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TRUST IN THE POLICE IN FORMER COMMUNIST EUROPEAN NATIONS

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by

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ABSTRACT

Police research has investigated numerous predictors of trust in the police, including demographics, neighborhood context influences, and citizen-officer interactions. However, research has largely ignored how experiencing government corruption may affect citizens' trust in the police. Moreover, most police legitimacy research has been limited to the United States or Western nations. This paper addresses these issues by attempting to answer two research questions: First, does government corruption negatively affect public trust in the police in Western and Central/Eastern Europe? Second, does government corruption exhibit a larger negative effect on trust in the police compared to trust in other social institutions? Findings indicate that in both Western and Central/Eastern Europe, government corruption negatively affects trust in the police. Additional evidence suggests that government corruption may create a larger loss of trust in a nation's police force than in a nation's parliament, political parties, and legal system. Moreover, prior studies have shown age, income, prior victimization, and perceived neighborhood safety to be consistent predictors of trust in the police in the United States and Western Europe. Surprisingly, in Central/Eastern Europe, these factors exhibit significantly different effects on trust in the police, suggesting that theories of police legitimacy must account for the lingering influence of a nation's recent history and political turmoil.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Legitimacy leads individuals to defer to social institutions and institutional rules out of personal obligation or respect (Weber, 1968; Beetham, 1991). When established, legitimacy allows institutions to function via public trust rather than coercion, a concept particularly important to law enforcement. Rather than rely on widespread coercion (i.e., a police-state), law enforcement perceived as legitimate by the citizenry can rely on public trust and cooperation to function effectively. Supporting this notion, studies have found that citizens' support for and cooperation with law enforcement is strongly motivated by public perceptions of police legitimacy (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2005).

Although instructive, prior police legitimacy research has mainly focused on the effects of officer conduct and has been mostly confined to Western nations (Cheurprakobkit & Barsch, 2001; Herbert, 2006). This paper addresses an important issue concerning police legitimacy outside of police conduct but relevant in former communist European nations: The effect of government corruption on trust in the police. Although research finds police performance affects public trust in law enforcement in post-communist Central/Eastern Europe (Ivkovic & Haberfeld, 2000), government corruption is an equally important consideration that has been largely ignored in criminological research.

Since the fall of Communism two decades ago, government corruption has remained a major threat to the standard of living and trust in institutions in former communist countries (Rose, 2001; Zuzowski, 2005). Many citizens, for example, must frequently pay bribes for public amenities, including health and police services (Holmes, 1997). More importantly, research has established a strong relationship between malfeasance and public perceptions of state legitimacy (Gilly, 2006). If government corruption undermines citizens' trust in the state, it

is reasonable to believe that widespread corruption may also undermine citizens' trust in state institutions, such as the police. Thus, while *police* corruption can obviously worsen the public's perception of law enforcement, broader *government* corruption may also depreciate this trust, even when the police do not act corruptly.

This study examines the relationship between government corruption and trust in the police using the 2004 European Social Survey (ESS). The analysis is guided by two main research questions: (1) Does government corruption negatively affect public trust in the police? And (2) does government corruption exhibit a larger negative effect on trust in the police compared to trust in other social institutions? To address these questions, this paper is divided into three sections. The first section explains how government corruption negatively affects public trust in the state and its institutions, and how communism promoted widespread corruption in Central/Eastern Europe (CEE). This section also reviews prior research concerning traditional predictors of trust in the police, including demographics, neighborhood context influences, and officer-citizen interactions. In the second section, data from the ESS is used to examine how government corruption affects public trust in the police in CEE and Western Europe. Finally, the third section discusses the implications of the findings and offers suggestions for future research.

The findings of this study add several key contributions to police legitimacy research. Consistent with prior studies, residents of CEE experience government corruption on average more than residents of Western Europe. Of greater import, government corruption is found to negatively affect trust in the police in both CEE and Western Europe. Moreover, in both CEE and Western Europe, government corruption causes a greater loss of trust in the police than in a nation's parliament, political parties, and legal system.

Equally important, this paper finds that emerging police legitimacy in CEE may be following a trajectory different from many Western nations, due in part to unique historical and social forces. For example, age, income, prior victimization, and perceived neighborhood safety are consistent predictors of trust in the police in the United States. Conversely, in CEE, these factors exhibit significantly different effects on trust in the police, suggesting that theories of police legitimacy must account for the lingering influence of a nation's recent history and political turmoil.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Government Corruption and Police Legitimacy

Police legitimacy reflects the degree to which the public trusts that the police are honest and provide effective, equitable service to members of the community. However, public trust in the police may depend not only on the performance of police officers, but also on the performance of other institutional actors. Rothstein and Stolle (2003) theorized that all public service institutions help create and maintain generalized trust in society. That is, if citizens perceive health or education institutions (for example) as equitable, accessible, and efficient agencies, then generalized trust toward other social institutions emerges. In this way, institutions are at least partly responsible for each other's legitimacy. For example, when one public official solicits bribes, he or she jeopardizes citizens' trust in other public officials, too, even if those officials do not act corruptly.

Citizens' trust in a nation's government has particularly far-reaching consequences. Research has found that individuals' perception of an equitable, impartial government is a main factor that creates or destroys their trust in social institutions (Rothstein, 2005). In other words, when citizens do not trust their government, they likely do not trust its institutions, such as the police.

Corruption challenges citizens' trust in government by dispensing services and resources to those most willing and able to bribe officials. Furthermore, when corruption undermines public trust in the government, it also undermines trust in state institutions. As the most visible symbol of state service and authority, the police institution may suffer a considerable loss of legitimacy from government corruption's erosion of public trust.

However, defining government corruption can be difficult, especially since the practice has become a cultural norm in many post-communist countries, as discussed below. Although politicians and social scientists have conceptualized government corruption in various ways, this paper relies upon Sandholtz and Koetzle's (2000) concise but encompassing definition: "The misuse of public office for private gain." In this way, public officials can use their position to obtain not only money, but services, favors, and many other amenities for private use.

Government Corruption in CEE: Communism's Legacy

Although no country likely exists without some level of government corruption, CEE is particularly prone to corrupt practices. Transparency International, an organization that tracks worldwide government corruption, routinely lists post-communist countries such as Poland, Ukraine, and Bulgaria among the more corrupt nations in the world (Transparency International, 2007). Many experts believe communist governments and economies facilitated corruption which eventually led to its social acceptance, or at the least, tolerance in many CEE nations.

Sandholtz & Taagepera (2005) list two main reasons why communism promoted and continues to sustain government corruption in CEE. First, certain structural factors encouraged corruption. Communist economies featured low levels of competition, allowing companies to fix prices and tempting regulators to solicit bribes and other kickbacks. Administrators responsible for resource allocation operated in the absence of political competition or media exposure, which provided them considerable power and little accountability. Additionally, the shortages routinely experienced in communist economies created myriad opportunities to obtain goods by bribing bureaucrats. Corruption, therefore, filled a large supply-and-demand niche in communist economies. Second, Sandholtz & Taagepera note how cultural factors continue to facilitate government corruption in CEE. Corruption's prominent economic role encouraged cultural

tolerance, meaning corruption has become a social practice or norm that persists today even though the economic and political structures have changed (Hutchcroft, 1997). Studies support this argument. Research has linked corruption's entrenched presence in CEE to past communist practices of embezzlement and bribery in both the public and private sector (Karklins, 2005). Miller et al. (2001) likewise found tolerance for corruption embedded in both the economies and cultural attitudes of CEE countries. In analyzing systematic corruption specifically in the Czech Republic, Appel (2001) found that most Czechs consider corruption a permanent cultural fixture. Based on these research findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

> *Hypothesis 1: CEE citizens are more likely to have experienced government corruption than Western European citizens.*

Government Corruption in CEE: Effects on Police Legitimacy

Corruption-prone CEE nations are also nations which initiated police reform in the early 1990's, a move aimed at changing former secret police agencies into civil police departments. Such a task is a formidable undertaking. The public's terror of a secret police agency is not easily forgotten, nor is their trust in a new police agency easily given. As a result, citizens may trust a newly renovated police institution less than they trust other state institutions, such as the government or political parties.

> Hypothesis 2: In CEE, public trust in the police is lower than public trust in the nation's parliament, political parties, and legal system.

Moreover, an emerging police institution's legitimacy may be more fragile and less reputable than the legitimacy of institutions which helped initiate and sustain democratic reform during the 1990's, including political parties, new governments, and legal systems. If so, the police may be most susceptible to factors which undermine trust in state institutions, including government corruption. Furthermore, Western Europe is not immune from the effects of government corruption despite their greater political and social stability. Rothstein and Stolle's

(2003) theory of generalized trust in society likewise applies to historically democratic countries. It is reasonable, therefore, to believe that even in the less corrupt Western European nations, experiencing government corruption decreases trust in the police and other state institutions. In light of the research noting the greater prevalence of corruption and recent police reform in CEE, however, it is also reasonable to believe that government corruption may exhibit a larger negative effect on trust in the police in CEE than in Western Europe.

> Hypothesis 3: Government corruption negatively affects public trust in the police in both CEE and Western Europe.
>
> Hypothesis 4: Government corruption has a larger negative effect on trust in the police in CEE than in Western Europe.
>
> Hypothesis 5: In both CEE and Western Europe, government corruption causes a greater loss of trust in the police than in trust in a nation's parliament, political parties, and legal system.

To their credit, many CEE police agencies have focused heavily on improving officer conduct and performance, meaning that the police are struggling to earn their legitimacy by demonstrating equitable and effective law enforcement practices (Haberfeld, Walancik, Uydess & Bartels, 2003). But despite ongoing post-communist police reform in CEE, widespread government corruption continues to undermine the institutional legitimacy of the police. Johnson (2005) found a strong relationship between levels of government corruption and public trust in state institutions and actors in Poland and Ukraine. Kääriäinen's (2007) analysis likewise negatively correlated the level of government corruption with levels of trust in the police. However, Kääriäinen's data was limited to only sixteen countries, and only a few were former communist nations. This study includes a larger number and greater variety of both Western and former communist countries, as well as assesses the impact of government corruption on the legitimacy of other institutions in addition to the police.

In sum, the public appears to hold state agencies, particularly the police, vicariously liable for broader government corruption. This key point has been generally overlooked by

police legitimacy research. Granted, studies have examined numerous predictors of trust in the police, but overall, American police research has mainly focused on factors related to demographics, neighborhood context influences, and officer-citizen interactions (Schafer, Huebner, & Bynum, 2003). The following subsection briefly reviews the literature regarding traditional predictors of trust in the police. Notably, the issue of government corruption and its effects on trust in the police remains largely ignored.

Traditional Predictors of Public Trust in the Police

Research has found a strong link between demographic characteristics and trust in the police. *Age* is one well-studied predictor. Typically, younger people view the police less favorably, most likely because they frequently experience more negative encounters with law enforcement (Alpert & Dunham, 1987). A substantial body of research has supported the positive link between age and trust in the police (Jesilow, Meyer & Namazzi, 1995; Reisig & Correia, 1997; Wortley, Hagan & Macmillan, 1997). *Gender* has also been argued as a strong predictor of public attitudes towards the police. Some researchers theorize that males trust the police less than females because of their higher offending rates and therefore greater number of negative police-citizen interactions (Decker, 1981). Although some studies have not found evidence supporting this link (Hindelang, 1974), other research has concluded that women hold more favorable perceptions of police than men (Cao, Frank & Cullen, 1996). Studies also demonstrate *income/class* is a stable predictor of perceptions of the police. Generally, studies report that higher earning and better educated respondents view the police more favorably, a finding that likewise suggests such individuals infrequently interact with the police in negative or confrontational contexts (Garofalo, 1977; Marenin, 1983; Reiseg & Giacomazzi, 1998).

Racial minority status remains one of the more consistent predictors of trust in the police, with African-Americans and other minority groups typically reporting more negative views of law enforcement. For example, Campbell and Schuman (1972) found that African-Americans were more likely to have had negative experiences with law enforcement, as well as more likely to be critical of the police. Other studies have found that while the majority of Americans hold favorable views of the police, African-Americans hold substantially less favorable attitudes (Huang and Vaughn, 1996). Additional research has also supported the negative relationship between racial minority status and public perceptions of the police (Davis, 1990; Weitzer & Tuch, 2004; Reisig & Parks, 2000), although other studies have found the effect of racial minority status diminishes when controlling for other variables such as neighborhood quality and prior victimization (Weitzer & Tuch, 2005).

In addition to demographic characteristics, *neighborhood context* (incivilities, disorder, crime rates) is also an important factor affecting perceptions of law enforcement. Research finds that residential areas featuring white, upper income, and well-educated residents typically rate the police higher than disorganized areas containing less educated and lower income residents (Smith, Graham & Adams, 1991; Reisig & Giacomazzi, 1998). Neighborhoods with higher crime rates also generally report lower satisfaction with the police (Sampson & Bartusch, 1998; Reisig & Parks, 2000), as do areas whose residents report a greater fear of crime (Reisig & Giacomazzi, 1998; Smith et al., 1999). In addition, as Schafer, Huebner & Bynum (2003) note in reviewing the literature, the effects of demographic variables often vanish once models incorporate neighborhood conditions (citing Cao, Frank & Cullen, 1996; Weitzer, 1999; Reisig & Parks, 2000).

Prior victimization has been shown to negatively affect public trust in the police. Those who suffer property or violent crimes may hold the police directly responsible for failing to protect community members and/or property. As a result, victims' confidence and overall trust in the police is diminished (Apple and O'Brien, 1983; Koenig, 2002).

Besides demographics and neighborhood context factors, recent research has identified another important component of police legitimacy. *Officer conduct* appears to substantially affect public perceptions of the police, and many current studies have examined the effects of police officer demeanor or behavior. Generally, when citizens perceive officers to be unconcerned, unfair, rude, or otherwise unprofessional, they typically report higher rates of dissatisfaction than when they perceive police conduct to be respectful and equitable (Tyler, 1990; Wortley, 1997; Cheurprakobkit & Barsch, 2001). Webb & Marshall (1995) similarly found that officer demeanor had the largest effect on citizens' perceptions of the police. Other research has similarly supported the positive effects of equitable treatment and neutral decision-making by officers on trust in the police (Tyler, 2004; Carr, Napolitano & Keating, 2007). In fact, some studies have shown unbiased treatment by police officers positively affects trust in the police more than law enforcement's ability to control crime (Tyler, 2005). Hence, while demographics and neighborhood context variables impact citizens' trust in the police, officer conduct may be a more important predictor of police legitimacy. *How* the police control crime, it seems, is equally important as *how well* they control crime.

To summarize, police legitimacy research has extensively examined numerous predictors of public attitudes towards law enforcement. However, research has not adequately addressed the relationship between government corruption and trust in the police. If citizens perceive that officials misuse their public office for private gain, public trust in the state and state institutions

is diminished. In turn, a reasonable conclusion is that the most visible sign of state service and authority—the police—might also suffer a loss of legitimacy, particularly in CEE.

Chapter 3. Data and Methods

Data was drawn from the 2004 European Social Survey to test the proposed hypotheses. The ESS is a multi-country survey monitoring public attitudes and values in Europe. Round 2 (2004) of the ESS compiled a dataset (N=32,548) using interview data collected via strict random probability sampling from twenty-five European countries. The survey passed a series of translation protocols and achieved a minimum target response rate of 70% across countries. Further details regarding the ESS data collection and methodology can be found in the 2004 ESS Documentation Report (Jowell & the Central Co-ordinating Team, 2005). Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for each variable included in the analyses.

Insert Table 1 here

The dependent variables for the regression models were drawn from a question asking respondents about trust in institutions:

> "Using this card, please tell me on a scale of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust."

Among others, respondents rated their trust in their nation's police, parliament (or national governing body), political parties, and the legal system. The independent variable measuring government corruption was derived from a survey question asking respondents how often, if ever, a public official[1] asked them for a favor or a bribe in return for a service in the last five years. This variable was recoded into two categories: Those who had experienced government corruption in the last five years and those who had not. The reference group included those who had not experienced corruption.

[1] The ESS broadly defined this term to include a variety of public officials, from custom officers to permit officers to housing regulators.

The regression models included empirically relevant control variables. Age was recoded into nine categories each containing a ten year interval (i.e., 30-39). For gender, females served as the reference group. Education level was represented by a seven category variable ranging from failing to complete primary education (1) to having received the highest degree possible, such as a Ph.D (7). Socioeconomic status was measured by a four-item scale ranging from those who reported it was very difficult to live on their present income (1) to those who reported living comfortably on their present income (4). Employment status was measured using employed individuals as the reference group and comparing this category to students, unemployed individuals, retirees/disabled, or others (i.e., family caregivers). The analysis controls for city size since major metropolitan areas may host more frequent and more diverse opportunities for corruption; the scale for city size ranged from residence in a very rural area, such as a farm (1), to residence in a big city (7).[2]

Prior victimization was also controlled for in the models. Those who did not report a violent or property crime in their household in the last five years served as the reference group. Similarly, the models included respondents' ratings of the perceived safety of their neighborhoods; the scale ranged from feeling very unsafe walking alone after dark in the neighborhood (1) to feeling very safe walking alone after dark in the neighborhood (4).

Being a member of a discriminated ethnic or racial group was included in the regression models since racial minority status has been noted as consistent predictor of attitudes towards the police in the United States. Non-membership served as the reference group.

The twenty-four countries were partitioned into two groups: Former Communist Central/Eastern European countries (Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia,

[2] This is a subjective scale, depending largely on respondents' perceptions of city size. However, the ESS does not feature a more precise population question.

Slovenia, and Ukraine) and the reference group, Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland).[3]

Several analytical strategies are used to test the hypotheses. Mean comparisons are first used to compare the rate of corruption and levels of trust in institutions between CEE and Western Europe. Next, logistic regression is used to test whether residents of CEE are more likely to have experienced government corruption. Ordinary least-squares regression models are constructed to examine the effect of government corruption on trust in the police, parliament, political parties, and legal system, as well as to examine the differences in coefficients between the CEE and Western Europe models.

[3] Since Turkey did not fit into either the former communist Central/Eastern European group or the Western European group, the country was omitted from the analysis. Regression models including and excluding Turkey produced similar estimates.

Chapter 4. Findings

Table 2 displays reported government corruption in the last five years by respondents' nationality. Results provide support for the first hypothesis: In general, respondents from Central/Eastern Europe reported having experienced government corruption substantially more than residents from Western Europe. Nearly 14% of residents in former communist nations reported being solicited by a public official for a bribe at least once in the last five years, compared to only 3% of residents in Western Europe. The t-test revealed this difference to be significant ($t=-39.57$, $p<.001$).

Insert Table 2 here

The rate of reported corruption varied widely in the CEE group. In the Ukraine, for instance, nearly 35% reported experiencing corruption, compared to about 5% in Hungary. Since studies have found that a longer experience of communist rule may leave countries more corrupt (Los, 1988; Treisman, 2003), these findings seem reasonable. Ukrainians have typically expressed much stronger support for communist rulers than other CEE residents; in fact, public support advocating a return to communism *increased* in Ukraine during the mid-1990's (Johnson, 2005). Furthermore, scholars have estimated underground markets constitute around 50% of Ukraine's economy (Kaufmann, 1998), meaning that bribery and other forms of corruption endemic to black markets are highly prevalent.

Conversely, communism in Hungary was sustained through occupation and sometimes violent oppression (i.e., the Soviet response to the 1956 Revolution). More importantly, following Hungary's independence, ex-Communists no longer competed for political power as they did in most other CEE nations (Bunce & Csanádi, 1993). As a result, Hungary has enjoyed fewer economic and cultural communist remnants, not least of which is government corruption.

Likewise, despite its ties to communist Yugoslavia following World War II, Slovenia enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy from communist influence, which may partially explain its low rate of reported corruption.

One additional outlier merits mentioning. Twelve percent of respondents from Greece reported solicitation by a public official for a bribe. This may reflect Greece's tradition of clientelism, a type of social organization in which patrons control access to and distribute resources (jobs, protection, infrastructure) in return for support from less powerful clients. Scholars have noted clientelism's historically central role in Greek political and social organizations (Hallin & Papathanassopoulos, 2002), a factor which likely affects the reported rate of bribery solicitation.[4]

Table 3 displays the estimates of a logistic regression model predicting having experienced government corruption. The results support the findings reported in Table 2: Residents of CEE countries are more likely to have experienced government corruption, controlling for other relevant variables. Additional findings are also consistent with prior research. For example, being male, more educated, employed, or residing in a larger city has been shown to increase the likelihood of experiencing government corruption (Mocan, 2008). Theoretically, public officials may view these individuals as more financially suitable targets for soliciting bribes. Table 3 reports similar findings for these demographics. However, Mocan found that higher income individuals were more likely to experience government corruption; this paper finds that when respondents report more comfortable levels of income, their likelihood of experiencing government corruption decreases. This discrepancy may be due to the range of

[4] The regression models and coefficients did not change substantially when Ukraine, Hungary, Slovenia, and Greece were omitted from the regression analyses.

countries analyzed. This paper only analyzes European nations, while Mocan's sample included nearly fifty countries from every part of the world.

Insert Table 3 here

Table 4 shows the mean values for trust in the police, parliament, political parties, and the legal system by respondent's nationality. First, Central/Eastern Europeans show a significantly lower mean value of trust in the police (4.5) compared to Western European (6.4) ($t=68.66$, $p<.001$). Additionally, Central/European residents report significantly lower trust in parliament, political parties, and the legal system compared to Western European residents ($t=52.20$, 47.85, 60.52, respectively, $p<.001$)

Insert Table 4 here

More importantly, these results contradict the second hypothesis stating that respondents would rate their trust in the police lower than their trust in other institutions. The opposite is true. Respondents' trust in the police is *higher* than their trust in parliament, political parties, and legal system. The one exception is Ukraine, and research shows that police reform in Ukraine has not followed the same upward trajectory as other former communist European nations. In particular, Ukrainian police reform has been hampered not only by logistical challenges (low pay, poor equipment, etc.), but also largely because of officers' rampant abuse of power and lack of respect for the public (Beck & Chistyakova, 2002).

Table 5 tests the third and fourth hypotheses by regressing trust in the police on the corruption variable when controlling for all other factors. Model 1 included the group of Western European nations and Model 2 included the group of CEE nations.[5]

[5] When regression models include both sets of countries, the R-squared is approximately .17. Dividing the sample reduced the amount of variance and therefore decreased the R-squared.

Insert Table 5 here

The results from Model 1 largely support findings from prior research. For example, in Western European countries, females, older individuals, better educated and higher income citizens, and those who feel safer in their neighborhoods reported higher levels of trust in the police. Members of a discriminated group reported lower levels of trust in the police. Interestingly, prior victimization did not significantly predict trust in the police in Western European nations. As predicted by the third hypothesis, having experienced government corruption significantly decreased trust in the police in Western Europe (b=-.81).

Model 2 produced notably different estimates than Model 1. For example, in CEE, neither age nor education significantly predicted trust in the police in Model 2, two factors that prior studies have found to be consistent predictors of police legitimacy. Similar to Model 1, however, females reported higher levels of trust in the police. Higher earning individuals and those whom feel safer in their neighborhoods also trusted the police more. In contrast to Model 1, prior victimization in the CEE model significantly decreased trust in the police. Also, being a member of a discriminated group did not significantly predict trust in law enforcement.[6] Consistent with Model 1 and predicted by the third hypothesis, experiences with government corruption decreased trust in the police in CEE (b=-.66).

Comparing the effects of certain variables between the two models revealed unexpected results.[7] First, the effect of age exhibited a significantly larger effect on trust in the police in Western Europe than in CEE (b=.15 vs. .03). However, while age groups in CEE appear to view the police similarly, the underlying causes may be different. Older citizens might be apprehensive to trust the police due to past negative experiences with communist secret police

[6] However, only a small number of individuals in CEE reported membership in a discriminated group (N=421).
[7] Clogg's (1995) test was used to compare the difference between the regression coefficients across models.

agencies. Younger people may report lower trust in the police due to more frequent, negative encounters with law enforcement. Yet, their levels of trust in the police approximate each other, possible evidence that the age-trust link is not quite as consistent or intuitive as American police research has found.

The effect of education likewise exhibited a significantly larger effect on trust in the police in Western Europe than in CEE (b=.10 vs. -.01). As with age, the history of a former communist nation's police force may explain this difference. In contrast to social class, citizens of all education levels were negatively affected by communist policies and police agencies. In fact, communist regimes often arrested or detained well-educated citizens, such as teachers and academics, because of their perceived threat to state authority (Andrew & Mitrokhin, 1999; Koehler, 2000). As a result, citizens of all education levels in CEE might be assessing the new civil police force with a similar guarded perspective.

Third, being a member of a discriminated group also had a significantly larger effect in Western Europe than CEE (-.58 vs. .13). In former communist countries, entire populations suffered politically biased police service prior to 1989. Consequently, the current attitude of discriminated group members may not be that different from other citizens in CEE.

Some variables had larger effects on trust on the police in CEE compared to Western Europe, such as perceived safety and prior victimization (b=.39 vs. .30, b=-.22 vs. -.04, respectively). These differences may reflect the growing pains of continuing police reform in CEE. The police in these nations are still earning their legitimacy by demonstrating not only equitable police performance, but effective police performance as well. The spike in both property and violent crime in countries such as Poland throughout the 1990's testifies to the importance of crime control in gaining public trust (Krajewski, 2004). Other research likewise

notes the importance of reducing violent crime in CEE. In 2000, the homicide rate (per 100,000) for CEE was 5.6 compared to 1.6 in Western Europe, while the robbery rate in CEE was 114.3 compared to 102.0 in Western Europe (Gruszczynska, 2004).

Income also had a larger effect on trust in the police in CEE (b=.55 vs. .31). This finding may reflect the static upper class structure in CEE which other scholars have noted. Szelenyi & Szelenyi (1995) found that while the socioeconomic system has changed radically in CEE, most individuals at the top of the class structure have maintained their positions. Following the fall of Communism in 1989, the upper social class did not change, only the ways in which they "legitimate(d) their authority, power, and privilege (were) altered" (Szelenyi & Szelenyi, p. 618, 1995). If true, the effects of class position on trust in the police in CEE matter a great deal. During communism, the quality of police service corresponded to a citizen's power and authority. Following democratic reform, if this same upper class maintained their economic privilege during privatization, they might simply trust the police more because they can afford to bribe them for better service if necessary.

Finally, contradicting the fourth hypothesis, Table 5 shows the effect of government corruption on trust in the police was *not* stronger in CEE than in Western Europe. In fact, the difference in coefficient sizes was in the opposite than expected direction; government corruption had a *larger* effect on trust in the police in Western Europe than in CEE (b=.-81 vs. -.66), albeit not significant. The greater degree of government corruption in CEE may explain this result. If corruption is as prevalent in CEE culture and economies as research suggest, then its effect may be dampened. Citizens in CEE may tolerate government corruption as an unfortunate but inevitable part of society, that vital lubricant of past communist systems. As a

result, routinely experiencing this “cultural norm” may diminish institutional trust less in these regions.

Table 6 examines the fifth hypothesis by regressing trust in the police, parliament, political parties, and legal system on government corruption in Western Europe when controlling for all other factors. Though Clogg’s test (1995) or other statistical tests are not used to compare the corruption coefficients across different models, results show that having experienced government corruption appears to negatively affect trust in the police more than trust in parliament, political parties, and the legal system (b=-.81 vs. -.44, -.55, and -.49, respectively).

Insert Table 6 here

Table 7 also tests the fifth hypothesis by regressing trust in the police, parliament, political parties, and legal system on government corruption in CEE when controlling for all other factors. Again, while the corruption coefficients cannot be compared across different models, results show that having experienced government corruption appears to negatively affect trust in the police more than trust in parliament, political parties, and the legal system (b=-.66 vs. -.16, -.05, and -.38, respectively). It is also worth noting that government corruption appears to have a stronger overall negative effect on institutional trust in Western Europe compared to CEE. In some cases, the effect of government corruption on an institution’s trust in CEE was quite small and/or not significant, such as its effect on trust in parliament and political parties.

Insert Table 7 here

Chapter 5. Discussion

Current research has examined how numerous factors affect police legitimacy. However, the relationship between government corruption and police legitimacy has not yet been fully ascertained, nor have studies compared corruption's effect on trust in law enforcement to its effect on trust in other social institutions. This paper has addressed these gaps in the literature by examining the effect of government corruption on trust in the police in CEE and Western Europe.

Several hypotheses were proposed and tested. The first hypothesis predicted that citizens of CEE were more likely to have experienced government corruption. Results supported this hypothesis; being a CEE resident increased the odds of experiencing government corruption by nearly four times. This finding corresponds to prior literature documenting corruption's prevalence in CEE due in large part to structural and cultural factors created by communist economics and politics.

The literature review also described continuing police reform in CEE countries after years of operating as a police-state. Past experience with a secret police force might negatively affect current levels of trust in the police, so the second hypothesis predicted that public trust in the police in CEE would be lower than trust in a nation's parliament, political parties, and legal system. Findings showed the opposite to be true. With the exception of Ukraine, respondents' trust in the police was the *highest* compared to trust in other social institutions in both CEE and Western nations. This surprising finding may be an encouraging indicator that police reform in CEE has improved the public image of the police over the last two decades.

Despite continued police reform, however, government corruption remains an important factor affecting police legitimacy. Rothstein (2005) posited that perception of an equitable,

impartial government is a main factor that creates or destroys trust in institutions. Government corruption erodes perceptions of an equitable government, which in turn might negatively affect trust in the police institution. The third hypothesis, therefore, that predicted government corruption would negatively affect public trust in the police in both CEE and Western Europe. Findings strongly supported this hypothesis. Clearly, police legitimacy depends not only on officer performance, but also on the performance of other institutional actors.

Still, government corruption may be due in part to poor police performance. For example, if the police fail to monitor and enforce bribery laws, such lax enforcement might encourage corrupt behavior by other institutional actors. On the other hand, officials and citizens may engage in bribery irrespective of police enforcement. In CEE, historical economic and cultural influences represent strong motivation to engage in corruption in addition to the police's inability to curtail the practice. This is not to ignore the contributions of poor police performance to increased government corruption, and in turn, decreased institutional legitimacy; rather, a more accurate hypothesis is that a variety of factors in addition to police performance contribute to prevalent government corruption.

Thus, corrupt conduct by other institutional actors remains an important point. Most police research has focused mainly on officer conduct, examining the effects of equitable versus effective police practices on police legitimacy (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Officer performance may largely determine American public trust in the police, but establishing a global model of police legitimacy requires acknowledging the effects of external factors. Widespread corruption is one example of how factors beyond the control of individual officers and departments may attenuate trust in the police.

Given corruption's prevalence in CEE, the fourth hypothesis predicted government corruption would exhibit a larger negative effect on trust in the police in CEE than in Western Europe. Results did not support this hypothesis. The statistical difference in coefficients between the two groups was not only non-significant, but in the opposite than predicted direction. In other words, government corruption exhibited a larger negative effect (albeit non-significant) on trust in the police in Western Europe, not CEE.

In fact, the effect of government corruption on trust in parliament and political parties in the CEE models was small or non-significant; in contrast, the effect of government corruption on trust in parliament and political parties in the Western Europe models was moderate to large and highly significant. Such a finding testifies to a possible dampening effect, the result of prevalent but tolerated government corruption in CEE. This reasoning finds support in the literature, which notes corruption remains a cultural and economic fixture in many CEE nations, but not in Western Europe. If so, the infrequency of government corruption in Western Europe may cause greater outrage and diminished institutional trust when citizens experience malfeasance.

Additional results from Table 5 revealed other important findings. The effects of age, education, income, perceived safety, prior victimization, and being a member of a discriminated group exhibited effects on trust in the police in CEE that were significantly different than those in Western Europe. Clearly, public perceptions of law enforcement do not arise from similar processes in all countries.

These findings question to what extent American police research findings can be generalized globally to developing nations or countries in the midst of dramatic political and social change. For example, American police research shows unbiased treatment by officers drives police legitimacy, but effective crime control may be a greater priority in CEE. If true,

this greater desire for crime suppression may explain why perceived safety exhibited the third strongest effect on trust in the police in the CEE model. Confronted with increased violent and property crime rates, CEE citizens may first simply demand the police exercise effective crime control.

Finally, the fifth hypothesis predicted that government corruption would cause a greater loss of trust in the police than in a nation's parliament, political parties, and legal system. Results supported this hypothesis both in Western Europe and CEE. One explanation might be that the police contribute most to government corruption, although some studies have found that police corruption constitutes around 18% of total reported bribery cases in CEE (Pływaczewski, 2000). If true, the police—not other government officials—sabotage their own legitimacy and likely the legitimacy of other institutions. This also suggests that police corruption might create more generalized mistrust towards institutions than other forms of government corruption. However, the ESS does not feature questions specifying types of government corruption, limiting the scope of this paper to the relationship between broader government corruption and police legitimacy.

The limitations of this paper present both opportunities and challenges for future studies. Future research should first consider constructing a multi-level model to measure the effect of CEE/Western European residency on having experienced government corruption, a more appropriate statistical context compared to the individual-level model featured in this paper. Specifically, controlling for the length of a nation's communist history is one factor warranting further examination. Second, due to the limitations of the data, this paper could not analyze what state institutions contribute most to government corruption. Moreover, the data available was cross-sectional and lacking a measure of officer performance, a constraint that prevents this

study from fully parsing out the relationships between police efficacy, corruption, and trust in institutions.

Nonetheless, the findings of this paper have opened new avenues for police legitimacy research. Future studies should move towards creating a more global model of police legitimacy, one that acknowledges factors and pathways beyond demographics or officer performance. Tyler (2005), for example, suggests that an officer's equitable exercise of authority is the strongest factor affecting citizens' trust in the police, even when controlling for fear of crime and police performance. Such a model performs well in the United States, but the effects of officer decision-making, fear of crime, and police performance on trust in the police have yet to be examined and compared in a cross-national context. It may be that a major pathway driving trust in the police in countries such as Poland or Ukraine is fear of crime or effective crime control.

Moreover, most models of police legitimacy have not included a pathway for government corruption, a prominent consideration in former communist European nations. Law enforcement in these countries may serve the public effectively and equitably, but broader government corruption may be undermining their legitimacy. Additional research is needed to examine the effects of different types of government corruption. Specifically, studies should examine not only what institutions contribute most to government corruption, but what institution's corruptive practices have the greatest negative effect on trust in other institutions, such as the police. Including variables tapping police performance may also help sort out the causal pathways between officer conduct, government corruption, and trust in the police. Addressing these issues adds important contributions to the police legitimacy literature, as well to corruption research.

Equally important, this paper has also demonstrated that future studies must further examine how historical factors have shaped and continue to influence current perceptions of the

police in CEE. As findings demonstrated, even traditionally consistent predictors such as age and income may exhibit different effects on trust in the police in different regions of the world. Scholars have made progress on this front, albeit in a race/ethnicity context. For example, Carr and Napolitano (2007) have offered a theory of legal cynicism that suggests citizens might develop attenuated or oppositional negative attitudes towards police due to their immersion in a subculture that encourages antagonism toward the law. Such a subculture is rooted in a long history of negative and sometimes brutal experiences with law enforcement. Although Carr and Napolitano analyzed attitudes in inner-city America, such concepts apply to nations emerging from politically oppressive and sometimes ruthless regimes. Both law enforcement and governments alike in these transitioning nations have a special interest in understanding whether citizens harbor oppositional or attenuated value systems towards the rule of law, and how these value systems can be renovated.

In sum, the findings of this paper affirm the need to continue testing theories and models of police legitimacy globally. The diversity of governments, societies, and cultures ensures that current studies have only scratched the surface of cross-national police legitimacy research.

Chapter 6. Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Description	Coding	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age		Categorical 1-9 (Example: Age 30-39=3)	4.21	1.80
Gender		0=Female 1=Male	Female=52.6% Male=47.4%	
Education		Categorical 1 (Did not complete primary)- 7 (highest degree possible)	3.93	1.49
Socioeconomic Status	“Which of the descriptions on this card comes closest to how you feel about your household’s income nowadays?”	1=Finding it very difficult on present income 2=Finding it difficult on present income 3=Coping on present income 4=Living comfortably on present income	3.0	.86
Employment Status	“Which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days?” (Employed is the reference group)	1=Employed 2=Unemployed 3=Retired/Disabled 4=Other (Caregiver, military, etc)	Employed=51% Unemployed=5% Retired/Disabled=25% Other=19%	
Student Status	“Which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days?”	0=Non-Student 1=Student	Non-Student=92% Student=8%	

City Size	“Which phrase on this card best describes the area where you live?”	1=Farm in country 2= Country village 3=Town or small city 4=Suburbs of big city 5=A big city	3.1	1.2
Perceived Safety	“How safe do you—or would you—feel walking alone in this area after dark?”	1=Very unsafe 2=Unsafe 3=Safe 4=Very Safe	2.96	.81
Prior Victimization	“Have you or a member of your household been the victim of a burglary or assault in the last 5 years?”	0=No 1=Yes	No=78.9% Yes=21.1%	
Member of Discriminated Group	“Would you describe yourself as being a member of a group that is discriminated against in this country?”	0=No 1=Yes	No=94.2% Yes=5.8%	
Government Corruption	"Has a public official asked you for a favour or a bribe in return for a service in the last five years?"	0=No 1=Yes	No=94.6% Yes=5.4%	
Respondent's Country	Is the respondent's country a former Communist European nation?	0=No 1=Yes	No=75.2% Yes=24.8%	
Trust in the Police	How much you personally trust the police?	0=No Trust- 10=Complete Trust	6.02	2.53
Trust in Parliament	How much you personally trust the parliament?	0=No Trust- 10=Complete Trust	4.63	2.46
Trust in Political Parties	How much you personally trust the political parties?	0=No Trust- 10=Complete Trust	3.75	2.31
Trust in Legal System	How much you personally trust the legal system?	0=No Trust- 10=Complete Trust	5.22	2.60

Table 2: Reported Government Corruption by Respondent's Nationality

Nationality	% Solicited by a public official for a bribe
Estonia	10.5
Czech Republic	13.4
Hungary	5.2
Poland	12.7
Slovakia	15.1
Slovenia	3.5
Ukraine	34.7
Mean Percentages for Central/Eastern Europe	13.6
Austria	5.4
Belgium	1.7
Denmark	2.3
Finland	0.9
France	1.5
Germany	2.0
Great Britain	1.2
Greece	12.0
Iceland	1.3
Ireland	1.6
Luxembourg	3.7
Netherlands	1.4
Norway	1.9
Portugal	3.7
Switzerland	1.4
Spain	2.8
Sweden	1.7
Mean Percentages for Western Europe	2.7

Table 3. Logistic Regression Model Predicting Government Corruption (N=32,548)

Variable	b	SE	Odds Ratio
Age	-.08***	.02	.92
Male	.42***	.05	1.50
Education	.12***	.02	1.12
SES	-.44***	.03	.64
Retired	-.25*	.09	.78
Unemployed	-.21*	.10	.81
Other	.02	.09	1.02
(Reference Group: Employed)			
Student	-.51***	.11	.60
City Size	.15***	.02	1.17
Central/Eastern European Residency	1.38***	.05	3.98
Constant	-2.85***	.16	
Psuedo R-Squared	.11		

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 4. Mean Values for Reported Trust in the Police, Parliament, Political Parties, Politicians, and the Legal System by Respondents' Nationality

Mean Value by Nationality	Police	Parliament	Political Parties	Legal System
Central/Eastern Europe				
Estonia	6.8	5.2	4.1	5.9
Czech Republic	5.1	4.2	3.7	4.7
Hungary	6.2	4.6	3.8	5.4
Poland	5.5	3.4	2.9	4.0
Slovakia	5.3	4.0	3.7	4.6
Slovenia	5.7	5.1	4.2	4.9
Ukraine	4.0	5.2	4.3	4.6
Mean Values for Central/Eastern Europe	*4.5*	*3.5*	*2.8*	*3.9*
Western Europe				
Austria	7.1	5.8	4.4	6.8
Belgium	6.8	5.7	5.3	5.8
Denmark	8.9	7.3	6.8	8.2
Finland	9.0	7.0	6.0	7.9
France	6.7	5.3	4.4	5.8
Germany	7.4	5.1	4.1	6.4
Great Britain	7.0	5.2	4.6	6.0
Greece	7.1	5.7	4.5	6.4
Iceland	8.2	6.9	5.9	5.7
Ireland	7.6	5.7	5.0	6.2
Luxembourg	7.4	6.8	5.9	7.0
Netherlands	7.0	5.6	5.8	6.4
Norway	8.1	6.4	5.3	7.3

Portugal	6.0	4.7	3.1	4.9
Switzerland	7.9	6.5	5.6	7.1
Spain	6.9	6.1	4.7	5.7
Sweden	7.5	6.3	5.4	6.9
Mean Values for Western Europe	*6.4*	*5.0*	*4.1*	*5.5*

Note: The scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust).

Table 5. Ordinary Least-Squares Regression Models Predicting Trust in the Police: Western Europe (N=25,113); Central/Eastern Europe (N=7,435)

	Model 1			Model 2			
	Western Europe			Central/Eastern Europe			Test of Significant Difference
Variable	b	SE	B	b	SE	B	Between Model Coefficients (z-score)
Age	.15***	.01	.12	.03	.03	.02	4.35
Male	-.18***	.03	-.04	-.27***	.06	-.05	1.24
Education	.10***	.01	.07	-.01	.03	-.004	4.05
SES	.31***	.02	.11	.55***	.04	.17	5.47
Retired	-.02	.05	-.003	.20*	.10	.04	2.01
Unemployed	-.45***	.07	-.04	-.29*	.13	-.03	1.10
Other	-.07	.05	-.01	-.04	.11	-.004	.22
(Reference Group: Employed)							
Student	.29***	.06	.03	.26*	.13	.03	.26
City Size	-.08***	.01	-.04	-.05*	.03	-.02	1.04
Perceived Safety in Neighborhood	.30***	.02	.101	.39***	.04	.11	1.97

Victim of Past Burglary or Assault	-.04	.035	-.01	-.22**	.07	-.03	2.12
Member of Discriminated Group	-.58***	.07	-.06	.01	.13	.001	4.12
Government Corruption	-.81***	.08	-.06	-.66***	.09	-.09	1.30
Constant	5.00***	.11		3.41***	.22		6.40
R-Squared	.06			.07			

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 6. Ordinary Least-Squares Matched Regression Models Predicting Trust in the Police, Parliament, Political Parties, and the Legal System for Western Europe (N=25,113)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Trust in the Police		Trust in Parliament		Trust in Political Parties		Trust in the Legal System	
Variable	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Age	.15***	.01	.08***	.01	.06***	.01	.05***	.01
Male	-.18***	.03	.06	.03	.001	.03	-.04	.03
Education	.10***	.01	.16***	.01	.13***	.01	.21***	.01
SES	.31***	.02	.39***	.02	.43***	.02	.34***	.02
Retired	-.02	.05	-.11*	.05	.08	.05	-.04	.05
Unemployed	-.45***	.07	-.38***	.07	-.23**	.07	-.29***	.07
Other	-.07	.05	-.09	.05	.06	.05	-.16**	.05
(Reference Group: Employed)								
Student	.29***	.06	.63***	.06	.53***	.06	.63***	.06
City Size	-.08***	.01	-.09**	.05	-0.03*	.01	.05***	.01
Perceived Safety in Neighborhood	.30***	.02	.35***	.02	.25***	.02	.40***	.02
Victim of Past Burglary or Assault	-.04	.035	.14***	.04	.10**	.03	-.06	.04
Member of Discriminated Group	-.58***	.07	-.41***	.07	-.35***	.06	-.51***	.07
Government Corruption	-.81***	.08	-.44***	.08	-.55***	.08	-.49***	.09

Constant	5.00***	.11	2.60***	.11	2.2***	.10	3.3***	.11
R-Squared	.06		.07		.06		.07	

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

Table 7. Ordinary Least-Squares Matched Regression Models Predicting Trust in the Police, Parliament, Political Parties, and the Legal System for Central/Eastern Europe (N=7,435)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Trust in the Police		Trust in Parliament		Trust in Political Parties		Trust in the Legal System	
Variable	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE	b	SE
Age	.03	.03	.08**	.03	.04*	.02	-.01	.03
Male	-.27***	.06	-.21***	.06	-.16**	.05	-.33***	.06
Education	-.01	.03	.27***	.02	.14***	.02	.14***	.02
SES	.55***	.04	.16***	.04	.18***	.03	.36***	.04
Retired	.20*	.10	.26**	.09	.31***	.08	.08	.09
Unemployed	-.29*	.13	.003	.12	.09	.11	-.22	.12
Other	-.04	.11	.22*	.11	.25**	.10	.07	.11
(Reference Group: Employed)								
Student	.26*	.13	1.03***	.12	.81***	.11	.77***	.12
City Size	-.05*	.03	-.04	.02	-.07**	.02	-.05	.03
Perceived Safety in Neighborhood	.39***	.04	.21***	.04	.11**	.03	.28***	.04
Victim of Past Burglary or Assault	-.22**	.07	-.07	.07	-.10	.06	-.12	.07
Member of Discriminated Group	.01	.13	-.42***	.12	-.25*	.11	-.34**	.12
Government Corruption	-.66***	.09	-.16*	.08	-.05	.07	-.38***	.08

Constant	3.41***	.22	2.1***	.21	2.33***	.19	3.0***	.22
R-Squared	.07		.04		.03		.05	

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001

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