

Triggers of change to public confidence in the police and criminal justice system:

Findings from the British Crime Survey panel experiment

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Abstract

Accounts of public ‘trust and confidence’ in criminal justice agencies often fall into one of two camps. Instrumental accounts suggest that people trust police and the criminal justice system (CJS) when they believe them to be effective in fighting crime and reducing offending. Expressive or affective accounts, by contrast, suggest people place as much or more emphasis on the social meaning of justice institutions as on their instrumental activities. In this paper we add to recent studies that have sought to weigh up the balance between instrumental and expressive factors. Using data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales panel experiment, we present evidence that trust in police and the wider CJS is implicated in public concerns about the nature of local order and cohesion. The expressive account appears to offer a better understanding of why people may grant trust to, or withdraw trust from, the police and CJS.

Key words: Police; trust and confidence; public opinion.

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Trust and confidence in the police and criminal justice system (CJS) is a topic that continues to receive significant attention in the criminological and policy literatures. Linked both to legitimacy and, consequently, public cooperation and compliance (Jackson et al. 2012a; Tyler and Huo, 2002), public trust in the police has been an object of particular attention. Events such as the 2011 riots in England and the Leveson enquiry into the culture of the press, which implicated a significant number of officers in corruption, serve to almost continuously ramp up levels of debate and contest around policing, a process that many would argue has been going on since the 1970s at least (Reiner, 2010). While there is less debate around public confidence in the CJS as a whole, the latter continues to be a subject of almost equal policy concern, as witnessed by repeated attempts to devise ways of enhancing people's confidence in the courts, prisons and other organizations (Chapman et al 2002; Singer and Cooper 2008).

There are, broadly speaking, two accounts of the sources of public trust in criminal justice agencies (Freiburg, 2001). The first can be characterised as instrumental or cognitive: people believe the police, courts and prisons are there to 'fight' crime, and place trust in these institutions when and to the extent that they judge them to be effective in this task. The second account can be characterised as expressive or affective. Here the argument is that people are (a) less concerned with instrumental factors than we might expect, and (b) much more concerned with both how they are treated by police and other agencies, and by a wider range of factors that indicate whether police, in particular, are successful in maintaining, and indeed in representing, order, stability and cohesion (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007; Jackson and Bradford, 2009).

Understanding which of these accounts provides greater insight into what generates and modulates public trust in the police and CJS is important not only because of what criminal justice agencies stand to gain from higher levels of public trust – legitimacy, cooperation and compliance – but also because citizens have a right to be served by trusted justice institutions and to expect that those institutions will both represent their core interests

and beliefs and concentrate on issues they believe to be important. The policy implications are obvious. If trust and confidence are motivated primarily by instrumental concerns, police and other agencies should concentrate on being seen to be firm and effective in dealing with crime. If, on the other hand, expressive factors are more important, too great an emphasis on ‘crime-fighting’ may not only be ineffective in terms of enhancing trust but actually counter-productive if, for example, it generates many confrontational encounters between police and citizens.¹ Moreover, if people are more concerned with issues of low-level disorder and community cohesion, policies that aim to increase public confidence by emphasising the police’s ‘crime-fighting’ role may turn out to be misconstrued.

From one perspective the evidence on this question appears clear. When it comes to personal contact with officers, people strongly value expressive ‘means’, such as quality of treatment, fairness, dignity and respect, over instrumental ‘ends’ in terms of ‘getting results’. Panel and experimental data have been used in a number of recent studies to demonstrate that contact experiences do appear to change people’s opinions of the police (Myhill and Bradford, 2012), that fairness judgements play a key role in this process (Tyler and Fagan, 2008), and that the experience of procedural fairness – or unfairness – during face-to-face interactions with officers is linked to legitimacy judgements (Mazerolle et al., 2012).

Yet only a minority of people come into contact with the police and other criminal justice agencies from year to year – what influences trust and confidence on a more general level? Here, the evidence is mixed. Studies conducted in England and Wales have generally found that it is expressive concerns about low-level disorder, social cohesion, collective efficacy and change in society that are associated most strongly with trust and confidence (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007; Jackson and Bradford, 2009; Jackson et al., 2012b; Merry et al., 2012), with concerns about crime and victimisation less important. Such studies have tended to be cross sectional in design, however, making it difficult to identify factors that might

¹ Of course, even if people do place more emphasis on an expressive or affective understanding of policing this does not mean police should necessarily place less emphasis on ‘fighting crime’. Indicated instead might be greater attention on the potential for unintended consequences arising from police activity.

effect *change* in levels of trust. In an important recent study, Sindall et al. (2012) used time-series analysis to show that, at the aggregate level, only instrumental factors have any long-run relationship with levels of confidence in the police. It may be that while expressive concerns about (dis)order and cohesion are associated with trust and confidence on a cross-sectional basis, they are relatively stable over time and are therefore unlikely to be the cause of *change* in levels of trust.

In this paper we build on recent studies to examine whether change in (a) instrumental factors (the perceived risk of victimisation and actual victimisation), and (b) expressive concerns about disorder and collective efficacy, are associated with changes in trust in the police and the CJS at the individual level. Using data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW)² panel experiment (Fong and Williams, 2011) we find that changes in perceptions of disorder and collective efficacy were consistently associated with changes in confidence in the local police and in the CJS as a whole. Change in the perceived risk of victimisation had, by contrast, no consistent association with change in confidence; recent victimisation had no such association at all, although earlier victimisation did have some link with later confidence. We therefore present evidence in support of both instrumental and affective accounts of trust and confidence, although the affective account retains a significant explanatory advantage. The paper concludes with some reflections on the implications of our findings.

Trust in the police and CJS

There is a voluminous literature on attitudes to the police, concentrated in the US but drawing increasingly on research from across the world (e.g. Brown and Benedict, 2002; Brandl et al., 1994; Hinds and Murphy, 2007; Skogan, 2012; Sun et al., 2013). While until recently only a relatively small number of studies have considered public trust in the police in a UK context (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007), here, too, the literature is growing (e.g. Bradford et al., 2009;

² In April 2012, the British Crime Survey became known as the Crime Survey for England and Wales to reflect the fact that Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own surveys.

Kautt, 2011; Merry et al., 2012; Sindall et al. 2012; Sindall and Sturgis, 2013). Measuring public attitudes towards the ‘criminal justice system’ as an entity, by contrast, seems a largely UK phenomenon (e.g. Bradford 2011; Van der Walle 2009)

Brown and Benedict (2002) reviewed over one hundred studies, highlighting several methodological and conceptual problems associated with measuring attitudes toward the police that should be considered when attempting to synthesise research findings. Of particular note is the nature of the dependent variable. Studies have for example distinguished between ‘diffuse’ and ‘specific’ support for the police, with the former relating to an overall evaluation of an organization’s performance and the latter to specific policies or individuals (Brown and Benedict, 2002:564; Brandl et al., 1994). In England and Wales, a distinction is often made between satisfaction with specific encounters with officers, and more general ‘trust and confidence’ in the police as an organisation. This latter phrase, subject to significant and often anguished conceptual debate about the distinction between trust and confidence (c.f. Luhmann, 1979), is perhaps best seen as wrapping up people’s perceptions of the current effectiveness and good intentions of the police (Hardin, 2006: 17) with their assessments of the extent to which police will be effective and officers well intentioned were they to encounter them in the future (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2011). Satisfaction, by contrast, is a retrospective assessment of specific police actions and performance. Yet, satisfaction and trust/confidence are clearly related: satisfaction with prior contact will shape trust judgements, and the extent to which people trust the police will colour how they ‘read’ officer behaviour during encounters (Rosenbaum et al., 2006; Myhill and Bradford, 2012).

A second important methodological issue relating to attitudes research is the question of whether to assess public opinions using several related attitude statements or a single ‘catch-all’ question. The former approach is preferable both methodologically, since it allows more accurate measurement of the underlying construct, and theoretically, as there are different varieties or components of trust (Jackson et al., 2012b; Stoutland, 2001). Indeed, people can have high trust in some elements of policing and low trust in others (Stone et al., 2005), and satisfaction with encounters with the police can be associated with some elements

of wider trust and not others (Bradford et al., 2009). Single indicator measures of confidence and trust are, however, appealing to policy makers for their simplicity (and to survey managers seeking to reduce the content of large surveys), and have, consequently, been used in several UK studies of attitudes to the police (e.g. Kautt 2011; Merry et al. 2012). Although they will always be somewhat crude and reductive, such indicators have been shown to 'summarise' wider trust in the police relatively well (Jackson and Bradford, 2010).

Notwithstanding these issues, three individual level variables – age, ethnicity, and contact with the police – seem to be consistently associated with attitudes toward the police (Brown and Benedict 2002). Individual level variables may, however, have complex interactions with contextual variables. The effect of ethnicity, in particular, on attitudes may be influenced by factors operating at the neighbourhood level – the style of policing adopted in particular communities, for example. The influence of victimisation and the fear of victimisation, on attitudes and/or trust seems, significantly, to vary between studies.

Brown and Benedict (2002) further identified a 'contextual level' variable that was associated consistently with public attitudes: type of neighbourhood. They suggested however (ibid: 556) that there is 'no consensus about why attitudes toward the police vary by neighbourhood'. One reason for this lack of consensus may be found in the suggestion that some US studies, while statistically advanced, have been largely atheoretical (Kautt, 2011), with little attempt to explain the correlates that emerge from complex multivariate analyses. Yet, there are significant examples of theory-driven research in the US context. Sampson et al. (1997) published a landmark study linking collective efficacy – social cohesion, trust, and informal social control – to levels of violent crime in Chicago neighbourhoods. Concentrated socio-economic disadvantage appears to be highly predictive of low collective efficacy (Sampson, 2004), and of lower satisfaction with the police (Sampson and Bartusch, 1998). Sampson (2004) and others (e.g. Gau and Brunson, 2010) suggest that negative attitudes to the police in deprived neighbourhoods may be caused in part by 'enforcement' styles of policing which are frequently applied in such neighbourhoods. In essence, poor areas receive heavy handed policing that alienates local residents and undermines their trust in the police.

Another approach has been to think not so much about whether disadvantage and disorder promote policing styles that undermine trust, but about what low-level disorder and its correlates (social cohesion and collective efficacy) *mean* for local residents (Jackson et al., 2012b; Jackson and Bradford, 2009; Jackson and Sunshine, 2007). Trust and distrust are active stances (Luhmann, 1979), and the relational and expressive sense of cohesion and efficacy that exists (or not) among residents of a particular locality may be one factor influencing the stances they take in relation to criminal justice agents. Key here is the idea that police, in particular, are embedded in a particular kind of ‘value-bearing narrative’ (Earle and Cvetkovitch, 1995); representing, for many, a sense of order and cohesion, and serving as an explanatory mechanism for understanding how order and cohesion are maintained over time (Girling et al., 2000). Experiences that support this narrative (by promoting a sense of order or by suggesting that local people are ‘pulling together’) increase trust. Experiences or impressions of community breakdown, by contrast, diminish trust because they undermine the narrative of policing – they suggest that there is a *failure* to maintain order and cohesion, and the police are implicated in this perceived failure (Jackson et al., 2012b).

The expressive nature of the concepts of social cohesion, collective efficacy and disorder, as perceptions people have about their social environment, sits comfortably with the notion that policing in British contexts is inscribed with symbolic meaning relating to cultural and social order (see for example Loader and Mulcahy, 2003). Indeed, several previous studies of public attitudes in England and Wales have shown perceptions of collective efficacy and neighbourhood disorder to be associated more strongly with public trust in the police than more instrumental factors such as experiencing victimisation or generalised worry about crime (Jackson and Sunshine, 2007; Jackson and Bradford, 2009; Jackson et al., 2012b). A possible explanation is that while serious victimisation is a rare event for most people, the (perceived) nature and extent of local social bonds are both apprehendable and immediate. Perceptions of disorder, for example, may serve as a guide or heuristic for people when they are forming their trust judgements in relation to the police because disorder indicates threats (Sampson, 2009) police are failing to address. The effect on trust of concerns

about order and cohesion may go yet deeper, however, outweighing the effects of victimisation (threat made real) even when this does occur. When people perceive their local environment as orderly, for example, it may indicate not only the absence of crime but also that the local community is efficacious in upholding shared norms and values. On this account police, representative of community *and* order, garner trust when community appears unified and social order seems strong (Jackson et al., 2012b).

Limitations of recent UK research

Despite the regular suggestion of strong associations between concerns about disorder and neighbourhood, on the one hand, and (for example) trust in the police on the other, much existing UK research has used cross-sectional survey data to investigate these issues and so might be considered somewhat limited, especially when it comes to investigating processes of change. In particular, it seems possible that perceptions of disorder and collective efficacy are relatively stable over time, because they are associated with ideological postures or because the nature of local areas are themselves relatively stable (Sampson, 2012). Such perceptions may provide an underlying structure to the narrative people have concerning the nature of social order and the trustworthiness of the police, but be unlikely to trigger change to that narrative.

Furthermore, two recent UK studies have produced findings inconsistent to some degree with other extant research. Kautt (2011) combined several sweeps of CSEW data to examine the correlates of trust and confidence on a cross-sectional basis. Crime victims, it was suggested, were less likely to rate the police as doing a good job as they felt ‘the police failed them’ (ibid: 369), a primarily instrumental judgement. Kautt did not, however, have measures of victims’ assessments of the quality of their contacts with the police, or of perceptions of social cohesion and collective efficacy, expressive concerns that might contrast with instrumental concerns about victimisation.

Sindall et al. (2012) also pooled data from several sweeps of the CSEW, but took a different analytic approach, using time series analysis to identify factors associated with

public trust in the police at the aggregate level and over time. They found that ‘only aggregate perceptions of crime and the property crime rate have any long-run predictive relationship with public confidence in the police’ (ibid: 756). It may be that positive change in trust and confidence will be generated by more instrumental judgements about, for example, crime rates.

This latter study, in particular, represents an attempt to derive as much value as possible from cross-sectional data. As Skogan (2012) contends, however, what is really required to move towards causal explanations of attitudes to the police is panel (and experimental) data. Myhill and Bradford (2012) used panel data to show that contact with the police – judged primarily in expressive terms – was associated independently with wider trust in the police. Measures of change in perceptions of disorder and collective efficacy were not utilised in this study, however, and the sample was drawn in part from neighbourhoods subject to a pilot programme of intensive community engagement and targeted problem-solving activity, placing the generalizability of its findings in some doubt.

Another limitation of existing research is that, despite policy interest in public opinion of the wider CJS, it has focussed primarily on the police. Part of the reason for the relative absence of research on confidence in the CJS may be scepticism about the extent to which, as an aggregate body, it can be an ‘object’ of trust in any meaningful sense. Survey questions about confidence in the effectiveness and fairness of a range of CJS organizations have, though, been shown to load onto single underlying factors, suggesting the CJS may indeed be a ‘thing’ that people may, or may not, trust (Bradford, 2011; Hough et al., 2013). Moreover, Bradford (2011) demonstrated that contact with Victim Support, a very specific part of the CJS, was associated with variation in levels of confidence in the system as a whole. It remains an open question, therefore, as to whether people have a similar orientation – instrumental or affective – toward the CJS as they do the police, or whether the sources of confidence in these two institutions differ. Previous work has found that service provision premised on principles of procedural justice (ibid), and perceptions of disorder (Hough et al.,

2013) are associated with such confidence in the CJS. Expressive factors may therefore be important, but this idea has yet to be tested in any systematic manner.

Research hypotheses

Two key issues have, then, hampered extant UK research on attitudes to the police and CJS. The first is an overreliance on cross-sectional data. The second is the availability of robust measures of key constructs. The present study develops the field in two respects. First, we utilise a dataset hitherto unique in this UK research context: a nationally representative panel sample. Panel data allows us to examine the association between changes in individuals' victimisation experiences, perceptions of crime and their local area, and change in their attitudes to the police. Second, we include measures of instrumental *and* expressive factors, in order to examine which have a greater bearing on 'trust and confidence'. Our specific hypotheses are that:

H1: Perceiving an increase in disorder (which we treat here as an expressive factor) over time will be associated with a decline in confidence in the police and CJS.

H2: Perceiving an increase in local collective efficacy (an expressive factor) over time will be associated with an increase in confidence in the police and CJS

H3: An increase in the perceived likelihood of victimisation (an instrumental factor) over time will be associated with a decline in confidence in the police and CJS

H4: Controlling for earlier victimisation experiences (an instrumental factor), a report of recent victimisation will be associated with a decline in confidence in the police and CJS.

Data and Methods

A panel experiment was conducted in the spring and summer of 2011 to investigate the possibility of boosting the sample size of the CSEW at the Police Force Area level by re-interviewing respondents from the previous year and adding them to the current year's sample

(Fong and Williams, 2011). Four re-contact methods were tested on some of the 85 per cent of respondents to the 2009/10 and 2010/11 surveys who had agreed to be re-contacted when originally interviewed: telephone (using CATI – Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing), postal, and two further methods involving on-line surveys. To minimise the risk of ‘mode-effects’ (forms of bias introduced by the different methods of survey administration), in this paper we use only the CATI and postal samples. Wave 1 of the current study therefore comprises data collected from January-March 2010 as part of the standard CSEW, using face-to-face interviews. Wave 2 comprises data collected approximately one year later, January-March 2011, by either CATI or postal survey (the intention was that all follow-ups would be 12 months after the initial contact, but this was not uniformly achieved). The response rate to the first wave of the panel was by definition the response rate to the CSEW (around 75 per cent). The response rate for both telephone and postal follow-ups was the same (60 per cent).

In the original dataset, there were some 1,503 CATI- and 2,002 postal-mode respondents. All respondents received the same questionnaire at Wave 2. Given the modular design of the standard CSEW, however, many questions of interest were asked only of one quarter of respondents at Wave 1. Since we required our measures to be fielded to all respondents in both waves, the final sample size was therefore 879 (362 CATI and 517 postal). The structure of the sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Near here

Response variables

Two response variables were needed. The first, *confidence in the local police*, is represented by answers to the question ‘Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in this area are doing?’, with answers on a five-point scale ranging from ‘very poor’ to ‘excellent’. The second response variable, *confidence in the CJS*, is represented by a latent variable measured by two observed indicators: ‘How confident are you that the criminal justice system as a whole is effective?’; and ‘How confident are you that the criminal justice

system as a whole is fair?’. Latent variable modelling in the package Mplus was used to estimate and derive this second measure (see below and Appendix Table 1). We take a pragmatic approach and treat both response variables as measures of ‘trust and confidence’, and use these terms interchangeably throughout the paper. While we agree there may be some level of conceptual difference between trust and confidence, the present paper is perhaps not the place to explore it.

Explanatory variables

Four explanatory variables were needed. One, *victimisation*, was represented by a dummy variable (the panel survey did not, unfortunately, ask victims of crime how satisfied they were with any police response). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in Mplus was utilised to estimate and validate the other three explanatory variables; factor scores for both waves were then extracted for further use (see Appendix Table 1 for full question wordings and factor loadings).

The first latent construct represented respondents’ views about low-level disorder and anti-social behaviour (*disorder*), measured by five items, including ‘How much of a problem in this area is vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage’. The second latent construct represented prospective *perceived risk of victimisation*. Respondents were asked how likely they thought they were to be victims of burglary and physical attack in the next year. Finally, respondent’s perception of local *collective efficacy* were measured by two items that asked how likely they thought it was that local people would intervene if a fight was occurring or local children were spraying graffiti.

Appendix Table 1 shows that a four-factor model that included the three explanatory variables described above, and confidence in the CJS, was an adequate fit to the data when estimated using Wave 1 and Wave 2 data simultaneously (Appendix Table 2 displays a correlation matrix for all the explanatory and response variables – note that within waves no pairwise correlation exceeded .54, suggesting good discriminant validity). Full information maximum likelihood estimation was used, meaning that cases with some missing values on

the observed indicators were retained in the analysis. Note further that the factor loadings of individual items were relatively stable between waves, although the loading of the item assessing the likelihood of suffering a violent attack did differ somewhat between the two sampling points. On balance, however, we do not believe this difference represents too great a threat to the validity of the underlying latent variable (perceived risk of victimisation).

Finally, we included the measure of confidence in the local police as an explanatory variable in the models predicting confidence in the CJS. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that confidence in the police, as the most visible and accessible CJS organization, is a key factor shaping confidence in the system as a whole (Hough et al. 2013).

Issues arising from the mixed mode administration

A significant threat to the validity of the latent variables derived from the CSEW panel – and indeed all analysis of this data – arises from the fact that the second wave was administered in two different modes (CATI and postal). Research on mixed mode surveys has shown that responses to questions can differ substantially depending on the way the questionnaire is administered. For example, respondents to aural modes (e.g. CATI) are more likely to give extreme positive answers than respondents to visual modes (e.g. postal) – implying that the mean scores on any observed variable may be more positive among aural mode respondents (Dillman et al., 2009).

To address the issue of measurement equivalence we used the multiple group function in Mplus. We first compared the factor structure of the latent variables measured at Wave 2. Models that allowed factor loadings to vary between the CATI and postal respondents did not improve model fit over a baseline model that constrained all Wave 2 factor loadings to be equal. We then estimated a second series of models that allowed factor loadings *and* the thresholds of the observed indicators to vary across groups; again, none significantly improved model fit over the baseline. These results suggest that the different survey modes did not influence the ‘meaning’ of the latent variables.

It is important to note that, as suggested by Dillman et al's study (2009), there were significant differences between groups in the *means* of the latent variables measured at Wave 2. For example the mean of the disorder variable in the CATI group was -0.077, while the mean of the postal group was 0.077 ($t=-3.72$, $p<0.005$). To correct for this effect we included a dummy variable for *survey administration* in all analyses, thus partialing out structural differences caused by the use of two survey modes (and see below for more discussion of this issue).

Control variables

A number of control variables were included in all models: gender; age; ethnicity (dichotomised as White/non-White due to the small sample size); employment status (dichotomised as employed/other); household car access; area type (inner city/rural area/other); a measure of interviewer-coded disorder derived from CSEW interviewers' assessments of the condition of respondent's homes and their immediate neighbourhood (logged to correct for skewness); and contact with the police in the past year (measured at Wave 2 only).

Results

Table 2 shows results from a series of ordinal logistic regression models predicting confidence in the local police at Wave 2. Ordinal logistic regression is the preferred method for measures of this type as it is recognisant of the structure of the response variable (Britt and Weisburd, 2011).³ Models 1 and 2 in Table 2 used only Wave 1 predictors. In model 1, victimisation (negative), disorder (negative), collective efficacy (positive) and perceived risk of victimisation (negative) were all significant predictors of confidence in the local police at Wave 2. However once confidence in the police at Wave 1 was entered in model 2 (for the sake of simplicity as a continuous variable) the coefficients for all but disorder lost

³ Brant tests (Long and Freese 2006) indicated that the proportional odds assumption was not violated by these models.

significance, suggesting that the statistical effect of the other Wave 1 variables on Wave 2 confidence were mediated by confidence at Wave 1.

Table 2 near here

Model 3 adds the Wave 2 explanatory variables. It is this model that allows us to assess the potential effects of change in experiences of crime, disorder and collective efficacy on confidence in the police. Since perceptions of disorder (for example) at Wave 1 are included (held constant) in the model, a positive coefficient for ASB at Wave 2 would represent a predicted *increase* in confidence between Waves 1 and 2 (specifically, the increase in the log odds of being in a higher category of the response variable associated with a one unit increase in the explanatory variable), while a negative coefficient would represent a predicted *decline* in confidence. Strikingly, we find that while an increase in perceptions of disorder was associated with a decline in confidence in the police, and that an improved perception of local collective efficacy was associated with an increase in confidence, change in the perceived risk of victimisation was not associated with such a change. Furthermore, conditioning on victim status at Wave 1, respondents who fell victim to crime between waves did not, once the other variables were taken into account, report significantly lower levels of confidence in the police at Wave 2.

Note that few other variables included in the models were significant. Confidence fell slightly with age, and people living in rural areas tended to express less trust in the police than those living in towns and cities. Most notably, interviewer-coded disorder, which might be considered as a more objective measure of the orderliness of respondents' immediate physical environments, was not significant in any model. This finding provides some support for the idea that what is at stake here are respondents' subjective assessments of their local areas, not some unobserved feature of 'objectively' disorderly neighbourhoods (e.g. aggressive policing).

Table 3 near here

Table 3 repeats the above process, this time with confidence in the CJS as the response variable, using linear regression models. Here, given inclusion in the model of ASB (for example) at Wave 1, the coefficient for ASB at Wave 2 represents the expected change in the mean of the confidence measure from Wave 1 to Wave 2 associated with a unit change in the disorder measure over the same period. There are some marked similarities with the police models. Perceptions of disorder, risk of victimisation and confidence in the local police, measured at Wave 1, were all significant predictors of confidence in the CJS at Wave 2 (Model 4); and most, although not all, of the statistical effect of these variables appeared to be mediated by confidence in the CJS at Wave 1 (Model 5). Finally, Model 6 shows that change in perceptions of disorder, in collective efficacy, and in confidence in the local police between Waves 1 and 2 were all factors associated with change in confidence in the CJS over the same period, with statistical effects all in the hypothesized directions.

Rather perplexingly, conditioning on these other factors an increase in perceived risk of victimisation was associated with an *increase* in confidence in the CJS. Further analysis (results not shown here) demonstrated that this effect arose only once perceptions of disorder were included in the model, and, absent disorder the coefficients for perceptions of risk at both Waves 1 and 2 were not significant predictors of confidence. It may be that, holding perceptions of disorder constant, the ‘idea’ of the CJS becomes more salient as people perceive greater risk, and this greater salience has the effect of increasing trust in the system; or, more accurately perhaps, their sense that it is important, something on which they in a sense rely and therefore should support (c.f. Van der Toorn et al., 2011).

This finding aside, however, the results in relation to confidence in the CJS echo those in relation to the police. Change in the more expressive variables – disorder, collective efficacy – was associated with change in confidence exactly as hypothesized. Change in the more instrumental factors of risk and victimisation did not have the hypothesized effect on

people's views, although perceived risk of victimisation at Wave 1 did have an indirect effect, mediated by Wave 1 confidence, on Wave 2 confidence.

Additional analysis

Fong and Williams (2011: 20) reported that in the BCS panel experiment the telephone model provided responses most congruent with the original face-to-face administration. Given that the potential problems created by the mixed mode administration at Wave 2, we re-estimated the models shown above using only the CATI respondents (full results available from the lead author). Results were similar to those shown above. Changes in both disorder and collective efficacy between Waves 1 and 2 were associated with significant change in confidence in the police, in the expected directions. Change in perceived risk, and recent victimisation, had no significant association with change in confidence. Changes in disorder, collective efficacy and confidence in the police were, again, associated with significant change in confidence in CJS, in the expected directions; change in perceived risk, and recent victimisation, were not.

Discussion

We found strong evidence to support our first two research hypotheses. Perceiving an increase in disorder over time was in the CSEW panel associated with a decline in confidence in both the police and the CJS (H1); perceiving an increase in local collective efficacy was associated with an increase in confidence, again both in the police and the CJS (H2). Evidence to support our remaining hypotheses, which related to instrumental factors, was weaker. While there was some suggestion perceived likelihood of victimisation at Wave 1 was associated with lower levels of confidence in the police and CJS, there was little evidence that an increase in perceived risk between waves was associated with a decline in confidence (H3); in the case of the CJS, increased risk may even have been associated with *increased* confidence. Finally, we found that between waves victimisation (H4) was not associated with a decline in confidence in either police or CJS. Again, however, there is some evidence that people who reported victimisation at wave 1 expressed less confidence in the police at wave 2

(although not the CJS), suggesting that victimisation has some association with trust in the police, at least.

In sum, while we find evidence in support of both instrumental and expressive accounts of ‘trust and confidence’ the latter appears significantly stronger. Change in risk perceptions, and recent victimisation, did not have hypothesized associations with our response variables. By contrast, collective efficacy, the most obviously ‘expressive’ explanatory variable, was a consistent predictor of confidence. On average, people whose assessments of the likelihood that others in their neighbourhood would intervene if a fight was occurring or local children were spraying graffiti grew more favourable between survey waves also tended to place more trust in the police and the CJS by Wave 2. Assessments of community efficacy on the face of it quite unconnected with the direct activity of the police and CJS were therefore associated with trust in these institutions, which would appear to strengthen the claim that there is a significant expressive or affective strand to public trust in both. Representing and embodying efforts to maintain normative social order, the police and CJS garner trust when collective efforts to maintain such order, as indicated by a perception that local people are willing to step in and help maintain it, seem to be strong (Jackson and Bradford, 2009).

Similar associations were found in relation to perceived disorder. On average, confidence in both the police and CJS declined among people who perceived an increase in disorder in their local environment. In this paper we have treated perceptions of disorder as an affective variable, representing perceptions of the quality of local social order. Yet perceived disorder is, as measured, something of a mixed bag, wrapping up assessments of clearly illegal behaviour (vandalism and graffiti) with other activity which might not be illegal but may certainly be threatening to some (drunk and disorderly behaviour). Concerns about disorder may therefore actually reflect a more instrumental concern with the extent of crime in local areas (Mackenzie et al. 2010). While our models controlled for actual victimisation and perceived risk of sanction, and thus to an extent partialled out the overlap between ‘crime’ and ‘disorder’, this is unlikely to have been total.

On balance, however, we believe perceptions of disorder are more expressive than instrumental. Most importantly, two key measures of concern, ‘noisy neighbours’ and ‘teenagers hanging around’, deal with essentially non-criminal behaviour that many people nevertheless experience as threatening to their sense of order and cohesion. The most obvious interpretation here is that of *metaphor* (Mackenzie et al., 2010). Local disorder represents a set of social processes and concerns associated with “a splintering of society (that leads) ... social groups to retreat from engagement with others in the public realm ... to segregate dynamically into privatised enclaves ... and to become increasingly intolerant of those perceived to be different or holding different values” (ibid: 10). If this is indeed what perceptions of disorder represent, the extent of their association with trust in the police and CJS is striking. Trust in the police and the CJS is withdrawn when people turn away from their neighbours and, concomitantly, begin to perceive low-level disorder and criminality as more threatening (c.f. Jackson and Sunshine, 2007).

Weaknesses of this study

We should note a number of limitations to the present study. Most importantly, although we use panel data this was collected at two time points only; we cannot therefore truly identify potential causal pathways. Multi-wave longitudinal or experimental data will be required in order to assess whether trust and confidence really is more expressive than instrumental. Furthermore, we were constrained by the variables available in the CSEW panel, and a greater variety of observed and latent variables would have enhanced the analysis. In particular our measure of collective efficacy was very limited, and a fuller set of measures might have altered the results. Equally, better-specified and more accurate measures of ‘trust and confidence’ would also have been desirable. For example, if trust in the police is composed of distinct components – for example fairness, effectiveness and engagement with the community (Bradford et al., 2009) – do these different components have different ‘triggers of change’?

Implications for policy and practice

What are the implications of these findings for policy and practice? Firstly, this study emphasises the extent to which people's expressive or affective concerns about policing and criminal justice are important, and very possibly more important than their instrumental concerns about crime. Research has shown that there is a tendency for community-focused police activity, in particular, to be viewed as 'nice to do but not essential' (Foster, 2010). This view is often accompanied by the argument that if criminal justice agencies get the 'essentials' of crime-fighting right public confidence will follow. The evidence presented here suggests this may not always, or even often, be the case. People's experiences of crime per se do not seem to be strongly linked to their confidence in justice institutions, at least at the level of the 'general' population.

'Crackdowns' on crime are thus unlikely to enhance public confidence. Of course there is no reason – aside perhaps from prevailing occupational cultures that associate 'real' police work with action and 'thief-taking' (Reiner, 2010) – to believe that long-lasting reductions in crime will in any case be achieved by an enforcement model. While enforcement-focused policing can achieve demonstrable improvements in crime in the short term (Ratcliffe et al., 2011), problem-solving and related approaches may achieve more sustainable gains in the longer term (Braga et al., 1999). Indeed, policing strategies that incorporate a community engagement element may be more likely to be regarded positively by local residents. Policies and practices which resonate with the association of police, in particular, with efforts to maintain community order and stability may be more acceptable to residents, and seen as more legitimate.

Secondly, if perceptions of community cohesion and social order, and trust and confidence, are as inextricably linked as the current paper and much other research suggests, then fostering collective efficacy seems a promising approach for improving both confidence and community safety. Such a process might create a virtuous circle – as local residents begin to trust police more, they become more ready to work both with police, other agencies, and each other to solve local problems (Sampson, 2004). The potential benefits of community

capacity building remain enticing – ‘greater activation of informal social control’ (ibid: 111) should mean communities require fewer resources from formal social control agencies. If the police and other criminal justice agents are to be required to undertake community capacity building, however, they must be given the skills and tools this work demands. Direct involvement by the police in local communities that is not well managed and, for example, makes promises that are not delivered, risks being counterproductive in terms of generating long-term public trust.

Yet, the extent to which criminal justice organizations (particularly the police) *should* engage in community capacity building remains an open question. While police will always be required to detect crime, undertake enforcement activity and, we would argue, prioritise local, collaborative crime prevention and problem solving activity, how far should they go in terms of wider community engagement – or building – activity? Is this role appropriate, or does it constitute ‘mission creep’ and an over-involvement of criminal justice organizations in wider public affairs?

Answers to these questions are yet to be forthcoming. It may be more realistic, given a policy agenda that continues to privilege ‘crime fighting’, to suggest the key message of this paper is simply that the public take a much broader view of policing, in particular, than such an agenda would support. People are, in this sense, arguably more attuned to some of the key themes in classic police sociology than many policy-makers either know or suspect. Empirical studies of police activity (e.g. Ericson 1983; see also Brodner 2010), and more theoretical accounts (Bittner 1990), have long stressed that order maintenance is a, if not the, defining feature of policing in liberal democracies. As well as being crime-fighters, police are peace-officers (Banton 1964), the secret social service (Punch 1979), and street corner politicians (Muir 1977), engaged in dealing with a wide range of usually sub-criminal activity that, nevertheless, influences the character of social order in local communities. While this order is, of course, also constituted by social, economic and cultural factors that go far beyond the activity of the uniformed police (or indeed of the CJS as a whole), they remain inextricably linked in people’s minds. From the perspective of the public, as much as students

of policing, police help reproduce order – concomitantly, when order maintenance appears successful, so do the police (Jackson et al. 2012b).

Calls for a focus in police activity on crime fighting ‘pure and simple’ thus appear sociologically *and* psychologically naïve. Not only do they cut against what is known about actual police activity, which is predominantly focussed on non-crime related activities, but, equally importantly, they appear ignorant of the factors that actually shape public trust, which are often highly expressive in nature and only tangentially related to crime. Naturally, it remains something of an irony that the police, and CJS, may gain or lose public confidence as a result of social processes largely beyond the control of justice agents or organizations. Efforts to ‘enhance’ public trust must be cognisant of the extent to which external factors help shape people’s perceptions and understandings.

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Table 1: Structure of the sample

Percentages			
Gender		Car Access (Wave 2)	
Male	45	Owens or has regular use	84
Female	55	No	16
Age		Employment status (Wave 2)	
16-24	5	Worked in last 7 days	51
25-44	25	No	49
45-64	41	Area type	
65-74	19	Rural	25
75+	10	Urban	75
Ethnicity		(of which) Inner City	10
White	95	Recent victim of crime (Wave 2)	
Non-White	5	No	84
		Yes	16
Housing tenure		Recent contact with police (Wave 2)	
Owner-occupier	79	No	77
Social renter	13	Yes	23
Private renter	8		

n=879

Table 2: Ordinal logistic regression models predicting confidence in the local police at Wave 2

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Follow up mode (ref: telephone)			
Postal	0.02	-0.09	0.06
Gender (ref: male)			
Female	0.14	0.13	0.09
Age	-0.01**	-0.01+	-0.01+
Ethnic group (ref: all others)			
White	-0.31	-0.19	-0.25
Employment status at Wave 2 (ref: all others)			
Employed	-0.09	-0.03	-0.04
Car access (ref: no)			
Yes	-0.18	-0.1	-0.09
Area type (ref: all others)			
Inner city	-0.16	-0.21	-0.1
Rural	-0.48**	-0.32+	-0.40*
Interviewer coded disorder (logged) (high=more)	-0.03	-0.03	-0.01
Wave 1 variables			
Victim	-0.29+	-0.21	-0.17
ASB (high=more)	-0.68**	-0.57**	0.31
Collective efficacy (high=more)	0.33**	0.08	-0.29+
Risk of victimisation (high=more)	-0.35*	-0.13	-0.18
Confidence in local police (high=better)		1.33**	1.28**
Wave 2 variables			
Victim			-0.19
Contact with police (ref: none)			0.16
ASB (high=more)			-1.08**
Collective efficacy (high=more)			0.45**
Risk of victimisation (high=more)			0.09
n	813	813	813

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Brant test for model 3: Chi sq=71.33 p=0.096 d.f.=57

Table 3: Linear regression models predicting confidence in the criminal justice system at Wave 2

	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Follow up mode (ref: telephone)			
Postal	-0.21**	-0.21**	-0.17**
Gender (ref: male)			
Female	0.01	0.03	0.02
Age	-0.01**	0	0
Ethnic group (ref: all others)			
White	-0.06	0.02	0.01
Employment status at Wave 2 (ref: all others)			
Employed	0.11+	0.08*	0.08+
Car access (ref: no)			
Yes	-0.10	-0.05	-0.03
Area type (ref: all others)			
Inner city	-0.26**	-0.20**	-0.17**
Rural	0.04	0.02	0.02
Interviewer coded disorder (logged) (high=more)	0.01	0.01	0.03
Wave 1 variables			
Victim	-0.04	-0.02	0.01
ASB (high=more)	-0.16**	-0.08*	0.23**
Collective efficacy (high=more)	0.03	-0.01	-0.19**
Risk of victimisation (high=more)	-0.18**	0.03	-0.12
Trust in local police (high=better)	0.27**	0.06*	-0.01
Confidence in the CJS (high=more)		0.79**	0.75**
Wave 2 variables			
Victim			-0.06
Contact with police (ref: none)			-0.03
ASB (high=more)			-0.29**
Collective efficacy (high=more)			0.22**
Risk of victimisation (high=more)			0.14*
Trust in local police (high=better)			0.10**
Constant	-0.47*	-0.10	-0.24
R ²	0.22	0.61	0.66
n	813	813	813

+ p<0.10, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01

Appendix Table 1: Latent constructs and indicators

	Wave 1	Wave 2
Disorder		
How much of a problem in this area are:		
Noisy neighbours?	0.65	0.65
Teenagers hanging around?	0.82	0.82
Rubbish or litter lying around?	0.76	0.73
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage?	0.81	0.84
People being drunk or rowdy?	0.77	0.78
Collective efficacy		
How likely is that local people would do something about:		
Children spray painting graffiti on a local building?	0.86	0.86
If there was a fight near your home and someone was being beaten up or threatened?	0.74	0.79
Risk of victimisation		
How likely do you think your home is to be burgled in the next year?	0.69	0.77
How likely are you to be physically attacked or assaulted by a stranger in the next year?	0.66	0.83
Confidence in the CJS		
How confident are you that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is effective?	0.83	0.91
How confident are you that the Criminal Justice System as a whole is fair?	0.86	0.90
Model fit statistics		
Chi square	566.294	
Degrees of Freedom	181	
p-value	<.00005	
RMSEA	0.05	
CFI	0.97	
TLI	0.97	

Appendix Table 2: Correlation matrix of response and explanatory variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Disorder (Wave 1) - 1	1									
Disorder (Wave 2) - 2	0.82	1								
Collective efficacy (Wave 1) - 3	-0.37	-0.36	1							
Collective efficacy (Wave 2) - 4	-0.40	-0.47	0.77	1						
Risk of victimisation (Wave 1) - 5	0.54	0.49	-0.28	-0.24	1					
Risk of victimisation (Wave 2) - 6	0.36	0.53	-0.30	-0.32	0.84	1				
Confidence in the CJS (Wave 1) - 7	-0.27	-0.27	0.23	0.29	-0.33	-0.29	1			
Confidence in the CJS (Wave 2) - 8	-0.26	-0.34	0.19	0.35	-0.27	-0.28	0.76	1		
Rating of local police (Wave 1) - 9	-0.26	-0.26	0.28	0.31	-0.25	-0.23	0.41	0.36	1	
Rating of local police (Wave 2) - 10	-0.28	-0.34	0.21	0.29	-0.22	-0.23	0.34	0.40	0.51	1