A Psychology of Social Order: Public Attitudes to Crime and Policing

This paper presents an emerging perspective on the fear of crime and public demands on the police. The framework describes how people make sense of the risk of crime. It draws together social-psychological and sociological work on risk perception, emotion and environmental perception, examining the social meaning of crime, incivility and social order while incorporating processes of stereotyping and social identity. One key feature is a ‘psychology of social order’: how people conceive social order, what they see as hostile to that social order, and why crime comes to embody or exemplify such things. Another is the designatory function of such attitudes: to identify a person, a behaviour or environmental conditions as criminal (or criminogenic) is to declare as deviant and to demand appropriate action. The paper finishes by discussing recent research on public demands for the risk regulators here, the police.

Jackson, Jonathan