# On the Cross-Domain Scholarship of Trust in the Institutional Context

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From government to health care and policing to the judiciary, the message of trust scholarship is clear: trust matters. Trust is consistently argued to play a critical role in facilitating relationships from the interpersonal level to the societal (e.g., Larzelere & Huston, 1980; Murayama, Fujiwara, & Kawachi, 2012). In the institutional context specifically, trust is thought to be important because of its role in facilitating the effective function of the institution. In this context, targets[1] that engender trust are typically more able to generate the cooperation and compliance necessary to efficiently move toward their goals while those that are less able to

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[1] This chapter spends relatively little time discussing the differences in trust between when it is directed to an institution and when it is directed to an individual within that institution. The reason for this is that it is an issue that has received relatively little attention in the literatures that we review here. For a more thorough treatment of the potential implications of the kind of target, see Campos-Castillo et al. (2016) as well as Herian and Neal (2016).

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build trust tend to struggle more—extreme examples of which include the civil unrest in Ferguson, Missouri, which many have suggested was predicated on a lack of trust in police (Holder, 2014) and the hard fought but only incremental successes in the early efforts to contain the Ebola outbreak in West Africa where a distrust in medicine played a major role in the virus' initial rapid spread (Bourgault & Bruce, 2014).

This recognition has provided the impetus for a wide variety of institutional efforts to increase trust. In the USA, these efforts include high profile efforts like President Obama's Open Government Initiative (Executive Office of the President & Office of Management and Budget, 2009), the Department of Justice's National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice (Department of Justice, Office of Public Affairs, 2014), and the National Conference on Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System (National Center for State Courts, 2000). Efforts like these typically seek to draw from the wide body of scholarship addressing trust in order to leverage the best available science for understanding and motivating trust. A great deal of this trust-relevant work has been conducted within the domains of government and major business organizations but trust has also been investigated in non-profits, local businesses, educational institutions, and so on. Unfortunately, however, this scholarship has typically been conducted in silos, where each domain is studied in relative isolation from the others. This situation lead to Barber's (1983) oft-cited critique of this literature as a "conceptual morass of constructs and definitions" (p. 1).

In the decades since this criticism, a great deal of scholarship has sought to develop a cross-boundary social science of trust and considerable progress has been made. One of the most influential of these efforts investigated the cross-disciplinary understandings of trust in the organizational domain and found that "despite the common concern regarding our different disciplinary lenses (i.e., 'blinders'), we observe considerable overlap and synthesis in contemporary scholarship on trust" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998, p. 402). Indeed, although trust is often not explicitly defined, even a cursory glance across these research silos often reveals noteworthy similarity in understandings of the construct. Across domains, trust is often conceptualized as a psychological state that exists within the trustor as directed toward a specific target. This psychological state often facilitates the trustor in working with (or at least not *against*) the target and is argued to be importantly distinct from its antecedents (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; McEvily & Tortoriello, 2011). Some have taken this a step further to argue that this psychological state specifically is a willingness to accept vulnerability in dealings with the target (e.g., Hetherington, 2005; Mayer et al., 1995; Möllering, 2013; Rousseau et al., 1998; Warren, 1999).

Despite this increasing consistency, however, trust is fundamentally tied to the context in which it occurs (Mayer et al., 1995). Even trust in the same individual may mean very different things when the context is changed from, for example, lending money to childcare (Frederiksen, 2013). Thus there is potential for a great deal of variability across the many domains in which trust has been investigated. This is problematic because it means that without specific investigation, it will be

unclear how much the understandings of trust overlap across domains and the extent to which they are importantly distinct. For example, although vulnerability is considered a central component of trust in an increasing number of domains, it is all but absent in some like the literature regarding the state courts which instead typically focuses on trust as synonymous with concepts like approval and satisfaction. Exploring these kinds of differences is critical because it has the potential to provide guidance for institutions seeking to leverage trust in achieving their goals. If trust in various domains is importantly different, it would be critical for an institution in one domain attend to these differences when applying research from another. If, on the other hand, trust is generally the same across domains, institutions are much more able to freely apply research from across the scholarship of trust.

The following chapter reviews trust in four domains where it is thought to be critical and in which considerable institutional effort is being expended in the name of building trust; namely, public administration, policing, state courts, and medicine. The domains are addressed in separate sections which review the mainstream understandings and, when available, definitions of trust; the major antecedents of trust[2]; and its major outcomes as they are currently understood in each domain. The chapter then turns to a discussion which integrates these ostensibly disparate literatures and highlights both important similarities and differences across domains. In toto, the chapter suggests that although there are likely important differences in the critical antecedents of trust across domains, trust itself seems to be fairly consistent.

## Trust in Public Administration

The first domain reviewed here is that of public administration. Although somewhat amorphously bounded, public administration broadly refers to the administration of government in general. Some researchers have followed this understanding by evaluating perceptions of "government," but many researchers focus on more specific governmental entities. For example, some researchers focus on legislative entities like local councils in England (Downe, Cowell, Chen, & Morgan, 2013) and Southern Africa (Cho, 2012) and law makers and parliament in the Netherlands (Bovens & Wille, 2008) and other European countries (Van der Meer, 2010). Other groups of scholars have primarily examined executive bodies (e.g., Morgeson, VanAmburg, & Mithas, 2011; Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011) at federal (Robinson, Liu, Stoutenborough, & Vedlitz, 2013), state (Brewer & Hayllar, 2005), and local levels (Kim & Lee, 2012). Thus in this domain, the target of trust varies in that it can be an aggregated or individual legislative, executive, or general governmental agency.

Trustors in this domain are usually the general public but some research investigates specific groups of people who are served by a particular agency or who have participated in a particular public administration process. Additionally, some studies

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[2] Note that although the majority of this scholarship is conducted cross-sectionally (thus precluding tests of causal effects), the general expectation is that these constructs drive trust.

measure trust from administrators' perspectives, such as government officials' perceptions of citizens (e.g., Wang & Wan Wart, 2007; Yang, 2006). Across targets and trustors, trust has been a core concern in public administration, and public sector leaders have been especially concerned about its decline over the last several decades (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2009).

## Conceptualizations

As mentioned earlier, the mainstream understandings of trust vary somewhat across disciplines and domains and public administration is no exception. Although much of this scholarship does not provide formal definitions of trust, there are a few in this domain. Key words in these definitions include confidence, faith, willingness, belief, evaluation, expectation, and a psychological state. Some researchers treat these constructs as roughly interchangeable but others identify distinctions among them. For example, La Porte and Metlay (1996) distinguish confidence from trust by arguing that trust is "the belief that those with whom you interact will take your interests into account, even in situations where you are not in a position to recognize, evaluate, and/or thwart a potentially negative course of action by 'those trusted'" (p. 342). Contrastingly, they argue that confidence exists when government acts to gain or build others' trust in it (see also Morgeson & Petrescu, 2011). Other scholars conflate these constructs by arguing, for example, that trust is the confidence and faith that public administration is performing in accordance with normative expectations held by the public (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007), specifically that the intentions and actions of public administration are ethical, fair, and competent. Some scholars have attempted to broadly capture citizen trust in government using these normative expectations that public administration is "doing the right things" (Wang & Wan Wart, 2007) and "operates in the best interests of society and its constituents" (Kim, 2010; Kim & Lee, 2012). Yet another stream of trust research in public administration incorporates the notion of vulnerability by defining trust as a psychological state that is willing to take a risk by accepting vulnerability (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012; Grimmelikhuijsen, Porumbescu, Hong, & Im, 2013; Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011; Yang, 2006), even in situations where the trustor cannot recognize, monitor, or control the target, and/or thwart a potentially negative course of action by the target (Kim, 2005; La Porte & Metlay, 1996).

## Antecedents

Scholars have documented diverse sources of trust in public administration which can be classified into five broad categories: performance, institutional design, and factors of the public officials, environment, and trustor. Probably the best studied of these categories is the linkage between performance and trust where performance is

broadly considered the target's previous output as assessed by the trustor, based primarily on his or her perception. A brief review of recent scholarly articles suggests that organizational effectiveness (Kim, 2010; Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, & Van Ryzin, 2010), satisfactory public services/service quality (Christensen & Laegreid, 2005), policy consistence (Brewer & Hayllar, 2005), transparency/corruption (Gronlund & Setala, 2012; Van der Meer, 2010), responsiveness and accessibility (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006), and economic development/growth/stability (Bovens & Wille, 2008) are some of the important specific evaluations within this broader performance category. In general, trust in public administration is expected to increase when public administration performs better, but some scholars report mixed findings. Some work has suggested that these increases may be somewhat specific as suggested by Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) who found that performance (operationalized in their study as responsiveness) positively affects citizen's trust in local government only, not state and federal government.

In addition to the direct link between performance and trust, some scholars have attempted to investigate the moderators and mediators of the effect. For example, Yang and Holzer (2006) suggest that mixed findings in the literature regarding the performance-trust linkage may stem from the inappropriate measure of performance. They therefore offered performance measurement as a moderator in the relationship between performance and trust such that the effect depends on the extent to which performance is appropriately measured. Regarding potential mediators, Morgeson et al. (2011) provide evidence that satisfaction with public services mediates the effects of performance on trust in federal agencies. However, Grimmelikhuijsen (2012) found that even if citizens gain knowledge about negative performance outcomes through transparent government Web sites, the knowledge had no negative effect on their trust in government. This may be because while negative performance might reduce satisfaction, transparency might increase satisfaction. In a similar vein, Kim and Lee (2012) found that citizens' satisfaction with online participation programs provided by a city government is positively related to their perception of citizen participation values (e.g., education and empowerment), assessment of transparency, and trust in government.

Although performance is certainly the primary antecedent in the public administration literature, other factors have also been the subject of noteworthy research. Regarding institutional design, some researchers have found that trust in government tends to be promoted under certain institutional designs such as those that include citizen participation mechanisms (Mizrahi, Vigoda-Gadot, & Cohen, 2009), a parliamentary structure (Van der Meer, 2010), and electoral systems (Cho, 2012; Van der Meer, 2010). In terms of public official factors, some studies suggest that their ethical behavior/integrity, competence, and benevolence positively shape the public's trust in government (Downe et al., 2013; Green, 2012; Kim, 2005). Other studies have found that environmental factors such as political stability, generalized social trust, and trust in government generally (Gronlund & Setala, 2012) play important roles in affecting trust in public administration. Lastly, trustor factors have been examined to better understand their role in trust in government (Christensen & Laegreid, 2005). In addition to demographics (e.g., age, education,

occupation), a recent study (Robinson et al., 2013) found that individuals' religiosity, party affiliation, and political ideology shape their belief that the Department of Homeland Security effectively deals with national security problems.

## *Consequences*

Scholars have also attended to the consequences of trust in public administration for both citizens and government. From the citizens' perspective, most of this work examines the relationship between trust and cooperation and compliance with public administration (Im, Cho, Porumbescu, & Park, 2014). For example, Montgomery, Jordens, and Little (2008) argue that in extreme situations like natural disasters and terrorist attacks, citizens' perceptions of the competence, integrity, and benevolence of public administration agencies somewhat reduce the perceived vulnerability to harm from the situation and thus lead to increased cooperation. Yang (2006) also found that public officials' trust in citizens facilitates citizen participation, and Vigoda-Gadot (2007) found that trust in public administration had a positive effect on political efficacy but found no effect on political participation. Cooper, Knotts, and Brennan (2008) found that a planning agency in a city government enjoyed bureaucratic discretion from support for zoning when the public had greater trust in city government. Welch, Hinnant, and Moon (2005) examined the mutual relationship between citizens' satisfaction with online government services and their trust in government and found that trust was positively associated with satisfaction with services. In addition to the direct linkage between trust in government and satisfaction, some research has found that trust in municipalities serves as a moderator, affecting the relationship between citizens' perception of the corruption and transparency of municipalities and their satisfaction with municipality services—specifically by reducing the relationship between corruption and satisfaction, while increasing the relationship between transparency and satisfaction (Park & Blenkinsopp, 2011).

## Trust in the Police

A second domain in which trust is argued to be important is that of policing. The term "police" can refer to a wide range of different institutions, from the local, city, or county level to the state, federal (e.g., FBI), and even international level (e.g., Interpol). These institutions have been investigated across these levels (see Tyler, 2006a; Tyler & Huo, 2002; Jackson, Bradford, Stanko, & Hohl, 2013 for review) in both the USA and other locations like Africa (Tankebe, 2008), Australia (Mazerolle, Antrobus, Bennett, & Tyler, 2013), Asia (Wu & Sun, 2009), Central America (Malone, 2010), Europe (Jackson et al., 2013), and South America (Haas & Fleitas, 2014). Across institutions, citizens invariably give up some of their freedoms in any

society that has a formal police force and, generally speaking, citizens are willing to give up these freedoms as long as they trust the police. When trust in policing is eroded, however, people often resist the imposition of police authority and may refuse to cooperate or even comply with the police. Examples of this can be seen in a number of recent high profile cases, such as those involving Erik Garner, Michael Brown, and Kelly Thomas. In each instance, the erosion of public trust made the police and citizenry less able to work together to resolve conflict. In this regard, trust is a vital commodity for policing.

## *Conceptualizations*

As in other domains, there has historically been a great deal of variety in trust conceptualizations in the policing literature. More recently, however, the field has begun to coalesce around two related, yet distinct, conceptualizations. The first, and most common, is to examine trust within the framework of legitimacy (Tyler, 2006a). Legitimacy refers to whether an authority is viewed as appropriate and rightfully in a position of power (Tyler, 2006b). Within this framework, trust is viewed as a component of legitimacy in so far that it is a practical expression of whether individuals judge the police to be legitimate (Jackson et al., 2013). When people trust the police, they are said to be communicating their belief that the police are appropriate authorities and, by extension, should be deferred to and obeyed (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Thus the focus here is on using trust to understand legitimacy, rather than on trust itself.

The other conceptualization is suggested by researchers who have recognized a need to separate trust from legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012; Jackson et al., 2013) and have started the challenging task of delineating these constructs theoretically (Tyler & Jackson, 2013). Here, a distinction is made between legitimacy and trust judgments in terms of both target and content. Legitimacy is focused on the role of policing in society and concerned with judgments about whether the institution of policing has the moral or normative authority to wield power over the population. Trust, on the other hand, is focused on actual police officers and concerned with judgments about their competence and intentions when interacting with the public. From this perspective, when individuals trust the police, they believe that officers are effective and efficient in performing their duties, understand and recognize the needs of the community, and behave with benevolent and caring intentions. Thus, while legitimacy taps into the role of policing within society, trust reflects people's judgments about what individual officers will do when they are in that role. As Hawdon (2008, p. 186) put it: "The role is legitimate… the individual is trusted." Although this direction seems promising, it is important to recognize that this distinction should not be made too sharply (see Tyler & Jackson, 2013). Legitimacy and trust are likely inextricably linked and almost invariably influence each other, such that judgments of trust in specific officers will be largely influenced by judgments about the legitimacy of policing and vice versa.

## *Antecedents*

Regardless of how it is conceptualized, there is remarkable consistency concerning what fosters trust in the police. Traditional views have asserted that people's trust in the police is dependent on perceptions of their performance (i.e., whether they are seen as effective crime fighters; Herbert, 2001; Kelling & Coles, 1998). This makes intuitive sense. If trust reflects a judgment about the ability of police to do their job, then it is likely that such judgments would be rooted in whether the police are effective at reducing crime. If people believe crime is being controlled in their neighborhood, they are likely to trust the police; if they think crime is rampant, they are unlikely to trust the police. Notably, however, this proposition has received only limited support. When effectiveness is predictive of trust in the police, it is usually a weak relationship at best (Dammert & Malone, 2003; Jackson & Bradford, 2010; Tyler, 2005; Walklate, 1998).

Instead, trust in the police is typically driven by how police officers behave when interacting with the community. Of central importance is whether the public believes the police are acting fairly, or procedurally just, in their treatment of citizens and their decision making (Tyler, 2006a, 2006b, 2011). When police officers treat the public with dignity and respect, show concern for their needs, behave in honest and ethical ways, give them an opportunity to voice their concerns, and make unbiased neutral decisions, the public is much more likely to trust them and there is now an extensive literature showing that trust in the police is strongly influenced by judgments of procedural justice (e.g., Tyler & Huo, 2002). In addition, when directly compared, procedural justice is consistently a better predictor of public trust than perceptions of performance (Jackson et al., 2013; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2009). For example, in a study of Chicago residents, Tyler (2006a) showed that public trust in the police was only weakly related to perceptions of effectiveness. Instead, the public's trust was largely based on whether the police gave them voice, made unbiased decisions, showed concern for their welfare, and treated them with respect.

Trust in the police is also influenced by neighborhood-level factors. It has long been known that attitudes toward the law, including trust, cluster around neighborhoods, with some communities having mostly positive views and other communities having mostly negative views (Shaw & McKay, 1942). In large part, this clustering is driven by the structural and social characteristics of the neighborhoods themselves. In terms of the former, people often distrust the police and their intentions when they live in areas of concentrated disadvantage that are characterized by institutional neglect and economic, social, and political isolation from larger society (Anderson, 1999; Kirk & Papachristos, 2011) and this distrust is exacerbated by the use of aggressive police tactics in these areas (Tyler & Huo, 2002). However, the social characteristics of the neighborhood are just as, if not more, important for predicting trust in the police (Jackson et al., 2013). Of special importance is the

community's sense of shared values defining appropriate behavior, the willingness to uphold those values, and their enforcement among neighborhood residents. This collective efficacy shapes the ability of the community to exert informal social control (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). When neighborhoods are characterized by high levels of collective efficacy, they are more likely to trust the police (Kirk & Matsuda, 2011; Sampson & Bartusch, 1998). As Jackson et al. (2013) argued in their extensive analysis of policing in London, individuals often base their evaluations of formal social control mechanisms (e.g., the police) on their perception of the effectiveness of informal social control mechanisms in stopping crime.

## *Consequences*

The most important role of the police is to provide a means of formal social control in society while helping to cultivate an informal means of social control within its communities. Trust is vitally important to this task. Traditionally, the role of trust in producing compliance with the police has received the most attention. In large part, this is because the institution of policing in general has emphasized a command and control professional model whereby the primary goal is to develop policies and practices that motivate obedience within the population (Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Here, trust is viewed as a cornerstone of motivating compliance such that when individuals trust the police they feel it is their duty to defer to them. Thus, the public is more likely to obey the law and accept legal decisions when they trust the police (Tyler, 2006a, 2006b) and the considerable body of scholarship supporting the positive link between trust in the police and compliance is indeed compelling (for reviews see Jackson et al., 2013; Tyler & Huo, 2002).

More recently policing has moved away from strict command and control models with the growing recognition that crime cannot be controlled without the help of the community (Skogan et al., 1999). As a result, police have become interested in motivating voluntary cooperation within the public. Effective crime control depends on police and citizens working together in order to produce cooperative formal and informal mechanisms of social control within the community (Tyler & Jackson, 2014) and trust plays a vital role in such police–citizen joint efforts (Tyler, 2011). When people trust the police, they believe the police are concerned with their welfare and will act in ways that benefit the community. As a result, people are more willing to cooperate, for example, by reporting crime and criminals to the police, providing information to help police find suspects, joining neighborhood watch groups, and participating in legal proceedings (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; Tyler, 2005; Tyler & Fagan, 2008; Tyler & Jackson, 2014). Thus cooperation often requires citizens to voluntarily and proactively work with police officers and this may implicate a sense of vulnerability because, in many cases, cooperation with the police requires that an issue be taken out of the hands of the individual and subjected to the discretion of law enforcement (Tyler & Jackson, 2013).

## Trust in the State Courts

A third important domain of trust scholarship is that of the American state courts. Lacking control over the "purse or the sword" (Hamilton, 1788), the American courts are unusually weak governmental institutions in that they must depend on the other branches of government for funding and enforcement, but they also rely heavily on the positive perceptions of the public (Mondak & Smithey, 1997). As Justice O'Connor (1999) remarked, "Sometimes in the pressure of doing what judges have to do and running a tight ship in the courtroom and deciding tough issues, we might forget that… it is, after all, the public we serve and that we do care how the courts are perceived generally" (p. 10). Thus, these positive perceptions are important as performance indicators but some have taken this even further, arguing that trust is essential to the effective functioning of these and all democratic institutions (Dougherty, Lindquist, & Bradbury, 2006; Leben, 1999).

A considerable body of literature has sought to address the issue of public trust in the American judiciary and, to date, the majority of this scholarship has focused on the United States Supreme Court (USSC; Rottman & Tomkins, 1999). Despite the importance of this literature, however, it addresses only the "tip of a very large judicial iceberg" (Wenzel, Bowler, & Lanoue, 2003, p. 191) as most of the work done by the American judiciary is done in the state courts. Research regarding the USSC serves as an excellent starting point for understanding trust in the state courts, but scholars have frequently suggested that there are important differences (Olson & Huth, 1998; Wenzel et al., 2003). Chief among these distinctions is the relative knowledge and experience that the average American has with the institutions. Although the USSC is often prominently featured in the news, Americans typically have very limited knowledge about the inner workings of this court (see Kritzer, 2001). Admittedly, factual knowledge about the state courts may not be much higher, but the public is certainly far more likely to have direct contact with them. In a 2009 survey, the National Center for State Courts found that 55 % of the nationally representative sample had some kind of personal contact with the courts as a defendant, witness, victim, juror, etc. (National Center for State Courts, 2009). The direct effect of this increased experience is somewhat debated. In general, research seems to suggest that the experience typically has a neutral or somewhat positive effect on perceptions of the state courts (Rottman, 1998) but this stands in direct contravention of the arguments of some researchers who suggest that it is precisely because of the Supreme Court's relative separation from the American public that it typically enjoys more positive perceptions than the state courts (Benesh & Howell, 2001).

### *Conceptualizations*

As in other domains, formal definitions of trust are scarce in scholarship in the state courts context. As a rare example, Dougherty and colleagues present a definition that they borrow from the broader political context of trust which suggests that trust

is a "fiduciary concept involving whether government has fulfilled its responsibility to the people to operate according to their normative expectations" (2006, p. 178). The authors go on to present analyses that they argue provide evidence that the construct is importantly distinguishable from confidence which is more concerned with the future performance of the courts. Distinctions like these, however, are in the minority in this scholarship (Hamm et al., 2013). Instead, the majority of the relevant literature treats trust as roughly synonymous with a number of other constructs including confidence, support, satisfaction, approval, and legitimacy. Trust in the state courts then mirrors trust in a number of other contexts in that it is somewhat imprecisely defined, but tends to focus generally on positive evaluations of the target.

The measurement of trust in this domain typically reflects this conceptual imprecision but some clarity can be achieved by evaluating the measures through the lens of a classic distinction in trust in government research. Specifically, Easton (1975) argues that specific trust, as an evaluation of "what political authorities do and how they do it" (p. 437), is importantly different from diffuse trust which is argued to be a more global, potentially affective, reaction to government (Wenzel et al., 2003). Trust measures in this literature tend to follow this distinction with some using more diffuse measures like "What is your level of confidence in the courts in your community?" (Benesh, 2006, p. 701) while others focus more on specific considerations like "most judges in my community treat people with respect" (Hamm et al., 2013, p. 17; but see Cann & Yates, 2007, who refer to these more specific considerations as diffuse support). Importantly, although some state courts research has sought to directly compare diffuse and specific measures (e.g., Hamm et al., 2011; Wenzel et al., 2003), the implications of focusing on one conceptualization of trust over the other remain as unclear in this context as they are in the broader governmental scholarship (see Citrin, 1974; Miller, 1974).

## *Antecedents*

Considerable research has investigated the antecedents of trust in the state courts. Although also complicated by the conceptual confusion that plagues the understanding of trust itself, it is clear that trust in the state courts is importantly influenced by, at least, issues of fairness, court performance, and factors of the trustor. Fairness is arguably the most important of these antecedents as it often has the strongest effect in models predicting trust in state courts (e.g., Benesh & Howell, 2001; Olson & Huth, 1998). The overarching rationale for the importance of fairness lies in the courts' roles as impartial decision makers but the specific conceptualizations of the construct of fairness vary significantly throughout the literature. Probably the best studied conceptualization of fairness is procedural fairness (also procedural justice or process fairness) which is the notion that the procedures used by the decision maker are fair (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 2006c). As in the policing literature, research with the state courts routinely finds positive independent effects for these

considerations on trust (e.g., Benesh, 2006; Benesh & Howell, 2001; Olson & Huth, 1998). Another fairness-related consideration that has been addressed in the state courts literature regards judicial selection. The general expectation is that election campaigns, and especially partisan campaigns, undermine the perception of judges as impartial decision makers and suggest that their biases will play an inappropriate role in judicial decision making (Peterson, Hare, & Wrighton, 2012). While some research does suggest a relationship between judicial selection and trust (e.g., Benesh, 2006; Cann & Yates, 2007; Gibson, 2012), there is an almost equally convincing body of scholarship that fails to find such an effect (e.g., Kelleher & Wolak, 2007; Peterson et al., 2012) leaving the question of the effect of judicial selection on trust open.

The second collection of antecedents of trust in state courts regards the performance of the courts themselves. As in the public administration and policing literatures, the general expectation is that institutions of government are trusted less when their performance is poorer (Citrin, 1974). Indeed, research has consistently identified important effects for relevant concerns like how well cases are managed (e.g., Dougherty et al., 2006) and timeliness (e.g., Benesh & Howell, 2001) such that courts are more trusted when they perform better.

The final important group of antecedents of trust in state courts regards factors of the trustor. Demographic variables such as age (Benesh & Howell, 2001; Kelleher & Wolak, 2007) and race (Rottman & Tomkins, 1999) have been routinely shown to influence trust such that older, white individuals tend to have higher trust. Attitudinal variables like trust in others generally (Hamm et al., 2011) and trust in other governmental institutions (Hamm et al., 2013; Olson & Huth, 1998; Wenzel et al., 2003) also tend to positively predict trust in state courts.

## *Consequences*

The major outcomes of trust in the state courts track well with its two important relationships: The institution's relationship to those with whom it has direct contact and its relationship with the public generally. As mentioned above, a noteworthy percentage of Americans have had some kind of direct contact with the courts as defendants, victims, or jurors. In these situations trust has frequently been shown to play a critical role in acquiescence behaviors like compliance with court decisions and even showing up at all (Bornstein, Tomkins, Neeley, Herian, & Hamm, 2012; Tyler, 1997). Despite the considerable number of Americans who do have direct contact with the courts however, approximately 45 % of Americans do not (National Center for State Courts, 2009). Nonetheless, the courts, as institutions of a democratic government, are not unaffected by the perceptions of the public in general (Dougherty et al., 2006). This concern is often cited in discussions about the USSC but the state courts are often just as visible as many of their cases are at least as popularized as those of the Supreme Court (e.g., O. J. Simpson and Darren Wilson; Rottman & Tomkins, 1999). Therefore, the second critical relationship for

the American state courts is their relationship to the public generally. This relationship is arguably as important as the first because, like all institutions of democratic government, the ability of the courts to function effectively is often directly tied to the perceptions of the public (Warren, 1999). In these relationships, the primary outcome of trust is usually the support the courts are able to elicit (Kelleher & Wolak, 2007).

## Trust in Medicine

Unlike the other three domains reviewed here, medicine is not primarily governmental. As such, one might expect that theoretical conceptualizations and empirical research might reveal different understandings of the nature and role of trust in this context. However, as will become clear, many of the same themes emerge. One observation, however, does clearly distinguish trust research in this domain from the research previously described in this chapter and that is that research on trust in medicine is considerably less developed. Indeed, it is only recently that this research has begun moving toward theoretical development. Instead, the vast majority of medical trust researchers have focused their efforts on creating a body of knowledge about the causes, consequences, and definitions of physician trust, rather than trust in medicine more generally. Of what research there is on trust in medicine as an institution, most researchers in this area have aimed to document levels of trust (or mistrust) in different aspects of the medical establishment. This is an important endeavor to be sure, but this kind of research does not do much to move the field forward theoretically.

### *Conceptualizations*

Few researchers in this domain report a conceptual definition of trust in their reports. Instead, the vast majority of researchers adopt single item measures without offering a formal definition of trust (e.g., "I trust hospitals"; Boulware, Cooper, Ratner, LaVeist, & Powe, 2003, p. 359; see also Jovell et al., 2007; Schlesinger, 2002). When explicit definitions are used in this domain, the most predominantly used one is that proposed by Mayer et al. (1995, p. 712); "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" (Hall, Camacho, Dugan, & Balkrishnan, 2002; Zheng, Hall, Dugan, Kidd, & Levine, 2002).

Qualitative researchers have also somewhat contributed to the development of understandings of trust in this domain by allowing participant responses to drive the conceptualization (e.g., Goold & Klipp, 2002; Hillman et al., 2013; Mechanic & Meyer, 2000; Thorburn, Kue, Keon, & Lo, 2012). One of the major themes that

arise in these studies is the role of vulnerability. Almost by definition, interactions with the health care system happen when a person is ill, so vulnerability is often an integral component of trust in this context. Individuals subject themselves to the expertise of their health care providers, literally allowing invasions of their body with the expectation of improved well-being. Consistent with this suggestion, Hall, Dugan, Zheng, and Mishra's (2001) theoretical work referred to vulnerability and trust as "inseparable" and other scholars have echoed the important place of vulnerability in trust (Brown & Calnan, 2012; Goold, Fessler, & Moyer, 2006). This emphasis on vulnerability is also underlined by researchers who conceptualize trust in the medical institution in terms of managing risk and uncertainty (e.g., Brown & Calnan, 2012: Hillman et al., 2013).

Instead of developing explicit conceptualizations of trust, by and large, most theoretical developments in the medical domain have been aimed at identifying "components" of trust[3] and these components are largely discussed as inherent to the definition of trust in this context. For example, Hall et al. (2001, 2002) propose that trust consists of separate components including fidelity, beneficence, competence, honesty, and confidentiality (Balkrishnan, Dugan, Camacho, & Hall, 2003). In addition to these components, Goold et al. (2006) proposed that trust also consists of fairness, reliability, and vulnerability. Finally, Taylor-Gooby (2006) emphasized an affective component of trust and that has been largely ignored in the current research.

## *Antecedents*

As described above, there is some dissonance between trust research in other domains and trust research in medicine, where certain factors that have been typically been identified as definitional in the medicine research (e.g., competence) are largely described as predictive in the other domains. Despite this difference, there is still considerable overlap across these literatures. Much like, but to a greater degree than the other domains, the relationship between factors of the individual (i.e., trustor) and trust in medicine has been the subject of considerable work. These characteristics include demographics, health indicators, and access to health care. As in other domains, some patterns emerge, but few have been replicated consistently (Hall et al., 2001). In reality, the medical context lacks a deep enough body of research to truly conclude strong connections. That being said, the most consistent pattern that has been found regards race such that Black respondents consistently report less trust in medicine than White respondents (Boulware et al., 2003; LaVeist, Nickerson, & Bowie, 2000). Interestingly, Pescosolido, Tuch, and Martin (2001)

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[3] It is worth noting that while these researchers propose multiple components of trust, their empirical work rarely finds support for a multiple-factor construct. For example, Hall et al. (2002) found that a single-factor structure emerged in their data. Goold et al. (2006) found a two-factor structure, with all the components except vulnerability loading onto the first factor.

found that Black participants endorsed fewer positive general attitudes toward physicians than White participants, but that both groups endorsed negative attitudes equivalently. It should be noted, however, that not all research has supported the connection between race and trust in this context (e.g., Goold et al., 2006).

A few other trustor factors have also been found to be correlated with trust. For example, some researchers have found that older people indicate less trust in medicine (Balkrishnan et al., 2003; LaVeist et al., 2000; but see Pescosolido et al., 2001, who found the opposite pattern). Similarly, income has been found to be negatively correlated with trust in medicine (Pescosolido et al., 2001; but see Balkrishnan et al., 2003, who found no relationship). Finally, individuals with less access to health care or poor health seem to have less trust in the system (Goold et al., 2006; Pescosolido et al., 2001).

While additional research connecting participant characteristics and attitudes to trust is certainly needed, the field might benefit even more from shifting the focus to institutional antecedents. As the discussion of earlier domains suggests, evaluating institutional practices that enhance trust has been especially beneficial and some researchers in the medical context have begun to move in this direction (e.g., Rhodes & Strain, 2000). For example, Buchanan (2000) draws on the legitimacy literature from other contexts (e.g., Tyler, 2006b) and argues that managed care organizations must earn "merit trust" by adopting policies that promote procedural justice, allow for and respond to criticism from physicians, and recognize physicians' unique commitment to patient well-being. Theoretically, employing these practices would facilitate trust building at a variety of levels, increasing physicians' trust in managed care, as well as patients' trust in their physicians, their managed care organizations, and medicine more generally.

## *Consequences*

The consequences of trust in medicine have been even less studied. By and large, the rhetoric of the trust literature suggests that higher trust in medicine should lead to greater compliance with medical directives, including consent to procedures and taking medications as prescribed (e.g., Boulware et al., 2003; Brown & Calnan, 2012; Buchanan, 2000; Hall et al., 2001, 2002). While there are a number of empirical studies testing the relationship between trust in doctors and compliance, there are very few studies testing this relationship for trust in medicine (but see Chakraborty, 2013; Thorburn et al., 2012). Moving beyond compliance, there is some evidence of other related positive outcomes of trust in medicine and negative outcomes of mistrust. For example, LaVeist et al. (2000) found that mistrust in medicine was negatively correlated with health care satisfaction, even after controlling for demographic variables (see also Balkrishnan et al., 2003). Similarly, researchers have found that trust in insurers was correlated with greater provider stability in the form of a lower desire to change carriers and fewer reported disputes

(Goold et al., 2006; Zheng et al., 2001). Finally, Calnan, Montaner, and Horne (2005) found support for their postulation that trust in care providers generalizes to support for new health care technologies.

## Discussion

The preceding sections outline the existing literature regarding trust in public administration, police, state courts, and medicine. As outlined in Table 1, the chapter focused specifically on the mainstream conceptualizations, antecedents, and consequences of trust in each domain.

### *Conceptualizations*

Across domains, existing understandings of trust tend to center around two major themes, specifically, evaluations of the future (e.g., confidence, faith, expectation) and evaluations of the target (e.g., fiduciary interest, competence, reliability). Although not necessarily discussed in this way in the various literatures, when considered in light of the definition proposed in the introduction—that trust is a willingness to accept vulnerability in dealings with another—these themes make considerable sense. If trust is an acceptance of vulnerability in dealing with an other, the concerns most relevant to that acceptance should be expectations about the future and the characteristics of the person/institution that are most likely to influence the outcomes of the interactions. Importantly, conceptualizing trust as a willingness to accept vulnerability does suggest a noteworthy criticism of the existing conceptualizations of trust in these and many other domains; specifically, that they often fail to distinguish trust from its antecedents. Many of the key words in Table 1 are constructs that, although often included in conceptualizations of trust, may, in fact, be better considered antecedents, or even outcomes, of trust. Indeed, the two themes of conceptualizations identified above (evaluations of the future and the target) both likely better explain what leads to trust than what trust itself is. Even in a colloquial sense, trust itself is not an evaluation of the other or the future but instead is something that arises from those evaluations.

In the two domains reviewed here that have directly addressed at least the possibility of the centrality of vulnerability (public administration and medicine) the major issues seem to regard the institution's role in protecting the trustor's welfare either by engaging in programming that is beneficial to the trustor or through the institution's direct effect on the trustor's health. The literatures regarding the police and state courts, however, have been less explicit about the role of vulnerability (and even less so in the domain of the state courts than the police), but it remains an important latent theme nonetheless. In terms of police, trust is a major component of legitimate police authority. This "right to rule" is only important so far as it

**Table 1** Summary of conceptualizations, antecedents, and consequences of trust across domains

| Domain | Conceptualization key words | Important antecedents | Major consequences |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Public administration | Confidence, faith, evaluation, expectation, interests, vulnerability, fiduciary interest | Performance[a], institutional design, public official factors, environmental factors, trustor factors | Cooperation, compliance, satisfaction |
| Police | Legitimacy, interpersonal trust, confidence, effectiveness, efficiency, motivations, character | Effectiveness, procedural justice[a], neighborhood level factors | Compliance, cooperation |
| State Courts | Fiduciary interest, responsibilities, confidence, support, approval, legitimacy, satisfaction | Fairness[a], performance, trustor factors | Cooperation, compliance |
| Medicine | Confidence, vulnerability, fidelity, competence, honesty, confidentiality | Trustor factors[a], merit trust | Compliance, satisfaction, support for new technology |

[a]Indicates the major antecedent in the literature

carries some level vulnerability; if there is no vulnerability, it is largely inconsequential. As mentioned above, when people acknowledge the right of the police to exert their authority, they are giving up certain freedoms, as well as accepting some vulnerability to harm that may result from that acknowledgement. Empowering police authority carries with it the potential for that power to be abused and this abuse certainly carries potential for direct harm to the trustor. Importantly, however, even beyond these extreme (but potentially not infrequent) abuses of power, vulnerability exists within the legitimate boundaries of police power in that voluntary cooperation can lead to harm from legal (e.g., sanctions from the legal system) or nonlegal sources (e.g., retribution from others). Regarding the courts, although trust is usually thought of as an issue of satisfaction with the courts as institutions of government, vulnerability is again relevant. This vulnerability is especially apparent for individual defendants in court, and many of the notions of trust in the police play out in the court context (e.g., Tyler & Huo, 2002), but vulnerability is not irrelevant for the far majority of individuals who will never appear in court as defendants. As suggested by the state courts literature's focus on perceptions of the courts as "good" institutions of government, the relevant vulnerability for these individuals is likely to the courts failing to effectively or efficiently do their jobs as administrators of the law which may harm more amorphous notions of what these important institutions of government should be.

## *Antecedents*

Assuming that vulnerability actually is central to trust, it stands to reason that the major antecedents of trust would be those constructs that increase the acceptability of being vulnerable or that reduce[4] the perception of vulnerability itself. The preceding sections lend some credence to this argument. Across domains, antecedents tend to center around concerns of performance, fairness, and factors of both the target and trustor. Regarding performance, three of the four domains identified some variation of perceived institutional performance as a critical concern (performance and effectiveness in Table 1). Performance evaluations influence vulnerability in that institutions with a successful track record of operating "well" in the past are likely to continue to do so in the future. For example, local governments that have worked to benefit their constituencies in the past can reasonably be expected to continue to do so in the future.

The second major theme in the identified antecedents is that of fairness (procedural justice, fairness, and merit trust) which is also represented in three of the four domains (policing, state courts, and medicine). The majority of the fairness literature suggests that these concerns carry important signals of the trustor's value and may signal that even if the outcome of dealing with an institution is not the preferred one, the decision itself was a "good" one (Tyler, 1989). These perceptions likely improve the acceptability of being vulnerable by suggesting that dealings with the institution will occur on a level playing field. Consider, for example, civil cases in the state courts. These situations are typically zero-sum games such that one side must win and one side must lose. Perceptions of fairness may suggest that the trustor's case is more likely to be successful, but it is even more likely that it would address the trustor's vulnerability to being disregarded in the process. In a procedurally fair court, the trustor will know that they will have their say.

The final theme comprises factors of the trustor and the target and is represented in some form in all four domains (public official factors, neighborhood factors, and trustor factors). These characteristics also impact vulnerability but target factors are likely somewhat different from neighborhood and trustor factors. Target factors likely allow the trustor to feel that they can predict the behavior of the target and therefore the likelihood of the exploitation of that vulnerability, while trustor factors likely operate more directly on either the subjective experience of vulnerability (as in the case of neighborhood factors that may create a social norm of acute perceived vulnerability) or on the perceived level of vulnerability itself (as in the case of a minority trustors who perceive themselves to be at increased risk to policies that disproportionately impact them).

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[4] If trust is a willingness to accept vulnerability, there must be some level of vulnerability. Constructs that are able to fully eliminate the perceived vulnerability therefore cannot be not antecedents of "trust," so defined.

## *Consequences*

The consequences of trust across the four domains are also notably consistent. In all four, the most commonly discussed outcomes are cooperation and compliance. Given this notion of trust as a willingness to accept vulnerability, the consistency of these outcomes is also to be expected. Vulnerability to some kind of negative outcome is often a major driver of a refusal to cooperate or comply with others in general. As mentioned in the introduction, two major contemporary crises of trust surround the civil unrest stemming from the events in Ferguson, Missouri, and the early failure to contain the Ebola epidemic in West Africa. In both situations, the critical failure to cooperate or comply arose in large part from a vulnerability that the public was unwilling to accept. In the case of the civil unrest, it seems to be a vulnerability to harm from inappropriate police behavior while, in West Africa, it seems to have been a vulnerability to harm from an institution that the trustors did not understand (namely western medicine). Trust then, by either decreasing the trustor's perceived vulnerability or by increasing its acceptability, provides a mechanism by which individuals can move past both major vulnerabilities like these and the relatively more minor vulnerabilities that are likely much more common in daily life (e.g., that of the public to inefficient institutions of government).

## *Implications*

There are two important implications of this chapter for institutional efforts to increase trust. The first is its suggestion of the centrality of vulnerability in trust across domains. For some domains, especially that of organizational trust, this is not a new recognition. Indeed, three of the four domains reviewed here have already begun to at least address this possibility. Nonetheless, the notion that vulnerability is central to trust is not yet widely accepted. If vulnerability is, in fact, the central consideration of trust, this recognition would suggest that the most efficient trust-building efforts would be those that focus on the most salient vulnerabilities. If, for example, the most salient vulnerability for a particular group of medical patients was to malpractice, efforts to increase trust for them are likely to be most effective when they focus on the doctor's conscientiousness and training. If, on the other hand, the major vulnerability is to decisions of a medical insurance provider that only cares about profit, efforts that focus on competence, even of the medical insurance companies, are unlikely to be especially effective. Instead, a focus on benevolence or even fairness in decision making would be preferable. There remains considerable work to be done testing the centrality of vulnerability to the construct, but if, as suggested by the majority of trust's cross-domain scholarship, vulnerability is central to it, trust-building efforts that address the salient vulnerabilities are likely to be most effective.

The second major implication is the recognition that although the antecedents that drive trust are fairly consistent across domains, the research does suggest that the most important antecedents will vary as a function of, at least, the domain. Across domains, concerns of performance, fairness, and characteristics of the trustor and the target matter, but the most important one changes. In the public administration context, perceived performance seems to be key, but in police and state courts contexts, performance concerns clearly take a back seat to issues of fairness. There is not, as yet, a sufficient body of research investigating reasons for this variation to confidently identify a rationale but it may be that the situations, or critical vulnerabilities within the situations, are fundamentally different and so activate different considerations. For example, much of the public is typically more directly impacted by local government decisions than they are by the decisions of the police or courts. This increased distance from the police and courts may facilitate a reliance on procedural concerns as a proxy for more precise evaluations (Herian, Hamm, Tomkins, & PytlikZillig, 2012). Importantly, however, it is also possible that the increased probability of personal interaction with the police and courts (as compared to local government) would increase the importance of fairness which some argue to be a fundamental concern in all human interactions (Tyler, 1989), and there are any number of other explanations that could be proffered as well. Regardless of the mechanism of the variation, it is clear that when applying the scholarship of trust, care should be taken to identify and address the most independently predictive antecedents in each specific domain.

## Conclusion

Scholarship has addressed trust in a number of domains. The message has consistently been that trust matters and this has led to a number of institutional efforts to increase trust. These efforts, however, have been stymied by a lack of clear understanding of the critical differences and similarities in trust across domains. The current chapter addressed this deficiency by examining the current understandings of trust in four institutional domains; specifically, by reviewing its conceptualizations, antecedents, and consequences. This examination shows that trust across domains is similar in many ways, but also importantly distinct. Across domains, trust can be understood as willingness to accept vulnerability. This willingness facilitates the relationship of the trustor to the target and is driven by antecedents that decrease, but do not eliminate, the perceived vulnerability of the trustor or that increase the acceptability of being vulnerable. Importantly, however, the major antecedents of trust do seem to vary across domains. Efforts to increase trust are therefore likely to be most successful when they (1) explicitly address the salient vulnerabilities and (2) focus on the antecedents most critical in the specific domain.

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