Public Perceptions of the Legitimacy of the Law and Legal Authorities: Evidence from the Caribbean

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Research on procedural justice and legitimacy has expanded greatly across the social sciences in recent years. The process-based model of regulation, which links people's assessments of procedural justice and legitimacy to their compliance with the law and legal authorities, has become particularly influential in criminology and sociolegal studies. A review of the previous research on perceived legitimacy highlights two important features. First, legitimacy has been conceptualized and measured in many different ways. Second, most of the research on legitimacy has focused on only a handful of developed nations. Using survey data from Trinidad and Tobago, this article examines the conceptualization and measurement of the perceived legitimacy of the law and legal authorities. The findings indicate that some of the prominent conceptual and measurement models used in previous research are not empirically valid in the Trinidadian context. The implications of the results for conceptualization, theory, and future research are discussed.

With roots in philosophy, political theory, and social psychology, the idea of legitimacy occupies an important role in scholarship across the social sciences, including psychology (e.g., Lind and Tyler 1988), organizational theory (e.g., Elsbach 2001), political science (e.g., Easton 1979), and criminology and sociolegal studies (e.g., Smith 2007; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002). Subjective assessments of the legitimacy of authority, whether in the form of individuals or institutions, are thought to influence a wide range of human behaviors, from child obedience and worker productivity, to decisions about whether to obey the law or comply with legal authorities. Legitimacy assessments play an

increasingly important role in a diverse scholarly literature on how people think about and respond to authority.

In criminology and sociolegal studies, a rapidly developing body of scholarship focuses on the antecedents and consequences of the perceived legitimacy of law and legal authorities. The most well-known causal model linking perceived legitimacy to its antecedents and consequences is Tyler's process-based model of regulation (e.g., Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002). In this model, perceived legitimacy mediates the relationship between people's perceptions of the procedural justice of legal authorities and their decisions about whether to obey the law or comply with the directives of legal authorities. According to this perspective, people assess the procedural justice employed by legal authorities like police officers, prosecutors, judges, and prison guards. These procedural justice judgments have a powerful influence on their more general assessments of the legitimacy of the law and legal institutions, which in turn influence people's willingness to obey the law and comply with the directives of legal authorities. Thus, according to the process-based model, when legal authorities treat people in a procedurally just manner, their behaviors promote the legitimacy of law and legal institutions and cultivate compliance and other beneficial outcomes like cooperation and support (Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2009; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Fagan 2008; Tyler and Huo 2002).

The process-based model of regulation is appealing for many reasons. From a theoretical perspective, it proposes an elegant set of causal relationships between procedural justice, legitimacy, and compliance with the law and legal authorities. Moreover, it serves as a compelling counterweight to deterrence, the most common or instinctual explanation for why people obey the law (Tyler 2006). The process-based model is also inherently testable or refutable, thus satisfying a key condition for good scientific theory (Blumer 1954). The model is also appealing from a philosophical perspective because it suggests that authority figures should treat people fairly, not only because it can satisfy the Kantian imperative to do the right thing, but because it also satisfies utilitarian objectives by generating socially meaningful outcomes.

Studies in this area have grown exponentially in recent years. Many of these studies provide support for the process-based model of regulation (Fagan and Tyler 2004; Hinds and Murphy 2007; Hough et al. 2013; Jackson et al. 2012; Mazerolle et al. 2013; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Fagan 2008; Tyler and Huo 2002). A review of the research on the legitimacy of legal authorities reveals two important patterns. First, legitimacy has been conceptualized and measured in numerous ways, suggesting that there is not yet a clear consensus among scholars about what

exactly constitutes legitimacy. Recently, a robust debate has emerged about the conceptual meaning and dimensional structure of perceived legitimacy (Bottoms and Tankebe 2012; Cherney and Murphy 2011; Gau 2011; Hough et al. 2013; Tankebe 2013). Second, most of the research on perceived legitimacy and the process-based model of regulation is based on data from a handful of developed nations. The few studies that have tested the model in other sociopolitical contexts have produced mixed results, thus raising questions about the universality of the structure and content of perceived legitimacy, as well as its connections with related concepts.

The present study seeks to address two issues: the lack of conceptual consensus in the field and the limited amount of research in developing nations. We aim to clarify the nature and structure of the perceived legitimacy of law and legal authorities, testing the fit of a dominant conceptual model and contrasting it with alternative models arising from recent conceptual and empirical challenges. The data used for this analysis come from Trinidad and Tobago, a small twin-island developing nation in the eastern Caribbean. This study contributes to a large and growing body of research in criminology and sociolegal studies on the meaning of perceived legitimacy and its relationships with other key concepts. It also contributes to the small but important body of research on procedural justice and legitimacy in developing and postcolonial countries (Kochel et al. 2013; Reisig and Lloyd 2009; Tankebe 2008a, 2009).

Conceptualizing Legitimacy and Related Concepts

The concept of legitimacy has a lengthy history in social and political philosophy. As Jost and Major (2001: 4) note, "it is now a well-established fact in sociology and political science that leaders and authorities are effective to the extent that they are perceived as having legitimate authority and acting in accordance with prevailing norms of appropriate conduct." Legitimate authorities are those institutions, regimes, or individuals whose laws, edicts, or directives are perceived as "desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman 1995: 574). Modern thinking about legitimacy has been shaped heavily by Weber, whose vital contribution was the notion that legitimate authority generates compliance by inspiring in people "an internal sense of moral obligation" (Herd 1999: 387; Weber 1918/1968).

Within criminology and sociolegal studies, arguably the most influential scholarship on procedural justice and legitimacy is the

work of Tyler and his colleagues. Tyler and Huo (2002: 102) define legitimacy as "a quality possessed by an authority, a law, or an institution that leads others to feel obligated to obey its decisions and directives voluntarily."[1] Voluntary compliance, emerging out of an internal sense of obligation to obey the law, plays a central role in Tyler's conceptualization of legitimacy. This view of legitimacy serves as a counterpoint to deterrence, which suggests that people comply with the law to avoid punishment.[2]

Tyler's theoretical framework—the process-based model of regulation—links procedural justice to legitimacy, and legitimacy to compliance. Tyler's model has been especially influential in the study of the police, particularly with regard to their relationships and interactions with the public (Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002).[3] In the process-based model of policing, procedural justice is typically conceptualized as having two components: quality of treatment (QT; e.g., the extent to which an officer behaves respectfully and politely) and quality of decisionmaking (QD; e.g., the extent to which decisions are based on a fair and neutral process). Tyler posits that procedural justice bolsters the perceived legitimacy of law and legal authorities, which in turn promotes citizen compliance and other beneficial outcomes such as cooperation with, and support for, legal authorities and institutions.

Although Tyler's conceptualization of legitimacy varies somewhat across studies, the central components of legitimacy in most of his work are obligation to obey and institutional trust (e.g., Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002). Thus, measures of one or both, particularly obligation, feature prominently in most of the empirical research on perceived legitimacy (e.g., Kochel 2012; Reisig et al. 2007; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2008a; Tyler 2001; Tyler and Fagan 2008). At times, Tyler also includes cynicism about the

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[1] Scholars have recently begun to separate the perceived legitimacy of the law from the perceived legitimacy of legal institutions. For instance, Murphy et al. (2009) treat the perceived legitimacy of the law as an antecedent of the perceived legitimacy of the police (see also Jackson et al. 2013).

[2] Deterrence is one aspect of formal social control, which Tyler (2006) views as an inefficient mechanism for regulating human behavior. By linking compliance to internal ethical values, Tyler's process-based model of regulation engenders compliance without the significant cost of formal social control institutions like police or courts. If the majority of people chose not to comply voluntarily with the law or legal authorities, formal social control institutions would quickly become overwhelmed. Furthermore, when people perceive the law or legal authorities as illegitimate, they are more likely to rebel or become defiant (Paternoster et al. 1997; Sherman 1993). Thus, it is in the best interest of authority figures to behave in ways that preserve or enhance perceptions of legitimacy.

[3] Social scientists studying perceived police legitimacy in countries as diverse as Australia, England and Wales, Ghana, Israel, Jamaica, Slovenia, and Trinidad and Tobago have based their conceptualization and measurement of legitimacy on Tyler's work (e.g., Elliott et al. 2011; Hinds and Murphy 2007; Jackson et al. 2012; Jonathan-Zamir and Weisburd 2013; Kochel et al. 2013; Murphy and Cherney 2011; Reisig and Lloyd 2009; Reisig et al. 2012; Tankebe 2008a; Weisburd et al. 2011; Wolfe 2011).

law as a component of legitimacy (e.g., Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler and Huo 2002). Drawing on Ewick and Silbey (1998), Tyler and Huo (2002: 104–05) conceptualize cynicism about the law in terms of whether people believe the law is used by the powerful or the state against them and their interests. Tyler has also included institutional support and affective feelings about authorities, laws, or institutions as additional aspects of legitimacy in some studies (Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler and Huo 2002). Tyler's research on these issues treats trust and obligation as key components of perceived legitimacy, with cynicism about the law, institutional support, and affective feelings included as additional components of legitimacy in some studies. As noted earlier, Tyler's conceptualization of legitimacy has become the dominant or default approach adopted by most researchers. Recently, however, Tankebe (2013) offered an alternative conceptualization of legitimacy, arguing against equating legitimacy with a felt obligation to obey legal authorities.

Drawing on Beetham (1991) and his own previous work (Bottoms and Tankebe 2012), Tankebe (2013) posits that legitimacy is comprised of four dimensions: distributive fairness, procedural fairness, police lawfulness, and effectiveness. Tankebe's conceptualization of legitimacy differs from Tyler's in important ways, and these differences have significant implications for testing the process-based model of regulation. For example, while Tyler treats procedural justice as an *antecedent* of legitimacy, Tankebe considers it a *component* of legitimacy. Similarly, Tyler draws a sharp conceptual distinction between instrumental judgments about the perceived effectiveness of police and normative judgments about the procedural fairness of police (Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2005, 2006), treating both as antecedents of legitimacy (Sunshine and Tyler 2003). Tankebe (2013), on the other hand, incorporates perceived police effectiveness into his conceptualization of legitimacy. Moreover, Tankebe (2013) treats obligation to obey, which is a central *component* of legitimacy in all of Tyler's work, as a *consequence* of legitimacy. Tankebe's (2013) reconceptualization of perceived legitimacy is well grounded in the conceptual and theoretical literature on legitimacy more broadly and represents a thoughtful challenge to Tyler's conceptualization.[4]

Stepping back from the particulars of this theoretical debate, we find it useful to envision perceived legitimacy as enmeshed in a dense network of related concepts representing different

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[4] Hough et al. (2013) recently offered a revised conceptualization of legitimacy that combines elements of Tyler's and Beetham's perspectives. In contrast to Tankebe (2013), they conceive of legitimacy as having three components: obligation, moral alignment, and perceived lawfulness (see also Jackson et al. 2012).

dimensions of how people perceive, judge, and respond to law and legal authorities. Some of the potential dimensions within this network are legitimacy and its components, procedural and distributive justice, perceived effectiveness, legal cynicism, and other related concepts. Cronbach and Meehl (1955: 187) note that " 'learning more about' a theoretical construct is a matter of elaborating the nomological network in which it occurs. . . ." Achieving a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the nature and dimensional structure of legitimacy means delineating its position within a nomological network of related concepts. Clarifying the relationships between related concepts is an essential part of the conceptualization and operationalization process through which abstract ideas are transformed into concrete measures. The criminological and sociolegal literature on legitimacy and its antecedents and consequences are at a crossroad because the nomological network in which these concepts are enmeshed is not yet well understood. It is often unclear whether and how the concepts within this network are related to one another, particularly given semantic overlap in their labels and in the items frequently used in empirical research to measure key constructs (Gau 2011; Henderson et al. 2010; Maguire and Johnson 2010, 2014; Mazerolle et al. 2013; Reisig et al. 2007; Tankebe 2013).

For example, it is unclear how *cynicism about the law*, which Tyler uses as a component of legitimacy, is related to the concept of *legal cynicism*, which was originally developed by Sampson and Bartusch (1998), and which has been used by Fagan and others in recent work on legal socialization (Fagan and Piquero 2007; Fagan and Tyler 2005). Drawing on Srole's (1956) measure of anomie, Sampson and Bartusch's (1998: 786) measure of *legal cynicism* uses indicators that tap into "general beliefs about the legitimacy of law and social norms." While Tyler and Huo (2002) treat *cynicism about the law* as a component of legitimacy, other scholars (Fagan and Piquero 2007; Fagan and Tyler 2005; Piquero et al. 2005) treat both legitimacy and *legal cynicism* as aspects of a broader concept that they term *legal socialization*.

A close reading of the specific items used in previous research to measure *legal cynicism* and *cynicism about the law* suggests that they are not tapping into the same concept, though they share a similar label. Tyler and Huo (2002: 104–05) conceptualize *cynicism about the law* in terms of whether the law serves people's interests. In contrast, Fagan and his colleagues conceive of *legal cynicism* as being rooted in a sense of normlessness or anomie. Their measure taps into people's views about whether it is acceptable to act outside of norms, rules, and laws (see Fagan and Tyler 2005: 221; Piquero et al. 2005: 272). Recently, Kirk and his colleagues (Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Kirk and Papachristos 2011) have developed an

alternative conceptualization of *legal cynicism*. In contrast to the normative perspective offered by Sampson and Bartusch and used by Fagan and colleagues, Kirk and his colleagues conceive of legal cynicism as a cultural orientation that views the law and legal authorities as illegitimate, unresponsive, and ineffective (Kirk and Papachristos 2011). These examples highlight how the nomological network of constructs related to perceived legitimacy remains unresolved and difficult to delineate.

As demonstrated in this brief review, scholars have not yet settled on a clear and consistent conceptualization of perceived legitimacy. Questions remain about its conceptual meaning, its structure and dimensionality, and its overlap with other related concepts such as procedural justice, distributive justice, perceived effectiveness, legal cynicism, and cynicism about the law (Tyler and Jackson 2013). Because perceived legitimacy has been conceptualized in different ways in the literature, and may overlap with other related concepts, clarifying its conceptual boundaries and mapping out its relationships with other key concepts is crucial.

Measuring Perceived Legitimacy

Just as scholars have *conceptualized* the legitimacy of legal authorities in a variety of ways, our review of the literature reveals substantial variations in the way perceived legitimacy has been *operationalized and measured*. Legitimacy is typically measured using one or more composite indexes. Most studies treat legitimacy as unidimensional, though some have specified two-, three-, or four-dimensional measures. Though the dimensional structure of legitimacy has not yet been resolved, formal tests of the dimensionality of legitimacy are rare. Few studies have seriously addressed measurement issues by assessing construct validity, diagnosing measurement error, or refining indicators. Few authors have examined the convergent and discriminant validity of their perceived legitimacy measures, or tested the empirical relationships between perceived legitimacy and potentially overlapping constructs such as procedural justice, cynicism about the law, or police effectiveness. This concern is especially salient in research on procedural justice and legitimacy because some indicators and constructs that have been used to measure legitimacy overlap conceptually and empirically with procedural justice. This overlap raises questions about the causal relationship between procedural justice and legitimacy, which is a central component of the process-based model of regulation.

Several scholars have argued that inattention to these types of conceptual and methodological issues raises important questions

about the validity of the theoretical inferences that can be drawn from this body of research (Eisner and Nivette 2013; Gau 2011; Henderson et al. 2010; Maguire and Johnson 2010, 2014; Mazerolle et al. 2013; Reisig et al. 2007). For instance, in their systematic review of research evidence on legitimacy, Mazerolle et al. (2013: 45) noted that they "encountered substantial heterogeneity among conceptual and operational definitions of key outcomes. Difficulty in defining and measuring latent variables . . . was reflected in a wide variety of measures for each construct." Mazerolle and her colleagues also noted that the relative absence of reliability and validity diagnostics in this line of research made it difficult for them to assess the effects of differences in measurement on study outcomes. Similarly, Reisig et al. (2007: 1006) observed that "much of the survey research in this area has inconsistently operationalized key constructs and has done surprisingly little to evaluate the construct validity of existing scales . . . perfunctory attention to whether measured variables reflect theoretical constructs has resulted in confounding variables and misleading findings." Reisig and his colleagues concluded that scholars need to pay more attention to construct validation in research on the process-based model. Similar concerns have been raised by several others (Eisner and Nivette 2013; Gau 2011; Henderson et al. 2010; Maguire and Johnson 2010, 2014).

The Present Study

The conceptual and methodological issues we have just reviewed have important implications for theories that specify relationships between procedural justice, legitimacy, and related concepts. Since concepts are the building blocks of theory, knowledge about their nature and structure and the relationships between them is vital for building, testing, and refining theory. Conversely, conceptual ambiguity inhibits the development of a robust and meaningful body of social theory. Blumer (1954: 9) notes the importance of exposing concepts to empirical scrutiny so that "proposals about that world can be tested, refined and enriched . . . ambiguity in concepts blocks or frustrates contact with the empirical world and keeps theory apart in a corresponding unrealistic realm." Similarly, Willer and Webster (1970: 755) note: "since we know that theoretical concepts gain their meaning primarily from their relations to one another . . . empirical studies can be used as tools for theory construction. Such research would begin with the description of observable relations." While much of the conceptualization process takes place at the level of abstract

thought, connecting abstract concepts with observable or empirical referents can provide useful insights about the validity of theories linking those concepts.

As we noted earlier, the scientific literature provides many clear examples of inconsistency and dissensus in the conceptualization and measurement of the legitimacy of law and legal authorities. One way to evaluate the competing perspectives is to examine the empirical relationships between observable measures of these concepts. In this study, we test a series of measurement models in an effort to provide greater clarity about the nature of perceived legitimacy and its relationships with other key concepts. Our findings reveal useful insights about the nature of the nomological network in which these concepts reside. These insights are directly relevant to theories linking procedural justice, legitimacy, and other key concepts, including those articulated by Tyler and Tankebe.

We examine the conceptualization and measurement of perceived legitimacy using survey data from Trinidad and Tobago, thus building on a small body of scholarship on police legitimacy in the developing world. Research in different sociopolitical settings is important for testing the conceptualization and measurement of legitimacy and other related perceptual constructs (Hough et al. 2013). As Tyler and his colleagues have argued (Tyler et al. 2007), and as Tankebe's work (2008a, 2009) suggests, the meaning of perceived legitimacy may not be universal. Moreover, its structural relationships with related concepts may vary across cultures and stages of development (Smith 2007). We begin by describing the research site, including a brief history and overview of relevant contemporary issues. We then estimate several statistical models that shed light on the structure of perceived legitimacy and its relationships with other key constructs. These analyses reveal new insights about the nature and structure of citizen perceptions of law and legal authorities. Though the research setting is distant from the locations where most of the research in this genre has taken place, the findings are consistent with an emerging body of research that questions the meaning and measurement of perceived legitimacy and other related concepts.

Research Site

Trinidad and Tobago is a two-island Caribbean nation located near the northeast coast of Venezuela. The nation achieved independence from Great Britain in 1962. Its official language is English and its legal system is modeled after English common law. Trinidad and Tobago is one of the wealthiest nations in the Caribbean due to its petroleum and natural gas reserves, but is

considered a developing nation.[5] The country's population of 1.26 million reflects its colonial history and is largely comprised of descendants of African slaves and South Asian indentured servants. According to data from the 2000 census, 40 percent of the population is Indian, 37.5 percent is African, and 20.5 percent is of mixed heritage.

Understanding a nation's evolution is vital for understanding the historical and contemporary context of policing and the law (see Tankebe 2008b). The style of policing that is common in Caribbean nations like Trinidad and Tobago—which "treat[s] the policed like subjects rather than citizens"—is rooted in the region's tumultuous colonial history (Harriott 2000: 284). Indeed, scholars argue that one cannot separate the development of policing in the Caribbean from the politics of colonialism:

> Understanding the enduring consequences of colonialism in the shaping of every aspect of Caribbean society, including the state's coercive apparatus, is arguably the most important factor in explaining police behavior in the region . . . the passive role of politics in the policing of plantation societies, differentiated along both class and racial lines, is of special significance in explaining not only the tactical decisions made by police in the daily performance of their duties, but also the enduring characteristics of police culture and behaviour that continue to generate recurring crises in police-community relations. (Mars 2007: 265)

As shown below, these recurring crises have generated significant legitimacy costs for the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS).

Spain colonized the island of Trinidad in the late sixteenth century, enslaved the native Arawak population, and imported African slaves to work in the sugar, cacao, and cotton industries (Richardson 1975). Following the Napoleonic Wars and subsequent transfer of the islands from Spain to Britain in 1797, Trinidad and Tobago wrestled with issues associated with slavery, indentured servitude, and law enforcement practices (Ottley 1972). During the nineteenth century, the police were a "paramilitary organization, headed by military officers . . . who envisioned their organization's role as repression of a rebellious public that threatened the island's elite" (Mastrofski and Lum 2008: 486; see also Trotman 1986). Following emancipation in 1834, some 20,000 slaves and their

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[5] The United Nations classifies Trinidad and Tobago as a "small island developing state" together with 36 other UN member states. The World Bank classifies it as a developing nation with an "upper middle income economy." The United Nations Development Program lists Trinidad and Tobago as the lowest ranking nation within its "High Human Development" category in the same class with the most developed nations in the world. The government of Trinidad and Tobago has established a plan entitled *Vision 2020* to become a developed nation by the year 2020.

children were freed (Richardson 1975; Wood 1968) and many migrated to the hillsides around the capital city of Port of Spain, including the area now known as Belmont (where our research took place). Without adequate means, many settlers did not pay for the land and instead illegally "squatted" in certain areas, a concern that eventually led the Police Service to establish a formal Squatters' Squad in 1971 (Ottley 1972: 137). Consistent with Tankebe's (2008b) account of former slave experiences in Ghana, the settlers (including those in Belmont) received poor treatment by police officers, some of whom may have perceived the settlers as "less than equal" and as lacking common norms and values.

Current Issues

Historical experiences with police mistreatment can have a lingering impact on citizen trust in police and perceptions of police legitimacy, particularly when these issues continue to remain salient. At the time of our research, Trinidad's criminal justice system was experiencing a serious legitimacy crisis related to the government's inability to stop an outbreak of violence. The number of homicides more than quadrupled in less than a decade from 120 in 2000 to 540 in 2008. Most of the increase was due to gang violence in distressed neighborhoods (Maguire et al. 2008), many of which were located in and around the area where our research took place. At the same time, clearance rates for homicide declined dramatically due in part to police capacity issues (Maguire et al. 2010). These two trends were a common storyline in the local media and significantly impacted public satisfaction with the police and the criminal justice system. National public opinion surveys conducted yearly between 2002 and 2007 indicated that citizens viewed the police as ineffective and expressed little to no confidence in them (MORI International 2002–2007). Research in other postcolonial nations shows that police effectiveness in controlling crime can exert a strong influence on perceptions of legitimacy (Tankebe 2008a). There are good reasons to expect the same to be true in Trinidad.

In addition, concerns about police corruption and brutality were widespread (U.S. Department of State 2007). For example, 43 percent of respondents in a 2005 national survey characterized the police service as corrupt (MORI International 2002–2007). Incidents of alleged police brutality were commonplace, with victims reporting beatings and other mistreatment at the hands of police (e.g., Deosaran 2002). Police use of deadly force was of particular concern (Amnesty International 2006; Kowlessar 2008; Renne 2008). These concerns were especially acute in the community where our research took place. For example, in 2006, more than 50 percent of residents in the Gonzales neighborhood of Belmont

reported that police officers used excessive force against community residents "very often" or "somewhat often" (24.0 percent and 33.2 percent, respectively) (Kuhns et al. 2011).

These patterns highlight the serious legitimacy challenges facing the TTPS and the nation's government.[6] Police–citizen relationships evolved somewhat differently in Trinidad and Tobago than in the United States and other developed nations where most of the research in this genre has taken place. These social and historical differences provide an intriguing opportunity to examine the nature of perceived legitimacy and its relationships with other key concepts in a setting where these issues are highly salient. Thus, Trinidad and Tobago represents a useful laboratory for examining the meaning and measurement of legitimacy and related perceptual concepts.

Methods

Data for this study are drawn from wave 3 of the IMPACT study, a multi-wave citizen survey designed to evaluate a pilot community-oriented policing project. The survey data were collected in Belmont, a community located in the Port of Spain metropolitan area. A local research firm conducted face-to-face interviews with 603 randomly selected residents from June 3 to July 11, 2008; the AAPOR Response Rate #1 was 83 percent.[7] Descriptive statistics for the sample are shown in Appendix S1, which can be found in the online version of this article.

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[6] In light of these significant concerns, the government of Trinidad and Tobago embarked on ambitious efforts to reform the TTPS in 2005 (Mastrofski and Lum 2008).

[7] To facilitate a quasi-experiment not relevant to the present analysis, the IMPACT study design involved partitioning Belmont residents into two groups for sampling purposes: those who live in Gonzales (denoted from this point forward as "Gonzales") and those who live elsewhere in Belmont (denoted from this point forward as "Belmont"). In Belmont, sampling was proportional to the size of the population using community boundaries based on census files from the Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office. The sampling boundaries for Gonzales were based on those identified by community residents because the boundaries of Gonzales are debated. The official boundaries from the Port of Spain Corporation and Central Statistical Office used for statistical purposes are smaller than the boundaries identified by community residents (see Pride in Gonzales Committee (2005), *Gonzales Community Profile*, *East Port of Spain*, *Trinidad*, "4.1.1 Population Size & Growth"). Gonzales was then split into eight zones (chosen to reflect smaller neighborhoods within the community), and the sample was drawn proportional to the population in each zone. In order to select respondents, GIS maps for each area were generated showing roads and housing. A start house was located and a sampling interval was calculated so that interviewers canvassed every "nth" house from the start location. Once the household was identified, an adult respondent within each household was selected using the "last birthday" method to ensure that the probability of selecting an individual within the household was the same for all eligible respondents. If selected participants were not at home at the time of the visit, interviewers made three call backs before the case was coded as a nonresponse using AAPOR final distribution code 2.25 (The American Association for Public Opinion Research 2008. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys, 5th Edition*, Lenexa, Kansas). The AAPOR Response Rate #1 was 85 percent in Belmont and 81 percent in Gonzales.

Table 1. Initial Measurement Model with 7 Factors and 34 Items

Legitimacy—Institutional Trust (5 Items)
Q90A.   I have confidence in the police.
Q90B.   The police are trustworthy.
Q92A.   I am proud of the police.
Q92B.   The police act within the law.
Q94B.   Most police officers do their job well.
Legitimacy—Obligation to Obey (5 Items)
Q78.   People should obey the law even it goes against what they think is right.
Q80.   People should obey the law even if they will not be caught for breaking it.
Q80B.   People should do what police tell them to do even if they disagree with the
             order.
Q80C.   People should do what police tell them to do even if they don't like the way
             the police treat them.
Q84.   I feel that I should accept the decisions made by legal authorities.
Legitimacy—Cynicism about the Law (4 Items)
Q82.   People in power use the law to try to control people like me.
Q84A.   The police do not act to protect my interests.
Q84B.   The law represents the values of the people in power rather than the values
             of people like me.
Q85.   The justice system and the laws in society are not in the interests, nor in
             favor, of persons like me.
Procedural Justice—Quality of Decision Making (4 Items)
Q89.   The police know how to carry out their official duties properly.
Q91.   The police are neutral and fair when dealing with citizens.
Q98A.   The police treat everyone equally.
Q98B.   The police make decisions based on facts, not their personal biases or
             opinions.
Procedural Justice—Quality of Treatment (6 Items)
Q92.   The police address citizens in a respectful manner and appropriate tone.
Q96.   The police are responsive to the needs of citizens.
Q97.   The police show care and concern for the welfare of the citizens they deal
             with.
Q98D.   The police clearly explain the reasons for their actions.
Q98E.   The police treat people fairly.
Q98F.   The police respect citizens' rights.
Legal Cynicism (6 Items)
Q79.   It's okay to do anything you want, as long as you don't hurt anyone.
Q80A.   Laws are made to be broken.
Q81.   To make money, there are no right or wrong ways, only easy and hard ways.
Q81A.   Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take
             care of itself.
Q83.   Fights among rival gangs should be ignored by the police.
Q83A.   Fighting between friends or within families is no one else's business.
Police Effectiveness (4 Items)
Q100.   How effective are the police at controlling <u>violent crime</u> in your
             neighborhood?
Q101.   How effective are the police at controlling <u>gangs</u> in your neighborhood?
Q102.   How effective are the police at controlling <u>gun violence</u> in your
             neighborhood?
Q103.   How effective are the police at controlling <u>drugs</u> in your neighborhood?

Topics on the IMPACT survey included community cohesion, fear of crime and victimization, perceived crime and neighborhood problems, and attitudes toward the police and the law. The instrument was carefully constructed based on a review of the relevant literature and focus groups in the study communities. Many of the survey items were drawn from previous research, and the questionnaire was reviewed by local professionals to ensure that it reflected Trinidadian language and culture and was appropriate

for a community with low literacy.[8] The instrument was further refined after pretesting with a small sample.

Measurement Strategy

Our general measurement approach was to treat respondents' answers on individual survey items as indicators of latent variables representing legitimacy and related perceptual concepts. We sought to measure seven perceptual dimensions. Following Tyler and Huo (2002), we included three dimensions of legitimacy: trust in institutions, obligation to obey, and cynicism about the law. Existing research treats these dimensions as "subscales" of legitimacy (e.g., Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2008b; Tyler 2001; Tyler and Fagan 2008). In line with Sunshine and Tyler (2003), we included two dimensions of procedural justice: QT and QD (see also Reisig et al. 2007; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2008a; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002). Finally, we included separate factors measuring legal cynicism (Fagan and Piquero 2007; Fagan and Tyler 2005; Sampson and Bartusch 1998) and perceived police effectiveness (Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tankebe 2013). Unfortunately, we do not have access to a measure of distributive justice. Table 1 lists the items associated with each dimension as they have been used in previous research.

The indicators were all ordinal variables with four categories. Thirty of the questions had response options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*), while four questions asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of police using response options ranging from 1 (*not at all effective*) to 4 (*very effective*).[9]

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[8] English is the official language in Trinidad, so no language translation of survey items was necessary. However, colloquial terms differ across cultures, and we wanted to capture these in the survey. For example, when asking respondents about "truancy" in their neighborhood, interviewers may have also used the phrase "break biche," which is the common term for skipping school in Trinidad.

[9] For the 30 items using Likert-type response options, respondents could select from the following four options: *strongly disagree*, *mostly disagree*, *mostly agree*, and *strongly agree*. One additional response option was "don't know." The proportion of respondents who gave a "don't know" response on these items ranged from a low of 1.5 percent for two items (Q78 and Q79) to a high of 11.8 percent for item Q98b (about police decisionmaking). Research on attitudinal survey response options is divided over how to handle "no opinion" or "don't know" response options. Some authors recommend including a no opinion option, while others find that this approach reduces data quality and effective sample size (Krosnick et al. 2002). We used an estimator that relies on pairwise present estimation, thus enabling us to retain cases in which some items have missing data. Another option would have been to treat "don't know" responses as a neutral category. For every analysis presented in this study, we also conducted a sensitivity analysis to determine whether our findings differed if we treated the "don't know" responses as a neutral option. In each instance, the factor structure was identical, the loading patterns were very similar, and the analysis resulted in the same substantive conclusions.

Frequencies for the 34 items used to measure these seven dimensions are available in Appendix S2, which can be found in the online version of this article.

Model Estimation and Selection

We used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the fit of an initial measurement model containing the seven factors and 34 items listed in Table 1. Measurement models allow all latent variables to be freely correlated, but do not impose a causal structure on the relationships between them. Measurement models are often useful for examining the relationships between constructs and their correspondence with observed indicators. As a result, we do not make any inferences about the causal relations between these constructs. Based on the findings from the initial CFA specification, we made small modifications to the model. Because the outcomes (indicators) are categorical, we used a robust (mean and variance adjusted) weighted least squares (WLS) estimator available in *Mplus* (Muthén and Muthén 2010).[10] Monte Carlo simulations show that the robust WLS estimator performs well in models with categorical outcomes, including those with skewed distributions and small samples (Flora and Curran 2004; Muthén et al. 1997). We specified a multiple group model that allowed factor loadings and other model parameters to vary across the two areas included in this study: Gonzales and Belmont.[11]

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[10] Our modeling approach treats the ordinal responses as coarsely categorized approximations of underlying continuous random variables. The procedures used in normal theory confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with continuous indicators are often inappropriate for use with categorical indicators. We treat each observed categorical variable *y* as an approximation of a continuous latent response variable, *y**. According to Brown (2006: 390): "The underlying *y** variables are related to observed categorical variables by threshold parameters (τ). In the case of a binary indicator (y = 0 or 1), the threshold is the point on *y** where y = 1 if the threshold is exceeded (and where y = 0 if the threshold is not exceeded)." This CFA methodology is appropriate for use with dichotomous and polytomous variables and approximates the modeling approach used in item response theory.

[11] We chose a multiple group model for two reasons. First, we sampled residents of Gonzales separately from residents of Belmont who were located outside of Gonzales (recall that Gonzales is a neighborhood located within Belmont). Second, there are some important differences between these two areas. Though Belmont is well known for problems with disorder, crime, and gangs, these problems are particularly acute in Gonzales, which resembles a shantytown in some areas. Parts of Gonzales have a squatter population where residents have limited access to water, electricity, and other utilities. As one rough indicator of the conditions under which the residents of these areas live, 64.4 percent of respondents to our wave 1 survey reported having heard gunshots in the last 30 days, including 86.3 percent of those from Gonzales and 41.5 percent of those from other areas in Belmont. Thus, for both methodological and substantive reasons, we viewed it as important to allow the model parameters to vary by area. This analysis relied on the Delta parameterization in *Mplus*, which fixes scale factors at 1 and factor means at 0 in the first group and frees these parameters to be estimated in the second group (Muthén and Muthén 2010).

Table 2. Initial Factor Correlations

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Legitimacy—institutional trust	1.0	0.399	−0.465	**0.975**	**0.949**	−0.229	0.609
2. Legitimacy—obligation to obey	0.336	1.0	−0.130	0.386	0.375	−0.281	0.181
3. Legitimacy—cynicism about the law	−0.507	−0.124	1.0	−0.437	−0.452	0.496	−0.347
4. Procedural justice—quality of decisionmaking	**0.992**	0.354	−0.443	1.0	**0.995**	−0.142	0.622
5. Procedural justice—quality of treatment	**0.939**	0.344	−0.479	**0.969**	1.0	−0.169	0.598
6. Legal cynicism	−0.140	−0.166	0.185	−0.041	−0.088	1.0	−0.058
7. Police effectiveness	0.504	0.274	−0.227	0.619	0.536	−0.048	1.0

Note: Correlations for Gonzales are shown below the diagonal and correlations for Belmont are shown above the diagonal. Correlations greater than 0.9 are shown in bold.

Findings

Our initial CFA tested the fit of a seven-factor measurement model derived from Tyler's foundational work. This model reflects the most common specifications used in the literature to measure legitimacy and related concepts. We sought to measure seven perceptual dimensions: three dimensions of legitimacy (institutional trust, obligation to obey the law, and cynicism about the law), two dimensions of procedural justice (QD and QT), perceived police effectiveness, and legal cynicism (e.g., Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Tyler 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002). Model fit was assessed using multiple measures.[12]

We encountered problems in attempting to estimate the initial CFA model because the latent variable covariance matrix (ψ) for both groups was not positive definite. This typically results from having either a negative variance or residual variance for a latent variable or a linear dependency between two or more latent variables. We traced the source of the problem to several correlations between latent variables that exceeded 0.9 (see Table 2). For instance, QT and QD, which are aspects of procedural justice, had a correlation of 0.969 in Gonzales and 0.995 in Belmont (see Table 2). Most interesting, however, is that these measures of procedural justice also had high correlations with institutional trust, which is a component of legitimacy in Tyler's work (e.g., Tyler 2004, 2006; Tyler and Huo 2002). In Gonzales, trust had a correlation of

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[12] Goodness of fit was evaluated using chi-square (χ^2), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI).

0.992 with QD and 0.939 with QT. In Belmont, trust had a correlation of 0.975 with QD and 0.949 with QT.

These high-factor correlations led to model estimation problems and suggest the need to respecify the model. According to Brown (2006: 131), "a factor correlation that exceeds 0.80 or 0.85 is often used as the criterion to define poor discriminant validity." The results presented so far suggest a discriminant validity problem involving QD, QT, and institutional trust. Although scholars have drawn clear *conceptual* distinctions between these three phenomena, *empirical* measures of these concepts overlap considerably, suggesting that residents do not distinguish between them. This finding casts doubt on key aspects of procedural justice theory, particularly the conceptualization of procedural justice and legitimacy. QD and QT are components of procedural justice whereas institutional trust is a component of legitimacy. This finding suggests that procedural justice and institutional trust, which are typically theorized to have a *causal* relationship, may be measuring the same underlying concept. We will return to this important finding in the Discussion section.

When factors overlap heavily, "a common research strategy is to respecify the model by collapsing the dimensions into a single factor . . ." (Brown 2006: 131). Therefore, we collapsed the three overlapping dimensions (institutional trust, QT, and QD) into one dimension that we term trust and procedural justice and tested the fit of the resulting model. Since we began with a seven-factor model and collapsed three factors into one, we now have a five-factor model consisting of trust and procedural justice, obligation to obey, cynicism about the law, legal cynicism, and perceived effectiveness. Three of the four fit indexes suggested that the model fit the data well (CFI = 0.982; TLI = 0.982; RMSEA = 0.045), while one (χ^2 = 1,814.8, $p < 0.000$) suggested poor fit.

Next, we made some minor modifications to the model to address localized areas of misfit.[13] Once again, three of the four fit indexes suggested that the model fit the data well (CFI = 0.986; TLI = 0.986; RMSEA = 0.042), while one (χ^2 = 1,504.9, $p < 0.000$) continued to suggest poor fit. Based on the well-known problems with χ^2 as a test of model fit, Bowen and Guo (2012: 145) note that "it is widely considered acceptable to conclude that a model fits the

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[13] We identified two sources of misfit in the model. First, two items (Q80 and Q81A) had low loadings relative to the others, so we dropped both items. Second, the modification indexes revealed some localized areas of misfit associated with error terms for three pairs of adjacent survey items with shared semantic content (Q80B and Q80C; Q90A and Q90B; Q98E and Q98F). Though freeing error correlations is often unwarranted, failing to account for methodological artifacts associated with question proximity and shared semantic content can produce misleading inferences about the latent structure of an item pool (Van Damme, Pauwels, and Haas 2012). For that reason, we freed the error correlations for these three pairs of items.

Table 3. Final Factor Correlations

Factors	1	2	3	4	5
1. Trust and procedural justice	1.0	0.517	−0.461	−0.176	0.616
2. Obligation to obey	0.427	1.0	−0.206	−0.389	0.219
3. Cynicism about the law	−0.490	−0.184	1.0	0.486	−0.347
4. Legal cynicism	−0.115	−0.251	0.185	1.0	0.010
5. Police effectiveness	0.553	0.322	−0.227	−0.066	1.0

Note: Correlations for Gonzales are shown below the diagonal and correlations for Belmont are shown above the diagonal.

data well even if the value [of χ^2] is statistically significant" if other fit indexes suggest good fit. Thus, we treat this as our final model. Table 3 shows the correlations between factors in this model and Table 4 shows the factor loadings for the 32 remaining items. The five-factor structure showed no sign of discriminant validity problems, as evidenced by the low factor correlations in Table 3. Moreover, every item loaded strongly on its intended factor. Our findings suggest the presence of five distinct perceptual dimensions that appear to be measured well. In the following section, we discuss these findings and their implications for procedural justice theory and the conceptualization of its key elements.

Discussion

Scholarship on perceptions of procedural justice and the legitimacy of law and legal authorities has grown rapidly in recent years. Research evidence from multiple settings shows that when people perceive the police and other legal authorities as treating them in a procedurally fair manner, they are more likely to view the law and its representatives as legitimate. These legitimacy assessments, in turn, play an important role in shaping people's compliance and cooperation with the law and legal authorities. Thus, the process-based model of regulation specifies a set of causal relationships that are fundamental to the interplay between law and society. If the process-based model is valid, it has powerful implications for the entire criminal justice process, starting from the initial encounter between a police officer and a citizen.

However, some scholars have begun to challenge the conceptualization and measurement of perceived legitimacy of law and legal authorities. This study sought to clarify the nature and structure of perceived legitimacy by examining the empirical relationships between seven key perceptual concepts relevant to Tyler's process-based model of regulation. These included legitimacy (obligation to obey, institutional trust, cynicism about the law), procedural justice (QT and QD), legal cynicism, and police effectiveness.

Table 4. CFA Factor Loadings

Factor/Item	Gonzales	Belmont
1. Trust and procedural justice		
Q89. The police know how to carry out their official duties properly.	0.810	0.701
Q90A. I have confidence in the police.	0.847	0.838
Q90B. The police are trustworthy.	0.827	0.831
Q91. The police are neutral and fair when dealing with citizens.	0.870	0.862
Q92. The police address citizens in a respectful manner and appropriate tone.	0.889	0.834
Q92A. I am proud of the police.	0.869	0.904
Q92B. The police act within the law.	0.852	0.815
Q94B. Most police officers do their job well.	0.773	0.762
Q96. The police are responsive to the needs of citizens.	0.869	0.812
Q97. The police show care and concern for the welfare of the citizens they deal with.	0.851	0.813
Q98A. The police treat everyone equally.	0.753	0.775
Q98B. The police make decisions based on facts, not their personal biases or opinions.	0.605	0.450
Q98D. The police clearly explain the reasons for their actions.	0.840	0.722
Q98E. The police treat people fairly.	0.879	0.860
Q98F. The police respect citizens' rights.	0.850	0.836
2. Obligation to obey		
Q78. People should obey the law even it goes against what they think is right.	0.751	0.671
Q80B. People should do what police tell them to do even if they disagree with the order.	0.608	0.573
Q80C. People should do what police tell them to do even if they don't like the way the police treat them.	0.592	0.521
Q84. I feel that I should accept the decisions made by legal authorities.	0.575	0.497
3. Cynicism about the law		
Q82. People in power use the law to try to control people like me.	0.595	0.509
Q84A. The police do not act to protect my interests.	0.728	0.620
Q84B. The law represents the values of the people in power rather than the values of people like me.	0.896	0.808
Q85. The justice system and the laws in society are not in the interests, nor in favor, of persons like me.	0.917	0.885
4. Legal cynicism		
Q79. It's okay to do anything you want, as long as you don't hurt anyone.	0.658	0.592
Q80A. Laws are made to be broken.	0.685	0.648
Q81. To make money, there are no right or wrong ways, only easy and hard ways.	0.623	0.571
Q83. Fights among rival gangs should be ignored by the police.	0.698	0.607
Q83A. Fighting between friends or within families is no one else's business.	0.465	0.532
5. Police effectiveness		
Q100. How effective are the police at controlling violent crime in your neighborhood?	0.884	0.878
Q101. How effective are the police at controlling gangs in your neighborhood?	0.965	0.955
Q102. How effective are the police at controlling gun violence in your neighborhood?	0.959	0.931
Q103. How effective are the police at controlling drugs in your neighborhood?	0.947	0.891

We chose a study site where these issues are highly salient in the daily lives of many citizens. Our research makes several useful contributions to the study of perceived legitimacy. First, our findings reveal significant empirical overlap between the institutional trust component of legitimacy and both components of procedural justice: QD and QT. Second, our results highlight the ambiguous role of cynicism about the law as a component of legitimacy. Third, our findings contribute to recent theoretical debates about the relationship between obligation to obey and legitimacy. Taken together, these findings raise important questions about the conceptual, theoretical, and empirical models of procedural justice and legitimacy that are common in this body of scholarship.

Institutional Trust as a Component of Legitimacy

A key assumption of Tyler's process-based model of regulation is that procedural justice and legitimacy are separate phenomena. Indeed, most of the empirical research on the process-based model treats procedural justice as an antecedent of legitimacy, placing the two constructs on opposite sides of regression equations and estimating the effects of procedural justice on legitimacy. A vital aspect of establishing a causal relationship between two concepts is first confirming that they are separate and unique phenomena. Although some scholars using rigorous methods have uncovered distinct measures of procedural justice and legitimacy (e.g., Reisig et al. 2007), others have found strong overlap between the two constructs (e.g., Gau 2011; Maguire and Johnson 2014; Pryce 2014). Our findings from Trinidad and Tobago challenge the assumption that legitimacy and procedural justice, as conceptualized by Tyler, are thoroughly distinct concepts. Citizens in our study were unable to differentiate between a key aspect of legitimacy (institutional trust) and both components of procedural justice (QD and QT). This empirical overlap suggests that measures of these three concepts may be tapping into the same underlying perceptual phenomenon.

Our findings are consistent with recent theorizing in political science about the relationship between trust and legitimacy. Kaina (2008: 511) argues that trust and legitimacy "are quite different concepts that should not be used synonymously" and that "trust should not be treated as a 'component' of (institutional) legitimacy." Kaina quotes Easton (1979: 258) in noting that legitimacy derives from people's conviction that institutions are "conforming with [their] own moral principles, [their] own sense of what is right and proper." Political trust, on the other hand, derives from people's evaluations of the extent to which institutions perform "in accordance with normative expectations held by the public" (Miller and

Listhaug 1990: 358). Kaina notes that it is possible for people to view an institution as a legitimate source of authority while simultaneously having little trust in the institution. Thus, while there are many good reasons to expect a relationship between trust and legitimacy, Kaina emphasizes that they should be treated as separate concepts. Several other scholars have also emphasized the conceptual distinction between trust and legitimacy (Barbalet 2009; Bottoms and Tankebe 2012).

We are unable to state with certainty why perceived QD and QT overlap so heavily with institutional trust. While the literature establishes clearly that these three constructs are distinguishable at a *conceptual* level, the evidence presented in this study suggests that they are not *empirically* separable. One reason may be that they all represent normative judgments about whether legal authorities behave in way that is consistent with expected standards of performance or conduct. This is not the first study to find that perceptions of police thought to be *conceptually* distinct were later found not to be *empirically* distinguishable (Maguire and Johnson 2010). One possibility is that when residents make normative judgments about the behavior of institutions relative to community standards, these judgments—whether about QT, QD, trust, or other phenomena—may blend together as part of one perceptual package under certain conditions.

Our finding that trust and procedural justice may be one and the same in the minds of citizens raises significant concerns about the accuracy of conclusions made about the process-based model of regulation in previous research. Put simply, procedural justice cannot be said to "cause" legitimacy if procedural justice *is* legitimacy.[14] For this reason, findings from previous studies which purport to show that procedural justice predicts legitimacy (including institutional trust) may be partially tautological. The results from this research suggest that scholars may need to rethink some of the key theoretical linkages in the process-based model of regulation.

Cynicism about the Law as a Component of Legitimacy

Our review of the literature, coupled with the results of our analysis, also raises questions about the role of cynicism about the law as a component of perceived legitimacy. As we noted earlier, the role of cynicism in people's perceptions of the law and legal

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[14] Here we paraphrase Gau and Pratt (2008: 181) who raise similar concerns in a separate body of research on disorder and crime: "A key assumption of the theory is that disorder and crime are two different phenomena—disorder cannot cause crime if disorder *is* crime."

authorities has been conceptualized inconsistently, resulting in confusion about its meaning and its relationship with legitimacy and other key concepts. We see three conceptual strands in the literature on "cynicism about the law" and "legal cynicism." First, Tyler and Huo (2002) conceptualize cynicism about the law in terms of whether people view the law as being used against them or their interests by elites or the state. Tyler and Huo treat cynicism about the law as a component of legitimacy, combining it with obligation to obey, institutional trust, and affect to form a composite measure of perceived legitimacy. In other studies (e.g., Sunshine and Tyler 2003), the same items used to measure cynicism about the law in Tyler (2001) and Tyler and Huo (2002) are included as measures of obligation to obey. This specification suggests that cynicism about the law is equivalent to (or a subset of) obligation to obey, which is a primary component of legitimacy in Tyler's model. Thus, although the exact specifications vary, much of the scholarship by Tyler and his colleagues treats cynicism about the law as a component of legitimacy.

Second, Sampson and Bartusch (1998) conceptualize "legal cynicism" as being rooted in a sense of normlessness or anomie in which acting outside the law is viewed as acceptable. A small body of scholarship has relied on Sampson and Bartusch's conceptualization of legal cynicism in studies that also focus on legitimacy. For instance, Fagan and Tyler (2005) treat legal cynicism and legitimacy (along with moral disengagement) as separate aspects of a concept they refer to as legal socialization. Similarly, Piquero et al. (2005) measure two dimensions of legal socialization: legitimacy and cynicism about the legal system. Implicit in these specifications is that legal cynicism is not a component of legitimacy. Rather, it sits alongside legitimacy as a separate aspect of legal socialization.

Third, recent scholarship by Kirk and his colleagues (Kirk and Matsuda 2011; Kirk and Papachristos 2011) draws on Sampson and Bartusch's (1998) conceptualization in defining legal cynicism as "a cultural frame in which people perceive the law, and the police in particular, as *illegitimate*, unresponsive, and ill equipped to ensure public safety" (Kirk and Matsuda 2011: 447; *emphasis added*). While Kirk and Matsuda (2011) describe their conceptualization of legal cynicism as narrower in scope than Sampson and Bartusch's (1998), we view it as broader. It explicitly includes legitimacy within its definition as well as the perceived effectiveness of police and the law. Their measure of legal cynicism includes one item that is consistent with Sampson and Bartusch's conceptualization ("laws are made to be broken") and two items that are consistent with instrumental judgments about the perceived effectiveness of the police (including items focusing on how well the police prevent crime and maintain order).

To summarize, these three strands of scholarship treat cynicism variously as a component of legitimacy, as a component (alongside legitimacy) of legal socialization, and as a broader concept that encompasses legitimacy. While our research design is not sufficient to declare any one of these conceptualizations more appropriate than the others, our empirical findings can help inform the debate. Our findings reveal that in spite of the similarity in their labels, cynicism about the law and legal cynicism are indeed separate constructs at an empirical level. Bivariate correlations between the two constructs differ considerably across communities ($r = 0.185$ in Gonzales and $r = 0.486$ in Belmont), but we find no evidence to suggest that the two measures are tapping into the same underlying concept. Similarly, the relationships between obligation to obey and the two cynicism constructs are small to moderate, suggesting that cynicism and obligation are not tapping into the same underlying concepts.[15] This finding casts doubt on the wisdom of using cynicism indicators to measure obligation to obey, or using them alongside indicators of obligation to obey to measure legitimacy. Both of these approaches, as we pointed out earlier, are common in the procedural justice and legitimacy literature. Our research is unable to draw definitive inferences about the relationships between cynicism and legitimacy. However, the low factor correlations in Table 3 suggest that obligation to obey the law, cynicism about the law, and legal cynicism do not share a common cause. Therefore, it may be inappropriate to treat them as indicators of the same underlying latent variable.

Obligation to Obey as a Component of Legitimacy

Recently, Tankebe (2013) challenged Tyler's (2006) conceptualization of legitimacy, which serves as the foundation of most empirical scholarship on this topic over the last two decades. Tankebe made a forceful argument against equating legitimacy with a felt obligation to obey the directives of legal authorities. In Tankebe's model, obligation to obey is not a component of legitimacy; it is a separate, downstream phenomenon that partially mediates the relationship between legitimacy and compliance. Our empirical findings are consistent with Tankebe's (2013) theoretical position that obligation to obey is distinct from the other components of perceived legitimacy.

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[15] The correlations between cynicism about the law and obligation to obey are -0.184 in Gonzales and -0.206 in Belmont. The correlations between legal cynicism and obligation to obey are -0.251 in Gonzales and -0.389 in Belmont. Obligation to obey has a stronger relationship with legal cynicism than with cynicism about the law, though the latter has been used as a component of obligation or legitimacy in several studies.

We agree with Tankebe that citizens may feel obliged to obey legal authorities for reasons unrelated to legitimacy. Indeed, we can imagine many situations where citizens would feel obliged to obey police directives precisely because they believe the police might act in an *illegitimate* manner. For example, qualitative evidence from our fieldwork suggests that citizens in Trinidad and Tobago—particularly in communities where the police are perceived as corrupt, brutal, and unfair—may acquiesce to the police out of fear, not because they perceive the police as legitimate and worthy of compliance. Thus, citizens may report an obligation to obey the police out of a rational calculation of self-interest, not a moral sense that it is the right thing to do. Tankebe (2009: 716), drawing on Carrabine (2004), refers to this phenomenon as "dull compulsion."[16] Similarly, Kaina (2008: 513) observes that "decision acceptance can also be attributed to other causes such as habits or utilitarian calculations."

Our results are also consistent with previous research that has found measures of obligation to obey, institutional trust, and cynicism about the law to be empirically distinct. Our findings from Trinidad and Tobago mirror those from Tankebe's (2008a, 2009) findings in Ghana, also a developing nation and former British colony. Like us, Tankebe identified separate factors for trust, obligation, and cynicism about the law.[17] At a conceptual level, our results (together with Tankebe's) suggest that the psychological processes that generate an internalized sense of obligation to obey the law and legal authorities, a feeling of institutional trust, and cynicism about the law may differ. At a measurement level, the patterns observed here suggest that the common practice of combining obligation, trust, and cynicism into a single composite measure, based on the assumption that they share a common cause, may be inappropriate.

Future Directions

The results from this study, together with various theoretical challenges to the dominant conceptualization of legitimacy, raise important questions about the future of research on perceived legitimacy. If legitimacy is not obligation to obey (as Tankebe argues

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[16] Some aspects of our findings challenge Tankebe's (2013) reconceptualization of legitimacy. While Tankebe views police effectiveness as a component of legitimacy (along with distributive justice, lawfulness, and procedural justice), we find that perceived police effectiveness is empirically distinct from our measure of trust and procedural justice. Although our dataset does not include the range of measures used in Tankebe's (2013) study and we therefore cannot test his conceptualization of legitimacy fully, our findings do suggest that effectiveness may not be a component of legitimacy as Tankebe posits (see also Maguire and Johnson 2014).

[17] Tankebe (2008a, 2009) did not report the correlation between cynicism about the law and obligation to obey. He found that the cynicism scale had a low alpha value, and therefore dropped it from his analysis.

it is not), and if legitimacy is not trust in institutions (as Kaina argues it is not), and if analyses continue to show that our conceptualizations of legitimacy fail to match empirical reality, then what is legitimacy and how do we measure it? Answering these questions is beyond the scope of this study, but they represent foundational issues for sociolegal scholars to investigate. In sum, our findings support recent calls for scholars to rethink the conceptual structure of perceptions, judgments, and feelings about the law and legal authorities (Gau 2011; Maguire and Johnson 2010; Tyler and Jackson 2013). Recent research from diverse settings, including the United States, the United Kingdom, and now Trinidad, has highlighted concerns about the conceptualization and measurement of perceived legitimacy and related concepts (Gau 2011; Maguire and Johnson 2014; Tankebe 2013). If findings from different settings continue to show that key concepts once thought to be separate (like procedural justice and trust) are not empirically distinct, then it may be appropriate to reconsider the psychological processes underlying the process-based model of regulation.

Evidence suggests that it may also be profitable to examine the influence of contextual effects on these perceptions. Maguire and Johnson (2010: 719) speculate that citizen attitudes may not just vary in magnitude across communities but that "the very structure of the attitudes themselves may differ." They posit that citizens in stable, low-crime communities "where the majority of police-citizen contacts are fleeting, not very serious, and of low-intensity" may not be able to develop detailed nuanced attitudes toward the police. As they note, detailed impressions of the police may only be formed among people "whose contact with the police was frequent, intense, and/or very recent. These citizens would be expected to have the most detailed, fully formed, and perhaps multidimensional opinions about the police."

Legitimacy issues are highly salient in the community we studied, thus we anticipated that concerns about procedural fairness and legitimacy would be particularly relevant for our respondents. Little is known about the influence of salience on the structure of citizens' attitudes toward law and legal authorities. Research in social psychology supports the idea that high-salience conditions may make information of this kind more "cognitively accessible," enabling people to form more nuanced perceptions and judgments (van Prooijen, van den Bos, and Wilke 2002). In addition, psychologists have long noted that moral judgment is a "cognitive-affective process," thus affect and emotion are also likely to play a role in structuring people's views on law and legal authorities (Barsky, Kaplan, and Beal 2011; Goodenough and Prehn 2004; Greene et al. 2001). Understanding these various psychological processes may help illuminate how residents form procedural justice and legitimacy judgments.

If the salience hypothesis is valid, one implication is that people in high-salience conditions should be able to distinguish between conceptually distinct phenomena like QT, QD, and institutional trust. However, in the high-salience community we studied, high correlations between these constructs suggest that residents did *not* differentiate between them. One possibility is that the salience hypothesis is not valid. Another is that the conceptualization of procedural justice and legitimacy in the process-based model of policing requires further refinement. Distinguishing between these potential explanations for our findings would require research across low- and high-salience conditions.

Beyond examining the possible impacts of context and salience on the nature and structure of perceived legitimacy, we also encourage scholars to devote more attention to the construct validity of perceived legitimacy. Many concepts in the social sciences are intangible or latent concepts that cannot be measured directly; they can only be approximated using indirect indicators or proxies. This is particularly true for perceptual constructs like values, attitudes, opinions, and orientations. When respondents answer survey questions that are intended to measure latent concepts like procedural justice, institutional trust, or obligation to obey, the hope is that their responses will serve as valid and reliable proxies for these unobserved concepts. Although we can never be certain that our measures reflect the latent concepts we intend to measure, construct validation procedures are available for checking our assumptions. Item-level analyses like those used here are useful for validating constructs. Testing for convergent and discriminant validity is especially important in substantive areas that feature a number of closely related concepts and a nomological network that is not yet well understood. Unfortunately, these methods are not used regularly in research on the process-based model of regulation, thus leading some scholars to question the accuracy of conclusions from past research (Gau 2011; Henderson et al. 2010; Maguire and Johnson 2010, 2014; Mazerolle et al. 2013; Reisig et al. 2007). The result is a science built on a foundation of untested concepts and uncertain measures. Focusing greater attention on construct validation can help sharpen our understanding of the nomological network involving legitimacy and related concepts. This type of scholarship is beneficial for testing and refining concepts and theories.

Limitations

As with all research, this study is not without limitations. The data are based on a cross-sectional survey, thus limiting our ability to examine the temporal stability in the phenomena under study.

Moreover, because the data were collected from only two neighbor-hoods within one community, it was not possible to test the hypothesis that we outlined in the Discussion section: that the salience of procedural justice and legitimacy issues may influence the structures (and not just the magnitudes) of attitudes toward these issues. Studying a wider sample of communities in which these issues have varying levels of salience would help reveal additional insights about procedural justice and legitimacy as experienced by citizens in different contexts. Finally, though distributive justice plays an important role in the network of concepts related to perceived legitimacy, we did not have access to a measure of distributive justice in this study. A recent study using data from London found that distributive and procedural justice were not empirically separable (Maguire and Johnson 2014). The present study would have been more complete had we been able to test the relationships between distributive justice and the other concepts in the nomological network we examined here. In spite of these limitations, the study makes several useful contributions to the existing research on procedural justice and legitimacy.

Conclusion

This study is instructive for thinking about the future of scholarship on procedural justice and legitimacy. It reinforces the need for more attention to conceptualization and measurement in this body of research. Moreover, it highlights the importance of understanding the nomological network of constructs that influence, constitute, and are influenced by legitimacy. Perceived legitimacy is one of the cornerstones of the law. Developing a more nuanced understanding of its nature and structure, as well as its antecedents and effects, is therefore of utmost importance.

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Supporting Information

Additional Supporting Information may be found in the online version of this article at the publisher's web-site:

Appendix S1. Sample Characteristics.
Appendix S2. Relative Frequencies for 34 Survey Items.

Appendix S1. Sample Characteristics

	Gonzales (%)	Belmont (%)	Full Sample (%)	N
Total sample				603
Gender				
Male	49.8	50.0	49.9	301
Female	50.2	50.0	50.1	302
Race/Ethnicity				
African	72.9	79.5	76.2	458
Indian	5.7	0.7	3.2	19
Afro/Indian	18.7	16.9	17.8	107
Other	2.7	3.0	2.8	17
Age				
18–24	21.9	19.9	20.9	126
25–34	21.6	26.5	24.0	145
35–44	22.3	22.8	22.6	136
45–54	15.6	14.9	15.3	92
55–64	11.6	8.9	10.3	62
65+	7.0	7.0	7.0	42
Educational attainment				
None	1.3	0.3	0.8	5
Primary	17.3	10.0	13.7	82
Junior secondary	5.6	2.7	4.2	25
Secondary	50.5	62.2	56.3	338
Technical/Vocational	14.3	12.0	13.2	79
Tertiary/University	11.0	12.7	11.8	71
Primary source of income in the last four months				
Unemployed—no income	2.1	2.7	2.4	14
Unemployed—government income	4.8	2.4	3.6	21
Unemployed—family income	12.8	10.3	11.5	67
Employed part-time/Odd jobs	22.1	15.8	18.9	110
Employed full-time	48.3	58.9	53.6	312
Retired—pension income	10.0	9.9	10.0	58
Marital status				
Single, never married	48.7	53.8	51.2	308
Living with someone, but not married	20.3	16.9	18.6	112
Married	18.0	17.6	17.8	107
Divorced/Separated	8.7	7.0	7.8	47
Widowed	4.3	4.7	4.5	27
Called or approached the police for assistance in the last four months				
Yes	9.0	10.3	9.6	58
No	91.0	89.7	90.4	544
Stopped by the police in the last four months				
Yes	10.4	7.3	8.8	53
No	89.6	92.7	91.2	546

Appendix S2. Relative Frequencies for 34 Survey Items

Question	Coding Scheme	1	2	3	4
Q78. People should obey the law even it goes against what they think is right.	1	5.2%	6.1%	26.4%	62.3%
Q79. It's okay to do anything you want, as long as you don't hurt anyone.	1	41.4%	31.3%	17.0%	10.3%
Q80. People should obey the law even if they will not be caught for breaking it.	1	9.5%	5.8%	27.7%	57.0%
Q80A. Laws are made to be broken.	1	64.5%	21.5%	8.3%	5.7%
Q80B. People should do what police tell them to do even if they disagree with the order	1	12.3%	17.6%	41.9%	28.2%
Q80C. People should do what police tell them to do even if they don't like the way the police treat them.	1	12.7%	18.7%	42.4%	26.2%
Q81. To make money, there are no right or wrong ways, only easy and hard ways.	1	47.5%	25.3%	15.9%	11.3%
Q81A. Nowadays a person has to live pretty much for today and let tomorrow take care of itself.	1	37.9%	23.2%	18.6%	20.3%
Q82. People in power use the law to try to control people like me.	1	7.1%	13.4%	31.0%	48.5%
Q83. Fights among rival gangs should be ignored by the police.	1	87.9%	7.8%	1.0%	3.2%
Q83A. Fighting between friends or within families is no one else's business.	1	40.7%	29.1%	17.9%	12.3%
Q84. I feel that I should accept the decisions made by legal authorities.	1	8.3%	15.4%	45.2%	31.1%
Q84A. The police do not act to protect my interests.	1	12.9%	24.1%	36.7%	26.2%
Q84B. The law represents the values of the people in power rather than the values of people like me.	1	9.0%	16.7%	33.4%	40.9%
Q85. The justice system and the laws in society are not in the interests, nor in favor, of persons like me.	1	9.8%	17.2%	35.0%	38.0%
Q89. The police know how to carry out their official duties properly.	1	30.2%	25.7%	35.1%	9.0%
Q90A. I have confidence in the police.	1	31.3%	29.6%	31.5%	7.7%
Q90B. The police are trustworthy.	1	31.5%	35.3%	28.4%	4.9%
Q91. The police are neutral and fair when dealing with citizens.	1	28.4%	36.8%	30.5%	4.4%
Q92. The police address citizens in a respectful manner and appropriate tone.	1	33.5%	34.6%	27.1%	4.9%
Q92A. I am proud of the police.	1	36.0%	31.1%	26.8%	6.1%
Q92B. The police act within the law.	1	25.6%	34.1%	34.3%	6.0%
Q94B. Most police officers do their job well.	1	18.2%	22.0%	49.9%	9.9%
Q96. The police are responsive to the needs of citizens.	1	20.0%	32.8%	41.8%	5.4%
Q97. The police show care and concern for the welfare of the citizens they deal with.	1	22.7%	31.9%	38.4%	6.9%
Q98A. The police treat everyone equally.	1	38.7%	39.8%	15.6%	5.9%
Q98B. The police make decisions based on facts, not their personal biases or opinions.	1	20.2%	32.0%	36.3%	11.5%
Q98D. The police clearly explain the reasons for their actions.	1	33.9%	40.6%	21.5%	4.1%
Q98E. The police treat people fairly.	1	33.0%	36.4%	26.2%	4.4%
Q98F. The police respect citizens' rights.	1	31.8%	37.4%	25.8%	5.0%
Q100. How effective are the police at controlling violent crime in your neighborhood?	2	28.8%	32.1%	30.1%	9.0%
Q101. How effective are the police at controlling gangs in your neighborhood?	2	41.2%	28.7%	24.2%	5.9%
Q102. How effective are the police at controlling gun violence in your neighborhood?	2	43.9%	28.2%	21.5%	6.4%
Q103. How effective are the police at controlling drugs in your neighborhood?	2	40.2%	31.5%	21.8%	6.5%

Key:
Coding scheme 1: strongly disagree=1, mostly disagree=2, mostly agree=3, and strongly agree=4.
Coding scheme 2: not at all effective=1, only a little effective=2, somewhat effective=3, and very effective=4.