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Perceived Police Performance, Racial Experiences, and Trust in Local Government

Given the continued revelation of police abuses of racial-ethnic minorities in America, it is of the utmost importance for scholars to focus on questions of how police conduct is related to minority political behavior, in particular their trust in local government. In this paper, we find evidence that both egotropic and sociotropic insecurity and experiences with police have a significant correlation with confidence in local government. The effect of both victimization and negative interactions with police have a substantive association with the ways that communities of color perceive their local government. Combining data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) and contextual data from the U.S. Census Bureau, FBI crime statistics, and "Mapping Police Violence" project we use maximum likelihood to examine how police conduct, personal experiences with the police and neighborhood conditions correlate with individuals' trust in local government.

Introduction

On August 9, 2014, Michael Brown walked into a convenience store in Ferguson, Missouri, and allegedly robbed it. Shortly after that, Officer Darron Wilson of the Ferguson Police Department confronted, shot, and killed Brown. This incident sparked mass mobilization of protestors in Ferguson and elsewhere. Why did this incident generate so much furor across the nation? Part of the answer rests in the protesters' perception that Officer Wilson's actions were genuinely excessive and would not have happened if Michael Brown had been a white person. A Justice Department civil rights investigation report confirmed this perception, concluding that Wilson, the Ferguson Police Department, and the city's municipal court engaged in a "pattern and practice" of discrimination against African-Americans, targeting them disproportionately for traffic stops, use of force, and jail sentences (Perez, 2015; U.S. DOJ, 2015).

In the wake of numerous more recent policing incidents resulting in oppression, injury or death, grassroots protests against police brutality and institutional racism have occurred across the country and around the world (Taylor 2020; NPR 2020). Driving the protests are perceptions of police misconduct disproportionately impacting Black Americans and other people of color and standard operating procedures by police departments and municipal courts that appear to condone this bad behavior. Between 2013-2019, Black Americans were three times more likely to be killed by police than were White Americans (Mapping Police Violence 2019) Nevertheless, ninety-nine percent of the police officers involved in civilian killings during this period were never charged with a crime (Ibid.).

Some political pundits excuse harsh policing because crime rates, especially violent crime rates, have steadily declined over the past 20 years (MacDonald 2017; Gramlich 2019). However, significant disparities persist. Low-income people are much more likely than others to

experience crime, including violent crime. Similarly, Black and Latino Americans are much more likely to be victims of violent crimes compared to White Americans. Black Americans are disproportionately more likely to be the victims of homicide compared to White or Latino Americans (HUD 2016). Exposure to violent crime has been found to damage the health and development of individual victims, their family members, and in some instances, entire communities (Hardin 2009). Thus, the disparity in exposure to crime further exacerbates the conditions of racial-ethnic inequality in the United States.

Why does this matter to politics and governance? We argue the unequal treatment of minorities by police leads to an undermining of the rule of law. As Guillermo O'Donnell has argued: "the rule of law is among the essential pillars upon which any high-quality democracy rests" (2004). Given the contradiction between American democracy that, theoretically, promotes equality, and the unequal application of the laws when it comes to minorities, it is logical for minorities to be skeptical of democracy and to view their government as hypocritical. More specifically, we argue unequal treatment undermines trust in local government, which can inhibit minority participation in local elections, results, and cooperation (Verba et al., 2003; Oskooii 2020). These relationships create questions. First, to what extent do perceptions of police conduct correlate with trust in local government? Second, is personal experience with police or crime correlated with trust in local government? Third, how does the local context, including the violent crime rate and the number of civilians killed by local police, affect individuals' overall trust in local government?

At its essence, perceptions of police conduct intersect with broader governing themes, including legitimacy and justice (Lipset, 1959; Gangl, 2003; Gibson et al., 2005). Police officers, like other street-level bureaucrats, are the "human face" of government policy (Lipsky 1980).

Due to police officers' close interactions with constituents, day-to-day application of discretion in their assessment of constituents' behavior and issues, and their role as policy interpreters, the police implicitly mediate aspects of the trust relationship between constituents and the government. Both public officials and scholars broadly agree governments are better able to address community problems when residents view government actions as fair and legitimate (Wolak & Palus 2010). The success of local governments, including efforts to keep communities safe, directly depend on the "procedurally just behavior" of police officers leading to greater trust and cooperation from all its residents (President's Task Force, 2015; OECD, 2017; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

While research indicates that people generally have higher confidence in local government than state or federal government and are satisfied with the way police perform their duties (Gallup 2019; Morin & Stepler, 2016; Pew Research Center, 2019a), not all segments of society hold equally positive opinions. Many studies have shown that African Americans are substantially more critical of police conduct and less trusting of local government officials than their white counterparts (Pew Research Center, 2016; Marschall & Shah, 2007; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cao et al., 1996; Gabbidon & Higgins, 2009; MacDonald & Stokes, 2006; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Webb & Marshall, 1995; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005; but see Wu et al., 2009; Sharp & Johnson, 2009). Considerably less is known about the perceptions of other racial-ethnic minorities or how these groups compare in their perceptions (but see McCluskey et al., 2008; Corriea 2010; Wu, 2013). Another limitation is the prevalent focus on a single city or a limited number of cities in prior research (Reisig & Parks, 2000; Corriea, 2010; Gabbidon & Higgins, 2009; Lee & Gibbs, 2014; McCluskey et al., 2008; Nix et al., 2015; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Wu, 2013). We do know that race is a central axis of social relations in American society (Omi &

Winant 2015) and while biologically meaningless, this social construct creates enduring systemic differences in the experiences, quality, and outcomes in the lives of Asian, Black, Latino, and White Americans (Blackburn 2000). This social construction creates different realities for non-White Americans in all aspects of their lives, particularly in their interaction with government institutions such as law enforcement (McGowen and Wylie, 2020).

With these ideas in mind, we combined data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) and contextual data from the U.S. Census Bureau, FBI crime statistics, "Mapping Police Violence" project we to model a variety of individual-level variables (i.e., ascribed/objective characteristics, attitudinal predispositions, and personal experiences with police and crime) and aggregate contextual factors (i.e., poverty, racial composition, crime rate and incidents of police using excessive force resulting in civilian fatalities) on individual's trust in local government.

Prior Research

Trust is a core concept in political science because it serves as the basis of institutionalization of political expectations and behavior (Mishler and Rose, 2002; Hetherington, 1998). As Fukuyama (1995) has argued: "trust acts like a lubricant that makes any group or organization run more effectively." Putnam (1993) has also noted the importance of trust "in facilitating, coordination, and cooperation for mutual benefit," which supports the building of social capital that, in turn, allows democracies to function. Political trust, as defined by Easton (1965), entails "a form of diffuse support for the political system on the part of its citizens" (p. 267). Many scholars argue political trust is necessary for democratic countries to flourish (Putnam, 1993, Inglehart, 1999; Marien & Hooghe, 2010; Balliet & Van Lange, 2012; but see Inglehart 2008; Rosanvallon, 2008). Moreover, prior research has shown that trust in societies

and especially regarding the institutions of governments is critical for economic growth (Zak & Knack, 2001), and institutional cooperation (Ostrom & Walker, 2003).

Ultimately, trust in government is vital to democracy as it reinforces the legitimacy required for the more efficient functioning of popular government (Braithwaite & Levi, 1998; Almond & Verba, 1963). Citizens must trust that their votes will be counted fairly, that their representatives are acting in their best interest, that their civil liberties will not be silenced, that they will be protected and treated equally, and that they will be afforded due process (O'Donnell 2004). Several authors have noted that the crises of the early 21st century, not only produce more mistrust, but also the conditions for undermining democratic governments in the future (Flinders, 2020; Arpino & Obydenkova, 2019). In short trust matters for democratic life.

However, how does trust in local politics connect trust and democracy? As Stoker (1996; 188) notes:

Local government and democracy is especially attractive because it involves a decentralization of power and the opportunity to use local knowledge to meet local needs. Above all, local democracy can rest its claim on being the most accessible avenue for political participation. It is in local politics that people feel most competent and are most immediately engaged.

What then drives trust in local government? For decades, many scholars have pointed to the importance of objective egocentric (aka individual-level) factors when examining public attitudes toward local government and the police. Scholars have consistently found that older residents trust their local government and its agents more than younger ones (Pew Research Center, 2019; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Chermak et al., 2001; Thomas & Hyman, 1977 Dalton, 2005; Cao & Zhao, 2005; Wu & Sun, 2009). Others have noted that older people who have

experienced the development of the welfare state tend to have more faith in government (Christensen & Lægreid, 2005).

However, findings are mixed regarding the correlation of other ascribed individual characteristics (Brown & Benedict, 2002; MacDonald & Stokes, 2006; Marschall & et al., 2007; Wu et. al., 2009). Lægreid (1993) found women support the public sector more than men do, but other scholars have found mixed findings when it comes to gender (Brown & Benedict, 2002; MacDonald & Stokes, 2006; Marschall & Shah, 2007; Christiani, 2020). Further, scholars have identified that educated voters tend to be more likely to trust the government (Brooks and Cheng, 2001; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1995; Bouckaert & Van de Walle, 2001). As such, scholars have concentrated on other theoretical explanations, including experiential, psychological, and contextual.

Some researchers have used the direct experience with government and their agents to guide their assessments (Reisig & Parks, 2000). For instance, those with higher levels of police-initiated contact are generally more negative in their perceptions of local law enforcement than persons with less contact (Webb & Marshall, 1995). Personal connections with police also affected overall satisfaction with local government. For instance, those who were dissatisfied with their treatment during a traffic stop or call for service were considerably less happy with law enforcement than those who had no such encounters (Ibid.; Chermak et al., 2001; Wu et. al., 2009; Nix et al., 2015)

Concerning psychological explanations (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Weitzer & Tuch, 2005), general attitudinal predispositions are shown to be important in evaluations of local government, including generalized trust (Marschall & Shah, 2007), alienation (Brown & Benedict, 2002; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998), and collective efficacy (Marschall & Shah, 2007;

Nix et al., 2015). And, in some studies, anxiety about local crime and other perceptions of neighborhood conditions play a significant role in evaluations of local government (Schafer et al., 2003; Schuck et al., 2008).

Crime and violence are crucial factors that have shaped the discourse of politics in several contexts. (Shirk & Wallman, 2015; Bailey, 2012). Scholars have found that crime victimization affects multiple areas of political life, such as voter participation (Trelles & Carreras, 2012) and public perceptions of political institutions (Ceobanu, 2011). Furthermore, Bateson (2010) has shown how victims of crime have lower levels of confidence in the judicial system and law enforcement compared to non-victims. Scholars have reported similar findings in Mexico. For instance, Blanco (2013) finds that self-reported crime victimization is negatively correlated with institutional trust in Mexico. According to Blanco, "the detrimental effect of insecurity and crime victimization on trust in institutions appears to be greatest for those institutions that are closely related to security, such as the judicial system and the police" (2013, 53).

In contrast, another line of inquiry finds context or environment exerts significant effects and concludes context is more important than individual-level variables in residents' evaluations of government institutions (Wu et al., 2009). Residents in disadvantaged communities (i.e., higher poverty, population density and percentage of residents of color) reportedly evaluate the police differently than residents in advantaged communities (i.e., more affluent, less crowded, and higher percentage of white residents) (LaVigne et al., 2017; Carr et al., 2007; Weitzel et al., 2005; Wu et. al., 2009). Moreover, when it comes to local police, there is evidence that these local government agents behave differently in more impoverished, majority-minority neighborhoods with officers being more likely to take coercive measures in socially

disadvantaged communities relative to other neighborhoods (Sun, Payne & Wu 2008; LaVigne et al., 2017). Other literature, however, finds mixed and limited effects from aggregate contextual variables (Sampson & Jeglum-Bartusch, 1998; Schafer et al., 2003; Schuck et al., 2008).

Race has been a focus of study on local government and trust as well (Miller, 1974; Marschall & Shah, 2007; PEW, 2016; Brown & Benedict, 2002; Sharp & Johnson, 2009; Thomas & Hyman, 1977), with Black Americans being more critical of police and less trusting of local government than whites (Corriea, 2010; Menjivar & Bejarano, 2004). However, all of this research has failed to recognize the link between how police are indicative of a racialized system of selective enforcement. As such, police interactions with specific racial groups is different. Most of the prior work studies the dyadic relationship between trust in police with race on the one hand, and race and trust in the government on the other. We see these phenomena as interconnected. To our knowledge, no one has studied how interactions with police, public security experiences, and race taken together impact trust in local government. In the next section, we begin to explore the logic underlying this argument that we see as filling an essential gap in the literature.

Argument and Hypotheses

As previously noted, Lipsky's theory of street-level bureaucracy suggests the importance of police behavior in shaping the attitudes of constituents toward local government. Due to police officers' close interactions with constituents, day-to-day application of discretion in their assessment of constituents' behavior and issues, and their role as policy interpreters, the police implicitly mediate aspects of the trust relationship between constituents and the government. However, minorities experience public security contexts and institutions differently than their white counterparts. Due to historical patterns of de facto and de jure segregation, minorities are

located in neighborhoods that are both literally and figuratively marginalized from the core of cities and towns. This separation, coupled with a lack of economic prospects and unequal treatment before the law, has meant that these communities are economically insecure. Economic insecurity is a significant source of criminal activity. Therefore, the context for minority communities is that they are more likely to suffer from a lack of human security (economic, physical, social, and political). Individuals who have been victims of crimes are less trusting of law enforcement and other government institutions (Ceobanu, 2011; Blanco, 2013). Despite their marginalization and ineffective provision of services, these communities are nevertheless expected to contribute to the system through taxation. This is the contextual reality of what minorities face due to a racial hierarchy that perpetuates itself to this day.

Psychological predispositions also play a primary role in evaluations of levels of trust, including fear or concern for local crime. The historical marginalization of minorities has weathered them into having to face their reality of crime and violence daily. Thus, heightened levels of concern or anxiety about personal or public safety invoke greater feelings of dissatisfaction with the police and likely lead to lower levels of trust in local government. Research commonly finds concern about crime is associated with more negative assessments of the police (Weitzer & Tuch, 2004; Weitzer et al., 2008; Maxson et al., 2003; Schafer et al., 2003). People fearful about crime place blame on the police and the mayor for losing control over the rule of law and believe the city cannot be trusted to protect the public (Ren et al., 2005). Thus, criminal contexts can shape opinions either through egotropic or sociotropic victimization (Lockerbie, 2006). As such, we hypothesize:

H₁: Levels of trust in local government will be different among racial groups

H₂: Experiencing crime as a victim will correlate with lower trust in local government.

H₃: Stronger concern for crime will correlate with a higher level of trust in the local government.

The coercive instruments of the state, like the police, are used to reinforce a racial hierarchy through policies that target communities of color. The argument from those in power is that these communities need more police presence given their higher levels of criminality. But, the practice of policing is not a solution to the root of crime. Real solutions to insecurity would require addressing the social, economic, and political marginalization that has been codified formally and informally to segregate cities by race. Law enforcement, as an institution, operates in these communities as a mechanism of social control, which in many cases leaves these communities more insecure. For example, the mass incarceration of African-American and Latino fathers with minor possession of marijuana does nothing to stop the drug trade and harms societies by breaking apart families. This type of policing ends up increasing insecurity for these communities, and is but one way that policing can do more harm than good.

Thus far, we have highlighted the contextual reality of insecurity for minority communities, coupled together with the institutional reinforcement of marginalization. How do these realities connect to political behavior? For this, let us turn back to the founding of the nation. The U.S. was founded on the principle that if we are to be taxed, then politically, we ought to have representation. This encapsulates the Rousseauian Social Contract whereby the governed willingly give their consent to be governed because they will have a say in shaping the government itself. The ultimate activity that binds citizens to this concept of a social contract is paying taxes and shaping policy in such a way that the state provides for the general welfare. Citizens pay taxes to the state and follow her rules expecting the state to protect its citizens. The state thus abridges the social contract when it fails to protect the community.

In short, public insecurity and policing are experienced differently depending on your race, and this experience, in turn, shapes the political trust of local governments. Omi and Winant (2015) argue that race/ethnicity is the primary factor in animating social perception and relations. Though immigration and interracial marriage are gradually altering the American racial hierarchy, Anglos remains at the top of the social hierarchy, while African Americans stay at the bottom (Gans, 2012). Asians and Latinos are located between Anglos and African Americans, with Asians positioned closer to Anglos and Latinos positioned closer to African Americans (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). Class and gender distinctions are also important in social position construction. Still, we consider these characteristics to be secondary to race/ethnicity, particularly given Hero's (1992) two-tiered pluralism argument about the U.S. social and political structure (with its lack of substantive equality for racial/ethnic minorities). This line of research understands that race and powerlessness promote distrust toward the police (Xu et al., 2005; Baumgartner et al., 2017). Individuals who have been stopped, and asked questions, and/or arrested are more critical of the police than individuals who have not had these experiences (Webb & Marshall 1995; Nix et al., 2015). Interactions with police are associated with levels of trust in government through egotropic and sociotropic interactions with police.

Thus, we hypothesize:

H4: The higher the number of civilians killed by the police, the lower the likelihood of having higher trust in local government.

H5: The higher a respondent's evaluation of police performance, the higher the likelihood of having higher trust in local government.

H6: The higher the involuntary contact with police, the lower the likelihood of having high trust in local government.

Data and Methods

To evaluate public opinion regarding trust in local government, we use data from the 2016 “Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey”—henceforth the CMPS (Barreto et al., 2017). The CMPS includes a total of 10,145 completed interviews collected online in a respondent self-administered format between December 3, 2016, and February 15, 2017. The sample consists of 3,003 Latinos, 3,102 African Americans, 3,006 Asian Americans, and 1,034 Anglos. The survey oversamples people of color to permit conduct of robust cross-racial analyses. Although Black, Latinx, and Asian respondents are oversampled in the survey, they were weighted in our analyses to reflect the general population according to the ACS census data. The CMPS features a survey weight proportionate to the 2015 American Community Survey 1-year data file for the U.S. adult population based on age, ancestry, education, gender, nativity, racial/ethnic demographics, and voter registration status. The survey weight makes the results more representative of the U.S. population in general (Barreto et al., 2018).

Given that one of the primary interests of the survey was to ask respondents about the 2016 election, the CMPS includes a large sample of registered voters; however, there are also non-registered voters—including non-citizens. We merged the CMPS data with zip code-level census demographic and police violence data, as well as county-level crime data. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's Unified Crime Report does not provide the data at the zip code-level; thus, we use the county crime data instead. Together, these data allow us to identify both individual-level factors and aggregate-level contextual factors that are relational to trust in local government.

The dependent variable measures the respondent level of trust in local government. The respondents were asked: "How much of the time do you think you can trust the LOCAL government to do what is right?" For ease of both interpretation and presentation, we collapsed

the original measure to a dichotomous variable coded one if a respondent indicates "Just about always" or "Most of the time" and 0 if a respondent indicates "Only sometimes" or "Never at all." We also performed the analyses with the expanded dependent variable with similar results and have included these results in the appendix.

The primary individual-level variables of interest are contextual police interactions, individual police interactions, and respondent race/ethnicity. We include other individual and contextual victimization controls as well as individual respondent and contextual controls in the analysis.

Egotropic and Sociotropic Victimization

We account for a respondent's victimization of a crime utilizing the response to the following question: "Have you been a victim of a crime?" our dichotomous variable *Crime Victimization* was coded one if a respondent has been a victim of a crime and 0 if not.

To measure concern for local crime, we include a 3-point Likert scale response to the question: "How concerned are you about crime in your city?" ("Not at all," "A little," "Very concerned."). A second contextual victimization measure is the county-level per capita violent crime rate provided by the FBI's 2015 Unified Crime Report.¹

Egotropic and Sociotropic Police Interactions

To control for a respondent's contact with police, we use responses to four questions capturing interaction with the police: Respondents were asked if they have "Ever been stopped and questioned by the police while in a car or while they were on foot." Respondents were also asked if they had ever been arrested by the police or treated unfairly or with excessive force by a police officer. We operationalize these four individual interactions with police using

¹ Violent crime is classified as murder/manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. The measure is based on the number of violent crimes per 10,000 residents.

dichotomous variables and include these contacts in the models. We also ran the models using different measures of police contact, including a measure of any police contact, and an additive scale of responses to the four questions and obtained similar results. We include these models in the appendix.

Our primary variable of interest is police performance. Respondents were asked: "How good a job is police doing in dealing with the problems that concern people in your city?" Responses ranged on a 4-point scale of poor, fair, good, and very good. For ease of interpretation, we collapse this variable into a two-category variable coded one if a respondent indicates the police are doing a "Poor Job" and 0 if otherwise. Of the entire 10,144 respondents, 12% (1,290 respondents) stated their respective police performance as poor. Theoretically, we are interested in investigating the relationship between poor police performance and trust in local government. As such, we dichotomized police performance between respondents who rated police performance as "poor" and those who did not. We are bound by the four responses to the police performance survey question: "poor," "fair," "good," "very good." Thus, we made a conceptual decision based on our theory, and the substantive definition of these responses relative to each other. Definitions of "fair" range from "legitimate" when used as an adjective, to "to a high degree" when used as an adverb (i.e. fair ruling, fair ball, fairly well-off).

As a concept then, we decided that fair is a categorically positive rating because the respondent is stating that police are meeting or exceeding their performance expectations. Thus, "fair" is conceptually closer to "good" and "very good." The response "poor" is the only negative option compared to the other possible response choices. "Poor" is the only word that identifies a negative evaluation of police performance. As such, we use "poor" as the negative response and collapse "fair," "good," and "very good" as the contrasting positive response.

Given the wording of the question, we believe our coding decision was the most appropriate approach to distinguish between positive and negative performance evaluations.

The second contextual police interaction variable is police violence, operationalized as the number of confirmed killings by police (per capita: 100,000 persons) that occurred within a zip code between 2013-2016. These data are taken from the "Mapping Police Violence" (MPV) research collaborative.² The data are culled from three crowdsourced databases (FatalEncounters.org, U.S. Police Shootings Database, & KilledbyPolice.net) and further augmented by archival research. Each event was verified via newspaper accounts, crime databases, obituaries, and/or police reports.

Controls

We add seven individual-level control variables: age, gender, education, income, partisanship, ideology, and immigrant generation. Age is a continuous measure of respondent age ranging from 18 to 98 and gender is coded one if a respondent is a female. Education is measured using a categorical variable that ranges from 1 (eighth grade or less) to 6 (post-graduate education). Personal income is measured using a 12-category variable ranging from 1 (less than \$20,000) to 12 (\$200,000 or higher). Ideology is measured by one binary variable if the respondent identified as Liberal. We also want to control for the migration experience of respondents because the literature tells us immigrants may have a different experience with local government, and police specifically. For this reason, we include the immigrant generation of the

² The MPV database is accessible at: mappingpoliceviolence.org. We cross-checked the MPV with "The Counted" database compiled by *The Guardian* (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database>). *The Guardian's* database counts the number of people killed by police officers and other law enforcement officers between 2015 and 2016. The count was executed through news reporting on police reports and witness statements as well as reviewing regional news outlets, research reports and crowdsourced databases. To verify the accuracy of the MPV data, we pulled a random draw of 10 percent of the incidents from the MPV between 2015 and 2016. Then, we culled the same data from "The Counted" database. Lastly, we compared the MPV and the Guardian data for 2015 and 2016 utilizing the "duplicates report" routine in STATA. Across both years with only two nonmatches.

respondent to control for how many generations the respondent is removed from the immigrant experience. Immigrant generation is coded 0 if the respondent is foreign-born, 1 if the respondent is second-generation, and 2 if the respondent is third-plus generation.

We include contextual controls, specifically racial demographics, at the zip code-level. We take the percent African American, Latino, and Asian Americans from the 2015 American Community Survey, while the urban measure comes from the 2010 Census.

Analysis of the Relationship between Insecurity and Police Behavior on Trust in Local Government

We use ordered logit to estimate the trust in local government models because our dependent variable is an ordinal dichotomous variable and the goal of this investigation is to predict the relationship between poor police performance and trust in local government while controlling for other individual and contextual variables (see appendix for models with the expanded dependent variable).³ Further, we employ the Huber-White sandwich estimated standard errors, which is an appropriate alternative to a multilevel model (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002). As there are too few cases at the aggregate level to reliably estimate the model of police evaluations, we do not apply a multilevel model (Maas & Hox, 2005). A methodological debate has arisen as to whether the use of OLS is preferable to model dichotomous dependent variables

³ Police behavior and trust in government are mutually constitutive. Scholars have been attempting to disentangle the endogeneity between police performance and trust in local government. Morris and Klesner (2010) highlight the embeddedness of policing in the concept of the local government, finding that "after creating instrumented values for (perceptions of police malfeasance and trust in government) in the first stage of the 3SLS regression procedure, each [variable] remains the most powerful predictor of the other in the second-stage equations. We must be clear that given the data, we are unable to definitively tease out the causation. However, the correlations do highlight that perceptions of police performance are significantly associated with levels of trust in local government. While we cannot make definitive claims about the causality of these phenomenon, it does point to new avenues of research that should make use of time series datasets, qualitative methods, or experiments to better clarify the direction of this relationship. Nevertheless, given the importance of our topic, we attempt to contribute an analysis of race, trust in local government, and perceptions of police performance to move this literature forward while the direction of causality is further investigated.

(Cameron & Huppert 1989; Briggs & MacCallum 2003; Neill et al., 2007). While we remain agnostic about this debate, we did run the models using OLS and found results to be substantively identical and statistically similar. We present the results of the full model shown in Table 1 and the model disaggregated by race in Table 2 in odds ratios for ease of interpretation. The robust standard error is clustered around zip code and presented as a z-score.

[Table 1 Here]

Table 1 shows the full model that includes controls for personal and contextual police interactions measure, individual and contextual victimization measures, and controls. Our sample included 9,994 respondents and has a χ^2 of 212. This statistic allows us to reject the null of no relationship between the categorical variables in the sample.

We find a correlation between a respondent's race/ethnicity and their trust in local government, which partially confirms our hypothesis 1. Black respondents were 22% less likely to have high trust in local government compared to non-Black respondents ($p < 0.05$), and Latino respondents were 21% less likely to have higher levels of trust in local government compared to non-Latino respondents ($p < 0.05$). We also found evidence for hypothesis 2 related to individual victimization. Respondents who were victims of a crime, were 12% less likely to have high trust in local government than respondents who had not been victims of crime ($p < 0.1$). Concern for the crime was the only significant contextual victimization variable. We find that a concern for crime is correlated with lower levels of trust in local government, which refutes hypothesis 3. Respondents concerned with the crime were 12% less likely to have higher trust in government than respondents who were not concerned with crime ($p < 0.01$). The full model results also support hypothesis 4: the higher the number of civilians killed by the police, the lower the level

of respondent trust in local government. A one-unit increase in the number of police shootings was 94% less likely to have high trust in their local government ($p < 0.01$).

[Figure 1 here]

As Figure 1 shows, respondents who rated police performance as poor were over 80% likely to express low trust in local government. Further, the mean predicted probability of having low trust in the local government is 56% among respondents who said police performance was poor. Thus, we find support for hypothesis 5: there is a correlation between poor police performance and a lack of trust in local government above and beyond any personal or contextual controls. Respondents with poor police performance opinions were 82% less likely to have high trust in their local government ($p < 0.001$). This serves to confirm the underlying intuition that police are, in fact, agents of local government. When police, for whatever reason, are perceived to not be doing their job, then this leads to a decline in trust in local government. However, different racial groups may come to the same conclusion based on the diverse experience of police performance. For minorities, police performance may be related to inadequate response times in their community, and in white communities, it may have to deal more with police not controlling crime effectively. We find mixed results for hypothesis 6, concerning individual police interactions. We see statistically insignificant and negative correlations for being stopped in a vehicle, being arrested, or reporting excessive force. However, we show a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of higher trust in local government if respondents reported being questioned by a police officer while on foot. These respondents were 21% more likely to have higher trust in local government compared to respondents who had never been stopped on foot ($p < 0.05$). On the surface these findings seem contradictory. However, theoretically, *the type* of police contact matters. Being stopped in a

vehicle by a police officer is a substantively different type of interaction than being stopped on foot. Constitutionally, a vehicle stop is considered the seizure of a person and their property in the sense that persons movement and property has been detained. A process of searching or due process begins the moment a person has been seized. Vehicle seizures present distinct dangers to officers through hidden weapons, being hit by the seized vehicle or other vehicles. This heightened caution is directed at drivers, who must contend with this increased tension and suspicion. Third, vehicle stops and patrols are activities linked to strategies of social control that assume law enforcement's goal of suppressing crime is achieved by increasing patrolling, and seizing individuals to get them off the streets. Thus, vehicle stops are tense moments for both the officer and driver.

An on-foot patrol is engaged in a qualitatively different activity. Conversing with people is not necessarily a seizure unless the officer makes it clear that this is taking place. The quality of interaction is also different. Approaching an individual, the officer has an advantage of a safer, although not necessarily risk free, interaction. Further, the purpose of foot patrol or of interacting with individual is the application of a different strategy from social control. Foot patrols are an integral part of a general strategy called community-oriented policing, which asks officers to step out of vehicles and to engage with citizens in person on the streets (President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. 2015; Ren et al., 2005; Chermak et al., 2001.; Baumgartner et al 2017). The goal here is to increase public security, not by harassing potential criminals alone, but by engendering community trust in the police so that the community is more willing to help officers control crime. Thus, when officers engage with citizens on foot, they are likely implementing community policing strategies geared towards engendering trust. When officers are engaged in patrol activities, they are applying a strategy of fear. Given this difference, the

divergent results come into full relief. Thus, foot patrols should engender trust, while other interactions like traffic stops reduce trust, which is how we interpret the mixed findings.

Finally, we find positive correlations with increased education and identifying ideologically as a liberal with higher trust in local government ($p < 0.1$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively), and a negative relationship between women and trust in local government. Women were 17% less likely to have trust in local government than non-female respondents ($p < 0.01$).

Analysis of Race, Insecurity, Policing and Trust in Government

To focus on the importance of how race conditions the relationship between poor police performance and trust in local government, we disaggregate respondents by racial category in table 2. Because race is a fundamental axis of American social relations, it substantively shapes respondents' relationships and understandings of both police performance and local government.

[Table 2 here]

We begin by discussing the effect of contextual police interactions with trust in local government by race. Asian respondents who felt their local police performed poorly were 61% less likely to have high trust in government than Asian respondents who thought the police were doing a fair, good, or very good job ($p < 0.001$). Black respondents who reported poor police performance were 78% less likely to have higher trust in local government compared to Black respondents who did not think the police were doing a poor job ($p < 0.001$). Latinos were 69% less likely to have high trust in local government ($p < 0.001$), and white respondents were 84% less likely to have high trust in local government ($p < 0.001$). For a one-unit increase in the police shootings, Latino respondents were 99.3% less likely to have high trust in local government, and white respondents were 99.97% less likely to have high trust in local government ($p < 0.05$) compared to white respondents in areas with less police violence ($p < 0.01$).

Of the Individual Police Interactions variables, only one variable was significant and only for one racial-ethnic group. Black respondents who were questioned while in their car by police were 32% less likely to have high trust in local government ($p < 0.05$). Of the individual victimization variables, Asian respondents who reported being a victim of a crime were 45% less likely to express higher levels of trust in government than their co-ethnics who had not been victims of crime ($p < 0.01$). Using a respondent's concern for crime as a proxy for Contextual Victimization, we found significant results for Latino and white respondents. Latino respondents who were concerned about crime were 17% less likely to have higher trust in local government compared to Latinos who were not worried about crime ($p < 0.1$). White respondents concerned with the crime were 26% less likely to have high trust in government compared to co-ethnics who were not worried about crime ($p < 0.05$).

We find that numerous individual controls are correlated with levels of trust in local government. Black women and Latinas were more than 25% less likely to have high trust in government relative to men ($p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.1$, respectively). While liberal Asian, Black, and white respondents were more than forty percent more likely to have higher trust in government than respondents who did not identify as ideologically liberal ($p < 0.01$, $p < 0.001$, and $p < 0.05$, respectively). Finally, we show that an increase in Asian and Black residents marginally increases Latino trust in local government ($p < 0.1$). In contrast, growth in the Latino community is correlated with a small increase in the levels of local government trust for Black respondents ($p < 0.05$). We see similar results in Figure 2, which disaggregates trust in local government by race. Black respondents had a mean predicted probability of .85 of having low trust in government if they rated police performance as poor. In contrast, Latinos and white respondents

had a mean predicted probability of .81 of having low trust in government if they rated police performance as poor.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that both individual (egocentric) and aggregate-level (sociotropic) factors are associated with one's assessment of the local government. In line with our expectations, there are differences in trust in local government across racial and ethnic groups. Additionally, being a victim of crime/or expressing concern about crime serves to diminish trust in local government. Finally, attitudes about the local police and police violence likewise are associated with attitudes. Negative attitudes about the local police and exposure to heightened police violence lead to lower levels of trust in local government.

Conclusion

For African-Americans and other communities of color, the leviathan has abridged the social contract when it fails to protect them. This is a major point in understanding why people are taking to the streets in mass to say, Black Lives Matter. Institutional racism serves to maintain the status quo: continuing a pattern of marginalization and violence using police. This violation of the social contract, at its core, undermines trust in local government as the logical source of blame. Thus, it makes more sense to understand policing and crime as a local issue, impacting local perceptions.

Our study advances the literature in three ways. First, we offer a comprehensive examination of public trust in local government. Second, we contribute an explanation of the racial/ethnic variation in trust in local government by understanding local police as street-level bureaucrats. Third, we clearly show evidence of a relationship between trust in local government and police performance. Obviously, more research is needed to examine the extent to which

these factors are generalizable beyond local government trust evaluations. Still, we expect it can be useful in explaining public attitudes towards a variety of government actors.

Our findings demonstrate trust in government is explained by objective, psychological, and experiential factors. First, concerning the objective characteristics, the results highlight a clear racial-ethnic divide in trust in local government. African Americans render significantly less trust in local government than all other racial-ethnic groups. Second, concerning the psychological factors, the results indicate heightened concern about crime, and some non-ascriptive characteristics like ideology and education are associated with low trust in local government. Third, concerning the experiential component of our framework, the findings highlight that increased contact with the local police is not associated with negative assessments of the local police.

From a real-world perspective, our findings suggest that local policymakers need to be discerning in the types of programs they undertake (e.g., watchman, legalistic, and service styles), particularly in communities of color. Our findings show that investments in local programs aimed at reducing police violence should increase trust in local government. Policies most likely to be successful in addressing community concerns include initiatives such as liaisons between local groups and the police. Neighborhood councils can help articulate group grievances between community members and the police and mediated facilitation between communities and police representatives (Lipskey 1983). Undertaking these efforts should also help increase government trust and legitimacy more broadly.

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