

CITIZEN TRUST IN THE POLICE: A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON

by

Author

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ABSTRACT

Trust in the police is a topic that has been examined extensively in prior research. However, those studies have primarily been limited to the United States and Western Europe. This study is one of only a few that examines trust in the police involving two Latin American countries and a comparison with the United States. Using data collected by the 2014 AmericasBarometer survey, this study compares levels of trust in the police and factors influencing police trustworthiness in the United States, Chile, and Honduras. Findings revealed Chile has the highest level of trust in the police, followed by the United States and Honduras. Fear in neighborhood and perceptions that rights are protected and courts are fair were found to be significant predictors of trust in the police across the three countries. Several other variables were significant predictors at the country-specific level. Policy implications are discussed.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The main purpose of this study is to compare and contrast factors influencing citizen trust in the police in the United States and two Latin American countries, Chile and Honduras. Studies of public attitudes toward the police are essential for making sure that police departments have the support of the public they are serving and are meeting the expressive and instrumental standards of the public. A study on trust in the police is of particular importance because of the many implications that trust has for police effectiveness and criminal justice policy.

Trust in the police is an indicator of consent and legitimacy for the police and without the two the police cannot function effectively. This ineffectiveness can sometimes result in a form of authoritarian or militarized police. With police forces all over the world transitioning to democratic practices, especially in Latin America, it is becoming more widely accepted that the police must be seen as the rightful power of formal social control by the public in order to legitimately and effectively do their jobs (Merry et al., 2012). Thus, it is the job of the police to build a reputation of being procedurally and instrumentally effective. When the public views the police as legitimate, it is affirmation that the police have public support and are acting in the best interest of the citizens.

Trust in the police is not only an indicator of public support, but just as importantly has implications for the ability of the police to successfully combat and control crime. Trust in the police has been found to be crucial for citizens being more

involved voluntarily in calling the police for assistance, reporting crimes to the police, cooperating with police (i.e. providing information), and providing political support for the police. Without citizen participation in helping to combat crime, the police cannot be effective and phenomena such as the “dark figure in crime,” the amount of crime that goes unreported, are perpetuated (Sidebottom, 2015). This lack of citizen participation in turn, inhibits the ability of the justice system to be effective as a mechanism for both general and specific deterrence and also precludes victims of crime from accessing the victim services programs that are available to them (Paternoster, 2010).

Finally, trust in the police is indicative of a cohesive community in which the citizens not only feel safe and protected from potential criminal behavior, but also feel community values and morals are protected. Citizens and the police are both reliant on one another for maintaining community order. Trust in the police not only indicates legitimacy and allows for better crime prevention, but also symbolizes a degree of unity between the citizens and the police. When this sense of unity is blurred, an us versus them mentality may be adopted, which greatly inhibits the effectiveness of the police and the criminal justice system as a whole (Rock, 1998). It is important that all citizens trust the police, not just those who have been victims of crime or have had encounters with the police, as every citizen has the potential to be in a situation where he or she needs or can help the police.

There is a great deal of research on trust in the police, at least in the United States and Western Europe, but few cross-national research efforts have been made to examine the factors related to citizen trust in the police in other regions. This holds true for Latin America, where only a handful of studies have been conducted

examining trust in the police (Cao and Zhao, 2005; Corbacho et al., 2012). To the knowledge of the author, this study is also the most recent study of trust in the police in Latin America and utilizes new data from the 2014 wave of the AmericasBarometer survey.

In a region such as Latin America where the police are often characterized as ineffective, repressive, and corrupt, as well as underfunded and understaffed at all levels, it is imperative that research is conducted to understand the complex, but necessary relationship between citizens and the police (Cao and Zhao, 2005). A study that examines trust in the police in both the United States and Latin American countries (Chile and Honduras) illuminates similarities and differences between attitudes toward the police globally and has implications for policy improvements on an international scale. Further, the current study tests the applicability of predominantly Western findings and theories to non-Western countries. The value of the current study is highlighted by the fact that very few studies have focused on Latin America and the results remain varied and inconsistent. The current state of policing in the United States, Chile and Honduras also demonstrates the contextual relevance of this study.

This study examined three specific research questions:

Do U.S. residents have a greater level of trust in the police than their counterparts in Chile and Honduras?

What factors affect citizen trust in the police?

Is citizen trust in the police in the U.S., Chile, and Honduras influenced by the same or different factors?

Literature Review

Different Perspectives and Models of Trust in the Police

“Trust in the police,” can be a rather broad statement. Within the criminal justice field, several perspectives and models have been adopted to better define and evaluate what “trust in the police” means. Similar to the dichotomous role of the police officer, trust in the police is often times divided into two types of trust: procedural-based trust and outcome-based trust (Bradford et al., 2009; Jackson & Bradford, 2010; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Kaariainen & Siren, 2011; Merry et al., 2012; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013). Procedural-based trust emphasizes that people trust the police because they are perceived to be acting fairly, ethically, and equitably in their encounters with citizens and in their decision-making process (Sun, Hu, et al., 2013). The outcome-based model stresses that trust in the police is based on citizens’ perceptions that police are effectively combating and controlling crime (Kaariainen & Siren, 2011; Sindall et al., 2012; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013). Although it is preferable to have multiple scales indicating trust, due to data limitation this study uses a single item to reflect trust in the police in sample countries.

Explaining Trust in the Police: Expressive v. Instrumental Functions

This study draws on two main functions of the police to explain possible variation in public trust in the police. In their original form, the police were created to maintain social order through the prevention and control of deviant behavior. This explains the dialectic between law-enforcers and lawbreakers (Rock, 1998). At least initially, it appears that there was the expectation that police could be one-dimensional, working solely to combat crime. While the prevention and control of crime remain central to the role of the police, this role has expanded to the extent that

police are now expected to simultaneously be crime fighters, defenders of neighborhood morals and values, “social glue of local areas,” and the community guardians of social order and cohesion (Sun, Hu, et al., 2013; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013: 1747). As the expectations and roles of the police have evolved, so have the criteria in which citizens use to evaluate their satisfaction with and trust in the police.

The police are one of, if not the most visible representations of the state and legal system (Cao & Zhao, 2005; Jesilow et al., 1995). The greater visibility and accessibility of the police compared to other state officials, in turn leads to greater responsibility put on the shoulders of police by a state’s citizens. More broadly, the role of the police within society can be divided into two general models: the expressive model and the instrumental model (Sindall et al., 2012; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013). The expressive model emphasizes the police’s role as the protector of community values and morals (Jackson & Bradford, 2010; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Merry et al., 2012; Sindall et al., 2012; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013). In this role, citizens expect the police to share similar community values and thus hold police officers accountable for any threats to the “moral architecture” of their communities (Jackson & Sunshine, 2007: 216). In the expressive model for example, citizens do not fear crime because of potential victimization per se, but instead fear crime because it represents a threat to the social order and cohesion that has been established in their neighborhood (Jackson & Sunshine, 2007). Crime in this sense, demonstrates to citizens that the police are not capable or willing to serve the community effectively. The expressive model relates to the neo-Durkheimian perspective that emphasizes the importance of social cohesion and warns against the “disintegration of moral structure which people fear” (Merry et al., 2012: 122).

Expressive: Collective Efficacy

One way in which expressive concerns are measured is through collective efficacy, which measures the degree to which residents in a community trust their neighbors. This study utilizes collective efficacy to further examine the significance of expressive concerns for trust in the police. A higher level of collective efficacy has been found to be strongly associated with higher levels of trust in the police (Merry et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2012; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013). Higher collective efficacy indicates a sense of social cohesion within a community, and when there is a lack of social cohesion, crime and fear of crime are more widespread and distrust of neighbors is more common (Sindall et al., 2012). Reisig and Parks, in their study analyzing the impact of neighborhood context on satisfaction with the police, find that satisfaction with the police is greater for citizens who perceive their neighbors as highly willing to protect one another from crime (Reisig & Parks, 2000).

Instrumental: Prior Victimization and Perceived Neighborhood Insecurity

The more conventional role of the police is expressed by the instrumental model. The instrumental model emphasizes the police's responsibility of curbing crime and maintaining safety (Sun, Hu, et. al, 2013). This model focuses on the usefulness of the institution rather than how it is perceived by the public or its ability to integrate into the community. Although lowering crime rates and preventing future victimization is the central goal of police forces, it is no longer sufficient for the police to have a one-dimensional identity. If police hope to increase positive attitudes

towards them and trust in them, then they must serve the dual role that is explained by both the expressive and instrumental models. They must simultaneously combat crime while demonstrating that they share similar values and morals of community members. Bayley and Mendelsohn emphasize the dual nature of the role of the police through their argument that the public expects police to be at the same time servants and masters (Bayley & Mendelsohn, 1969). With trust in the police, by nature, being very fragile and having the ability to erode quickly, it is essential that police departments find ways to be both expressively and instrumentally effective.

Across the literature, prior victimization has consistently been associated with lower levels of trust in the police (Cao et al., 1996; Ivkovic, 2008; Merry et al., 2012; Sindall et al., 2012; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013). Although this variable is an example of an instrumental concern, trust may be lower for a number of expressive and instrumental concerns. For example, the victim of a crime may not have felt that the police took them seriously or that the police officer cared about solving the crime. These would be examples of expressive concerns. Possible instrumental concerns could be that stolen property was not returned or that no suspect was apprehended. Although the research has been very consistent, in that prior victimization has shown to lead to decreased trust in the police, Sun and colleagues, in their study of public trust in the police in Taiwan, found that victimization was no longer significant after control variables were introduced (Sun, Jou, et al., 2013).

For the variable, perceived neighborhood insecurity, previous studies have overwhelmingly found that increased neighborhood insecurity or fear of crime lead to decreased trust in the police (Cao et al., 1996; Ivkovic, 2008; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Merry et al., 2012; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sun et al., 2012; Sun, Jou, et al.,

2013). In other words, if one fears becoming the victim of a crime in his or her neighborhood, they are likely to have lower levels of trust in the police. Sindall and colleagues in their study of confidence in the police over time found that worry about crime was only significant in predicting monthly levels of public confidence in the police, and unrelated to confidence in the police over time (Sindall et al., 2012). Merry and colleagues with their neo-Durkheimian perspective argue that the perceived status of community morals and values is a better predictor than fear of crime (Merry et al., 2012).

Other Determinants of Trust in the Police

In addition to expressive and instrumental concerns, the study also examines the effects of demographic background characteristics, political participation and attitudes, and criminal justice experiences and perceptions.

Background Characteristics

The current study examines six demographic background characteristics including: sex, age, race, education, marital status, and political ideology. All six variables have been included in many previous studies on trust in the police. Across the literature, sex has commonly been associated with trust and attitudes toward the police, with females having more trust and more positive attitudes toward the police than males (Cao et al., 1996; Cao & Zhao, 2005; Hu et al., 2015; Ivkovic, 2008; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Merry et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2012). Cao and colleagues in their study on confidence in the police posit that women have more confidence in the police because of the nature of their contacts with police compared to those of men. While women are more likely to come into contact with the police through service

requests, men are more likely to “be involved in situations in which the police are acting against them,” thus making the contact more antagonistic (Cao et al., 1996: 14). Despite the vast amount of literature that supports the claim that women are more trusting of the police, some studies have found the opposite to be true (Tankebe, 2010) or that sex does not have any impact when it comes to trust or attitudes toward the police (Jesilow et al. 1995).

Age is another demographic variable that has been consistently shown to be associated with trust in the police. Older citizens have been found to have more trust in the police than their younger counterparts (Cao et al., 1996; Ivkovic, 2008; Jesilow et al., 1995; Merry et al., 2012; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013). Ivkovic in his study attributes this phenomena to the “aging-out process and differential experience with the police,” for older citizens (Ivkovic, 2008: 428). This finding is also justified by the argument that younger citizens often see the police as working to restrict their freedom and autonomy, compared to older citizens who better recognize the police’s role in maintaining safety and preventing crime (Skogan, 2009; Tankebe, 2010). Finally, Merry and colleagues in their study on trust in the police in the UK mention that older people are least likely to have been a recent victim to crime, which is an important observation since past victimization has been associated with lower trust in the police (Merry et al., 2012). Cao & Zhao’s study on confidence in the police in Latin America did not find age to be a significant predictor of confidence in the police (Cao & Zhao, 2005). However, Cao and Zhao still recognize that aging promotes conservatism and integration into the societal order (Cao & Zhao, 2005).

Race is a demographic variable that is widely used in studies on trust in the police. However, findings on the significance of race for predicting trust have been inconsistent. In their study on satisfaction with the police, Reisig and Parks found that Caucasians had the highest satisfaction with police (Reisig & Parks, 2000). Cao and colleagues however, in their study that specifically examined race and community context in Cincinnati, found that race was no longer significant after community context variables were introduced (Cao et al., 1996). This is a finding that has been echoed in several other studies, which also argue that race may not be significant after neighborhood context variables are introduced (Ivkovic, 2008). Examples of these neighborhood context variables that may weaken the impact of race include fear of crime, perceptions of disorder, and collective efficacy (Ivkovic, 2008). The inconsistent findings on the significance of race demonstrate the need for more research to be conducted.

Similar to race, education is a widely used variable in studies on trust in the police but the findings are inconsistent as to what impact increased education has on trust in the police. Reisig and Parks found that higher levels of education led to more satisfaction with the police while Jesilow and colleagues also found that college educated citizens had more positive attitudes toward the police (Jesilow et al., 1995; Reisig & Parks, 2000). However, several studies found that an increase in education led to reduced trust in the police (Hu et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2012; Tankebe, 2010). Tankebe in her study on confidence in the police in Ghana argues that greater education leads people to be more critical of the police because educated people better understand the “normative obligations of legal institutions towards citizens,” and thus are aware when social injustices occur (Tankebe, 2010: 305). This is especially true in

less-developed countries where attainment of higher education is rarer and problems such as police corruption are pervasive. Finally, some studies have also found that education is not a significant predictor of trust in the police (Cao & Zhao, 2005; Cao et al., 1996). Again, the inconsistent findings on the significance of education for predicting trust in the police demonstrate a need for more research to be done.

Marital status, although often used as a demographic variable in studies on trust in the police, is not often analyzed in much depth. Generally findings have been mixed on the predictive power of marital status (Cao & Zhao, 2005). However, Cao and Zhao in their study of confidence in the police in Latin America found that married people were more confident in the police than single and divorced people. The lack of analysis and inconsistent findings on this variable are reason for more research to be done. For the last demographic variable of political ideology, the findings have been consistent with greater conservatism leading to increased trust in the police (Cao & Zhao, 2005). The implications of aging and conservatism are fairly similar with both being associated with a greater stake in conformity (Tankebe, 2010). With a greater integration into the institutional order, it is not surprising that more conservative people would be more likely to trust one of the most important government institutions (Cao & Zhao, 2005).

Political Participation and Attitudes

Because of the important connection between trust in government and trust in the police, this study utilizes two independent variables that measure citizens' political attitudes and participation. It is assumed that more positive attitudes and increased participation would be indicative of greater trust in the government. The independent variable of "voted in last presidential election," is used to measure political

participation. The influence of political participation on trust in the police has not been widely examined. Hu and colleagues, in their study of Chinese trust in the police, measured political participation based on one's engagement in community affairs and grassroots elections (Hu et al., 2015). They found that political participation and trust in the police were positively related, with trust in the police increasing as political participation increased. Possible justification for this finding is the link between trust in government and trust in the police that was previously discussed. Additionally, if one engages in more community events in which police officers are also usually engaged, then they may have a greater chance of forming stronger bonds with those officers (Hu et al., 2015). However, a different study done by Sun and colleagues on trust in the police in urban China found that the odds of trust in the police decreased as political activity increased (Sun, Hu, et al., 2012). Some political gatherings could actually work to promote distrust towards police (Sun et al., 2013). The inconsistent findings on the influence of political participation demonstrate the need for this variable to be examined further.

Perception of democracy is used in this study to measure political attitudes. It has not been a widely used variable in studies on trust in the police. However, Cao and colleagues examine the influence of one's perception of democracy in their study on confidence in the order institutions and they find that those who believe in democracy have higher confidence in the order institutions, with the police being one of those order institutions (Cao et al., 2015). This finding can be justified by the fact that in democratic societies, the criminal justice system has a reputation of being fair, honest, and of acting in a procedurally just manner. The current study will allow for further analysis of this variable.

Criminal Justice Experiences and Perceptions

This study uses the combined variable of rights are protected and courts are fair to measure one aspect of an individual's criminal justice experiences and perceptions. The idea of fairness is commonly used in studies on trust in the police through variables that measure procedural justice. However, this combined variable is not the same as procedural justice. A variable that measures perceptions of rights and the courts has not been widely used in studies. It is anticipated that more positive perceptions will lead to increased trust in the police.

Due to the varied levels of corruption within the three countries, this study examines the connection between whether a police officer asked for a bribe and trust in the police. The literature has shown that bribery has led to decreased trust in the police (Ayodele & Aderinto, 2014; Ivkovic, 2008). However, Tankebe, in her study of confidence in the police in Ghana, found inconclusive results as to what affect police corruption had on citizen confidence in the police (Tankebe, 2010). This variable should be included in more studies on trust in the police in order to better understand the significance.

The Study Countries

The three countries examined in the present research are: the United States, Chile, and Honduras. These countries were chosen strategically to enhance the comparison of citizen trust in the police, as they vary in political and social settings, both historically and currently.

United States

Although the United States was initially thought to be the control country in this research study, an extensive literature review and examination of not so distant

past events involving the police has created uncertainty as to whether this can be the case. Cao and Zhao emphasize the long tradition that police in the U.S. have to abide by the rule of law and to be responsive to popular demands (Cao & Zhao, 2005: 403) Further, the U.S. has had a long-standing and stable democracy in which constitutional protections for basic rights are at the center of civil society (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Despite the U.S. possessing these qualities, the last several years preceding the collection of the data used in this study, have been overshadowed by an obvious tension between many citizens in the U.S. and the criminal justice system. The Human Rights Watch report published in 2015, which analyzed the events of 2014, stressed this point by saying that in the U.S., racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, children, the poor, and prisoners are the people most likely to suffer abuses (Human Rights Watch, 2015). While this fact is nothing new, the issue has been brought to the forefront of the political arena and the media agenda in the United States.

One of the most followed cases in the U.S. in 2012 was the murder case of Trayvon Martin. Trayvon Martin, an African-American teenager, was shot in February of 2012 by George Zimmerman whose parents were of German and Peruvian descent (CNN). The case led to mass protests and anger across the United States as the issues of racial profiling and race relations and equal justice in America came to the forefront (Kovaleski, 2012). Not only did the acquittal of George Zimmerman create a public outcry, but so did the recognition that there were a series of police missteps in the handling of the investigation (Kovaleski, 2012). This is one example of many highly publicized cases involving racial minorities and the criminal justice system. Although after the period of investigation for this research, the Ferguson case involving Michael Brown demonstrated the longstanding problem with having a predominantly black

community policed by almost an entirely white police force (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Finally, the United States is notorious for having the highest incarceration rate in the world. In addition to having the highest number of people incarcerated, the prison system is plagued by racial disparities, with African-American men being incarcerated at six times the rate of white men, despite representing a much smaller sample of the U.S. total population (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Based on the issues addressed, ranging from abuses for racial and ethnic minorities in the criminal justice system, to highly publicized cases involving the criminal justice system and police, to having the highest incarceration rate in the world, it is difficult to classify the United States as a control country in the current study.

Chile

Chile is one of the most politically and economically stable countries in Latin America currently. With Michelle Bachelet becoming the first female president in Chile in 2006, Chile is far more progressive than most other nations in the region. The key exception to Chile's strong political history is the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet from 1973-1990, which resulted in more than 3,000 dead and missing persons (Long, 2013). What is critical about this period of time besides the brutality and torture experienced by thousands of Chileans is that in any political regime the police play a central role. Thus, less than 30 years removed from Pinochet's dictatorship, the police in Chile, known as the "Carabineros," are tasked with protecting and enforcing the rule of law for a population that has not forgotten the oppressive role that the police played during the military dictatorship. (Cruz, 2010).

In addition to the need to transform the reputation of the police in Chile, the legacy of Pinochet's dictatorship is still present in many ways in Chile. One important issue regarding the Carabineros is that civilian cases involving alleged abuses by the Carabineros are still under military jurisdiction (Human Rights Watch, 2015). In other words, when a Carabinero is accused of police misconduct, he or she is judged by colleagues. This in turn, leads to very few Carabineros being convicted of alleged abuses. Although President Bachelet is committed to changing the system, it will take time and support to change a system that was fortified during Pinochet's many years in power.

Finally, the Carabineros in Chile are considered to be a national militarized police force (Bonner, 2010). By nature, a militarized police force may create a greater gap between the police and civilians. This is not only because of how militarized police are dressed, but also because of how they are trained and what their goals are. David Gagne in his article on the rise of militarization in Latin America, stresses the close link between militarization and increased human rights abuses because "soldiers are trained for combat and to kill adversaries, not to settle disputes or investigate crimes" (Gagne, 2015). One particular issue that the Carabineros have been accused of is many human rights abuses in their handling of public protests (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Protests in Chile by students in 2011 on the issue of public education were overshadowed by violent encounters between student protesters and riot police (Franklin, 2011). Despite the Carabineros in Chile being one of the most respected police forces in Chile and having been consistently ranked as the most respected institution in their country, it is clear that there is still room for growth (Bonner, 2010: 2).

Honduras

Of the three countries being examined in the current study, Honduras is by far the least politically stable and most corrupt when it comes to government and national police. In 2009, a military coup ousted Honduran president, Manuel Zelaya, in Latin America's first military coup since the Cold War (Rosenberg, 2009). During the military coup, key civil liberties were suspended, further demonstrating Honduras' state of political instability. Honduras has a history of military coups, including ones that occurred in 1963 and 1975 (BBC). In regards to the Honduran police, they are notorious for being corrupt, brutal, and involved in organized crime (Cawley, 2013; Graham, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2015; WOLA, 2012). The vice president of the Honduran Congress even claimed that police chiefs said that up to 40% of their officers were involved in organized crime (Graham, 2011). Although Honduras has administered more than 4,500 tests to officers meant to identify corruption, only a small fraction of those who failed the test have actually been removed from the police force (Human Rights Watch, 2015; McCleskey, 2013). The Washington Office on Latin America, like several other sources, stresses that Honduran police are no longer only corrupt through tactics such as bribery, but police are now involved in criminal activity, and in some instances are playing a leadership role (WOLA, 2012).

In addition to the political instability and police corruption in Honduras, the government recently created a military police force of 900 police in 2013, known as the Military Police of Public Order (Cawley, 2013). As previously mentioned for the context of Chile, militarization of police is very problematic. Instead of a relationship being built overtime between police and civilians, militarization can perpetuate violence, human rights abuses, and further hostilities between police and citizens. Militarization not only poses a problem for the actual effectiveness of policing, but it

also poses a problem for the legitimacy of non-militarized police in the country. Creating militarized police forces drains necessary resources from regular police forces while “fail[ing] to address the need to reform the existing police” (Cawley, 2013)

Finally, Honduras has for many years led the world in murder rate, including the year of 2014 in which the data for this study comes from (Human Rights Watch, 2015). To consistently lead the world in murder rate demonstrates to citizens the inability of police to control crime, and is reason enough to distrust the police. Despite Cao and Zhao’s point in their article on confidence in police in Latin America that police may offer a source of stability in a corruption-riddled or often-changing government, it does not appear to be the case in Honduras, where the only thing consistent is a corrupt police force (Cao & Zhao, 2005). The combination of political instability, police corruption and militarization, human rights abuses, and top murder rate justify this study’s hypothesis that trust in the police will be lowest in Honduras.

Chapter 2

METHODS

Data Sources and Collection

The data for this study comes from the 2014 wave of the AmericasBarometer survey. The AmericasBarometer is a product of the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) at Vanderbilt University. It is the “only survey of democratic public opinion and behavior that covers the Americas,” and started with its first round in 2004, in which there were eleven participating countries (Vanderbilt University). The survey has continued to expand since its first wave, with additional waves in 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014. The data utilized in this study comes from the latest wave in 2014 in which there were 28 participating countries and 53,566 interviews conducted. For data collection, face-to-face interviews were conducted in Spanish in Chile and Honduras, while data was collected in the United States using a web survey. For Chile, interviews took place between April 16th and May 22nd; for Honduras, interviews took place between March 18th and April 30th; and for the U.S., surveys were filled out between June 26th and July 6th.

Samples

The samples for each country were nationally representative as a national probability sample design of voting-age adults was used. The samples for each country were developed using a multi-stage probabilistic design, and were stratified by major

regions of the country, size of municipality, and by urban and rural areas within municipalities. The sample sizes for each country are as follows: United States, 1,500, Chile, 1,571, and Honduras, 1,561. However, the valid sample for each country was 1,445 respondents for the United States, 946 respondents for Chile, and 1,251 respondents for Honduras. This wave of the survey acted as a follow up to the previously conducted waves.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is trust in the police. The survey contained a single item reflecting citizen trust in the police. On the AmericasBarometer survey, respondents were asked, “To what extent do you trust the Police?” To answer this question, respondents were shown a staircase figure with coinciding stairs ranging from 1 to 7 with 1 meaning “not at all,” and 7 meaning “a lot”. All three countries had a very high response rate to the question. The U.S. had 1,489 valid responses and only 11 missing responses, Chile had 1,564 valid responses and only 7 missing responses, and Honduras had 1,555 valid responses and only 6 missing responses.

Independent Variables

Independent variables in this study were divided into five groups: (1) instrumental concerns, (2) expressive concerns, (3) background characteristics, (4) criminal justice experiences and perceptions, and (5) political participation and attitudes.

To measure instrumental concerns, the variables of household victimization and perceived neighborhood insecurity are used. The variable of household victimization combines personal victimization of the respondent and whether a family member had been the victim of a crime. This variable is a dichotomized variable with 0 indicating no victimization and 1 indicating prior victimization. The second variable within the instrumental concern group is perceived neighborhood insecurity. Respondents were asked to think about their neighborhoods and the possibility of being assaulted or robbed. The response categories for this variable were (1) very safe, (2) somewhat safe, (3) somewhat unsafe, and (4) very unsafe.

For the second variable group of expressive concerns, the variable of low collective efficacy was used. This variable measures the degree to which citizens trust the members of their communities. When asked to describe the members of their communities, respondents were given the options of (1) very trustworthy, (2) somewhat trustworthy, (3) not very trustworthy, and (4) untrustworthy. Thus, a higher score for this question indicates lower levels of collective efficacy.

The third group includes six demographic background characteristics: sex, age, race, education, marital status, and political ideology. Sex was coded as a dummy variable with 1 representing male. The variable of age was measured in years. Race was also coded as a dummy variable with 1 representing white and 0 representing all other races. Due to the variation in how the question was asked in the United States versus Chile and Honduras, education was measured differently between the three countries. For the U.S., educational attainment was measured on a scale from 1 to 6 with 1 representing “some school but no high school degree” and 7 representing “post graduate degree.” For Chile and Honduras, educational attainment was measured in

years, with a range of 0 to 17 for Chile and a range of 0 to 18 for Honduras. Marital status was coded as a dummy variable with 1 representing married or common law. The last background variable of political ideology was measured using a range of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning liberal and 10 meaning conservative.

The fourth variable group of criminal justice experiences and perceptions includes two variables: police asked for a bribe and the combined variable of rights are protected and courts are fair. For the variable of police asked for a bribe, respondents were asked whether a police officer had asked for a bribe within the past twelve months. This is a dichotomized variable in which 0 indicated no and 1 indicated yes. The second variable for this group measured perceptions of the criminal justice system. It combined two variables into one. The first variable asked the respondent to what extent he or she thought the courts guaranteed a fair trial while the second question asked to what extent the respondent thinks that citizens' basic rights are protected by the political system. Both variables used the same scale of 1 to 7 with 1 meaning "not at all" and "7 meaning "a lot," so the new combined variable had a range of 2 to 14.

The last variable group used two variables to measure political participation and attitudes. The first variable asked respondents whether they voted in the last presidential election. This is a dichotomized variable with 0 meaning did not vote and 1 meaning did vote. The second variable asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement that "Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government." The range for this question was 1 to 7 with 1 meaning "not at all" and 7 meaning "a lot."

Chapter 3

RESULTS

Levels of Trust in the Police

The first research question of this study looks to compare the levels of trust in the police between the United States, Chile, and Honduras. Mean comparison was assessed to decide whether the three countries differ in their trust in the police. Table 1 in appendix A displays these results. The results showed that Chile had the highest mean level of trust in the police with 4.82, followed by the United States with 4.26, and lastly Honduras with 3.81. The *F* test indicated that the mean differences are significant.

Predicting Trust in the Police

The multivariate analysis involved two steps. The first step used the entire sample and the second step separated the residents of the United States, Chile, and Honduras. Ordered logistic regression was estimated for both models. Table 2 in appendix A summarizes the results from the multivariate analyses of the entire sample.

The model for the entire sample shows that eight of the independent variables are significant predictors of trust in the police for the entire sample. The instrumental concern variable of fear in neighborhood is significant, suggesting that as fear in neighborhood increased, trust in the police decreased. The expressive concern variable

of low collective efficacy was found to be a significant predictor. As trust in neighbors decreased, so did trust in the police. The three background characteristic variables of age, education, and political ideology were significantly linked to trust in the police. Trust in the police increased as one got older and trust decreased as education increased. For political ideology, trust in the police increased as level of conservatism increased.

Both of the criminal justice experiences and perceptions variables were found to be significant. Trust in the police decreased when a bribe was asked for and trust in the police increased with more positive perceptions of rights and the courts. Finally, one political participation and attitudes variable was also significantly related to trust in the police. Trust in the police increased with more positive perceptions of democracy.

The second analytical procedure for trust in the police divided the entire sample into the three countries and looked to answer the question of which factors are significant predictors of trust in the police within each country. Table 3 in appendix A summarizes the results from the multivariate analyses of the individual country samples. Of the eight variables previously found to be significant for the entire sample, two were found to be cross-nationally significant. For all three countries, as fear in neighborhood decreased, so did trust in the police. Additionally, more positive perceptions of rights and the courts enhanced trust in the police in all three countries. The other variables found to be significant in this model were country-specific.

For the United States, eight variables were found to be significant in addition to the two variables that were cross-nationally significant. The variables of age, white, democracy is best, and conservative index were positively associated with trust in the

police while male, voted in last presidential election, victimization, and low collective efficacy were negatively associated with trust in the police.

For Chile, six variables were found to be significant in addition to the two variables that were cross-nationally significant. Age, voted in last presidential election, democracy is best, and conservative index were positively associated with trust in the police while police asked for a bribe and low collective efficacy were negatively associated with trust in the police. Finally, for Honduras two variables were found to be significant in addition to the two variables that were cross-nationally significant. Increased education and police asked for a bribe were both negatively associated with trust in the police.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The current study is one of just a few that have examined citizen trust in the police involving Latin American countries, and to the author's knowledge, employs the most recent data on trust in the police for Latin America from 2014. The vast majority of previous literature on trust in the police has focused primarily on the United States and Western Europe. One goal of this study is to see whether the findings for these regions are applicable to countries in Latin America. Additionally, the study uses three countries with distinct political and social settings to assess whether citizens hold similar attitudes toward the police and whether the same factors are significant for predicting trust in the police despite these differences.

The results for the first research question examining the levels of trust in the police within each country showed that Chile had the highest level of trust in the police followed by the United States and lastly Honduras. However, only the differences between Chile and the United States and Chile and Honduras were found to be significant in the regression analysis. Given that Chile is less than thirty years removed from a military dictatorship in which the police played an oppressive role, these results may appear alarming. However, the United States is in the midst of high tension between police and citizens, which began not long before the data for this study was collected. The abundance of media portraying police mishaps and the focus on high profile cases involving police and racial minorities, such as the Trayvon Martin case, demonstrate the state of instability that the United States has been in for

several years now regarding sentiments toward the police. Honduras having the lowest level of trust in the police comes as no surprise, based on its history of political instability, the prevalence of police corruption, and Honduras' extremely high homicide rate.

The second research question asks what factors are significant predictors of trust in the police for the entire sample. Fear in neighborhood, low collective efficacy, education, and police asked for a bribe were significant and negatively associated with trust in the police. The significance and negative association of these variables is consistent with prior studies (Ayodele & Aderinto, 2014; Cao et al., 1996; Hu et al., 2015; Ivkovic, 2008; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Merry et al., 2012; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sun et al., 2012; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013; Tankebe, 2010) The variables of age, conservatism, rights are protected and courts are fair, and the perception that democracy is best were significant and positively associated with trust in the police. The significance and positive association of age and conservatism is consistent with prior studies, while the other two variables have not been widely examined in previous studies (Cao et al., 1996; Cao & Zhao, 2005; Ivkovic, 2008; Jesilow et al., 1995; Merry et al., 2012; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sun, Hu, et al., 2013; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013) Only household victimization, sex, race, marital status, and voted in last presidential election were not found to be significant predictors. In previous studies, victimization has been found to be a significant predictor of trust in the police, but Sun and colleagues in their study of trust in the police in Taiwan found that it was no longer significant after control variables were introduced (Sun et al., 2013).

The final research question asks what are some similar and different predictors of trust in the police across the three countries. The results from this level of analysis

showed variables that were cross-nationally significant in all three countries and variables that were significant at the country-specific level. The two variables of fear in neighborhood and perceptions of rights and courts that were found to be cross-nationally significant in all three countries were either consistent with the previous literature or expected (Cao et al., 1996; Ivkovic, 2008; Jackson & Sunshine, 2007; Merry et al., 2012; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Sun et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2013). When residents do not feel safe in their neighborhoods, this represents a failure of the police both expressively and instrumentally. The police are demonstrating that they are not capable of controlling crime while also failing to uphold the morals and values of the community that have been proven to be a crucial part of maintaining trust in the police. For the variable measuring perceptions of rights and the courts, the finding that this was cross-nationally significant calls for future studies to examine this variable, as it has yet to be examined much in previous research. Although not exactly the same, this variable tried to make up for the absence of variables that directly measure procedural justice. The finding of variables that were cross-nationally significant in the three countries or significant in two countries demonstrates that similar factors influence trust in the police in countries with different political and social climates.

In addition to the cross-national findings, there were also some notable country-specific significant variables. For the United States and Chile, for example, age was found to be significant and had a positive association with trust in the police. Race, not surprisingly, was only found to be significant in the United States, with a positive association between white and trust in the police. This can be explained by the current state of policing in the United States, which has been overshadowed by racial tensions between racial minorities and the police. Education was only significant for

Honduras and was negatively associated with trust in the police. The variable of voted in last presidential election was found to be significant in the United States and Chile. However, the United States had a negative association with trust in the police for this variable while Chile had a positive association. Police bribery was found to be significant in Chile and Honduras and had a negative association with trust in the police. The perception that democracy is best was significant for the United States and Chile, with a positive association between this perception and trust. For the United States and Chile, low collective efficacy was found to be significant and had a negative association with trust. Finally, the conservative index variable was found to be significant for the United States and Chile with a positive association with trust.

Policy Implications

Before discussing policy implications derived from findings of this study, a few limitations should be noted. One limitation of this study was that the AmericasBarometer survey did not have questions that directly measured procedural justice, which has been found to be a significant predictor of citizen trust in the police. As a result, a combined variable measuring perceptions of rights and the courts was used in order to touch on this aspect of procedural justice. Additionally, this study used a single item question for the dependent variable of trust in the police. It may be better in the future to use a survey that measures trust in the police using multiple scales indicating trust.

Several recommendations can be made to increase trust in the police, based on the results of this study. First, police must work to ensure that citizens feel safe in their neighborhoods. This requires a two-dimensional approach in which the police are able

to effectively combat crime and also demonstrate that they share the same morals and values as the community members. In addition, the police and criminal justice system need to develop a reputation of acting procedurally fair. The variable measuring perceptions of rights and the courts was found to be cross-nationally significant, demonstrating that all citizens, regardless of country, find fairness to be essential within the criminal justice system. For example, during an encounter with the police, citizens want to feel that they are being treated fairly and that the procedures being employed by the officer are just (Merry et al., 2012) This is especially true for police-initiated contacts, which are evaluated mainly by fairness and have been shown to increase trust more than citizen-initiated contacts which are evaluated mainly by outcome (Merry et al., 2012). This aspect of fairness during police encounters is especially important as increased contact with the police does not necessarily build trust and it can even work to erode it (Ivkovic, 2008; Merry et al., 2012) Thus instead of trying to only increase the number of encounters between police and citizens, the focus should be placed on improving the satisfaction and quality of each contact (Ivkovic, 2008; Merry et al., 2012; Skogan, 2009).

The results also show that trust in the police should be increased by targeting specific populations who tend to have lower levels of trust in the police, so that resources can be properly allocated for building trust initiatives. For the United States, efforts should be made to increase trust for men and racial minority populations. For both the United States and Chile, efforts should be made to increase trust for younger citizens. Merry and colleagues propose an initiative that would get younger residents more involved in the community, as increased collective efficacy has also been shown to increase trust (Merry et al., 2012; Sun, Jou, et al., 2013).

For Honduras, efforts should be made to increase trust for those with higher levels of education. This can be done through making the police a more transparent organization, enhancing the public's knowledge about police actions, and building relationships between police and citizens (Sindall et al., 2012). This involves efforts to make sure that the public is well informed on topics including on-going investigations, police training, and additional police initiatives (Skogan, 2009). When the public is better informed, police are held more accountable for their actions and the public is also reassured that their community values and morals are being protected.

Two strategies used to enhance the public's knowledge as well as relationship with the police are increased visibility by the police in communities and community policing initiatives (Bradford et al., 2009; Cao et al., 1996; Merry et al., 2012; Sindall et al., 2012; Skogan, 2009). Visibility is important as it signals to residents that police find community safety to be a priority and it indirectly increases familiarity with police officers (Skogan, 2009). When residents become familiar with police officers, they may in turn feel more comfortable reporting a crime to the police or providing important information. Feeling comfortable with police officers is one of if not the most important goals of community policing, which strives to build a relationship between residents and local police through community engagement activities. Community policing has recently become a popular initiative in disadvantaged neighborhoods with low-income residents and high-crime rates (Ivkovic, 2008; Skogan, 2009).

As low collective efficacy was found to be significant and negatively associated with trust in the United States and Chile, communities should make efforts to build relationships amongst neighbors, which will make neighbors more trusting of

one another. When neighbors trust one another, it is more likely that they will feel safer in their neighborhoods. Possible options include community meetings and community block celebrations, which both help bring community members together. Since the perception that democracy is best was found to be significant and positively associated with trust in the police in the United States and Chile, democratic governments have the duty of ensuring that their citizens are satisfied and understand the value of democracy for the well-being of a country and its citizens.

This study found that there were two variables that were cross-nationally significant in all three countries and six variables that were significant in two of the countries. These findings demonstrate that similar factors influence trust in the police in countries with different political and social climates. Thus, when considering policy adoption, there is the option in some cases to make recommendations on an international scale.

Unfortunately, trust in the police is a phenomena that is difficult to build, but can quickly be eroded (Sindall et al., 2012). However, based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations have been made above that are thought to have the ability to increase citizen trust in the police or demonstrate how initiatives for increasing trust in the police should be approached. An important implication from this study is that efforts to increase trust in the police should not just be focused on the actual police departments themselves. There are things that communities and governments can do, independent from the police, to increase trust in the police. Additionally, there are initiatives that can be taken to incorporate certain populations better into society so that they can have increased levels of trust in the police as well.

Ultimately, the results of this study showed that there are cross-national methods and country-specific methods that can be employed to increase trust.

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Appendix A

TABLES

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Variables

	United States (n=1445)			Chile (n=946)			Honduras (n=1251)			F value ^a
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	
<i>Dependent Variables</i>										
Trust in Police	4.26	1.66	1-7	4.82	1.67	1-7	3.81	1.94	1-7	167.05*
<i>Independent Variables</i>										
<i>Instrumental</i>										
Household Victimization	.20	.40	0-1	.19	.39	0-1	.31	.46	0-1	52.08*
Fear in Neighborhood	1.8	.7445	1-4	2.3	.8503	1-4	2.2	.92	1-4	131.54*
<i>Expressive</i>										
Low Collective Efficacy	2.1	.69	1-4	2.0	.8495	1-4	2.2	.97	1-4	14.47*
<i>Background characteristics</i>										
Male	.49	.50	0-1	.47	.50	0-1	.50	.50	0-1	49.74*
Age	48	17	19-90	44	17	18-99	39	15	18-88	189.92*
White	.67	.47	0-1	.43	.50	0-1	.23	.42	0-1	436.25*
Education	3.2	1.5	1-6	11	3.8	0-17	7.4	4.3	0-18	1581.41*
Married	.54	.50	0-1	.54	.50	0-1	.61	.49	0-1	317.53*
Conservative	6.3	2.7	1-10	4.8	2.4	1-10	6.2	2.9	1-10	76.06*
<i>CJ experiences and perceptions</i>										
Police asked for bribe	.03	.17	0-1	.01	.08	0-1	.15	.36	0-1	184.57*
Rights protected/fair courts	7.7	2.6	2-14	7.2	2.5	2-14	7.3	3.0	2-14	11.09*
<i>Political attitudes and participation</i>										
Voted in presidential election	.64	.48	0-1	.66	.47	0-1	.75	.44	0-1	25.48*
Democracy is best	5.4	1.6	1-7	5.5	1.4	1-7	4.9	1.8	1-7	60.07*

calculated based on one-way ANOVA; $p < .05$

Table 2 Regression Summary for Entire Sample

	b	S.E.
Instrumental		
Household victimization	-.08	.07
Fear in neighborhood	-.31***	.04
Expressive		
Low collective efficacy	-.16***	.04
Background characteristics		
Male	-.08	.06
Age	.01***	.00
White	.06	.06
Education	-.03***	.01
Married	.05	.07
Conservative	.06***	.01
CJ experiences and perceptions		
Police asked for bribe	-.36**	.12
Rights protected/fair courts	.20***	.01
Political attitudes and participation		
Voted in presidential election	.08	.07
Democracy is best	.07***	.02
Country		
Chile	1.27***	.10
Honduras	.09	.09
R ²	.28	

*p < .05, **p<.01, ***p<.00

Table 3 Regression Summary for Within Country Samples

	United States	Chile	Honduras
Instrumental			
Household victimization	-.35***	.03	-.07
Fear in neighborhood	-.16**	-.35**	-.29**
Expressive			
Low collective efficacy	-.34**	-.17*	-.10
Background characteristics			
Male	-.32**	-.11	-.02
Age	.01**	.01**	.00
White	.21**	-.11	.09
Education	.00	-.01	-.06**
Married	-.01	.14	.00
Conservative	.09**	.08**	.03
CJ experiences and perceptions			
Police asked for bribe	.04	-1.4*	-.43**
Rights protected/fair courts	.26**	.17**	.19**
Political attitudes and participation			
Voted in presidential election	-.19*	.29**	.05
Democracy is best	.16**	.13**	.02
R ²	.36	.21	.17

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