory analysis suggests the hypothesis that the attitudes towards trust in, and legitimacy of the police, is mostly related to individual experience with police contact and collective perceptions of the police.

Do social characteristics play no role at all? Some of the variables have a consistent but not very strong effect in all countries. Age and prosperity of respondents have in all countries a positive effect on trust and legitimacy. In other words, older citizens are more likely to have more trust in the police and to consider police actions are legitimate. Likewise, if respondents report that they can easily get by with their monthly income, they are more likely to trust the police and find police actions legitimate. Foreign origin has an effect in the opposite direction. Having a 'foreign origin' has in all countries, except Germany, a negative effect on trust and legitimacy. Belonging to a discriminated minority group, according to the respondents self-conception, has, with the exception of Belgium, also a consistent negative effect.

6. Conclusion and a note on further research

This contribution departed from the measurement of the concepts of trust in and legitimacy of the police in the TPCC module of Round 5 of the *European Social Survey*. We have tested whether trust and legitimacy is measured in an equivalent manner for Belgium and four neighbouring countries, France, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. In the five countries under study, equivalence of the measures of trust and legitimacy was established. This is not a superficial issue but an essential prerequisite and *conditio sine qua non* in order to proceed, our next step, to a valid comparison of the levels of trust and legitimacy across different countries. Ignoring potential flaws in the cross-national equivalence of measurement instruments not only limits the full potential of the study at hand, but endangers the profoundness of all contextual outcome and interpretation (Pauwels & Pleysier, 2005).

In comparing levels of 'trust in police effectiveness' and 'police procedural fairness', as sub-concepts of trust, and the willingness 'to obey the police' and 'moral alignment with the police', as sub-concepts of legitimacy, we have to conclude that Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK are fairly similar. Considering the willingness to obey the police, we see higher scores in the Netherlands. Furthermore, it was observed that perceptions of effectiveness, procedural fairness and moral alignment with the police are somewhat higher in Germany compared to the four other countries in the study. This observation is in line with the consistent higher score of Germany on the general question of

trust in the police in previous rounds of the ESS; this general question delivered a level of trust in the police in Germany that is comparable to the classic high rates of trust in Scandinavian countries (Van Damme et al., 2010). Finally, a first attempt to explore factors related to (the explanation of) trust and legitimacy was undertaken. Based on this analysis, we concluded that the traditional social background variables had a limited influence, and that, except for obedience to the police, perceptions of trust in, and legitimacy of the police, were mostly related to individual experience with police contact and a (collective) perception of the police as corruptive.

Future research should broaden the scope and perspective of the analyses initiated in this contribution. On a methodological level, it would be interesting, though time-consuming, to test the equivalence of the trust and legitimacy measures in a broader array of countries. As mentioned before, most research on procedural justice and trust is done in English-speaking countries and cultures; this raises questions on the equivalence of concepts in countries with different cultures, histories and legal jurisdictions across Europe (Jackson et al., 2011). It would be interesting to see whether the main concepts of 'trust' and 'legitimacy', and the sub-concepts 'procedural justice', 'moral alignment', etc., are understood in a similar way not only across Western-European countries as in this study, but also, for example, in the Scandinavian countries or the 'new' Eastern European countries.

Likewise, and on condition of the cross-national equivalence of measures, the levels of trust and legitimacy in different countries, and the similarities and divergences in explaining trust in different countries, should be explored intensively. It could advance our knowledge and lead to new insights in the 'if' and 'how' of higher levels of trust and legitimacy in Scandinavian countries, or lower levels in the former Communist countries which experienced rapid transformations (not in the least on the field of police and justice) in recent years. We could learn from analyses like that, not only in order to have a better understanding of the mechanisms and determinants of trust in and legitimacy of the police, but also to offer some direction to policy makers in order to increase trust, legitimacy and compliance and cooperation to the police. In that sense, and with this we conclude, it is of absolute importance to pinpoint and stress the value of high quality data as is offered by the *European Social Survey* in general, and the TPCC module in particular.

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APPENDIX

OBSERVED INDICATORS OF THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF TRUST IN POLICE

Trust in effectiveness of police (POLeft)

D12. Firstly, please tell me how successful you think that police in this area are at preventing crimes that use violence or threaten violence? Choose your answer from this card, where 0 means *Extremely unsuccessful* and 10 means *Extremely successful*.

Extremely Unsuccessful	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Extremely Successful
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D13. Please tell me how successful you think that police in this area are at solving burglaries in this area? Use the same card.

Extremely Unsuccessful	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Extremely Successful
------------------------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----------------------

D14. And if an emergency were to occur in this area and the police needed to be called, how likely do you think it is that they would respond quickly? Choose your answer from this card, where 0 means *very likely* and 10 means *not at all likely*.

Very likely	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Not at all likely
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Procedural fairness (POLfr)

D15. Based on what you have heard or your own experience how often would you say the police generally treat people in [country] with respect ... READ OUT...

- 1 not at all often,
- 2 not very often,
- 3 often,
- 4 or, very often?
- (8) (Don't know)

D16. About how often would you say that the police make fair, impartial decisions in the cases they deal with? Would you say... READ OUT...

- 1 not at all often,
- 2 not very often,
- 3 often,
- 4 or, very often?
- (8) (Don't know)

D17. And when dealing with people in [country], how often would you say the police generally explain their decisions and actions when asked to do so? Would you say... READ OUT...

- 1 not at all often,
- 2 not very often,
- 3 often,
- 4 or, very often?
- 5 (No one ever asks the police to explain their decisions and actions) 3
- (8) (Don't know)

Police legitimacy (POLobey)

Now, again, some questions about the police. People have different views about the police, including whether or not citizens should obey the police, and whether or not citizens should question the decisions of the police.

- 1 About in the sense of approximately or roughly.
- 2 'Fair, impartial' - in British English the use of both of these words clarifies the meaning of 'fair' in the context of this question. Countries should ensure that impartiality is conveyed.
- 3 Coded as missing in the analysis of the measurement model.

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Makhu

D18. Using card X indicate to what extent it is your duty to accept the decisions made by the police even if you think the decisions are wrong. Please use this card.

Never or almost never	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Always or almost always
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D19. Using the same card, to what extent is it your duty to do what the police tell you to do, even if you did not understand the reasons for their instructions?

Never or almost never	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Always or almost always
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D20. And to what extent is it your duty to do what the police tell you to do, even if when you did not like the way they treat you? Use the same card.

Never or almost never	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	Always or almost always
--------------------------	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----------------------------

Procedural fairness (POLfr)

D15. Based on what you have heard or your own experience how often would you say the police generally treat people in [country] with respect ... READ OUT...

- 1 not at all often,
- 2 not very often,
- 3 often,
- 4 or, very often?
- (8) (Don't know)

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Makhu

D16. About how often would you say that the police make fair, impartial decisions in the cases they deal with? Would you say... READ OUT...

- 1 not at all often,
- 2 not very often,
- 3 often,
- 4 or, very often?
- (8) (Don't know)

D17. And when dealing with people in [country], how often would you say the police generally explain their decisions and actions when asked to do so? Would you say... READ OUT...

- 1 not at all often,
- 2 not very often,
- 3 often,
- 4 or, very often?
- 5 (No one ever asks the police to explain their decisions and actions)⁶
- (8) (Don't know)

Moral alignment with the police

D21. The police generally have the same sense of right and wrong⁴ as I do.

Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	(Don't know)
1	2	3	4	5	(8)

D22. The police stand up for values that are important to people like me.

Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	(Don't know)
1	2	3	4	5	(8)

⁴ About in the sense of approximately or roughly.
⁵ 'Fair, impartial' - in British English the use of both of these words clarifies the meaning of 'fair' in the context of this question. Countries should ensure that impartiality is conveyed
⁶ Coded as missing in the analysis of the measurement model.
⁷ 'Sense of right and wrong' in terms of feeling of morally right or wrong from a personal point of view.

D23. I generally support how the police usually act.

Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	(Don't know)
1	2	3	4	5	(8)