

Procedural Justice, Police Legitimacy and Cooperation of Bosnian Students with the Police

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Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to highlight the factors that influence police legitimacy in students' eyes. More specifically, this study presents an empirical test and description of student attitudes based on prior experiences with the police and the criminal-justice system. This study aims at describing correlations between police legitimacy and the identified significant factors (procedural justice, compliance with the law, police effectiveness, moral credibility, personal morality, deterrence) which may determine legitimacy of the police. Furthermore, it is important to assess attitudes of students of the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Criminal Justice, Criminology and Security Studies at the University of Sarajevo about their cooperation with the police. The ultimate purpose of this study is to test various research hypotheses derived from the process-based model of policing. The findings may be used as a basis for the future related research in Sarajevo or Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Design/Methods/Approach:

This study tests process-based model hypotheses using cross-sectional data from students of the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Criminal Justice, Criminology and Security Studies at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, who successfully completed an online questionnaire ($n = 583$). In this empirical study, a survey was used as a method of data collection. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion) and statistical inference (factor analysis and correlation analyses).

Findings:

The study presents the findings of the survey conducted among the students of the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Criminal Justice, Criminology and Security Studies at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority of the surveyed respondents revealed that trust in the police is determined by the perceived police reputation. That means that if the police work effectively, morally, and in compliance with the law, the level of trust in the police increases. Moreover, the findings have shown that the threat of sanctions/costs (formal and informal) plays a significant role in the story about trust in the police, as well as the relationship between procedural justice and trust in the police. On the other hand,

the analyses did not report significant correlations between police legitimacy and other factors such as cooperation with the police. Thus, demographic factors (gender and age), self-control and lifestyle do not play a significant role in terms of trust in the police, at least within this sample of college students.

Research Limitations/Implications:

The limitations of this study relate primarily to sampling. A convenience sample was used in this case, and although the online survey questionnaire was available to all students in the two faculties ($N = 4014$), a large number did not complete the survey, which can be considered as a research limitation. Considering that only 583 students successfully completed the online questionnaire, the response rate is 14.51%.

Practical Implications:

The results of this study have implications for police practices in Canton of Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specifically, the findings can be considered as the indicators which can aid the police to improve their practice in Canton Sarajevo.

Originality/Value:

The study is important because studies of this kind are a rarity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so it means that the results of this study could become the basis for such studies in the future. Furthermore, this study examines those factors that influence trust in the police among students of law, criminal justice, criminology and security studies in Sarajevo.

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Keywords: police, legitimacy, trust, cooperation, legal compliance, students, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Postopkovna pravičnost, legitimnost policije in sodelovanje bosanskih študentov s policijo

Namen prispevka:

Namen študije je osvetliti dejavnike, ki vplivajo na zaupanje študentov v policijo v Sarajevu. Natančneje, pričujoča študija predstavlja empirični preizkus in opis odnosa študentov, ki temelji na preteklih izkušnjah s policijo in sistemom kazenskega pravosodja. Namen študije je ugotoviti, ali obstaja povezava med postopkovno pravičnostjo, legitimnostjo policije in sodelovanjem javnosti s policijo, kakor tudi preučiti, kaj vpliva na zaupanje v policijo med študenti Pravne fakultete in Fakultete za kriminalistiko, kriminologijo in varnostne vede Univerze v Sarajevu. Glavni namen študije je preveriti različne raziskovalne hipoteze, ki izhajajo iz postopkovnega modela policijske dejavnosti. Ugotovitve študije je možno uporabiti kot osnovo za prihodnje podobne raziskave v Sarajevu ter Bosni in Hercegovini.

Metode:

Študija testira hipoteze, ki izhajajo iz na postopkovnem modelu temelječe policijske dejavnosti. Pri tem uporablja presečne podatke študentov Pravne

fakultete in Fakultete za kriminalistiko, kriminologijo in varnostne vede Univerze v Sarajevu, ki so v celoti izpolnili spletni vprašalnik ($n = 583$). V pričujoči empirični raziskavi je bila kot metoda zbiranja podatkov uporabljena anketa. Podatke smo analizirali s pomočjo opisne statistike (mere srednjih vrednosti in razpršenosti) in statističnega sklepanja (faktorska analiza in analize korelacij).

Ugotovitve:

Članek predstavlja ugotovitve raziskave med študenti Pravne fakultete in Fakultete za kriminalistiko, kriminologijo in varnostne vede Univerze v Sarajevu v Bosni in Hercegovini. Večina respondentov je razkrila, da je zaupanje v policijo določeno z dojemanjem njenega ugleda. To pomeni, da če policija deluje učinkovito, moralno in v skladu z zakonom, se stopnja zaupanja v policijo povečuje. Ugotovitve so pokazale, da ima grožnja glede sankcij/stroškov (formalnih in neformalnih) pomembno vlogo v zgodbi o zaupanju v policijo, prav tako pa je pomemben tudi odnos med postopkovno pravičnostjo in zaupanjem v policijo. Po drugi strani pa analize niso pokazale pomembnih korelacij med legitimnostjo policije in drugimi spremenljivkami, kot je sodelovanje s policijo. Tako tudi demografski dejavniki (spol in starost), samonadzor in življenjski slog ne igrajo pomembne vloge glede zaupanja v policijo.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Omejitve te študije se nanašajo predvsem na vzorčenje. Za namen pričujočega prispevka je bil uporabljen priložnostni vzorec. Čeprav je bila spletna anketa na voljo vsem študentom obeh fakultet ($N = 4014$), veliko študentov vprašalnika ni izpolnilo, kar lahko štejemo za omejitev raziskave. Glede na to, da je samo 583 študentov v celoti izpolnilo spletni vprašalnik, je stopnja odzivnosti 14,51 %.

Praktična uporabnost:

Rezultati raziskave imajo vpliv na policijsko prakso v kantonu Sarajevo ter Bosni in Hercegovini. Natančneje, ugotovitve je možno obravnavati kot kazalnike, ki lahko pomagajo policiji pri izboljšanju svoje prakse v kantonu Sarajevo.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Raziskava je pomembna, saj so študije te vrste v Bosni in Hercegovini redkost, kar pomeni, da bi ti rezultati lahko postali podlaga za podobne raziskave v prihodnosti. Študija proučuje tudi tiste dejavnike, ki vplivajo na zaupanje v policijo med študenti prava, kazenskega pravosodja, kriminologije in varnostnih ved v Sarajevu.

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Ključne besede: policija, legitimnost, zaupanje, sodelovanje, spoštovanje zakonov, študenti, Sarajevo, Bosna in Hercegovina

1 INTRODUCTION

The link between procedural justice, police legitimacy, and public cooperation with the police has received significant scholarly attention in criminology and criminal justice. In this triangle, police legitimacy may be considered as a certain pathway for the police to elicit cooperation, obtain compliance, and increase satisfaction among the public. On the other hand, numerous studies have shown that the most effective promotion of legitimacy is based on procedural justice and public trust in the police (Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, & Manning, 2013). In the context of the relationship between police and citizens, trust is expected to promote their cooperation, so the trust of citizens in the police has been studied a great deal. In the sense of the afore-mentioned statements, the police will enjoy higher levels of legitimacy in the eyes of the public when citizens believe that the police are respectful, polite, and make fair decisions when dealing with community members (Reisig, Tankebe, & Meško, 2013). These theoretical assumptions have received empirical verification in a large number of studies (e.g. Cherney & Murphy, 2013; Flexon, Lurigio, & Greenleaf, 2009; Gau, 2014; Jackson, Huq, Bradford, & Tyler, 2013), but it should be noted that these studies are limited by various factors.

In previous studies, definitions of police legitimacy were linked to the concepts about the legitimacy of governments in general. Generally speaking, legitimacy is the right to rule and the recognition by the ruled of that right (Tyler & Jackson, 2013). In that sense, Gau (2014: 188) considered that “any agent or agency possessing coercive authority over some subordinate segment of society must devise a rationale that explains to these subordinates the reasons why it is necessary or right to submit to this authority”. Also, legitimacy can be defined as “the right of legal authorities to exercise power, prescribe behaviour, and enforce laws” (Jackson et al., 2013: 2), or “the extent to which an individual states that he or she believes that the law (or legal agents) represents just, fair and valid basis of legal authority” (Papachristos, Meares, & Fagan, 2012: 417).

Legitimacy is primarily an issue of procedural justice (Tyler & Jackson, 2013) because judgments about procedural justice influence police legitimacy. These in turn shape compliance with the law. Gau (2014) states that the procedural model of police legitimacy maintains that police garner legitimacy through their efforts to make their relations with the community more positive and respectful. According to Mazerolle et al. (2013), procedural justice implies four essential components: (1) a dialogue that encourages citizen participation in the proceedings prior to an authority reaching a decision, (2) the citizen’s perception of neutrality in decision making, (3) indicators that the authority demonstrates dignity and respect in contact with citizens, and (4) an awareness of trustworthy motives of authority. In accordance with this, Reisig et al. (2013) claim that public cooperation with the police is powerfully shaped by general perceptions that the police are legitimate. On the other side, the police need voluntary help from the public because it is essential to their efforts to reduce crime, as evident in the following statements:

- the majority of volume crimes are detected through the information provided by victims and witnesses (Jansson, 2005);

- problem-solving is often most effective when the public is involved (Tuffin, Morris, & Poole, 2006); and
- the public can provide extra resources to the police by volunteering to take on a variety of roles (Goldstein, 1990).

Considering that public cooperation is based on a model which involves costs and benefits, the police should provide desirable rewards for cooperation, such as high performance in solving crime, maintaining order, or addressing public concerns (Tyler & Jackson, 2013).

The present study represents an effort to examine correlations between procedural justice, police legitimacy, and public cooperation with the police based on Bosnian students' attitudes toward the police. This article has two main aims: the first is a description of the data provided by the survey conducted among students of the Faculty of Criminal Justice, Criminology and Security Studies and Faculty of Law, University of Sarajevo, while the second is a scientific finding related to detecting the relationship between the factors derived from the theoretical framework. In this way, the paper will conclude with some foundations and recommendations for future research.

2 SOME PREVIOUS FINDINGS

In the last two decades, criminologists have been preoccupied with the idea that people obey the law because of their calculations about potential punishments and benefits and that these calculations are usually in their own self-interest (Klepper & Nagin, 1989; Reisig, Tankebe, & Meško, 2012; Sherman, 1990). In the context of the relationship between the police and citizens, trust is expected to promote their cooperation, so the trust of citizens in the police has been the object of a great deal of study. In that sense, police legitimacy has increasingly focused on normative considerations over the last two decades, and this can be considered as one of the most important developments in criminological research. In other words, some criminologists claim that compliance with the law and cooperation with legal authorities are primarily shaped by the general perception that legal authorities are legitimate. The name of this model is the process-based model of regulation or process-based model of policing. It implies that the variation in perceived police legitimacy is explained by procedural justice in terms of the manner in which police officers exercise their authority (Reisig et al., 2013; Tyler, 2003).

According to Bottoms (2002) and Hough, Jackson, and Bradford (2013), general compliance with authority is explained by four categories:

- prudential or self-interested calculations about the potential costs and benefits of punishment, which take into account the risks and costs of punishment;
- normative considerations about the 'rights and wrongs' of non-compliance;
- the impact of obstructive strategies, such as locking up offenders to prevent their reoffending, and locking up the targets of criminal attention, literally or metaphorically; and
- habit.

The first scientist to research antecedents and consequences of police legitimacy was Tom Tyler, who draws a distinction between instrumental and normative perspectives on the antecedents of police legitimacy (Tyler, 1990). According to Reisig et al. (2013: 151), “the instrumental perspective holds that the police are legitimate to the extent that they are effective in fighting crime and in preventing disorder”. On the other hand, the normative perspective considers the importance of procedural justice. In that sense, procedural justice implies two dimensions: “quality of decision-making” and “quality of interpersonal treatment” (Reisig et al., 2013; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Decision-making quality primarily refers to the opportunity for people to present fully their case to the police, the neutrality of the police in the decision-making process, and the consistency of the police in applying the law (Paternoster, Bachman, Brame, & Sherman, 1997; Tyler, 2003). Interpersonal treatment quality concerns public perceptions that the police treat them with politeness and dignity and respect their human rights.

The existence of strong correlations between procedural justice and police legitimacy is confirmed by the research conducted by Jackson et al. (2013), who found that positive judgments about police legitimacy are associated with more negative views about the use of violence. In addition to those previously mentioned, numerous studies have been conducted in a great number of different countries, and these studies support the basic argument and show that legitimacy explains variations in compliance with the law (Jackson et al., 2012; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2006; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler & Jackson, 2013), as well as the willingness to defer to the decisions of police officers and judges (Tyler & Huo, 2002), to continue to accept decisions over time (Tyler, Sherman, Strang, Barnes, & Woods, 2007), to cooperate with legal authorities (Jackson, Bradford, Stanko, & Hohl, 2012; Tyler, Schulhofer, & Huq, 2010), and to believe that violence is an acceptable mean to achieve social control and social change (Tyler, Jackson, Huq, & Bradford, 2012).

Murphy (2009) claims that, in the context of policing, procedural justice has also been shown to be important for shaping citizens’ views about police legitimacy, their satisfaction with the police, as well as in fostering cooperation with the police. In this study, Murphy examined the relative importance of procedural justice in the overall ratings of police satisfaction across two types of police-citizen encounters (citizen-initiated contacts and police-initiated contacts), and showed that procedural justice is most important in police-initiated contacts, while police performance is most important. Other research (Cherney & Murphy, 2013; Hinds & Murphy, 2007) indicates that procedural justice influences public cooperation with the police. The results of the research conducted by Cherney and Murphy (2013) show that perceptions about the legitimacy of the law and identification with Australian society matter a great deal when it comes to predicting cooperation in counter-terrorism. On the other hand, perceptions of police legitimacy matter most for predicting cooperation in general crime control activities.

In the United States of America, Reisig, Bratton, and Gertz (2007), using a sample of 432 adults from a nationwide telephone survey, determined that procedural justice judgments affect police legitimacy, which in turn influences

both cooperation with the police and compliance with the law. They found that if legitimacy was disaggregated, then trust in the police predicted both of the outcomes of interest.

Tankebe (2008) conducted a study of police effectiveness and police trustworthiness in Ghana, using data from a representative public survey in Accra ($n = 374$) and strived to fill gaps in criminological knowledge in this area. The results of this study show correlation between perceptions of police effectiveness and perceived police trustworthiness. Tankebe (2008) also found that the relationship is stronger if the police are also perceived to be procedurally fair. These results are significant because they show that building public trust in the police requires democratic reforms that simultaneously improve the capacity of the police to achieve both substantive effectiveness and procedural fairness.

A survey conducted by Ellison, Pino, and Shirlow (in press) focused on identifying the generative processes that influence perceptions of the police in the context of an inner-city neighbourhood in Northern Ireland. Contrary to other surveys, their analysis suggests that instrumental concerns about crime and illegal activity are more influential predictors of attitudes toward the police than expressive concerns with disorder and anti-social behaviour.

In this context, Kääriäinen and Sirén (2012) claim that the literature about police culture indicates that the police have a rather cynical approach to citizens. Empirical proof of this mainly comes from examining major cities in the United States and the United Kingdom. Considering this proof, Kääriäinen and Sirén (2012) conducted a study comparing the level of generalized trust among police officers and other respondents based on the cumulative materials gathered for the European Social Survey of 22 countries in 2002–2008. The primary findings of this study indicate correlations between generalized trust of those working in the police forces and generalized trust in society as a whole. In that sense, they found that if citizens generally trust each other, the police also trust the citizens. On the other hand, in countries with a low level of trust in general, the police are also cynical towards the citizens. Similar to this study, Jackson et al. (2011) outlined the conceptual roadmap for a current comparative analysis of trust in justice where the methodology included examining a 45-item module in Round 5 of the European Social Survey. The basis for this study was the social indicator approach to trust in justice. It recognizes that the police and criminal courts need public support and institutional legitimacy if they are to operate effectively and fairly.

When it comes to willingness to report crimes, Kääriäinen and Sirén (2011) found that trust in the police does not appear to increase the likelihood of people reporting crime. Instead, they found that the seriousness of crime and the relationship between victim and perpetrator have the most significant impact on the willingness to report crimes. In this sense, they pose a question: Does a high level of generalized trust reduce citizens' desire to rely on official control? Addressing this question, they examined the links between generalized trust and trust in the police, and their interactive effect on the willingness to report violent and property crimes. Kääriäinen (2007) also conducted a multilevel analysis dealing with trust in the police in 16 European countries. Assumptions in this

study were that general perception of corruption among public officials decreases public trust in the police, and that substantive investments in public order and safety institutions also decrease trust in the police. Kääriäinen (2007) concludes that corruption in government strongly explains the country-level variation in public trust towards the police.

In India, Vinod (2012) examined the impacts of community policing on public satisfaction and perception of the police. This study was conducted in the Indian state of Kerala and considered the Janamaitri community policing program. It indicated a strong impact of the program on different aspects of police–public relations, such as greater accessibility, better behaviour of the police, greater sense of security among the populace, and better perceptions of the police.

Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd (2013) examined police performance and procedural justice as antecedents of police legitimacy in acute security threat situations and in “no threats” situations in Israel. They found that assessments of police performance did increase in importance for the public under threat, and procedural justice remained the primary antecedent of police legitimacy in both situations.

In the Western Balkan region, there have been other studies, one involving pencil-and-paper surveys that were administered to 683 individuals, 18 years of age and older, and enrolled in six high schools located in Maribor and Ljubljana, Slovenia. The purpose of this study, conducted by Reising et al. (2013), was to examine the effects of procedural justice judgments on the perceived police legitimacy. The findings indicate there is a strong correlation between procedural justice and police legitimacy, the latter influencing public cooperation. In other words, it shows that when the public cooperation scale is disaggregated, the effect of police legitimacy varies across different cooperation outcomes. Ultimately, the results reveal that:

- procedural-justice judgments significantly shape individual perceptions of police legitimacy, and
- perceived police legitimacy explains self-reported compliance with the law.

3 METHODS

The purpose of this research study is to collect information about students’ experiences with the police and the criminal justice system and to examine factors that influence their trust of the police in Sarajevo. In other words, the effect of procedural justice judgments on perceived police legitimacy is empirically scrutinized. This study also has the intention to determine correlations between procedural police legitimacy and various legitimacy related variables, such as procedural justice, trust in police, police effectiveness, police authority, legal cynicism, legal compliance and public cooperation, as well as to examine what influences trust in the police among students of Faculty of Law and Faculty of Criminal Justice, Criminology and Security Studies at the University of Sarajevo. It is important to focus specifically on law and criminal justice and security studies students because the fact that a number of this students will work in the field of

law enforcement and criminal justice. However, the results are based on student opinions and are not representative of the entire population.

The research study "*Procedural Justice, Police Legitimacy and Public Cooperation with the Police among Bosnian Students*" tests process-based model hypotheses using cross-sectional data from 583 students (aged 18 and above) attending two faculties within the University of Sarajevo (Faculty of Criminal Justice, Criminology and Security Studies and Faculty of Law), Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because of its similarity with the research studies conducted among students in some other countries (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Russia, etc.), the method applied here was very similar to that in the aforementioned research studies. The current study relies on an online student-survey questionnaire which was distributed via the official web sites of the two faculties during January–May, 2013.

This empirical study used a questionnaire (survey) as the method of data collection and was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Every study has its limitations, and the critical element in this study was sampling. Although the online survey questionnaire was available to all students of these two faculties ($N = 4014$), a large number of students did not complete the survey, and this can be considered as a research limitation. The number of students who answered the online questionnaire ($n = 583$) represents a response rate of 14.51%. In this sense, we used a convenience sample. It should be emphasized that a convenience sample consists of whatever subjects are readily available to the researcher and are appropriate in a variety of research situations. However, if we choose to examine respondents on the assumption that the included respondents provide a cross-section of different types, it can be said that the sample is representative. On the other hand, researchers must always be wary of potential threats to external validity every time they use a convenience sample. They have to be careful in the interpretation of their findings because convenience samples are prone to systematic biases precisely because they are convenient (Weisburd & Britt, 2007).

Overall, the surveyed students comprised three age groups: 18–24 (89.0%); 25–30 (7.6%); and 31 and older (3.4%), and the respondents were primarily female (64.0%). The mean age in years for all surveyed students was 22.5 years ($SD = 3.8$), and their major area of study was law (57.3%) and criminal justice and security (42.7%). In terms of years of study, the mean number was 2.7 years of study ($SD = 1.1$; range 1–7 years).

Participants were asked to respond to questions designed to capture their economic/financial status. In terms of this question, 9.4% of surveyed students reported that they have their own income, 69.3% answered that they get income from another source or person, 13.4% answered that they have combination of own income and income from another source/person and only 6.0% answered that they are grant-financed. Participants were also asked to provide information about their family's social status. On average, most participants ranked their family social status as "average" (79.9%), while other participants ranked their family social status as "far above average" (0.7%), "above average" (10.3%), "below average" (7.0%) and "far below average" (0.5%) (see Table 1).

Table 1:
Sample characteristics

	Frequency	%
Age		
18–24	519	89.0
25–30	44	7.6
31 and more	20	3.4
Mean	22.5	
Std. Deviation	3.8	
Gender		
Male	210	36.0
Female	373	64.0
Major area of study		
Law	334	57.3
Criminal justice and security	249	42.7
Year of study		
First year	109	18.7
Second year	91	15.6
Third year	289	49.7
Fourth year	54	9.3
Master study (fifth year)	31	5.3
Doctoral study	8	1.4
Economic/financial status		
Own income	55	9.4
Income from another source or person	404	69.3
Combination of own income and income from another source/person	78	13.4
Grant	35	6.0
Missing	11	1.9
Family's social status		
Far above average	4	0.7
Above average	60	10.3
Average	466	79.9
Below average	41	7.0
Far below average	3	0.5
Missing	9	1.5

4 RESULTS

4.1 Variables

In this section of the article, the key findings will be presented. First, it is important to examine respondents' experiences with the criminal justice system and prior victimization. As can be seen in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, students were asked to describe which role they had in the official/formal communication/contact with the criminal justice system and how these institutions responded to them. They were also asked to describe if they had ever been a victim of a crime, which crime it was, and to describe the victimization they experienced.

The students answered that they had official contact with the criminal justice system as a hearsay witness (11.5%), as an eyewitness (19.9%), as a person who has committed a minor offence (25.4%), as a suspect of a crime (9.6%), as someone who reported a crime (23.8%) and as a victim of a crime (24.4%). In total, just under half of the respondents (47.3%) have prior experience with the criminal justice system. In terms of the way the criminal justice system institutions responded, 47.9% of students answered that they did not communicate with anyone personally; 9.3% of students answered that institution employees' behaviour/response was generally very professional; 29.5% answered that behaviour/response was mostly professional but thought they could have handled the matter a little better; 6.2% of students think that employees' behaviour/response was generally unprofessional; 5.3% have the opinion that behaviour/response was both unprofessional and rude; and 1.9% of students answered that employees' behaviour/response was generally cruel and accusatorial, without any provocation/reason (see Appendix 1).

In addition to the questions asked about their experiences with the criminal justice system, students were also asked about possible victimization. In that sense, 29.3% of students answered that they were a victim of a crime at some point in their lives. In terms of the type of crime, 74.8% of students answered that they were theft victims; 66.2% were break-in/burglary victims; 0.7% were rape/sexual assault victims; 0.5% were armed robbery victims; 10.3% were arson victims; 15.6% were assault victims; 15.3% were fraud victims, and 4.3% were victims of some other crime. Specifically, 13.9% of students indicated that victimization that they experienced was non-violent, while 11.5% of students answered that they experienced violent victimization. Further, students described the incident of being victimized as follows: 3.8% of students think that victimization was a bad experience, and they are still suffering at this point in time; 9.3% of students think that was a bad experience and that they are no longer suffering any ill effects; 8.9% think that was not so bad and that they are able to handle/cope quite well; and 9.4% think that victimization did not really impact them in any major way (see Appendix 2).

In the Table 2, we will show *police legitimacy* in the respondents' eyes. In this case, police legitimacy is a variable composed of four questions. Thus, students were asked to describe their attitudes about police legitimacy where they had to choose one answer with the above statements on a scale from 1 – never, 2 – rarely,

3 – occasionally, 4 – frequently. The level of internal consistency for this composite variable is acceptable (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.67$).

Table 2:
Police legitimacy

Composite Variable	M	SD
Police legitimacy**	9.51	2.443
Questions***		
Do what the police tell you to do even if you disagree	2.56	0.74
Accept police decisions even if you think they are wrong	2.36	0.80
The police in my community are trustworthy	2.37	0.77
Proud of the police in community	2.23	0.80

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 4 = minimum to 16 = maximum

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

Table 2 shows that the mean of the composite variable is close to 10, and if we consider that the minimum is 4 and maximum 16, we can conclude that students do not have a clear attitude toward the police legitimacy. If we consider their answers to the first two questions in this section, we can conclude that students mostly are not sure whether to do something that is contrary to their beliefs, if police ask it. Further, the answers to the other two questions suggest that they do not have complete confidence in the police. In addition, it is evident that there is a statistically significant difference in the opinions of the students who have had previous experiences with the criminal justice system and students who had not. Namely, students with previous experience rated police legitimacy lowest (*t*-test, $p = 0.002$).

Obviously, the variable Police legitimacy is a summated scale composed of two components /factors: a) obligation to obey the police, and b) trust in the police. It seems that considering these components as separate composite variables makes sense. Namely, we want to show correlations between mentioned variables and the factors which may determine legitimacy of the police. The composite variable *Obligation to obey the police* is composed of two questions. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the above statements on scale from 1 – strongly disagree, to 4 – strongly agree. Results are presented in Table 3. The level of internal consistency is good (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.85$).

Table 3:
Obligation to obey the police

Composite Variable	M	SD
Obligation to obey the police**	4.92	1.440
Questions***		
You should do what the police tell you to do even if you disagree	2.56	0.74
You should accept police decisions even if you think they are wrong	2.36	0.80

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 2 = minimum to 8 = maximum

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

The mean number of the composite variable presented in Table 3 is near 5, and with the minimum being 2 and the maximum 8, we can conclude that students’ attitudes toward the obligation to obey the police are mostly neutral as was seen in the previous two cases. Students also indicated statistically significant differences

in their opinions toward the obligation to obey the police. In that sense, students who have had previous experiences with criminal justice system express much more disagreement (t -test, $p = 0.001$).

The second component of Police legitimacy is the variable *Trust in the police*, composed of two questions (Table 4). It is very important that students of criminal justice, security studies and law have a high level of trust in the police. Therefore, the variables which measure the level of students' trust in the police were analysed on a scale from: 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree. This scale possesses an acceptable level of internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$).

Composite Variable	M	SD
Trust in the police**	4.59	1.5
Questions***		
The police in my community are trustworthy	2.37	0.77
I am proud of the police in this community	2.23	0.80

Table 4:
Trust in
the police

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 2 = minimum trust to 8 = maximum trust

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

As it can be seen in Table 4, the mean of the composite variable is near 5 (Mode = 6) with standard deviation of 1.5. Obviously, students' trust in the police is not on a high level. We should also emphasize that there are not statistically significant differences between students who have had experiences with the criminal justice system and students who had not in terms of their trust in the police.

In Tables 5 to 12, the results shown identify the variables introduced in the theoretical remarks and previous research as the crucial factors which can determine police legitimacy. Operationally, the factors are composite variables built of certain questions from the instrument.¹

Table 5 presents the results for the composite variable *Perceived police's compliance with the law*, composed of two questions. Participants were asked to rate legality of police work with the statements on a four-point scale where one indicates "strongly disagree" and four indicates "strongly agree". In this case the level of internal consistency is acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$).

Composite Variable	M	SD
Perceived police's compliance with the law**	4.46	1.422
Questions***		
The police always obey the law	2.20	0.77
When the police deal with people, they always behave according to the law	2.27	0.73

Table 5:
Perceived
police's
compliance
with the law

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 2 = minimum to 8 = maximum compliance with the law

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

¹ Choosing questions was depending of factor analysis. Namely, the analysis identified questions from instrument which compose one factor.

As can be seen in Table 5, students’ opinions on the legality of police work were mostly neutral. This conclusion is supported by the mean number of the composite variable, which is near 5. In this sense, it can be also concluded that a slightly larger group of students rated legality of police work in a negative context. The *t*-test reports statistically significant differences between respondents with and without experience with criminal justice system ($p = 0.002$). Namely, respondents with such experience viewed police as less compliant with the law.

The next composite variable is *Procedural justice* and is composed of twelve questions pertaining to the level of agreement with the statements on a scale from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree. This scale possesses excellent level of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.93$). The results can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6:
Procedural justice

Composite Variable	M	SD
Procedural justice**	28.30	6.395
Questions***		
The police treat citizens with respect	2.43	0.73
The police take time to listen to people	2.34	0.74
The police treat people fairly	2.39	0.71
The police respect citizens’ rights	2.47	0.71
The police are courteous to citizens they come into contact with	2.46	0.70
The police treat everyone with dignity	2.30	0.72
The police make decisions based on the facts	2.51	0.71
The police explain their decisions to the people they deal with	2.46	0.71
The police provide better services to wealthier citizens*	3.06	0.75
The police make decisions to handle problems fairly	2.44	0.71
The police don’t often listen to all of the citizens involved before deciding what to do*	2.78	0.68
The police follow through on their decisions and promises they make	2.36	0.73

M – Mean, *SD* – Standard Deviation

*Reverse scored

**Cumulative score from 12 = minimum to 48 = maximum

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

The mean score of the composite variable (Table 6) is near 28, which means that respondents mostly rated low level of agreement with the above statements, except those statements which are reverse scored. Based on the results, we can conclude that students mostly disagree with the statement that the police are respectful and polite, and they think the police mostly make unfair decisions when dealing with citizens. Respondents with experience with the criminal justice system gave these responses more frequently than other respondents. The *t*-test reports a statistically significant difference between respondents with and without experience with the criminal justice system ($p = 0.038$).

Police effectiveness is the next composite variable, and is composed of two questions which refer to the students’ perception of effectiveness of criminal

justice system. Also, in this case a four-point scale is used going from 1 – strongly disagree, to 4 – strongly agree (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.83$). Results are presented in Table 7.

Composite Variable	M	SD
Police effectiveness**	4.68	1.450
Questions***		
The police are doing well in controlling violent crime	2.30	0.78
The police are doing a good job preventing crime in my neighborhood	2.37	0.79

Table 7:
Police effectiveness

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 2 = minimum to 8 = maximum effectiveness

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

As seen in Table 7, the mean number of the composite variable is near 5, which means that students tend to disagree that police are effective. But, if we consider each question separately, the conclusion is that a slightly larger group of students consider that police effectiveness is not at a desirable level.

Legal cynicism is one of the important composite variables, and is composed of five questions which can be seen in Table 8. Students were asked to rate the level of their agreement with the statements below. As expected, the scale has a good level of internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.81$).

Composite Variable	M	SD
Legal cynicism**	12.11	3.235
Questions***		
Laws were made to be broken	2.07	0.91
It is okay to do anything you want as long as you don’t hurt anyone	2.70	0.82
To make money, there are no right or wrong ways anymore, only easy ways and hard ways	2.51	0.89
Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself	2.33	0.84
Fighting between friends or within families is nobody else’s business	2.50	0.83

Table 8:
Legal cynicism

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 5 = minimum to 20 = maximum legal cynicism

***Response set ranging from 1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree

From Table 8, it can be seen that a slightly larger group of students disagree with these statements; in other words, students mostly want to obey the law. These conclusions are supported by the mean number of the composite variable which is near 12. If we consider that the minimum is 5 and maximum 20, it can be concluded that students’ opinions are quite divided as well.

Another important variable is *Moral credibility* that contains only one item - *The law does a good job making sure that criminals get the punishment they deserve regardless of how much money they have* (M = 2.65; SD = 0.90). The conclusion that can be derived from this is that students have significantly different attitudes regarding this statement, but it is observed that a slightly larger group of students are of the opinion that criminals do not get the punishment they deserve. In this

case, a four-point scale was used (1 – strongly disagree to 4 – strongly agree) for rating the level of agreement with the statement.

A four-point scale was also used for the composite variable *Deterrence*, but in case 1 was “very unlikely” and 4 was “very likely”. The composite variable is composed of six questions where students were asked to choose one number beside each statement (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.83$).

Table 9:
Deterrence

Composite Variable	M	SD
Deterrence**	14.49	3.732
Questions***		
How likely are you to be caught and punished if you ...		
... illegally disposed of trash and litter?	1.94	0.94
... made a lot of noise at night?	2.47	0.83
... broke traffic laws?	2.73	0.75
... bought something you thought might be stolen?	2.19	0.88
... to steal a car?	2.86	0.86
... used marijuana or some other drug?	2.31	0.92

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 6 = minimum to 24 = maximum deterrence

***Response set ranging from 1 – very unlikely to 4 – very likely

The results in Table 9 show that students’ opinion is that the level of deterrence is not high. The mean number of the composite variable (near 15) indicates that opinions differ significantly, but if we consider each question separately, we note that there are some exceptions. In this sense, students mostly consider it unlikely that someone will be caught and punished if they illegally dispose of trash and litter. On the other hand, students mostly have the opinion that someone who broke traffic laws or stole a car is more likely to be caught and punished.

The next composite variable is *Personal morality*. It contains six questions, and a three-point scale was used (1 – not wrong, 2 – somewhat wrong and 3 – very wrong): respondents were asked to choose one number beside each statement to express their attitude about it. The level of internal consistency for personal morality is good (Cronbach’s $\alpha = 0.86$).

Table 10:
Personal morality

Composite Variable	M	SD
Personal morality**	15.92	2.648
Questions***		
In your opinion, how wrong is it for someone to ...		
... illegally disposed of trash and litter?	2.53	0.63
... made a lot of noise at night?	2.45	0.62
... broke traffic laws?	2.83	0.46
... bought something you thought might be stolen?	2.51	0.67
... to steal a car?	2.92	0.39
... used marijuana or some other drug?	2.69	0.64

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Cumulative score from 6 = minimum to 18 = maximum personal morality

***Response set ranging from 1 – not guilty, 2 – little guilty, to 3 – very guilty

If we consider the mean number of the composite variable which is near 16, it can be concluded that students have shown a solid level of personal morality (see Table 10). For each particular question, the students indicate the highest level of personal morality with regard to a situation where someone steals a car, and the lowest level of personal morality pertains to the question regarding a situation when someone made a lot of noise at night.

Moral credibility of the police and criminal justice system is a five-item summarized scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.70$). Participants were asked to rate moral credibility of the police and criminal justice system with the statements on a four-point scale where 1 indicates, "minimum credibility" and 4 indicates "maximum credibility".

Composite Variable	M	SD
Moral credibility**	13.37	2.6
Questions***		
To make sure they get what they deserve, criminals should be punished according to the law	3.32	0.75
Lots of people I know think the law often punishes people who DO NOT deserve it*	2.77	0.70
The law does a good job making sure that criminals get the punishment they deserve regardless of how much money they have	2.65	0.90
Most people in my community believe that the law punishes criminals the amount they deserve	2.31	0.82
Innocent people who are accused of crimes are always protected by the law	2.33	0.79

Table 11:
Moral
credibility

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

**Reverse scored*

***Cumulative score from 5 = minimum to 20 = maximum personal morality*

****Response set ranging from 1 – min credibility to 4 – max credibility*

From the results in Table 11 it can be seen that the mean of the composite variable is near 13 (Mode = 15 for composite variable; Mode = 3 for each individual variable/question) with a standard deviation of 2.6. Generally, it is obvious that students do not have a clear attitude about moral credibility of the police and the criminal justice system. We should also emphasize the presence of statistically significant differences between the students who have had experiences with the criminal justice system and the students who had not (*t*-test, $p = 0.020$).

All of the mentioned variables can influence the respondents' cooperation with police. Thus, the last composite variable in this article is *Cooperation with the police*. This variable is comprised of five questions (see Table 12). As in the previous section, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the above statements on scale from 1 – strongly disagree, to 4 – strongly agree (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.82$).

Table 12:
Cooperation with the police

Composite Variable	M	SD
Cooperation with the police**	16.35	3.15
Questions***		
Imagine that you were out and saw someone steal a wallet. How likely would you be to call the police?	3.09	0.87
If the police were looking for witnesses in a case where someone's wallet was stolen, how likely would you be to volunteer information if you witnessed the theft?	3.30	0.83
Imagine you had evidence that someone bribed a government official. How likely would you be to report this behaviour to the police?	3.10	0.95
How likely would you be to call the police if you saw someone break into a house or car?	3.63	0.64
How likely would you be to volunteer to serve as a witness in a criminal court case involving a crime that you witnessed?	3.24	0.83

M – Mean, SD – Standard Deviation

** Cumulative score from 5 = minimum to 20 = maximum preparedness to cooperate

*** Response set ranging from 1 – never to 4 – frequently

In this case, we can conclude that respondents mostly indicated a high level of agreement with the statements shown in Table 12, where it can be seen that the mean number of the composite variable is near 16. From these results we can also conclude that students are likely to report crimes as well as to cooperate with the police as a witness. The *t*-test did not show statistically significant differences between attitudes of students with and without experience with the criminal justice system.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

To get the basic information about the relationship between the identified factors and Police legitimacy, we conducted a correlation analysis. Surely, we should observe police legitimacy through two components: 1) *Trust in the police* and 2) *Obligation to obey the police*. Results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13:
Correlations (Pearson's coefficient)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Police legitimacy	1									
Obligation to obey the police	.82**	1								
Trust in the police	.84**	.37**	1							
Procedural justice	.71**	.38**	.79**	1						
Compliance with the law	.65**	.38**	.69**	.73**	1					
Cooperation	-.04	-.09 [†]	.02	.07	-.06	1				
Deterrence	.48**	.32**	.48**	.47**	.48**	.02	1			
Personal morality	.43**	.29**	.42**	.38**	.42**	.11*	.62**	1		
Police effectiveness	.60**	.32**	.67**	.65**	.61**	-.03	.61**	.51**	1	
Moral credibility	.36**	.29**	.41**	.44**	.48**	.11**	.49**	.50**	.56**	1

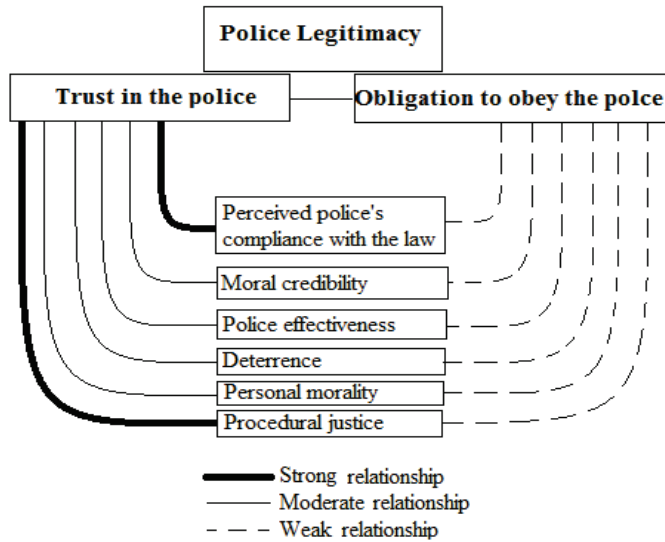
[†]p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Table 13 reports the correlations between the variables/factors which we used. It is possible to see that *Trust in the police* and *Perceived police's compliance with the law* represent a correlation coefficient ($r = 0.69$), which is significantly ($p < 0.01$) different from zero. In other words, the relationship existing between these variables is statistically significant. There is also a positive relationship between *Trust in the police* and *Moral credibility* ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$) and *Police effectiveness* ($r = 0.67$, $p < 0.01$). It seems plausible that **image (reputation) of the police** determines trust in the police, and if the police work effectively, morally, and in compliance with the law, trust in the police will go up. Interestingly, that does not necessarily mean that citizens will cooperate with the police. Namely, the correlation between these variables and the *Cooperation with the police* does not exist, or there is a very low correlation. Similarly, there is a significant positive relationship between the aforementioned variables (*Perceived police's compliance with the law*, *Moral credibility*, *Police effectiveness*) and *Obligation to obey the police* ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$), as the second part of the police legitimacy.

It seems that **threat of sanctions/costs** (formal and informal) plays a significant role regarding trust in the police. Thus, certainty of legal sanctions (*Deterrence*) and moral sanctions (*Personal morality*) significantly correlates with trust in the police ($r = 0.48$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) and also with the obligation to obey the police ($r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$; $r = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$).

Finally, the factor **procedural justice** has a strong relationship with trust in the police ($r = 0.79$, $p < 0.01$), and the correlation between this factor and obligation to obey the police is statistically significant with moderate strength ($r = 0.38$, $p < 0.01$). The results of the correlation analyses did not show significant correlations between police legitimacy and other factors/variables we describe in the article. Thus, demographic factors (sex/gender and age) are not playing a significant role in shaping trust in police, likewise self-control or lifestyle. It is very important to understand that the variable *Cooperation with police* does not significantly correlate with any of factors. Figure 1 shows the correlation between trust in police and the obligation to obey the police, as parts of *Police legitimacy*, and identified factors.

Figure 1:
Relationship
between police
legitimacy and
identified
factors



5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first objective of this paper was to describe Police legitimacy in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina) through the eyes of students. We began by reviewing theoretical perspectives on this topic, and, by doing so, crucial factors have been identified and the relationships between them have been examined. In presenting the findings, we presented some descriptive statistics and noted that students are very cautious in assessing police legitimacy. To find the causes, we examined the variables *Trust in police* and *Obligation to obey the police*. According to Reisig et al. (2013), these are two crucial segments of police legitimacy.

Results show that trust in the police in our student population is not at a high level. In this context, trust is believing that the police have the right intentions and are competent to do what they are tasked to do (Hough et al., 2013). Therefore, students do not believe the police can be characterized in this manner: as a result, following their opinions, they will not accept an obligation to obey the police in all cases. That can be a significant problem if we consider the fact that the survey respondents were students of criminal justice, security studies, and law. On the other hand, it is very important to consider the doubt in the criminal justice system, precisely the doubt in functionaries' moral credibility. Robinson (1995) dedicates special attention to this factor. The results indicate that a significant part of students view the criminal justice system with less moral credibility. If we add the attitude about limited police effectiveness, we get a complete picture. Generally, through the students' eyes, the image of police in Sarajevo is negative, and the worst thing is their experience with criminal justice system. When compared to respondents without such experiences, they more frequently reported police violations of the law. These findings somewhat contradict the Tyler and Fagan (2008) study according to which experiencing procedural justice as a personal experience increases legitimacy. How each community perceives law enforcement depends on each police department. It is thus essential that police programs and tactics

be tailored to meet the specific needs of the neighbourhoods (Brown & Benedict, 2002). Namely, we should give the impression that the public and the police are on the same side. But how can we do that? According to Tyler and Fagan (2008), the police can generally enhance their legitimacy by using fair procedures.

The article examined beliefs of students about certainty of sanctions for some criminal offences. It seems that most respondents think that, as offenders, they will not be arrested and punished. That could be an indicator of police working effectively or not. On the other hand, most respondents have strong moral beliefs, and they blame offenders. Moral beliefs play a significant role in the decision-making processes about compliance with the law (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, & Paternoster, 2004). We should probably expect cooperation with the police and obey the police decisions from people with high level of moral beliefs.

In the eyes of students, the style the police use in their contact with citizens is not at a high level. In his works, Tyler dedicates some special attention to this factor (Hough et al., 2013), as it is usually significant in the considerations about police legitimacy because fair and legal treatment also demonstrates that the police are acting in the interests of the wider community.

On the other side, this article examined relationships between two linked parts of police legitimacy and thereto related factors, such as low self-control, lifestyle, procedural justice, cooperation with the police, perceived compliance by the police with the law, legal cynicism, deterrence, personal morality, police effectiveness, and moral credibility, many of which indicate a strong and moderate relationship with trust in the police. Obviously, low trust in the police reduces police legitimacy in the eyes of the public. If we consider the obligation to obey the police, the conclusion will be similar but not identical. The analyses show that trust in the police is a far more salient antecedent than the obligation to obey the police. Similar results have been noted by Reisig et al. (2013).

Some of the identified indicators do not show a significant relationship with Police legitimacy, but that does not mean that we should ignore them. Namely, we should note the aforementioned limitations of the research, and improve the methodology in future studies.

In the end, the results from this study should serve as an inspiration for the next phase of research and as indicators for better realization. Considered from the perspective of the social justification of this work, the results can be expected to contribute to better policing policy-making. It is important to note that the police cannot function without the support of the public, so they should strive to work in such ways that maximize public cooperation.

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Appendix 1

Descriptive analysis of experiences with criminal justice system (n = 583)

Variable	Frequency	%
Role in official contact with criminal justice system		
Hearsay witness	67	11.5
Eyewitness	116	19.9
Person who has committed a minor offence	148	25.4
Suspect of a crime	56	9.6
Someone who reported a crime	139	23.8
Victim of a crime	142	24.4

The way of response of criminal justice system institutions		
No personal communication	279	47.9
Very professional	54	9.3
Mostly professional	172	29.5
Unprofessional	36	6.2
Unprofessional and rude	31	5.3
Cruel and accusatorial	11	1.9

Appendix 2

Descriptive analysis of students' victimizations (n = 583)

Variable	Frequency	%
Victim of a crime		
Yes	171	29.3
No	412	70.7
Type of a crime		
Theft	436	74.8
Break-in/burglary	386	66.2
Rape/sexual assault	4	0.7
Armed robbery	3	0.5
Arson	60	10.3
Assault	91	15.6
Fraud	89	15.3
Other crime	25	4.3
Type of experienced victimization		
Non-violent	81	13.9
Violent	67	11.5
Incident description		
Bad experience and still suffering	22	3.8
Bad experience and no longer suffering	54	9.3
Not so bad experience	52	8.9
No impact on respondent	55	9.4
Missing	399	68.4