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Police reform and the problem of trust

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Abstract

Police reform is widely undertaken in developing and post-authoritarian countries. The starting point for analysis of this phenomenon, it is suggested, is the absence of public trust in police that characterizes police–community relations in these countries. Without public trust in police, 'policing by consent' is difficult or impossible and public safety suffers. The nature of trust is examined in general terms and related to the problem of trust in governance. Then, the problematic nature of trust of the police is considered; structural features as well as performance aspects are invoked to explain distrust of police. In the penultimate section, the question of how to build trustworthy police forces is examined in the light of what has been learnt about the difficulties of maintaining or establishing trust in police. Process as well as substantive improvements each play a role here. In addition to building trust, ways of institutionalizing distrust are needed. The article concludes by pointing to some inherent limits or constraints upon trust-building, including the impact of the wider environment in which policing occurs, and the need to trust the tools we use for building trust.

Key Words

accountability • effectiveness • institutionalized distrust • legitimacy • trustworthy police

> Our effectiveness [as police] depends greatly on the extent to which we can achieve the trust of the courts, the press, and the public. This in turn depends on our willingness to be accountable and to deal effectively with our own wrong-doers. It is essential also that this willingness be made clear to the public.
>
> (Sir Robert Mark, 1972)

The problem of trust in police–community relations

Public trust in police can enhance police effectiveness and the legitimacy of police actions (Lea and Young, 1984; Lyons, 2002; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; National Research Council, 2004). It is linked therefore to the capacity of state police to provide basic citizen security (Goldsmith, 2003). Trust, through its presumption of benevolence, dedication and a shared ethical framework (Six, 2003), also enables police legitimacy—'the judgments that ordinary citizens make about the rightfulness of police conduct and the organizations that employ and supervise them' (National Research Council, 2004: 291). When the public views police as legitimate (or trustworthy), public co-operation with police in ways that assist effectiveness is more likely.

Yet such trust cannot be taken for granted. Trust is fragile due to its highly contingent character in most social relations. Its extent and very existence depends upon a range of factors both within and outside police control. A deficit of trust in the police is all too common in deeply divided, post-conflict and post-authoritarian societies (Weitzer, 1995; del Frate, 1998; Mishler and Rose, 1998). However, more generally, wherever there are strong indicators of social disorganization and relative socio-economic inequality, public trust in police tends to be problematic (Reisig et al., 2004). In Nigeria, for example, contacts 'between the police and the citizens are characterized by anxiety . . . more so for those who are poor and powerless' (Alemika, 1999: 2). The police's historical role, degree of effectiveness and repertoire of practices in dealing with ordinary people play a large part in explaining the deficit, as this article will demonstrate. Such relations undermine the important, indeed crucial, role of police in providing citizen safety and protection for human rights (Goldsmith, 2003). Trust, it has been noted, 'reduces complexity for individuals while providing them with a sense of security by allowing them to take for granted most of the relationships upon which they depend' (Warren, 1999: 3–4). Yet the potential for public trust is not equally distributed between or within particular societies. Those 'whose lives are more insecure can less afford to trust' (Offe and Patterson, quoted in Warren, 1999: 9). Trust, through its presence or absence, is innately linked to feelings of existential safety. What is required therefore in police reform thinking is a much deeper understanding of the notion of trust and its relationship to policing.

Given the recent explosion in the trust literature (Fukuyama, 1995; Misztal, 1996; Govier, 1997; Cvetkovich and Loftstedt, 1999; Warren, 1999; O'Neill, 2002; Nooteboom and Six, 2003; O'Hara, 2004), it is strange from a theoretical perspective that the problem of trust in police has received little attention in the policing and criminological literature (Stoutland, 2001; Tyler and Huo, 2002; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). Pertinently, for example in relation to the issue of police reform, the complexities of, and potential trade-off between, building or preserving public trust and establishing formal accountability mechanisms has been suggested by O'Neill (O'Neill, 2002), a matter examined later in the article in relation to establishing trustworthy institutions. From a practical point of view, it also surprising the link noted above between trust and feelings of safety. Ultimately, those concerned with police reform, I shall argue, are interested largely with establishing trustworthy police agencies, so that the conditions of trust erosion and production in policing are important questions that police reformers need to address in informed ways.

The principal reason why trustworthy police are desirable lies in the simple fact that their position with respect to the ordinary citizen is one of power and control—their powers, mandate, training and traditions make them 'inherently offensive' (Gianakis and Davis, 1998). These powers are not distributed evenly across the population, hence the privileged position and power of the police. This places them in a position of formal public trust, whether or not their actions accord with their official responsibilities. So there can be relationships of formal trust but no actual trust. Where such trust is absent or deficient in some sense, it suggests that the police concerned are unworthy of that trust (i.e. they are untrustworthy). Nonetheless, a trust deficit can make certain segments of the population more vulnerable to the police. It can, significantly, affect the methods used in policing. Where there is limited or no *policing by consent*, policing is likely to take more arbitrary and violent forms (Lea and Young, 1984; Cole, 1999; Goldsmith, 2003), further damaging public trust. In turn, the failure of police to be answerable for their acts, and to act responsively to the concerns of the community at large—the two key elements of police accountability—is disastrous for public trust in police. It engenders distrust in them and establishes a lasting legacy of being untrustworthy. Trust arrives on foot, and departs on horseback, it has been observed (Nooteboom, 2003).

In all, the article has two goals. *First*, it seeks to provide a better appreciation of those factors that undermine public trust in the police. *Second*, it asks how trust in police can be produced and sustained. These questions, I propose, are fundamental to considerations of police reform in places with grave problems of police accountability, human rights abuses by police and historical neglect of basic citizen safety. These are often, though not always, less developed countries in which state formation and consolidation has been uneven or remains incomplete (Goldsmith, 2003).

In such places, the trust deficit is considerable as is the need for improvement in citizen safety. The focus therefore is mainly upon police in low-trust settings, though in some respects it will have broader relevance. In these settings, often the police have been engaged in regime policing or social discipline (Choongh, 1997), rather than anything even resembling 'policing by consent'. An examination of trust and accountability in policing under conditions of late modernity is the subject of a separate article.[1]

The next section looks at the nature of trust and what it means to trust. Trust in policing cannot be examined separately from trust in government, so that the implications of trust for effective as well as legitimate government and for civil society relations are also considered. Then, the specific problem of trusting the police is examined. The structural, organizational and interpersonal obstacles to trusting the police are considered; some of these features relate to the location of police within particular sets of social relationships, while others are related to choices and decisions made by police organizations and individual police. The penultimate section considers how (and when) trust in police and policing can be established in a positive way, and when indeed distrust is not warranted. The goal of trustworthy police is examined drawing upon the trust literature as well as that dealing with police governance and accountability. Finally, the need to trust in police governance arrangements, despite and indeed *because of* the operation of systems of accountability, is proposed.

Trust and governance

Public trust, or faith in government to do the right thing, is closely aligned to the exercise of political liberties and popular acceptance of, or acquiescence towards, government actions within a democratic framework—what is sometimes known as *popular consent*: it presupposes a set of arrangements that makes popular consent, and trust, feasible and sensible.

> Democratic governments rest on popular consent: accountability helps to sustain democracy by generating informed consent. [. . .] In many cases, accountability strengthens public trust by confirming the competence and integrity of these power-holders. In other cases of lapsed or broken accountability, the reverse can occur, weakening public confidence in power-holders. Thus accountability is important to democratic societies in providing opportunities for those who govern and manage our affairs to account for, explain and justify their use of their offices of power and influence.
>
> (Uhr, 2001)

By contrast the absence of democratic government and, in particular, effective accountability procedures, is commonplace in less developed and post-authoritarian countries, which have been shown to have significant trust deficits (Mishler and Rose, 1998). The importance of 'policing by consent' in democratic societies will be examined later in this article.

However, in general terms, without accountable institutions, public confidence in governance arrangements will suffer and 'consent' will be withheld. Uhr defines accountability to include *answerability*, 'the obligation to provide information in response to questions about performance', and *responsiveness*, 'the general commitment expected of democratic governments to respond to relevant community opinion, even when a government might believe that such opinion is incomplete or flawed' (2001: 8). Accountability, by providing for public input and influence, it will be seen, plays an important part in establishing or maintaining trustworthy institutions of public governance.

The nature of trust

Trust is 'an abstract concept but one whose origins are firmly rooted in experience; individuals' interactions with other people and their past experiences with institutions create expectations about how they will be treated in the future' (Mishler and Rose, 1998: 5). In order to understand the capacity of ordinary citizens to trust institutions such as the police, we need to adopt a 'commonsense epistemology of trust' (Hardin, 1993), one that takes the subjectivity of actual and potential trustors as a central theoretical and empirical concern. The key role of experience in understanding trust logically requires us to focus on what tends to be called cognitive, active, contingent or *reflective* trust—'the residual belief in another person granted after consideration of his reliability' (Govier, 1997: 68; see also Giddens, 1994; Levi, 1998; Nooteboom, 2003). The kinds of experiences that people have inevitably influences their preparedness to trust though, as we will see, experience requires interpretation for it to become meaningful. Individuals will vary in the perceptual 'frames' or filters that they bring to the interpretation of experience. Trust theory posits a range of other kinds of trust, including *innocent* and *implicit* trust. The former is found among young children; the latter tends to be found in stable, committed personal relationships. However, these do not typify low-trust situations related to governance. Familiarity, and hence prior knowledge about behaviour and intentions of actual or potential trustees, will permit greater levels of trust or alternatively, under histories of adverse relations, render the placement of trust less likely. As the focus here is upon low-trust situations, it makes most sense to focus on contingent trust, especially from the perspective of building trust and demonstrating trustworthiness, as it is the first stage, developmentally, in the establishment of trust relations. 'Advanced' forms of trust, such as implicit trust, presuppose an absence of any recent negative prior history (as say between two spouses) or a relationship of some duration under which a pattern of benevolence and competence has been established in the mind of the trustor.

Trust can also be *instrumental* or *virtuous* in nature. Instrumental trust looks at short-term as well as longer-term objectives. It is more sceptical of

the ends of others. It seeks confirmation through exchange relations that trust is well placed. Against a low-trust background, new instances of trust are likely to be instrumental in the early stages at least, whereas virtuous trust makes assumptions about good character that makes it less watchful in nature. As we shall see, a propensity to distrust can be both necessary and desirable as a means of self-protection, again according to prior histories of relationships. Overcoming distrust, and hence building trust, will require tangible indicators of a shift of disposition and capacity in dealings with potential trustors. The trust literature also commonly distinguishes between *interpersonal* and *institutional* trust. While this article is primarily concerned with the latter, the two are related. For example, societies in which interpersonal trust is low tend to exhibit low levels of trust in institutions, though interpersonal trust can compensate for public distrust in institutions (Gambetta, 1993; Mishler and Rose, 1998). Trust and distrust in civil society is explored further below.

Distrust of government

Many citizens find governments difficult to trust (Peel, 1998). Margaret Levi points out, 'The major sources of distrust in government are promise breaking, incompetence, and the antagonism of government actors toward those they are supposed to serve' (1998: 88). Levi's list accords substantially but inversely with the four dimensions of trustworthiness identified by Frederique Six (2003)—ability, benevolence, dedication and ethics. Governments can, and do, founder on each account, and often more than one at any time. How public officials *perform*, and how their acts are *experienced* by citizens, are crucial. These grounds are considered in detail with respect to policing in the next section. The *political* nature of government and its involvement in the distribution of *resources* also points to some grounds for the elusiveness of trust. Groups that are excluded from the policy process, or who receive few services or little support from government, tend towards distrust of public bureaucracies (Warren, 1999). A reluctance to trust seems thus related to instrumental and cognitive considerations. Distrust of the state can emerge in several ways:

> [It] is not simply a matter of bad personal experience. Personal and collective histories are gathered into shared scripts that mythologize the distrusting state . . . Distrust is learned, and all too often it is proved. People share stories of misunderstanding, ignorance, and occasional brutality: the indignities at the front counter, the police raid on the wrong house, the mother who killed herself when the welfare took her kids away. These ready-made interpretations infect every interaction, especially with the police and social workers, who form most people's daily experience of governance.
>
> (Peel, 1998: 320)

Local settings that reflect concentrations of ethnic population or social disadvantage, in other words, often provide distinct experiences and social-

ization processes for residents that impact negatively upon public perceptions of public services including the police (Weitzer, 2002; Weitzer and Tuch, 2002; Warner, 2003).

Some governments are also less trustworthy than others, as Levi (1998) notes. Incompetence, dishonesty and an absence of benevolence towards ordinary citizens do little to inspire citizen confidence and trust. In divided or authoritarian societies, sustained neglect and abuse of citizens is common as well as destructive of public regard for government. Government may take the form of a *distant*, often weak, state that has had little regular or positive contact with significant sectors of civil society; their weakness typically makes them unable to perform basic state functions (e.g. monopolize legitimate violence). Alternatively, there is the *claustrophobic* (or police) state that also is associated with high levels of citizen distrust (Goldsmith, 2003). Authoritarian and communist states are prime examples of this category (Rose, 1994; Łoś, 2002). Such states are less likely to be weak in terms of capacity, but rather to lack benevolence and concern for ordinary citizens. Indeed, part of their strength lies in the extensive patterns of spying and use of informers to monitor and check the speech and actions of citizens. In these societies, citizen distrust is highly rational and self-protective (Govier, 1997; Łoś, 2002). In all these less trustworthy states, it should be noted, there is a general deficit of government accountability.

Ultimately, long-term reflective distrust of government institutions is undesirable. As noted earlier, it undermines the sense of security that citizens feel, one that is only partly, or in some cases, compensated for by alternative security arrangements (Goldsmith, 2003). It points to a widespread perception of sustained poor performance by those institutions, and makes citizen co-operation in achieving socially desirable goals less likely. In this sense, governments require public trust to operate effectively as well as legitimately (Levi, 1998). Distrust, on the other hand, will often indicate a lack of congruence between the needs and aspirations of citizens and the institutional orientation of government. Here, proper accountability mechanisms can assist in ensuring that there is some commensurability between institutional performance and general public expectations (Warren, 1999). Another factor is the persistent desire by citizens, even after appalling mistreatment by state officials over time, to have trustworthy government agencies (Govier, 1997: 143). In other words, the lack of credible alternatives to the state is a point nonetheless frequently appreciated by those most victimized by the state (Goldsmith, 2003). Achieving trustworthy government, in short, is a widely and tenaciously held public expectation in societies across the world.

Trust and civil society

Trust in public institutions tends to be low where interpersonal trust is low and civil society is weak. Distrustful communities are less likely to trust

public institutions (Mishler and Rose, 1998) and more inclined to make provision for basic services in other ways. They are also less likely to act collectively to demand greater accountability from government. As Edward Banfield noted in his study of peasant life in southern Italy, 'It is precisely [the people's] inability to act in the public interest that is the problem' (quoted in Govier, 1997: 140). Divided, unequal and authoritarian societies are characterized as much by interpersonal distrust as they are by their shared distrust of government. Low levels of interpersonal trust prevent the development of civil society organizations that can contribute to political and economic development (Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995).

In low-trust environments, impersonal trust in human institutions is virtually unknown, and interpersonal trust is largely limited to one's family or immediate associates. According to Fukuyama, these conditions give rise to what he calls 'delinquent communities', criminal gangs who take advantage of the opportunities presented by the combination of weak, distant states and distrustful civil communities (Fukuyama, 1995: 101). Similarly, Robert Putnam has argued that in societies in which *social capital*—the 'connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (2000: 19) is low, there is a higher incidence of violent crime. In his study of social capital within the United States, he concluded: '[L]ethal violence is endemic wherever social capital is deficient' (2000: 310). In such settings, private security and self-help solutions can often become part of the 'problem' rather than a 'solution' to insecurity (Goldsmith, 2003). Gambetta (1993), for example, has described the emergence of mafia protection rackets in Sicily and Russia in response to distrustful civil societies and weak states. These conditions point, among other things, to the ineffectiveness of government generally, an outcome that is linked to their poor public legitimacy.

This literature therefore suggests that the process of ensuring trustworthy government agencies ignores civil society at its peril. Mechanisms for dealing with citizen distrust become essential (Braithwaite, 1998) for good government. Civil society has an indispensable role in achieving improved governmental performance. Hybrid mechanisms that link citizens to government agencies, such as civilian oversight mechanisms for police (Goldsmith, 1991), I will suggest, look promising in terms of building reflective trust and improving services for ordinary citizens.

Trust and the police

Reasons not to trust the police

There are many reasons not to trust the police. Indeed, withholding trust from police will often be perfectly sensible and rational, especially where trustors' security needs and interests are better served by other arrangements. These reasons include the structural relationships between police

and other groups, the traditional role and functions practised by the police and how they have been experienced by citizens, the 'tools of trade' of police work (including technologies used and attitudes and dispositions held by police towards their work) and particular characteristics of police interactions with citizens.

Their structural location and historical functions

The potential use of force in the context of everyday policing *of itself* colours how citizens will regard the police. In 'dealing' with an issue, the police run the risk of being perceived by a group or individual as unjust or unfair as a consequence of the outcome achieved or the process followed to achieve that outcome. This effect is magnified when the structural location of the police relative to some groups (e.g. immigrants, indigenous persons) is considered. The use of the police for social disciplinary purposes (Choongh, 1997) puts the police in conflict with such groups (Cunneen, 2001). Often, for them, the police symbolize all that is alien and untrustworthy about the state (Goldsmith, 2003). The same processes of social distancing and withholding of trust found in inner-city policing of large western cities (Sherman, 1993; Reisig and Parks, 2000; Lundman and Kaufman, 2003) are evident in more striking form in developing, authoritarian and post-authoritarian societies (del Frate, 1998; Mishler and Rose, 1998) where interpersonal distrust will often be sensible at an individual level in terms of reducing risk from others or encouraged by the state through fostering extensive civilian spying networks.

The entrenched nature of antagonistic relationships between the police and certain sub-groups of society are indicative of, among other things, the lack of, to use Bourdieu's term, a common or shared *habitus*—'a set of historical relations "deposited" within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perception, appreciation, and action' (Wacquant, cited in Chan, 1997: 71). For subordinate groups, the *perceived* bases for distrust of police will emerge from the particular habitus they possess, grounded in the personal experiences, shared narratives and interpretive frames located within those groups (Peel, 1998; Weitzer and Tuch, 2002). The differences between *habituses* ensure that the meanings attributed by participants and witnesses of particular police–citizen encounters and of relationships between police and particular groups over time will often vary significantly. Ongoing social and political exclusion of those groups historically most distrustful is likely to preserve these differences and to render trust production difficult, especially trust based upon shared identifications (Six, 2003). Ensuring police accountability as part of the process of building trust therefore must contend with these disparities of interpretive standpoint (Goldsmith, 1995). Informal, *communal* modes of accountability are likely to be less promising in the short to medium term, suggesting the need for more explicit, *contractual* forms of accountability (Laughlin, 1996: 230) until broader bases for trust can be found.

Some societies have done a better job than others at implementing the ideal of *policing by consent*. The Peelian model of modern policing (Critchley, 1978; Alderson, 1979; Reiner, 2000) presupposed the capacity of the police in 19th-century England to win the trust and confidence of the majority of the population. Since then, policing by consent has been widely viewed as essential to a democratic form of policing (Lea and Young, 1984). In contrast, in colonial societies, there historically was less effort given to justifying police policies and actions in terms of broad public support. In countries such as England, policing by consent has not merely been 'an artificial construct, an ideological conspiracy, deliberately manufactured as a rationalization, or a concealment for maleficent practices, suddenly revealed.' Instead, Mike Brogden has argued, 'it represents a concrete ideology, a major and substantive review of the relation between civil society and the police as affirmed by senior police officers, and repetitively reiterated in a myriad of public and private statements (1982: 170). Success also seems to have lain in the balance struck between repressive and service functions undertaken by police. Robert Reiner attributes the 'winning over' of the public by the police to a combination of '"soft" service activities' and their '"hard" law enforcement and order maintenance functions' (2000: 45). The promotion and at least partial implementation of policies of bureaucratic hierarchy, the rule of law, minimum force, non-partisanship and accountability have also contributed to wider public acceptance of the police (Reiner, 2000: ch. 2). Some similar constellation of factors would seem necessary if establishing trustworthy police can occur. The task in other kinds of society is much more daunting. Divided, developing and authoritarian societies have tended to lack, or have failed to establish convincingly, a credible ideology of policing by consent (Cole, 1999; Ellison, 2002).

Their commitment to uphold particular laws and regimes

Trust will also be elusive in situations in which the police are directed or choose to enforce laws that lack broad public support:

> Police who are consistently required to enforce unpopular laws will gradually lose public support for their general duties; and where laws are unacceptable, civil violence and even rebellion can result. This leads to the seeming paradox that a weak police with public support, at least in the long run, will be more effective than a powerful police lacking public support.
>
> (Alderson, 1979: 11)

Enforcing traffic laws even in democracies poses a particular challenge for public trust in police. It generates a high number of citizen contacts, including with citizens historically or socially otherwise disposed to support police, in situations in which strict enforcement is likely to leave citizens disgruntled if not handled carefully (Sherman, 1993; Sunshine and Tyler, 2002; Weitzer and Tuch, 2002). Moreover, in societies in which police are deployed to bolster the political authority of the regime, police

will often be used under the guise of the law against political opponents and ethnic minorities (Goldsmith, 2003). In such countries, we see *fear of police* existing broadly within the community, as well as fear of crime, based upon actual experience or close contact with victims of police violence (Caldeira, 2002). Fear of this kind is destructive of the possibilities for trust (Misztal, 1996).

Impunity

Mere lip service to, or blatant disregard for, the law by police provides another pretext for withholding public trust. When the law enforcers are themselves immune from legal processes, there is a situation of impunity. The failure of police to be governed by the law is evidence of double-standards and hypocrisy, as well as an imbalance of expectations between citizens and police officers. Such an absence of reciprocity contributes to distrust and even cynicism among the public. Among other things, it is a form of promise-breaking (Levi, 1998), and thus destructive of trust. As a consequence, at least in more open societies, it can lead to demands for greater external (i.e. civilian) police accountability mechanisms (Goldsmith, 1991). Police impunity for all kinds of misconduct has been widely linked to declines in public confidence in police in developed as well as less developed countries by international human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch as well as by national-level official inquiries and civil libertarian organizations (e.g. Alemika and Chukwuma, 2000). However, it seems likely that forms and degrees of impunity relate to public antipathy and distrust of police. Failure to investigate and successfully prosecute instances of police homicides or even massacres is not uncommon in many less developed countries; equally not uncommon in such countries are relatively low, often abysmally low, rates of public confidence in police (Chevigny, 1995; Goldsmith, 2000).

'Reason to suspect'

Police officers are, by function, training and experience, suspicious. It goes with the territory of police work. They are required to detect crime and preserve order. Reiner describes an 'attitude of constant suspicion that cannot be readily switched off', one that is a 'product of the need to keep a lookout for signs of trouble, potential danger and clues to offences' (Reiner, 2000: 91). In societies disrupted by intrastate conflicts, terrorist incidents and/or high crime levels (e.g. Israel, Nepal, Colombia), police will have even more cause to be suspicious of apparently ordinary citizens. This attitude can readily lead to an 'us' versus 'them' conception of their relationship with substantial sections of the community (Muir, 1977), making reciprocal trust and co-operative dealings, at the very least, difficult. Police distrust towards citizens, when it becomes cynicism, bodes badly for how members of the public are likely to be treated. For the police cynic, 'empathy across enemy lines [is] impossible'; a hallmark of this

perspective being a 'contempt for a substantial sector of the human race' (Muir, 1977: 226). The problem deepens because official contempt begets public distrust (Levi, 1998). In deeply divided societies, this attitude will serve to reinforce those habituses already suspicious towards police and even call forth hostile public reactions, including violent attacks, against the police.

Performance-related issues

So far, public distrust of police has been explained in terms of longstanding historical relationships, functions and group characteristics. These factors have impacted in particular upon three of the four bases for trustworthiness identified by Six: *benevolence*, *dedication* and *ethics* (Six, 2003). The other dimension of trustworthiness, it will be recalled, is *ability* or competence. Perceptions of police performance, which rely heavily upon perceptions of skill and competence, can crucially affect the level and distribution of public confidence and trust in the police (Mishler and Rose, 1998; Tyler and Huo, 2002). Analysis of the police literature, as well as of human rights reports and media accounts, helps to identify an extensive repertoire of police actions and failures to act that *in themselves* pose difficulties for public trust. This level of analysis is needed to complement our understanding of other pretexts for withholding trust. One of the challenges police face is that sometimes a single contact between a citizen and a police officer can have a profound influence upon perceptions of the police more generally, by the individual's friends and family as well as by the individual. Tyler and Huo report that 'even minor personal experiences with legal authorities—dealing with a fender-bender traffic accident, a burglary or a street stop—have a strong general influence on people's views about the police and the courts' (2002: 206).

A variety of trust-diminishing behaviours by police can be identified from the trust and policing literatures. Each one listed reflects a mixture of shortcomings of ability, benevolence, dedication and ethics that work against trustworthiness:

- *Neglect*: as noted earlier, police in many countries, even when not actively abusive, lack a tradition of public service to the community at large. This can arise from their mandate (a primary focus upon regime policing (Goldsmith, 2003)) or can be a consequence of institutional weakness (e.g. inadequate resources and limited capacity). More basically, a *failure to explain* what has happened in response to a citizen's call for service can result in the perception that there has been police neglect (Goldsmith, 1996; Reisig and Parks, 2000). It may be that police action has been taken, but its invisibility to the citizen concerned nonetheless enables the perception of neglect to emerge.
- *Indifference*: like neglect, it is another form of unresponsiveness, indicative of a lack of dedication. Indifference can vary in form from benign to malevolent (Goldsmith, 2003). It can operate at the level of individual

officers or at the unit or organizational level (Herzfeld, 1992). Indifference suggests a failure to take the concerns of persons seriously, a lack of attention and of sympathy for their concerns. In police work, this can take the form of taking no apparent interest in the stories of domestic violence complainants (Sherman, 1993) or in allegations of police misconduct (Maguire and Corbett, 1991; Goldsmith, 1996). Rudeness and incivility can suggest indifference, if not in fact hostility. It is readily interpreted by some young people as 'disrespect' (Sherman, 1993; Anderson, 1994). Indifference threatens the kinds of procedural justice found to be consistent with more positive public attitudes towards police and other legal authorities (Tyler and Huo, 2002).

- *Incompetence*: trust, it has been noted, 'involves a sense of the other's competence' (Govier, 1997: 4). That sense can be challenged when police fail to prevent a crime or to investigate effectively and prosecute a criminal offence. In South Africa, for example, the 1998 National Victimization Survey revealed 'the majority of respondents . . . felt that the police were performing as badly, or worse, than they had under apartheid' (Rauch, 2002: 23). Incompetence by police may be the result of a number of factors, including inadequate selection procedures, poor training, poor supervision, limited facilities and resource shortages. Actual incompetence is not necessary to undermine trust. An apparent failure to respond to reported matters is widely interpreted by citizens as police incompetence (Reisig and Parks, 2000).
- *Venality (petty corruption)*: the practice among police officers of seeking small bribes or favours is commonplace in low-trust societies (Einstein and Amir, 2003). While this might simply be seen as a transaction cost, the association of police services in public perceptions with capacity to pay undermines the trustworthiness of the police institution in terms of a generalized commitment to provide a service. It undermines citizen assessments of the motives for entering police service, and hence the kind of service that can be expected. In at least one former Soviet republic, police patrol positions are bought and sold on the basis that they offer lucrative employment through the extraction of bribes (personal communication, 2002). Venality is widely observed in countries such as Nigeria, Indonesia, Colombia, Georgia and Mexico. Its particular association in many countries with traffic police means that a large percentage of the population is exposed to this form of police work (e.g. Alemika and Chukwuma, 2000: 44).
- *Extortion*: this is more systematic and serious in nature than venality, relying on overt intimidation or actual violence. In some developing countries, it is not uncommon for police to set up road-blocks primarily in order to extract money from travellers (Kaplan, 1996). More widespread is police involvement in deriving profits from organized crime activities, especially in relation to illicit drugs. In some cases these payments might easily be described as 'pay-offs' for turning a blind eye, while in others, police have been found to play a key role in setting up and maintaining rake-offs of this

kind. The intimidation lies in police capacity to take official action against or to threaten informally those citizens who do not co-operate in the illegal scheme. Needless to say, the perceived *unfairness* of these situations is not conducive to trust (Tyler and Huo, 2002).

- *Discrimination*: police targeting of particular groups contributes to the perception of unfavourable treatment of those groups by police (Weitzer and Tuch, 2003). 'Driving while black', for example, is linked to police discrimination towards people of colour in the United States (Lundman and Kaufman, 2003) and Australia (Cunneen, 2001). Perceptions of discrimination are compounded in those countries where police recruitment is done on racial or ethnic lines, whether by deliberate design or as an outcome of existing policies. Catholic community attitudes towards the Protestant-dominated Royal Ulster Constabulary during much of the 20th century provide a telling example (Ellison, 2002). Wherever policing is experienced as partisan in nature, generalized trust in the police is unlikely.
- *Inconsistency*: inconsistency, like incompetence, undermines trust by providing evidence that the trustor's expectations will not reliably be met. It points to a lack of dedication (Six, 2003). Not knowing whether or not by calling 911, a police patrol will respond to your call does little to inspire confidence that police will act appropriately when asked. Nor does having little idea of how the police will act if they do respond. Police failure to act in a predictable manner in the fulfilment of official duties offends what Giddens (1994) calls 'elemental trust'—the predictability of daily encounters. Inconsistency, in terms of *if* and *how*, suggests a weakness of institutional character, a lack of integrity (Shaw, 1997), that renders the institution untrustworthy.
- *Intimidation*: police intimidation for partisan or selfish reasons in its full variety of forms points to a lack of benevolence. It undermines public expectations that police will act responsively and with restraint in response to citizens' concerns.
- *Excessive force*: this refers to the use of force by police for order maintenance and law enforcement when other means are available to achieve the same end, and to the use of excessive levels of force, or the continued use of force beyond the point when it is strictly justifiable. Restraint in the use of force remains a distant goal in many countries in Latin America (Chevigny, 1995; Caldeira, 2002) and indeed elsewhere (Coady et al., 2000). Excessive force contributes to the alienation of citizens from the police. In many countries, there is often little or no appreciation of the principle of the use of minimum force, and certainly in practice it is too frequently absent. Unfortunately, populist support for 'get tough' measures on crime lends credence to use of extreme force (e.g. Caldeira, 2002) at the cost of further polarization of public opinion towards the police.
- *Brutality*: while taking a variety of forms, including torture and causing death, police violence of this kind occurs outside the formal limits of the law and lacks any legal justification. It might be considered the very antithesis of *policing by consent*; hence its destructive consequences for

> trust. In part, it emerges in the kinds of structural relationships and entrenched antipathy between police and some groups within society discussed earlier. It also coincides frequently with the kind of regime policing found in many weak states and authoritarian societies (Goldsmith, 2003). In a more immediate sense, it is widely related to a poor appreciation of human rights principles, considerable distance from the community (rendering volunteering of information to the police problematic) and a lack of investigative skills and/or resources, resulting in the use of torture and violence for extracting confessions and admissions. Brutality often points to a lack of confidence within the police ranks in the criminal justice system as a whole (impunity), leading to extra-judicial beatings and killings (Chan, 2000; Caldeira, 2002). It can also reflect hostility towards certain groups, such as minorities, women, homosexuals, and street people. It also can be an expression of police incompetence in that police are not skilled in dealing with the public in other ways. For members of these targeted groups, police actions of this kind undermine what Giddens called 'basic trust'—the belief in the continuity of one's personal identity.

(Re)building trustworthy police

> Trust has to be learned, just like any other kind of generalization. . . . What it is sensible for a given individual to expect depends heavily on what the individual knows, both about the past and the future of the other person or other party to be trusted . . . . Experience molds the psychology of trust . . .
>
> (Hardin, 1993: 508, 523, 525)

For a variety of reasons then, police in many low-trust settings have little legitimacy and a deservedly poor reputation. The focus upon *how may police institutions become more trustworthy* requires us to consider in part how institutional arrangements and practices associated with policing can be reshaped so as to make them more deserving of public trust. In other words, how can the police be reformed so that citizens have more positive experiences with police? The need to address previous experience implies the need for a set of confidence-enhancing experiences that challenge the negativity of pre-existing public attitudes.

Improving accountability, as part of changes to the governance structures, is central to the challenge of building trust. However, the standards to which accountability will recur must reflect the endorsement of *protective* rather than *regime* policing (Goldsmith, 2003). A mutually shared dedication by police and the public to the protection of all citizens sets an important foundation for building trust by evidencing benevolence (altruism) and a shared value framework (ethics). As Mishler and Rose suggest:

> Trust can be nurtured through changes in governance. Even if political institutions do not enjoy high levels of public trust as a consequence of pre-

> existing interpersonal trust, government can generate a measure of public trust the old fashioned way: it can earn it through honest and effective performance, by reforming corrupt practices, protecting new freedoms, and providing policies that respond to public problems. The character and performance of trustworthy institutions can generate trust just as the performance of the old untrustworthy institutions generated skepticism and distrust.
>
> (1998: 29)

Accountability mechanisms need therefore to address a number of performance areas, ensuring a range of different substantive and procedural outcomes. Getting the institutional arrangements right, however, should also be considered as entrenching good habits in police practice, contributing to its character and reputation over time. Consistency and reliability with respect to the performance of its key public service function—contributing to citizen safety—is what ultimately is required of trustworthy police institutions (Warren, 1999).

The preceding analysis points to some obvious areas in which police performance requires substantial improvement. Six (2003) proposes three classes of 'key actions' needed for the conscious building of trust: *information* (disclosure of information in a timely and accurate fashion, provision of positive as well as negative feedback); *influence* (seeking counsel from others, initiating and accepting changes to one's decisions as a consequence); and *control* (making oneself dependent on others, sharing responsibility, delegating tasks) (Six, 2003: 203).

Acting fairly, transparently and respectfully

Police will typically need to adopt a proactive approach in building trust. Their relative power and previous, often longstanding histories of police abuse and neglect will demand that they show good faith by taking the first steps. These early steps will need to be concrete and transparent in nature, laying a foundation *in performance* that will enable favourable public assessments of competence, reliability and self-control in the police to emerge. Third-party intervention through, inter alia, oversight and accountability, provides a level of formal reassurance that competence and accountability will be enhanced. The element of transparency, through the provision of relevant information, ensures that the public can verify for itself that the police are performing well, or that where they are not, that appropriate corrective action is being taken (Levi, 1998).

Proactive change by the police requires starting from the top. It means that the police, especially at the highest levels, act conspicuously in ways that demonstrate their commitment to democratic accountability and the Rule of Law (Levi, 1998; Goldsmith, 2001; Weitzer, 2002). Leadership should be evident not just with respect to limiting the use of coercion but also in the areas of anti-corruption, greater responsiveness to citizen requests for assistance and more attention to crime reduction and public

safety measures. In other words, the *influence* of new values and sources of values needs to be demonstrated and communicated from the top down. Above all, internal forms of accountability need to be seen to be working properly. This means senior police accepting responsibility for poor performance, taking firm action against police personnel who have performed poorly or corruptly and encouraging and supporting those whistleblowers who disclose areas of poor police performance (Goldsmith, 2001).

Across the police organization, acting fairly (procedural justice) and consistently with the core *citizen safety* function are crucial. Fair procedures, Tyler and his colleagues suggest, often matter as much as if not more than 'hard results' in terms of trust-building (Tyler, 1998; Tyler and Huo, 2002). In the police context, the explanation for this may lie partly in their visibility, relative to other ways of evaluating police work, as well as in their openness to citizen involvement (*control*). Showing concern for citizens, and avoiding rudeness in dealings with them, are relatively simple steps to implement that seem to offer positive payoffs for police (Sherman, 2003). However, in low-trust environments, especially where there is a history of violence or chronic conflict, improved substantive outcomes for citizens are also likely to be rated highly by them (Hickman and Simpson, 2003); this is consistent with the notion of reflective trust. Overall, positive regard for police reform can only be enhanced by police acceptance of higher standards for measuring performance and addressing performance shortcomings. Institutional norms and practice must be brought into clear alignment with citizens' interests and needs for safety and reassurance (*influence*). To quote Levi again, to 'earn the trust of the citizens, government actors place themselves in institutional arrangements that structure their incentives so as to make their best options those in which their individual benefits depend on the provision of the collective benefit' (1998: 87).

Limiting the use of force

Police work has never been more visible. Therefore *how police use coercion in their public engagements* is fundamental to changing public attitudes. What kinds of force are used, how frequently force is used and the pretexts for the use of force, are relevant here. As the Rodney King incident showed, the increasing media visibility of police use of force, principally through the greater prevalence of video cameras and mass audience television broadcasts (Weitzer, 2002), makes fundamental change crucial. Media attention has the ability to convert a single instance in a confined setting into a matter of mass notoriety, an 'experience' of police available to the habituses of millions. The need is even greater in weak and authoritarian states where police violence is routine (Goldsmith, 2003) and confirms a lack of public *influence* and *control* over police. Moreover, in unequal societies, police actions are a measure of those inequalities and social frustrations among the excluded, so that until those structural features are removed or

reduced, police violence can be expected to continue largely unabated (Caldeira, 2002).

By contrast, states that are democratically inclusive and responsive to their constituencies, which adhere to the principle of minimum force, will be more motivated to rule by agreement than by reliance on coercion. As Levi notes, such governments are 'better at restricting the use of coercion to tasks that enhance rather than undermine trust' (1998: 82). There is not the space to go into detail here. Nonetheless, policies in selection, training, supervision and discipline that encourage and facilitate parsimony in the exercise of coercion are clearly fundamental to developing more trustworthy police institutions that are respectful of individual rights.

Bringing in third parties

In circumstances of profound police–citizen mistrust, outside assistance is probably inevitable to turning the situation around. Annette Baier has observed:

> In conditions where there is little or no mutual trust . . ., it is hard to see how trust could get started except with the help of a third party, trusted by both the others. Only if trust is already there in some form can we increase it by using what is there to contrive conditions in which it can spread to new areas.
>
> (1995: 176–7)

Third-party accountability can serve as a 'circuit-breaker' by establishing a channel for provision of information, influence and control where previously these means have been absent or deficient (Goldsmith, 1991). The absence of a shared habitus in low-trust settings suggests that *contractual*, rather than *communal*, forms of accountability (Laughlin, 1996) might offer greater promise initially. This implies the existence of a third-party umpire in cases of disagreement. It suggests that old power relationships and unwritten understandings need to be superseded by a new power balance and more clearly defined standards. In part, third parties are needed to verify the inaccuracy of persistent myths about the police despite real improvements in performance (Peel, 1998). They are also required to arbitrate disputes between police and the community and to ensure that one side does not act repressively towards the other. They may also be needed to ensure that each party has a voice (*influence*)—'people will not join in discussions about transformation of institutions which they perceive themselves to be helpless to affect' (Fox Piven, quoted in Misztal, 1996: 253). This explains the failure of many community policing schemes in developed and less developed countries to persuade citizens that 'the police are different now' (Gianakis and Davis, 1998).

Finding a third party acceptable to both sides is key. Where such a person or entity does not exist, they may need to be created. As a recent example, following the Ramparts inquiry into the Los Angeles Police Department, an 'independent federal monitor . . . with broad powers to oversee reform

measures and to probe police department operations' was established, resulting in improved public attitudes towards the police (Weitzer, 2002: 406). Crucially in terms of establishing trust, we can see here a third party being introduced with a specific mandate to ensure better police performance. External scrutiny and oversight through the *establishment of durable, independent mechanisms that are able to ensure greater answerability and responsiveness by the police over time* therefore seems to be an inescapable element of trust-building.

Mobilizing distrust

Distrust, we noted earlier, can often be quite rational. However, in the long term, distrust is dysfunctional from a police reform perspective. Dealing constructively with expressions of distrust is therefore desirable. Accountability enables trust-building by ensuring that institutions 'are structured so that they might recur discursively to their constitutive norms' (Claus Offe, quoted in Warren, 1999: 7). Ensuring that when things go wrong, as inevitably they will in any police organization, there is an appropriate, remedial response to grounds for actual or potential distrust, is crucial. Accountability mechanisms provide a process for dealing positively with those 'trouble cases', as Six (2003) calls them, that disrupt patterns of expectation crucial to trusting relationships. Post-hoc procedures that ensure information is provided to disgruntled citizens, that provide a channel for citizen influence over future police behaviour, and that render the police subject to citizen control, tackle opportunities for distrust by 'institutionalizing' that actual or potential distrust (Braithwaite, 1998; Levi, 1998).[2]

Civilian oversight mechanisms for policing (Goldsmith, 1991; Goldsmith and Lewis, 2000) provide ways of institutionalizing distrust in positive ways. While not all complaints indicate individual distrust (Maguire and Corbett, 1991), some do, and probably a larger number will if not properly and sensitively handled. Of course, ways need to be found to support citizens to use these procedures. In low-trust states, police have typically been unresponsive to complaints against their members, and have patently failed to draw, and learn from, the lessons that can be extracted from such feedback, especially in an aggregated and well-analysed form (Goldsmith and Lewis, 2000). The trust-building potential of other kinds of oversight and conflict resolution mechanisms needs also to be considered, including police auditors (Walker, 2000), alternative dispute resolution (Goldsmith, 2000), civilian police commissions (Goldsmith, 2001) and 'restorative policing' (Bazemore and Griffiths, 2003).

Police reform, especially in relation to accountability issues, frequently engenders police officer suspicion and even hostility towards police leadership and outsiders promoting reform (Goldsmith, 1991; Goldsmith and Lewis, 2000). However, building trustworthy police institutions depends in

large measure on recruiting and retaining police officers who are benevolent, dedicated and ethical, as well as being technically skilled and resourced. Reforms to accountability through mobilizing distrust and in other areas must build internal as well as public trust; the latter will not flourish logically without the former. Encouraging trustworthy policies and practices inside police organizations implies a constructive approach to accountability reform and other steps encouraged to build public trust. It also points to the same kinds of trust-building actions within the police ranks, based upon information, influence and control (Six, 2003). Braithwaite and Ayre's (1992) regulatory pyramid model starts with a belief in the efficacy of dialogue in promoting mutual respect and respect for individual rights. It enables participants to demonstrate their good faith and respect. If such demonstrations are not forthcoming, then firmer methods based upon deterrence are introduced. These might include mandatory, even random, audits and inspections of police performance. At this point, the agent who has failed to warrant trust is presented with sanctions that are designed to discourage repetitions of the behaviour and to encourage actions deserving of trust. Finally, if neither of these strategies works, the pyramid model warrants the use of incapacitation. While public trust in police will from time to time require the prosecution and punishment of police officers engaged in particularly egregious conduct that undermines public trust, it must be undertaken fairly and transparently so that destructive gossip within the police ranks that is inimical to trust is minimized (Nooteboom and Six, 2003). Measures of this kind can be put in place and exercised by internal or external accountability mechanisms, or both in tandem. In low-trust settings, the tandem approach would seem to offer the prospect of both reassuring sceptical or distrusting citizens that things have changed for the better and still ensuring institutional learning through active self-monitoring and regulation within the police organization. Ensuring a balanced approach to institutionalizing distrust gives effect to the observation that placing trust in individuals tends to make them act in more trustworthy ways (Baier, 1995).

Trust-building at the local level

I have suggested that trust-building must occur inside as well as outside the police organization. Setting the basic orientation for policing is a macro-level consideration requiring, as we have seen, appropriate constitutional and legal arrangements outside the police agency to set the scene for protective policing. However, inevitably, implementation of trust-building programmes will require understanding and co-operation at the local level (city, municipality, community). This is sensible not least because, as noted earlier, patterns of public distrust of police will often reflect neighbourhood and geographical differences. For example, Levi (1998) points to some studies that suggest American citizens are more likely to trust local government than state or national government. Encouraging greater inter-

personal trust around specific programmes at the municipal level may assist in building institutional trust (Levi, 1998). In many low-trust societies, in contrast to the USA, the police are national bodies, with highly centralized commands, and little proven capacity or tradition of responsiveness at the local level. David Bayley has expressed pessimism about the prospects of replacing such forces with locally organized police forces (Bayley, 1975, 1995). If this pessimism is justified, a decentralized system of ensuring greater transparency and responsiveness (i.e. *information*, *influence* and *control*) may well still be necessary if changes in police performance are to be positively experienced and evaluated at the local level.

The role of civil society

Building trust, especially in post-authoritarian and developing societies, requires confronting the weakness of civil society (Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Mishler and Rose, 1995; Scott, 1999; Goldsmith, 2003). Such societies provide a weak source of monitoring and resistance to government policies and practices. They are poorly organized and positioned to seek greater information and influence over policing. As individuals, people are too scared in many instances to stand up publicly to police abuses or inaction. One clear role for non-governmental organizations in these societies lies in educating, organizing and mobilizing citizens to play a more engaged role in monitoring government performance and in debating that performance publicly. Seeking information about police practices, and making clear the security concerns of ordinary citizens, is crucial to establishing better communication with the police and the preconditions for influence and control.

A key strategy of many foreign assistance programmes has become strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations to undertake accountability functions in the citizen safety/public security arena (Neild, 2001), as well as through the provision of other kinds of public assistance. Support for strategic litigation against the police in cases of serious human rights abuses, helping victims of police abuse to collect evidence and file complaints, and raising community awareness about courses of action available for challenging police performance in different areas, are some specific examples of this broader trend. This has been a clear objective, for example, of the Open Society Justice Institute in its programmes in Central and Eastern Europe and, more recently, South Africa (Open Society Justice Initiative, 2003). It is also evident in the programmes of agencies such as the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). However, all such steps should be undertaken with a view to promoting a convergence of police and public values and strategies on questions of public safety and citizen security that is both hopeful and realistic about the challenges facing police as well as the community (Goldsmith, 2003).

Conclusion

> [O]ne of the ironies of trust is that we frequently protect it and respond to its failures by bestowing even more trust . . . By creating guardians of trust, we foster all kinds of ancillary certifications or guarantees of trustworthiness . . . that are readily manipulated yet are now essential to principals who have abdicated their distrust to these new guardians.
>
> (Shapiro, 1987: 212)

Establishing trustworthy police forces is the key challenge for police reformers in low-trust settings. For many reasons, trustworthy police forces are difficult to maintain, and even harder to establish from scratch. They however remain important both to preserve where they exist and to establish where they are absent. Without them, the vulnerability of ordinary citizens to human rights abuses will be much greater. In their absence, the very idea of *policing by consent* will remain, at best, a phantasm. Explicating the 'problem of trust' is central to making sense of deterioration in, or the absence of, positive police–community relations. However, the literatures on trust and on public attitudes to police remain limited. We need to know much more about the foundations for public confidence in the police and what makes police agencies trustworthy. We need to discover more about the forms of public distrust of police and in particular the co-existence of areas of trustfulness and distrustfulness towards police within the one individual or community. In other words, while there can be more or less trust, there are also different areas or bases for trust that cannot be analysed simply in terms of *more/less* trust.[3] The circumstances of marginalized sub-populations within national societies, the construction of their *habituses*, as well as the impact of particular police practices, require closer examination. The relevance of the *context in which policing occurs*, as much as how police act at a micro-level, is clear. Police reform therefore needs to embrace issues of role and mandate, as well as efficient and respectful execution of prescribed duties.

Establishing trustworthy police in low-trust settings requires fundamentally that ways of building reflective trust be identified. 'Reasons to trust' need to be identified, reiterated and built upon in the context of police/citizen contacts and relationships. Equally, indicators of institutional trustworthiness, both formal and informal, need to be consciously developed, maintained and preserved. Accountability mechanisms, by institutionalizing the 'trouble cases' of disappointed expectations, address breaches of expectations partly through providing information and explanations for breaches but also in substantiated cases by promising one or a combination of redress, institutional learning and changed policies and procedures. These outcomes, if not directly constitutive of reflective trust in the short term, at least seek to transform any negative legacy of citizen disappointment in police into something more constructive. Persons historically

neglected or abused by police must be given strong, tangible grounds for shifting their beliefs about police. These grounds can be found in processes as well as in substantive outcomes. Accountability arrangements must assist this goal by ensuring their own trustworthiness. A tandem approach, employing both internal and external accountability, will often be justified where distrust is prevalent. The measure of success of trust-building strategies is ultimately a subjective one—how has the police–citizen contact been experienced *by that person or group*?

Finally, we need to be realistic about how much we can rely on formal accountability measures. As Shapiro and O'Neill have pointed out, building trust through formal mechanisms of accountability itself requires trust. Too much accountability, or the wrong kind of it, may also prove counterproductive (O'Neill, 2002). Ultimately we will need to trust our monitors and accountability systems to do the right thing. Trustworthy police will not emerge from formal accountability arrangements alone, though they remain necessary. As Putnam, Fukuyama and others have pointed out, levels of prosperity and community within civil society will always influence public trust in police, other government institutions and each other. What *needs* to be done will depend upon the degree of, and reasons for, distrust of police. However, what *can* be done will also depend upon the kinds of societies we live in.

Notes

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1. In another article, I examine the implications of New Public Management, and especially the 'audit explosion' for police accountability and public trust in a country such as Australia or the United Kingdom. See Goldsmith (2004).
2. Under some public complaint systems, police as well as ordinary citizens are able to file complaints. Often these complaints concern the actions of senior officers. Trust *within* the police is an issue worthy of greater examination in itself, though it is not attempted here.
3. I am grateful to Janet Chan for this point.

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