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Machura, Stefan; Jones, Stephanie; Würgler, Alexandra; Cuthbertson, Joanna; Hemmings, Alannah

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National identity and distrust in the police:

The case of North West Wales

Stefan Machura, Stephanie OP Jones, Alexandra Würgler, Joanna Cuthbertson and
Alannah Hemmings

School of Social Sciences, Bangor University

Corresponding author:

Stefan Machura, School of Social Sciences, Bangor University, Bangor, Gwynedd

LL57 2DG, UK.

Email: s.machura@bangor.ac.uk

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Abstract

Trust in the police, as defined by perceived procedural fairness, just decisions, and effectivity, may be impacted by deep political divisions among the population, especially where citizens adopt opposing national identities. In Europe, North West Wales is one such area. Nationalism is intensified by language issues (Welsh vs. English) and historical experiences of British institutions. A sample of 207 residents living within the local authority of Gwynedd were asked to take part in the study. A questionnaire survey addressed how much trust in the police ultimately depends upon national identity as expressed by preference for the Welsh language, trust in British institutions, and attitudes towards political symbols. Other factors tested included personal experience of the police, the influence of news reports and police TV series, as well as the perceived effectiveness of the police in addressing crime. Trust in UK institutions, preference for the Welsh language, and news reporting were found to have most influence on trust in the police.

Keywords: Media representation of police; national identity; North Wales; trust in police; procedural justice; Welsh language

Introduction

In many countries, tension exists between citizens of different ethnic identities. This can compromise the levels of trust in state institutions. One of the most crucial institutions is the police, which has a symbiotic relation with the public, and largely depends on public trust for its operation. However, citizens who hold deeply negative views of the police may be reluctant to seek its help, advice and/or protection. This study investigates the relationship between national identities and trust in the local police. Since the groundbreaking work of David Easton (1965) on ‘diffuse support’, political scientists have noted that trust can spread and infuse people’s general understanding of agencies. Trust in the police may also depend on the belief that society is able to defend itself against crime, as Durkheim (1976: 181) outlined. If people think that their community is collapsing, trust in the criminal justice system decreases (Bradford and Myhill, 2015). A police force and its operations may suffer significantly if people feel that it only represents one particular group of the society (Chmielewski et al., 1997: 7), or is viewed as part of a social order they oppose (Huq et al., 2011). In Europe, there are several scenarios, from earlier violent large-scale conflicts which have stabilised over time (e.g. Danish and German-speaking minorities in the border region of Schleswig), or are turning away from violence and heavy-handed policing (e.g. the Spanish Basque country, and South Tyrol in Italy) to peaceful and uninterrupted integration (e.g. the Slavic Sorben people in Germany, certainly since 1945).

The present study focuses on one of the ‘four nations’ of Britain. The expression refers to the presence of four peoples within one state in which their different national identities are recognized. In addition, there are many layers of migration, including immigration from abroad. Different views of political history have influenced the sense of belonging and identity in many parts of Britain. Where national identity appears under

threat, the police can be perceived as a tool in the struggle for power (Weitzer, 1985). The use of force reduces trust in the police (Brodeur 1983). People want the police to represent their sense of community, but if there is a plurality of communities in competition with one another, this can lead to dissatisfaction.

In England, the police has become a symbol for competing definitions of the nation: it either represents the long-established citizens who uphold traditional patterns, or those open to new ways of living who welcome people from different backgrounds. Perceptions of the police have been found to be closely connected to the politics of inclusion and exclusion at local and national levels (Loader and Mulcahy 2006). Trust in the police and expectations of what they can – or at least should – achieve vary between generations, and cultural and ethnic milieus. Many of these feelings are aimed at the police as agents of the local community in maintaining or creating cohesion, and sometimes have an intolerant undertone directed against people of other ethnic groups and different cultural heritage (Loader and Mulcahy 2006).

In Northern Ireland, there is an additional dimension to nationalist conflict: part of the population aspires to join another state, and for them the police represents the resented authority of the British state (Weitzer, 1985; Mulcahy, 1999). The police in Northern Ireland experienced the various stages of a civil war and its aftermath. Loyalist and nationalist communities supported the police only when it favoured their side (Weitzer, 1985: 50-52). Only after the peace agreement was a police force established with a prospect of serving everyone equally. Reformers had to address the contested issue of ‘police ownership’, to the extent that ‘the British Union flag was no longer permitted to be flown from police stations’ (Ellison 2007: 246 and 251). Today, grievances have changed somewhat: loyalist and nationalist communities are both critical of the ‘poor policing service’ (Topping and Byrne 2016: 535).

The Scottish independence movement aims at changes whereby the state institutions will switch allegiance. As if as a preparatory step, a unified Scottish police force has recently replaced the previous regionalized structure. The two sides in the Scottish independence debate used political and legal means, rather than violence, so relations with the police were not strained by the side-effects of policing a volatile situation.

North West Wales

Less well known outside Britain is the situation in Wales, especially that in the North Wales region. Wales has its own political history. The Welsh Assembly Government's powers do not extend to policing, but aspects of police work are influenced by its policies, and by local factors. North West Wales, comprised mainly of the counties of Anglesey and Gwynedd, is a culturally distinct region in which Welsh, a Celtic language, is very prominent. Bilingual Welsh speakers, those speaking only English, as well as Welsh learners and those speaking 'bad Welsh' make up varying constellations, which range from those accommodating to those rejecting the other (Mann, 2004). The 2016 population survey registered 71% in Gwynedd and 63% on Anglesey as Welsh speakers (StatsWales, n.d.). In this region, a multi-layered interplay of different political identities can be found (Osmond, 2009; Day, 2015; Mann and Plows, 2016). For some, British institutions are tainted by their historic experiences of 'English oppression'. A minority strives for an independent Wales: in the 2016 Welsh Assembly elections, Plaid Cymru ('Voice of Wales') received 20.5% of the votes (BBC, 2016). On Anglesey and in the Arfon constituency of Gwynedd, more than half of the voters supported Plaid (Jones and Holzinger, 2016: 20).

National identities in Wales, and more specifically, in North West Wales, involve a multi-layered set of ideas of belonging. Sympathies vary when it comes to Wales, the United Kingdom and Europe. The minority in Wales favouring independence are aware of the weak economic base of the country. But the process of ‘devolution’ of powers from London to Cardiff at least results in policy differences between England and Wales. The European Union appears much more positive from the perspective of Welsh nationalists than that of English ones. In the Brexit referendum, the most Welsh-speaking county, Gwynedd, voted to remain. Issues around the Welsh language tend to be complex. For many public-sector jobs, the ability to speak Welsh is required, especially in areas with a clear Welsh-speaking majority. Not speaking Welsh excludes in-migrants from some social circles (Mann, 2004). Strong concern about the future of the Welsh language is not found only among campaigners. Its long-term decline may at best have been halted by measures such as making Welsh mandatory in secondary schools, or subsidized Welsh classes for adults.

For Welsh nationalists, such measures do not go far enough to compensate for the experience of historic injustice. The resultant perceived disadvantage has both economic and ideological aspects. North Wales includes some of the poorest areas in the UK. Gross disposable household income on Anglesey and in Gwynedd fluctuates around 90% and 82% of the UK average (Stats Wales, 2017). Many locals accuse English in-migrants of moving in and driving up property prices (Jones et al., 2016: 72-74). In politics, social democratic approaches prevail over liberal and free-market ideas. Many long-established residents share ‘a deeply ingrained sense that Welsh people are a particular kind of people of moral worth’ (Harris, 2014). On the other side of the divide, the Welsh are often portrayed as backward-looking. Significant parts of the population rally around ‘British’ or ‘English’ symbols of identity on one side, and ‘Welsh’ symbols

on the other. The majority locate themselves somewhere between the extremes. In a recent study, local students preferring to communicate through the medium of Welsh showed higher distrust of the UK police (Machura et al., 2016).

Like other state institutions, the police in North Wales responded to the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 by introducing policies favourable to the use of Welsh (North Wales Police, 2017). For example, police cars and uniforms in North West Wales are marked bilingually as ‘Heddlu’ and ‘Police’ (with the Welsh word first), and having some level of Welsh is required to gain employment in the force. Information leaflets and website entries are bilingual. Welsh speakers can insist on communicating with officers exclusively in their own language.

Such a configuration of locally conflicting political identities and the consequent repercussions on citizens’ attitudes towards state institutions are to be found in numerous places around the globe (e.g. Germany after Unification, Chmielewski et al., 1997: 25-27; Montada, 2000). Police forces, and especially uniformed officers (Bittner, 1990: 233, 241), are among the state’s most visible manifestations; in this they resemble military and border control agents. The present study adds knowledge about a key problem of interest to social scientists: the social basis of state power.

Trust in the police

Trust in the police depends on a range of factors. Even if citizens resent a police force for political reasons, there may be qualities of police services which are viewed positively. Trust is more than just a binary phenomenon.

Trust in authorities has been defined by Tom Tyler as involving three elements: procedural and distributive justice, and perceived effectiveness (Tyler and Huo, 2002;

Tyler and Jackson, 2013). If these conditions are seen to be met, individuals are more inclined to put trust in institutions such as the police. Procedural justice refers to an evaluation of how decisions are made, while distributive justice is concerned with how 'just' the results are. People will accept even negative outcomes if the process used to arrive at them appears fair (e.g. Leventhal, 1980: 36; Hough, 2013). Procedural justice is key for trust in institutions such as the police (e.g. Tyler and Huo, 2002; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Dirikx et al., 2013: 125; Tyler and Jackson, 2013), as unfair procedures threaten to lead to repeated injustice (Tyler, 1990). In previous studies focusing on North Wales the same three components have been found to define trust in the police (Machura et al., 2013; 2014 and 2016).

The present study examines the effect of nationalism, particularly among speakers of the Welsh language, on trust in the local police. It is also possible that English nationalists reject the North Wales Police (NWP) for its bilingual policies, or for being a Welsh institution. Historically, certain sections of society in North Wales have held negative attitudes towards the police. Prior to 2009, the North Wales Police enforced a strict anti-speeding policy, which saw large numbers of drivers punished, often for small transgressions (Dalton et al., 2009). Decades ago, police clashed with local farmers blocking ports to protest against the import of Irish products, and with Welsh language campaigners employing civil disobedience tactics. In private, among family and friends, people are more inclined to discuss negative experiences of the police (Heenan et al., 2008; Dalton et al., 2009; Machura et al., 2013 and 2014: 297); such past events may therefore still cast a shadow on attitudes and opinions.

Other direct and indirect experiences

When looking at the influence of national identity on trust in police, in order not to overestimate its influence, it is necessary to consider other factors that have been found to relate to trust. Experiences of the police can be direct, or indirect. Direct experiences may result from situations ranging from personal contact with the police as a victim (found to be generally positive in the UK by Bradford et al., 2013: 88), being a witness to a crime, to simply observing police officers. Indirect experiences can be gained from media consumption, with effects depending on the content chosen, or from the experiences of family and friends (Machura et al., 2014). When individuals have police officers among their family and/or friends, their views appear to be more positive (Dalton et al., 2009; Machura et al., 2013). Indirect experience can come from various media sources, for example, television and the print media (Machura et al., 2014: 297). Routine crime reports generally offer conflicting portrayals of the police – sometimes they are heroic and professional crime fighters, sometimes they are ineffective and incompetent (Surette, 1998). Numerous TV shows portray the police as brave crime fighters, who solve complex crimes in very little time (Robson, 2016: 49). Reality police shows, which contain edited footage of actual police actions, have been found to influence at least younger people's views of the police in the United Kingdom (Machura et al., 2014: 297).

Opinions of the police can depend upon perceptions of crime levels and of the effectiveness of the police in dealing with offences, especially locally (Myhill and Beak, 2008). When it comes to investigating trust in a single police force, perceptions of local crime are particularly important (Ellison et al., 2013). Violent crime, especially assaults and sexual violence, are universally seen as serious offences, and burglaries can be a problem in certain areas; in North West Wales in particular, farm crimes are a concern

(Jones and Holmes, 2013). A visible police presence has been identified as being strongly related to trust (Dalglish and Myhill, 2004; Quinton and Tuffin, 2007). In rural North Wales, a lack of police presence has contributed to many farmers giving up reporting instances of criminal activity (Holmes and Jones, 2017). In these rural areas, Welsh is traditionally spoken, and Welsh nationalist ideals remain prevalent.

The way in which trust in the police is correlated to demographic and socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, formal education and income, is less clear. Older people are more likely to have had direct and indirect experiences. They may feel nostalgia for the idealized time of their youth and find today's police lacking the perceived virtues of the past (Loader and Mulcahy, 2006). Higher education can be correlated to more law-abiding attitudes (Sunshine and Tyler 2003: 526). Lack of trust in the police may be influenced by income inequality, especially given that economic disadvantage is one of the grievances voiced in North Wales. In an earlier study, no gender differences were found in trust in the police (Dalton et al., 2009: 102, 104).

The police is a key institution of the modern state, and citizens expect it to serve them. Definitions of the community and its interests thus become important, as it is here that different national identities and views of the state become visible. The main hypothesis addressed by the present study is that trust in the North Wales Police depends – among other factors – on national identity as expressed by a preference for the Welsh language, trust in British institutions, and feelings/attitudes towards political symbols. The main supposition will be tested against other explanations, such as personal experience of the police, media exposure, formal education and income, as well as the perceived effectiveness of the police in addressing specific forms of crime. A multifactorial analysis allows a more robust test of the main hypothesis.

Method

As in previous literature examining citizens' trust in the police (e.g. Tyler and Huo, 2002), a questionnaire study design was adopted. Scales for trust in North Wales Police and for self-perceived sources of trust were taken from earlier research (Machura et al., 2013, see Appendix A). Additional influence factors were added, and scales for perceptions of violent crime and the police were developed. A set of items measured trust in state institutions, particularly British institutions. Respondents were also given a list of recent popular TV series related to police and crime to indicate which they have watched. There was also a question on the ability to speak Welsh, and a scale for rating preference for using the language in a variety of social situations. Finally, respondents were asked to rate a selection of symbols associated with various national identities.

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Bangor University's College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences. It complies with the Ethics Guidelines of the British Society of Criminology and of Bangor University.

A total of 207 questionnaires was collected in February and March 2015 from eight different social settings in the Bangor (Gwynedd) area; these were a railway club meeting (11), a church service (40), a group of social services employees (19), a rugby club (56), a dance class (31), a community group meeting (25), supermarket customers (Porthmadog area, 13) and a gathering of squash players (12). Respondents filled in the questionnaires independently, or in the presence of the researcher.

Demographics

The sampling method provided results from a variety of participants with diverse backgrounds. Of them 55.1% were male, and 44.4% female¹; 31.9% were between 18

and 25 years old, 18.4% between 26 and 35, 18.8% between 36 and 45, and 12.6% were between 46 and 55. Only 17.9% of the respondents gave their age as 56 or older; of these 6.3% were aged between 56 and 65, and 8.7%, between 66 and 75.

- Place Figure 1 here -

The majority (50.2%) indicated that they had been residing in North Wales for more than sixteen years; 7.7% selected the less than one year option, 26.1% between one and five years and 14.5% indicated six to fifteen years. A quarter (24.6%) of the respondents had Welsh as their first language, and a further 13% said that they were fluent. 15.9% selected 'I can get by', 24.6% to speak 'a few words', while a fifth of the respondents (20.3%) said that they did not know any Welsh at all. On a five-point scale, participants rated their preference for using the language in different social surroundings (Figure 1). A clear preference (first two values selected) for speaking Welsh with family was expressed by 28.5%, with friends by 29%, in shops by 25.6%, at work, school, college or university by 24.2%, with their GP by 23.2%, with public administration staff by 21.2%, and, with the police by 20.8%.

A further question related to the respondents' educational qualifications: 43% had (at least) an undergraduate degree and 19.3% a postgraduate degree. Only 2.4% said they had no qualifications at all. Regarding annual household income, 15.5% had less than £10,000, 11.6% between £10,000 and £20,000, 17.4% between £20,000 and £30,000, 14% between £30,000 and £40,000 and 20.1% had more than £40,000 pounds.

- Place Table 1 here -

Results

Trust in North Wales Police was measured in several dimensions: overall trust, perceived distributive and procedural justice, and effectiveness. For almost all dimensions (see Table 1) approximately 25% of the respondents did not state a positive or a negative opinion. Two questions were related to misbehaviour by officers, and in response to these, a higher number of respondents indicated a negative perception than elsewhere. A principal components analysis with oblique rotation (oblimin) also showed two dimensions of attitudes, namely, general trust and views related specifically to abuse. The first seven variables in Table 1 have been combined to form an index for police trust (Cronbach's alpha = .943, n = 162) to be used in the following analyses.

– Place Table 2 here –

Participants were asked to identify possible influences in their rating of the police (Table 2). A high proportion of answers mentioned the news, observing the police at work, and the experiences of family and friends. Other sources frequently cited were having family and friends in the police force, police presence in the county, or neighbourhood, and a variety of other situations. Films, TV shows and novels, or a penalty/fine issued by the police were less often mentioned.

– Place Table 3 here –

Trust in North Wales Police may also have been influenced by the respondents' perception of violent crime where they live, work or study (Table 3). However, in general, participants did not indicate that sexual violence in their immediate environments, or violence in the neighbourhood, was a problem. In addition, participants rated the effectiveness of police against violent crime, the impact of their presence on violent crime and the need for the police to do more to tackle this type of

crime where the respondents 'live or work' (Table 3). On a bivariate level, these three evaluations were significantly correlated with police trust.

Participants were asked how often they watched certain TV series on a five-point scale. For instance, 42% indicated they watched, at least occasionally, (values '1' to '4') the fictional programme 'Silent Witness', 41.5% was the figure for 'A Touch of Frost', 39.5% for 'Midsomer Murders', 37.6% for 'New Tricks', 35.2% for 'Law and Order UK', and 27% for 'Hinterland/Y Gwyll'. The British fictional TV dramas were combined in an index variable ($\alpha = .815$, $n = 198$). Similarly, the two British reality police series 'Night Cops' and 'Traffic Cops' were combined in one variable for nonfictional police series (Spearman's $\rho = .77$, $p = .01$, $n = 206$). 'Night Cops' has been at least 'rarely' seen by 29.5% of the respondents, 'Traffic Cops' by 40.5%.

Feelings towards various symbols connected with national identity were the focus of the last set of questions. Six flags and symbols were illustrated in colour with rating options ranging from '-5' to '+5' or 'don't know'. Overall, the national flag of Wales (the Red Dragon) received the most positive reactions: 64.7% chose either '+3', '+4' or '+5'. These ratings were selected by 48.8% for the Union Jack (United Kingdom flag), by 31.9% for the flag of England (St George's Cross), by 31.8% for the St David's flag, by 30% for the European Union flag and by 20.8% for the Tafod y Ddraig. The St David's flag is another symbol for Wales, but is less popular than the official Red Dragon. Tafod y Ddraig shows a stylised dragon's tongue and is used by Welsh language campaigners.

– Place Table 4 here –

To measure the general feeling of trust in state institutions, a selection ranging from the monarch to the prison service, was included in the questionnaire. All of them

were significantly related to the police trust index. Using the first five items from Table 4, an index variable for ‘Trust in British Institutions’ was created ($\alpha = .738$, $n = 163$). The Welsh Assembly Government was excluded, because of its different connotations, as was trust in the UK police, because of its close similarity to trust in North Wales Police ($r = .75$).

– Place Table 5 here –

Multivariate Analysis

A multivariate linear regression was conducted to test factors influencing trust in the North Wales Police. Missing values for trust in the North Wales Police, trust in British institutions, and general preference to speak Welsh were estimated using arithmetic mean values. The model presented in Table 5 explains 62% of the overall statistical variance in the sample. Participants trusted North Wales Police more:

- the more they trusted British institutions, and this turned out to be the strongest factor, explaining 22% of the statistical variance;
- the more they preferred speaking Welsh;
- the more they felt influenced by news about the police;
- when their household income ranged between £20,000 and £30,000 per year;
- when they thought that the presence of police in the neighbourhood had an impact on violent crime.

In contrast, respondents had lower levels of trust in the police when their view was impacted by having been stopped by officers. Equally, those with postgraduate degrees indicated lower levels of trust.

Further factors were tested but did not significantly contribute to an explanation (see note below Table 5). These included experiences of family and friends, and having police among family and friends, which made no difference. The respondent's age, gender or attitudes towards symbols such as the Red Dragon or the Union Jack showed no direct effect.

Estimating missing values with means results in less data variation, and may therefore influence results, though a separate multivariate linear regression excluding cases where data was missing largely confirmed the findings. Again, trust in British institutions, preference for the Welsh language, news reporting, and household income were most important².

Trust in UK police appeared significantly lower than trust in North Wales Police³. The strongest predictor of trust in the UK police again was trust in British institutions. It explained 39% of the variance, with the overall explained variance including all significant factors being 53%. Among remaining factors is the perceived effectiveness of police against violence where people live or work⁴.

Thus, trust in British institutions is a key factor in explaining trust in the North Wales Police and the UK police more generally. A multivariate analysis was conducted to identify factors explaining trust in British institutions. Trust increased when the participants had positive feelings for its symbol, the Union Jack. The preference to speak Welsh index did not correlate significantly, but those 'not at all' able to speak Welsh, showed significantly more trust in British institutions⁵.

Discussion

Since the ground-breaking works of David Easton, social scientists have studied how generalized trust in public institutions extends to specific institutions. We tested the relation between trust in British institutions and trust in local police in the bilingual setting of North Wales. Previous empirical studies have related trust in the police to distributive and procedural justice, as well as to effectiveness. We were interested in how national identity influences trust, using the example of the local police force in North Wales. The study design also took into account other factors mentioned in the literature on trust in the police.

An opportunity sample of 207 people living in North West Wales was analysed to identify the factors which influence trust in the regional police force. The questionnaire was administered in person. An online survey to be completed in the comfort of people's homes may have resulted in fewer missing answers. These answers were estimated with mean values, a commonly accepted method, but it assumes that there is no systematic distortion. If anything, the choice of venue – the Bangor area – and the sampling method may have slightly underrepresented the strength of feeling about issues of 'Welshness', as the national language is most dominant in the villages of Snowdonia and on the Llyn Peninsula.

The present study measured trust by an index that included perceived procedural and distributive justice as well as the perceived effectiveness of the police in general. Much of the literature on trust in authorities concentrates on isolating the effect of perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. Those studies have repeatedly endorsed Tom Tyler's theory that procedural justice creates trust in institutions (Tyler 1990). Perceived procedural and distributive justice were often found to correlate

closely with one another, and with other items used to measure trust. In our study, they are highly correlated and can be used as part of one index of trust.

The perceived effectiveness component of the trust index is general in nature, while views of the effectiveness of the police in combatting violent crime, such as assaults and burglary, have a specific focus. The latter can therefore be employed as explanatory variables. How individuals view the police's effectiveness in responding to specific crimes, and how certain measures contribute to overall levels of trust, are empirical questions. In our analysis, one of these factors was found to be related to trust in North Wales Police, namely the perceived impact of police presence in the neighbourhood on violent crime.

North West Wales is a stronghold of the Welsh language and culture. Accordingly, the local police have a decidedly Welsh character. The results suggest that trust (or the lack of it) in British institutions is a key factor in trust in North Wales Police (and in the UK police force more widely). National identity politics, namely divisions along 'Englishness' and 'Welshness', provide a possible explanation. Those unable to speak Welsh, and individuals feeling positive about the Union Jack, feel more positively about British institutions. Enthusiasm for the Union Jack did not significantly correlate with trust in the UK or North Wales Police. The analysis suggests that other factors are more important when it comes to evaluating the police, and that liking the Union Jack might only be significant via its relation to trust in British institutions. Liking the Welsh dragon did not significantly correlate with anything, perhaps because this symbol is widely accepted and generally used in North Wales.

The North Wales police also receives support from an important identity-related factor linked to the region: respondents preferring to speak Welsh was associated with greater trust. They may recognize the regional police force as endorsing the place of the

language in their specific milieu. Communication need not only be in Welsh, but it is the default option.

Experiences and perceptions of the behaviour of police are also significant factors. We have already noted that trust in the police was greater when respondents thought that the police had an impact on violent crime in the places where they live or work. In contrast, respondents who were strongly influenced by having been stopped by the police had less trust in North Wales Police. As suggested by Tyler (1990), the way people are treated by the police is an integral part of what leads to trust or distrust. This is a fact which may be borne in mind by the police in order to address the concerns of citizens (Tyler and Huo, 2002: xiv-xv), apart from the obvious issue of appearing effective in addressing specific issues of crime (e.g. through greater emphasis on prevention, Lum and Nagin, 2017).

While those strongly influenced by news about the police had more trust in North Wales Police, other forms of media influence were insignificant, in contrast to the findings of earlier studies based on interviews with university students in the same area⁶. The current sample includes older people drawn from wider circles of North West Wales society. It is also noticeable that, in comparison to previous studies, friends and colleagues did not influence trust in the local police.

Other factors related to trust in North Wales Police included education. Respondents with the highest degree levels (MA, PhD, or equivalent) showed a less favourable attitude. In contrast, those with a household income of between £20,000 and £30,000 per year had more trust than other income groups. This suggests one might further investigate the link between trust in the local police and higher social status.

Finally, it is possible that Welsh people in the area mistrust the UK police generally, but approve of the North Wales police. The present study does not confirm the result of an earlier study in which local students who preferred to communicate in Welsh showed higher levels of distrust of the UK police (Machura et al., 2016). Of course, student views are often more radical, but opinions about local institutions were often found to be more favourable than those about their more remote counterparts (e.g. Loader and Mulcahy, 2006: 35). In the present study, the NWP was considered more trustworthy than the UK police in general.

Conclusion

North Wales Police have derived at least one benefit from its policy of supporting the Welsh language and culture: people who prefer to speak Welsh trust the police and its bilingual stance. The downside is that some who do not speak Welsh are likely to feel excluded. It will be interesting to see how this plays out over time, as political measures to support the Welsh language as a key aspect of national identity are set to continue.

Overall, our results point to ideas of belonging in a region where identities are contested to the extent that some ultimately aspire to an independent nation state. Any measures to support the national language can be understood by some as preparing the ground for that goal. The situation in North West Wales resembles that in several European states where minorities define themselves in terms of their own language. Trust in the North Wales Police (NWP) was strongly related to perceptions of the trustworthiness of British institutions. For many citizens, the evaluation of the regional force is part and parcel of a wider set of views on state institutions and national identity.

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Notes

- 1 Percentages do not always add up to 100 due to missing, or ‘don’t know’ answers.
- 2 The model (N = 130, p = .001) had six significant predictors, and resulted in 61.4% overall explained variance. Of these, the first four significant predictors were identical to those presented in Table 5 and already explained 53.3% of the variation: trust in British institutions with a Beta of .52, general preference to speak Welsh with .32, feeling influenced by news about the police with .34 and household income 20-20.000 with -.34 (all p = .001.) So far, the result is similar to the calculation with missing values estimated. Additionally, another respondent group was found to have a lower level of trust (supermarket respondent group, Beta = .25) and those who did not speak Welsh at all (Beta = .21).

- 3 Using the first variable in Table 1 ‘overall trust’, means = 2,72 and 2,35, respectively, $t = -5.057$, $df = 192$, $p < .001$.
- 4 Members of the squash player respondent group were more negative about the UK police, as were people with negative feelings towards the EU flag.

	Beta	Significance	Cumulated adjusted R ²
Trust in British institutions	.51	.001	.389
Squash player respondent group	.29	.001	.483
Police effective against violent crime (values ‘1’ and ‘2’)	-.20	.001	.513
Negative feelings towards EU flag (values ‘-5’ to ‘-3’)	.14	.007	.528

Note: Dependent variable is trust in UK police, $N = 207$, $p = .001$. Procedure: stepwise linear regression.

Excluded variables: age, gender, general preference to speak Welsh, feeling influenced by several individual factors (values ‘1’ and ‘2’ for film, TV, novels on police, experiences of family and friends, family and friends in police, stopped by police, observed police action, interviewed as witness by police, stopped/fined by police, reported to police, victim of crime, police response time, neighbourhood police presence, county police presence); where person lives, works or studies values ‘1’ and ‘2’ for violent crime a problem in neighbourhood, in county, assaults a problem, sexual violence, burglaries, police influence on violent crime, personally afraid of violent crime, neighbourhood presence of police, police needs to do more to tackle violent crime; watching fictional/reality TV police shows; education variables (no qualification, GCSEs, A-levels, BA, apprenticeship, vocational qualification); income levels; time living in Wales; levels of speaking Welsh; positive feelings (‘3’ to ‘5’) for symbols (Welsh Dragon, Union Jack, Tafod y Ddraig, EU flag), positive feelings towards Union Jack (values ‘-5’ to ‘-3’), membership in the other respondent groups.

- 5 Higher trust was also expressed by respondents approached at a dance class and while attending a local community group meeting.

	Beta	Significance	Cumulated adjusted R ²
Positive feelings for the Union Jack	-.38	.001	.13
Member of community group	-.26	.003	.19
Dance class	-.24	.009	.24
Speaking no Welsh	-.21	.017	.27

Note: Dependent variable is the trust in British institutions index. N = 198, p ≤ .001. Procedure: stepwise linear regression.

Excluded variables: preference to speak Welsh, age, gender; education levels; income levels; time living in Wales; other levels of speaking Welsh; feelings for other symbols (Welsh Dragon, St. David's Flag, etc.), membership in the other respondent groups, watching fictional/reality TV shows.

- 6 Reality TV police shows together with news were found related to trust in UK police in Machura et al., 2016, while reality TV police shows, and more so film, TV and novels, but not news, were found related in: Machura et al., 2014: 297.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

What do you think of the North Wales Police? (For each question, please tick only one of the boxes.)

Scale from 1 = Very to 5 = Not at all, and 'don't know'.

B.1 Overall, do you trust the police?

B.2 How well are the police working?

B.3 How just are their actions?

B.4 How much do you trust police procedures?

B.5 How effective are the police?

B.6 Do officers treat citizens fairly?

B.7 Do officers abuse their powers?

B.8 Do officers sincerely try to serve justice?

B.9 Are officers prejudiced against some people?

People often form their opinions based on different sources of information. To what degree were your opinions on the police influenced by: (For each question, please tick only one of the boxes.)

Scale from 1 = Very to 5 = Not at all.

C.1 Films, TV shows and novels on police, C.2 News about the police, C.3 Experiences of family and friends with police, C.4 Police among family and friends, C.5 Having observed police actions, C.6 Having been interviewed as a witness, C.7 Having been stopped by the police, C.8 Having been fined by the police, C.9 Having reported to the police, C.10 Having been a victim of crime, C.11 Police response times, C.12 Police presence in your neighbourhood, C.13 Police presence in your county.

Now we would like to ask you some questions about violent crime. (For each question, please tick only one of the boxes.)

Scale from 1 = Very to 5 = Not at all, and 'don't know'.

- D.1 Is violent crime a problem in your neighbourhood?
- D.2 Is violent crime a problem in your county?
- D.3 Are assaults a problem where you live, work, or study?
- D.4 Is sexual violence a problem where you live, work, or study?
- D.5 Is burglary a problem where you live, work, or study?
- D.6 Are you afraid of violent crime where you live or work?

How much do you agree to the following statements?

Scale from 1 = Very to 5 = Not at all, and 'don't know'.

- D.7 Where I live or work, police act effectively on violent crime.
- D.8 Where I live or work, police presence has an impact on violent crime.
- D.9 Where I live or work, police need to do more to tackle violent crime.

How much do you trust these institutions?

Scale from 1 = Very to 5 = Not at all, and 'don't know'.

- E.1 The Queen, E.2 British Government, E.3 Welsh Assembly Government, E.4 UK Police, E.5 HM Prison Service, E.6 British Military, E.7 HM Revenue and Customs.

How often do you watch the following shows? (For each question, please tick only one of the boxes.)

Scale from 1 = Very often, 2 = Often, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Rarely, 5 = Never.

- F.1 CSI, F.2 Midsomer Murders, F.3 New Tricks, F.4 Law and Order UK, F.5 Silent Witness, F.6 Touch of Frost, F.7 Criminal Minds, F.8 The Good Wife, F.9 Judge Judy, F.10 Night Cops, F.11 Traffic Cops, F.12 Hinterland/Y Gwyll.

Additionally, open-ended category 'Others'.

We would like to ask you some questions about yourself.

- G.1 What is your age?

18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66-75, Over 75.

G.2 Are you?

Female, Male.

Which of these qualifications do you have?

H.1 GCSEs, O-levels, or equivalent, H.2 A-Levels, or equivalent, H.3 Academic qualifications (BA, BSc, or equivalent), H.4 Higher academic qualifications (MA, PhD, or equivalent), H.5 Apprenticeship, H.6 Vocational/work-related qualifications, H.7 Other (space for answer), H.8 None.

I. What is your annual household income before tax? (Please tick one of the alternative answers.)

Under 10.000, Between 10.000 and 20.000, Between 20.000 and 30.000, Between 30.000 and 40.000, Between 40.000 and 50.000, Between 50.000 and 60.000, Between 60.000 and 70.000, Between 70.000 and 80.000, Between 80.000 and 90.000, Between 90.000 and 100.000, More than 100.000, Don't know.

J.1 How long have you been living in North Wales?

Less than one year, 1- 5 years, 6-15 years, More than 16 years.

K. Do you speak Welsh?

First language, Fluent, I can get by, A few words, Not at all.

Do you prefer Welsh when speaking: (For each question, please tick only one of the boxes).

Scale from 1 = Very to 5 = Not at all.

L.1 With family, L.2 With friends, L.3 With your GP, L.4 With police, L.5 In shops, L.6 With public administration staff, L.7 At work, school, college or university.

On a scale of minus 5 to plus 5, how do you feel about the following symbols?

Scale -5, -4, - 3, -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, +3, +4, +5, don't know.

Symbols: M.1 Welsh Dragon flag, M.2 Union Jack, M.3 Tafod y ddraig, M.4 St. George's flag, M.5 St. David's flag, M.6 EU flag.

Any other comments (three lines).

Figures and Tables

Figure 1: Preference to speak Welsh in social situations

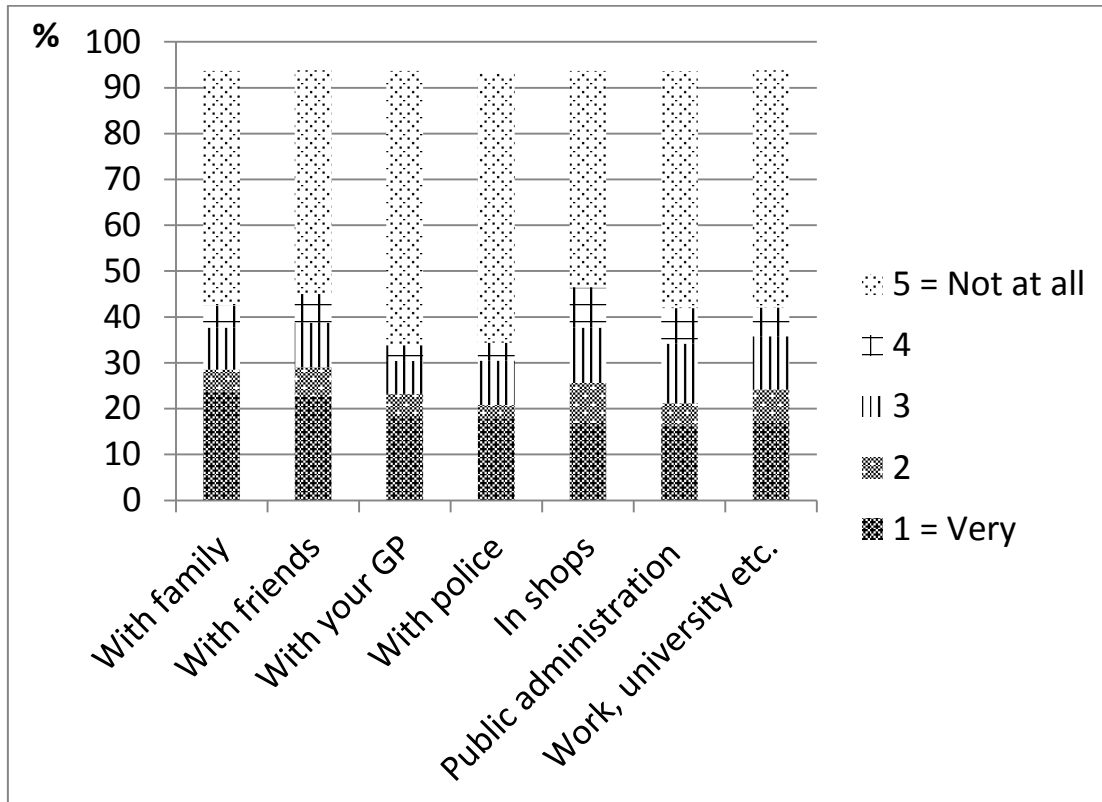


Table 1: Trust in North Wales Police, percentages

	1 = Very	2	3	4	5 = Not at all	Correlation with 1.
1. Overall trust	27.5	33.3	17.9	8.7	9.2	-
2. How well they work	13.5	30.4	26.6	12.6	4.8	.74
3. How just their actions are	13.5	31.4	26.6	12.6	4.3	.67
4. Trust in procedures	14.5	34.8	23.7	14.0	8.2	.67
5. Effectiveness	11.1	32.9	28.5	14.5	6.8	.62
6. Officers treat citizens fairly	15.9	30.4	27.5	14.0	4.3	.72
7. Officers try to serve justice	17.4	36.2	24.2	12.1	2.9	.56
8. Officers abuse powers	12.6	18.4	23.2	23.7	10.1	-.32
9. Officers are prejudiced	13.0	22.2	24.6	16.4	10.1	-.23

Notes: Percentages: differences to 100 are missing answers and 'don't know'. Correlations are Spearman Rho, $203 \leq n \leq 206$, $p = .01$.

Table 2: Self-assessed influences on trust in police, percentages

	1 = Very	2	3	4	5 = Not at all
News about the police	17.9	41.1	21.7	7.7	9.7
Observed police action	24.2	31.9	23.2	9.2	9.7
Experiences of family and friends	28.5	27.5	24.2	5.8	12.1
Family, friends in police	19.8	23.2	20.3	7.2	27.5
Presence in the county	19.8	20.8	30.0	13.5	13.5
Presence in the neighbourhood	16.4	23.2	23.2	15.5	18.8
Stopped by police	20.8	16.9	23.7	6.8	28.5
Having been a crime victim	18.8	18.4	15.0	4.8	39.6
Reported to police	18.4	18.4	15.9	6.8	36.7
Response time	15.0	21.7	23.2	11.6	23.2
Interviewed as witness	14.0	18.4	16.4	6.8	40.6
Films, TV shows, novels	10.6	15.5	17.4	17.9	35.7
Fined	13.0	12.6	15.0	3.4	52.2

Notes: Percentages: differences to 100 are missing answers.

Table 3: Perception of violent crime as a problem and police reaction where respondents live, work or study, percentages

	1 = Very	2	3	4	5 = Not at all	Correlation with Police Trust Index
Neighbourhood violence	4.8	5.8	12.6	26.1	41.5	-.03
County violence	9.7	15.5	28.0	22.7	12.1	-.01
Assaults	5.8	8.2	15.5	24.6	36.7	-.04
Sexual violence	3.9	5.3	14.5	23.2	34.8	.05
Burglary	6.3	15.0	23.7	26.1	17.9	-.02
Personally afraid	9.7	3.9	13.5	24.6	43.0	-.10
Police act effectively on violent crime	14.5	21.7	26.6	10.6	6.8	.51*
Police presence impacts on violent crime	7.7	18.4	27.1	13.0	12.1	.36*
Police to do more to tackle violent crime	11.1	15.9	26.6	14.0	10.6	-.19*

Notes: Percentages: differences to 100 are missing and ‘don’t know’. Pearson correlations, $142 \leq n \leq 158$,
* $p = .01$.

Table 4: Trust in institutions, percentages

	1 = Very	2	3	4	5 = Not at all	Correlation with Police Trust Index
British military	25.1	30.4	21.3	5.8	11.1	.24
The Queen	21.7	20.3	16.4	9.7	22.7	.32
HM Prison service	9.2	22.7	27.1	13.0	13.0	.54
British Government	8.2	13.5	27.1	20.8	26.6	.40
HM Revenue and Customs	7.2	19.8	32.4	9.2	19.3	.38
Welsh Assembly Government	11.6	19.8	30.4	15.5	16.4	.38
UK police	14.0	30.9	30.9	8.2	11.6	.75

Notes: Percentages: differences to 100 are missing and 'don't know'; Pearson's correlations, $145 \leq n \leq 159$, $p = .01$.

Table 5. Multivariate linear regression for trust in North Wales Police, missing values estimated with means

	Beta	Significance	Cumulated adjusted R ²
Trust in British institutions	.39	.001	.216
General preference to speak Welsh	.30	.001	.323
Feeling influenced by news about the police	.36	.001	.383
Household income: 20-30.000	-.22	.007	.457
Squash player respondent group	.30	.001	.516
MA, PhD or equivalent	.18	.020	.553
Neighbourhood presence impact on violent crime	.24	.004	.582
Stopped by police	-.24	.007	.624

Notes: Dependant variable is the police trust index, N = 197, p = .001.

Procedure: stepwise linear regression.

Excluded variables: age, gender; feeling influenced by several individual factors (film, TV, novels on police, experiences of family and friends, family and friends in police, observed police action, interviewed as witness by police, fined by police, reported to police, victim of crime, police response time, neighbourhood police presence, county police presence); perceived crime problem where person lives, works or studies: violent crime a problem in neighbourhood, in county, assaults a problem, sexual violence, burglaries, personally afraid of violent crime, police effectiveness on violent crime, police needs to do more to tackle violent crime; watching fictional/reality TV police shows; education variables (no qualification, GCSEs, A-levels, BA, apprenticeship, vocational qualification); other income levels; time living in Wales; levels of speaking Welsh; feelings for symbols (Welsh Dragon, Union Jack, etc.), membership in the other respondent groups.