

ADVANCING THE SOCIAL SCIENCE OF TRUST: 2022 TRUSST LAB REPORT

LAB SUPERVISOR

- Joe Hamm, PhD MLS – *MSU School of Criminal Justice, Environmental Science and Policy Program, Department of Political Science*

LAB STUDENTS

- Tayo Bakare, PhD student – *MSU Department of Political Science*
- Travis Carter, PhD student – *MSU School of Criminal Justice*
- Jed Knode, PhD student – *MSU School of Criminal Justice*
- Vincent Liu, PhD student – *MSU School of Criminal Justice*
- Amanda Isabel Osuna, PhD candidate – *MSU School of Criminal Justice*
- John Ropp, PhD candidate – *MSU School of Criminal Justice*
- Jenna Van Fossen, PhD candidate – *MSU Department of Psychology*

LAB ALUMNI

- Katie Darcy, PhD – *University of Michigan Dearborn*

VISION

The Teaching, Researching, and Understanding the Social Science of Trust Lab was initiated in January of 2020 as a scholarly incubator for PhD-student led trust research. By bringing together students with varied contexts of interest and disciplinary orientations, we collectively work to refine theoretical arguments on trust, focusing especially on leveraging students' unique perspectives to challenge and build upon existing approaches. By integrating our diverse backgrounds, experiences, and practitioner networks, we collectively work to ensure the practical impact of our efforts, especially by developing relationships with agencies and institutions with an interest in supporting public trust.

STRUCTURE

The lab is currently made up of seven students and a faculty supervisor. Five students are from the School of Criminal Justice with one each from the Department of Political Science and Department of Psychology. Dr. Katie Darcy is an alumna of the lab (now an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan-Dearborn) and two additional students have voiced interest from the College of Education and the Department of Agricultural, Food, and Resource Economics. Two other students from the Departments of Psychology and of Social Work initially proposed projects and were integral members of the lab but had to step back for personal reasons.

The lab meets every other week to report on the status of our efforts and to work collectively in advancing them. Lab projects are those that were proposed by a lab student and approved by the lab for inclusion. These projects are conducted entirely within the lab (though they may include outside faculty as collaborators) and are eligible to make requests for funding from the lab. All lab projects are supported by the entire lab which works collaboratively during the meetings to develop ideas, refine measures, and interpret findings, but authorship is reserved for students who take an active role in data collection, analysis, or writing.

Lab meetings are also used to support synergistic projects as needed. These projects are not conducted within the lab but involve at least one lab student and are outgrowths of thinking within the lab. Dissertations are a key example as students in the lab often build upon their lab projects in projects where they take complete ownership.

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THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Our work has individually and collectively shed light on a variety of theoretical questions of importance to trust research—like the dynamics of its stability (LP7 and SP3)—but we have identified three primary foci that we discuss in further detail below.

TRUST AND VULNERABILITY

Most of our research to date has specifically aimed to advance thinking on trust and vulnerability. Building on a key citation in trust research (Mayer et al., 1995) and a trio of papers looking at the place of vulnerability in trust in the police (Hamm et al., 2017; 2022a; 2022b), the lab has sought to shed light on the vulnerabilities that individuals feel and to explore how they connect to feelings of trust. SP1 and SP4 attack this question head-on to argue that vulnerability, as it relates to trust, can be imposed (such that it is simply an element of existing in a particular place at a particular time), focal (such that it is understood by the trustor to be controlled by the trustee), or emergent (in that it arises specifically from the trustor's trust). Several of our lab projects go on to shed light on the nature or impact of these vulnerabilities. Four collect the ways that individuals feel focal vulnerability in their relationships with trustees (higher education institutions for LP2, LP11, and SP5 and state courts for LP5). While six empirically connect different kinds of vulnerability to trust with LP1, LP3, and LP6 considering imposed vulnerability to COVID, cyanoHABs, and hurricanes while LP5, LP8, LP9, and LP10 consider focal vulnerability to courts, police, groups responsible for responding to intimate partner violence, and the IRS, respectively. SP7 then takes that a step further testing whether the negative impact of imposed vulnerability on subjective well-being can be assuaged by a willingness to accept focal vulnerability to an environmental health governance agency. Together our work helps to elucidate the vulnerabilities people feel and how they condition trust but suggests some caution in assuming that vulnerability always lies at the center of trust. In our work, we often find that while some individuals can immediately identify the ways in which they are vulnerable in the specific relationship we are studying, others have a much harder time. More research is needed, but it generally seems that even though we are always objectively vulnerable in relationships where trust matters, we are only cognizant of that vulnerability when we feel that it is unprotected. Thus, our work motivates concerted efforts to increase our understanding of the interplay of being vulnerable and feeling vulnerable, as those who do not feel vulnerable may not use it as a major causal basis of their level of trust. On the other hand, it could be that not feeling vulnerable is, itself, the essence of trust (rather than being willing to accept it).

TRUST AND POWER

Significantly less of our work to date has systematically considered power but thinking about vulnerability necessarily implicates it. LP4 is our only work to date that addresses this directly. In that conceptual handbook chapter, we leverage feminist theory to argue that the contours of power within society are not random but are intentionally distributed. We then apply our wider thinking on vulnerability to argue that this power most directly impacts trust through the ways in which groups and individuals are uniquely offered access to or precluded from power which, in turn, conditions the harms to which they are, and feel, vulnerable.

TRUST AND MOTIVATION

Motivation has similarly not played a major role in our work to date but does recurrently arise as a potential, but largely uninvestigated element of our findings. For example, LP1 considers the moderating influence of political ideology on the effect of trust and risk perception on contact tracing. Although one possible mechanism for this moderation might be the different information that these groups might be likely to have, there is also likely some level of motivation at play when an individual feels trust. Similarly, LP5 hints at, but does not systematically investigate, the possibility that individuals who have more need to address a conflict formally may feel differently about their vulnerability. SP3 is the only project to spend dedicated time discussing motivation itself as it relates

to trust where we find that individuals who feel unable to trust governance agencies seem to feel a motivation to feel more trust in their community.

PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

As a lab, we are careful to ensure that every project has clear practical implications that, wherever possible, are developed in collaboration with and disseminated to practitioners. We have, however, had the opportunity to work especially closely with three organizations who care quite deeply about trust.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Our lab has a long running and particularly beneficial relationship with the MDHHS. As the lead agency focused on human health in the state, MDHHS staff have long been particularly interested in their relationships with communities. Much of our work is with the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) whose former Operations Administrator, Michelle Chambers, serves on the lab's External Advisory Board. Staff from the DEH also collaborate with Joe on a National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences-funded research center at MSU. As part of that award, the Community Engagement Core that Joe leads will conduct annual trainings with the entire division. These trainings will serve as yet another opportunity for bidirectional communication to ensure, not only that practitioners can benefit from the work done in the lab, but that the lab understands the challenges facing health educators in Michigan.

As part of the NIEHS award, Joe will oversee an annual survey of three Michigan communities facing environmental contamination to assess salient concerns relevant to their relationships with environmental health governance agencies. Data from this project will serve as the basis for SP7 which will, in turn, be communicated to the MDHHS to help support their community engagement efforts state-wide.

Similarly, MDHHS contracted with the lab to lead an effort in support of a grant to the Department from the US Environmental Protection Agency to enhance their efforts in cyanoHAB management. To assess public thoughts about the risk posed by cyanoHABs, its management, and the agency responsible for it, the lab prepared and fielded an online survey (LP3). A report was presented to the Department to inform their state-wide management strategy.

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

The lab also has a budding relationship with the Michigan Supreme Court Administrative Office (SCAO) in support of its administrative responsibilities over the Michigan Judiciary. At a high level, Joe has consulted with now former Chief Justice McCormack on issues of trust in the courts and these discussions have led to several opportunities to inform court practice in Michigan.

SP2 is the clearest example of this opportunity as the SCAO contracted with the lab to conduct a state-wide survey to understand how judicial officers were experiencing the shift to virtual courtrooms. The lab helped design the survey, conducted the analyses, and presented the findings, both in a report and at a session in the annual state judicial academy meeting attended by the majority of Michigan judges. The lab was also able to collect data on judges' attitudes, including the extent to which they feel that they are legitimate legal authorities, a construct theorized to be an important part of public trust in the courts, and to empirically demonstrate how these attitudes relate to sustained performance during the organizational crisis.

LP5 was born out of conversations that were initiated by Chief Justice McCormack with the SCAO and the director of Michigan's online court dispute resolution system (MI-Resolve). Although the project itself was not a direct collaboration with the SCAO, court staff were consulted throughout the process and the ultimate report was shared with MI-Resolve for comment before publication to ensure that the ultimate product would be best positioned to help guide court practice. As a result of his efforts in leading LP5, John was able to build a relationship with the SCAO that solidified into a full-time position in their office. In his role in the SCAO, John

has been tasked with helping to lead the state-wide court user satisfaction survey which will serve as a key source of data for SP6.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University (MSU) has been the site of a number of high-profile trust violations over the last decade or so. Both Joe and Amanda serve on committees across the university and have been called on to provide expertise on trust in those roles.

Amanda's interest in student/university relationships was the impetus for LP2 which, given the contemporary COVID-19 Pandemic, focused heavily on pandemic-related concerns. The report for that project was shared widely at MSU, including with then Provost Woodruff who invited Amanda to lead a campus-wide expansion (SP5). Amanda received funding from the Provost's Office to fund her and a team of undergraduate research assistants who are currently conducting focus groups of students across campus. As a university-sponsored effort, Speak Up MSU has been featured in a number of campus-wide communications and a variety of campus organizations have voiced a strong interest in the findings.

Finally, although both are still in development, LP9 and LP11 have strong potential to impact MSU, both through our existing relationships with now Interim President Woodruff and with the various organizations that have committed to helping collect data for LP9.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO STUDENT TRAINING

As noted in the Student Perspectives below, the TRUSST Lab serves as an important hub for professional development opportunities. By bringing together diverse perspectives, the lab facilitates students in working to refine the critical thinking, data collection and analysis, and project management skills they need to learn from and speak to diverse perspectives to answer questions of societal import. Thus, in addition to the role the lab plays as a fertile environment for advancing our collective thinking and capacity to do trust research, the lab also provides opportunities for building curricula vitae that secure jobs. Lab projects are designed to result in publications themselves but have also positioned students to conduct strong dissertations and to build relationships with practitioners and other researchers provide critical fodder for successful and community-engaged careers.

Katie and John's success in landing full-time positions in academia and the courts, respectively, demonstrate our capacity to train and place the next generation of trust researchers. They will be soon followed by Jenna and Amanda, both of whom will graduate next year well-prepared to bring nuanced thinking about trust into their first post-PhD positions.

EXPENDITURES

The TRUSST Lab is graciously funded by an annual gift from an anonymous donor. Although we have been relatively successful in securing funding from other sources to support elements of our work, the lab's direct funding both provides strong incentive for students to join the lab and important startup and gap funding, as well as supporting critical networking and professional development opportunities. Funding decisions are made collectively within the lab in response to proposals. We received our first round of funding too late to support our initial projects or our travel to the FINT meeting in Charleston this spring and so have spent less this year than we expect in the future. We have, however, spent \$5,100 for a general population sample from Qualtrics for LP8. We also anticipate larger than usual travel expenses next summer as Joe and several lab students have submitted proposals to present LP6, LP7, SP3, and SP5 at the First International Network of Trust meeting in Helsinki in June.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

DR. KATHLEEN DARCY

As an alumna of the lab, the TRUSST Lab has shaped both my research and provided me with essential experience that was attractive to employers. As to my research, the conversations we had as a lab helped further my work in two tangible ways. First, the conversations we had as a lab helped push my research in two tangible ways (1) the informal conversations we had as a lab about the importance of context and identity in shaping vulnerability was the direct origin of my project for the lab and resulted in a book chapter submitted to the Handbook of Trust in Governance that is currently under review. This project (and these conversations) allowed me to bring a theoretical framework of Feminism and Intersectionality to the table and convinced me that this was an essential frame to consider when thinking about vulnerability going forward. (2) I was able to work through key theoretical concepts related to my dissertation with the lab. As an example, after I had some initial results from my data, I brought them to the lab and they helped me think through the concept of vulnerability that might change within an existing relationship of trust, especially as relates to survivors of institutional sexual assault. Ultimately, I built on their comments and proposed a concept called emergent vulnerability in my dissertation. Second, when I was on the job market the experiences that I had in the lab with supporting other student research (and having research supported by my peers and colleagues) was something that University hiring committees were extremely interested in hearing more about. Interviewers were impressed by my experience with an opportunity like this to support and tangibly promote outdent-led research that was strongly related to my dissertation and research trajectory. I firmly believe this was an essential experience setting me apart in an extremely competitive job market.

AMANDA ISABEL OSUNA

As one of the founding members of the TRUSST lab, I have nothing but positive things to say about the lab, the supervisor, and the other student members. While I had always engaged in research that examined vulnerability, I had never framed it in that sense. Not only have I learned a lot from the lab and its members, but it has also allowed me to engage in opportunities that I previously did not have. For example, the Office of the Provost was so excited about research that I did in collaboration with the lab that they funded not only my dissertation research but also my assistantship. I am truly grateful to be a part of the TRUSST lab.

JENNA VAN FOSSEN

Joining Joe's lab has been a really positive and valuable experience for me in terms of professional development. I'm in organizational psychology and working with and learning from scholars in criminal justice has been useful to sharpen my skills in interdisciplinary partnerships. As a lab we all took some time to read and discuss seminal theory papers on trust development, which was also invaluable for me to gain fluency in the trust literature. Due to the TRUSST lab, I have been able to extend my research agenda to include trust as a driving theme, including projects on trust in artificial intelligence and automation. Because of my involvement in the lab, I am planning to continue to study trust and apply trust theory to better explain pressing issues, including workforce preparation for automation, as a core theme in my research career as an academic.

LAB PROJECTS

LP1. EXPLORING TRUST, RISK, AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY IN COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING

TEAM:

Jenna Van Fossen (lead), John Ropp, Katie Darcy, & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Manuscript published with *Social Science and Medicine*.

CITATIONS:

Van Fossen, J. A., Ropp, J. W., Darcy, K., & Hamm, J. A. (2022). Comfort with and willingness to participate in COVID-19 contact tracing: The role of risk perceptions, trust, and political ideology. *Social Science & Medicine*. 115174. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115174

Van Fossen, J., Ropp, J., Darcy, K., & Hamm, J. A. (2022). Willingness to participate in COVID-19 contact tracing: The role of risk perceptions, trust, and political ideology. Presentation at the First International Network of Trust Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina.

ABSTRACT:

Contact tracing (CT) can limit the spread of infectious diseases, however its effectiveness hinges on public participation. We evaluated perceptions of the financial and health risk posed by COVID-19 and trust in information about COVID-19 provided by the state health department that manages CT as predictors of comfort and willingness to comply with CT. We further examined the moderating effect of political ideology on these relationships. We used structural equation modeling to test hypotheses in data from a cross-sectional survey completed by a representative sample of Michigan residents ($N = 805$) in 2020 via the State of the State Survey (SOSS) conducted by the Michigan State University Institute for Public Policy and Social Research. Perceptions of the risk of COVID-19 to one's health (but not finances) was negatively related to comfort and willingness to participate in CT. Trust in information about COVID-19 and liberalism were positively related to comfort and willingness. There was also a moderating effect of political ideology, such that conservatives were less comfortable and willing at greater perceptions of health risk. Conservatives and those who perceive a greater health risk may require targeted messaging and more deliberate engagement strategies to increase CT participation.

LP2. UNDERSTANDING STUDENT VULNERABILITY AT A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

TEAM:

Amanda Isabel Osuna (lead), Katie Darcy, Zach Woessner, & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Report published on lab website.

CITATIONS:

Osuna, A. I., Darcy, K., Woessner, Z. W., & Hamm, J. A. (2021). Perceived Student Vulnerabilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Report available at <http://www.trusstlab.com/resources>

ABSTRACT:

The COVID-19 Pandemic impacted higher education both through the structural changes that comprise university responses and through student experiences of their real and perceived effects. Research has begun to attend to these changes, but little work has considered how they affect students and virtually none has considered these

impacts through students' eyes. Addressing this gap in knowledge is important because these perspectives may reveal unintended and even surprising impacts of the decisions made by universities as they continue to navigate the pandemic. This report presents the results of a qualitative analysis of data collected via an online survey of Michigan State University (MSU) students conducted in September of 2020. The purpose of the survey was to understand trust and harm in higher education generally, from a student perspective. As might be expected given the timing of the survey, harms related to the COVID-19 Pandemic emerged naturally. These COVID-specific responses were then categorized into four somewhat overlapping themes. Students discussed educational and financial harms, especially regarding the perceived decrease in the quality and value of instruction as courses moved online and university decisions that left students in expensive housing contracts. Students also discussed failures to mitigate student injury, a related but distinct set of harms that arose from situations where they felt that the university could have alleviated some of the injuries to students by taking a slightly different approach, even to the same end. The final set of harms focused specifically on the university's stay-at-home order where students highlighted a lack of consistency and fairness in its application. Although our data are limited—both in that the survey was not initially designed to collect COVID-specific harms and in that they were collected at only one university—results highlight (1) the need for universities to engage in effective and timely communication with students to position them to make informed decisions, especially regarding their finances, (2) a need to think proactively about the resources students need to be successful in the new environments created by responses to crises, and (3) an overarching need to demonstrate unwavering concern for student welfare.

LP3. MANAGING CYANOHABS IN MICHIGAN

TEAM:

Jenna Van Fossen (lead), John Ropp, Katie Darcy, Zach Woessner, Amanda Isabel Osuna, Betsy Meier, & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Report submitted to Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

CITATIONS:

Van Fossen, J. A., Ropp, J. W., Darcy, K., Woessner, Z., Osuna, A. I., Meier, E., & Hamm, J. A. (2020). CyanoHAB Outreach in Michigan: Survey Report. Report prepared for research partners [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services]. Available at <http://www.trusstlab.com/resources>

ABSTRACT:

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) can lead to health problems in people and animals, and the number of HAB outbreaks has increased in Michigan over the last few years. As part of its response, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) contracted with the TRUSST Lab to conduct a survey assessing thoughts about HABs and the agencies tasked with managing them held by people who live in and/or recreate on bodies of water in Michigan. We recruited respondents in 2020 from a Facebook sample ($n = 383$) of closed Facebook Groups for lakes that have recently experienced a HAB, and a Listserv sample ($n = 113$) via email listservs held by MDHHS. Participants were predominantly White, educated, and liberal, and most spent at least one month at waterfront property annually. Although participants reported a sense of confidence in their subjective knowledge and ability to identify a HAB, the majority failed to correctly answer objective knowledge questions potentially suggesting a somewhat lower level of awareness than they felt they had. Participants who perceived more the risk from HABs, were older, and White, were more likely to report greater intentions to cooperate with HABs management in the future. Up to one-third of participants did not perceive any risk from HABs and these individuals were more likely to feel they know more about HABs, be older, less educated, have a lower income, and be more politically conservative. Respondents generally viewed MDHHS as at least somewhat trustworthy, with more positive perceptions of MDHHS' benevolence but relatively lower perceptions of MDHHS' communication, fairness, and shared values. Approximately one-fifth of respondents reported very low trustworthiness perceptions. These participants were more likely to be White, conservative, and perceive less risk

from HABs. These results offer a window into how the public thinks about this management responsibility and identifies the characteristics of specific groups for whom particular management approaches may be necessary.

LP4. EXPLORING POWER, VULNERABILITY, AND TRUST IN PUBLIC GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE LENS OF FEMINIST INTERSECTIONALITY

TEAM:

Katie Darcy (lead), Betsy Meier, Amanda Isabel Osuna, Jenna Van Fossen, John Ropp, & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Under review with the *Handbook of Trust and Public Governance*.

CITATIONS:

Darcy, K., Meier, E., Osuna, A.I., VanFossen, J.A., Ropp, J., Hamm, J., (under review) Exploring Power, Vulnerability, and Trust in Public Governance through the Lens of Feminist Intersectionality. *Handbook of Trust and Public Governance*.

ABSTRACT:

At the center of the relationship between governance entities and the publics they serve are power imbalances. Feminist theory has, from its outset, explored how power structures enable and constrain individual behavior on the basis of gender. Further, it brings an inherently multi-level analysis, exploring individual identity and contextualizing it against power structures. Intersectionality builds on this foundation and that of Black feminist scholars to consider multiple intersecting identities and how these might relate to when and why individuals feel more or less vulnerability in governance relationships and become more or less willing to accept it. This chapter highlights feminist intersectionality as an important lens for unpacking power and its impact on vulnerability in trust in governance. Two examples (policing and military sexual trauma) are explored to demonstrate how an intersectional lens can add nuance to understanding governance relationships and why trust might differ among individuals by more fully considering power and intersecting identities. Using a feminist lens draws attention to the role of intersectional identities and how they are shaped by multi-level power structures and can push our theoretical understanding of vulnerability to public governance entities through calls for increasing use of feminist and indigenous methods.

LP5. MOBILIZING THE LAW: THE ROLE OF VULNERABILITY AND COURT PROCESS IN THE DECISION TO FILE A SMALL CLAIMS SUIT

TEAM:

John Ropp (lead), Betsy Meier, Jenna Van Fossen, Amanda Isabel Osuna, Katie Darcy, Zach Woessner, & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Under review at *Law and Society Review*.

CITATIONS:

Ropp, J. W., Darcy, K., Meier, E., Osuna, A. I., Van Fossen, J., Woessner, Z., Hamm, J. A. (2020). Public expectations regarding online dispute resolution: A comparison of dispute resolution processes during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Available at <http://www.trusstlab.com/resources>

Ropp, J. W., Meier, E., Van Fossen, J., Osuna, A. I., Darcy, K., Woessner, Z., Hamm, J. A. (Under Review). Mobilizing the law: The role of vulnerability and court process in the decision to file a small claims suit. *Law and Society Review*.

ABSTRACT:

This study explores the role of individual perceptions of vulnerability and how they relate to various dispute resolution processes in the decision to mobilize legal processes to address a legitimate claim. A sample of MTurk workers completed a survey in response to a hypothetical landlord-tenant dispute. In the survey, respondents were randomly assigned to read one of three common dispute resolution methods (small claims trial, alternative dispute resolution, online dispute resolution) and a control group, and subsequently responded to questions about their willingness to use, and anticipated experiences with the court via the assigned process. We found that respondents perceived categorical differences in the anticipated harms associated with different processes. Particularly, anticipated experiences with online dispute resolution evoked unique concerns compared to in-person processes. Furthermore, the perception of vulnerability was a significant predictor of a respondent's willingness to mobilize legal processes for the resolution of the hypothetical dispute. Given these results, we recommend that researchers more fully consider the ways that vulnerabilities may change as a result of the type of court interaction that may occur.

LP6. DISENTANGLING TRUST AND RISK AS DRIVERS OF COMPLIANCE WITH A GOVERNANCE AGENCY

TEAM:

Jenna Van Fossen (lead), Tayo Bakare, Adam Zwickle (collaborating faculty), & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Accepted for presentation at the First International Network of Trust annual meeting.

ABSTRACT:

Public agencies are tasked with managing imposed vulnerability to external risks, such as from natural disasters, but their effectiveness depends on public trust. In particular, heeding agency recommendations requires the public to accept some potential of risk within the relationship if the recommendations are wrong or damaging. However, different requests for compliance carry different focal vulnerabilities: Following an agency's advice to evacuate ahead of a hurricane carries different risk than does following advice to shelter in place. Trust research often connects trust to compliance but is, thus far, generally silent as to whether there are kinds of compliance that are more or less rooted in trust. To disentangle the interactive effects of trust and risk to hurricanes in predicting compliance under conditions of low (willingness to evacuate) and high (willingness to shelter in place) risk in the event of a hurricane, we collected 25 weekly reports from a final total of 94 Florida residents during the 2016 hurricane season. Using multilevel modeling, we found a significant cross-level moderation effect of risk in the relationship between trust in the National Hurricane Center (NHC) and intentions to comply with an evacuation order. At low levels of perceived risk to a hurricane, the relationship between trust and evacuation intentions is more positive but that trust becomes less important as individuals perceive more risk, suggesting that the primary driver of compliance here is the threat of the hurricane itself. Similarly, we identified a moderating effect of risk on the relationship between trust and intention to comply with a shelter-in-place order but here trust became more positively associated with compliance intentions as hurricane risk increased. Our findings offer increased nuance into understanding the distinct effects of focal vulnerability and imposed risk together with trust and unique, alternate forms of agency compliance. Specifically, we find that when compliance reduces risk to an external threat, the willingness to accept vulnerability to the agency (*i.e.*, trust), is not especially important. However, when that compliance increases that external risk, trust becomes much more important.

LP7. IS TRUST SELF-REINFORCING? INSIGHT INTO THE DYNAMICS OF PERCEIVED TRUSTWORTHINESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST

TEAM:

Jenna Van Fossen (lead), Tayo Bakare, Adam Zwickle (collaborating faculty), & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Accepted for presentation at the First International Network of Trust annual meeting.

ABSTRACT:

Despite a long-running understanding of trust as dynamic, most research treats it as largely static. Thus, we know relatively little about the stability of trust and of relationships between trust and its key antecedents, especially in the governance context where, despite a general understanding that trust is important, little is understood regarding how established levels of trust inform subsequent perceptions of an agency's trustworthiness, and vice versa. We examined the dynamic relationships of trust in the National Hurricane Center and perceptions of the agency's ability, benevolence, and integrity across 25 weekly surveys completed by 94 Florida residents, recruited through MTurk, during the 2016 hurricane season. We tested hypotheses using two-level time series analyses with bivariate cross-lagged models, and a separate model for each trustworthiness dimension. Results indicate that a higher proportion of the variance in ability perceptions can be attributed to fluctuations within-person (42.30%) as compared to benevolence (24.90%) or integrity (25.40%). As would be expected, previous week trust was a significant predictor of each trustworthiness dimension, and vice versa. Interestingly, previous week trust was more strongly associated with ability perceptions ($b = .20$) as compared to benevolence ($b = .12$) or integrity ($b = .09$). Our results support previous arguments suggesting the self-reinforcing nature of trust and trustworthiness but highlight that perceptions of ability may exhibit greater variability and be more informed by levels of established trust.

LP8. EXPLORING THE CORRELATES OF FEAR OF POLICE HARM

TEAM:

Travis Carter (lead), Justin Pickett (collaborating faculty), & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Analyzing data.

ABSTRACT:

Maintaining positive public perceptions are critical to American policing (Kochel, 2022; Tyler, 2004). When these perceptions worsen, so too does public cooperation with the police, effective crime control, and the safety of both officers and the public (Mazerolle *et al.*, 2013; Tyler & Fagan, 2008). Understanding the contours of these perceptions is therefore important. Although considerable work has considered the dynamics of constructs like trust and legitimacy, only recently has quantitative research begun to explore thoughts about police-caused harm (Hamm *et al.*, 2022). This is an important oversight, especially in light of movements like Black Lives Matter and those calling for defunding or abolishing the police, most of which appear to center on a rejection of these communities' vulnerability to harm caused by the police (Cobbina-Dungy & Jones-Brown, 2021). Preliminary research has demonstrated that fear of police harm is racially divided and that it may supersede concerns for criminal victimization (Pickett, Graham, & Cullen, 2022). Absent however is a robust understanding as to how researchers can "best" measure fear of unjustified harm by the police and the correlates of that fear. The current study seeks to advance our understanding by evaluating measures of fear and perceived risk of police harm paying particular attention to the dimensions of that fear and perceived risk of police harm. The primary goal for this research is thus to provide evidence of the reliability and validity of measures as well as their relations with a number of theoretically driven correlates like trust, legitimacy, and willingness to support the police. To this end, we surveyed a nationwide sample of Americans ($N = 650$), split evenly across 4 race/ethnicity strata (Black, Hispanic, Asian, and White) via a Qualtrics general population sample in 2022.

LP9. NAVIGATING VULNERABILITY: HOW SEXUAL AND GENDER MINORITIES SEEK HELP AFTER INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES

TEAM:

Jed Knode (lead) & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Designing materials.

ABSTRACT:

Sexual and gender minorities (SGMs) experience higher rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) than non-SGMs while having comparatively few options for tailored formal help services. Instead, SGMs tend to rely heavily on informal support (e.g., friends, family) while holding negative opinions of most formal services (e.g., police, courts, shelters). While past research suggests SGMs perceive more focal vulnerability to these formal institutions, research has not explored the role of trust and vulnerability in help-seeking behaviors of SGMs who have experienced IPV. This is noteworthy as minoritized individuals may be more vulnerable to intracultural harm within their communities, as well as intracultural pressure to not disclose that harm. The goal of this project is to increase understanding of how intracultural pressures interact with perceived vulnerability to help sources in SGM experiences of IPV and help seeking behavior. Measures of these variables will be incorporated into an online survey and evaluated via multiple regression analyses. Two hundred and fifty SGMs will be surveyed through snowball and convenience sampling with the assistance of Michigan agencies such as the Salus Center, LGBT Detroit, and Equality Michigan. A proposal to the SGM Consortium to fund this work is currently under review. This project will be the first to integrate research on trust and help-seeking behavior with intracultural trust and cultural betrayal in a SGM population. Understanding these relationships is especially important with the rapidly increasing population of Americans holding SGM identities. The findings of this study will offer an important insight into how intragroup pressures intersect with trust in a variety of services seeking to reduce the negative impact of IPV on communities.

LP10. TRUST AND THE IRS

TEAM:

Tayo Bakare (lead) & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Developing a lab project proposal.

ABSTRACT:

Public trust is crucial for legitimizing the actions of government agencies and ensuring citizen compliance with agency mandates. In 2013, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) admitted to intentionally targeting conservative nonprofits that sought tax-exempt status. Unsurprisingly, public trust in the IRS declined, especially among Republicans who reported significantly lower levels of trust in the IRS than Democrats (Ballotpedia 2013; Pew Research Center 2013). Scholars have done vital work assessing relationships among antecedents of trust, institutional trust, and partisanship (Mayer *et al* 1995; Keele 2005). Yet, existing work has not addressed how partisanship conditions the effect of trustworthiness and felt vulnerability on trust. The proposed study will address this gap in the literature with a novel study on trust in the IRS, partisanship, and trust outcomes. Using a battery of questions added to the MSU State of the State Survey (SOSS), a nationally representative, "phone and online public opinion survey of Michigan adults" (IPPSR MSU 2022), I will test a regression model that captures partisanship, the dimensions of trustworthiness (*i.e.*, ability, benevolence, and integrity), and vulnerability to the agency as competing predictors of trust in the IRS. I will then add interaction terms to assess any interdependent relations among partisanship, the trustworthiness dimensions, and vulnerability. I postulate that partisanship will be useful in explaining the variation in the relationship between trust and its antecedents, given that partisanship colors much of Americans' assessments of governmental institutions and naturally manifests in their interactions with them.

LP11. THE ROLE OF TRUST IN CHINESE STUDENTS' PURSUIT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

TEAM:

Vincent Liu (lead) & Joe Hamm

STATUS:

Developing a lab project proposal.

ABSTRACT:

This project will look at the pushing factors behind Chinese nationals' decision to pursue higher education in the United States during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Using an exploratory sequential design, the project will first interview a group of Chinese international students who applied to universities in the U.S. and travelled from China to the U.S. between 2020-2022. Drawing from the themes discovered from the interviews, the project will proceed to creating a survey exploring factors related to Chinese international students' desire and decision to study abroad, especially during a difficult time like the COVID-19 Pandemic and rising anti-Asian and anti-Chinese hate. This project will use as sensitizing concepts participants' vulnerability to and trust in themselves, the universities, and society generally. Theoretically, this project will contribute to the literature by investigating the intersection of trust and vulnerability at micro, meso, and macro levels. Practically, this project will shed light on students' motivations and concerns and provide an evidence basis for recommendations for higher education institute to better accommodate a diverse student body.

SYNERGISTIC PROJECTS

SP1. DISSERTATION RESEARCH: EXPLORING INSTITUTIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, BETRAYAL, AND TRUST-BASED HARM

LAB INVOLVEMENT:

Katie Darcy (lead), Joe Hamm (dissertation chair)

STATUS:

Dissertation defended and deposited with ProQuest.

CITATIONS:

Darcy, K., (2022). Exploring Institutional Sexual Assault, Betrayal, and Trust-Based Harm [Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University]. *Proquest Dissertation and Theses Global*.

ABSTRACT:

Shocking stories of institutional sexual assault (ISA; assault occurring in institutional settings or between institutional actors) have been brought to light in numerous settings, including prisons, the military, higher education, sports, medicine, religious institutions and more. Theories to understand harm that stems from ISA suggest that trust is at the center such that betrayal trauma and institutional betrayal are linked to mental health, physical health and relationship harms distinct from sexual assault more broadly (Delker & Freyd, 2014; Freyd, 1996; Smith & Freyd, 2014). The dissertation investigated harm in the context of institutional sexual assault using trust as a lens to identify potential for harm (1) at different stages of the trust process and (2) in interpersonal versus institutional trust relationships. Findings illuminated how stages of the trust process aligned with different harms and trust relationships, adding understanding to imposed and focal vulnerability, trustworthiness, and what I call “emergent vulnerability.” Risk taking in a relationship might relate to increased dependence, which can create a vulnerability to exploitation especially when relationships have a power imbalance (Misztal, 2012). Emergent vulnerability refers to the vulnerability that arises from risk taking in a trust relationship. Results of a scoping review identified harms for both interpersonal and institutional trust as concrete (e.g., physical, financial) where identity, context, and power mattered, and as amorphous (e.g., professional, privacy, emotional). Interpersonal trust articles identified mechanisms to understand emotional harm (moral injury and betrayal), whereas only (institutional) betrayal arose in institutional trust. Next, qualitative analyses using the victim impact statements given at the sentencing trial of Dr. Larry Nassar compared how victims who experienced different trust relationships (interpersonal and multilevel) spoke to vulnerability, trustworthiness, and harm. Vulnerability related to identity and context, differing by type of trust. Both groups described multiple reasons to trust, but only the multilevel group identified institutional factors. Moral injury and betrayal again helped understand harm, but the multilevel group identified harms tied to institutional responses (e.g., putting institutional interests above its members). The final chapter connected empirical results to the trust process framework. Legal and practical implications of the findings are discussed, where improved understanding of victims’ experiences can better shape efforts at prevention, improve reporting, and better tailor legal remedies to victims’ needs.

SP2. MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT VIRTUAL COURTROOM SURVEY

LAB INVOLVEMENT:

Joe Hamm (lead), John Ropp

STATUS:

Manuscript under review at *Public Administration Quarterly*.

CITATIONS:

Hamm, J. A., Ropp, J. W., Scott, B., & Witwer, A. R. (2021). Virtual Courtroom Survey: Analysis Report. Report prepared for research partners [Michigan Supreme Court Administrative Office]. Available at <http://www.trusstlab.com/resources>

Hamm, J.A., Ropp, J., Witwer, A., & Scott, B. (under review). Self-efficacy, prosocial impact, and self-legitimacy as psychological predictors of judicial officer performance during an organizational crisis. *Public Administration Review*.

Viviano, K., Hutzler, L., Hamm, J. A., & Latusek, J. (2021). COVID-19 and the Virtual Courtroom. Presentation at the Michigan Judicial Institute Annual Judicial Conference, Online.

ABSTRACT:

The COVID-19 Pandemic necessitated massive changes to court operations, virtually overnight. In compliance with a variety of public health measures, courts across the country significantly cut back their caseloads, implemented social distancing measures, and—most critically—moved a significant portion of proceedings online. The changes represent an important organizational crisis for the judiciary and, in response, the Michigan Supreme Court connected with the TRUSST Lab to conduct a survey of judicial officers. Participants completed measures focused primarily on their experiences in virtual proceedings but also provided subjective measures of participants’ perspectives. The team provided a report of the findings which they also presented at the Michigan Judicial Institute’s annual meeting. A similar but not overlapping manuscript was also prepared evaluating facilitators of organizational performance during the crisis. Specifically, we tested the impact of judicial officers’ assessments of their own efficacy at work, the extent to which they feel they have a positive impact on society, and their thoughts about their legitimacy as a legal authority on their performance during the pandemic. Performance was measured subjectively in the survey as well as via objective performance data collected by state court administrative officers. Latent variable analysis confirmed the separability of the three predictor constructs and, although all were bivariately related to performance, revealed self-efficacy as the sole predictor of subjective performance. An unplanned mediation analysis suggested significant indirect effects of self-efficacy and prosocial impact on subjectively assessed performance through self-efficacy. Regarding objective performance, self-efficacy emerged as the only significant correlate or predictor. The research confirms the separability of self-efficacy, prosocial impact, and self-legitimacy but provides some exploratory support for a causal model whereby self-efficacy provides the proximal impact on performance but is itself facilitated by prosocial impact and self-legitimacy.

SP3. TRUST AND DISTRUST AS ALTERNATIVE STABLE STATES

LAB INVOLVEMENT:

Joe Hamm (lead), Jenna Van Fossen

STATUS:

Manuscript under review at *Ecology and Society*.

CITATIONS:

Hamm, J.A., Carrera, J., Van Fossen, J., Key, K., Woolford, S. J., Bailey, S. B., McKay, A., Evans, L., & Calhoun, K. (under review). Conceptualizing trust and distrust as alternative stable states: Lessons from the Flint Water Crisis. *Ecology and Society*.

ABSTRACT:

Despite the universally recognized importance of fostering trust and avoiding distrust in governance relationships, there remains considerable debate on core questions like the relation between (dis)trust and the evaluations of the characteristics that make a governance agent appear (un)worthy of trust. In particular, it remains unclear whether levels of (dis)trust simply follow levels of (dis)trustworthiness—such that building trust is primarily a question of signaling trustworthiness and avoiding signals of distrustworthiness—or if their dynamics are more

complicated. The current paper adds to this discussion novel theory for thinking about the management of trust and distrust in the governance context through the application of principles borrowed from resilience. Specifically, we argue that trust and distrust exist as distinct, self-reinforcing (*i.e.*, stable) psychological states separated by a threshold. We then theorize as to the nature of the self-reinforcing processes and use qualitative data collected from residents regarding the Flint Water Crisis to look for evidence of our argument in a well-documented governance failure. We conclude by explaining how this novel perspective allows for clearer insight into the experience of this and other communities and speculate as to how it can best be leveraged to mitigate the impact of future crises.

SP4. INTEGRATING FOCAL VULNERABILITY AS AN ANTECEDENT OF TRUST

LAB INVOLVEMENT:

Joe Hamm (lead) & Katie Darcy

STATUS:

Revising manuscript.

CITATIONS:

Hamm, J. A., Möllering, G., & Darcy, K. (in preparation). Integrating focal vulnerability as an antecedent of trust.

ABSTRACT:

The primary components of a trusting relationship are generally understood to be the trustor, the trustee, and the context in which they are embedded. Despite considerable work addressing the first two, much less has sought to understand the elements of the context that make trust different across relationships. The current article positions the vulnerability that a trustor is, by definition, willing to accept as a key concept for understanding how changes in the context condition trust. We argue that this *focal vulnerability* is perceived, relational, and present. We further argue that variability in it can be meaningfully captured by understanding the extent to which the trustor is concerned about their focal vulnerability and that this concern is itself conditioned by the trustors power, privilege, and positionality. Finally, we argue that this concern about focal vulnerability has a direct effect on trust such that, all else equal, more concern will lead to less trust. Thus, we offer to the literature a clear and testable theoretical roadmap for integrating focal vulnerability into trust research.

SP5. DISSERTATION RESEARCH: UNDERSTANDING VULNERABILITY IN THE STUDENT/UNIVERSITY RELATIONSHIP

LAB INVOLVEMENT:

Amanda Isabel Osuna (lead), Joe Hamm (dissertation chair)

STATUS:

Collecting and analyzing data.

ABSTRACT:

Trust is an important pillar of higher education that facilitates positive student experiences and well-being and has been linked to enrollment, retention, and continued involvement after graduation (Ghosh *et al.*, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Understanding student trust in universities is therefore an important task and research on trust in a variety of contexts positions vulnerability as a key concept (Mayer *et al.*, 1995). As in most situations in which individuals engage with more powerful institutions, students look to their universities to make decisions that reduce the likelihood and severity of a variety of potential injuries (Smith & Freyd, 2013). Trust is generally understood to exist when these individuals, more or less consciously recognize their vulnerability and feel willing to accept it. Unpacking how students come to understand their vulnerability to their university and the reasons why they are or are not willing to accept it is therefore important, both, and because of the light it may shed on generally understanding trust in the context of institutional victimization. Complicating this, however, is

the multilevel nature of these institutions. Universities are comprised of actors at a variety of levels that include, but are not limited to, administration, college, department, faculty, staff, and other students, each of which may be perceived to have different levels of control over different kinds of victimization and to be worthy of being entrusted with them. Understanding, building, and repairing student trust, therefore, requires a nuanced understanding of student vulnerability across the levels that comprise the university. The proposed research addresses this by asking 1) How do students come to understand their vulnerabilities in their relationship with their university? and 2) How do students become willing (or unwilling) to accept the risk of being harmed by their university?

SP6. DISSERTATION RESEARCH: THE INFLUENCE OF JUDICIAL ATTITUDES ON EFFICIENCY, SATISFACTION, AND LEGITIMACY PERCEPTIONS AMONG COURT USERS

LAB INVOLVEMENT:

John Ropp (lead), Joe Hamm (dissertation chair)

STATUS:

Developing proposal.

ABSTRACT:

The courts are reliant on public ascriptions of legitimacy to maintain their limited authority (Gamper, 2015). The theoretical literature has consistently demonstrated that procedural fairness is an important antecedent to legitimacy perceptions of the court (see Tyler & Huo, 2002). However, scholars have also called for a greater consideration of the legal actor's own perceived power-holder authority, or self-legitimacy (Bottoms & Tankebe, 2012). Recent research in the policing context suggests that self-legitimacy is associated with what may be described as more "procedurally fair" behavior towards members of the public (Jonathan-Zamir & Harpaz, 2018; Noppe, 2016; Wolfe & Nix, 2016). The procedural fairness model of legitimacy fails to account for the individual attitudes of the legal authority themselves that would likely contribute to the way they interact with the public. Beyond self-legitimacy, research from other fields indicates that self-efficacy and trust in the public may also be associated with fairer behavior by legal authorities (see Mortgous *et al.*, 2022). We might expect that those legal authorities who believe they are capable of handling challenges and are willing to be vulnerable to the public, would treat individuals in ways that are more likely to be perceived as procedurally fair, thus contributing to perceptions of legitimacy. Self-legitimacy, self-efficacy, and trust in the public have all become more salient elements to the work of the judicial officer in the wake of the rapid and widespread adoption of remote hearing technologies and procedures. The traditional role of a judge and the mechanisms of justice have changed significantly in recent years. This dissertation endeavors to explore the way this context may shape judicial attitudes, by leveraging real-world survey data from court users linked to survey data of judges to explore the mediating relationship between judicial attitudes (*i.e.*, self-legitimacy, self-efficacy, and trust in the public) and court legitimacy via court user perceptions of procedural fairness.

SP7. (DIS)TRUST, COMMUNITY HEALTH, AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

TEAM:

Joe Hamm (lead), Jenna Van Fossen

STATUS:

Preparing materials.

ABSTRACT:

Trust research has long attested to a variety of positive outcomes of trust in governance agencies for communities. In general, the argument goes that communities who trust agencies more, better facilitate the agencies in accomplishing their responsibilities through increases in compliance and cooperation, and through decreases in efforts to monitor or control the agency. Less work, however, has considered the direct impacts of trust despite long-running evidence of the psychological costs of feeling distrust in a valued domain. The current project contributes to this small but growing body of literature by assessing the impact of distrust in government on subjective well-being. In his role as Lead of the Community Engagement Core of the MSU Superfund Research Center, Joe is currently preparing a survey that will be distributed to residents in three communities in Michigan that are dealing with dioxin contamination. The survey will assess the extent to which participants are concerned about the contamination as well as other community health challenges. They will then complete a battery of questions measuring their trust in the agencies responsible for ensuring community health and measures of subjective health and well-being. We expect that concern will have a negative impact on subjective health and well-being but hypothesize that this impact will be attenuated for individuals who report greater trust in the agencies responsible for keeping them safe. More plainly, we argue that—when faced with a salient community health concern—trust plays an inoculating role, severing the impact of that concern on subjective well-being.