

TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT: DO OFFICER PERCEPTIONS OF
ORGANIZATIONAL “FAIR TREATMENT” INFLUENCE
THE WAY THEY VIEW THE PUBLIC?

By

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ABSTRACT

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Considerable research has explored the relationship between the police and the “policed,” and findings consistently indicate that policing is more efficient and effective with public support. If police departments engage in just, or fair, practices, the public is much more likely to provide that support. Unfortunately, pervasive mistrust of the public is a common element in occupational police culture, and potentially incompatible with service or process-based policing reforms designed to improve public trust in the police. Research in organizational justice studies have regularly demonstrated the benefits of employing just practices in organization-employee relationships and the ‘trickle-down effect’ of such treatment in employee-customer interactions. While the organizational justice model has only recently been applied in the policing context, the few studies using organizational justice constructs have noted distinct advantages of officer perceptions of organizational fair treatment. This study will add to this research by comparing officer perceptions of organizational justice with officer views of the public. To provide a more detailed view of officer attitudes toward the general public, measures will be taken and amended from the Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (1995) model of organizational trust. Implications for policing management will be discussed.

Dedicated to my beautiful, talented, and unbelievably patient wife.
Not much longer, love.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Encouraging police support for community “self-policing” has been an important consideration in the community-policing and problem-oriented policing literatures over the past few decades (Somerville, 2009). A fundamental premise of community and problem-oriented policing is that a neighborhood that endeavors to preserve stability and lawfulness through informal social controls, in conjunction with an accommodating local police organization that assists in identifying and solving problems, is the best way to maintain order in the community (Somerville, 2009). From this perspective, maintaining order in the neighborhood is a shared responsibility. Building a partnership with the public is therefore critical to the success of departmental reforms that are designed to promote better police-public relations and commit the organization to the principles of community-oriented policing. In addition to supporting a community’s efforts to “self-police,” a substantial amount of literature also notes the benefits to police organizations that cultivate an improved police-citizen relationship (Skogan et al, 1999). By employing fair processes and practices in police-citizen encounters (e.g. every citizen treated equally, respectfully, and objectively; police officers consistently making decisions based on the law and reflecting local values; allowing citizens to express their concerns and grievances; and openly and clearly explaining police decisions), police legitimacy is enhanced in the eyes of the public, leading to greater cooperation with police and compliance with police directives (De Cremer & Tyler, 2007; Mazerolle, Bennett, Davis, Sargeant, & Manning, 2013; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tankebe, 2008; Tyler, 1990; Tyler & Huo, 2002). In short, a police organization that enjoys public trust and support provides more effective and efficient policing, while simultaneously strengthening a neighborhood’s informal social controls (Silver & Miller, 2004).

Yet not every department or police officer is on board with community-oriented policing (e.g. Rosenberg, Sigler, & Lewis, 2008), or finds significant value in community-policing initiatives (Liederbach, Fritsch, Carter, & Bannister, 2008). Officer resistance to community policing reforms can be high, depending on organizational structure, training, and management style (Wycoff & Skogan, 1994). A frequently cited source of officer resistance to effective implementation of community policing is officer cynicism, a psychological state of enduring skepticism directed at the general public as well as their organization. Put simply, many officers do not trust the average citizen and do not trust their superiors (Reiner, 2010). Officer cynicism is generally considered a persistent and pervasive element of police culture (Manning, 1995; Paoline, 2001; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Skolnick, 1994). Police cynicism generally develops as a result of several factors, such as the hazardous nature of the job, a strong sense of social solidarity with other officers, and the pressure to produce quantifiable outcomes (such as arrests and citations) as an empirical measure of job performance. In terms of behavior, it manifests as a tendency to develop negative attitudes toward the public such as suspicion and aloofness, while at the same time forming pessimistic views of the expectations and scrutiny of upper management. Citizens may not be viewed as partners in order maintenance but as potential problems that will need to be overcome (Reiner, 2010; Westmarland, 2010); management may be considered overbearing or “rule-obsessed,” out of touch with the reality of street patrol (Paoline, 2001; Reiner, 2010; Reuss-Ianni, 1983). As such, building a sense of trust and partnership with the general public may be problematic for many police departments and officers steeped in cynicism.

If the overall goal of community-oriented policing is to strengthen the police-community relationship, is it possible for police organizations and management to influence rank-and-file

attitudes that do not fit well with community-oriented policing reforms and improve officer views of the public? Several studies within the criminal justice literature have reported findings that suggest this is indeed possible, noting the impact of organizational decision-making, processes, and policy on officer attitudes, rule adherence, decision to arrest, culture, and conduct (Adams, Rohe, & Arcury, 2002; Bradford, Quinton, Myhill, & Porter, 2014; Chappell, MacDonald, & Manz, 2006; Tyler, Callahan, & Frost, 2007; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011; Wycoff & Skogan, 1994). Additionally, research in the fields of procedural and organizational justice has consistently demonstrated that procedures and practices employed by organizations that are perceived as fair and just by employees encourages identification with the organization and positively shapes employee commitment to organizational goals (e.g. Colquitt, 2008). Perceptions of justice have also been connected with “organizational citizenship behaviors” (OCB), behaviors that are optional and rarely compensated but capable of helping to improve organizational performance (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). These findings suggest that it may be possible for police organizations to employ ‘just’ processes and supervisory practices that will positively influence officer views of the public, foster greater commitment to community-oriented policing reforms and initiatives by reinforcing officer identification with the organization, and, by extension, secure increased cooperation and compliance from the public.

This study will explore the relationship between officer perceptions of “fair treatment” by their organization and their perceptions of the citizens in the areas they patrol, and attempt to determine if the use of ‘just’ processes can in fact positively influence officer views of the public. Organizational justice theory draws upon subjective assessments of outcomes, processes, and interactions to determine perceptions of fairness. Building on Myhill and Bradford’s (2013)

introduction of organizational justice measurements in the policing context, this study will attempt to partially replicate Myhill & Bradford's research in local urban settings. Officers will be given a survey exploring their views of their organization as well as their views of the citizenry in their patrol areas. Measures exploring officer perceptions of organizational outcomes, processes, and supervisory interactions will be taken or modified from the Myhill & Bradford study and the organizational justice literature. To provide a more nuanced view of officer attitudes toward the public, Myhill & Bradford's *attitude* measure will be supplemented with the Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995; hereafter referred to as MDS) *trust* construct from the organizational trust literature. This study represents the first test of the classic MDS definition of trust – a willingness to be vulnerable – from the police's perspective. While the scope of this study will be necessarily less than Myhill & Bradford's, it is anticipated to still provide useful insights into the complicated relationship between the police, their organization, and the communities they serve.

Chapter 2

Organizational Justice Theory

While the concept of justice has been explored by philosophers and scholars for centuries, widespread interest in and study of justice within organizations is relatively recent (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zepata-Phelan, 2013). In fact, Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) - in their meta-analysis of empirical and theoretical studies of organizational justice - noted that most of the studies (over 500) in their pre-analysis sample were published after 1990. It was the introduction of social psychological principles to the study of behavior in the workplace in the latter half of the 20th-century that set the stage for some of the initial theoretical work on organizational justice (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zepata-Phelan, 2013). The earliest theories of social justice, or the study of “fairness,” such as Adam’s Equity Theory (1963; 1965) or social exchange theory, tended to examine principles of justice in basic social interactions, but not necessarily in the context of organizations (Greenberg, 1990). However, as Greenberg (1990) noted, considering these theories – Equity Theory in particular – measured outcomes and inputs in quantifiable terms, it was inevitable they would be applied in organizational settings. It wasn’t long before scholars realized the importance of employee perceptions of justice to the successful operation of organizations (e.g. Moore, 1978; Greenberg, 1982).

The research focus in examinations of ‘justice,’ predominantly, has been on cognitive, affective, and behavioral reactions to context-specific perceptions of justice (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), or a focus on what people *believe* is just depending on circumstances. In other words, justice is considered a subjective, normative ideal (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zepata-Phelan, 2013) dependent on context and individual characteristics, not a concrete definition of what justice may actually be. In the organizational context, Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007)

note that perceptions of justice are related to social considerations (just treatment conveys a sense of being valued and belonging), ethical considerations (normative views of what *ought* to happen), and long-term considerations (what happens now predicts what will happen later). Put another way, positive perceptions of justice, or fair treatment, reduces uncertainty (Cugueró-Escofet & Fortin, 2014) and reinforces employee identification with and commitment to the organization (Masterson, 2001).

Initial studies in what Greenberg (1987) later called organizational justice explored employee reactions to perceived fairness of outcomes, such as pay rates. Adam's Equity Theory (1963;1965), for example, proposed that employees compare their outcomes and their perceived input (i.e. work or effort) to the ratio of outcome/input of others (co-workers). A belief that this ratio is out of balance in comparison with co-workers would subsequently be interpreted as "unfair," and, as a consequence, worker performance would suffer. There is a great deal of empirical support for Equity Theory (e.g. Garland, 1973) demonstrating a clear link between worker performance and justice outcomes, and most reviewers in the field consider the theory strongly supported by evidence (Greenberg, 1982). However, critics soon pointed out the possibility of confounding variables in interpretation of the data (Pritchard, 1969), and the lack of attention to the processes involved (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Despite this, Equity Theory still retains its popularity, although it has undergone numerous refinements (Cohen & Greenberg, 1982).

Leventhal (1976; 1980) added another dimension to employee perceptions of fairness of outcomes by studying the conditions under which people make use of fairness norms. Leventhal argued that equity was not the only allocation "rule" in the minds of individuals when assessing the fairness of outcomes. When people proactively use allocation rules to determine outcome

justice, they may use allocation rules associated with other aspects of normative values such as need or equality. Different circumstances, objectives, and personal motives can trigger the use of a wide variety of allocation rules (Deutsch, 1975). Regardless of the rule used, however, the main goal is the achievement of outcome justice, such as equitable pay, “deserved” promotion, and so on.

Taken together, Adam’s and Leventhal’s theories form what is known as **distributive justice**, reactive and proactive behaviors that result from subjective perceptions of the fairness of particular outcomes. A perception of an outcome as unfair may affect an individual’s thoughts (i.e. comparing self to others) and emotions (generate anger, fear, guilt), which will in turn impact behavior (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). In terms of explanatory power, however, distributive justice appeared limited. It did not identify processes, it focused on individual reactions to outcomes. In essence, it focused on *what* the outcome decisions were (and individual reactions to them) but not *how* those outcome decisions were made. As a result of this shortcoming, theorists soon began to shift their attention to the perceived fairness of the *processes* that ultimately lead to outcomes (e.g. Greenberg & Tyler, 1987; Leventhal, 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Thibault and Walker (1975) are credited with the original development of **procedural justice**, or subjective perceptions of process fairness, although their work was in the context of dispute-resolution. By comparing autocratic procedures, where an individual has little or no control or input, with procedures that allow a great deal of input in the process, Thibault and Walker (1975) were able to demonstrate that end results were perceived as fairer when individuals felt their ‘voice’ was heard, regardless of outcome results. Subsequent research has consistently shown that outcomes from processes offering employees some measure of control or

input are generally perceived as fairer than outcomes from processes offering little control or input (e.g. Walker, Lind, & Thibault, 1979). Thus researchers have noted an important distinction between conceptualizations of justice: fairness of outcomes and fairness of the means used to achieve those outcomes (Greenberg, 1987).

Tyler (1990) applied procedural justice more broadly and Leventhal (1980) expanded the list of elements of perceived process fairness beyond process control. Tyler and colleagues demonstrated that procedural justice can be used to evaluate behavior in a number of settings, including student-teacher interactions (Tyler & Caine, 1981), voter views of political leaders (Tyler, Rasinski, & McGraw, 1985), and, most relevant to the current study, police-citizen encounters (Tyler & Folger, 1980; Tyler, 1990). Leventhal (1980) proposed six criteria that people may use to determine if a process is fair: (1) the process is applied consistently across all appropriate parties; (2) the process is unbiased, untainted by personal self-interest; (3) the process is based on accurate information; (4) the process can be corrected, if needed; (5) the process takes into account the needs, values, and opinions of all relevant parties; and (6) the process reflects the ethics and morals of the individual. Three decades later, Leventhal's six criteria are still frequently combined with *voice* (i.e. process control or input) to compose measures of procedural justice in various settings (e.g. Gau, 2014; Dietz, Robinson, Folger, Baron, & Schulz, 2003).

The versatility of procedural justice as a construct was quickly recognized. For example, Greenberg (1986) noted that in management studies, performance appraisals became a popular framework to test the effects of fair treatment and employee behavioral reactions (e.g. Mayer & Davis, 1999). Employee input into the performance appraisal process was demonstrated to be a significant predictor of whether or not an employee evaluates the outcome as fair (Greenberg,

1986). Since this evaluation is organization-specific rather than outcome-specific, it becomes critical to employee views of their organization, especially in terms of employee identification with the organization (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005). “Organizational procedures represent the way the *organization* allocates resources” (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001, p. 281), thus a worker’s behavioral reaction to a perceived “unfair” process will inevitably reflect on the organization.

Bies and Moag (1986) introduced a third conceptualization of justice that encompassed the quality of interpersonal treatment experienced during procedures. **Interactional justice** measures in organizational research typically examine if employees feel they were treated politely, respectfully, and with dignity by management throughout a process or in pursuit of an outcome (e.g. Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al, 2001). Interactional justice has been further broken into two more components by Greenberg (1990; 1993) and Colquitt (2001): **interpersonal justice** (treated with politeness, dignity, and respect) and **informational justice** (adequately informed about why decisions, expectations, or processes were made). Thus, the organizational justice model evolved from a two-factor model of *distributive* and *procedural* justice to a three or four-factor model covering outcomes, processes, interpersonal treatment, and the adequate transmission of information. Subjective assessments of the fairness and quality of each factor were believed to collectively predict context-specific employee behavior (Colquitt, 2001).

However, there is considerable debate concerning the distinctiveness of the various justice constructs (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al, 2001; Colquitt et al, 2013). Cropanzano and Ambrose (2001) suggested that an event may be seen as a process in one interpretation and an outcome in another, and the high correlations between distributive and procedural justice in some studies (e.g. Sweeney & McFarlin, 1997) appear to support their observation. Most studies, however, have shown a clear distinction between procedural and

distributive justice (e.g. Gilliland, 1994). In fact, when measured separately, distributive and procedural justice frequently show different relationships to different things (Masterson, 2001; Moorman, 1991; Roch & Shanock, 2006). In a particularly interesting experiment, Dulebohn and colleagues (2009) found differences in brainwave patterns when participants engaged in subjective assessments of distributive and procedural justice. A majority of research, in other words, appears to confirm that the effects of procedural justice and distributive justice can be independent of each other, despite some overlap.

There has been even greater concern regarding the separation of interactional justice from procedural justice. Tyler and Bies (1990), for example, argued that interactional justice is a subset of procedural justice, and a great deal of procedural justice research subsumes interactional justice measurements (i.e. “the police in my community treat people with dignity and respect,” Gau, 2011) into a procedural justice construct. However, Colquitt’s (2001) structural tests of all three models of organizational justice (distributive-procedural, distributive-procedural-interactional, and distributive-procedural-interpersonal-informational) suggested that collapsing interactional justice measurements into procedural justice would “mask certain differences” (p. 396), despite high intercorrelations. Subsequent studies have indeed demonstrated that procedural justice and interactional justice may have independent effects or different associations (e.g. Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009). While the debate on the distinctiveness of the various justice constructs is by no means settled, the organizational justice model’s usefulness in predicting behavioral reactions to perceptions of injustice is generally accepted.

2.1 Organizational Justice in the Policing Context

The organizational justice model, as a whole, has rarely been applied to research in the policing context. However, this is not to say that scholars haven't explored organizational influences on police behavior. Wilson (1978), for example, presented exploratory research that suggested police chief 'styles' of command affect officer behaviors through organizational structure. Worden (1995) found modest support for organizational influences on excessive use of force by police officers. Several studies have noted the effectiveness of administrative policy as a control on police discretion to use force (e.g. White, 2000), as well as the impact of organizational factors on officer misconduct (Eitle, D'Alessio, & Stolzenberg, 2014; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011) and police culture (Paoline, 2003; Paoline, Myers, & Worden, 2000). In short, policing researchers have certainly not been lax in examining organizational variables in a variety of policing contexts; the research literature is extensive.

It should be noted that organizational justice constructs *have* been adapted to the policing context, but not necessarily in a consistent framework and frequently condensed into a single index of *justice*. For example, Tyler's voluminous research on public cooperation with the police has relied heavily on *procedural justice* constructs that generally include *interactional justice* measures as well (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 1990, 2004, 2009; Tyler & Huo, 2002). In fact, the recent attention to police legitimacy precipitated by Tyler's (1990) original work relies almost exclusively on *procedural/interactional justice* measures, or individual interpretations of the fairness of the process and the fairness of treatment during citizen-police encounters (e.g. Tankebe, 2008). Perceived 'fair' treatment of the public by police officers is a significant driver of the public's trust in police officers (Jackson, 2015), felt obligation to obey officer directives (De Cremer & Tyler, 2007), and voluntary cooperation with the local police department in

community order maintenance (Reisig, 2007; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). In terms of the organizational justice model and public cooperation with the police, *distributive justice* (i.e. outcome) measurements are frequently absent from current legitimacy research, although there have been a few comparisons of outcome-based judgments of the police with process-based judgments of the police (e.g. Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), which generally show that *procedural justice* (interpretations of fairness of processes) has a greater effect on public cooperation with police than *distributive justice* (interpretations of fairness of outcomes).

The few studies in the policing literature that have used the organizational justice model to examine the effect of officer perceptions of justice on officer behavior or attitudes have noted remarkable findings. Wolfe and Piquero (2011) studied officer perceptions of fair treatment and the relationship these perceptions have with aspects of police culture and misconduct. Results indicated that officers who believed their department operated fairly and justly were less likely to adhere to the ‘code of silence’ or deem corruption in the pursuit of a noble goal as acceptable. Perceptions of just treatment were also associated with lower levels of activity in various forms of misconduct, such as bribery or theft. Tyler, Callahan, and Frost (2007) found that perceptions of organizational justice (predominantly procedural justice) are significantly related to rule adherence among law enforcement and military personnel. Bradford and colleagues (2014) obtained similar results, but in addition to greater rule adherence, they also found that officers who felt fairly treated by their superiors and the organization as a whole had more positive views toward community policing, were more confident and willing to take initiative in a variety of circumstances, and displayed improved identification with the organization. Identification with the organization was an intervening variable for the three types of organizational justice constructs on each of the behaviors studied except compliance with instructions and procedures,

which was *directly* related with perceptions of procedural justice. This finding corresponds with research on social identity in the organizational context (e.g. Blader & Tyler, 2009) that suggests perceptions of justice are directly linked with the strength of an employee's connection with the organization.

A new direction in the application of organizational justice in the policing context was provided by Myhill and Bradford (2013). They examined officer perceptions of organizational justice and the impact these perceptions may have on officer attitudes toward the public, as well as their influence on officer views of community policing principles. While their conclusions were limited due to the lack of generalizability of their findings - their sample was drawn from a predominantly rural location and a police organization already heavily committed to service-oriented policing - there was a clear relationship between officer perceptions of fair treatment, fair outcomes, and fair processes, and officer attitudes toward the general public. Specifically, officers who felt their agency was acting in a just manner toward members of the force had more positive attitudes toward serving members of the public and were more receptive of departmental reforms aimed at implementing community-policing policies. The implications of these findings are obvious: police organizations that employ just practices in dealing with frontline officers not only improve officer identification with the organization and officer willingness to commit to departmental reforms and regulations, but also positively influence the police-community relationship, at least in terms of officer attitudes toward the general public. The degree to which this may influence officer-citizen encounters and whether or not this influence may encourage officers to behave in a procedurally just manner with the public is still an open question, however.

Chapter 3

The Police-Community Relationship

Depending on circumstances, the relationship between the police and the public they “police” may be contentious (Skogan, 2005; Sobol, 2010). Friction between the community and local law enforcement is nothing new (Fyfe, 1993), but the ubiquitous presence of cameras and cell phones ensures a greater capacity to ‘catch’ instances of aggressive or abusive policing practices and disseminate these images to a wide audience through local news stations and social media. Public perceptions of unfair treatment at the hands of the police convey a sense of exclusion and belittlement (Bradford, 2014) that may reverberate throughout a community, if such actions are perceived as commonplace. Events such as the recent public unrest in Ferguson and Baltimore captures the nation’s attention and keeps the police-community conversation at the forefront of American social issues. These incidents have their parallels in American history (e.g. the Rodney King riots in Los Angeles in 1992, the Miami riots in 1980, and the Camden riots of 1971) and expose a community-level mistrust and dissatisfaction with local law enforcement that can be endemic in some neighborhoods or cities around the country (Weitzer, Tuch, & Skogan, 2008). This mistrust has a tangible effect on policing and order maintenance. Without public support, law enforcement will have greater difficulty employing efficient and effective policing practices (Skogan et al, 1999).

Ironically, the negative attention garnered by cell phones, social media, and news broadcasts of civil unrest or police misconduct conflates the estimated incidence of abusive policing (Toch, 2012). The majority of police-community interactions are uneventful; only a relative few result in arrest or some form of use of force (e.g. Reiss, 1971). Moreover, surveys consistently reveal that the public by and large supports law enforcement efforts, recognizes

police legitimacy, and feels that obeying police officer directives is appropriate and expected (Rosenbaum et al, 2015). Despite a general ‘good feeling’ for police officers, negative events, such as the beating of Rodney King or the shooting of Michael Brown, have a more profound and immediate effect on the public than the mundane everyday ‘good’ behavior of most police officers. Slovic (1993), describing this imbalance between trust and distrust, identified reasons why the “playing field” is tilted toward distrust in the public sphere: (1) negative events are much more visible than positive events; (2) negative events carry greater weight than positive events; (3) sources of bad news tend to be seen as more credible than sources of good news; and (4) once distrust has manifested, it feeds itself through a constant process of selective reinforcement. Applying Slovic’s observations in the context of the police-community relationship, it becomes clear why the handful of instances of police misconduct or corruption, widely viewed through social media and local news outlets, have a much greater impact on public views of the police than the overwhelming majority of encounters that are conducted appropriately and professionally.

However, an organization that loses public trust due to scandals or misconduct can repair that trust over time (Eberl, Geiger, & Abländer, 2015). Eberl and colleagues (2015) discovered that an organization that begins a tightening of regulations and implementation of oversight procedures gives the public the impression that the organization is “doing something about it” rather than paying it lip service or ignoring the problem. In time, due to a predisposition to trust (Downes et al, 2002) and assuming no further instances of misconduct come to light, the public’s trust in the organization gradually returns. Unfortunately, such measures can also negatively influence employee morale and identification with the company due to the difficulty of applying the new procedures and the dissatisfaction of being associated with the misconduct of the ‘few’

(Eberl et al, 2015). This discontent can filter down and affect employee-customer relationships (Masterson, 2001). Tyler's (1990; 2004; 2009) exploration of *procedural justice* in public cooperation with police provides a more promising, albeit slower, approach to repairing public trust in the police by stressing "fair" policing practices that improve the public's perception of local law enforcement. Other studies, already noted, have demonstrated the advantages of using organizational justice principles in police organization management (Bradford et al, 2014; Eitle et al, 2014; Myhill & Bradford, 2013), in particular the decrease in officer acceptance of misconduct. Taken together, these studies suggest an approach to policing management that may bypass the 'double-edged sword' paradox of increasing public trust while simultaneously lowering employee satisfaction observed by Eberl and colleagues (2015), primarily by creating an organizational atmosphere that fosters greater levels of organizational commitment and satisfaction, which in turn filters down to interactions with the public.

The 'trickle-down effect' of fair treatment of employees so often observed in organizational studies (e.g. Masterson, 2001) may not translate adequately into the policing context, however, for two reasons: first, there is a significant power differential between the police and the average citizen (Walker, 1993); and second, cynical police views of the public. While senior officers and managers generally support and see the benefits of community policing (Somerville, 2009; Westmarland, 2010), frontline officers have a difficult time viewing the public as 'customers' (Westmarland, 2010) or even trustworthy, depending on local crime rates (Sobol, 2010), and tend to be pessimistic about allowing public input into policing practices in their neighborhoods (Adams et al, 2002; Westmarland, 2010), failing to see how this approach could be reconciled with police officer duties. In addition, the occupational and environmental strains of the job, the unique responsibility of wielding discretionary coercive power, and

unpredictable supervisory oversight may create considerable cynicism, or anomie, toward both the community and the organization (Manning, 1995; Reuss-Ianni, 1993). Surmounting these obstacles may be difficult, but considering the strength of justice research thus far, appear worthwhile. Procedurally just treatment by officers of the public strengthens the public's social bond with the police organization, which in turn promotes cooperation, ergo a "trickle-down" effect may be possible if the utilization by police organizations of the principles of organizational justice in administrative practice influences officers to act more fairly and positively towards the public.

Chapter 4

Data and Methods

Similar to Myhill and Bradford's original work, this study will examine how police officers' perceptions of justice in their own organization affect their attitudes toward their organizations and their attitudes toward the public. However, diverging from the Myhill & Bradford study, data was gathered in a city context rather than a rural setting and with police agencies that have varying levels of commitment to community policing principles. Myhill and Bradford's measurement of officer views of the public is supplemented with the Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) model of trust which includes perceived *trustworthiness* (as three components: perceived *benevolence*, *ability*, and *integrity*) and *propensity to trust*¹. The third part of the construct is *a willingness to be vulnerable*. The third component of the MDS construct of trust presents challenges since, in general, the police view vulnerability as unacceptable and a condition that needs to be avoided (Sobol, 2010; Westmarland, 2010). Measures of vulnerability, therefore, run the risk of being answered consistently in the negative. This study measures vulnerability as officers' views of greater community involvement in order maintenance. Many officers may not be supportive of greater community involvement and may consider community involvement a significant risk (Westmarland, 2010), such as, for example, in increasing the department's vulnerability to litigation, challenges to their authority, and so forth. However, considering that one of the goals of community-oriented policing is greater community involvement in controlling neighborhood crime (Somerville, 2009), these views become particularly important to measure.

¹ Also called *dispositional trust* in some studies (e.g. Bianchi & Brockner, 2012).

4.1 Survey and Sample

Patrol officers from four departments in mid-size city locations in Lower Michigan were asked to participate in a survey exploring police officer perspectives about their organization and the general public. Since police officers in the patrol division generally have the greatest exposure to police-citizen encounters, they were considered the most appropriate group of officers to sample for this study. In three departments, an invitation to participate in an online survey was distributed to line officers in the uniform patrol division. To maintain officer e-mail privacy, communication to the officers was sent through the department's IT division, which then disseminated the e-mail invitation and follow-up reminder to each officer. In the fourth department, a paper survey was distributed to officers at an annual training session. The choice of departments depended largely on the convenience of location, a reasonable number of possible respondents, and the willingness of management to allow and cooperate with the study. The four city areas are somewhat similar in population size and demographics according to the most recent census data, but show diverse crime rates per the FBI's UCR (Uniform Crime Reporting,

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of study participants (n = 170)

	Mean	Median	SD	Range
Age	39.7	41	8.28	22 - 60
	Frequency		Percent	
Gender				
Male	145		87.9	
Female	20		12.1	
Ethnicity				
White	145		88.4	
Non-White	19		11.6	
Views of Community Policing				
Mostly favorable	124		73.8	
Mostly unfavorable	22		13.1	
Neutral	22		13.1	

2010).

One hundred ninety officers responded to the invitation to participate in the survey. Of these, 20 officers followed the e-mail link to the opening page of the survey but failed to answer any questions at all and were not included in the final analysis (N = 170). The officer sample² (**Table 1**) was mostly white (88.4%) and male (87.9%). According to the U.S. Department of Justice (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2015), in 2013 whites made up 73% of local police officers nationwide and 87.5% of police officers were male, so this sample is more skewed than the national average in terms of ethnicity. A majority of the respondents had more than 10 years of experience as a police officer (73.6%). The median age of participants was 41, and they ranged in age from 22 to 60. Most reported favorable attitudes toward community policing (73.8%), and an overwhelming majority felt their department was either fully committed to community policing or practiced a mix of community policing and traditional policing techniques (95.2%).

4.2 Research Model

The conceptual model used for this research is delineated in **Figure 1**. To represent officers' perceptions of organizational justice, four constructs are used: distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice. Each of the items comprising these four constructs are outlined in **Table 2**. Officer perceptions of organizational justice is the main independent variable. Officer organizational commitment to their department, also an independent variable, was measured with two items. A profession-specific factor (attitude toward community policing) and demographics (age, gender, and ethnicity) are assessed as control variables. Officer trust in the public, the main dependent variable, is measured with four

² Initially, the survey would have asked the officers to identify their department of employment, but the question was discarded due to concerns of protecting officer anonymity.

constructs: general views of the public, trustworthiness, propensity to trust, and a willingness to be vulnerable. The trustworthiness construct is represented by three items (**Table 2**) that measure, respectively, *integrity*, *benevolence*, and *ability*. The key construct items (officer perceptions of organizational justice, officer organizational commitment, and officer trust in the public) were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The survey was anonymous and confidential, and had an informed consent. The survey took an average of less than 10 minutes to complete (8.6 minutes).

Figure 1. Conceptual model – dependent, independent, and control variables

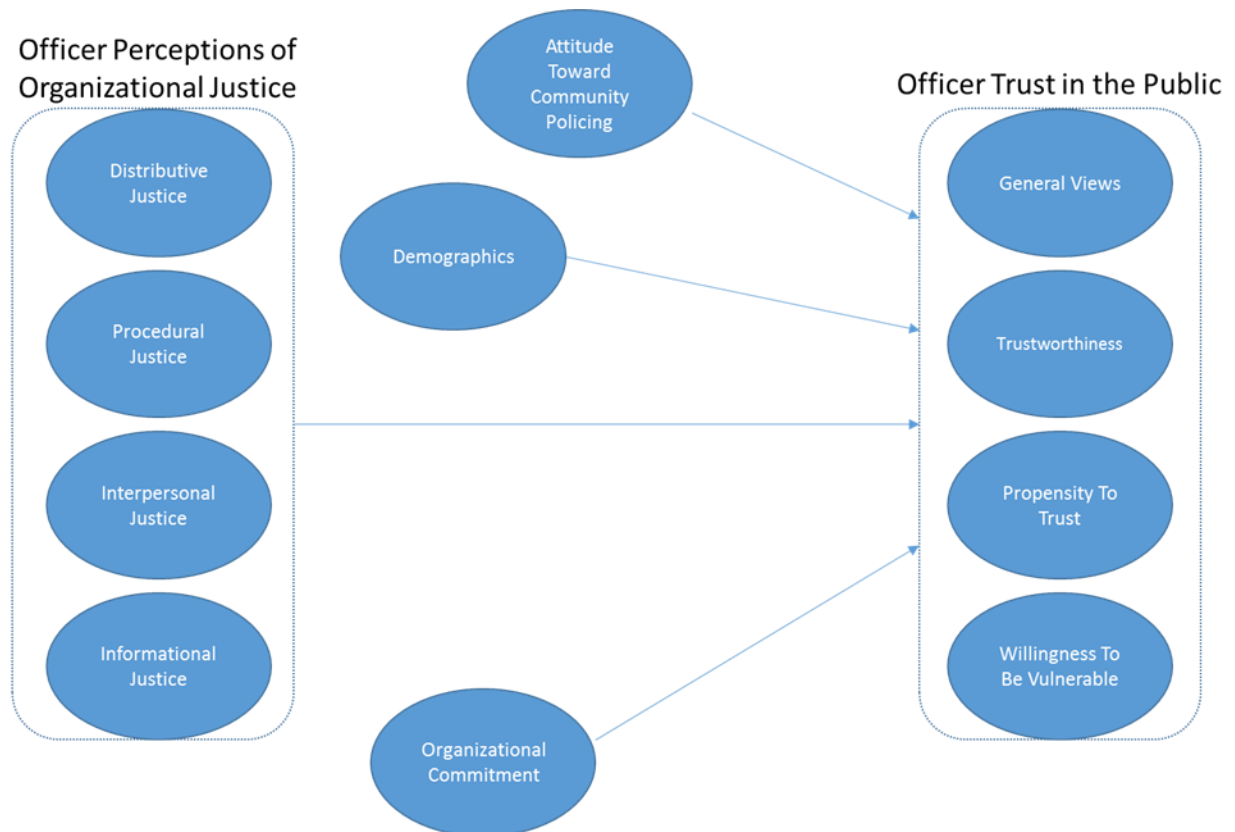


Table 2. Survey question text and key constructs

Officer perceptions of organizational justice

Distributive justice items

I am fairly paid considering the amount of effort I put in to the job
I am fairly paid considering the amount of education, training, and experience I have
Disciplinary action is a result of pressure on supervisors from command staff^a

Procedural justice items

Senior managers are open to differing views
In my department, my opinions are valued and taken into account
In my department, good performance is recognized and awarded
In my department, training and development is provided according to need
The force acts fairly regarding career progression

Interpersonal justice items

My supervisor treats me with respect
My supervisor refrains from improper comments or remarks
My supervisor takes steps to deal with me in a truthful manner
Police supervisors in this organization show interest in the officers who work under them

Informational justice items

My supervisor explains procedures thoroughly
My supervisor provides needed information in a timely manner
My supervisor's explanations of procedures are reasonable
Senior management ensures that all personnel are adequately informed on important issues

Organizational commitment

I have a strong attachment to the force
I feel a sense of loyalty to my department

Officer trust in the public

General view items

Some victims of crime are more deserving of a good service than others^a
It's a waste of time trying to help some people^a
There are certain communities that do little to deserve the respect of the police^a

Trustworthiness items

The people in the community I patrol approach life with a strong moral code
The people in the community I patrol care about what happens to police officers
The people in the community I patrol are capable of "policing" themselves

Officer propensity to trust items

Most people can be counted on to do what they say they will do
I think that most people try to be fair
I would say that most of the time, most people try to be helpful

Willingness to be vulnerable items

I would be comfortable giving a person in the community I patrol a task that is important, even if I could not monitor his/her actions.
If I had my way, I would let the people in the community I patrol have an influence over issues that are important to me.
If I had my way, I would let the people in the community I patrol have a say in how the department conducts policing activities in their neighborhood.

Notes: ^aReverse scored items

Upon further evaluation it was noted that among the constructs comprising officers' trust in the public, *general views* and *propensity to trust* scales appeared to be targeting a broader view of the public while *trustworthiness* and the *willingness to be vulnerable* scales focused on more community-specific officer perspectives. Considering the possibility that there may be a distinction between officer perceptions of people in general and officer perceptions of people in the community they patrol, it was decided that two additional dependent variables will be assessed – *general trust in the public* (composed of two scales: *general views* and *propensity to trust*) and *community-specific trust in the public* (consisting of two scales: *trustworthiness* and *a willingness to be vulnerable*).

The following hypotheses are tested in this study:

Main Hypothesis: Officer perceptions of organizational justice will be significantly associated with officer trust in the public.

Corollary Hypotheses: It is anticipated that officer perceptions of organizational justice will remain statistically related with public trust when competing explanations are controlled: (1) officers' commitment to their organizations (e.g. Blader & Tyler, 2009); (2) officers' views of community-oriented policing (Bradford et al, 2014; Myhill & Bradford, 2013); and (3) demographic variables (age, gender, ethnicity).

All of the above hypotheses will be retested with *general trust in the public* as the dependent variable, and with *community-specific trust* as the dependent variable.

4.3 Scales

The general views of the public scale was taken directly from Myhill and Bradford's (2013) study (specifically, their *attitudes to serving the public* measure), and is supplemented by

the constructs from the MDS trust model (*trustworthiness*, *propensity to trust*, and *a willingness to be vulnerable*). Scales were created by summing all relevant items per scale (see **Table 3**), and then merging trust and justice scales into the main dependent and independent variables of *officer perceptions of organizational justice* and *officer trust in the public*. Officers were given the option to skip any questions they felt uncomfortable answering, but as long as they gave *some* answers to scale questions (e.g. 1 of the 3 questions regarding *propensity to trust*, 2 of the 5 questions exploring *procedural justice*, etc.), their responses were included.³

Previous studies using similar scales have generally returned alpha scores greater than .7, and reliability analysis using SPSS returned comparable results. The *general views of the public* scale returned a Cronbach's alpha score of .804 (**Table 3**). Three questions represented perceptions of *trustworthiness* ($\alpha = .742$), encompassing benevolence ("The people in the community I patrol care about what happens to police officers"), ability ("The people in the community I patrol are capable of 'policing' themselves"), and integrity ("The people in the community I patrol approach life with a strong moral code"). An officer's *propensity to trust* ($\alpha = .901$) was measured with three questions (ex: "I would say that most of the time, most people try to be helpful"), while an officer's *willingness to be vulnerable* ($\alpha = .791$), in the context of allowing the public greater involvement in order maintenance, was also measured with three questions (ex: "If I had my way, I would let the people in the community I patrol have a say in how the department conducts policing activities in their neighborhood").

In line with research conducted by Colquitt (2001) and Greenberg (1993), the organizational justice construct (see **Table 2**) consisted of four components: distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice. Distributive justice was

³ It should be noted that of the sample of 170 officers, only 12 officers failed to completely fill out the survey, giving partial responses to some scales or skipping demographics questions (age, ethnicity, or gender).

initially measured with three questions (example: “I am fairly paid considering the amount of education, training, and experience I have”), returning an alpha score of .673, but one question (“Disciplinary action is a result of pressure on supervisors from command staff”) was poorly correlated with the other two items and removed, improving the reliability of the scale ($\alpha = .939$), as shown in **Table 3**. Procedural justice ($\alpha = .858$) was measured with 5 questions (example: “In my department, good performance is recognized and awarded”), interpersonal justice ($\alpha = .801$) was measured with 4 questions (example: “My supervisor treats me with respect”), and informational justice ($\alpha = .820$) was also measured with 4 questions (example: “My supervisor provides needed information in a timely manner”). Organizational commitment ($\alpha = .805$) was assessed with two questions (“I have a strong attachment to the force,” and “I feel a sense of loyalty to my department”).

Table 3. Internal consistency of scales

Subscale/item	Mean	SD	α
Organizational Justice (Independent Variable)			
Distributive Justice			.939
Fairly paid considering effort	4.15	1.78	
Fairly paid considering experience and education	4.03	1.80	
Procedural Justice			.858
Managers open to differing views	4.24	1.61	
Opinions are valued	4.46	1.66	
Good performance is recognized	4.91	1.56	
Training provided according to need	4.99	1.69	
Force acts fairly in career progression	4.22	1.64	
Interpersonal Justice			.801
Supervisor treats with respect	6.24	0.81	
Supervisor refrains from improper remarks	5.85	1.17	
Supervisor is truthful	6.05	0.99	
Organization's supervisors interested in officers	5.50	1.33	
Informational Justice			.820
Supervisor explains procedures	5.54	1.12	
Supervisor provides timely information	5.68	1.13	
Supervisor's explanations are reasonable	5.70	1.03	
Senior management adequately informs personnel	4.79	1.49	
Organizational Commitment (Independent Variable)			
			.805
Strong attachment to the force	5.82	1.34	
Loyal to the department	6.06	1.23	
Trust in the Public (Dependent Variable)			
General Views of the Public			.804
Some victims more deserving of good service	4.36	1.87	
Waste of time trying to help some people	4.29	1.94	
Certain communities deserve little police respect	4.57	1.80	
Trustworthiness			.742
Community has strong moral code	3.67	1.50	
Community cares about police officers	4.09	1.61	
Community capable of "policing" itself	2.81	1.58	
Propensity to Trust			.901
Most people can be counted on	4.72	1.26	
Most people try to be fair	5.05	1.08	
Most people try to be helpful	4.99	1.13	
Willingness to be Vulnerable			.791
Give a person in community an important task	4.01	1.47	
Let community have influence over important issues	3.63	1.60	
Let community have a say in policing activities	3.54	1.66	

Note: Questions are abbreviated; for full question text, see **Table 2**

Chapter 5

Analysis and Results

The constructs were first assessed for bivariate correlations, since high correlations between scales may present multicollinearity problems (Stoltzfus, 2011). **Table 4** shows that the scales are significantly correlated ($p < .01$), but Pearson's r values are not high enough to be a cause for concern with regards to multicollinearity. All the constructs that comprise organizational justice are positively correlated with each other. As shown in Table 4, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice are positively correlated (Pearson's r at .205~.532). Of these four constructs, interpersonal justice and informational justice are the most highly correlated with each other. In terms of 'trust in the public,' the four constructs that comprise it are also positively correlated with each other (Pearson's r at .216~.546). Trustworthiness and willingness to be vulnerable are the trust constructs most highly correlated with each other. In terms of the correlations between the independent variable constructs and the dependent variable, one can see that perceived organizational justice is correlated with both organizational commitment and trust in the public. As with previous research findings (Myhill & Bradford, 2013), officer perceptions of organizational justice were positively correlated with organizational commitment.

Table 4. Pearson correlations between scales

<i>Organizational Justice</i>	DJ	PJ	IP	IJ
Distributive Justice (DJ)		.499**	.205**	.236**
Procedural Justice (PJ)			.394**	.484**
Interpersonal Justice (IP)				.532**
Informational Justice (IJ)				
<i>Trust in the Public</i>	GV	TW	PT	WV
General Views (GV)		.216**	.240**	.326**
Trustworthiness (TW)			.306**	.546**
Propensity to Trust (PT)				.357**
Willing / Vulnerable (WV)				
<i>Independent & Dependent Scales</i>		OJ	OC	TiP
Organizational Justice (OJ)			.517**	.419**
Organizational Commitment (OC)				.383**
Trust in the Public (TiP)				

**p < .01 (2-tailed)

5.1 Regression Analysis

As outlined in **Figure 1** and as stated in the main hypothesis, the primary objective of this research was to investigate the relationship between officer perceptions of organizational justice and officer perceptions of the public. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses were used to test models to assess factors that affect officer trust in the public. Hierarchical regression was used to enable assessment of the separate effects of each of the independent variable constructs, as well as all of their effects together, on the dependent variable. Hierarchical regression is a useful technique to analyze the effects of a variable after controlling for other variables that may be correlated with each other. The coefficient of determination, or R^2 , is a statistical measure of how well data fit the model. Incremental change in variance is reflected in the change in R^2 after each predictor variable is entered into the model. A large change in R^2 suggests a sizeable effect on the criterion variable, while a small change may suggest little effect

on the criterion variable. The order of placement of variables into the model is reflective of expectations, namely that officer perceptions of organizational justice will have the largest effect on officer trust in the public, followed by organizational commitment, and so on.

Model statistics and regression coefficients are shown in **Table 5**⁴. Model 1 in Table 5 includes only officer perceptions of organizational justice, and, as shown, the construct is statistically significant ($p < .01$) with a standardized beta of .419 and an R^2 of .176. This indicates that perceptions of organizational justice alone accounts for 18% of the variance in officers' trust in the public. The model remains statistically significant when organizational commitment is added, with a standardized beta of .302 and an R^2 of .213. After controlling for organizational justice, the change in R^2 when organizational commitment was added was (.038), suggesting that an officer's organizational commitment has only a small effect on officer trust in the public. When officer views of community policing was added to the model (Table 5, Model 3), the R^2 change was (.072), which meant that officer views of community policing has nearly twice the effect on officer trust in the public as organizational commitment. Finally, adding the demographic variables to the model appeared to have very little effect on officer trust in the public (R^2 change = .013), and none of the demographic variables were statistically significant. Perceptions of organizational justice and views of community policing were the only variables consistently significant across models ($p < .01$). Organizational commitment was statistically significant in the two-factor model ($p < .01$), but was not statistically significant in the final model, when other variables are controlled. The final 4-factor model was able to account for 30% of the variance in officer trust in the public ($R^2 = .298$), although one can see throughout the

⁴ Zero order correlations between model variables can be found in **Table 8** in the **Appendix** (p. 41).

four models that perceptions of organizational justice has the largest impact across the explanatory variables considered

To explore whether police officers' trust in the public varies when the trust variables comprise only general trust (*general views* and *propensity to trust*) or only community-specific trust (*trustworthiness* and *a willingness to be vulnerable*), these two constructs were also assessed as dependent variables using the OLS regression technique. **Table 6** shows an OLS regression with officer general trust in the public as the dependent variable. As shown, Model 1 includes only officer perceptions of organizational justice and it is statistically significant ($p < .01$). This accounts for 12% of the variance in officer trust in the public. Adding organizational commitment into the model (Table 6, Model 2) increases R^2 to .168 (R^2 change = .045), but reduces the statistical significance of organizational justice somewhat ($p < .05$), suggesting a suppression effect. This means that other variables besides perceived organizational justice are likely more important in predicting general trust in the public. When officer views of community policing were added in Model 3, the R^2 increased to .227, although the R^2 change was modest (.059). Finally, the addition of officer demographics to the model yields a slight improvement to the model (R^2 change = .028), and the added variable of age was statistically significant ($p < .05$). The 4-factor model for predicting general trust in the public yielded similar results as the 4-factor model for predicting overall officer trust in the public, accounting for 26% of the variance in general trust in the public ($R^2 = .255$).

A final regression analysis with community-specific trust in the public as the dependent variable is shown in **Table 7**. The effects shown here mirror the previous models (Table 5 and Table 6). As shown in Model 1, officer perceptions of organizational justice alone accounts for 12% of the variance in officer community-specific trust in the public, and the model is

statistically significant ($p < .01$). Adding organizational commitment to the model has only a minimal effect ($R^2 = .141$, R^2 change = .014), and this variable is not statistically significant, although the model itself remains statistically significant. The addition of officer views of community policing in Model 3 increased the model's R^2 to .185. Officers who had unfavorable and neutral views of community policing had less trust in the community than did police who were favorable towards community policing (the reference category). Officer demographics had virtually no effect on the model (R^2 change = .003). The final model for assessing officer community-specific trust in the public accounted for 19% of the variance ($R^2 = .188$).

Across all three dependent variables and models, officer perceptions of organizational justice were statistically significant predictors of officer trust in the public and provided the most explanatory power. These results echo research findings in management and organizational psychology literatures on employee perceptions of organizational justice and their effects on the employee-customer relationship (e.g. Masterson, 2001). The perception of fair treatment strengthens an employee's (or an officer's) commitment to the organization, as well as the organization's goals, one of these goals being 'good' customer service. While the dynamic is somewhat different in the police-community context (i.e. many officers do not consider the public 'customers'), there has nevertheless been a consistent shift in focus in police departments toward a more community-oriented form of policing, something of which the overwhelming majority of officers are aware. For example, over 95% of respondents in this sample felt their department was either fully or partially committed to community policing principles. By treating their officers in a manner deemed just by the officers, this sample's police departments appear to have strengthened their commitment to their organization and positively influenced officer views of the public.

Officer views of community policing were also statistically significant across all dependent variables, although noticeably less significant for *community-specific views of the public*. Organizational commitment had no effect on any of the final models predicting officer trust. Ethnicity and gender were not statistically significant in any of the models. Age was a significant predictor in *general trust in the public*, but it was not significant in the final model of *community-specific trust in the public* nor in the main dependent variable, *officer trust in the public*. Demographics as a whole had remarkably little effect on the regression models.

Table 5. OLS regression results, Officer Trust in the Public

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (Beta)			
	Standard Error			
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
1. Organizational Justice	.353(.419)**	.254(.302)**	.210(.250)**	.229(.272)**
	.062	.071	.070	.072
2. Organizational Commitment		1.070(.227)**	.673(.143)	.655(.139)
		.400	.398	.399
3. View of Community Policing				
Unfavorable			-8.021(-.244)**	-7.977(-.243)**
			2.484	2.492
Neutral			-6.677(-.203)**	-6.751(-.205)**
			2.413	2.419
Favorable			<i>Reference Category</i>	
4. Non-White				-.166(-.004)
				2.701
5. Female				2.421(.071)
				2.462
6. Age				.145(.108)
				.099
Model statistics	F=31.988**	F=20.220**	F=14.649**	F=8.730**
	R ² = .176	R ² = .213	R ² = .285	R ² = .298
		R ² change = .038	R ² change = .072	R ² change = .013

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 6. OLS regression results, Officer General Trust in the Public

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (Beta)			
	Standard Error			
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
1. Organizational Justice	.168(.351)**	.107(.223)*	.084(.176)*	.104(.217)*
	.037	.042	.041	.042
2. Organizational Commitment		.663(.247)**	.458(.171)	.449(.168)
		.234	.235	.234
3. View of Community Policing				
Unfavorable			-3.950(-.212)**	-3.964(-.212)**
			1.468	1.459
Neutral			-3.668(-.196)*	-3.764(-.202)**
			1.426	1.416
Favorable			<i>Reference Category</i>	
4. Non-White				-.476(-.022)
				1.582
5. Female				1.383(.072)
				1.441
6. Age				.130(.171)*
				.058
Model statistics	F=21.062**	F=15.039**	F=10.794**	F=7.042**
	R ² = .123	R ² = .168	R ² = .227	R ² = .255
		R ² change = .045	R ² change = .059	R ² change = .028

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 7. OLS regression results, Officer Community-Specific Trust in the Public

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (Beta)			
	Standard Error			
	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
1. Organizational Justice	.185(.356)**	.147(.284)**	.126(.243)**	.125(.242)**
	.040	.046	.046	.047
2. Organizational Commitment		.404(.139)	.214(.074)	.205(.071)
		.257	.261	.264
3. View of Community Policing				
Unfavorable			-4.045(-.200)*	-3.987(-.197)*
			1.632	1.649
Neutral			-2.985(-.148)	-2.965(-.147)
			1.585	1.601
Favorable			<i>Reference Category</i>	
4. Non-White				.316(.014)
				1.787
5. Female				1.044(.050)
				1.629
6. Age				.016(.019)
				.066
Model statistics	F=21.825**	F=12.254**	F=8.358**	F=4.764**
	R ² = .127	R ² = .141	R ² = .185	R ² = .188
		R ² change = .014	R ² change = .044	R ² change = .003

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Chapter 6

Discussion

At its most basic, community policing involves an effective working partnership between the police and the “policed.” Close community-police relations and interactions are expected, and the success or failure of departmental reforms geared toward a more community-oriented approach to policing may depend to some extent on the strength of those relations. For community policing to work, the public needs to feel they can trust the officers patrolling their neighborhoods. In other words, trust matters, and since trust is a reciprocal relationship, trust matters in *both* directions. The success of community policing may be just as dependent on officer trust in the public as public trust in police officers. The task, therefore, becomes one of exploring methods to improve the relationship of trust on both sides of the equation.

The main purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between an officer’s perceptions of how fairly he/she feels treated by their organization and how they view the public. Research in organizational psychology has consistently revealed that practices employed by organizations that are perceived as fair by employees positively shapes employee commitment to organizational goals (Colquitt, 2008). In terms of policing, one of those organizational goals is better police-community relations, an aim that is well-known to the overwhelming majority of police officers, including the officers in this study’s sample (95.2% believe their department is either fully or partially committed to community policing). The findings of the current study suggest that officer perceptions of organizational justice have a significant influence on how police officers view the public, and this holds true across officer ethnicity, gender, and age. In essence, a “trickle-down” effect occurs; officers in this sample who felt fairly treated by their organization had a more positive, or trusting, view of the public. Officer views of community

policing were also an important influence on officer trust in the public. Those officers with an unfavorable or neutral view of community policing had significantly less trust in the public. This would seem to suggest that police departments that encourage their officers to develop a greater commitment to community policing principles *and* make a concerted effort to satisfy officers' expectations of organizational and supervisory fair treatment will also be positively influencing the police-community relationship, by way of enhancing officer trust in the public.

A particularly interesting finding in this research was the distinction between general and community-specific trust in the public. Officer perceptions of organizational justice, while still significant, were less of an influence on an officer's general view of people. In addition, although demographics had little effect throughout the study, *age* was statistically significant in the *general trust in the public* model, with older officers having more trust in the general public. This suggests that broad questions about the public may be tapping into an officer's personal views of people that may or may not be overlapping with their professional experiences on the beat. In a sense, general questions about people are answered from a subjective *personal* perspective, while questions about people in the communities an officer patrols are answered from a *cop's* perspective. In support of this possibility, officer perceptions of organizational justice and officer views on community policing had even less influence on *community-specific trust in the public*, and mean officer scores for community-specific trust questions were noticeably lower than for general trust questions. Clearly, at least in this sample, police officers appeared to distinguish between *people* and *people in the communities they patrol*.

The survey results also provided a more nuanced view of officer attitudes toward, or trust in, the public than is usually found in the policing literature. Based on the results, it would seem that officers, for the most part, feel the public cares about what happens to police officers, and

that most people are reliable, helpful, and fair. However, as mentioned above, these attitudes change somewhat when officers are asked to consider people living specifically in the neighborhoods the police officer patrols. In particular, police officers have little faith in the public's ability to "police" themselves; that is, they appear to doubt a community's ability to use informal social controls to maintain order. This is an especially knotty problem considering the emphasis in community policing philosophy on a community's ability to assist police in order maintenance. The police are effectively being asked to partner with people they don't feel are capable of holding up their end of the bargain. Moreover, the police in this sample were less than enthusiastic about allowing the community a say in policing activities in their neighborhoods, which becomes rather problematic considering that having a say in policing activities is very popular among the public (Westmarland, 2010). Finally, the mean for officer perceptions of the community's *integrity* (defined here as community residents' moral code) was conspicuously lower than most other trust values, suggesting that officers have some doubts about the morality of the people in the neighborhoods they patrol. Considering that normative, or moral, alignment is central to research exploring the public's perceptions of police legitimacy (e.g. Jackson et al, 2012), it may be reasonable to assume that moral alignment is just as important a factor in the police's trust in the public as it is in the public's trust in police.

In any event, it should come as some comfort to police management to know that police departments that attempt to create a positive work environment and treat their officers fairly are not only reducing the risks of officer misconduct but also positively influencing the police-community relationship. Policing scholars and police management have devoted a considerable amount of time, money, and energy in recent years in finding ways to improve the public's trust in law enforcement agencies and actors. Local and national polling has identified problem areas

that contribute to negative perceptions of the police, while academic research has explored specific methods, such as officers employing procedurally just practices when interacting with civilians, which may enhance the public's overall trust in law enforcement. Although instances of police misconduct are generally uncommon in most communities, they *do* occur, and the events may be sensationalized by local news or social media. In these circumstances, police management must struggle with trying to please a public justifiably upset over an incident of police misconduct while simultaneously attempting to avoid disaffecting the majority of police officers within the organization. Disgruntled police officers are more likely to engage in some form of misconduct, which in turn can have a continued negative impact on the public's trust in police, creating a further burden on police management, and so on. Clearly, addressing the initial incident in a manner that is deemed appropriate by the organization's officers while also satisfying the public's desire for justice is a best case scenario.

This research has several noteworthy limitations. First, it is unclear if this study was measuring officer trust/mistrust or measuring officer caution. Police officers, by habit and training, approach virtually every encounter with the public with some degree of caution. They might believe they are in a "good" community (i.e. they have a high level of trust in the community), and yet still approach an interaction with a community resident in a very cautious, careful manner. Therefore, it is possible that the officers answered some of the survey questions, especially the community-specific questions, with prudence rather than as a reflection of trust or mistrust. This study lacked the means to distinguish between officer trust or mistrust and officer caution. Second, officer attitude may not translate into officer action. In other words, a more positive attitude toward the public does not necessarily mean officers are more likely to be procedurally just in their policing practices when interacting with the public. Future research

may want to explore a connection between officer trust in the public and officer policing practices. In addition, it is unclear if *attitude* leads to trust or *behavior* leads to trust; there is considerable overlap in interpretation and definition. This research also did not take into account the effect of local crime rates on officer trust, a known environmental influence on officer behavior. Another notable limitation is the fact that this study involved exploring perceptions from four different police departments in four different locations (communities) without considering the context (i.e. environmental factors) that may be influencing police officer responses. Finally, the limits of cross-sectional research – conducted at a specific point in time and unable to determine cause and effect – and the self-selection and geographic location of the sample's officers – which may limit the generalizability of the research's findings – should be noted.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Table 8. Bivariate correlations between model variables

	OJ	OC	Ucp	Ncp	Eth	G	A
Trust in the Public (TiP)	.419**	.383**	-.320**	-.234**	.071	.131	-.037
Organizational Justice (OJ)		.517**	-.267**	-.152	.107	.142	-.277**
Org Commitment (OC)			-.283**	-.208**	.119	.113	-.142
Unfavorable Views of CP (Ucp)				-.151	-.066	-.091	.087
Neutral Views of CP (Ncp)					-.062	-.036	.068
Ethnicity (Eth)						.138	-.076
Gender (G)							-.220**
Age (A)							
General Trust	.351**	.363**	-.277**	-.227**	.044	.107	.041
Community-Specific Trust	.356**	.286**	-.263**	-.170*	.075	.113	-.097

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed)

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