

The New Governance of Public Security in Spain

La nueva gobernanza de la seguridad en España

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Abstract: Over the last few years, Spanish police have been transformed as a result of the deep economic, social and political changes in the environment. It is controversial whether these changes are part of a process of redefinition of its role in the governance of security. This article explores the extent of this redefinition by analyzing the social and institutional relations of the police force. The methodology is based on interviews to senior police officers. The results, although tentative, confirm a transformation process in security governance. The engine of change is more social than institutional in its origin. The central protagonist is an empowered, demanding, organized, fragmented and participatory citizen who expresses new demands. Police respond with closer proximity to citizenry, maintaining alliances with a large number of all kinds of entities, and increasing the use of new technologies.

Key words: police, security, governance, crime, social crisis.

Resumen: En los últimos años, las policías españolas se transforman como consecuencia de los cambios económicos, sociales y políticos profundos que se producen en su entorno. Existe un debate teórico sobre si esos cambios suponen un proceso de redefinición de su rol en la gobernanza de la seguridad. El objetivo del presente artículo es evaluar el alcance de esa redefinición, a través del análisis de las relaciones sociales e institucionales de la policía. La metodología se basa en entrevistas a responsables policiales españoles. Los resultados, aunque exploratorios, confirman esa transformación en la gobernanza de la seguridad. El motor del cambio tiene un origen más social que institucional. El protagonista central es un ciudadano empoderado, exigente, organizado, fragmentado y participativo que

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plantea unas demandas nuevas. La policía responde con una mayor proximidad al ciudadano, manteniendo alianzas con un gran número de entidades de todo tipo y utilizando de manera creciente las nuevas tecnologías.

Palabras clave: policía, seguridad, gobernanza, criminalidad, crisis social.

Introduction¹

The current governance of public affairs poses considerable challenges and heated academic debates.² As of the early XXI century, deep changes take place in various social institutions with consequences for governability, suitability for social demands, accountability and legitimacy (Van Kersbergen and Van Warden, 2004). Their inception is in the constant transformation of the environment caused by global societies. These dynamics are translated to public administrations, by means of new demands (AA.VV., 2000; Jar, 1999). To address them, the institutions have to reform their structure and functioning, as well as their daily interactions with other actors.

Police are maybe one of the institutions that changes the most, precisely because of its overexposure to the social environment (Goldstein, 1990). From the stand point of public policies, police corps are institutional actors that operate in a systemic scenario (Loubet de Bayle, 1998); but at once, they are also corporate entities that expect to locate in the institutional fabric as influential actors (Torrente, 1997; Jaime and Torrente, 2017). Its privileged position at institutional-political levels and citizens give police an important role in contemporary governance (Shapland and Vagg, 1988).

Presently, one of the most interesting academic debates is to what extent changes in political governance involve a weakening of the power of the state institutions, or if simply, the forms of exercising it are the ones changing. Empirically addressing this question makes us put forward case studies that make the comprehension of the scope of new political dynamics easy (Blankenburg, 1980).

1 The present research was funded by Plan Nacional de la Ciencia de España (2012-2014). The research team was composed of Diego Torrente, Juli Sabaté, Pedro Gallo, Oscar Jaime, and Cristina Rechea. With collaboration from: Vanessa Peñaranda, Laia Folguera, and Tamara Rubiños.

2 Public governance considers interaction between different actors involved in a political topic and decision making they carry out to create, apply or reproduce regulations and social institutions (Van Kersbergen and Van Warden, 2004).

The present article makes a contribution in this sense. The purpose is to analyze police governance from the standpoint of authorities. Attention is paid to the interaction of Spanish police forces with other institutional and social actors. In this game of relationships, police deploy its strategies to preserve its position of power and legitimacy. All of this, within a changing context, characterized by the reduction of the middle classes, socioeconomic polarization, cultural diversity, the growing delegitimization of traditional institutions and the consequent difficulties of power to reach certain goals (Naím, 2013). This complex environment alters the traditional interaction logics and forces police to redefine its political-institutional role.

Police are a central institution in the construction of the modern State, therefore, analyzing its role is theoretically and politically relevant. However, there are but few studies in Spain that approach the considerable transformation of police forces. The present research analyzes police as a political-institutional actor with a complex role (Recasens, 2007; Reiner, 2000).

The political dimension of police forces is approached from two viewpoints. On one side, attention is paid as regards its relation with different institutional powers (often discreet, ambiguous and sophisticated). On the other, it is fixed in the interchanges with the citizenry. Security forces perform intermediation work, as any public service, between the Administration and society. Furthermore, they act as a laboratory where answers are assayed for a wide variety of problems, which go beyond fighting against crime (Reiner, 2000).

Analysis framework

Political science documents the way public governance registers deep transformations in recent lustra. The forms, mechanisms, location, capability and governance styles change (Shaw, 1997). The main change tendencies can be sorted out in two (Van Kersbergen and Van Warden, 2004). Vertically, power and decision-making advance from the national sphere toward the supranational and also the local; horizontally, the traditional public-private and civil society boundaries blur. Public governance relates entities from the three sectors, while autonomous public agencies grow. The way of governing as a network advances in the face of traditional hierarchies (Rhodes, 1998 and 2000); the judiciary also gains noticeability in relation with the legislative and executive (Tate and Vallinder, 1997).

These changes give rise to governability, accountability, responsiveness, and institution legitimacy conflicts (Eising and Kohler-Koch, 2000). Other studies contest such vision of governance (Sending and Neumann, 2006; Rose and Miller, 1992); it is argued that they offer a zero-sum vision of power, and that they start from the classic vision of governance that does not consider changes in the governments' logic. For Sending and Neumann (2006), changes do not imply loss of power or control. In order to verify it, the analysis must focus not on institutions, but in the relationships of the State with other actors and in the logic or mentality behind. From this standpoint, the study of governance dynamics has to be carried out from the interactions and practices of the various political and institutional actors, as well as the associated meanings.

The police environment radically changed over turn of the XX century and the early XXI. Changes took place at various levels and many of the new situations to manage were more complex and uncertain. Numerous crimes globalize, either physically or virtually over the Internet (Van Dijk *et al.*, 2005). There is a process of pluralization and privatization of public security from which new actors appear (Jones and Newburn, 2006). Increasingly, security is provided by networks of public, private and third-sector organizations, however police hold a central place among them (Ransley and Mazerolle, 2009). It is debated to what extent this new situation entails a lesser role as a reference actor in the field of security. Ransley and Mazerolle (2009) argue that police increase its influence by means of the coordination of the local network and, at once, becomes part of international police networks, where it accesses information and intelligence.

In order to adapt to the new environment and its uncertainties, police undergo a redefinition of its role and function (Ransley and Mazerolle, 2009). This leads to a second sort of uncertainties regarding its capability to keep the principles of a democratic police force and at once efficaciously face new security threats.

On this balance depends its legitimacy, understood as "the right to govern". In this sense, there is a debate on the fusion of high and low policing, that is to say, security at the service of the State (traditionally focused abroad and based upon undercover secret services and preemptive intelligence), and another at the service of citizens (continuous-surveillance reactive domestic police).

Some authors (Clarke and Newman, 2007; Innes, 2006; Crawford, 2006) state that response to terrorism and organized crime dilute these differences in the working methods. While others (Bayley and Weisburd, 2011) argue

that police carry on, by and large, with its traditional style of working, simply because it is also useful to detect local terrorism connections. What there is indeed is competence for the resources to fight traditional crime or against new threats. Moreover, counterterrorist responses often entail more aggressive policing methods, and restriction of citizen rights (Brown, 2007).

All of the above leads to the need of a new police organization model that integrates the functions against terrorism and organized crime with those of protecting the citizens' daily security. However, there is no clear model at present. There are tendencies toward the centralization of the most specialized units in organized crime, but also toward pluralization or partnerships in networks of public, private and third-sector actors, directly or indirectly related to security (Shearing, 2006; Ericson, 2007). This dilutes the traditional differences between sectors. At once, it puts forward issues of great relevance: how is coordination accomplished between actors with disparate goals and interests? How can they be made responsible for their actions and accountable?

The so-called *Third-party policing* model enquires on the way police may lead and manage these networks, which by and large are more preemptive and vigilant than reactive. As well, to accommodate the network members better, administrative and other sort of legislations are preferred before penal ones (Ransley and Mazerolle, 2009).

Collaboration networks incentivize a higher demand of the corporations for police; in return, this takes the decisions and resources from such agencies. Power is not lost, it transforms. Besides, a higher interaction of police in the preemptive institutional and social networks underscores its increasing importance as a political actor with decision capacity (Reiner, 2000).³

Goals and methodological design

The present article has two goals:

1. Analyze the recent changes in the interactions of Spanish police forces with their environment of institutional and social actors, from the study of the discourses of those responsible for the police.
2. Analyze, also from the standpoint of those in command, the political-institutional consequences of those changes for police forces and assess whether they represent a substantial transformation in the governance of security.

3 Police has always had a political role linked to discretion in the application of laws, its activity as a pressure group, its associationism and unionism (Reiner, 2000).

The hypotheses are articulated on the triangulation between police, political-institutional decisionmakers and citizenry / civil society:

1. Police is a political-institutional actor, and the people in charge perceive they are undergoing a deep transformation process of its traditional role and their social and institutional relation patterns. Most of these changes may be understood from an analytical schema of governance.
2. These transformation processes mainly come from the changes in their patterns of social relation with a citizenry that makes new demands. Relationships with political power are also important, though not that much. Other institutional actors such as the judiciary do not seem to have the same influence level.
3. In their relationship patterns there is a tendency of police corps to approach influential civil society actors so as to have their support, it is a consequence of greater demands of the citizen (and certain social strata in particular) and of the sophisticated challenges posed by new criminality.
4. In its relationships with these institutional and social actors, a variable geometry is established in function of who they are, their power, demands or the nature of the problems to face. This leads to consider that more than loss of political power, there is a change in the way such power is exercised.

The methodological design starts from the same idea that in order to understand changes in the role of institutions, the analysis has to focus on the relation of them with other actors and on the logic or mentality in the background (Sending and Neumann, 2006). The research tries to capture this logic by means of the discourses of those in charge of police forces, on the interactions with the other institutional and social actors. The latter compose an environment that push politics through demands and political capacity. Such demands are diverse in function of the body, police unit or geographic environment under observation.

Owing to this, various interviewee profiles are selected and each is asked to tell the new demands and answers they receive. To obtain them, a questionnaire was devised following a schema of stages in policy analysis, gathers variables related to the sort of actors who make the demand (understood in a broad sense), its nature and its formulation channel. Likewise, it includes variables on the respondents' interpretation of these demands, criteria to prioritize them, response strategies, the sort of services and actions triggered, actors who partake of the response and who the respondent values all of this are.

There were 30 semi-structured interviews with strategic informants, located in relevant posts in *Cuerpo Nacional de Policía* [National Police Force], *Guardia Civil* [Spanish military police], *Mossos d'Esquadra* [Catalonia autonomous police force], *Ertzaintza* [Basque Country autonomous police force] and local police forces of various municipalities. The election of the respondents was made in function of their force, hierarchy, specialization, and the size of the city where they work (see Table 1⁴). All the interviews were recorded with the exception of four, for which there were no authorizations. In this case, notes were taken and transcribed.

The interviews were codified via the program Atlas-ti, by means of a tag system based on categories mentioned.⁵ At the time of analyzing the interviews, attention was also paid to discourses that account for the interaction of police with the various political-institutional and social actors. Fragments that connote demand, pressure, need or obligation were selected, particularly if they imply police decision-making. It is an institutionalist sociological approach in which institutions operate in an open environment, in which there are other institutions that condition and pressure one another (March, 1984; March and Olsen, 1997; Méndez, 2008; Hall and Taylor, 1996; Mayo, 2000).

In such environment, the main objective of the organizations is to survive and gain legitimacy (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). By interpreting the results, an interpretative approach was utilized, similar to that used by other authors (Sabaté, 1984; Martín, 1990). The methodology tries to link the theoretical elements with the discourses expressed by the respondents. All of this is supplemented with *exemplification* (Szczepanski, 1973; Valles, 2002) to support the interpretations of lives and personal-professional experiences.

Interaction with society

This section analyzes the respondents' discourses on the way the change in the way of relating between police and citizens, associations, interest groups, and firms.

⁴ Table 1 is at the Annex at the end of the present article (Editors' note).

⁵ The tag system is available for those interested upon reasonable request.

Citizens

The various forces and professional profiles assessed concur in perceiving a significant change in the number and diversity of demands of the citizenry, and its relation with police over recent years. Citizens are now wider aware of their rights and expect a proximate interactive police service:

[...] I believe [...] that society itself is changing [...] people have a series of rights and demand them, they may even ask them quickly, [...] the demand [...] is increasingly greater, and people [...] are increasingly aware of their rights, and maybe after facing purchases or a series of rights and demand them more (interview 34).

These demands are deemed a necessary factor of internal dynamization by some police authorities, which makes them assume new functions, even though this produces internal tensions. Moreover, due to a certain distancing and confidence crisis between citizens and political spheres, police officers perceive now their intermediary power, even, as an interpreter, for the demands of the street:

Citizens, since we are in the democratic state, have become very demanding as regards security. And it isn't bad, it's good because this frequently allows us to be aware of what actually occurs. Because police sometimes may get enclosed in its structure and think everything is nice and shiny, and that we can be far from reality (interview 26).

Police force has a very important informative function because it lets the legislator and the government know what occurs on the street, for if it doesn't, they won't see it. And this direct information for political power seems fundamental to me (interview 15).

Despite the management difficulties of increasingly contradictory demands, the interaction with the citizens is perceived as an undelayable need, at least from the discourse rhetoric. Certainly, plural societies need permanent and articulated interlocution in order to detect social necessities. The growing demand for personalized attention in a wide range of situations increases the need of the police to broaden its access to new information sources, more interactions with citizenry and –sometimes conflictive– with other institutional actors:

A problem faced by present-day police is that the citizen increasingly demands more things from it [the example commented by the commissioner is the demand of the citizens to directly mediate on child custody, when the issue is obviously judicial] (interview 29).

Social pressure makes our working system change, [...] we have to answer via the machines, police officers, this social demand for information, transparency, management, and organization [is present] at the time of prioritizing resources and tasks (interview 15).

To sum up, subjective perceptions of the citizenship and its translation into demands are still important drives for political change (Gottfredson and Hinderland, 1979; Skogan, 1976 and 1984; Sparks *et al.*, 1977). On the other side, we know that police concerns are somewhat different from those of the citizens (Jaime and Torrente, 2017). The former focuses its attention on problems that affect the collectivity such as traffic jams, urban public disorders, street commerce, or congregations of people, among others. For its part, the population is increasingly restless in the face of more visible situations perceived as a more individual threat, such as criminal acts, riots or mendicancy (Shapland and Vagg, 1988; Torrente, 1997). In the face of an increasingly diverse society, this tension perceived by police officers between collective interests and individual demands grows. All of this makes police responses difficult, but also increases its mediating power.

Interest groups and socioeconomic powers

The Spanish society is increasingly uneven, which ends up conditioning police work in a number of aspects. An extreme situation, illustrative nevertheless, takes place in a number of high-class neighborhoods, where sectors with political and economic influence live and where it is frequent that demands for police forces are transmitted personally and directly to the officer, or directly to police authorities if the topic is important. One of the respondents declares:

[...] if the chalet of someone with tremendous public transcendence is burglarized here, you realize the transcendence it will get and the level at which calls are made (interview 10).

Demands from influential economic and political sectors produce certain tension. This is because of the political and media transcendence of some of them, but also to the fact that, as pointed out by a respondent, “it is a sort of very demanding population” (interview 10). In any case, those police authorities develop the capacity to weigh some of these pressures:

[...] the pressure from entrepreneurial sphere, which is very tangible [...] in this country is relevant. We’ve had calls [...] from ministers, state secretaries, because economic power is very potent and when it tightens its grasp, it gets serious. [The closure of a factory] is a problem related to money, and they want to turn it into a police one to distract from the context, which is the dismantling of this factory [of the place] because in this way [the firm] is profitable and it will buy it (interview 16).

It is significant that crimes committed by higher strata are invisible for the rest of the population, thereby they are scarcely concerning. Maybe because of this, corruption, in any of its forms, is not an issue that appears in police discourses. Neither is it cited as a subject for pressure by any of the political spheres. For one reason or another, corruption is not a priority topic (Zuloaga, 2014).

Police, as public service, have to offer equal access to security for all the citizens and entities; however, the increasing socioeconomic polarization makes it difficult. On occasions, public resources favor some sectors more than others (Torrente *et al.*, 2016). These privileged alliances are frequently justified in pursuit of police efficacy or co-responsibility in security. An instance are the desks to receive denounces, which are installed in supermarkets or hotels:

[...] you have to make denouncing easy for them. You have to consider that in *Corte Inglés* [...] there are plenty of my people with private security people working for you, for your district (interview 6).

Citizens and mainly merchant collectives demand things from police that correspond to judges or that could only be enforced if *Ley de Enjuiciamiento Criminal* [Law on Criminal Prosecution is transformed]. Professional unions also look for police presence (interview 29).

On occasion, electoral logic makes politicians ask for some relaxation in the overall application of the norms. During the 2008 economic crisis, this situation took place relatively often, even though it contributed to the very police sensibility:

Public opinion is currently asking for more tolerance in Public Order. We are asked to be moderate in control, owing to the ongoing crisis and the discontent it causes (interview 21).

In global society, economic power tends to concentrate where corporations capable of challenging the powers of the States appear, and whose activities are sometimes of questionable legality (Jaime and Torrente, 2017). It is interesting that some respondents, main with autonomous forces, underscore the challenge entailed by legal firms that carry out highly sophisticated suspicious activities, before which the States lack sufficient and effective means.

The most disturbing is the prediction that this tendency will stress in the future and that State resources devoted to this issue cannot growth at the same rate. Adding to the above, the increasing connection between organized crime and opaque legal firms that even operate in leading sectors is also underlined. One of the greatest challenges, in this regard, is in the sphere

of new technologies and cybersecurity. One of the respondents expressed their concerns about the disadvantage of the State before new forms of technologic criminality:

The State understands that cybersecurity is a State affair. All the ministries are involved. Security problems may upset the balance of the country. Cybersecurity is the strategic action of the State. In any case, we are aware that it is not enough; more means are needed faster. When I request the latest server model to the Ministry, which is the most expensive, they ask me if I can do with the previous or they tell me I have to wait for the next year budget. In cybersecurity, it is key to have the latest technology. I'd rather have the latest, even though I had one analyst less (interview 1).

In recent lustra, police have made considerable investments on communications, databases, scientific police instruments, advanced surveillance media, et cetera (Mattelart, 2007). However, the perception that the divide between criminals and police officers broadens is widespread. Moreover, paradoxically, fighting cybercrime depends heavily regarding technology and knowledge on the private security industry (Bosch *et al.*, 2004; Torrente *et al.*, 2005). About the risks this implies, a respondent expressed as follows:

There is risk of turmoil. I'm scared of the operation capacity of private security no one controls them. We do not have instruments. Plus, the costs of such control for the whole of the economy are great (interview 1).

One of the spheres where there is a heavier dependency on the police is the technologic and multinational operators of social media; which concentrate and control a large volume of information about people, many of police interest, which they make available for the police only restrictively. Respondents deem the current collaboration schemes with these operators insufficient, which is valued as a noticeable vulnerability.

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) pose a great challenge for police in a number of aspects. Not only is it an issue of restriction of means or knowledge, but also of capability to address a growing volume of demand, investigation or collaboration with foreign agencies. The denounces of crimes committed on the Internet substantially alter the delinquency map. One extra problem is that the population is not fully aware of the risks of the Internet. More so, new technologies alter the conditions of police work:

The net deeply alters police work and traditional rights. For example, laws protect the right of individuals to demonstrate. Police balances that right with that of individuals' free movement. But that is a lie nowadays; now they call you for demonstrations hours in advance. You can no longer predict the size, or the attendees. It is not a right anymore; it's a movement in which many interests and groups come together. Law becomes meaningless (interview 1).

Interaction with institutional actors

This section analyzes the new interaction patterns between police and politicians, the media and other police forces.

Politicians

As observed, police are somewhat bewildered and uncertain about some recent and disperse citizen demands. But also, growing social pressure technically groundless, from its own standpoint. In the post-truth politics, adjectivized and objectifiable facts come into play. The conflict occurs because politicians tend to sacrifice the technical-police standpoint in favor of the perspective they attribute to citizenry, even is sometimes that is inefficacious and onerous. The politicians' fundamental demand for police is maximizing citizen satisfaction. Passages such as the following are illustrative:

[...] All the politicians in the world, all the electoral programs in the world, all the ministers, everyone says: more prevention and less repression (interview 15).

[For politicians] my question is [...] that they tell me what they would do to orient that, because I tell them they can't stop doing anything. You can't stop doing what you've been doing as a cop, [...] this way, [you're] a preemptive police force, a repressive police force, a custodial police force. You can't stop doing it, you have to add tasks (interview 15).

By and large, politicians are unaware of the more technical aspects of security policies. The disinterest comes partly from the scarce political benefit this provides them with, as there are other more agreeable, profitable and foreseeable management areas. Though, this proposition of let the professional do is changing as well. The pressure on the politician in a scenario with greater social fragmentation, appearance of new parties and more electoral volatility is easily transferred to police forces, as the following quotations evince:

What politicians want is [...] more presence, mainly and fundamentally [...] presence in some areas because they will receive the neighbor association of this neighborhood or another, fundamental at the level of local politics (interview 7).

We manage ourselves with these sensations and with those pressures from politicians well. [...] here [there's] a neighbor [...] that is the most degraded area [...], where a lot or foreign immigration has arrived. There are many local people for many years who see their neighbor degraded, but mainly if we analyze crime, which [...] we systematically constantly do, and see it is not the place where the most crime is committed, but

nonetheless there is significant pressure from neighbor associations that go to the town hall, [...] and ask for solutions. [When] we do the planning not only we use objective data, we also have to think of the insecurity sensation people have (interview 8).

Police logic and times do not match those of the politicians. Police answers for many problems need time to be designed, implemented and produce results. This clashes with the political logic which increasingly searches for immediate solutions:

We have reached a whim direction [...] or reactive, which is more dangerous [...] and in security the impulses... Oh, something has to be done here!!!! No, never in the heat of the moment, never (interview 16).

Not only are quick answers sought, but there is a tendency to hyperregulation and indiscriminate answers. Traditionally, politicians usually simplify the complexity of security issues, which usually have perverse effects. On occasion, there is a tendency to adopt indiscriminate measures, which ends up affecting broad population sectors. Commonly, police are not consulted to design them and find that without taking part in the making of the regulation, they have to impose it in a critical social context, generating discomfort.

Media

The relationship of police with the media is always tense in democratic contexts (Reiner, 2000; Fox *et al.*, 2001; Martel, 2006; Jaime, 2011; Kies, 2011). Such media, with their information, contribute to create public opinion and become an autonomous power, with influence and interests of their own (Surette, 1998). The image of police as an institution is created and projected on the media. The legitimization of police depends to a good extent on them (Jaime, 2017).

However, police also have a margin to fabricate and project its own image. This depends less on crime rate than the way police manage such information in time, format and context (Lovell, 2002). The position that police is hegemonic in this regard, as it generates and disseminates such information; this control increases with new information technologies. This has relativized the traditional victim stance of police officers before the media a little (Mawby, 1999; Reiner, 2000).

Other police corps

The Spanish police system is composed of a complex corporative structure, in which various police institutions compete for a hegemonic position in their competence spheres and geographic positions. The increasing fragmentation of political power in Spain at local, autonomous and central levels emphasizes this tendency. In the interviews, the representatives of police corps implicitly refer this by means of complaints and demands.

Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (CNP) [National Police Force] perceives a loss of political-institutional influence before *Guardia Civil* [Civil Guard], due to its expansion toward urban centers, affecting its privileged access to political decision levels. It is also verified –though it is perceived as a lesser threat– the expansion of certain local police forces, taking up judiciary police tasks.

For their part, local police forces tend to complain about the limited means of CNP and the overload that makes them address the authentic citizen security in large cities. While *Guardia Civil* expresses few complaints about other police forces, though we found critical observations about the fact that certain local police forces carry out judicial tasks, which go beyond their competence and capability. This sort of criticism may be interpreted as satisfaction with the current readjustment process in the Spanish security system undergoing at state level.

Furthermore, autonomous police corps express certain uneasiness about state authorities, by understanding that these restrict their will to become integral police forces, by having more international projection and access to certain information. In spite of this, intercorporate collaboration is considered adequate and functional. Between autonomous and local police forces there are also struggles. Some local police corps intend to expand their competences and operations, urged not by local politicians —who conceive public security in very basic terms (Jaime and Díaz, 2009)—, but by the very police chairs that aspire to integrally manage security, up to the limit of their legal attributions.

In this confuse inter-organizational context, coordination turns into need, but it is also conditioned by the individual will of police chairs and the inertias of the past. As a consequence, it may be stated that the police system does not look for competitiveness between corps and efficiency as much as keeping a balance that enables it to preserve its own existence. This is one of the reasons for the corporate clash not to reveal the system deficiencies or its structural dysfunctionality. Under these conditions, the system does

not register large transformations because this would generate excessive uncertainty in a context where inaction and the search for corporative balances produce sufficient benefits.

Discussion of results and conclusions

In this section, we present the discussion of results, relating them with the stated hypotheses. The first hypothesis states that changes perceived in the patterns of social and institutional relationships by the police chairs interviewed may be understood from a governance analytical perspective. Discourse analysis reveals awareness of Spanish police forces that they are undergoing a marked process to redefine their role.

The main driver of change is a more demanding and empowered citizen. There are vertical processes of fragmentation of institutional power that make room for competence between national, autonomous and local corps. Other processes are more horizontal such as the increasing importance given to cooperation networks and partnerships with all sort of entities, where police corps are still central.

The phenomenon of the pluralization of security is such that the role of private security has been normalized in police discourses. The challenges implied by these changes are diverse. The increase of diversity and social fragmentation of demands makes it difficult to address them satisfactorily, restricts the governance of security and hinders its institutional legitimacy.

The second hypothesis states that in police discourse, social interactions rather than institutional are largely linked to police change. Results show that police perceive the importance of relationships with citizens; however, they are increasingly organized, connected, participative and demanding. Among institutional interlocutors, political power is the one that keeps a heavier influence on police.

However, politicians tend to selectively gather, interpret and transfer civil pressure to police. Often, this keeps direct relations with a variety of groups with different power levels, beyond the political intermediary.

The reference for legality is still important in police, though as opposed to some authors (Tate and Vallinder, 1997), the judicial-penal system changes slowly and does not seem to have the same influence level in police discourse. Instead, police perceive tension between changing social demands and the rigidity of the penal system. The way the media depict police is a sensible topic for it. However, to the extent that traditional media lost prominence in favor of new technologies, police gain capacity to control its own public image.

The third hypothesis states that there is a tendency, relatively new, that police corps approach determinate influential actors of civil society and other institutions. Often, collaboration is sought in the face of great challenges posed for the State by organized crime, terrorism, crimes of firms and professions or those on the Internet. But also, it responds to greater demands of the citizens (and certain social groups) as regards prevention and security. At once, this favors the pluralization processes of security. The counterpart is the difficulty to coordinate and lead these initiatives.

The fourth hypothesis puts forward that in its relationships with institutional and social actors, police keep variable geometry in function of what are, their degree of power, demands or the nature of the problems to face. They are flexibility mechanisms that enable them to be at various networks and gain presence (Jordana, 1995).

Such fact, together with the aforementioned processes, makes us think that rather than a loss of political power, police change the way of exercising such power. Maybe because of this, few are the police commands that express the loss of authority and institutional power. The feeling of the majority is that of a change not always easy in the relationships with citizens, civil society and other institutions. Simply, these are changes which one has to adapt to.

Technology and collaboration with broad social sectors facilitate adaption to the new police roles. Particularly, ICT's are fundamental; paradoxically, the control of such technologies is in private hands.

He main contribution of the preset work research is to help understand change in police corps. The study has a more exploratory than explanatory nature. In spite of this, there are clear indications that verify numberless changes in the patterns of social and institutional relationships of Spanish police corps, which allow glimpsing fundamental changes in the governance of security.

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Annex

Table 1
Interviews by corps, hierarchies and labor spheres

Hierarchy	Sort of unit	Labor sphere	Cuerpo Nacional de Policía	Guardia Civil	Mossos d'Esquadra	Ertzaintza	Local police
Chieftain	Direction of the unit	High management			Interview 16, Barcelona	Interview 7, Bilbao	Interview 33, Vigo Interview 23, Barcelona
		Strategy and planning	Interview 29, Madrid	Interview 11, Madrid	Interview 15, Barcelona		
	Specialized central units		Interview 6, Madrid	Interview 12, Madrid	Interview 21, Barcelona		
Chair		Information / investigation	Interview 1, Madrid	Interview 9, Madrid	Interview 17, Barcelona Interview 18, Barcelona		
	Operative provincial units	Territorial	Interview 3, Málaga Interview 26, Alicante	Interview 13, Pamplona	Interview 20, Barcelona		

Intermediate command	Planning	Interview 19, Barcelona
	Information	Interview 25, Barcelona
	Local specialized units	Interview 24, Madrid Interview 31, Madrid
	Investigation	Interview 14, Barcelona
	Citizen relationships	Interview 34, Albacete Interview 32, Vigo
Local operative units	Territorial	Interview 2, Madrid Interview 4, Madrid Interview 10, Madrid Interview 8, Bilbao Interview 22, Barcelona

Source: Own elaboration based on the research project “Necesidades y demandas ciudadanas a la Policía” [Citizen needs and demands for Police], Plan Nacional de la Ciencia de España (2012-2014).

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