

The Overlooked Perspective of Police Trust in the Public: Measurement and Effects on Police Job Behaviors

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Abstract

Many studies have looked at the public's trust in the police, but very few have examined police trust in the public. Based on Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's model of trust, we conducted two studies. The first study created scales measuring the antecedents of trust and assessed police trust in the public based on a survey of 990 police officers from across the United States. The second study used the trust measures developed in the first study, as well as supervisors' evaluations and archival performance data, in a study of the job performance of 135 police officers. We found that officers who had greater trust in the public engaged in more proactive policing and made more arrests. We discuss the implications of these findings, including what they mean for police officers and the communities they serve.

Keywords

trust, police, de-policing, public

In recent years, there have been a number of high profile, tragic incidents involving the police and the public that have garnered national attention, such as the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody in Baltimore, Maryland. These incidents have severely strained police–public

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relationships, especially with minorities. The public's trust in the police is essential for effective law enforcement (Hohl, Bradford, & Stanko, 2010; Lyons, 2002; Mason, Hillenbrand, & Money, 2014; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tankebe, 2013). The police need the public's compliance, cooperation, and empowerment to do their job effectively (Nix, Wolfe, Rojek, & Kaminski, 2015).

However, the police–public trust relationship is not one-sided (Westmarland, 2010). Although the public's trust in the police is essential for good police–public relations, so is police trust in the public. As Kääriäinen and Sirén (2012) state, “[T]he trust of citizens in the police and the trust of the police in citizens are closely intertwined” (p. 282). Widespread collaboration and cooperation between the police and the public is impossible without *mutual* trust, respect, and support (Moon & Zager, 2007, emphasis added). Moreover, mutual trust is essential for democratic governance (Yang, 2005). Although many studies and articles have addressed the public's trust in the police (e.g., Brown & Benedict, 2002; Cao, Stack, & Sun, 1998; Goldsmith, 2005; Hohl et al., 2010; Kääriäinen, 2008; Tuch & Weitzer, 1997; Tyler, 2001; Wu & Sun, 2009; Zamble & Annesley, 1987), few have examined police trust in the public (Carr & Maxwell, 2018; Mourtgos, Mayer, & Wise, 2017). A potent practical illustration of this can be seen in the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015). The report outlines “building trust and legitimacy” as the first of six pillars for the advancement of policing. Although the importance of building trust on *both* sides of the police–public relationship is acknowledged, none of the nine recommendations or 19 action items listed for this pillar directly address police trust in the public. Understanding the trust relationship between two parties requires understanding both sides of the relationship.

Failure to assess police officers' trust in the public neglects many of the possible causes of problems in the police–public relationship. This is problematic for at least two reasons. First, when the police lack trust in the public, we suggest (and test in this research) that it affects how the police perform their job. For example, they may be less willing to engage in behaviors that are in the public's best interest, such as proactive police work. Second, scholars have long recognized that trust is a reciprocal relationship and that one party's level of trust affects the other party's level of trust (e.g., Ferrin, Bligh, & Kohles, 2008; Mayer, Bobko, Davis, & Gavin, 2011; Serva, Fuller, & Mayer, 2005). With the reciprocal nature of trust in mind, it thus follows that when the police do not trust the public, the public may be less likely to trust the police. The current research focuses on police trust in the public. Consequently, we use a police perspective in the examples and reasoning here to better understand how police perceptions affect their trust in the public and their behaviors to protect it.

The complexity of the construct of trust may be one reason for the lack of research on police trust in the public. Historically, there has been disagreement on how to define trust, confusion over its relationship with risk, confusion between trust and its antecedents, and a failure to differentiate between a trustor and a trustee (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Moreover, regarding criminal justice research specifically, trust has been imprecisely discussed and often does not have an agreed-upon definition (Cao, 2015). Notwithstanding these difficulties, researchers began devoting greater

attention to the study of trust in the mid-1990s because of highly publicized corporate and government scandals, which generated a new interest in the construct (Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 2007).

Mayer et al. (1995) developed an integrative model of trust that is widely accepted and influential (Hamm, Trinker, & Carr, 2017). It defines trust as the “willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712). Although their theory of trust has frequently been applied in organizational research, many other disciplines have also used it including economics, political science, communication, ethics, law, psychology, sociology, and health care (Schoorman et al., 2007). It is applicable to both individuals and groups (Schoorman et al., 2007), and it has been used to study trust between different groups (e.g., Muthusamy & White, 2005; Serva et al., 2005) including police officers’ trust in police administrators (Maurya & Agarwal, 2013) and the public’s trust in the police (Hamm et al., 2017). This fact is important because police officers often conceptualize themselves as one group and the public as another group. This “us vs. them” mentality has been widely documented in police culture (Paoline, 2003; Silverman, 1999; Sparrow, Moore, & Kennedy, 1990; Westley, 1970).

Mayer et al.’s (1995) model states that how much a trustor trusts a trustee is determined by the trustor’s willingness to trust others in general (termed “propensity to trust”) and the trustor’s perception of the target’s trustworthiness. Although a trustor’s propensity to trust others is seen as an individual personality trait encompassing their propensity to trust “most people,” the perceived trustworthiness of a trustee includes three factors: the trustee’s perceived ability, benevolence, and integrity. Ability refers to the perceived skills and competencies that enable the trustee to have influence within a specific domain. Benevolence is the trustor’s perception that the trustee has a positive orientation toward and wants to do good for the trustor, even if the trustee will not benefit. Integrity refers to the perception that “the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 719). A perception of integrity thus encompasses both the acceptability of the trustee’s apparent values and a judgment that the trustee consistently follows them. How trustworthy a trustor perceives a trustee depends on these three factors, which are related but distinct (Mayer & Davis, 1999).

Mayer et al.’s (1995) model also differentiates between trust and risk-taking. Trust is the *willingness* to be vulnerable, whereas risk-taking is *actually becoming vulnerable*. In short, risk-taking is the behavioral expression of trust (Mayer et al., 1995). The model thus distinguishes among three issues: (a) the perceived characteristics of the trustee that affect trustworthiness, (b) trust as a *behavioral intention to take risk*, and (c) *actual risk-taking* behavior.

Numerous empirical studies over the last two decades support Mayer et al.’s (1995) model of trust (e.g., Bhattacharjee, 2002; Gill, Boies, Finegan, & McNally, 2005; Mayer et al., 2011; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Ridings, Gefen, & Arinze, 2002; Tan & Lim, 2009). Colquitt, Scott, and LePine’s (2007) meta-analysis

of 132 independent samples showed ability, benevolence, integrity, and propensity to trust each had a significant and unique relationship with trust. In addition, the meta-analysis supported the fundamental assumption of the model that a significant relationship exists between trust and risk-taking.

Carr and Maxwell (2018) recognized police trust in the public as an understudied phenomenon and importantly moved this line of research forward by utilizing Mayer et al.'s (1995) model of trust. They examined the relationship between police perceptions of organizational justice and trust in the public. Their research operationalized police trust in the public as a willingness to partner with the community. This conceptualization of police trust in the public overlaps with but does not cover the full spectrum of the Mayer et al. (1995) model. Moreover, they measured officer perceptions of the public's trustworthiness (ability, benevolence, and integrity) with only one item for each variable. For reliability, longer measures than single items are necessary.

To our knowledge, no other study has comprehensively measured police trust in the public based on a sound theoretical model of trust. Some studies have assessed components of police trust in the public. They are discussed below, divided into different categories based on their relationship to the antecedents of trust described above and their relationship to the behavioral outcome of trust (i.e., risk-taking).

Propensity to Trust

If police do not trust the public, it could be argued that it is because their propensity to trust others is low. Niederhoffer's (1967) seminal work on police cynicism suggests that police propensity to trust may be low. Indeed, Osborne (2014) indicates that the police cynicism literature that followed Niederhoffer's work demonstrates officer cynicism is ubiquitous. Moreover, Caplan (2003) states that police work inevitably produces cynicism. However, police cynicism and suspiciousness may be a product of frequent interactions with criminals and other aspects of officers' jobs, rather than a reflection of their propensity to trust. Paoline (2003) indicates that police are more suspicious of the public than distrustful. Suspicion is essential to police work, and Skolnick (1977) indicates that this is part of an officer's working personality.

Kääriäinen and Sirén (2012) examined police officers' general level of trust in 22 European countries and compared them with the public's general level of trust in those countries. They found that within a country, the officers' level of general trust in people closely reflected the public's level of general trust in others. This study suggests that police officers' propensity to trust does not significantly differ from the public's propensity to trust. Past research has consistently found that one's propensity to trust others affects trust in another party (Colquitt et al., 2007). It therefore seems likely that it will have a similar effect when examining officers' trust in the public.

Ability

We propose that police view the public from the perspective of ability. From the perspective of a police officer, this entails evaluating the extent that the public has the

knowledge to understand the dangerous and difficult nature and the many stressors of police work, make competent judgments about police actions, and interact appropriately with the police.

A common sentiment among the police is that: "The public is generally naïve about police work . . . Members of the public are basically unsupportive and unreasonably demanding. They all seem to think they know our job better than we do" (Sparrow et al., 1990, p. 51). Indeed, the perception that the public does not understand the realities of police work and that the public needs to be educated and gain a better understanding of police work is common among police officers (Bartels & Silverman, 2005; Westley, 1970). This perception may help explain the resistance of the police to civilian review boards (Bartels & Silverman, 2005; Fogel, 1987; Terrill, 1982), where members of the public judge the appropriateness of police actions.

The concept of ability becomes especially salient when use-of-force controversies arise. Incidents where the police use force against the public can damage the relationship between police departments and the public (Alpert & Dunham, 2004) because police officers and the public are likely to see the incident very differently (Herbert, 2006). Police officers are well-versed in the realities of violent encounters, whereas generally, the public is not knowledgeable. Accordingly, the public may make judgments about police use-of-force without adequate background knowledge of the realities of such actions.

For example, Lewinski (2000) has demonstrated that a suspect who points a gun at an officer and then immediately turns has a high likelihood of being shot in the back, which can often cause accusations of unjustified deadly force. This is due to the physical and cognitive limitations of officers; suspects can present a deadly threat and turn to run away faster than an officer can visually attend to the threat, make the decision to shoot, shoot his or her gun, but then recognize that the suspect has turned. It has also been demonstrated that once an officer perceives a deadly threat and shoots, the threat that would justify continuing use of deadly force can change before an officer can perceive the change, process it, and stop shooting. This can result in an extra three to six bullets being fired by an officer after the threat has ceased (Lewinski & Redmann, 2009). Officers who have to cope with the trauma of using deadly force may feel angry and frustrated with the public if the public accuses the officers of using excessive force in such circumstances. They may also conclude that the public lacks the ability to competently judge their actions.

There are of course instances where the police use excessive force, and public criticisms of the police is justified. However, in the present study we are focusing on police officers' perceptions of these incidents to better understand police trust in the public. The copious amounts of recent public criticism of police behavior, which at times have reached levels of hysteria (Wolfe & Nix, 2016), have likely influenced police officers' perceptions of the public's ability to judge their actions fairly.

Officers' belief that the public lacks the ability to objectively evaluate police actions is probably not confined to police use-of-force (Herbert, 2006). Many officers may also believe that the public lacks even a basic understanding of the law and their constitutional rights. For example, they may believe that most members of the public do

not understand legal concepts such as reasonable suspicion, probable cause, Miranda rights, and search and seizure law. Indeed, surveys of the U.S. public have consistently found low levels of public knowledge of the Constitution and the U.S. legal system (Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2016; Jamieson & Hennessy, 2006; “Take the Quiz,” 2011). Members of the public who do not understand the law may challenge officers’ actions, resulting in confrontations with the police. These encounters may reinforce officers’ belief the public lacks the ability to properly evaluate their actions.

If officers believe that the public lacks the ability to understand their actions, it may cause officers to feel misunderstood. If officers believe that the public does not understand them or the many hazards of their dangerous profession, it may also generate feelings of not belonging or being part of the community they serve. This belief is problematic because it reinforces the “us vs. them” attitude of police officers (Muir, 1977; Paoline, 2003; Westley, 1970) that can cause a deterioration in the police–public relationship. A recent survey by the Pew Research Center of a representative sample of U.S. police officers supports this conclusion. Their study found that only 14% of officers in the survey believed that the public understands the risk and challenges that police officers face, whereas 83% of civilian adults think they *do* understand them (Morin, Parker, Stepler, & Mercer, 2017).

If officers believe that the public will criticize them even when they act according to established police procedures, or that the public does not understand the many difficulties and stressors of their job, several unfortunate consequences are likely. For example, we posit that because officers believe that the public does not understand their jobs, they will be less willing to make themselves vulnerable to the public. Consequently, officers may avoid interacting with the public, not seek the public’s cooperation, not put themselves in a position where they are subject to public scrutiny, and avoid other actions that make them vulnerable to the public. Officers may avoid these behaviors because public complaints about their job performance can damage their careers and finances.

Benevolence

Research suggests that many police officers believe that the public has low levels of benevolence toward them. Westley (1970) found that 73% of the police officers in his sample thought that the public were hostile toward them and hated them. More recently, Yim and Schafer (2009) found that police officers believed the public generally perceived them unfavorably. Moon and Zager (2007) found that the majority of police officers in their sample believed that the public did not support them. Importantly, it is police officers’ *perception* of the public’s benevolence toward them rather than the public’s actual level of benevolence that impacts police trust in the public (see Mayer et al., 1995).

Displays of public animosity toward the police may exacerbate police officers’ perception of low public benevolence toward them. For instance, large crowds of people chanted for the killing of police officers after the deaths of Michael Brown and Freddie Gray (“Video Shows NYC Protestors Chanting for “Dead Cops,” 2014;

Zagier, 2014). On Twitter, people have celebrated the shooting of police officers (Datoc, 2016). On Facebook, members of the public have posted photographs that advocate the murder of police officers (Quinones, 2014). Whether these hostile messages are representative of the public's beliefs about the police may not matter—if they are frequently disseminated for a prolonged time, many police officers may come to believe that they represent the beliefs of the majority of the public. If officers believe that the public has negative feelings toward them, officers' willingness to make themselves vulnerable to the public may decrease.

Human services professionals have a high incidence of burnout because of a lack of reciprocity in their relationships and because of a perceived imbalance between investments and outcomes with the people they serve (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1993; Kop, Euwema, & Schaufeli, 1999; Schaufeli & Janczur, 1994). Police officers' feelings of alienation from their communities and their belief that the public does not care about them can be expected to decrease their willingness to make themselves vulnerable to the public (i.e., decrease their trust in the public). Therefore, we expect that police perceptions of the public's benevolence will be positively related to police trust in the public.

Integrity

As mentioned above, integrity refers to the perception that “the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 719). A perception of integrity thus encompasses both the acceptability of the trustee's apparent values, and a judgment that the trustee consistently follows them. Widely publicized incidents involving unfounded accusations against officers such as the underlying circumstances of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri may affect officers' perceptions of public integrity. For months, the media and the public criticized the police because they alleged that a police officer shot Michael Brown while he was surrendering with his hands in the air. A U.S. Department of Justice (2015) investigation found these accusations lacked merit: “There is no credible evidence that Wilson willfully shot Brown as he was attempting to surrender or was otherwise not posing a threat” (p. 86). The report identified 24 witnesses whose accounts did not support prosecution of Officer Wilson because of the inconsistencies in the witnesses' statements or because they conflicted with the physical and forensic evidence from the incident.

Of particular importance to our line of reasoning here, five of these witnesses admitted to lying about the shooting. Some of these witnesses gave interviews to the media, which then disseminated their false statements to the public. The vast majority of the remaining witnesses admitted to making assumptions about what happened based on hearsay rather than on personal observation, or were discredited for other reasons. Moreover, several witnesses claimed to have seen Officer Wilson shooting Brown while he held his hands up and was attempting to surrender. To the contrary, the U.S. Department of Justice (2015) reported: “All of these purported witnesses, upon being interviewed, acknowledged that they did not actually witness the shooting, but repeated what others told them in the immediate aftermath of the shooting” (p. 77).

Numerous studies show that most complaints against police officers are not sustained. The proportion of substantiated public complaints against police officers is generally not greater than 10% (Adams, 1993). Heaphy (1978) found a substantiation rate of approximately 24%. Wagner (1980) found a substantiation rate of 5% for all types of complaints by the public, and only a 2% substantiation rate for physical abuse complaints by the public.

More recently, Liederbach, Boyd, Taylor, and Kawucha (2007) examined the internal affairs investigations of public complaints in a large Midwestern police department. The department's complaint review system involved civilian employees of the department in the investigation process. In addition, to minimize police intimidation, the department did not require members of the public to make complaints in person. Out of 180 public-initiated investigations, only three were sustained, which amounts to less than 2% of the public complaints.

Although some assert that the rate of substantiated complaints is low because the investigations are biased as police officers conduct them, others assert the rate is low because most public complaints are frivolous and false (Liederbach et al., 2007). We reiterate that it is the officers' perceptions that matter to their trust in the public: if officers believe that most public complaints against police officers are unjustified, this belief will likely adversely affect officers' perceptions of the public's integrity.

Another factor that may affect police officers' perceptions of the public's integrity is officers' beliefs about the reasons for the many public protests that have followed police use of deadly force against African Americans in recent years. The previously discussed Pew Research Center survey found that 68% of police officers believe that long-standing bias against the police was the primary motive for these public protests. Only 10% of officers surveyed believed that a genuine desire to hold police officers responsible for their actions motivated protesters (Morin et al., 2017). These results suggest that the police have a negative perception of the public's integrity.

The more that officers believe the public has integrity, the more they will likely feel that they will be treated fairly for doing their jobs and will be less susceptible to public complaints. Thus, higher perceptions of public integrity should lead to a higher level of public trust. A decreased perception of the public's integrity may cause officers to decrease their willingness to have both professional and social interactions with the public, thereby making them less susceptible to public complaints. Thus, we expect that police perceptions of the public's integrity will predict police levels of public trust.

Effects of Antecedents of Trust

In sum, applying Mayer et al.'s (1995) model of trust to the police literature suggests that some police officers may perceive the public as lacking in ability, benevolence toward them, and integrity. Moreover, past research indicates that the four antecedents of trust (i.e., propensity, ability, benevolence, and integrity) should contribute independently to officers' trust in the public (Colquitt et al., 2007). Accordingly, we expect all four antecedents of trust to contribute to the variance in police trust in the public. Based on the explanations in each of the sections above, we offer the following summative hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Police officers' propensity to trust and their perceptions of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity will each have a significant independent positive relationship to police trust in the public.

Risk-Taking

Risk-taking in a relationship is the behavioral expression of trust in another party (Mayer et al., 1995). The more a trustor trusts (i.e., is *willing* to be vulnerable to) a trustee, the more the trustor will *take risks* that make him or her vulnerable to the trustee. Police officers encounter many risks in interacting with the public, two of which include being physically assaulted and being treated, at least in an officer's view, unjustly.

One risk officers encounter when interacting with the public is the potential for violence, serious injury, and even death (Paoline, 2003; Reiner, 1985; Sparrow et al., 1990). In the United States in 2016, 64 officers were killed by gunfire, three were killed by assault, 13 were killed by vehicular assault, and one was stabbed. In 2017, 46 officers were killed by gunfire, five were killed by assault, six were killed by vehicular assault, and one was stabbed ("National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, 2018"). In addition, in 2016, 9.8 sworn officers per 100 were assaulted ("FBI—Officers Assaulted," 2017).

Another potential risk for police officers is that the public may judge their behavior as unjust or ineffective (Brandl, Frank, Worden, & Bynum, 1994; Chandek, 1999; Hopkins, Hewstone, & Hantzi, 1992; Jefferis, Butcher, & Hanley, 2011; Mason et al., 2014; Reisig & Chandek, 2001; Ren, Cao, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2005). This can put an officer's reputation and career at risk, especially if the incident garners national attention. When such incidents occur, some departments will terminate an officer's employment as the most convenient means to deal with the negative publicity generated by the incident (Herbert, 2006). Even if the officer is not fired, an officer can face many other negative consequences. For example, Darren Wilson, the officer who shot Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, lost his job after the shooting, was unable to find other employment as a police officer, received death threats against himself and his children, and had to move from his home after his address was made public (Halpern, 2015).

If police officers trust the public, we posit that they will be more likely to take risks with the expectation that the public will support their actions. We expect that officers who lack trust in the public will avoid taking risks that could jeopardize their reputation and career. Herbert (1997) describes how officers avoid risky situations when they believe their actions will be second-guessed. Moreover, recent anecdotal evidence supports that police officers' lack of trust in the public may decrease risk-taking ("Baltimore Gets," 2015; Heath, 2018; Kaste, 2015; MacDonald, 2015; Toppo & Madhani, 2015).

Although there is limited research on how lack of public trust affects police risk-taking, Wolfe and Nix (2016) found a relationship between negative publicity and police officers' willingness to partner with the community. Morgan and Pally (2016)

determined that police officers in Baltimore, Maryland, significantly reduced their risk-taking—as measured by arrests made—after the negative publicity in the Michael Brown and Freddie Gray cases. This reduction in police risk-taking is often called “de-policing.” Oliver (2015) conducted an exploratory study of de-policing with a convenience sample of 25 officers and found that de-policing is a well-known phenomenon in law enforcement. Rushin and Edwards (2017) found that de-policing occurs after periods of intense public scrutiny and following increases in police regulation.

If police officers avoid taking risks because they do not trust the public, it may significantly affect public safety. Conversely, an example of police deciding to take more risk in doing their jobs is “proactive police work,” which is integral to high-quality law enforcement (MacDonald, 2003, 2016; Wilson, 2013). Proactive police work is self-initiated, rather than police work that is initiated by a call to police such as a 911 call. Police who do not trust the public may avoid engaging in proactive police work. Former FBI Director James Comey cited comments from police officials that support this. He stated that in the current environment, police may be unwilling to conduct proactive police work such as approaching suspects on a street corner at 1 o’clock in the morning to determine what they are doing if there is no citizen complaint (Comey, 2015). Indeed, 72% of officers have become less willing to stop and question people they think are suspicious (Morin et al., 2017). To do so may put an officer’s career at risk if the encounter becomes violent or generates negative publicity. Although there is likely more than one cause for this change in behavior in a large percentage of police officers, low levels of police trust in the public are likely at least partially responsible for this change in police behavior. This is likely to occur because an officer can reduce his or her vulnerability to the public by decreasing their frequency in undertaking these discretionary activities, which increase the probabilities of citizen complaints against an officer, an officer having to use force, and/or an officer coming under public scrutiny. Accordingly, we hypothesize that police trust in the public will affect police risk-taking.

Hypothesis 2: Police trust in the public will be positively related to police officer risk-taking in the performance of their duties.

To test our two hypotheses, we conducted two studies. The first was a large-scale cross-sectional study to develop the necessary trust-related measures and test their interrelationships. The second was a study using the measures developed in the first to examine whether trust in the public affects officers’ job behaviors.

Study I

Methods

Procedure. Our goal in the first study was not to obtain a nationally representative sample of police officers to determine how much officers nationwide trust the public,

but rather to develop measures of trust and trustworthiness for police officers. Second, we wanted to examine whether these measures and propensity to trust predicted officers' trust in the public.

We conducted a survey of U.S. police officers' trust in the public.¹ Emails containing a link to a questionnaire on SurveyMonkey were sent to police departments and police organizations across the United States requesting them to distribute the link to their officers. A total of 145 police departments and police organizations were contacted. The survey was accessible to respondents for approximately 1 month at the end of 2015. We received 1,165 responses, of which 175 were dropped because they did not provide answers for all antecedent items or trust items. Listwise exclusion was used for cases with incomplete responses on these core variables. To maintain anonymity, no data were collected concerning which departments and organizations distributed the survey, nor were respondents asked to indicate which police department employed them. Consequently, we could not calculate a response rate for the survey.²

Respondents. Respondents supplied demographic data. On average, respondents had 17 years of law enforcement experience ($n = 933$; $M = 17.48$, $SD = 8.59$) and were primarily men ($n = 856$; 89.2%). The racial composition of the respondents ($n = 957$) was Caucasian (89.1%), Hispanic (5.4%), African American (1.5%), Asian-American (1.5%), Native-American (0.5%), and other racial groups (2%). Respondents ($n = 963$) reported the following educational levels: no high school diploma (0.2%), high school graduate (2.1%), some college but no degree (26.5%), 2-year college degree (17.4%), 4-year college degree (34.1%), some postgraduate work (5.7%), master's degree (12.8%), and doctoral or law degree (1.2%).

Measures. We used a published scale to measure officers' propensity to trust others (Mayer & Davis, 1999). Unlike propensity to trust, however, the primary variables in the study (i.e., ability, benevolence, integrity, and trust) did not have existing measures. Because the public is a more diffuse referent and the nature of the risks is different for police than for most employees, we could not readily adapt prior measures of trust and trustworthiness. After an extensive literature review and consultation with police officers, for each of the three trustworthiness factors, we generated items that both reflected the intended construct and avoided conceptual overlap with the other constructs. The consultation with police officers was critical to ensure that the scale items had both face validity and external validity.

To measure trust, we created a trust scale using the same procedures that we used to create the scales for ability, benevolence, and integrity. Each trust item assessed an officer's willingness to be vulnerable to the public. Prior to data collection, we had eight police officers review the trustworthiness and trust items for conceptual clarity and face validity, adjusting item wording as necessary. The questionnaire used 5-point Likert-type response scales in agree/disagree format with verbal anchors for each response option. All of the items for ability, benevolence, integrity, and trust are listed in the Appendix.

Table 1. Unstandardized Loadings (SE) and Standardized Loadings for Four-Factor Confirmatory Model of Antecedents of Trust ($n = 990$).

Factor	Item	Loadings	
		Unstandardized	Standardized
Propensity	P1	1.00 (—)	0.29
	P2	1.69 (0.29)	0.34
	P3	2.82 (0.40)	0.57
	P4	1.47 (0.22)	0.3
	P5	2.47 (0.36)	0.5
	P6	2.48 (0.36)	0.5
	P7	2.26 (0.33)	0.45
	P8	1.89 (0.28)	0.38
Ability	A1	1.00 (—)	0.45
	A2	1.35 (0.09)	0.61
	A3	1.15 (0.07)	0.52
	A4	1.25 (0.07)	0.57
	A5	1.32 (0.07)	0.6
	A6	0.91 (0.05)	0.41
	A7	0.98 (0.07)	0.45
Benevolence	B1	1.00 (—)	0.7
	B2	0.92 (0.04)	0.64
	B3	0.93 (0.04)	0.65
	B4	0.92 (0.05)	0.65
	B5	0.83 (0.05)	0.58
Integrity	I1	1.00 (—)	0.61
	I2	0.98 (0.05)	0.59
	I3	0.57 (0.06)	0.34
	I4	1.15 (0.05)	0.7
	I5	0.59 (0.04)	0.36

Results

Using the full sample ($n = 990$), we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on the trustworthiness items. We retained items in each of the three trustworthiness scales based on how clearly they loaded in the factor analysis (i.e., with a high loading on the intended factor). Results of this analysis are presented in Table 1. Overall model fit of the four-factor confirmatory factor analysis was good, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.916, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = 0.906, root mean square error approximation (RMSEA) = 0.049 (90% confidence interval [CI] = 0.046, 0.053). All items had standardized loadings ranging from 0.29 to 0.70 on the factor for which they were written. The propensity scale had less internal consistency than the ability, benevolence, and integrity scales, which was expected based on prior use of the scale. Standardized loadings for the items for each factor are given in Table 1.

Table 2. Oblimin-Rotated Loadings for Two-Factor Exploratory Model of Trust ($n = 990$).

Item	Factor Loadings	
	Proactive	Engagement
T1	0.06	0.44
T3	0.79	0.02
T4	0.50	0.18
T5	0.88	-0.09
T7	0.69	0.08
T8	0.05	0.64
T10	0.02	0.47
T11	-0.08	0.51
T12	-0.08	0.54
T14	-0.11	0.53
T15	0.00	0.66
T16	0.03	0.64

Note. Factor loadings greater than .40 appear in bold.

We then conducted an exploratory factor analysis on the trust items. Although we did not hypothesize specific factors, results of prior research by Gillespie (2003, 2012) and Mayer and Gavin (2005) suggested a two-factor solution should be explored, as both prior studies found two similar factors. Twelve items clustered into two separate factors, with eight and four items, respectively; the remaining four items were excluded because they failed to load on either of the two observed factors or form additional factors. Each item loaded .44 to .88 on one factor and $-.11$ to .18 on the other factor. We subsequently treated these subsets of items as separate measures of trust. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Although the trust items did not factor clearly based on Gillespie's (2003, 2012) or Mayer and Gavin's (2005) findings, which were parallel, there does appear to be a theme to each trust measure. The four-item trust measure appears to evaluate how willing a police officer is to be vulnerable by engaging in proactive police work (hereafter "the Proactive scale"). The Proactive scale items address the following: proactive police work, being visible to the public, taking action on minor offenses, and taking action on noncriminal issues. All four of these items clearly address becoming vulnerable to the public by conducting proactive police work: field interviews (stop-and-frisk), minor disorder offenses (broken windows policing), dealing with homeless issues, and so on.

The eight-item trust measure appears to evaluate officers' willingness to engage with the public in a variety of manners (hereafter "the Engagement scale"). This trust measure includes the following items: frank communication, being known as a police officer when off-duty, giving members of the public the benefit of the doubt during interactions, allowing the public to determine if an officer's actions were justified, the public having great influence over important police matters, provision of personal

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations for Study Variables and Trust Factors.

Variable	M	SD	No. of items	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Propensity	2.63	.48	8	(.69)					
2. Ability	1.75	.56	7	.42**	(.83)				
3. Benevolence	2.68	.71	5	.41**	.48**	(.83)			
4. Integrity	2.18	.60	5	.45**	.53**	.65**	(.74)		
5. Proactive	3.25	.92	4	.23**	.23**	.33**	.28**	(.83)	
6. Engagement	2.15	.64	8	.40**	.44**	.48**	.53**	.45**	(.78)

Cronbach's alpha values are in parentheses.

**Two-tailed significance at $p < .01$.

information, family members identifying the respondent as a police officer, and being more vulnerable to public criticism. All eight items concern officers becoming vulnerable to the public by engaging with them in different ways: frank dialogue, provision of personal information, evaluation of actions, and so on.

Regardless of the interpretation of these two separate trust factors, our suppositions should be considered post hoc, as we did not hypothesize about different factors of trust before analyzing the data. Although our interpretations seem logical, additional research is needed on this issue.

Mean values, standard deviations, and correlations among the study's variables and Cronbach's alphas for all scales are presented in Table 3. Cronbach's alphas for the trustworthiness measures (ability, benevolence, and integrity) were between .74 and .83. Cronbach's alpha for propensity to trust was .69, consistent with that found previously (e.g., Mayer & Davis, 1999; Mayer & Gavin, 2005). Cronbach's alphas for the trust measures were .83 and .78, respectively.

As expected, each of the three trustworthiness measures (i.e., ability, benevolence, and integrity), propensity to trust, and the two trust scales are significantly and positively correlated with one another. Importantly, the four antecedents are all significantly correlated with both measures of trust. The two measures of trust were only moderately correlated with one another at $r = .45$, suggesting that they are tapping into somewhat different ways that a police officer is willing to be vulnerable to the public.

To test Hypothesis 1, we used multiple regression to determine whether officers' propensity to trust and officers' perceptions of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity all independently predicted police trust in the public. We selected years of experience, sex, race, and education as potential covariates for inclusion in each model. Correlations between each covariate and trust measure are shown in Table 4. We included a covariate if it was significantly correlated with a particular trust measure, with the exception of sex. As sex (measured here as a male/female binary variable) had such an uneven split (85.9% men), we excluded sex from the regression for the trust scales due to the potential bias in examining relations between a continuous

Table 4. Zero-Order Correlations Between Covariates and Trust Factors.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Years of experience	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Sex	-.081*	—	—	—	—	—
3. Race	-.029	.008	—	—	—	—
4. Education	-.018	.156**	-.020	—	—	—
5. Proactive	.077*	.109**	-.020	.074*	—	—
6. Engagement	.213**	-.040	.043	.105**	.449*	—

*Correlation significance at $p < .05$.

**Correlation significance at $p < .01$.

Table 5. Regression Analyses of Trust Scales on Trustworthiness Scales and Covariates.

Variable	B	β	t
Proactive trust scale			
Propensity	.12	.06	1.69
Ability	.10	.06	1.52
Benevolence	.31	.23	5.47**
Integrity	.10	.06	1.38
Years of experience	.01	.05	1.42
Education	.03	.05	1.52
Engagement trust scale			
Propensity	.15	.11	3.63**
Ability	.18	.16	4.87**
Benevolence	.15	.16	4.53**
Integrity	.29	.27	7.19**
Years of experience	.01	.15	5.78**
Education	.03	.07	2.61**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

and a binary variable when the binary variable has substantially unequal group sizes (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). We therefore included years of experience and education as covariates in each regression.

Results of the regression are shown in Table 5, and partially confirmed that officers' propensity to trust and their perceptions of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity predicted trust in the public. The analysis excluded participants with missing information on covariates, resulting in $n = 887$ for the Proactive scale regression and $n = 886$ for the Engagement scale regression. Both the multiple regression for the Proactive scale, $F(6, 887) = 21.71, p < .001$, and the multiple regression for the Engagement scale, $F(6, 886) = 87.37, p < .001$, were significant. R^2 measures for the regressions were .15 and .38 for the Proactive scale and Engagement scale measures of trust,

respectively. As indicated in Table 5, officers' perception of the public's benevolence significantly predicted the Proactive scale, and each of the four trust antecedents significantly predicted the Engagement scale. In addition, years of experience and education level positively predicted the Engagement scale. These results support Hypothesis 1, with the caveat that not all predictors contributed significantly to one of the two trust measures identified in the exploratory factor analysis.

Discussion

Based on prior research, we hypothesized that a police officer's perception of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity as well as the officer's propensity to trust would significantly predict the officer's trust in the public. Each of the four antecedent variables significantly predicted officers' trust in the public for the Engagement scale, and one of the antecedent variables significantly predicted officers' trust in the public for the Proactive scale.

These results provide empirical support that Mayer et al.'s (1995) model of trust is applicable to police trust in the public. Although these results help us to better understand the extent of police trust in the public and the factors that predict police trust in the public, they do not address the issue of whether police trust in the public predicts job performance. This issue is critical because, as stated previously, prior research suggests that police officers avoid risky situations if they believe their actions will be second-guessed (Herbert, 1997) and that de-policing occurs after negative media accounts of the police (MacDonald, 2016; Morgan & Pally, 2016). Those studies, however, do not explain *why* officers reduce their risk-taking in these circumstances.

Study 2

Although the first study provided evidence that propensity to trust, ability, benevolence, and integrity all explain variance in officers' trust in the public, it did not provide evidence that police trust in the public is of practical importance. In the second study, we examine whether officers' trust in the public relates to their taking risks so that they can perform their jobs more effectively.

Methods

Police trust measure. Using the same measures as in Study 1, we surveyed police officers working in patrol and in the bicycle units of a medium-sized city police department in the Western United States. We selected these officers because they frequently interact with the public and have broad discretion to determine the extent of their public interactions. Furthermore, their job duties consist of common police activities and their job performance is more easily measured than is performance for administrative or support officers.

We solicited officers for the study during their pre-shift meetings. We explained the study to the officers and gave them informed consent forms and a survey with the same

measures that were used in the first study. Participation was voluntary and confidential, and occurred in December 2015. The survey was distributed to 151 officers; 140 were returned. Two of the surveys were not included due to omitted responses. The resulting response rate was 91.4%.

Respondents. On average, respondents had 10 years of law enforcement experience ($M = 10.05$, $SD = 7.69$) and were primarily men (97.1%). The racial composition of the respondents was Caucasian (89.1%), Hispanic (3.6%), African American (1.4%), Asian-American (0.7%), Native-American (0.7%), and other racial groups (3.6%). Respondents reported the following educational levels: no high school diploma (0.7%), high school graduate (5.1%), some college but no degree (39.1%), 2-year college degree (12.3%), 4-year college degree (33.3%), some postgraduate work (3.6%), and master's degree (5.8%). The demographics of this sample are similar in most respects to the sample in Study 1. Because we surveyed only patrol and bicycle officers in the second study rather than all types of officers as we did in the first study, it is not surprising that the average years of experience of the second sample are less than in the first sample (17.5 vs. 10.1).

Performance measures. We used supervisors' evaluations and archival performance data to evaluate the job performance of the officers who participated in the survey. The police department where we conducted the survey regularly collects the archival performance data. It has used this data for officer performance evaluations in the past, but it has not used the data for officer evaluations for the last several years. Consequently, many supervisors were unaware that it is regularly collected. Moreover, even if a supervisor was aware of its collection, the department no longer regularly provides supervisors with this data. This gave us two independent measures of officer job performance.

The archival performance data for the officers consists of the following categories: (a) the number of times an officer was the initial responding officer on a call, (b) the number of times an officer was the back-up officer on a call, (c) the number of proactive cases (i.e., initiated by the officer him/herself) generated, (d) the number of initial reports written, (e) the number of supplemental reports written, (f) the number of street checks conducted (i.e., stopping to talk with potential criminals and making notes about the conversation), (g) the number of arrests made, (h) the number of traffic citations written, and (i) the number of days worked.

We collected archival performance data for the officers participating in the survey from January through March 2016, and we averaged it for the officers over the 3 months. We chose a duration of 3 months for the archival performance data to obtain a reliable measure of job performance that would help minimize temporary fluctuations in job performance. We did not use a longer time period for the archival performance data because trust levels can vary over time, and we did not want to weaken the relationship between officer trust in the public (which was measured just prior to the performance evaluation period) and job performance. Much of the archival performance data were not available for three officers. Consequently, the data from these

three officers were not included in the study, leaving a sample of 135 officers (i.e., 89.4%).

The second source of officers' job performance was their supervising sergeant's evaluation. We gave the sergeants 5-point Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scales (BARS) to evaluate their officers. We developed the BARS based on Cascio and Valenzi's (1977) eight dimensions of police job performance: Job Knowledge, Judgment, Initiative, Dependability, Demeanor, Attitude, Relations with Others, and Communication. In consultation with police officers, we identified one or more job functions for each dimension of police job performance. The job functions helped clarify and specify the content of each dimension. For example, Job Knowledge was comprised of items measuring four areas of knowledge: criminal law and procedure, departmental policies and procedures, investigations, and officer safety. Therefore, the sergeants evaluated performance on 20 job functions for each officer. For each item, sergeants rated the officer's performance as either unacceptable, needs improvement, meets standards, exceeds standards, or outstanding. We defined each rating anchor with a brief description of the level of performance that would merit that rating.

We solicited the sergeants' participation in person and provided them with an informed consent form and the above-described evaluation form. During April 2016, we asked each sergeant to complete a performance evaluation for each officer that he or she directly supervised from January through March 2016 (the same time period for which archival data were collected). Participation was voluntary and confidential. Twenty-three sergeants received the performance evaluations. We put each officer's badge number on the evaluation form that we gave to the officer's sergeant so that the sergeant knew which officer he or she was evaluating. To ensure confidentiality and guarantee that no one could match sergeant identities with that of the officers they evaluated, the sergeants mailed the evaluations to a co-author who used the officers' badge numbers to match their sergeants' evaluation with their archival data. To further protect respondents' confidentiality, when the matching process was completed, we deleted the badge numbers from the data set, and we destroyed the surveys and sergeants' evaluations. The sergeants returned all the evaluations for a response rate of 100%. From organizational records, we determined that 21 of the sergeants were men (87.5%).

We hypothesized that the performance data most closely related to taking risks to person or reputation, particularly via proactive police work and making arrests, would be significantly associated with officers' levels of trust (i.e., the number of proactive cases generated, the number of arrests made, the number of street checks conducted, and the number of traffic citations for the archival data; and initiative from the supervisor evaluations). This was hypothesized because an officer can reduce his or her vulnerability to the public by decreasing these discretionary activities, especially the number of arrests the officer makes and the frequency that an officer performs proactive police work. Moreover, proactive police work typically increases the number of arrests an officer makes, which increases the probabilities of citizen complaints against an officer, an officer having to use force, and/or an officer coming under public scrutiny. Although the idea of "risk-taking" as defined in the Mayer et al. (1995) model of

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations for Study 2 Antecedent Variables and Trust Factors.

Variable	M	SD	No. of items	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Propensity	2.62	.44	8	(.54)					
2. Ability	1.86	.56	7	.31*	(.84)				
3. Benevolence	2.61	.61	5	.37**	.64**	(.78)			
4. Integrity	2.14	.60	5	.34**	.59**	.72**	(.78)		
5. Proactive	3.23	.85	4	.08	.12	.27**	.32**	(.78)	
6. Engagement	2.15	.57	8	.24**	.43**	.52**	.53**	.49**	(.76)

Note. Cronbach’s alpha values are in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

trust has not been explicitly discussed in the de-policing literature, several researchers have used arrests in a conceptually similar manner to measure risk-taking (e.g., Morgan & Pally, 2016; Shjarback, Pyrooz, Wolfe, & Decker, 2017; Wallace, White, Gaub, & Todak, 2018).

Results

The measures developed in the first study showed acceptable reliability again in the second study, consistent with the first study, as noted below. Table 6 presents the mean values, standard deviations, correlations, and Cronbach’s alphas for the measures.

In addition to the demographic similarity between the two samples, comparison of Tables 3 and 6 reveals similar mean values, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alphas of the scales, and correlations for most of the variables in the two studies. Although Cronbach’s alphas are slightly lower in Study 2, this was expected because of its smaller sample size than Study 1.

The correlations between the Proactive scale and both propensity and ability were somewhat lower than we expected based on prior research (Colquitt et al., 2007) and Study 1. In the larger national sample, both were significant at $p < .01$, and in the smaller sample in the second study both were smaller in magnitude and not significant. However, the magnitudes of the differences in these correlations between the two samples are not large. The much smaller size of the sample in Study 2 compared with Study 1 ($n = 135$ vs. $n = 990$) is likely the reason these correlations are not significant in the second study. Moreover, these two variables showed the weakest correlation of all variables in both studies. These correlations are included for completeness, but they are not critical to the purpose of Study 2, which was to examine the relationship between trust and police behaviors.

For every officer, we averaged the evaluating sergeant’s score for all the items comprising each of Cascio and Valenzi’s (1977) eight performance dimensions. None of the eight dimensions was significantly correlated with police officer trust in the public, so we subsequently treated each item as a separate measure of performance. Three of the performance indicators were significantly correlated with officers’ trust in

the public. Proactive police work ($r = .21, p < .05$) and written communication skills ($r = -.19, p < .05$) were correlated with the Proactive scale, and performance under stress was correlated with the Engagement scale ($r = .17, p < .05$; see Table 7). The significant correlation between officers' trust in the public and sergeants' evaluations of proactive police work supports Hypothesis 2.

The mean values, standard deviations, and correlations of the nine variables constituting the archival data and the two trust scales are presented in Table 8. Six of the performance indicators were significantly correlated with officers' trust in the public. With the exception of arrests, each of these measures of performance was correlated with only one of the trust scales. These results suggest that each of the scales is measuring a somewhat different facet of trust.

Three archival performance measures—proactive police work ($r = .29, p < .01$), number of supplemental reports written ($r = .20, p < .05$), and number of arrests made ($r = .31, p < .01$)—were significantly correlated with the Proactive measure of trust. Two of these performance measures involve risk-taking. As was discussed earlier, engaging in proactive policing increases the likelihood of public complaints. Likewise, making an arrest may anger the arrested individual, his or her family and friends, and onlookers. Both of these behaviors increase the probability of violent encounters with the public and also the probability that a member of the public will file a complaint or lawsuit against the officer. These results support Hypothesis 2 that police trust in the public is related to whether officers are willing to put themselves at risk while performing their jobs.

We have two possible explanations regarding the significance of the supplemental reports variable. First, it may be an artifact of the significant relationships between trust with proactive police work and arrests made: the more proactive police work conducted and the more arrests made, the more reports that must be written (the correlation between supplemental reports written and proactive police work was $r = .55, p < .01$; the correlation between supplemental reports written and arrests made was $r = .52, p < .01$). Second, the less an officer trusts the public, the more he or she may believe they need to write a report to document their actions in case of misconduct allegations.

The number of times an officer was the initial responding officer on a call ($r = .23, p < .01$), number of initial reports written ($r = .25, p < .01$), number of arrests made ($r = .18, p < .05$), and job attendance ($r = .17, p < .05$) had a significant correlation with the Engagement scale. These findings are further evidence of the relationship between officers' trust of the public and risk-taking. First, again for the reasons listed above, an increase in risk-taking comes with an increase in the number of arrests made and the number of calls an officer responds to. Officers maintain some control over the number of arrests they make and the number of calls to which they respond, thus they can reduce their risk-taking if desired. Second, one of the easiest ways for officers to decrease risk is to be absent from work. This obviously is problematic for police departments as it impairs their ability to maintain adequate staffing levels. It is also problematic for the public because it results in fewer police officers on the street, which decreases public safety.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Trust and Sergeant Evaluation Variables.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Proactive	3.23	0.85	1																					
2. Engagement	2.15	0.57	.49**	1																				
3. Law	3.36	0.70	.00	.10	1																			
4. Policies	3.20	0.67	-.07	.08	.74**	1																		
5. Investigation	3.27	0.73	-.06	-.05	.61**	.59**	1																	
6. Officer safety	3.26	0.66	-.08	-.10	.45**	.40**	.46**	1																
7. Judgment	3.24	0.68	-.08	.09	.59**	.53**	.63**	.60**	1															
8. Use of force	3.31	0.64	.01	-.13	.46**	.46**	.43	.62**	.63**	1														
9. Proactive	3.06	1.08	.21*	.11	.44**	.34**	.44**	.29**	.37**	.29**	1													
10. Calls for service	3.27	0.84	.16	.13	.36**	.31**	.35**	.21*	.35**	.28**	.65**	1												
11. Problem-solving	3.13	0.87	.05	.05	.51**	.42**	.53**	.45**	.50**	.44**	.65**	.46**	1											
12. Stress performance	3.37	0.77	.11	.17*	.55**	.48**	.53**	.49**	.65**	.52**	.46**	.47**	.50**	1										
13. Attendance	3.29	0.95	.05	.14	.33**	.32**	.25**	.23**	.46**	.39**	.40**	.55**	.38**	.55**	1									
14. Performance of duties	3.20	0.73	.13	.07	.45**	.36**	.37**	.34**	.55**	.46**	.55**	.64**	.47**	.58**	.67**	1								
15. Appearance	3.34	0.80	-.05	-.06	.40**	.45**	.38**	.42**	.51**	.49**	.36**	.28**	.42**	.50**	.45**	.44**	1							
16. Equipment	3.29	0.63	.01	-.10	.44**	.41**	.35**	.57**	.51**	.65**	.40**	.39**	.37**	.52**	.44**	.58**	.70**	1						
17. Dissatisfaction	3.21	0.97	.12	.15	.37**	.36**	.38**	.29**	.49**	.46**	.58**	.51**	.49**	.49**	.52**	.51**	.51**	.51**	1					
18. Public interaction	3.26	0.80	-.02	.02	.34**	.41**	.32**	.31**	.38**	.50**	.37**	.33**	.54**	.35**	.34**	.41**	.40**	.43**	.62**	1				
19. Teamwork	3.22	0.70	.05	.03	.36**	.32**	.41**	.42**	.48**	.48**	.44**	.52**	.42**	.53**	.40**	.62**	.49**	.64**	.58**	.49**	1			
20. Supervision relations	3.16	0.74	.06	.07	.50**	.41**	.39**	.47**	.57**	.52**	.46**	.49**	.50**	.58**	.54**	.60**	.54**	.65**	.64**	.52**	.60**	1		
21. Oral communication	3.24	0.69	-.02	.04	.56**	.52**	.50**	.45**	.65**	.58**	.28**	.35**	.44**	.62**	.41**	.48**	.48**	.48**	.52**	.51**	.54**	.55**	1	
22. Written communication	3.21	0.84	-.19*	-.09	.59**	.50**	.51**	.44**	.53**	.55**	.23**	.26**	.35**	.57**	.40**	.45**	.50**	.55**	.34**	.34**	.46**	.47**	.66**	1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 8. Study 2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Trust and Archival Variables.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Proactive trust	3.23	0.85	1										
2. Engagement trust	2.15	0.57	.49**	1									
3. Initial officer	59.02	20.92	.09	.23**	1								
4. Backup	69.44	21.65	.02	.15	.58**	1							
5. Proactive	12.87	13.39	.29**	.09	.23**	-.11	1						
6. Initial reports	20.34	9.24	.14	.25**	.80**	.34**	.40**	1					
7. Supplemental reports	6.78	4.43	.20*	.10	.21*	.11	.55**	.27**	1				
8. Street checks	1.09	0.89	.04	.02	.21*	.09	.10	.15	.06	1			
9. Arrests	8.52	8.20	.31**	.18*	.31**	-.09	.88**	.55**	.52**	.06	1		
10. Tickets	2.14	1.07	.15	.05	.26**	.08	.26**	.22*	.20*	.02	.19*	1	
11. Days worked	13.54	2.49	-.12	.17*	.30**	.42**	-.06	.23**	.03	.15	-.01	.07	1

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Regarding the significant correlation with the initial reports variable, we would offer the same two possible explanations as we did above for the supplemental report variable and its significant correlation with the Proactive scale, plus two other possibilities. First, in this case, it is more likely that the significance of the initial reports variable is an artifact of the number of times an officer was the initial responding officer ($r = .80$, $p < .01$). Second, some of the relationships are also likely explained by the number of days worked ($r = .23$, $p < .01$), though the correlation between the supplemental reports written and number of days worked was not significant ($r = .03$, *ns*).

Table 8 has 45 correlations among archival variables. The largest correlation is between proactive police work and arrests ($r = .88$, $p < .01$). The magnitude of this correlation is striking and is consistent with our line of reasoning earlier in this article. Officers who have greater trust in the public engage in more proactive policing. By doing this, they become aware of more crimes and make more arrests. Of all the measures of police officer performance collected from the two data sources, these are the ones that most clearly reflect an officer actively engaging in a behavior that puts him or her at risk.

Discussion

In recent years, much attention has been paid to public trust in the police, but little attention has been paid to police trust in the public. Only considering one side of the police–public trust relationship is problematic. By not analyzing the police side of the relationship as well, many of the contributing problems in the trust relationship are potentially being ignored (Mourtgos et al., 2017).

In the current research, we explored whether Mayer et al.'s (1995) model of trust applies to police trust in the public and can be used to better understand the job

performance of police officers. We explained what a police officer's willingness to be vulnerable to the public means and why it is important. We clarified what the trustworthiness factors of ability, benevolence, and integrity mean in the context of police trust in the public, and why each of these factors should contribute to a police officer's willingness to be vulnerable to the public. In Study 1, we developed measures of police trust in the public, and police's perceptions of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity, all based on existing measures. We used these measures and an existing measure of propensity to trust in a sample of nearly 1,000 police officers. We found that police officers' trust in the public depends on their perception of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity. These factors of trustworthiness and propensity to trust each independently explained variance in officers' levels of trust in the public.

We used these measures in Study 2, a field study lasting several months, which included performance data from two separate sources: supervisors' evaluations and archival performance records. We expanded on the work of Cascio and Valenzi (1977) to develop more granular research measures of police officers' job performance. This study found that police officers with greater trust in the public engage in more behaviors that both (a) put them personally at risk and (b) serve the public's interest by keeping it safer. These results suggest that it may be the more trust police officers have in the public, the safer the public is.

Other research helps illustrate the negative effects of less officer risk-taking, which decreases proactive police work and arrests. Morgan and Pally (2016) found that officers in the Baltimore Police Department decreased their overall arrests by 30% in the approximate 2½ months following Freddie Gray's death. The decreases in arrest categories commonly associated with proactive policing activities (e.g., drug distribution, drug possession, driving violations, prostitution, trespassing, disorderly conduct, and loitering) ranged from 21.9% to 71.6%. During the same time period, crime increased significantly, with homicides increasing by 91.9%, shootings by 139.6%, commercial robberies by 82%, and auto theft by 53.4% (these statistics do not include the increases in crime that occurred during the week of rioting).

The authors propose several explanations for the rise in crime, with one possibility being decreased arrests. Other researchers attribute decreases in discretionary stops and arrests (proactive policing) to the dramatic increase in violence in Chicago (Arthur & Asher, 2016; Cassell & Fowles, 2018). Moreover, a recent report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) determined that certain types of proactive police work reduce crime.

Although the purpose of this article is not to analyze whether decreased proactive policing increases crime, our findings provide empirical data that officers with low public trust conduct less proactive police work, which appears to result in fewer arrests. Therefore, less police trust in the public may, at least in part, contribute to higher crime rates and less safe communities.

The measures of trust, police officers' perceptions of the public's ability, benevolence, and integrity, and the rating scales for police officer performance developed for this study can help researchers study police trust in the public, police officer performance, and the relationship between these two variables. The trustworthiness

measures may also help police departments and other governmental agencies improve police trust in the public. For example, these measures can assess a police department's current level of public trust. If the level of trust is low, these measures could help identify some of the factors that are decreasing police trust in the public.

These measures may also help police departments identify interventions that may increase police trust in the public. For instance, if a department's officers have a low perception of the public's ability, the department could create programs such as citizen police academies that increase communications between officers and the public and increase the public's knowledge of police work and the law. In addition, the measures created for this study to assess trust and the antecedents of trustworthiness can help researchers evaluate the success of interventions to increase police trust in the public.

In assessing the police–public trust relationship, it is important to consider how reciprocal trust and trust asymmetry can affect it. Reciprocal trust means that one party's level of trust affects the other party's level of trust (Korsgaard, Brower, & Lester, 2015). Several studies have found that when one party trusts the other party, the trusted party is more likely to in turn trust the first party (Ferrin et al., 2008; Mayer et al., 2011; Serva et al., 2005). Conversely, if either party perceives a lack of trust from the other party, a breakdown in trust in return may occur in the relationship. The breakdown in trust can cause an asymmetry of trust where the two parties in the dyad have different levels of trust (Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2009). This asymmetry of trust can produce a downward spiral in trust in the more trusting party, with his or her behavior and attitudes corresponding to the behavior and attitudes of the less trusting party (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

In a review of the trust literature, Korsgaard et al. (2015) concluded that when trust asymmetries exist, their effects increase over time. Trust asymmetries produce less favorable outcomes in a trust dyad (Korsgaard et al., 2015; Tomlinson et al., 2009), decrease cooperation between the parties, and increase negative affect after an interaction (Call & Korsgaard, 2013). This downward spiral of reciprocal, negative consequences can eventually produce mutually low levels of trust between the parties. A lack of reciprocity of trust has been cited as a contributor to the public's lack of trust in the police (Goldsmith, 2005). We suggest that due to reciprocity, a lack of trust on either side of the police–public relationship can reduce subsequent trust from the other side.

Limitations and Future Research

The first study surveyed nearly 1,000 officers from across the United States to develop and test measures of police officers' trust in the public and their perceptions of the public's trustworthiness. The second study's sample consisted of nearly all patrol and bicycle officers in a medium-sized police department in the Western United States. It investigated the effect of officers' trust in the public on officer behavior. Because the first study did not have a representative sample of U.S. police officers, and the second study's sample came from a single department, the results may not generalize to police departments of a different size or departments located in different regions of the

country. This limitation also applies to other factors that can affect police trust in the public (e.g., the diversity of the community the police department serves, recent occurrence of a police shooting, and protests directed against the police). Indeed, the importance of the context in which police risk taking occurs is important (see Mayer et al., 1995), and it should be considered when evaluating police–public trust.

Accordingly, additional research is needed to assess whether the results from the present study will be replicated in other police departments in the United States and in other countries. It would be particularly beneficial if such studies utilized the same methodology as the present study and applied it in multiple police departments at the same time. Doing so would not only generate a larger sample but also would allow for testing if other factors such as regional differences, department size, and differences in communities moderate police–public trust and its effect on police behavior.

Consistent with much prior research (see Colquitt et al., 2007), all four antecedents contributed significantly to the prediction of trust. Nevertheless, the percentage of variance in trust that they explained was relatively modest (i.e., .15 and .38 for the two measures). Possible additional factors that also may influence officers' level of trust in the public, and which should be explored in future research, include work interference with family, organizational justice perceptions within an agency, the policing model used by the department an officer works for, recent police–community conflict, and so on. As it appears from the current results that officers' trust in the public is important to public safety, future research is needed that identifies additional variables in the context of the police–public relationship that help explain how much an officer trusts the public (see Mayer et al., 1995).

Police officers may define “the public” in different ways (i.e., individuals they encounter while working, members of the community they serve, or all individuals in the United States). We discussed this issue at length including with several police officers and decided to have the respondents define what “the public” means rather than defining it *a priori* for them. Some evidence suggests that widespread negative media coverage of police use of deadly force affects police officer perceptions and actions even if they work far from where the incident occurred (Morgan & Pally, 2016; Morin et al., 2017). Therefore, further parsing of officers' different conceptualizations of “the public” is warranted.

Finally, one of the reasons that police–public trust has gained so much attention is because of much-publicized shootings of civilians as discussed earlier in this article. Based on the current research, we suggest that a lack of police trust in the public may affect an officer's decision to use deadly force because lack of trust in the public can increase an officer's negative emotions. A study by Kleider, Parrott, and King (2010) found that decreases in working memory and negative emotions produced by a threat affected police decisions to shoot. They suggested that other situational factors likely contribute to this decision. Based on the current research, we suggest that a lack of trust in the public warrants investigation as a critical situational factor that contributes to the likelihood an officer will shoot in a given situation. This may occur because lack of trust in the public could increase the background negative emotionality an officer experiences when faced with a perceived aggressor.

Furthermore, Kleider et al.'s (2010) findings coupled with those in this study suggest that a lack of police trust in the public could cause an officer to hesitate to shoot in a situation where that force is warranted, thereby putting at risk the officer's life and those of other officers and bystanders. For example, in October 2016, a female police officer in Chicago was almost beaten to death by a man who was under the influence of phencyclidine (PCP). The officer stated that she knew she should have shot the suspect, and she believed that she was going to die, but she feared the inevitable scrutiny that would follow on national news ("Chicago Police," 2016). Our finding of a significant correlation in Study 2 between officers' levels of trust and supervisors' evaluations of performance under stress would seem to lend additional credence to Kleider et al.'s (2010) findings. Clearly, further research is warranted to understand the outcomes of police trust in the public and its interactions with other variables like working memory and emotionality. The current research suggests that police officers' trust in the public may be important to the safety of both police and the public.

Conclusion

Using Mayer et al.'s (1995) model of trust not only appears to increase our understanding of the police–public trust relationship, but it may also aid in the development of interventions that can improve it. To our knowledge, this is the first study to use a well-established theoretical framework to comprehensively measure police trust in the public.

The police wield great power over the public. Accordingly, it could be asserted that the police have a greater responsibility to improve police–public trust than the public. Nonetheless, to improve the police–public trust relationship, a better understanding is needed of all the factors that affect it. The current study offers an important theoretical foundation and tools to aid in understanding this important relationship. Further research is needed to determine whether the present results extend to other settings, and to test whether interventions can improve police trust in the public.

Appendix. Trustworthiness and Trust Scales Items.

Ability

1. The public is sufficiently knowledgeable about criminal law to determine if I am competently performing my job.
2. When interacting with a police officer, the public understands what behaviors will cause the police officer to be concerned about his or her safety.
3. The public has an accurate understanding of how their constitutional rights apply to their interactions with the police.
4. The public understands under what circumstances police officers will have to use force and the degree of force they will have to use.

(Continued)

Appendix. (continued)

5. The public understands what a police officer's authority does or does not permit the officer to do.
6. The public is knowledgeable about police policies and procedures.
7. The public understands the many pressures and problems that confront police officers while doing their jobs.

Benevolence

1. The public is very concerned about my welfare.
2. The public goes out of their way to help me.
3. The public is courteous and respectful in their interactions with me.
4. The public will not intentionally obstruct me in my duties.
5. When a conflict occurs between police officers and the public, the public responds to the conflict in a reasonable, benign manner.

Integrity

1. The public is honest in their dealings with the police.
2. The public is objective in their evaluation of police actions.
3. The public's behavior toward the police is consistent.
4. The public tries hard to be fair in their dealings with the police.
5. If a citizen acts improperly with a police officer, that citizen will take responsibility for his or her actions.

Trust (Proactive scale in *Italics*—Engagement Scale in **Bold**)

1. **I do not worry about having a normal, frank conversation with members of the public because they will not use my responses against me.**
 2. I am comfortable interacting with the public without recording the interaction.
 3. *I am willing to do more proactive police work even if it increases the possibility of public criticism of me.*
 4. *If it were up to me, I would be even more visible to the public while at work.*
 5. *I am willing to take action on minor offenses even if it increases the possibility of public criticism of me.*
 6. *I do not worry about how the public may affect my career.*
 7. *At work, I am willing to take actions on noncriminal issues, such as dealing with the homeless and the mentally ill, even if it increases the possibility of public criticism of me.*
 8. **I have no concerns about mentioning that I am a police officer when I am off-duty and talking with members of the public.**
 9. I do not worry about negative publicity (social media, news coverage, etc.) for actions I take at work.
 10. **I am willing to give members of the public the benefit of the doubt when they engage in behavior that makes me question their intentions.**
 11. **I would be willing to let the public determine whether my actions as a police officer were justified.**
 12. **I believe the public should have a great influence over issues that are important to me as a police officer.**
 13. I am willing to tell members of the public about mistakes I've made on the job, even if the information could damage my reputation.
 14. **I am willing to give out my personal information to the public (e.g., full name and cellphone number).**
 15. **I am fine with family members telling others that I am a police officer.**
 16. **Making myself more vulnerable to public criticism would not be a mistake.**
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Notes

1. Although law enforcement officers often refer to themselves by different titles (i.e., police officer, deputy sheriff, and state trooper), they commonly use the term “police” to describe all the different types of law enforcement officers within the profession.
2. Nix, Pickett, Baek, and Alpert (2017) recognize that to increase participation and honesty in police surveys, precautionary measures to ensure anonymity are of vital importance. Nix et al. elaborate that asking too many demographic questions regarding officers or the departments they work for can compromise respondents’ belief in anonymity and thus participation. Keeping this in mind, we did not inquire about all of the necessary demographic material necessary to be able to report the number of officers invited to participate, the response rate, or the sampling frame. However, we are able to report all of the other suggested standards for police surveys outlined by Nix et al.: the data were collected from November 2, 2015, through December 7, 2015; the survey was administered via email on SurveyMonkey’s platform; incentives were not offered; follow-ups were not administered; respondents were told the survey was regarding the “police–public relationship from a police perspective”; 1,165 responses were received; and 175 responses were excluded from subsequent analyses because they did not provide answers for all antecedent items or trust items.

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