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crime control system : Differences between public and private policing

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCEPTIONS OF TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE CRIME CONTROL SYSTEM: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE POLICING

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Elsa Saarikkomäki

Abstract

Private security increasingly participates in policing, thus changing the field of policing. However, there is a lack of research on how private security is perceived by citizens, and particularly by young people. This article reports on a novel approach to studying procedural justice and trust; it compares young people's perceptions of public and private policing. Relying on focus group data from Finland, the findings indicated that young people have more trust and confidence in the police than in private security guards. Their perceptions were based on face-to-face encounters (to measure 'trust') and on general assumptions (to measure 'confidence'). Young people perceived the police as more educated, professional, legitimate and respectful than security guards. They also felt that security guards sometimes exceed their legal rights and act unfairly. However, the findings also suggest that security guards have some legitimacy. The study suggests that issues around trust in policing are more complex than prior research indicates and that private security cannot replace police tasks without it affecting perceptions of trust in policing.

Keywords

Focus groups, police, private security guards, procedural justice, trust, youth

Introduction

There has been a rapidly growing interest in studying trust and confidence in the police and criminal justice system (e.g. Bradford et al., 2008; Bradford and Myhill, 2015; Murphy, 2015). According to a procedural justice approach, perceptions of fair treatment by the police are essential in order to establish trust in the crime control system, and to make people feel that they are a respected part of society (Tyler, 1990; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Jackson et al., 2012). However, there is a lack of research on young people's perceptions of trust in policing and on new public-private policing contexts. A fresh approach to procedural justice research is needed because recent societal changes have potentially affected young people's relations with policing agents. First, the rapid rise of private security in many Western countries has blurred the boundaries between public and private crime control (e.g. Bayley and Shearing, 1996; Jones and Newburn, 2002; White and Gill, 2013). Second, (young) people increasingly spend time in quasi-public shopping mall spaces, which are typically intensively policed (von Hirsch and Shearing, 2000; Wakefield, 2003). Third, scholars suggest that policing of

young people has intensified in many European countries (Crawford, 2009; Harrikari, 2013; Goldson, 2010; Saarikkomäki and Kivivuori, 2016).

Current research has indicated that young people find the police useful and effective, although personal experiences are often negative (e.g. Crawford, 2009; Dirikx et al., 2012). However, research on encounters between young people and security guards is scarce. Prior research suggests that encounters are common, that young people are frequently asked to move on by security guards and these requests often make young people feel unwelcome in city spaces (Matthews, et al. 2000; Fine et al., 2003; Saarikkomäki and Kivivuori, 2016; Saarikkomäki, 2016).

This study compares young people's views of the police and private security guards. Beyond producing comparative information, the study also produces information on how trust is constituted between young people and policing agents. It analyses interviews with young people who have encountered police officers and/or security guards in intervention situations (9 focus group interviews with 31 young people, conducted in Helsinki, capital of Finland). I mainly refer to policing agent initiated situations that have taken place when young people have been spending their free time, such as, 'hanging out' in shopping malls or public city spaces, or drinking alcohol. While conducting the interviews, I noticed that young people often compared public and private policing agents, and thus I analysed these perceptions more closely. The current research answers two important questions: How do young people's perceptions of the police and private security guards differ? What do these different perceptions tell us about how trust and confidence in control agents is established?

The public-private policing context

Similar to many other Western countries, Finland has experienced increasing privatisation of crime control as policing has become a mix of public and private agents (e.g. Bayley and Shearing, 1996; Reiner, 2010; White and Gill, 2013; Santonen and Paasonen 2014). The police are typically defined as policing agents employed by the state, with mandates of crime control, road traffic control and order maintenance (Reiner 2010, 1). In this study, I refer to private security guards as policing agents used by the private or public sectors, employed by a private company, guarding private, quasi-public and public places, with a public mandate of order maintenance or a private mandate of securing private property. Although I define security guards as policing agents, they are different from the police. First, the police are agents of the state criminal justice system while security guards are typically employed by a private company (that can be multi-national). Second, private security agents work in an area defined by a client, while police are typically responsible for patrolling larger jurisdictions. Third, in Finland the legal rights of security guards are more limited than those of the police (Button, 2002, 122–125; Santonen and Paasonen, 2014)[i]. However, in shopping malls they have extensive powers to remove people (also von Hirsch and Shearing, 2000). In Finland, the state regulates the legal rights and private agents are obliged to report to the police apprehension of individuals. Finally, education and training requirements differ between the police and security agents. Security guards who work in stores and on public transport have a minimum of 40 hours of basic training in Finland (for crowd controllers 110 hours). The police are educated at the police university college (3-year degree programmes) and its entrance exam is demanding.

Even though the private security field is fundamentally private, it is not completely distant from the state if they operate together with the police and if they fulfil a public mandate, and as they are using legal rights issued by the state. However, Shearing (2004) points out that using the legal rights does not mean that they always operate under state direction; private security has emerged because corporations have decided to hire them. White (2012) argues that private security should be understood as having considerable impact and power while, at the same time, it still remains shaped by the legacy of the state monopoly in crime control, in which the police are prioritized.

Because the police tend to have more legitimacy, the private sector needs to pay special attention to fostering and maintaining their legitimacy (Thumala et al., 2011; White, 2012). Legitimacy means that people consider that the authorities have the right to exercise power, and they are obliged to obey policing orders (Tyler, 2006; Bradford et al., 2008). Professionalization has become crucial in legitimating policing work (Reiner, 2010; Thumala et al., 2011). Mopasa and Stenning (2001) found that public and private policing agents use similar legitimation 'tools': institutional tools (symbolic power of the institution they represent), legal tools (legal rights), physical tools (uniform, batons) and personal tools (physical strength, demeanour). Thumala and colleagues (2011) used security magazines and interviews to study how the private security field justifies the selling of security. The findings suggested that the industry gains legitimacy and professionalism by providing training and education, regulation through licensing, uniforms that resemble police uniforms, and co-operation with the police (also White, 2012). In an aim to gain trust and legitimacy, the private sector attempts to downplay their connection to market-based affiliations (Thumala et al., 2011). Although there is research on the conceptualization of the complex public-private policing field, there is a lack of empirical research on the field of private policing. For example, it is unknown how people view private security compared to public policing, and whether the private security field has succeeded in creating trust and legitimizing their status as policing agents.

Procedural justice, trust and confidence

Luhmann (2000) proposed that the formulation of trust can be distinguished as trust towards people you encounter, termed 'trust', and trust towards institutions, termed 'confidence'. Bradford et al. (2008) indicated that trust in the criminal justice system is formulated in personal relations. Specifically, these relations involve situations where individuals are actively involved in face-to-face interactions with police and where they can make their own evaluations of, for example, the fairness of the officer's behaviour. Confidence, on the other hand, is an assessment of how the system acts in general, at a personally remote level. Assessments of confidence do not require personal experiences; rather, it is a 'job rating' of the crime control system (Bradford et al., 2008). Trust and confidence are interconnected and not easy to separate (Bradford et al., 2008; Luhmann, 2000).

The procedural justice theory is used to scrutinize citizens' conceptions of trust and confidence in the crime control system, usually on a general level. Tyler (1990, 2000; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003) found that citizens' perceptions of fair treatment are more important for trust and legitimacy than perceptions of police decision-making, sanctions or effectiveness (instrumental approach). Fair procedures involve a) friendly, polite and

respectful treatment, b) the opportunities for participation that control agents provide in making their decisions, c) neutrality of control agents and d) trustworthiness (Tyler, 1990: 163–165, 2000). Prior survey-based studies found that perceptions of unfair treatment lower citizens' willingness to comply and cooperate with the police (e.g. Tyler 1990; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Bradford et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2012).

Although studied less than adults, quantitative studies have stressed that procedural justice and fair treatment are important for enhancing compliance among young people (Fagan and Tyler, 2005; Hinds, 2007; Murphy, 2015). There are also a few qualitative studies addressing youth perceptions of procedural justice. Crawford (2009) suggested that good relations and compliance are more likely if young people perceive police orders to be legitimate and reasoned. Based on a participant observation study, Pettersson (2014) found that along with police treating respectfully, non-verbal communication, such as smiling and being calm, is important. Drawing on focus group interviews, Dirikx et al. (2012) suggested that young people generally respect the police but some have negative experiences.

In an earlier analysis of the same study I conducted, I asked young people to continue a story, where the police and security guards intervened in alcohol use, to compare how fair and unfair narratives differed (Saarikkomäki, 2016). I found that young people did not define situations as fair based on whether policing agents would intervene or not. Instead, perceived fairness related to how policing agents treated young people; fair narratives consisted of respectable, friendly, calm, and predictable encounters as well as control agents who were able to manage their negative emotions (Saarikkomäki, 2016). The earlier narrative analysis focused on fictional and personal stories of face-to-face policing encounters. However, I noticed the field would benefit from a deeper analysis of general perceptions of confidence. Furthermore, I did not systematically distinguish between public and private agents. As a result, these aspects were given special attention in this study.

Most research in the procedural justice literature has neglected private security, with some exceptions. Mopasa and Stenning (2001) found that the legitimacy of security officers is sometimes challenged as many people are unwilling to comply with their demands. However, most existing studies of citizens' perceptions of confidence in security guards do not focus on people who have personal experiences, let alone on young people (Van Steden and Nalla, 2010; Moreira et al., 2015).

Citizens' confidence in the police is high in Finland compared to other European countries (Kääriäinen, 2007, 2008), which creates a special context for comparative research on public and private policing. Confidence in state institutions and generalized trust are typically high in democratic societies, particularly in welfare states (Kääriäinen, 2007, 2008). Confidence in the police is likely to correlate with generalized trust and trust in state institutions. However, high trust in the police in Finland may also be influenced because the police are highly educated and close to communities (Korander, 2004). Studies of trust in police typically measure citizens' attitudes in the general population and do not focus on people who have personal interactions with policing agents. Attitudes toward the police, abstract concepts of trust, confidence and legitimacy have been operationalized into survey questions, for instance, by asking people how much they trust the police (measured on scale of 0-10). However, because of the predefined questions there is a lack of knowledge about how people themselves conceptualize trust, confidence, and legitimacy. There is a need for more understanding of how such complex concepts are formulated (also Dirikx et al. 2012). Qualitative analysis can offer new insights and

people are given the opportunity to discuss these aspects on their own terms and to raise issues that are important to them.

This study examines how young people conceptualize the differences between the police and private security guards. The article suggests that using this kind of comparative approach contributes to procedural justice research by helping us to understand how people formulate perceptions of trust and confidence. In addition, the study highlights that, within the novel context of public-private control, there is a need to understand more broadly the effects of the rise of private security. This study distinguishes empirically the concepts of 'trust' and 'confidence' and goes on to argue that young people perceive that they have more trust and confidence in the police than in security guards. The results of the study emphasize the importance of fair treatment in the encounters between control agents and targets of control. Furthermore, the study proposes that education is one crucial factor in creating perceptions of confidence, professionalism and neutrality. The results underline the importance of current debates on policing agents' education and on the increasing use of private security.

Data and methods

The data consists of nine in-depth focus group interviews with 31 young people (16 girls and 15 boys). The participants were 14 to 17 years of age (besides one person who was 18). I recruited participants from one popular youth club in Helsinki in 2012–2013. All the participants had previous "street-level" encounters with police or security guards. Among other pastimes, they spend their free time in shopping malls, in city spaces and in the youth club. The participants were from a variety of different backgrounds (e.g. differing class status, ethnicity, resident in different parts of the capital). They were all enrolled in compulsory school, vocational school or high school, so in this way they were not the most marginalized.[ii] The focus group interviews had two parts. First, I began the interviews by using vignettes; I asked young people to narrate stories by continuing a fictional story of policing intervention. I used this narrative data part in my earlier analysis (Saarikkomäki, 2016), but not in this analysis. Second, I asked young people semi-structured thematic questions that covered their personal experiences of encounters with the police and security guards and general confidence in these policing agents. This thematic part has been used for the first time in this article.

As a method of analysis for the thematic part, I used thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) and NVivo 10 software to code the differences between perceptions of police and security guards. Towards the end of the interviews, the participants were specifically asked about whether they feel there are differences between these policing agents, although they discussed the differences throughout the interviews. Participants sometimes made direct comparisons between police and security guards, while other times the comparisons could be identified by juxtaposing their individual comments about police or security guards. I asked if there were differences in how they trust the police and security guards. Sometimes the participants found the concept of trust itself difficult to understand (perhaps an interesting finding itself), so I attempted to clarify this concept by asking whether they could ask for help or how they felt they were treated by the control agents. In addition, the young people raised issues about respectful approaches, frequent interventions, professionalism, education, authority and legal rights.

Trust: Fair police encounters, unfair security guard encounters?

Fair and respectful treatment

The police were typically described as more friendly, predictable, humorous and as acting in a more professional manner than the security guards. These kind of perceptions of fair treatment were often linked to personal or friends' experiences or to the encounters that young people have seen in city spaces. I termed these perceptions linked to face-to-face experiences as trust (Bradford et al., 2008; Luhmann, 2000). The participants emphasized that it was important that the authorities respected them, listened to them and talked calmly. Perceptions of security guards as treating people unfairly were apparent throughout the focus groups. The participants considered that the police sometimes acted harshly and used extensive force; however, they suggested that security guards did so more often. They talked about security guards who had used threatening or labelling language, and others who had been aggressive and treated them too coercively. Furthermore, they raised the point that the behaviour of the subjects of control affects the way policing agents act and vice versa. Thus, they viewed themselves as having an active part in the interaction situations. Some suggested that young people might not respect security guards, and therefore they might not act respectfully towards them.

> B: The police are calmer.
>
> K: They are in a way, but it depends.
>
> J: Yeah it depends on how you act.
>
> L: I've never seen the police really grab someone violently.
>
> Others: I have.
>
> L: I've seen security guards do it often.
>
> B: I've seen the police hold someone down and stuff, but more often you see security guards do that. (I7)

> K: If me and my friends are hanging out in (a shopping mall), the security guards will always come fuck with us and tell us to move on and demean us in every possible way. Sometimes in the summer, the police come and chat with us when we sit in a park, nothing special.
>
> Interviewer: What do these security guards do exactly?
>
> K: They have sometimes called us institutionalized kids, saying we have no future, that we just hang out somewhere in the mall, that we are homeless and stuff like that. … … … I was once thrown into the detention room for resisting the security guards. I was sitting quietly and they came to tell us to leave, I politely asked, "Excuse me Mr. Security Guard why are you asking us to move on, even though we haven't done anything. (The guard says:) "Are you fucking with me?" "Why won't you tell me why, you don't have a good reason?" And suddenly the security guard grabs me and takes me to the detention room. Great! (I2)

Trust and confidence are not stable and people actively construct their relationship with authorities (Bradford et al., 2008). Individual perceptions of trust may increase or decrease based on stories young people hear from their friends, social media or the news (Crawford, 2009; Saarikkomäki, 2016). For example, one participant noted, 'S: Security guards have a bad reputation because everyone has heard how they have treated young people (I5).' Another one stated that earlier he had trusted the security guards, but his trust has been challenged:

> Interviewer: What diminishes young people's trust in the police and security guards?
>
> S: Their aggressiveness ... ... At one point I pretty much trusted security guards as well, but after hanging out here, I don't anymore.
>
> Interviewer: Do the guards create security?
>
> S: Not always. Sometimes I am afraid whether they will spray me one day. And from what I've read in the paper, some security guards have taken someone around the corner where there's no surveillance camera and beaten him up. (I6)

The young people perceived their position as subjects of control differently depending on whether they were talking about the police or security guards. They were only "a minor disturbance" for the police whereas, for the security guards, hanging out was felt to be a major disturbance: 'H: I have noticed that security guards are a bit more aggressive towards young people whereas police officers act as if it's semi-amusing. The police seem like they think of us as a nuisance, that we are only a minor disturbance.' (I5)

Security guards moving young people on

One recurring theme was the 'moving on' of young people from shopping malls by security guards. This was often perceived as unfair for two reasons. First, the young people felt that they were frequently moved on even if they were not doing anything disturbing or illegal. Second, they felt that the security guards focused on young people because they did not have enough important tasks to do. The work of the security guards was seen as quite similar from day to day and some suggested that security guards may be tired of the routine of moving people on, causing them to behave disrespectfully. However, some proposed that frequent interventions were not necessarily the fault of the security guards but rather that of the management who decided their tasks (also Manzo, 2004). Some also suggested that security guards are inexperienced because they only patrol a limited area. Similar to prior research (Crawford, 2009), the young people in this study complied and moved on more easily if the intervention was warranted, with the reasons being explained, and if they were treated with respect. Intensive intervening can create the perception that control agents lack empathy (Saarikkomäki, 2016).

> C: The security guards usually they don't really do much. ... I've seen a security guard doing something once, otherwise it's just "go away, go away". (I9)

> B: ... usually, the security guards come throw us out... ... really, really often when we sit there, they comment "be more quiet, be more calm, do this, do that!" ... ... …

K: They throw you out even if you are not doing anything, you are hanging out in a spot with seats, you are calm, talking to your friends, and they're like "get the fuck out!". (I2)

Opposing voices

Although the commonly occurring pattern was to speak about the security guards more negatively than the police, the participants wanted to emphasize many viewpoints, for instance, that there were also fair and respectable security guards and unfair police officers. Perhaps one reason why the police were more trusted was because their encounters with young people were more varied than simple intervention situations. For instance, the police came to youth clubs or schools to talk. The young people appreciated it if security guards came to talk with them and asked how they were.

T: Well, security guards have huge egos. ...

N: But there are good security guards too.

T: There are. These are just extremes.

N: Really easy-going, always smiling

E: who might even come chat with you. We were kicked out (from the shopping mall) last Friday. Supposedly we were making noise. He comes to us and says "can you move outside". We are like "but it's cold there". Then he starts chatting to us about how it's supposed to be cold and stuff. He jokes about it together with us. (I1)

There was one exception to the general view that the police were preferred. One girl said that she had more trust in security guards. Her reason was that if security guards acted unjustly, someone (perhaps the police) could do something about it. Accordingly, she believed that the security guards had to act more fairly. Typically, participants stated that they had general confidence in both police and security guards. However, a few participants had very low confidence in both of these policing agents. Interestingly, one girl pointed out the confusion that the general perception in Finland about the high confidence in the police, learned through socialization, had not been reflected in her personal experiences. Unfair experiences had challenged her trust and confidence.

B: It's a bit confusing that people who should secure our security are attacking us. They teach the kids that you can always trust the police, and security guards. But when you start to think about, that they attack you, how can you trust them? (I7)

Negative interactions can challenge trust and confidence; however, they might not always affect general views of confidence (Bradford et al., 2008: 1–3). The following extract indicates that although police officers decisions were experienced as unfair, this seemed not to deter confidence and respect:

B: The police actually come talk to you first ... I respect the police ... although they made quite a few shitty decisions and they were rude to me. (I4)

Confidence: the police were perceived as more professional compared to security guards

Usefulness, helpfulness

Discussions of usefulness, effectiveness and helpfulness related mostly to general statements (confidence) and not primary on personal interactions, but there were also statements based on experiences (trust). Furthermore, it was not always possible to know whether statements were based on personal interactions or general attitudes. Aspects of usefulness and effectiveness did not raise as much discussion as the aspects of fair treatment. The young people recognised the usefulness of both types of authorities, although they saw the police as more useful and more willing and able to be helpful. On one hand, frequent requests to move on caused the young people to question the usefulness of security guards. On the other hand, they perceived security guards as being useful in preventing fights. Additionally, they perceived security guards as being closer to young people because they worked in shopping malls.

> Interviewer: What is the importance of the police and security guards on a general level?
>
> K: They are useless.
>
> B: Both of them?
>
> K: Well the police are more useful, they guard the law.
>
> B: The police are much more useful, but security guards are too.
>
> K: They just oversee that nothing happens at the shopping centre.
>
> B: For example, I've been in many fights which they have cut short, and if they hadn't, they would have ended badly. But you don't need as many as there are now.
>
> K: More resources than are needed. (I2)

Interestingly, the latter extract was the only example in which the young people directly stated that the police safeguard the law (public policing), whereas security guards mainly patrol shopping malls (private policing). They did recognize the differentiation of tasks and the different locations where these agents patrol. However, they did not specifically talk about the police as a part of the public justice system and security guards as private actors.

Education, professionalism

One reason why the young people preferred the police was because police professions and training were perceived as being more demanding than security guards. One common belief was that because security guards had not been selected to the police training, they had to settle for less. There are no studies defining whether this is the case in Finland, but it implies that training is important for building professionalism and legitimacy

(Thumala et al., 2011). The next extract suggests that the security guards do not have a lot of authority, which the participants connected to education:

> B: I trust policemen 'cause they have education and things and more authority. … … … If you increase their authority, maybe they would take the job-
>
> Interviewer: What do you mean by increasing authority?
>
> P: Making it harder to become a guard … requiring an education of some sort. (I9)

> D: Security guards are useless, they are security guards only because they are not accepted as police officers. ...
>
> A: But there's a difference between the security guard training and police profession.
>
> B: Right, but why doesn't everyone apply for the police school?
>
> C: Not everyone is accepted-
>
> A: Right, and they don't necessarily want to.
>
> D: I am sure some people actually want to be security guards. ... (I3)

The participants perceived that security guards were perhaps less neutral than the police. Many raised concerns about the lack of neutrality leading to selective treatment of young people, particularly among ethnic minorities. This challenged perceptions of fair treatment. Some suggested that the police officers' long training developed their skills to treat people better and to be more neutral and professional.

> H: So the security guard was prejudiced about (name) being the troublemaker ... By that you can tell they are slightly racist towards foreigners. ...
>
> Interviewer: What about the police?
>
> H: It's the same.
>
> T: I think the police are more educated.
>
> H: They are more neutral perhaps.
>
> E: They keep things to themselves more, they don't visibly react. (I5)

Legal rights, authority and power

The young people also raised discussions about legal rights and authority. The comments were based on general views or on their personal experiences. The police were discussed as having more power, authority and legal rights when compared to security guards. They felt that the security guards were using their authority unjustly, exceeding their legal rights or using too much force. Some participants were aware of the legal rights and they

did not want to comply if they felt the control agents exceeded their legal rights (Mopasa and Stenning, 2001). However, many pointed out that it was difficult to not comply the authorities' demands.

> C: They misuse their authority, they could just take you by your shoulder, not twist it off. Most security guards kind of lie about their authority, that people don't know the law. (I9)

> S: Well, the police are pretty good at getting people in order. And it's even legal for them to use force. Security guards don't have a right to use force, so they use it illegally. … The police use it when they need to. Security guards will use it whenever. (I6)

> G: They have less power than the police … they can get the police there, but they can't do the same stuff.

> M: Security guards just like-

> G: they just guard.

> N: They just hang.

> M: If I was boss, or if you were boss, they would be like employees.

> N: … they are inferior.

> M: Like a corporal and a sergeant in the army. (I8)

The latter group (in I8) considered the police higher in the hierarchy. Interestingly, the private and public fields of policing were not seen as completely separate even though the control agents were seen as different in regard to hierarchy, legal rights and power status. Although the young people perceived private security agents as being less legitimate, they were also seen as being a partner of the police and having some legitimacy and trust.

Conclusion

The aim of this article has been to explore the differences in young people's perceptions of the police compared to private security guards. It focused on young people below the age of majority who have encountered police and/or security guards in city spaces in Helsinki, Finland. This research contributes to the existing literature of procedural justice by studying how young people formulate their perceptions of trust and confidence in the crime control system. Furthermore, because current research in criminology has largely neglected issues related to privatisation of policing, and research on private security has largely ignored the targets of policing (see e.g. Zedner, 2009; White, 2012; Winlow and Hall, 2016), this study provides new information on the private security sector's ability to legitimize their status in the eyes of the public. Similar to this research, prior procedural justice research stresses the importance of fair treatment (e.g. Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Bradford and Myhill, 2015; Murphy, 2015; Saarikkomäki, 2016). However, prior research has mainly focused on how procedural justice increases the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and citizens' compliance. This study highlighted the need to extend the theory of procedural justice to private policing and to analyses of the

viewpoints of young people who have experienced policing. Based on thematic analysis of focus group data, the current study emphasized that issues related to trust are more multifaceted than prior survey-based research has shown. The analyses distinguished between trust (personal experiences) and confidence (general views, 'job rating') (Bradford et al., 2008; Luhmann, 2000). However, these two concepts are interconnected and it was not always possible to specify on which basis the perceptions are formulated. The young people formulated their perceptions based on their personal and their friends' experiences, on how they have seen policing agents interact with other people, and on general assumptions about the policing institutions. The findings indicated that the young people have more trust and confidence in the police compared to security guards.

The young people in this study perceived that police officers have a more respectful, friendly, helpful and fair approach in their encounters compared to security guards. These qualities created trust. A calm, predictable and relaxed approach was important. Many described their own position as targets of control differently: for the police, they were simply a minor disturbance, but for the security guards they were seen as a bigger disturbance.

In addition to these personal experiences, general perceptions related to usefulness and education stirred discussion. The young people had more confidence in the police because they were viewed as more educated, professional, useful and experienced. It was perceived to be more demanding to become a police officer, which created legitimacy. Furthermore, the young people perceived that because of their education the police would treat them more fairly and approach situations more neutrally than private security guards. These findings suggest that education and professionalism are important for creating trust and legitimacy (also Thumala et al., 2011).

The security guards were perceived as treating young people sometimes aggressively, as using coercive measures and as lacking respect (e.g. threatening, using labelling language). These types of perceptions were mainly linked to face-to-face experiences, although the young people also attributed this to the guards being less educated and to their more limited legal powers and authority status. Security guards were sometimes seen as exceeding their legal rights and trying to feign their authority. This challenged views of trust and legitimacy. Security guards might exceed their legal rights if they are not trained well and if people assume they have powers that they do not have. Public police culture, in contrast, emphasizes trying to avoid resort to legal powers in the resolution of disputes (Korander, 2004; Reiner, 2010).

The young people in this study sometimes questioned the legitimacy of security guards, because they were seen to merely move people on from shopping malls. Similar to other research (Matthews et al., 2000; Fine et al., 2003; Crawford, 2009; Saarikkomäki, 2016), interventions were sometimes perceived as too intensive or unfairly targeting young people. The findings suggested that young people may experience difficulties in using city spaces (also von Hirsch and Shearing, 2000; Wakefield, 2003). It has been suggested that citizens' rights to use city spaces are increasingly based on being a consumer, and although young people are a part of consumer cultures, they usually have fewer possibilities to consume than adults (Atkinson, 2003; Winlow and Hall, 2016). This might result in exclusion of young people from quasi-public city spaces.

The study was based on local data. Many of the interview participants had encountered security guards more often than the police, which might partially explain why they were regarded more negatively. Police officers might be viewed positively because they were being compared to security guards, who were usually the first policing agent in many of the encounters. The views might also appear predominantly negative because negative encounters are more meaningful than positive ones (Skogan, 2006). It is important to note that the young people also expressed multiple views: some security guards were friendly and helpful, and they also discussed unfair police experiences. However, the research reveals clear patterns in which private security guards were generally viewed more negatively than the police. The young people stated a preference for the police even if they were sometimes unable to explain why.

This new policing context can raise questions of whether the police legitimacy is threatened because of the rise of private security. However, these findings may suggest that the rise in private security seems *not* to challenge perceptions of police legitimacy, at least in this study context. Although trust in the police was sometimes challenged due to encounters experienced as unfair, there were not many views that challenged the general confidence in the police. In Western democratic countries, the police are public actors and the institution possesses a historical legacy and historical legitimacy whereas the private security industry is relatively new and does not possess the same historical legacy (Loader and Walker, 2006; White, 2012). These factors may partly explain why police were preferred to private security, although the young people did not directly discuss these factors. This specific context of high confidence and trust in the police in Finland clearly affects the findings of this study (Korander, 2004, 16; Kääriäinen, 2008). While education and professionalism are important in Finland, pragmatism, which is a crucial part of police culture, is also present (Korander, 2004; Reiner, 2010). The police in Finland are typically close to the citizens and they apply community-policing approaches. However, perceptions of policing are not only based on how police officers act but also on structural and historical factors. Police cultures in Western countries share similarities, but there are also country-specific differences (Reiner, 2010). In that regard, it would be beneficial to gain additional research from different countries to study the effects of the rise of private security.

Private security is complex to define; the field is private and market-based but they use legal rights defined by the state and they may patrol public spaces (Bayley and Shearing, 1996; Thumala et al., 2011; White and Gill, 2013). Interestingly however, this research suggests that young people do not distinguish between actors as public and private. Although they sometimes questioned the legitimacy of security guards, they did not link this with the industry being private. In this way, a blurring of the boundaries between public and private policing was visible (White and Gill, 2013). It might be that these concepts are difficult for young people to distinguish or, on the contrary, too self-evident to discuss. In addition, this might reflect the finding that the private security industry does not want to emphasize itself as private, as part of an attempt to gain legitimacy (Thumala et al., 2011). These findings raise a question of whether the private security field has succeeded in legitimating its status to some extent. Furthermore, even though the young people placed security guards hierarchically lower, they were often seen as a partner of the police. My empirical findings from young people in Finland seem to support White's (2012) argument that private security should be conceptualized from two different perspectives: first, as having a vast impact, power and agency; and second, as still being shaped by the legacy of the state monopoly, in which the public police are prioritized (White 2012).

Scholars debate the advantages and disadvantages of the increasing use of private security (Loader and Walker, 2006; Lister et al. 2000; Thumala et al., 2011; White and Gill, 2013, 75; Leese, 2016). Some concerns presented are that the commercial role of private security can shift security into a private commodity and thus challenge it as a public good (Loader and Walker, 2006; Zedner, 2009). Furthermore, security industries do not always respond to a real demand, but they also market their services to make their existence needed (Zedner, 2009).

This research has several implications for the use of private security agencies in Western nations. There is continuous public discussion about whether private security can replace certain police tasks. It seems that private security cannot simply replace the police without it affecting people's perceptions of policing and trust. The findings regarding intensive policing and unfairly experienced interventions raise concerns as to how the private security field is regulated and how it uses legal rights. Sufficient training in the professional use of legal powers and a focus on respectful encounters could be one way forward, though there is variation in the training of security officers in Europe. In addition, this research revealed the importance of education, a concern that is also relevant to the current debate in Europe over whether the police should receive vocational or university education.

To conclude, this study highlighted the need to consider the many factors that affect the complex ways in which fair treatment, trust, confidence and legitimacy are formulated. The research also offers some possible support for development of better practice for improving trust specifically in private security, including the need for sufficient training, professionalism, minimal and last resort use of legal powers, and avoidance of over-coercive and frequent interventions. There is an important aspect that encompasses all of these, which is the capacity of control agents, whether public or private, to treat people with fairness and respect.

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[i] In Finland, the powers of private policing agents derive mainly from the ordinary powers of citizens and they do not have the rights to search bags without the permission of the owner (Santonen and Paasonen, 2014). There are some differences between two types of security guards: stewards can only remove people, whereas crowd controllers can prohibit people from entering their operating area (Santonen and Paasonen, 2014). The police issue the permits for security guards.

[ii] The names and initials of the participants were anonymized and the locations were left out. I followed the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity's recommendation of informing the guardians of participants under the age of 15. The interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions were checked against the recordings.