

Speeding, the Chief Constable and Trust in North Wales Police

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Abstract

Police Chief Constables have a public office. Richard Brunstrom, until recently the Chief Constable of North Wales Police (NWP), is especially known for his interventions in hot political topics. For many, Richard Brunstrom became a controversial figure. He is also identified with the emphasis NWP puts on combating speeding. Many citizens were affected and criticized the Chief Constable. What, then, is the influence of the crackdown on speeding and of the Chief Constable as a public figure on trust in the police force? There seems to be no prior empirical research on how perceptions of the leading police officer affect public trust in the police force. The study presented controls for other factors like personal or family member experience with police. A questionnaire study was undertaken with Bangor students and other residents in North Wales. Trust in the NWP was found to be significantly related to support of its speeding policy and to experiencing unfair treatment by police officers.

Key Words: trust, police, speeding, Chief Constables, fairness

Introduction

How do an unpopular policy and a controversial Chief Constable influence trust in the police? Public trust is pivotal for state authorities. The police often needs the voluntary cooperation of citizens who report incidents and provide information. Also, it depends on political decisions for its work, namely, on the allocation of resources and the provision of legal instruments. The public image of the police also influences the willingness of people to enter the police force.

Trust is related to legitimate authority. Legitimacy was famously defined by Max Weber (1980: 16, 123) as the willingness to obey an order

even if it is resented. Nowhere is this problem more acute than in the daily work of the police who often have to get individuals to act against their will. Legitimacy is also important for the inner relations in a police force as police officers can be ordered to act in ways they would personally reject. Trust encompasses legitimacy as it can influence actions before resistance has been evoked.

Chief Constables represent the police regularly in the media. Richard Brunstrom, the Chief Constable of North Wales Police (NWP) from early 2001 to July 2009, is especially known for his public interventions in hot political topics and for controversial policies. While Brunstrom has offered his advice and opinion on various topics and received UK-wide media coverage, among citizens of North Wales he is mostly known for propagating a crack down on speeding. Under his command, NWP has taken the strictest measures against even minimal violations of speed limits.

One might expect that the public profile of the chief representative adds to the degree of trust citizens have in the police. This is put into question in the case of North Wales. In the region, both the public image of Brunstrom and the emphasis on speeding provoked a lot of angry responses. For example, stickers are distributed via the Association of British Drivers website: “Croeso i Gogledd Cymru” with a speed camera sign and the explanation below reads: “(Welcome in North Wales) Inspired by Richard Brunstrom”¹. Some locals and tabloid media use defamatory words like “traffic taleban” and worse to express their dismay over Brunstrom and the NWP. A strict enforcement of traffic rules and a strong media presence of the Chief Constable responsible may therefore impact negatively on the public’s trust in the police force.

Social scientists have developed concepts that address the degree of trust people have in institutions and leaders. The present study, which resulted from an MA research seminar, not only sheds light on the relation between trust in NWP and trust in its Chief Constable but also looks at the contribution made by the most prominent policy of the force, namely, its clamp down on speeding.

Fair or unfair treatment of citizens by the police has attracted increased attention. Therefore, the role of fairness in evaluations of the police will be analyzed to have a fuller picture of factors contributing to trust. Intuitively, most would look at performance outcomes when analysing factors related to trust in authorities like the police. According to Tyler et al. (1985) research into political support for authorities has identified two types of poor outcomes: The first is the inability to provide solutions to the economic and social problems that people are suffering or to deliver expected governmental services or benefits. For the second outcome, citizen-leader policy incongruence is defined as politicians pursuing policies that are opposed to the values of a particular person. However, a more important factor is the notion of procedural justice (Tyler

¹ www.abd.org.uk/speed_camera_signs.htm

et al., 1985), the perception of how fairly decisions are reached. Procedural justice is commonly measured by criteria like bias suppression, careful examination of cases, and benevolence to parties involved as well as hearing all sides before a decision (Leventhal, 1980; Lind and Tyler, 1988; Machura, 1998). The experience gained from encounters with police officers would therefore be vital for levels of trust in the police. Indeed, studies have confirmed that procedural fairness is linked to trust in the police².

The public role of Chief Constables

Chief Constables (and their equivalents in the Metropolitan and City of London police forces) are the chief police officers within the 43 police forces of England and Wales. In the 1970s and 1980s, a time of increased debate on issues of crime and of increased social conflict, several police Chief Constables took on a more public role (Reiner, 1992; Wall, 1998: 2). A majority of Chief Constables believed it reflected badly upon the police, and this spurred on the development of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to become a more conscious voice for all Police Chief Constables (Reiner, 1992).

In recent years, there has been one Chief Constable who has become quite prominent. Richard Brunstrom, Chief Constable of NWP from January 2001 until recently, Head of Road Policing for ACPO until 2005, and later for a while its Head of Rural Affairs, has gathered a reputation for courting controversy (BBC News, 2004; Devine 2009). He has attracted considerable media attention over various issues from breaking into his own office, subjecting himself to a Taser, arguing for the decriminalisation of heroin (BBC News, 2009b) and suggesting that he may prosecute MPs over any illegal expenses (BBC News, 2009a). Yet, it is his views on traffic policing that have caused the most controversy locally. Brunstrom himself argues that he needs to stir up debate on topics related to crime and police as politicians were too reluctant to address pressing issues in fear of media attacks and resulting unpopularity (personal communication, 18 February 2009).

Speeding policy

Traffic policing is a special case because a much broader array of citizens are stopped including those with a higher social status (Schafer and Mastrofski, 2005: 225). Generally speaking, the approach of police officers is to treat motoring offences very leniently, although such leniency is bounded by the policy of the given police force (Schafer and Mastrofski, 2005). Schafer and Mastrofski (2005) highlight reasons for lenient traffic policing: no interests of justice to prosecute someone for speeding, or the

² E.g. Tyler and Folger, 1980; Tyler, 1990; Tyler and Huo, 2002; Skogan, 2006. Researchers starting an international survey of literature related to procedural justice and legitimacy in policing estimated that there were “nearly 20,000 articles of which nearly 2,000 are likely to be of direct relevance” (Mazerolle et al. 2009: 3).

penalty deems too severe in relation to the seriousness of the offence. Prosecuting every speeding violator could be inefficient as it will create a mountain of work for relatively minor offences, whereas a more targeted approach (for example prosecuting speeders in areas that are known for high levels of road accidents) may be more beneficial and economical.

The use of speed cameras coupled with automated enforcement has increased over the last years. It does not give drivers the opportunity to appeal to the discretion of a police officer. Instead, it results in indiscriminate punishment which is seen as unfair by a majority who consider themselves as good drivers and wish to be heard and respected (Groombridge, 2008; Wells, 2008).

In 2007, 182,115 road accidents caused 247,780 casualties in Britain of which 2,946 died (Department for Transport, 2008). Citing that 3,000 deaths on the road is an unacceptable figure, NWP and Richard Brunstrom in particular have taken a hard-line approach with speeding, by prosecuting the vast majority of drivers who are even a small amount over the speed limit, which according to Brunstrom, is related to the number of deaths on the road. This tactic, Brunstrom has argued on his blog (Chief Constables Blog, 2008), has led to a reduction in the number of deaths on the roads in North Wales.

Yet, such is the controversy created by the traffic policing policy adopted by NWP and promoted by Richard Brunstrom that the Association of British Drivers have even gone as far as setting up a webpage dedicated to him (Association of British Drivers, 2009) where they claim that in 2003 NWP caught 10 percent of the North Wales population speeding within 5 months³.

Trust in British police

One of the images that police forces consciously aim to promote is the notion that policing across Britain has always been policing by consent, that there is a high degree of support for the police. Survey results on trust in the police reveal a favourable picture, especially in international comparison⁴. Nevertheless, trust in the police has gone down over several years (Jansson, 2007: 21, citing the British Crime Survey). Jackson and Sunshine (2007) illustrate that this could be due to a myriad of wide societal factors, from changes in society which have led particularly in the

³This would be unusual. In a survey for the Daily Telegraph, 18 percent of the respondents indicated to have “been fined for speeding in the past five years” (YouGov, 2003).

⁴For example, in a survey among 16 European countries, Finland, Denmark, Austria and Germany were on top of the list when it comes to satisfaction with how the local police control crime. Behind Ireland, the UK is a respectable number 5 with three out of four respondents answering positively. France, Greece, and finally Spain, can be found at the bottom of the list (Brings, 2008: 308-309). The GfK Trust Index 2009 has a figure of 78 percent trust for police in the UK in line with 75 percent trust for German police and 78 percent for Swedish police. Finnish police even scored 91 percent. East European forces typically fare worse, with only 28 percent of Romanians trusting their police, and 23 percent of Russians (GfK, 2009).

1980s to the police being used heavily during moments of social conflict or developing tense relationships with structurally excluded communities. There have also been well publicised cases of corruption and abuse of rights as well as recent serious failures on operations which have led to losses of the lives of innocents. Finally, concern of crime and criticism of state weakness has increased since the 1970s (Downes and Morgan, 2008: 235-236) and the public holds the police, to a certain extent, responsible for perceived crime problems.

Confidence in police also constitutes the official performance indicator for police forces and is therefore monitored closely. The British Crime Survey for the year 2008 produced as a prominent result that 46 percent of the respondents in England and Wales had “confidence in police and local councils” to deal with anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter where they live. North Wales was close to the national average (Home Office, 2009b, Table 1). Furthermore, in March 2009, the Home Office (2009a) announced that police forces have to raise their “confidence rate” by 15 percentage points until 2012. This would require some forces to increase their ratings by a staggering 50 percent (Home Office 2009a, Table 1). The targets will be difficult to meet, and therefore, research into the antecedents of trust in the police is much needed.

Only recently, procedural justice in policing and its effect on trust has become a focus of research in Britain. In an analysis of British Crime Survey data for England, Myhill and Beak (2008: 6, 14) found that public confidence in the “local police” was significantly related mainly to “police factors” and “neighbourhood factors”. The latter related to perceptions of local crime and anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhood. Yet, “police factors” were more decisive for confidence. They fell into two categories: “agreeing that the local police are dealing with the things that matter to the people” scored highest to be followed by “agreeing that the local police treat everyone fairly and with respect”. Other studies have used local data to demonstrate the importance of procedural justice for trust in the police: Bradford, Jackson and Stanko (2009) based on the 2005/2006 London Metropolitan Police Public Attitude Survey; and Jackson and Sunshine (2007) with data from a rural area in England. A study with Bangor University students (Heenan et al., 2008) found that having experienced unbiased Police Community Support Officers in personal encounters correlated with trust in PCSOs.

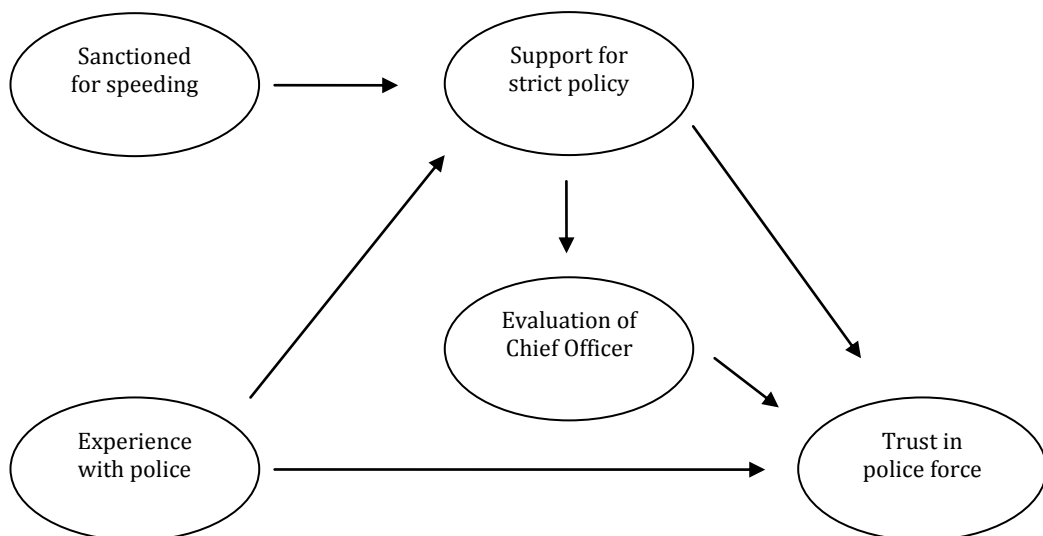
NWP, like other forces, has also recognized the importance of public trust. Mark Polin, who succeeded Richard Brunstrom as Chief Constable of NWP on 2 November 2009 (North Wales Police 2009b), was introduced to the public with the following statement:

My priority is to build on the strong track record that North Wales Police has in terms of performance and particularly to focus upon improving trust and confidence in our communities in terms of the policing services that we provide (North Wales Police 2009a).

Hypotheses

The main hypotheses are illustrated in Figure 1. Support for the strict speeding policy is likely to depend on positive personal experiences with police officers. Furthermore, it is assumed that the more harshly respondents or their family were sanctioned for speeding the less they will support the NWP speeding policy. Supporters of the crack down on speeding should be more likely to evaluate the person of the Chief Constable, Richard Brunstrom, positively while opponents of the policy are expected to resent the Chief Officer. The paper goes on to examine the influences of a three main factors on trust in NWP: personal experience with police, perceptions of the Chief Constable, and support for its most prominent policy. Personal experience with police has been identified as a powerful predictor of trust. Accordingly, our hypothesis is that favourable personal experience in encounters with individual police officers will enhance trust in the force while negative experiences strain the relationship between citizen and police. Also, we also assume that evaluations of the quality of Richard Brunstrom as Chief Constable are correlated to trust in the force. Finally, individual support for the strict speeding policy will be related to trust in NWP.

Figure 1. Main Hypotheses



In addition, we look at the role of perceived and experienced fairness. Procedural fairness of the police has been identified as a main factor for citizen's evaluations. It is assumed that actually experienced fairness shapes personal experience with police. Citizens will evaluate encounters with police by fairness criteria. Also, perceptions of how fairly Brunstrom acts as Chief Constable should be correlated with opinions on the quality of his work. Support for the speeding policy of NWP should be highest when respondents assume that offenders caught speeding are treated fairly.

Methods and Sample

A questionnaire was developed and piloted with student and non-student respondents in the area of Bangor. With the final questionnaire (Appendix 1) data were gathered from groups of inhabitants of North Wales in March and April 2009. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and anonymity would be preserved. The largest respondent number were Bangor University students from a range of subject areas (second year law students, first year criminology students, second year sports students). Questionnaires were circulated to students in their lectures. To give a more balanced sample including older respondents, non-students were also questioned. Data were obtained from members of a football club in Wrexham, mostly parents, before and after training sessions. During their meeting, members of the North Wales Railway Circle were also given questionnaires. Similarly addressed were members of the University and College Union at Bangor University. Employees from a supermarket in Bangor were given questionnaires during their lunch break. The resulting sample is not representative for the population of North Wales⁵. However, it provides a cross-section of inhabitants, young and old, male and female, with and without direct personal experience with North Wales Police (Table 1).

Results

Sanctions for speeding

Of all respondents, 54 percent indicated having had “any personal experience with North Wales Police for example having reported an incident or being approached by them”. Three quarters of the sample were drivers (Table 1), of which 28 percent (21 percent of all respondents) had been caught speeding by NWP during the last decade. Half of those surveyed reported that they knew a close friend or family member who had been caught speeding within the same period.

The questionnaire had open-ended questions to enable respondents to indicate how the police responded when the respondents or their family and friends were caught speeding. Table 2 shows the outcomes that respondents reported as a result of being caught speeding. Fourteen percent of the respondents had received points on their license which constitutes the most frequent response by the police. Sometimes the respondents reported having got points and having to pay a fine. Yet, points can result in losing the driver’s license. Therefore they are usually seen as the main sanction even if accompanied by a fine. To have a measure of outcomes for speeding, answers were coded into a scale running from not being caught speeding to being banned from driving. In addition, 28

⁵ Notably, Mason (2009: 2) argues, that the British Crime Survey has a problem with small sample sizes for police force area levels. Additional surveys like the present one are thus needed to provide additional insights into the situation in North Wales.

percent of all respondents had a close friend or a family member who had received points on their license (Table 2). Sanctioning for speeding therefore affected a significant proportion of the respondents.

Table 1. The seven respondent groups

	Number	% of all respondents	Mean age	% under 25	% above 60	% female	Mean years in North Wales	% experience with NWP	% heard of Brunstrom	% NWP harsh with speeding*	% drivers	% caught for speeding	% relatives caught for speeding
Criminology students	58	17.9	21.7	86.1	0.0	65.5	10.2	37.9	46.6	43.1	65.5	12.1	43.1
Law students	61	18.8	23.2	79.0	1.6	68.9	15.6	63.9	82.0	59.0	72.1	18.0	68.9
Sports students	83	25.6	20.1	91.6	0.0	39.8	5.7	39.8	18.1	25.3	81.9	13.3	38.6
Supermkt workers	53	16.4	39.7	22.7	3.8	58.5	30.1	67.9	81.1	49.1	64.2	26.4	43.4
Unionists	22	6.8	46.3	0.0	4.5	27.3	22.2	68.2	81.8	44.4	95.5	36.4	45.5
Football club	30	9.3	38.8	26.6	9.9	43.3	26.5	66.7	56.7	60.0	76.7	33.3	50.0
Railway Circle	17	5.2	61.5	0.0	41.3	17.6	38.9	64.7	100	53.0	94.1	41.2	64.7
Total	324	100	29.5	61.3	4.5	51.2	17.0	54.3	57.7	44.8	75.3	21.0	48.8

* Comprises of answers “very” and “entirely” to question “How harshly does North Wales Police deal with speeding?”

Table 2. Outcome of speeding for self and family or friends, percentages

%	Cautioned/ got off	Fine only	Speed awareness course	Points or points and fine	Banned
Outcome for self	1.9	3.4	1.5	13.6	0.0
Outcome for family or friends	0.9	12.0	3.4	28.4	1.9
Coded as	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0

N = 324, open-ended questions: “If yes, what was the outcome when you (they) were caught speeding?” No answer to the question was coded as “0”.

Personal experience with North Wales Police

Respondents indicating prior experience with NWP were asked about aspects of their treatment by the police officers. Table 3 shows the responses and the correlation with how fairly respondents felt treated. Only about a third of the respondents were satisfied with the service by the police officers. Service satisfaction and fair treatment were highly correlated. Half of the respondents were pleased that officers listened to them. Officers listening had a high correlation of .75 with being treated fairly, showing that it is a deciding factor when individuals make their mind up on fairness. Being treated with respect and the opportunity to discuss views had similarly high levels of correlation, .80 and .75 respectively, with being treated fairly. Four out of ten respondents thought officers were 'not at all' biased and 13 percent believed them to be 'less' biased. Again, perceived fair treatment and absence of bias are related. All measures for personal experiences with NWP were combined to form an index variable (Cronbach's alpha = .905, n = 159).

Table 3. Personal experiences with North Wales Police, percentages

%	Very much	Much	Some what	Less	Not at all	Don't know	Miss- ing	Correla- tion with treated fairly
Treated fairly	20.5	29.0	23.9	10.2	11.4	1.1	1.1	-
Service satisfaction	14.2	22.7	26.1	13.6	19.3	1.7	2.3	.79
Officers biased‡	11.9	11.4	11.4	13.1	43.2	4.5	0.6	.44
Officers listened	21.6	27.3	23.3	10.2	11.4	1.7	0.6	.75
Treated with respect	26.1	25.0	25.0	5.1	11.4	2.3	1.1	.80
Opportunity to discuss views	18.2	24.4	22.7	11.4	18.8	2.3	0.6	.75

N = 187. All correlations Spearman's Rho, significant at $p < .01$, two-tailed

‡ Inversely coded, positive precursor indicates a negative correlation.

Perception of the Chief of North Wales Police

Of all respondents, 58 percent had heard about the then Chief of NWP, Richard Brunstrom (Table 1). Of these, 44 percent had heard about him via television and radio, 38 percent through newspapers, 7 percent from websites and 21 percent from friends and family. Some had met him personally on other occasions, for example, through work, or heard him give a speech at university.

Participants were asked a number of questions pertaining to Chief Constable of NWP Richard Brunstrom (Table 4). About a third of the respondents were inclined to take the view that Richard Brunstrom does not perform a good job, compared to 17 percent, who took the opposing

view. The majority believed Richard Brunstrom influences the policies of NWP. There was, however, little support for the notion that Richard Brunstrom shares the values of the community. Only 8.6 percent tended to say that Brunstrom takes all relevant arguments into account when forming a decision. Perceptions of Brunstrom’s performance were highly correlated with whether he shared community values and took all relevant arguments into account when forming a decision. The measures for quality of job, community values shared and taking arguments into account were combined to an index variable for the evaluation of Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom (Cronbach’s alpha = .921, n = 120).

Table 4. Evaluations of Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom, percentages

%	Very much	Much	Some what	Less	Not at all	Don’t know	Missing	Correlation with does a good job
Does a good job	4.8	11.8	26.2	16.6	18.2	18.7	0.5	-
Influences NWP policies	27.8	25.7	20.9	2.7	2.7	18.2	2.1	.15
Shares community values	3.2	11.2	19.3	22.5	21.9	17.6	0.5	.80*
Takes all relevant arguments into account	1.6	7.0	20.3	20.3	20.9	25.7	0.5	.79*

N = 187, correlations are Spearman’s Rho *p < .01, two-tailed.

Speeding policy support

Table 5 shows the opinions on the traffic policing policy of the North Wales Police. Many respondents saw the policy as effective (37% chose “entirely” and “very”) and a substantial number (nearly half the sample) believed the policy was harsh. Only one in five stated that “people who get caught speeding” are treated “entirely” or “very” fairly by North Wales Police while around a quarter of the respondents either answered “somewhat” or answered negatively (“less” and “not at all”). As a consequence, only a third of the respondents supported “the emphasis North Wales Police places on tackling speeding”. There is a strong correlation between perceived fairness and support for the speeding policy and another, albeit lower, correlation between supposed effectiveness and support (Table 5). Also, the more harsh people perceived the policy the less they tended to support the emphasis on speeding.

Table 5. Opinions on North Wales traffic policing policy, percentages

%	Entire-ly	Very	Some what	Less	Not at All	Don't Know	Miss- ing	Correl- ation with support for emphasis
Support for emphasis on speeding	12.3	22.2	21.6	12.0	17.6	12.7	1.5	-
Effectiveness	11.7	25.3	29.6	7.4	5.2	18.5	2.1	.26**
Fairness	4.6	15.1	25.6	11.7	13.3	28.1	1.5	.63**
Harshness	17.0	27.8	22.2	4.6	0.6	25.3	2.5	-.15*

225 < N < 251, correlations are Spearman's Rho, *p < .05, **p < .001, two-tailed.

For further analysis, an index variable “speeding policy support” (Cronbach’s alpha = .700, n = 220) was created from the variables shown in Table 5: effectiveness, fair treatment and emphasis on speeding. The Chief Constable was largely identified with the force’s traffic policing strategy as the evaluation index for Brunstrom is significantly correlated with this support index for traffic policing (r = .52, p < .001).

A multivariate linear regression was used to identify factors related to speeding policy support (Table 6). Contrary to expectations, there was no significant influence on support from the outcomes received when caught speeding. Women were significantly more in support of the force’s speeding policy as were those who have had positive personal experiences with the NWP.

Table 6. Linear regression for index variable speeding policy support

	Beta	Sig.
Gender	-.194	.021
Personal experience	.467	.001
Outcome for self	.096	.247
Outcome for family	-.060	.458
Sports student	.011	.917
Law student	.215	.094
Criminology student	.086	.433
Supermarket worker	.134	.248
Unionist	.176	.066
Railway Circle	.164	.090

R-Square = .28, p < .001, N = 129.

Trust in North Wales Police

Evaluations of NWP were not very positive, as indicated in Table 7. Just half of the respondents felt very much/much “comfortable reporting an incident to North Wales Police”. Less than 30 percent answered that NWP is very

much/much “effective in their role”. Answers to questions whether NWP “sincerely tries to help people with their problems”, “accurately understand and apply the law”, and “treat citizens fairly” showed a similarly sceptical pattern. The statement “Some of the things that North Wales Police do, embarrasses our area” was typically answered with “somewhat” and “don’t know” and about a quarter clearly agrees to the statement. – With the exemption of the embarrassment variable, evaluations of NWP as reported in Table 7 were combined to form a single measure for the support of North Wales Police⁶.

Table 7. Evaluations of North Wales Police, percentages

%	Very much	Much	Some-what	Less	Not at all	Don’t know	Missing
Comfortable reporting an incident	19.1	33.0	27.2	4.9	9.3	5.6	0.9
Effective in their role	4.6	23.1	39.2	8.3	6.8	16.4	1.5
Sincerely try to help	4.6	22.8	30.6	10.2	8.0	22.8	0.9
Understand and apply the law	6.8	23.1	27.2	11.1	4.9	26.2	0.6
Treat citizens fairly	4.9	25.6	28.4	10.2	8.0	19.4	0.9
Embarrass our area‡	15.4	10.8	22.8	12.3	11.1	25.3	0.6

N = 324.

Finally, the factors explaining trust in the North Wales Police can be addressed (Table 8). It was expected that evaluations of the performance of the Chief Police Officer might have an influence. This could not be confirmed in a linear regression analysis. Also, the gender of the respondents has been unrelated to support of the police force. Instead, there were some significant differences between respondent groups. Trust in the NWP was found to be highly significantly related to support of its speeding policy and to experiencing unfair treatment by police officers.

⁶ N = 197, Cronbach’s alpha = .905. Including the embarrassment variable would have resulted in a lower n (= 178) and alpha (= .874).

Table 8. Linear regression for trust in North Wales Police

	Beta	Sig.
Gender	.036	.563
Sports student	.136	.049
Law student	.188	.008
Railway Circle	.131	.039
Speeding policy support	.383	.001
Brunstrom bad job‡	.079	.232
Unfair experience‡	.386	.001
Criminology student	.088	.197

R-Square = .45, $p < .001$, $N = 162$

‡ Dummy variable: "1" combines "less" and "not at all" fair or good job.

Conclusion

North Wales teaches an interesting lesson for students of policing and public policy. It has seen an attempt to crack down on the speeding habit of its population thereby straining the relation between drivers and their sympathizers on the one hand and the police force on the other. The Chief of North Wales Police, Richard Brunstrom, has been outspoken in his views on several controversial topics but above all, is seen as the propagator of the speeding policy. North Wales therefore provides an opportunity to study the consequences of actions unpopular to many for public support of the police.

The sample used for this study does not allow conclusions on, for example, the exact amount of support for NWP, its former chief officer or its speeding policy. This would require a representative sample which was beyond the available resources for this MA seminar project. However, a sample was achieved that includes people with varying characteristics and varying degrees of experience with police. Correlations are less affected by unrepresentative samples than percentages. Indeed, only extremely skewed or very small samples would fail to confirm robust relations between variables. Therefore, the present sample sufficiently serves as a basis for establishing correlations of factors related to trust in police.

On many levels, the current study replicates findings of prior research in that procedural fairness is closely related to evaluations of authorities (see e.g. Tyler, 1990; Röhl and Machura, 1997; Tyler and Huo, 2002). Personal experience with NWP was measured mainly by aspects of fairness: absence of bias, officers listened to respondents, treated them with respect and provided opportunity to discuss their views. Fairness was found to be the most important predictor for support of the NWP speeding policy, while outcomes like fines or points received were not significantly related. Also, whether the Chief Constable does a good job was found to be

related to whether respondents assume that he takes all relevant arguments into account, which is a common fairness criteria mentioned already by Leventhal (1980).

Respondents who experienced an unfair treatment by police officers were less likely to support NWP as an institution. The effect is about as strong as disapproval with NWP speeding policy. Similar as in this study, Myhill and Beak's (2008: 6, 14) analysis of British Crime Survey data showed that confidence in the "local police" was significantly related to whether the police seemed to deal with pressing matters and whether police "treat everyone fairly and with respect". Both studies show the importance of the approval of policies and of fair treatment when people make up their mind on the police. The findings support the theory of Tyler and Lind (1992) that individual officers in daily encounters represent the authority. If treated unfairly, people will take their experience as a strong clue for major defects in an institution and that the authorities do not share their values. The present study underlines that negative experiences in citizen-police encounters may have a particularly strong impact on attitudes towards the police (Skogan, 2006: 100).

In addition to perceived unfair treatment in personal dealings with police officers, the approval or disapproval of the NWP speeding policy was identified as a cause for support of the NWP as an institution. Therefore, unpopular policies detract from the cushion of support institutions have. Respondents' support for the emphasis NWP puts on speeding was related to how fairly drivers caught speeding are treated, how harshly speeding is dealt with and how effective NWP is combating speeding. The Chief Constable is very much identified with the speeding policy. Perhaps as a consequence, this study revealed no independent contribution of opinion on the quality of Brunstrom's job to support for NWP when support for speeding policy was also entered.

It might be taken as good news that trust in the police does not depend much on the personae of the Chief Police Officer. Rather, personal experiences with police officers on a daily basis are of prime importance. The consequences for the recruitment and training of police are quite obvious. However, given that police officers often have to act in stressful circumstances the display of fair treatment will be a never-ending challenge. Certainly, police and political leaders can influence the working conditions of officers on the beat by determining staff levels and available resources.

When police – or public agencies generally – enforce policies that meet resistance by large parts of the public it costs them sympathy. Measures taken by NWP to combat speeding are perceived as too harsh by many. In addition, the police dispense penalties in a way that is also seen by many as unfair. There might be better examples for an accepted and at the same time successful policy on speeding.

Basic findings of this study apply to other social settings, too. When authorities wish to change behaviour the relevant public needs to be convinced of the measures taken. The wider the gap between the initial

situation and the patterns aimed for, the more difficult this will become. In encounters with the public individual representatives will stand for the institution. It is important that they treat the public according to social standards of fairness. Perceived unfair treatment will cause a lack of trust in the authority. Policies which have merits from an administrative and technical point of view can still fail to win over the public when they ignore this.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

**SURVEY OF OPINIONS ABOUT POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS
WITHIN THE BANGOR AREA**

This survey is voluntary and anonymous. Your answers will be combined with others and not individually identified. You can decline to answer any question or all of the questions. Please tick the appropriate response. Thank you very much for answering!

A.1 What is your age? _____

A.2 Are you? Female ___ Male ___

A.3 How long have you been living in North Wales? _____

What do you think about North Wales Police?

	Very Much	Much	Some- what	Less	Not at all	Don't know
B.1 Are North Wales Police effective in their role?	___	___	___	___	___	___
B.2 Would you feel comfortable reporting an incident to North Wales Police?	___	___	___	___	___	___
B.3 Do North Wales Police sincerely try to help people with their problems?	___	___	___	___	___	___
B.4 Do North Wales Police accurately understand and apply the law?	___	___	___	___	___	___
B.5 Do North Wales Police treat citizens fairly?	___	___	___	___	___	___
B.6 Some of the things that North Wales Police do embarrasses our area	___	___	___	___	___	___

Personal experiences with North Wales Police

C.1 Have you ever had any personal experience[s] with North Wales Police? For example having reported an incident, or being approached by them? (Circle a or b as appropriate)

- a- Yes – please answer questions C 2 to C 7.
- b- No – please skip questions C 2 to C 7.

	Very Much	Much	Some- what	Less	Not at all	Don't know
C.2 Did the police provide a satisfactory service whilst dealing with the problem?	___	___	___	___	___	___
C.3 Apart from the outcome, how fairly were you treated by the Police?	___	___	___	___	___	___
C.4 Did the officers appear biased?	___	___	___	___	___	___
C.5 Did they listen to what you said?	___	___	___	___	___	___
C.6 Did they treat you with respect?	___	___	___	___	___	___
C.7 Did you have enough opportunity to discuss your views?	___	___	___	___	___	___

Richard Brunstrom

D.1 Have you heard of Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom? (circle a or b as appropriate)

- a. Yes – please answer questions D 2 to D 6.
- b. No – please skip questions D 2 to D 6.

D.2 How did you hear about him? (tick as appropriate)	Television/radio	___				
	Newspaper	___				
	Website	___				
	Friends and Family	___				
	Other (please state)	_____				
	Very Much	Much	Some- what	Less	Not at all	Don't know
D.3 How much does Brunstrom influence the the policies of North Wales Police?	___	___	___	___	___	___
D.4 Does Brunstrom do a good job?	___	___	___	___	___	___
D.5 Does Brunstrom share the values of the community?	___	___	___	___	___	___
D.6 Does Brunstrom take all relevant arguments into account when forming a decision?	___	___	___	___	___	___

Traffic Policing

	Entirely	Very	Some- what	Less	Not at all	Don't know
E.1 How effective is North Wales Police in tackling speeding?	___	___	___	___	___	___
E.2 Are people who get caught speeding treated fairly by North Wales Police?	___	___	___	___	___	___
E.3 Do you support the emphasis North Wales Police places on tackling speeding?	___	___	___	___	___	___
E.4 How harshly does North Wales Police deal with speeding?	___	___	___	___	___	___
E.5 Do you drive?			Yes ___	No___		
E.6 If yes, how long have you held a driving license?			_____			
E.7 In the last 10 years have you ever been caught speeding by North Wales Police?			Yes___	No__		
E.8 If yes, what was the outcome when you were caught speeding?			_____			
E.9 In the last 10 years have close friends or family been caught speeding by North Wales Police?			Yes ___	No ___		
E.10 If yes what was the outcome when they were caught speeding?			_____(2 lines)_____			

Comments

F How would you like police work to change in the future? _____(2 lines)_____

Please check again for having answered all questions. And: Thank you very much!