5-1-2019

Citizen trust of the police in the United States: How bad is it, and what can we do to fix it

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By

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An Undergraduate Honors Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of

Mississippi State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for Graduation *Cursus Honorum* in the Shackouls Honors College

Mississippi State, Mississippi

May, 2019

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Date of Degree: May 3, 2019

Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: Criminology

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Ashley Perry

Title of Study: Citizen trust of police in the United States: How bad is it, and what can we do to fix it

Pages in Study: 42

Candidate for Degree of: Bachelor of Arts

Trust in the legitimacy of law enforcement is necessary for effective policing. Literature focuses in on three broad areas in its discussion of trust in the police; general feelings of social trust toward one's community, belief in absence or presence of procedural justice, and perceptions of police effectiveness in the neighborhood in terms of disorder and incivilities. In this paper, I use data from the World Values Survey collected in 2011 in the United States to examine these correlates of trust in the police by way of logistic regression models. I find that, in accordance with recent scholarship, individuals' perceptions of procedural justice have the greatest impact on one's trust in the police. These findings should impart legislators to give substantial weight to potential policies such as the "Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act of 2018" if the US wishes to improve its policing.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis work to those who inspired my interest in this field – the innocent men and women whose lives have been lost at the hands of law enforcement, but also the brave men and women who do truly protect and serve. May continual research in this area serve to reform broken bonds and strengthen our society.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the members of my committee – Ashley Perry, Lindsey Peterson, and Seth Oppenheimer – for their continued support and encouragement. I also wish to acknowledge my friends and peers in the Department of Sociology, whose lively classroom discussions and commitments to social justice have continuously maintained my passion for this work. This project would not have been possible without the enriching environment provided by Mississippi State University and the Provost Scholarship program.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Thesis Structure

The following paper proceeds in five chapters, each intended to utilize different skills I have I garnered during my tenure as an undergraduate student at Mississippi State University. In the next section of this chapter, I introduce my topic and explain both its public and academic salience. In Chapter II, I conduct a systematic literature review of scholarship on the topic of trust and confidence in the police. Chapter III presents logistic regression models used to analyze data from the World Values Survey to provide new insight into the correlates of trust in the police. In Chapter IV, I examine a potential policy to be enacted in an effort to increase trust in the police and provide my own recommendations based upon previous literature and my own research. Chapter V concludes this thesis and provides directions for future research.

Trust in the Police as a Publicly Salient Issue

History of Trust in the Police

Trust in the police is not a new issue; however, the proliferation of the media has made it recently more publicly salient than ever. To understand the full context and complexity of the issue, an elementary understanding of law enforcement as a whole is necessary, and thus I begin with a bit of history. Ineffective 'night watches' began in the United States in the 1600s, but the first American police force was not established until 1838 in Boston (Potter 2013). Though European immigrants were the initial targets of violent police tactics, African-Americans fleeing the south soon became victims of punitive policing (Potter 2013). A survey conducted between 1927 and 1928 provides the first evidence of disproportional police contact, with only 5% of the population being African-American but making up 30% of the victims of police killings (Potter

2013). While police brutality is often now regarded as a racial issue, it affects individuals from all demographics, and knowledge of the incidents certainly has an impact on all individuals. Perception of police violence is not the only variable that goes into determining one's level of trust in the police, but it is an important one. The following chapter will provide information about the current state of citizen-police relations in the United States and will discuss what the current body of scholarship had determined are the most important factors in molding individual's trust in their law enforcement.

Is This Really That Important?

Trust in the police is quite literally an issue of life or death. In his novel *Gang Leader for a Day*, Sudhir Venkatesh (2008) writes about how in the Robert Taylor Homes – a high-rise housing project in Chicago – residents refrained for calling for help if someone got hurt, and they managed crime internally among themselves. In situations where many or most people would not hesitate to call the police, this population of individuals found it easier not to do so, due to a lack of trust, whether warranted or not. Communities like the Robert Taylor Homes often remain in disarray with high crime rates as the norm due to a lack of outside intervention. However, in areas where the police and the community have strong bonds, progress generally comes at a quicker rate. Trust in the police is necessary for citizens to be able to feel as though they can get the help they need and deserve.

Apart from trust in the police being a necessary factor for well-being, it is also essential in reducing crime. Crime can (almost) never be solved unless it is first reported to the police. Less than half of violent crimes and only about a third of property crimes are ever reported to the police, and only about half of reported crimes are ever able to be solved (Gramlich 2017). If one assumes the clearance rate for crime to be relatively constant, then a higher amount of reported

crime would result in a greater amount of solved crime which could potentially lead to an overall reduction in criminal activity.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Method of Review

I chose to conduct a systematic literature review for this paper rather than the typical narrative review in an effort to avoid the potential bias that comes with discussing such a polarizing topic. I conducted my search for literature using the search engine 'Google Scholar.' Google Scholar is the world's largest academic search engine and is believed to cover approximately 80-90% of all articles published in English (Gusenbauer 2019). This coupled with its ability to link with Mississippi State University libraries in order to provide access to articles made it the ideal option. I ran an advanced search for publications that contained the word "police" and either "trust" or "confidence" in the title. I limited my search to works published after August 2014, the month in which Michael Brown was fatally shot by a police officer in Ferguson, Missouri (Buchanan et al. 2015). I personally felt as though this incident sparked a renewed public attention to the actions of law enforcement, and data supported this intuition (Demby 2016). I limited my review to peer-reviewed journal articles, excluding books and dissertations/theses. I also only included articles to which I had immediate access granted by Mississippi State University in order to facilitate the research process; with more time and resources, ideally all articles would be utilized. After narrowing with these parameters, I read the abstracts for each publication and excluded those that focused on countries other than the United States. One publication was excluded because it focused on trust between police officers, and this paper centers on civilian trust of law enforcement. This left 21 articles to read and summarize. Using these parameters means that I am not covering the entire body of research regarding trust in police; there is simply too much material for the confines of this study.

However, articles were selected in a non-biased manner that should result in a fairly comprehensive understanding of the topic. Articles other than the previously mentioned 21 are cited in this section to round out the literature; the exact 21 articles collected for the narrative review are denoted with an asterisk in the reference section.

The Meaning of Trust and its Counterparts

Before we can have a meaningful and productive discussion about citizen trust in the police, it is necessary to define what trust is in addition to discussing the other words and ideas that are used in its conjunction. Tom R. Tyler is one of the leading scholars on issues of trust in the police and his definitions are used widely and often. Tyler and Huo (2002) are quoted by Nix et. al (2015) stating that "trust in a person's motives or character refers to his or her internal, unobservable characteristics that are inferred from his or her observable actions" (613). Tyler (2006) is later quoted by Novich and Hunt (2018) defining trust in the police specifically, as the "degree of perceived honesty of police behavior during involuntary encounters" (58). The latter definition speaks to real examples of interviews with past criminals where individuals, despite the interaction with police being that of a negative circumstance, are generally understanding of the police 'doing their job' if evidence of a crime being committed was clear (Novich and Hunt 2018). Alternatively, individuals have issue with the police when they are approached while "doing nothing" (Novich and Hunt 2018:58). Research also suggests that African American men and women's perceptions of whether or not officer behavior is viewed as honest is more significantly impacted by the undercurrents of the exchange, such as the demeanor of the officer and the reason for the stop (Novich and Hunt 2018). The following section on race and ethnicity will elaborate on possible explanations for why this is. Often discussed alongside trust is the concept of legitimacy. Sunshine and Tyler (2003), again quoted by Novich and Hunt (2018),

define legitimacy as "a property of an authority that leads people to feel that the authority or institution is entitled to be deferred to and obeyed" (514). These definitions of trust and legitimacy infer that trust and legitimacy must coincide for either or both to be present.

Variation by Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

The Black/White Divide

Every article in this review makes reference to the racial divide in America in regard to views toward law enforcement. One of the foundations for any study related to opinions of policing in the United States is that black individuals consistently report having less trust in the police than white individuals (Mullinix and Norris 2015; Wozniak 2016; Burgason 2017; Kochel 2017; Moran 2017; Novich and Hunt 2018). While recognizing that race is a strong indicator of trust level is important, it is necessary to note that there must be other factors involved that contribute to race being as influential as it is. There is evidence that certain individuals' personalities give them a greater predisposition to trust, but there is no indication that this "dispositional trust" is in any way linked to race (Hamm et al. 2017:1189). Rather, it is more likely that race and ethnicity are the driving forces behind other variables that lead to a lack of trust among blacks and other minority groups. In the United States in particular, African-Americans face a history of marginalization and mistreatment at the hands of white, male, authoritarian figures who – perhaps uncoincidentally – are what make up the majority of the police force (Census Bureau 2016; Kochel 2017). Lee et al. (2015) writes that "the processes of legitimation or delegitimation are generated and influenced by numerous…factors, starting with early childhood socialization…", and when generations of black Americans have had negative interactions with police figures, they pass these experiences on to their children (301). White

individuals often state that they were instructed to respect the police as children, and any act of defiance would go against this teaching (Kochel 2017). While there is no evidence that black parents instruct their children to disrespect of defy law enforcement, there is evidence of a difference in the socialization of black children in regard to how to approach interactions with police; due to past negative interactions, parents often feel a need to first and foremost educate their children on past injustices and on ways to avoid being a victim (Threlfall 2016).

Arab Americans and Hispanics

The vast majority of scholarship surrounding trust or confidence in the police focuses only on the differences between black and white individuals when speaking to racial variance. Some articles might include Hispanics as a third race category, but this is mostly the extent at which most scholarship attempts to answer questions of variation among race. Two articles in this review, however, focus primarily on races other than white and black. Arab Americans are usually classified as 'White' or 'Caucasian' on surveys with demographic questions, but one would be ignorant to state that there are no differences between whites of European heritage and those who come from the Middle-East. Due to living in a post-9/11 America where terrorism is a chief concern among law enforcement, many Arab Americans have experienced varying levels of discrimination and/or harassment due to their perceived affiliation with radical Islamist terrorists (Sun and Wu 2015). However, a study of Arab Americans in Detroit found that these individuals actually have more confidence in the police than the general population (Sun and Wu 2015). Most Arab Americans are Christian and native-born, and thus they are socially and politically very similar to their European-white counterparts (Sun and Wu 2015). Most Arab Americans live in communities with high collective efficacy as opposed to in the dilapidation that was portrayed by the media after 9/11, and even those who report experiencing insults are

threats do not seem to let these experiences shape how they feel about law enforcement (Sun and Wu 2015).

Similar to how the 'war on terrorism' could have potential implications for Arab Americans' trust in police, controversy surrounding immigration – particularly of Hispanics from Mexico and Central America – could reduce citizen trust of police from individuals in this community. The one study in my review that focuses on Hispanics finds that respondents who had been previously questioned about their immigration status by police had lower confidence in police but worrying about deportation did not have any significant impact (Barrick 2014). Those who chose to conduct the interview in Spanish had lower levels of confidence, giving credence to the fact that being less assimilated into US culture reduces confidence; however, citizens had less confidence than noncitizens which challenges the preceding implication (Barrick 2014). The predominant explanation used to explain both Arab Americans' and Hispanics' surprisingly high levels of trust in the police is that both groups have strong bonds and trust among each other; their communities are tightly knit. As will be discussed on the following page, those who are generally more trusting of others are also more trusting of institutions such as the police. Thus, the factor that explains the gregarious nature of these communities might also explain their heightened trust in police.

Age, Sex, and Political Ideology

Some studies find a statistically significant increase in trust in the police with an increase in age, but others conclude little or no relationship exists between one's age and their reported trust in law enforcement (Lee et al. 2015; Thompson and Kahn 2016; Berthelot et al. 2018). The general consensus on sex is that there is no definitive evidence – some research suggests females have more trust in the police, some studies argue they have more, and some findings report that

there is no significant relationship either way (Huang and Vaughn 1996; Bradford et al. 2009; Stuart, Baumer, Brunson, and Simmons 2009 cit. in Taylor and Lawton 2012). Politically conservative individuals report more trust in the belief, though this effect is stronger in some studies than in others (Mullinix and Norris 2018; Van Slyke et al. 2018).

Non-Demographic Correlates of Trust

The literature focuses in on three broad areas in its discussion of trust in the police. These are: general feelings of social trust toward others (Taylor and Lawton 2012; Sun and Wu 2015), belief in the absence or presence of procedural justice (Nix et al. 2015; Simmons 2015), and perceptions of police effectiveness, usually in terms of disorder and incivilities in one's neighborhood (Lee et al. 2015; Hamm et al. 2017). The following section of the literature will examine these three factors, and they will shape the statistical models in the next chapter.

General Trust

Multiple studies examine individuals' relationships to their neighborhoods and communities in an effort to parallel these to views toward police. As previously stated, Arab Americans have high levels of trust in the police, and one possible explanation is that these individuals have a greater level of trust for one another and confidence in the neighborhoods in which they reside (Sun and Wu 2015). One study that found those who live in rural areas to express less trust in the police, and the authors attribute this to residents' isolation resulting in less social cohesion and thus trust among each other (Taylor and Lawton 2012). Following the same line of reasoning, those who live in neighborhoods where individuals move in and out more often state lower levels of trust than those in more stable communities (Burgason 2017). The community climate is certainly not the only influencing variable here, however. The effect that isolation from rurality has on an individual could be negligible compared to their pre-existing

political beliefs, and the transient nature of urban environments might not have the effect on trust that actually comes from a lack of relationship with officers due to a large population density. Preceding any effects that environment has on one's trust level, inherent or dispositional trust is also a potential factor; however, there has been minimal research and will likely be little going forward into whether or not some individuals are biologically more apt to trust than others (Hamm et al. 2017). Levels of trust both affect and are also affected by the other two main correlates of trust discussed below.

Procedural Justice

Early research on confidence in the police separated such a feeling from the perception of procedural justice or fairness, but they are now often spoken of in conjunction with one another (Tyler 2004). The terms 'procedural justice' and 'procedural fairness' are used almost interchangeably, with justice seeming to be the preferred term among scholars, so that is what I will use in this paper. Scholars use the terms to define one another. Tyler (2004) defines procedural justice as police exercising their authority in a fair manner. Hamm et al. (2017) write that measures of fairness typically include "a presence or lack of voice, respect, honesty, impartiality, accountability, and participation in public–police encounters" (1186). Interviews with convicted drug dealers find that individuals are generally accepting of repercussions and perceive punishment to be fair when police respectfully apprehended them and allowed the individual to take accountability for their actions (Novich and Hunt 2018). While instinct might imply that individuals trust law enforcement more when they believe police to be performing their duties well, efficacy of policing is actually not nearly as important as the perceived amount of procedural justice by citizens (Nix et al. 2015; Hamm et al 2017).

The Case for Independent Prosecutors

One of the biggest reasons for a lack of trust in the police is the occurrence of and extreme media attention paid to cases of police brutality and/or misconduct (Kochel 2017). After an instance of potentially unlawful behavior occurs, the logical next step is determining if prosecution of one or more of the involved individuals should take place. An issue with unlawful behavior of the police is that those doing the investigating and prosecuting are often colleagues of the potential offender. These conflicts of interest have created issues in the past, and the most commonly discussed solution are independent prosecutors. The American Bar Association Standards for Criminal Justice: Prosecutorial Investigations (2014) states that "a 'special prosecutor' or an 'independent counsel' is a prosecutor serving independently from the general prosecution office under a particularized appointment and whose service in that role typically ends after the purpose of the appointment is completed." In other words, a prosecutor who does not work in the local office and is typically far-removed from the area is brought in for the sole purpose of trying a specific case. Katz (2014) states that "Broad cross-sections of the public have lost trust in local law enforcement agencies due to their perception of biased investigations of such deadly-force incidents" (235). He also writes that these perceptions of systemic injustice, such as that of Michael Brown's killer being found innocent, are the most important factor shaping perceptions of the legitimacy of law enforcement (Katz 2014). Simmons (2015) provides the suggestion that states refer all cases to independent prosecutors instead of only certain ones; another option would be to establish permanent independent prosecutors, but this would be inefficient in areas where there are few of these cases (Simmons 2015).

Unconstitutional Police Actions

While the majority of the public are not legal experts, there is a general understanding of what law enforcement are and are not legally allowed to do in regard to approaching and detaining potential criminals. Despite what one may perceive, individuals are generally not overly distraught about being stopped and questioned by law enforcement if the individual was actually doing something wrong (Novich and Hunt 2018). It is when individuals and specific groups of people feel as though they are consistently berated by police with no cause that a strong and often irreversible level of distrust develops (Novich and Hunt 2018). Interview data show that many racial minorities feel as though, despite the fact that police are supposed to make places safer, "they don't ever be out there when people be shooting, they always just harassing people" (Novich and Hunt 2018:59). Statistics match this general feeling of unease among certain groups, with a 2015 study showing that black residents were more likely to be stopped for traffic and street stops than any other group and black and Hispanic individuals are more likely than white to have had multiple contacts with the police (U.S. Department of Justice 2018). It is for the same reason of perceived unconstitutionality that public opinion opposes perp walks (Van Slyke et al. 2018).

Perp Walks

Another example of citizen belief in procedural justice is public opinion about 'perp walks' (Van Slyke et al. 2018). "The term 'perp walks' refers to situations in which the police or other criminal justice officials notify the news media in advance that a criminal suspect (i.e., a perpetrator) is going to be walked or in some manner moved through a public setting in such a way that the 'perp' can be photographed or videotaped and the images distributed via news outlets" (Van Slyke et al. 2018:606). Less than a third of surveyed Americans express support

for choreographed perp walks, where the media are notified prior to the movement of a suspect in order to take photos and video (Van Slyke et al. 2018). Confidence in the police correlates with a greater support for perp walks, but so does being African American or Hispanic, which is negatively associated with police confidence (Van Slyke et al. 2018). The conclusion reached by some is that Americans dislike perp walks due to the belief that they violate a suspect's rights and procedural justice (Van Slyke et al. 2018). Individuals are supposed to be innocent until proven guilty, but plastering the image of someone in handcuffs on the news prevents this perception.

Police Effectiveness through the Lens of Neighborhood Incivilities

Initial theories on trust in the police often begin with examining how 'effective' or 'good at their job' citizens believe police to be (Hamm et al. 2017). However, these terms are loaded and broad. Some perceive police effectiveness to mean low crime rates, while others believe police are only effective if they are fair and approachable by citizens. Current research attempts to rectify this issue by measuring police effectiveness in terms of perceived drug and alcohol use as well as other incivilities in neighborhoods (Lee et al. 2015). The proposition is that if residents perceive low levels of petty crime, the police are effectively combatting crime in that area. Studies find that perceptions of procedural justice or fairness plays a much larger role in trust in the police than their perceived crime combatting efforts, though there are still mixed results and no definitive ranking of the importance of various factors (Lee et al. 2015; Hamm et al. 2017).

Efforts to Improve Citizen Levels of Trust

Body-Worn Cameras

Establishing greater trust and confidence in the police is a complicated and multi-faceted issue, as even the limited correlates and causes of increased or decreased trust that we are aware

of are numerous. There are an array of public policy initiatives that have been proposed in recent in order to effect change regarding trust in the police, but little research has been conducted on many potential solutions such as sensitivity training or community engagement programs. One idea that has been widely implemented and studied is body-worn cameras – devices worn by officers that record everything they see in order to have an exact recording of transpired events. In general, the public supports the use of body-worn cameras by officers, but there is concern that, while this measure would increase transparency by allowing citizens to witness police encounters, that the public would not like what it sees and would actually develop lower levels of trust (Sousa et al. 2018).

Restorative Justice

While most potential solutions look to changing the existing system, Alternative Dispute Resolution, or ADR, provides outside strategies for building previously severed bonds that can be equally or even more effective than doing so through a formal legal process (Merkey 2015). Merkey (2015) advocates for "restorative circles," a strategy for conflict resolution adapted from Native American tradition. She writes, "Restorative circles can both respond to problems as well as build relationships and a sense of community…members share their perspectives in an atmosphere of safety and equality, in contrast to traditional meeting formats, which can sometimes by hindered by a sense of hierarchies, win lose positioning, or other factors" (Merkey 2015:1135). Restorative circles could be used to combat mistrust of the police in two ways. First, officers could be active participants in dispute resolution in the event that an issue arises between them and a civilian citizen. Additionally, police could be used to mediate conversation between two aggrieved parties, and this role of facilitator rather than a punitive authority could aid the public in the realization that law enforcement plays a greater role than solely retribution. Of

course, the main hindrance with solutions like these is getting individuals to participate, but programs in Baltimore and Seattle have seen initial success (Merkey 2015).

CHAPTER III

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL FOR LEGITIMACY: WHAT THE WORLD VALUES SURVEY TELLS ABOUT PREDICTING CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE

Introduction

Literature surrounding trust in the police focuses on three main areas as correlates – other forms of trust, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of police effectiveness (Taylor and Lawton 2012; Hamm et al. 2017; Novich and Hunt 2018). Scholarship tends to focus on one of these topics, but there is little research combining the three together. Wave 6 of the World Values Survey contains variables allows for this analysis. Logistic regression modeling demonstrates that trust in family, personal trust, and perceptions of procedural justice – measured as confidence in the courts and frequency of police interference in one's neighborhood – are the most influential predictors of confidence in the police.

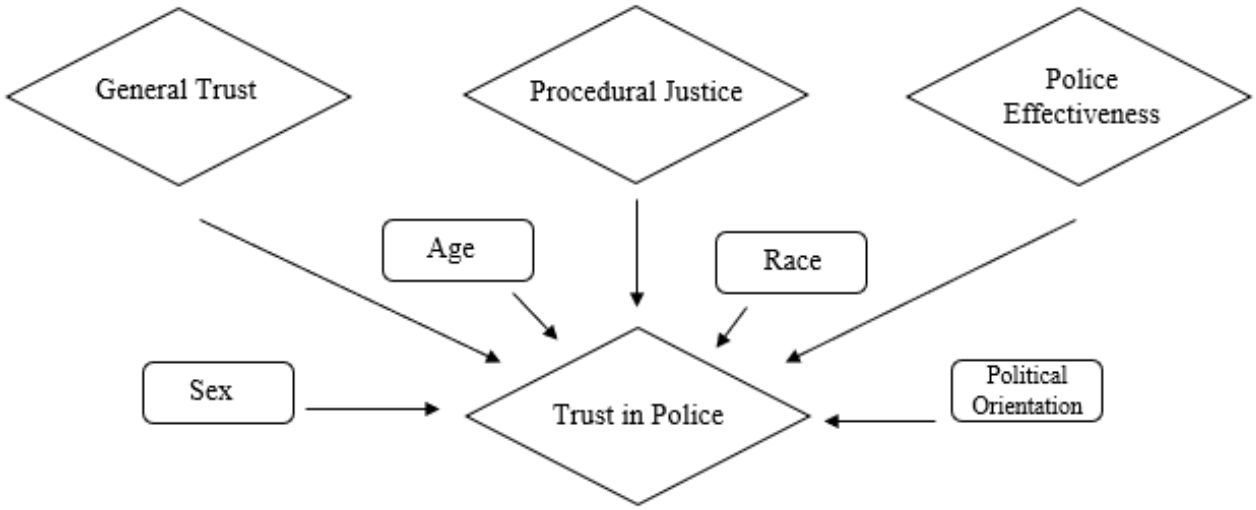
Methods

Data

The data analyzed for this paper came from Wave 6 of the World Values Survey (WVS) which was collected in 2011 in the United States. Only respondents from the US were used. The WVS is broadly administered by the World Values Survey Association (WVSA), a global network of social scientists headquartered in Vienna, Austria (WVSA 2018). WVS questionnaires are administered face-to-face, and the sample must be representative of all people age 18 and older residing in private households in the given country (WVSA 2018). The minimum sample size for all countries is 1200, but the United States regularly exceeds this by a large margin. In the United States, an organization called Knowledge Networks manages the administration of the World Values Survey. In wave 6, the survey was conducted in both English

and Spanish from June 9, 2011 to July 5, 2011. Of the 3,150 individuals invited to participate, 2,232 individuals completed the survey, a cooperation rate of 70.86% (Knowledge Networks 2011).

Conceptual Model



A plethora of scholarship on trust in the police focuses on three broad areas. These are: general feelings of social trust toward others (Taylor and lawton 2012; Sun and Wu 2015), belief in the absence or presence of procedural justice (Nix et al. 2015; Simmons 2015), and perceptions of police effectiveness in the neighborhood, particularly in terms of disorder and incivilities (Lee et al. 2015; Hamm et al. 2017). The above image demonstrates how these three factors all separately influence trust in the police. The WVS is an appropriate dataset to examine this model, as it contains questions related to all three factors. Additionally, sex, age, race, and political orientation are the most commonly included demographic factors and will thus also be included here.

Variable Operationalization

Dependent Variable

The concept this paper seeks to greater understand is trust in the police, which is operationalized by a question in which the interviewer asks the respondent to answer "how much confidence you have in [the police]" (Inglehart et al. 2014). The answer choices are "a great deal, quite a lot, not very much, or none at all." Due to this small categorical variable, I chose logistic regression as the modeling tool, which required collapsing the four categories in to two. I am interested in the variation between those who have general trust in the police and those who do not. Therefore, I combined 'a great deal' and 'quite a lot' into one category – Trust. There is not a clear objective distinction between 'a great deal' and 'quite a lot' and there is theoretical reason to assume that respondents in both categories are generally similar. Similarly, I combined 'not very much' and 'none at all' into one category – No Trust. There is also not a clear objective distinction between these two options, and both would suggest a similar absence of trust in the police.

Independent Variables

There are six types of trust asked about in the WVS. The interviewer instructs the respondent to respond to each question with "Trust completely," "Trust somewhat," "Do not trust very much," or "Do not trust at all." The categories are – "your family," "your neighborhood," "people you know personally," "people you meet for the first time," people of another religion," and "people of another nationality" (Inglehart et al. 2014). These questions were recoded similarly to the dependent variable, with "Trust completely" and "Trust somewhat" combined into one category – Trust, and "Do not trust very much" and "Do not trust at all" combined into another category – No trust.

Respondent's perception of procedural justice is measured with two questions. The first is the same question as the dependent variable but with "the courts" being the institution under question rather than "the police." It is recoded identically. The other question asks respondents "How frequently do the following things occur in your neighborhood: Police or military interfere with people's private life." The choices are "Very frequently," "Quite frequently," "Not frequently," and "Not at all frequently." The options were recoded dichotomously as the previously stated variables.

Perceptions of police effectiveness is measured with two questions regarding neighborhood incivilities. They are worded the same way as the question regarding police interfering with people's private life – "How frequently do the following things occur in your neighborhood?" Here, however, the neighborhood activities under consideration are "Alcohol consumed in the streets" and "Drug sale in streets." Answer choices are coded as previously stated for the other variables.

Control Variables

Variables that will be controlled for based on previous literature include age, sex, race/ethnicity – only white, black, and Hispanic, and self-positioning in a 10-point political scale, with 10 being the most conservative. Race is coded using polytomous dummy variables.

Analytic Strategy

Due to the four-category nature of the "confidence in police" variable, logistic regression provides the most adept analytic tool. This requires a dichotomous dependent variable, so I recoded "A great deal" and "Quite a lot" into one category – "Trust"; and I recoded "Not very much" and "None at all" into one category – "No trust." I believe the important distinction to be made is between those who have a generally high level of trust in the police and those who have

a generally low level of trust and splitting the variable this way best captures this. A previously stated, previously literature focuses heavily on three correlates of trust in the police – other forms of trust, perceptions of procedural justice, and perceptions of police effectiveness measured as the presence or absence of neighborhood incivilities. I wanted to build my model as to examine each of these concepts individually and also determine which remained significant after adding in other measures. Model 1 includes only the dependent variable on trust in the police and the independent demographic variables of age, sex, race/ethnicity, and political orientation. Model 2 adds in the six variables on trust. Model 3 removes the trust variables and includes the two variables on procedural justice. Model 4 removes the variables on procedural justice and includes the two variables on neighborhood incivilities. Model 5 includes all the variables that were significant in their category model, and Model 6 includes all the variables that were significant in Model 5. I include only the statistically significant variables in order to create the most valid model. Police interference was not significant in Model 5, so I excluded it in Model 6, but I predicted that with the other insignificant variables removed, police interference would be significant if added back in on its own. My prediction was correct and thus Model 7 was created. I checked to ensure that any other variables from Model 5 were still not significant in Model 7. Additionally, a likelihood ratio test was run to confirm that Model 7 is the best fitting and most parsimonious model. An analytic sample of 1,958 was created from the size of the final model. However, due to respondents failing to consistently answer all trust questions and those regarding alcohol and drugs in their neighborhoods, Models 2 and 5 have missing cases. I did not wish to throw out respondents in order to achieve an equal sample size across models, but the slight variations still allow for relevant comparison between models.

Results

Table 1, below, displays the descriptive statistics for this analysis.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Confidence in the police					
4 category	1958	2.881	.765	1	4
2 category	1958	.728	.115	0	1
Sex (female)	1958	.517	.500	0	1
Self-positioning on political scale (10=conservative)	1958	5.799	2.057	1	10
Age	1958	49.151	16.875	18	93
Race					
White	1958	.779	.415	0	1
Black	1958	.100	.300	0	1
Hispanic	1958	.121	.326	0	1
Trust					
Family	1958	.967	.179	0	1
Neighborhood	1958	.769	.422	0	1
People you know personally	1958	.938	.242	0	1
People you meet for the first time	1958	.395	.489	0	1
People of another religion	1951	.739	.440	0	1
People of another nationality	1946	.699	.459	0	1
Confidence in the courts	1958	.567	.496	0	1
Frequency in the neighborhood of					
Police interfering in people's lives	1958	.066	.248	0	1
Alcohol use in the street	1958	.140	.348	0	1
Drug sales in the street	1951	.125	.331	0	1

The majority of respondents (72.8%) have some confidence in the police. The average respondent has somewhere between "not very much" and "quite a bit" of confidence in the police but is much closer to the "quite a bit" side. The sample is almost evenly male and female. Respondents are just slightly to the right of center politically. The average age of the sample is about 49. The majority of the sample (77.9%) is white, followed by Hispanic (12.1%), and Black (10%). Respondents are more likely than not to express trust in every category except "people you meet for the first time." Familial and personal trust are by far the most likely forms of trust.

Just over half of the sample has confidence in the courts. A little over 6% of people experience police interference on a regular basis, and between 12 and 14% of people witness public drug and/or alcohol use regularly as well.

Table 2, on the following page, contains the results of the first six logistic regression models discussed in the previous section.

Table 2 Logistic Regression Models Predicting Odds of Trust in the Police

	Model 1(N=1,958)	Model 2 (N=1,942)	Model 3 (N=1,958)	Model 4 (N=1,951)	Model 5 (N=1,958)	Model 6 (N=1,958)
Sex (1=Female)	1.399(.150)***	1.429(.163)***	1.537(.197)***	1.427(.154)***	1.579(.208)***	1.549(.202)***
Self-Positioning on Political Scale	1.154(.031)***	1.173(.034)***	1.179(.038)***	1.146(0.031)***	1.182(.039)***	1.183(.038)***
Age	1.014(.003)***	1.007(.004)*	1.014(.004)***	1.012(0.003)***	1.011(0.004)**	1.014(.004)***
Hispanic	.318(.047)***	.411(.067)***	.303(.057)***	.345(.052)***	.650(.068)***	.327(.063)***
Black	.286(.046)***	.345(.059)***	.314(.063)***	.313(.051)***	.343(.071)***	.308(.063)***
Trust in						
Family		6.076(2.089)***			4.641(1.864)***	5.057(2.063)***
Neighborhood		1.556(.216)***			1.218(.196)	
People you know personally		2.463(.608)***			2.709(.776)***	3.210(.887)***
People you meet for the first time		1.336(.181)**			1.227(.181)	
People of a different religion		1.323(.231)				
People of a different nationality		1.312(.219)				
Procedural Justice						
Confidence in the courts			19.077(2.858)***		16.810(2.561)***	17.606(2.658)***
Police interfere with private life			.513(.123)***		.656(.174)	
Neighborhood Incivility						
Public alcohol use				.604(.109)***	.859(.167)	
Drug sales in the street				.859(.164)		
Constant	.712(.160)	.029(.013)***	.190(.053)***	.868(.200)	.016(.009)***	.013(.007)***
Log likelihood	-1057.690***	-971.543***	-769.932***	-1044.698***	-742.969***	-748.293***
Pseudo R2	.077	.147	.328	.085	.352	.347

p<.10; p<.05**; p<.001*** (two-tailed test)*

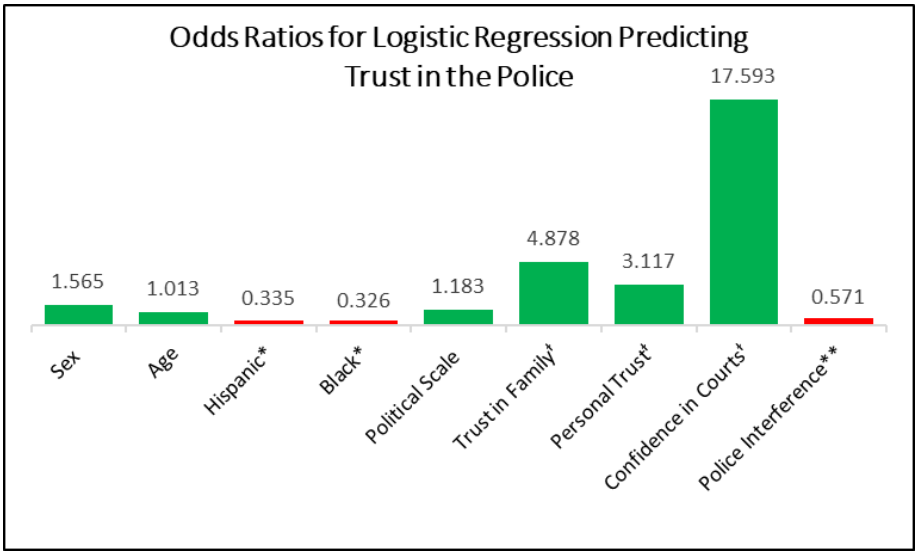
In Model 1, which contained only the demographic factors, all independent variables were significant. The demographic factors remained consistent throughout all models. Model 2 included the trust variables, and trust in "your family," "your neighborhood," "people you know personally," and "people you meet for the first time" were significant. Model 3 included the procedural justice variables, both of which were significant. Model 4 included the neighborhood incivility variables, but only frequency of "public alcohol use" was significant. Model 5 combined the independent variables that were significant in their respective models. "Trust in family," "trust in people you know personally," and only "confidence in the courts" remained significant. Model 6 contained only these variables that remained significant in Model 5. Model 7, seen on the following page, added back in police interference and produced the best prediction of all models, with a pseudo R^2 value of .350, thus predicting 35% of the variation in one's odds of trusting the police.

Table 3 Logistic Regression Model Predicting Odds of Trust in the Police

	Model 7(N=1,958)
Sex (1=Female)	1.565(.205)***
Self-Positioning on Political Scale	1.183(.038)***
Age	1.013(.004)***
Hispanic	.335(.064)***
Black	.326(.067)***
Trust in	
Family	4.878(1.961)***
Neighborhood	
People you know personally	3.117(.870)***
People you meet for the first time	
People of a different religion	
People of a different nationality	
Procedural Justice	
Confidence in the courts	17.593(2.664)***
Police interfere with private life	.571(.140)**
Neighborhood Incivility	
Public alcohol use	
Drug sales in the street	
Constant	.015(.008)***
LR chi^2	801.28***
Pseudo R2	.350

p<.10; p<.05**; p<.001*** (two-tailed test)*

Figure 1 Graphic Representation of Model 7



Discussion & Conclusion

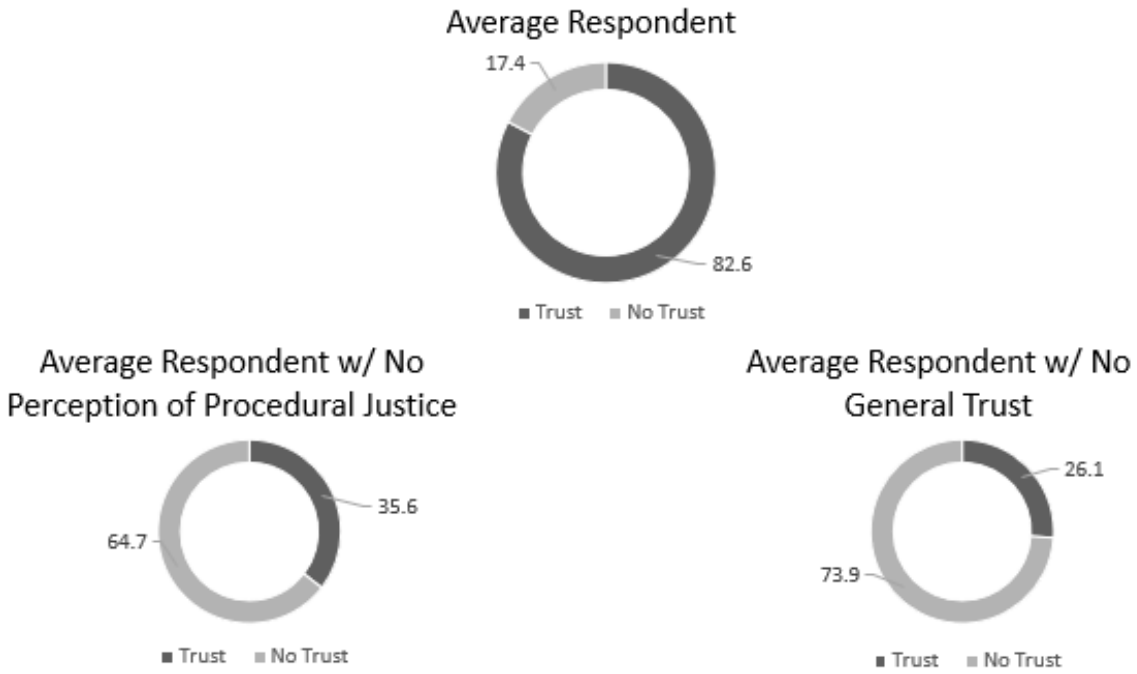
The results of this analysis corroborate much of the literature and provide some alternative and additional insight as well. The most influential variables – other than the demographic factors of sex, age, race, and political ideology – are: trust in family, trust of people known personally, confidence in the courts, and perception of police interference in one's life. The first two of these variables correspond to the idea of 'general trust' and the latter two are encompassed by 'procedural justice.' These two factors are clearly more important in one's perception of the police than perceived police effectiveness of neighborhood crime control. Literature varies in regard to the impact one's sex has on his or her trust in the police. My findings state that females, compared to males, have 56.5% greater odds in trusting the police. For each increase on the political scale toward conservativism, an individual gains 18.3% more odds of trusting the police; this corroborates the literature in that conservatives are more likely to trust the police than liberals. There are also no definitive predictions in the literature on age, but my model states that each additional year of age yields 1.3% greater odds of trusting the police. Previous research finds that older individuals are more likely to be politically conservative than their younger counterparts, so perhaps this is a mediating factor. There is a lack of research into perceptions of Hispanics, though the general consensus is that blacks have the lowest levels of confidence. However, my findings state that, compared to whites, Hispanics have 66.5% fewer odds of trusting the police while the odds are just 67.4% fewer for blacks. This difference is very small, so we can conclude that Hispanics and blacks have approximately equally low levels of trust, most arguably due to the discriminatory treatment they face. As the American Hispanic population grows larger, it will be essential to continue to examine these relationships.

Trust in one's family and one's neighborhood are the two significant types of trust in relation to confidence in the police. Having familial trust yields an increase in odds of confidence by a factor of 4.878, and having personal trust yields an increase of odds by a factor of 3.117. It is likely than an additional factor which causes individuals to be more trusting of those around them also causes them to trust institutions like the police, but it is not clear from this model what that is. Confidence in the courts is by far the most significant predictor of confidence in the police. Confidence in the courts leads to a factor increase of 17.593 in odds of confidence in the police. It is possible that the same underlying principles that lead people to trust the courts also results in trust in the police, so a dataset with additional variables on reasons for trusting the courts should examine this. Also a procedural justice variable, perceiving that police are interfering with everyday life leads to 42.9% fewer odds of having confidence in the police. Police interference is representative of situations discussed in the literature review in which individuals feel as though they are being stopped and questioned by law enforcement for no apparent reason; this is potentially a simple action for officers to cease that could have great impacts on citizens' feelings toward them. The significant coefficient of .015 states that a white male with far-left political leanings, who has no familial or neighborhood trust, no confidence in the courts, and who perceives no police interference with everyday life, has 1.5% odds of having confidence or trust in the police.

Figure 2, below, demonstrates visually some of the preceding results. A perfectly average respondent would have an 82.6% chance of having confidence in the police. However, the same average respondent, if not having confidence in the courts and believing police to interfere with people's lives, then has only a 35.6% chance of trusting the police. Lastly, an average respondent in every way except not trusting of their family or people they know personally has only a 26.1%

chance of trusting the police. In summation, it is more likely than not that people do generally trust the police, but the absence of other forms of trust or a belief in procedural justice very easily minimizes any trust.

Figure 2 Graphic Representation of Predicted Probabilities



CHAPTER IV

USING CRIMINOLOGY TO EFFECT CHANGE IN PUBLIC POLICY: AN ANALYSIS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT TRUST AND INTEGRITY ACT OF 2018

Thus far I have examined the current scholarly climate surrounding trust and confidence in the police, establishing that it is most certainly an issue in need of addressing. Law enforcement relations with both young and African-American individuals are particularly in need of mending. My own research with the World Values Survey confirmed that increasing perceptions of procedural justice is vital to increasing trust in the police, All of this noteworthy information is little more than useless if not able to be translated into tangible policies that can produce positive results. The remainder of this chapter introduces and assesses a bill that was presented to the United States Senate in 2018 with the intention of improving the veracity of American law enforcement.

Policy Description

The "Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act of 2018," hereby referred to as S. 3195, was presented and read on the floor of the United States Senate on July 11, 2018 by Sen. Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) (U.S. Congress 2018). The 23-page legislation's 'Official Title as Introduced' is "A bill to encourage greater community accountability of law enforcement agencies, and for other purposes" (U.S. Congress 2018). S. 3195 contains seven sections which each lay out an initiative the federal government is to take. Section I states that the Attorney General is to review current accreditation procedures for national, state, regional, and tribal accreditation organizations. New uniform standards shall be adopted, and grants be made available to law enforcement agencies to assist in gaining or maintaining accreditation. Section II authorizes a series of grants for law enforcement agencies for studying management, pilot training programs,

recruitment of diverse officers, oversight, juvenile justice and school safety, and victim services. Any program receiving a grant will be required to submit biannual evaluation reports. Section III calls upon the Attorney General to conduct a study "of the prevalence and effect of any law, rule, or procedure that allows a law enforcement officer to delay the responses to questions posed by a local internal affairs officer, or review board on the investigative integrity and prosecution of law enforcement misconduct, including pre-interview warnings and termination policies" and report these results to congress. Section IV allocates $28,300,000 of funding to "combat police misconduct and reform police departments." Section V calls for the establishment of a National Task Force on Law Enforcement Oversight to work with law enforcement organizations in dealing with complaints of alleged misconduct and lays out who is to be included in this task force. Section VI mandates that all federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies report on traffic violation stops, pedestrian stops, frisks and body searches, and instances where officers use deadly force, broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender. Lastly, Section VII calls for the distribution of medallions to the survivors of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty or those on the wall of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

Reasons for Initiation of Policy Changes

A similar bill with the same title was introduced in the House of Representatives in 2005, but never made it out of the Committee on The Judiciary. A released summary of the legislation in 2005 stated that it was "Drafted in response to outrages like the 1997 Los Angeles Rampart Division perjury scandal and tragedies such as the 1999 Amadou Diallo shooting (and the more recent Rice, Brown, Gray and Garner Killings) …" (U.S. House Committee on The Judiciary 2005). Trust in the police has been declining in the United States for many years, particularly among African American individuals whose level of trust is already lower than other groups

(Taylor and Lawton 2012; Katz 2015; Wozniak 2016). Trust in the legitimacy of law enforcement is necessary for effective policing for a multitude of reasons (Tyler 2003). The police depend on members of the community to report crimes and to cooperate during investigations, and this cooperation is only possible if the police are believed to be trusted (Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Nix et al. 2015). If we wish for the rule of law to be maintained in the United States, changes to increase citizens' levels of trust and confidence in the police are necessary, and thus that is the reasoning behind this policy initiative. A plethora of studies have shown that one of the largest predictors of citizen trust in the police is whether or not they perceive procedural justice to be taking place (Taylor and Lawton 2012; Lee et al. 2015; Nix et al. 2015; Novich and Hunt 2018). While every part of S. 3195 could contribute to enhanced procedural fairness, Sections III-V especially work to ensure procedural justice by looking at current due process procedures, administering grants for independent prosecutors and other efforts to combat police misconduct, and creating a task force for law enforcement oversight (U.S. Congress 2018). Because trusted and respected policing institutions are necessary for the maintenance and growth of a prosperous nation-state, and the public perception is that the US is lacking integrity in its law enforcement sector, these policy changes have been initiated.

Policy Options to be Considered

The simplest option available would be to not enact any new legislation or policy, forgoing the creation of new standards and procedures that this act would establish. S. 3195 in and of itself does not actually amend any existing codes but rather serves to glean information about current practices and provide funds for the enforcement of already established law. There are other bills that have been presented to Congress, some with a narrower scope and more teeth and others like S. 3195 that are broad but potentially insubstantial in the amount of change they will

create. For example, H. R. 125, the "Police Training and Independent Review Act of 2019" again does not necessarily change existing statute but would amend the "Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968" by adding additional sections. H. R. 125 encourages states to mandate sensitivity training for law enforcement officers and enact laws requiring an independent investigation and prosecutor for lethal use of force cases by providing grants to those who do so (U.S. Congress 2019). Like S. 3195, H. R. 125 would not necessarily create any new law at the federal level but encourages state governments to do so by providing monetary incentives. Another option that has been considered and implemented in some areas in an effort to improve confidence in police at the local level is the use of body-worn cameras, but this has been shown to actually only improve citizens' perceptions of police accountability, not confidence or trust (Sousa et al. 2018). The most widely used method for combatting distrust in law enforcement has been community policing initiatives, including specific programs such as citizen forums, having police visit schools, or encouraging officers to volunteer in local neighborhoods. All of these things could be helpful, but they lack the coverage and breadth of a legislative policy like S. 3195 (Rukus, Warner, and Zhang 2018).

Benefits and Drawbacks

The best-case benefit that could result from this policy, as the name implies, is certainly increased trust in the police from the general public. While being able to trust their police force certainly benefits citizens themselves, law enforcement receives their own perks as well. If individuals have more positive feelings toward law enforcement, the act of policing becomes safer for all parties involved, including the police. Despite the perhaps intuitive perception that those who commit crimes dislike the police, studies have shown that individuals are actually quite understanding of punitive members when they feel as if the police have been fair and,

procedural justice measures have been followed (Novich and Hunt 2018). Section II of S. 3195 includes a provision that would provide funding to departments working to recruit diverse officers (U.S. Congress 2018). If police departments took advantage of these grants, their communities could reap a multitude of benefits. Women officers are less likely to use force than their male counterparts (Bergman et al. 2016). Evidence is fairly clear that adding more women to police forces would be beneficial, but what to do about racial diversity is not quite as certain. If we wish to speak about blacks and whites as two separate ethnic groups, there is evidence to support that blacks policing blacks and white policing whites would be the most effective way to assure cooperation among both groups (Fearon and Latin 1996). However, out of this notion arises a mirage of ethical issues as in-group policing potentially evolves into talk of partitions, etc. Previous research has actually shown that most individuals, both black and white, would prefer policing by "racially integrated partnerships" (Weitzer 2000:322). A book review for *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* by James Forman contains a powerful statement that I think illuminates the potential drawbacks of efforts to create what could perhaps be called artificial diversity in law enforcement agencies: "…racial diversity without meaningful reallocations or redistributions of power might not only limit the possibilities for social transformation but also potentially reproduce and legitimize the very forms of inequality the pursuit of racial diversity was intended to address" (Carbado and Richardson 2018). Therefore, for the measures on increasing diversity and even requiring additional training for officers, I think local agency leaders will need to be mindful of how they would present new policies to their respective subordinates in order to ensure that any new mandates became benefits rather than drawbacks.

Recommended Course of Action

In a ghastly polarized political climate, Congress festers at the notion of passing the budget necessary to maintain functioning of the federal government, let alone legislation that makes powerful policy provisions. While I do not believe that S. 3195 does enough in the way of enacting law enforcement reform, I think that, if it would be possible to pass the bill, that it would serve as good enough for the moment. One of the greatest simultaneous strengths and weaknesses of the United States is its slowness to change. While mounds of red tape and seemingly constant stagnation make for an arduous political process, this method of governance should allow for a free and non-monarchical state where the interests of a particular group are not able to demolish the ideals of another (whether or not this works in practice is a different conversation). Law enforcement reform is not something that can or should occur overnight, and because this bill serves mainly to conduct studies for information and provide resources to local agencies wishing to voluntarily make adjustments, I think S. 3195 would be a beneficial though not overbearing step to take toward better policing for everyone.

Reasoning for Selected Course of Action

Some action needs to be taken. Matters of law enforcement have historically been left to their respective states, and there will be backlash that this act damages federalism, but strict federalism is no longer a viable possibility. States are not able to be the separate entities they once were, because an incident that occurs with the police in Missouri affects residents and law enforcement in California. As previously discussed, the use of body-worn cameras changes the public perception of the police; the media does this as well. BWCs have the potential to increase trust in the police, but what the public sees and fixates itself on is the limited poor police behavior that occurs (Sousa et al. 2018). The media behaves similarly, crowding screens with

images and stories that will receive the most clicks. In this way, the media does not necessarily tell us what to think, rather what to think about (Robinson 2011). What the media tells us to think about is not the mundane, but rather the extraordinary – for example, the actions of poor policing. Despite the fact that there might not be a plethora of issues with standard police operations, the fact that the attention is given to the events in which there are issues causes the public to think that this is the norm. Media is not confined within state lines, and thus policy cannot be either. Blanket federal action is necessary due to the universal nature of distrust in police. However, the federal government has somewhat limited power in regulating state and local agencies. Thus, this policy, which does not create explicit statutes but rather encourages specific practices through grant money, would be the most effective national measure to increase trust in the police, mediating many other factors and leading to reduced levels of crime. Policy should never be implemented without research; my findings from Chapter III clearly state that public belief in procedural justice is essential in increasing citizens' levels of trust. Sections III-V of this bill, which allocate funding, establish more oversight, and mandate additional research, are targeted *specifically* at improving public perception of the police through the creation and execution of increasingly fair practices.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNICATION AND CONTEXTUALIZATION

Law enforcement is a subject that all Americans have experience with. While certainly not everyone has been arrested or even stopped for a traffic violation, individuals do comply with or disregard statutes constantly, even if not with conscious thought. Therefore, the individuals who are tasked with the everyday maintenance of the law – the police – should be of concern to everyone. American author and social critic H. L. Mecken once said, "The average man does not want to be free. He simply wants to be safe." As previously stated, the police rely on citizen trust in order to effectively carry out their job, a large part of which involves maintaining safety through the enforcement of law. Therefore, if individuals desire to be safe, they must have trust in those whose task it is to make this wish a reality. However, in light of a history of law enforcement's abuse of this immense power, particularly against certain groups, it is clearly not the case – nor should it be the expectation – that all citizens put equal and whole faith in the police. Previous research and my analysis confirm that young, politically left, racial minorities have the lowest levels of trust in the police. By examining other correlates, my analysis also seeks to uncover the best ways to address this by discovering why these groups feel the way they do. The conclusion I arrive at is that these groups of people most feel that procedural justice has failed them and does not work to their benefit. Therefore, if we can increase perceptions of procedural justice through reforms including the mandating of independent prosecutors, increasing diversity of police departments, and providing officers with additional training, a resurgence of trust, though perhaps very slow, will occur.

Limitations & Directions for Future Research

The ever-foreboding constraint of every research endeavor is, of course, time and resources. Additional capital could allow for a broader contextualization or one that is greater able to examine the nearly infinite intricacies of social behavior regarding the police. More articles could be read and synthesized, and increasingly complex statistical procedures could be used. I believe this paper contributes to the scholarship in the best way that it can given the abilities and resources of the researcher. An additional limitation of this paper is the potential disconnect between the literature review and the data analysis. I chose to review only recent literature for the purpose of being able to contribute new information to the discourse. Furthermore, I was curious as to the potential shift in public opinion due to a perceived increase in police brutality beginning in 2014. However, the survey data I analyzed was collected in 2011. Despite the differing time periods, literature suggests that perceptions of the police have remained relatively constant since the perceived uptick in police brutality in the mid-90s, and there have not been extreme changes in recent years. Additionally, there is no current literature using this particular survey data to examine trust in police, so using this information as opposed to an alternative data source contributes to the literature in a way that a repetition study might not.

In nearly all of social science research, one variable rarely effects another in isolation; in fact, there are usually extensive mitigating factors. One step for furthering this research would be to examine interactions among the demographic and other variables in my analysis in order to determine the existence and size of relationships between variables. Additionally, other variables such as regional crime rates or individuals' socioeconomic status could be included. Furthermore, individuals likely have varied views on the police as a result of or lack of personal

interactions with law enforcement. Questions on police interaction would add another interesting element. Lastly, I confined my study to the United States, but a cross-national comparison could allow for greater insight into factors that are potentially uniquely American and those that are simply facets of the human condition.

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