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Empowerment Through Research: Bridging Academia and Society

An exploration of determinants of public trust in the police

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INTRODUCTION

- Policing in the UK is rooted in the concept of policing by consent which relates to maintaining the approval, respect, and affection of the public.
- The police will be seriously limited in their ability to do their job without trust and confidence of the public.
- It is, therefore, important to improve our understanding on why people may grant trust to, or withdraw trust from, the police.

Research hypotheses

- H1: Perceiving a high overall anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the local area is associated with lack of trust in the police.
- H2: Being victim of a crime is associated with lack of trust in the police.
- H3: Being dissatisfied with the service provided by the police is associated with lack of trust in the police.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

- Data from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (2019-2020) is used to explore the determinants of public trust to the police.
- Multiple logistic regression is used to analyse the data

Dependent Variable:

- Trust: 'Police in this area can be trusted'. Nominal level. 1:Agree, 0:Neither/Disagree.

Independent Variables:

- Victimization: 'Experience of any crime in the previous 12 months' Nominal level. 1:Victim of a crime, 0:Not a victim of a crime.
- Contact with the police: 'Whether had contact with police officers or Police Community Support Officers in the last 12 months? - Was stopped'. Nominal level. 1:Was stopped 0:Was not stopped.
- Perceived level of anti-social behaviour: Nominal level. 1:High overall ASB, 0:Not high overall ASB.
- Dissatisfaction with the police service: 'Have you ever been dissatisfied with the service provided by the police?' Nominal level. 1:Yes, 0:No.

Logistic regression results predicting trust in the local police

Variables	B	SE
Age	.003	.002
Gender/Male (Ref: Female)	.111	.065
Ethnic Group (Ref: White)		
Black/African/Carribbean/Black British	-.521	.171**
Asian/Asian British	.185	.153
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	-.575	.249*
Other ethnic group	.296	.373
Employment Status (Ref: employed)		
Unemployed	-.361	.231
Economically inactive (Student, retired etc)	-.001	.085
Urban area	-.009	.079
Education Level (Degree or diploma)	.073	.070
Personal and partner gross income	.041	.012***
Victim of any crime in past 12 months	.023	.095
Stopped by the police in past 12 months	1.073	.450*
Perceived level of ASB – High overall	-.518	.113***
Ever been dissatisfied with the police service	-1.263	.068***
Constant	1.345	.156***
N	33,734	

Notes: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001

RESULTS

- People perceiving a high overall ASB are significantly less likely to agree that the police can be trusted.
- Being victim of a crime in the previous year is not significantly associated with trust to the police.
- People who have been dissatisfied with the police are significantly less likely to agree that the police can be trusted.
- People with higher levels of income are significantly more likely to agree that the police can be trusted.
- Blacks and mixed ethnic groups are significantly less likely to agree that the police can be trusted compared to whites.
- Age, gender, employment status, and education level are not significant predictors of trust to the police.

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