



Public trust and police legitimacy:

Concepts and data from the  
British (and European) context

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XXIII Conference of the Baltic Criminologists





# Outline

1. Set out the objectives of the EuroJustis project and European Social Survey module:
  - Measurement: Highlight levels of trust and legitimacy in criminal justice settings across Europe
  - Theory-testing: Test two psychological models of cooperation and social regulation in countries across Europe
2. Measurement piloting: European Social Survey
3. Present the fullest set of data that we have so far:
  1. Representative sample survey of England and Wales, in which we tested our extended version of Tyler's social values/normative model of compliance

# The EuroJustis project

- Funded under the European Commission 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme
  - Activity 8.6 Socio-economic and scientific indicators
  - Area 8.6.2 Developing better indicators for policy
  - SSH-2007-6.2.1 Improved ways of measuring both the potential for and impact of policies
- Laboratories: Kings College London, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Center for the Study of Democracy, European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, Institute for Political Sciences, London School of Economics, Center for Crime Prevention, University of Parma, University of Sheffield - UK



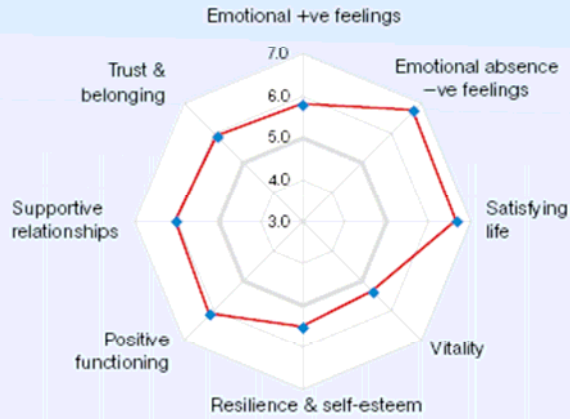
# Two objectives

1. Develop the conceptual and methodological tools to measure and track levels of confidence, trust and legitimacy
  - Survey-based measures of public trust and conferred legitimacy (level-1 and level-2 indicators); with
  - Country-level statistics that help interpret survey-based estimates (level-3 indicators)
2. Extend Tom Tyler's framework of procedural justice for comparative European analysis

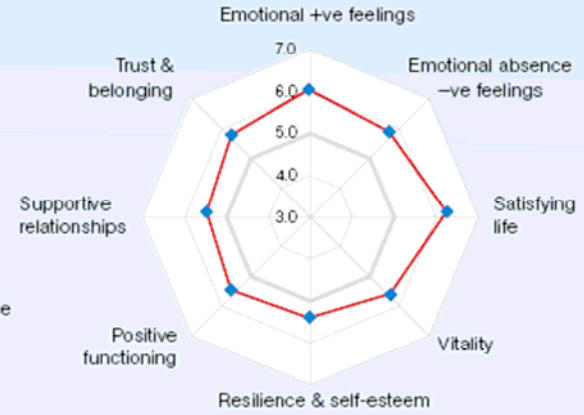
# Objective #1: Social indicators of trust and legitimacy

- Measure public trust in (separately) the police and courts:
  - Trust in effectiveness
  - Trust in procedural fairness
  - Trust in distributive fairness
- Measure perceived legitimacy of (separately) the police and courts:
  - Obligation to obey/accept decisions
  - Moral alignment
  - Corruption (legality of action)
- Survey indicators (level-1 and level-2) will also sit alongside national-level indicators (level-3):
  - Augment measures of legitimacy
  - Help interpret country-level differences

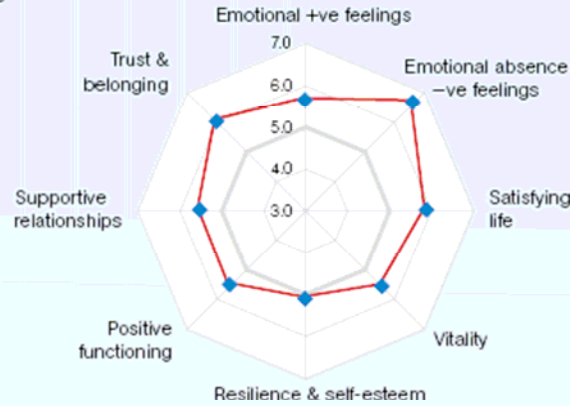
## Denmark



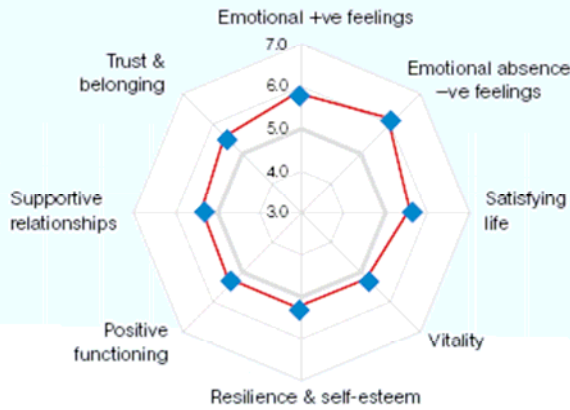
## Switzerland



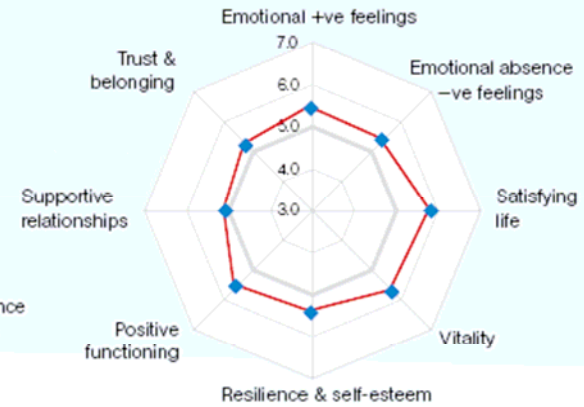
## Norway



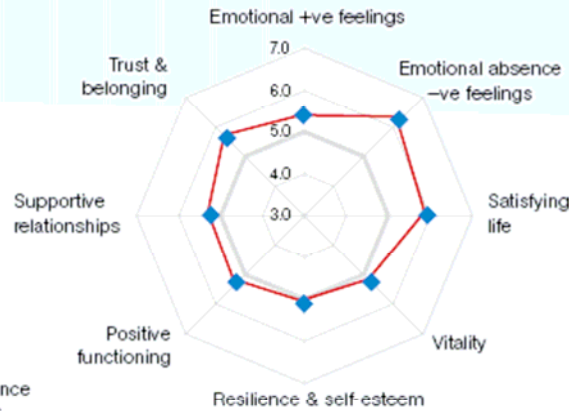
## Ireland



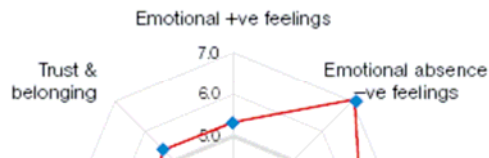
## Austria



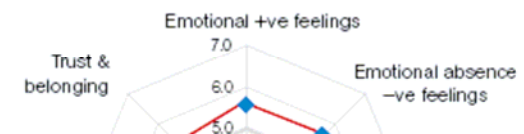
## Sweden



## Finland



## The Netherlands



# Objective #2: testing two models of cooperation

- Once we have the data, we can test relationships between concepts
  - Following Tyler's work, the first model of cooperation links trust in police effectiveness with perceived risk of sanction and compliance with the law
  - The second model links trust in police procedural fairness with legitimacy and compliance with the law
- More of this later

# Where are we now?

## Progress and piloting

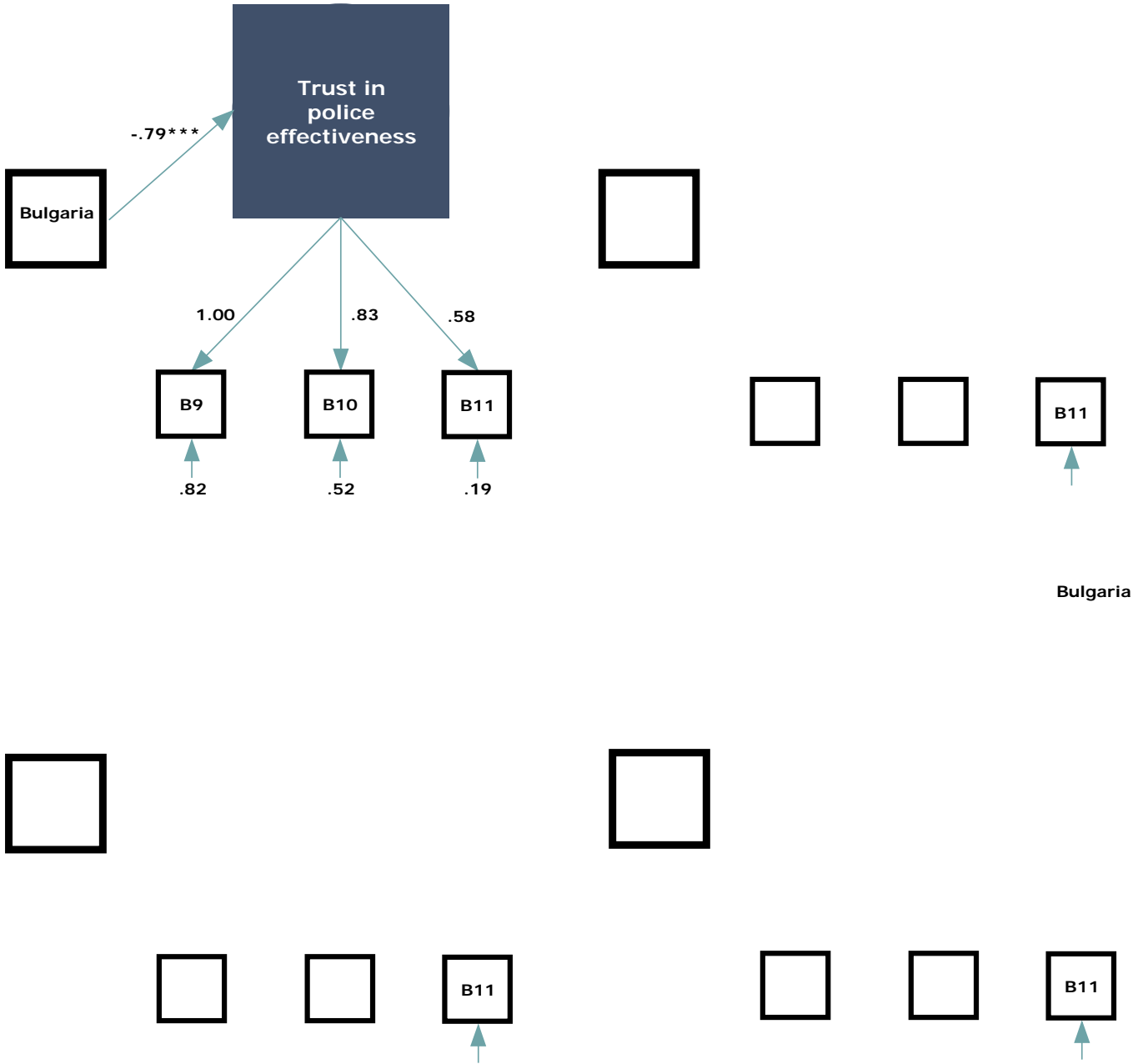
- EuroJustis has developed a conceptual map that defines trust and legitimacy
- Space won on Round 5 of the European Social Survey module (46,000 respondents nested in 30+ countries)
  - Expert review process developed measures
  - Cognitive question testing carried out in UK, Italy, Finland and Bulgaria
  - Measures piloted in UK and Bulgaria (n=400) with interviewer debriefings
- Attracted funding from the UK's National Policing Improvement Agency:
  - Face-to-face interviews with representative sample of residents of England and Wales

# Measurement piloting

- European Social Survey, n=400 in UK and Bulgaria
- Interviewer debriefing
- Multi-group latent class and latent trait modelling
- Only time for one or two examples

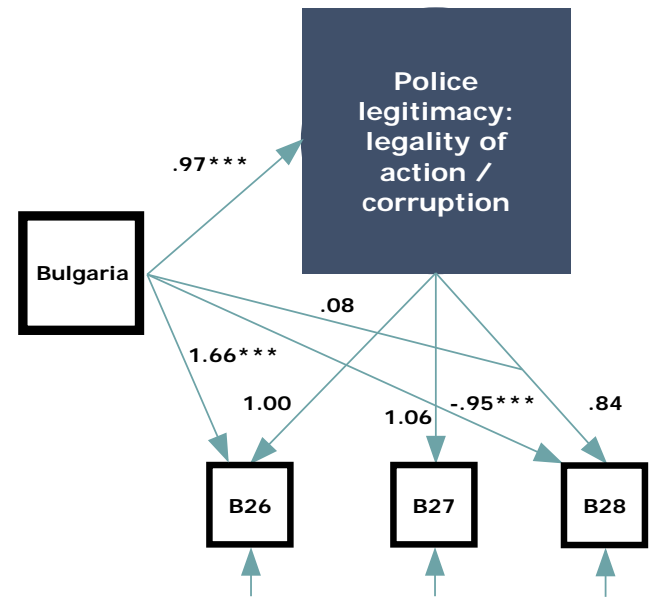
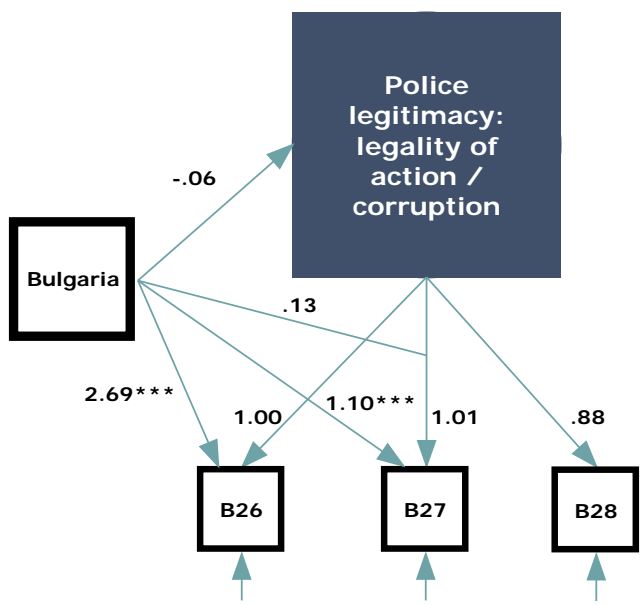
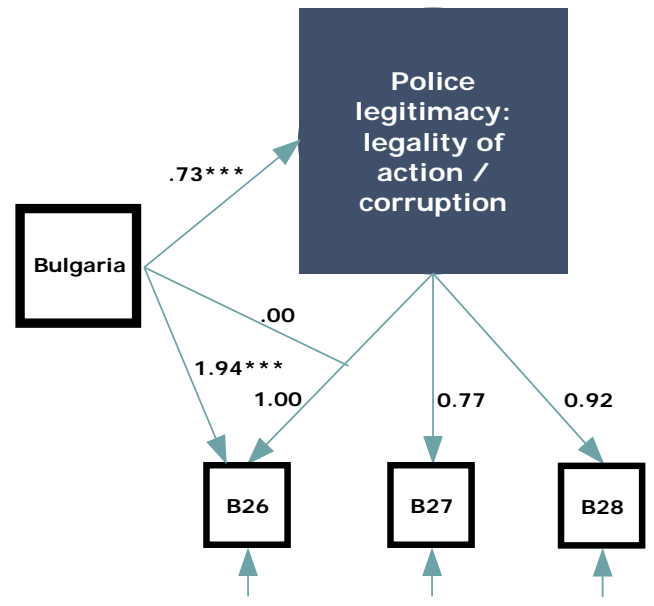
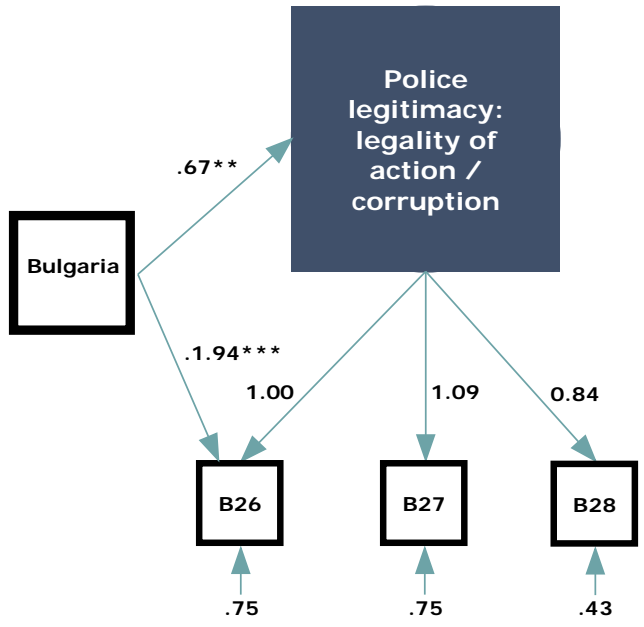
# Trust in police effectiveness

- How successful do you think the police are at preventing crimes in [Northern Ireland/ Scotland/ Wales/ England] where violence is used or threatened?
  - Choose your answer from this card, where 0 means extremely unsuccessful and 10 means extremely successful.
- And how successful do you think the police are at catching people who commit burglaries in [Northern Ireland/ Scotland/ Wales/ England]?
- If an emergency were to occur near to where you live and the police were called, how quickly do you think they would arrive at the scene?
  - Choose your answer from this card, where 0 means not at all quickly and 10 means extremely quickly.



# Police legitimacy: legality of action

- How often would you say that the police in [Northern Ireland/ Scotland/ Wales/ England] take bribes?
  - Choose your answer from this card where 0 means never and 10 means always
- How often would you say that the police in [Northern Ireland/ Scotland/ Wales/ England] deliberately provide false evidence to the courts?
- How often would you say the police in [Northern Ireland/ Scotland/ Wales/ England] use more force than is legally allowed when making arrests?

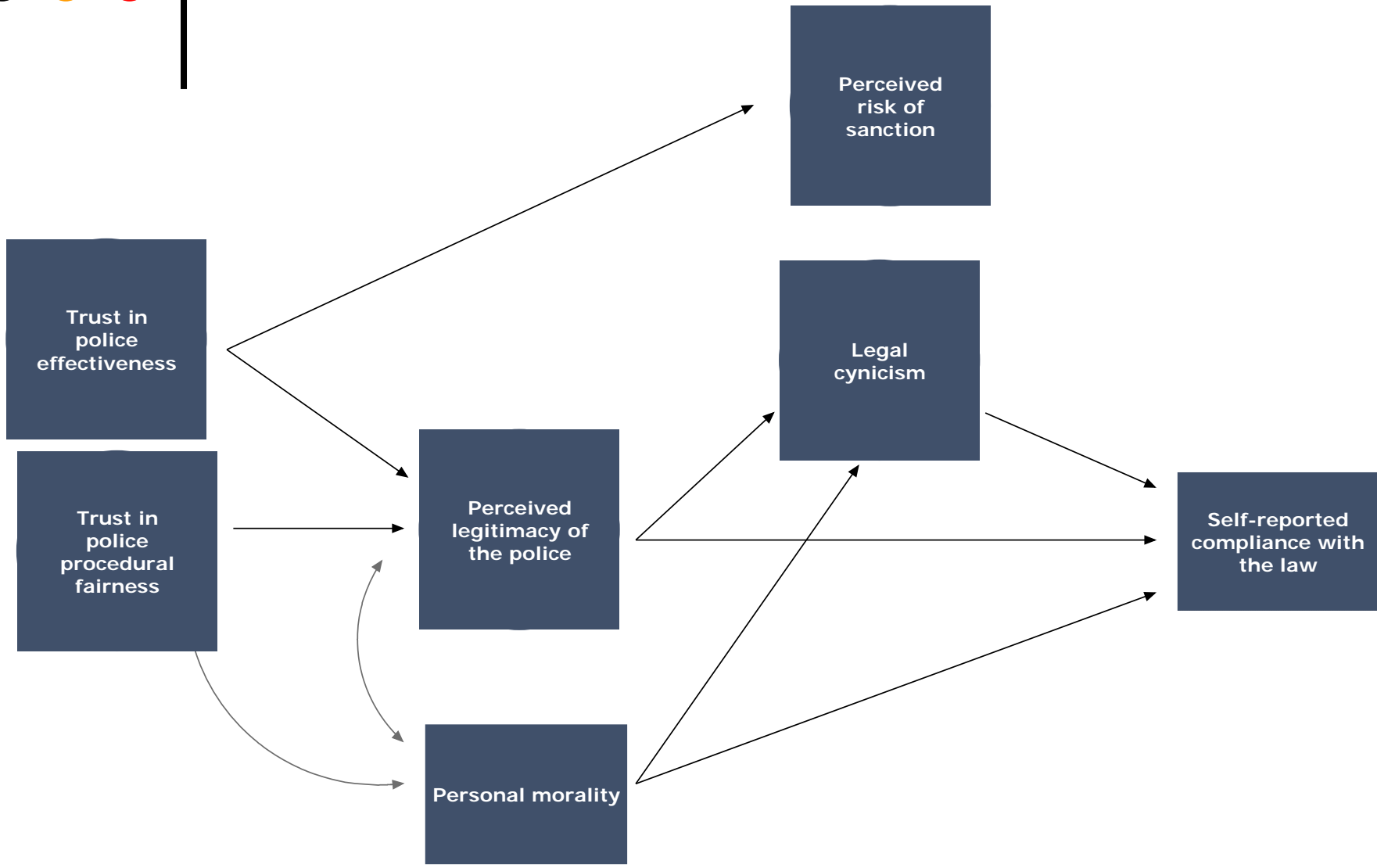
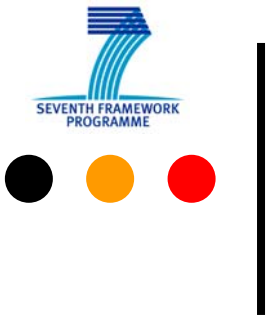


# Police and court legitimacy

- There were similar findings with court legitimacy
  - i.e. 'taking bribes' did not scale well in Bulgaria
- We dropped the other items and focused instead on:
  - 'taking bribes' for both police and courts
  - 'unacceptable pressure from politicians' for both police and courts
- This will (hopefully) create scales that combine both police and courts and focus on corruption and state capture

# Theory-testing piloting

- Tom Tyler's work on procedural justice provides links between:
  - Direct and indirect experience of the fairness of police/court procedures
  - Perceived legitimacy of the police and courts
  - Compliance with the law and cooperation with authorities
- Has policy implications: crime policies that foster procedural justice and legitimacy rather than 'command-and-control' strategies
- But is this a distinctively US perspective?
- NPIA study of police legitimacy: Face-to-face interviews with a representative sample of residents of England and Wales (n=937)



# Where next?

- The NPIA study has helped theory-testing:
  - Framework seems to work in the UK: open and empirical question whether it pertains to other jurisdictions
  - Many of the scales worked well
- ESS piloting (and cognitive question testing) has helped develop measurement tools by providing data from a country other than the UK(!)

# Where next?

- Collect European data via EuroJustis and ESS:
  - >30 countries
  - Test broader framework
  - Bring together level 1, 2 and 3 indicators in a series of comprehensive and integrated tools
- Study underway in Santiago, Chile (to be bring into the project a Latin American country)
- Studies planned in Trinidad & Tobago, Japan and Australia



Comments, questions?