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**Public Trust in the Police: Identifying Factors that Shape Trust
in the Ghanaian Police**

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ABSTRACT

Though much have been conducted to examine the influences on public trust in the police in developed countries, little or no such studies have been conducted in developing countries, limiting what we know in those countries thereby creating a gap in the academic literature. To fill this gap, the present study examined factors that influence Ghanaians' trust in their police. Using a representative field survey data collected in Summer, 2011 in Accra, Ghana (N=493), I found that fear of crime and satisfaction with the police are significant predictors of public trust in the Ghanaian police. Policy implications of the findings are discussed.

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Introduction

Effective operation of the criminal justice system is dependent upon the level of trust people have in the system. The police, one of the foundations of the criminal justice system must maintain high public trust if the system is to perform its mission to the fullest. Public trust can exist only when the police execute their duties with fairness, equity, professionalism, and firmness. Public trust is important to police institutions particularly in democratic societies in which the police have to 'earn' legitimacy for their actions from citizens. From the point of view of effective police work, good and confidential relationships with citizens are of primary importance. Public trust can enhance police effectiveness and the legitimacy of police actions (Lea and Young, 1984; Lyons, 2002; National Research Council, 2004; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). However, as Goldsmith notes, it is surprising how little research has focused on public trust in the police (2005: 445).

Goldsmith (2003) contends that, trust is linked to the capacity of state police to provide basic citizen security. Trust, through its presumption of benevolence, dedication and a shared ethical framework (Six, 2003), also enables police legitimacy-the judgment that ordinary citizens make about the rightfulness of police conduct and the organizations that employ and supervise them (National Research Council, 2004: 291). When the public views police as legitimate or trustworthy, they co-operate with the police in ways that ensure effectiveness of police performance. A deficit of trust in the police is common in deeply divided, post-conflict and post-authoritarian societies (del Frate, 1998; Mishler and Rose, 1998; Weitzer, 1995). Trust, it has been noted, reduces complexity for individuals and providing them with a sense of security by allowing them to take for granted most of the relationships upon which they depend (Warren, 1999: 3-4).

There have been few empirical studies conducted in the arena of trust or trustworthiness of institutions such as the police. Two features seem to be typical

of these studies. First, trust has been conceptually different from one study to another and second, these empirical studies find explanations for any variation in trust in the quality of police work (Kaariainen, 2008: 142). The idea is that effective police work that serves citizens well is reflected in a positive attitude toward the police. Empirical studies conducted to examine public trust in the police and public perceptions of police are important and essential because how the public conceptualize and evaluate police can directly or indirectly shape the way they respond to the police, the political support and cooperation they render to police, and their willingness to participate in police and community anticrime programs and efforts. However, most of these studies have concentrated on the Western countries, especially the United States, and this has created an empirical gap within the academic literature of policing.

Due to this, very little attention has been paid to how people on the African continent view the police in their respective countries. Ghana for instance is no exception to this academic neglect as extremely little is written and known about policing in general and about public perceptions of police in particular. Specifically, no study has yet been conducted to evaluate specific factors that shape public trust in the police in Ghana. The present study therefore situates the Ghana police in the academic context by identifying some factors that influence citizens' trust in the police. The next section examines theoretical bases of public trust and perception; assess factors influencing trust, and situates policing in Ghana. This is followed by a description of how the study was conducted, data were collected, and the methods used in analyzing the data. The last section covers the results obtained, discussion of findings, limitations, and policy implications of the findings.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study postulates that poor public satisfaction with the police is related to a general public distrust of the other criminal justice institutions, such as the courts and the correctional system, and the increasing fear of crime. This assumption is supported by the motive-based trust theory and offers the basis for understanding the impact of institutional trust on public-police satisfaction. Institutional trust, according to Tyler (2001), is the belief about the degree to which the police are honest and care for the members of the communities they police. This type of

trust exists when members of the public view the police as being honest and competent authorities who exercise their institutional responsibilities on behalf of all citizens.

Studies have documented that when citizens perceive an institution as trustworthy, the more likely they would comply with the institution's demands and regulations (see Levi and Stoker, 2000). This conclusion is also evidence in Tyler's (1990) argument that institutional trust motivates compliance with the law. Relating Tyler's argument to the police implies that the more citizens perceive the police to be honest and care about their interest, the more they would comply with the police directives and decisions. This leads to citizens' increased trust in the police as an institution with the mandate and capability of protecting them. Motive-based trust on the other hand involves inferences about motives and intentions of the police and reflects the concept of fiduciary trust. Tyler and Huo (2002) suggest that for powerful institutions such as the police, public trust is related to how the police use their authority to serve the best interest of those they are charged to serve and protect. Motive-based trust theory supports the notion that public trust of the police can be a predictor of public satisfaction with police.

Rational choice theory has been utilized to explain how trust in general is created (Coleman, 1990; Hardin, 1991 & 1993). From rational choice theory perspective, a person will trust an institution only when that person has adequate reason to believe it will be in the institution's interest to be trustworthy. Regarding this argument, citizens will trust the police when they have fair knowledge about the police and their operations, and know the exact things they expect from the police. There are risks and benefits of entering a trusting relationship (Hardin, 1993). When the public consider trusting the police beneficial in terms of what they expect from the police, they end up giving their trust to the police and vice versa.

From conflict theory perspective, scholars argue that the interests of the dominant class are represented and protected by the police and those from lower class are more likely to be targets of law enforcement (Chambliss & Seidman, 1971; Das, 1983). Hence, persons of lower socio-economic status who are frequently observed by the police will tend to have little or no trust in the police due to biased treatment against them. Conflict theory has been used to examine public

attitudes and behaviors toward the police. For instance, Weitzer and Tuch (2004, 2005) extended Blumer's (1958) group position theory of racial prejudice to explain race-differentiated attitudes toward police. The theory asserts that an individual's perception stem from that person's sense of group position in the society. Weitzer and Tuch (2004, 2005) argue that Whites are more likely to hold favorable views of police because they perceive racial threats from Blacks and thus rely on the aggressive law enforcement from the police to control Blacks and their neighbors. Similarly, conflict theory has also been used to explain public perception on the police use of force (Thompson and Lee, 2004) and to predict citizen complaints again police (Holmes, 2000).

Factors Influencing Trust in the Police

Empirically, several studies have been conducted to examine variables that predict trust in the police. Most of these studies have looked at the effects of procedural justice and perceptions of the police on trust (Tankebe, 2008; Tyler, 2005; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). In his extensive study of police effectiveness and police trustworthiness in Ghana, Tankebe (2008) argued that perception of police effectiveness exercise a direct impact on perceived police trustworthiness. He concluded by stating that the influence of police effectiveness is powerfully mediated by the perception that the police are procedurally fair. Similar observation was made by Tyler (2005) when he argued that process-based judgments are more influential in determining levels of citizens' trust in the police than are either assessments about the effectiveness of police crime-control activities or judgments about the fairness of the distribution of police services as has been noted by other research. By definition, the process-based judgment favored by Tyler is a judgment about the manner in which the police interact with citizens and was developed from the social justice literature (Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997; Tyler & Smith, 1997) which implies that citizens' reactions to authorities are influenced by how fairly authorities make decisions and how respectfully they are treated. Tyler (2005) and Tankebe (2008) have called our attention to police policies and practices to explain the levels of trust and confidence the public will have in the police.

Fear of crime and public satisfactions with police work have been observed in many studies to influence how people trust the police. For example, Reynolds et

al. (2008) found that criminal justice system trust is significantly related to public satisfaction with the police. Using a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM), the authors argued that as variance in fear of crime increases, variance of the trust in criminal justice system decreases and vice versa. Fear of crime and trust in the criminal justice system covary but inversely. Other studies have also focused on public-police encounters to explain variations in citizens' trust in the police (Bradford et al., 2009; Skogan, 2006). Skogan (2006), conducting a meta-analysis to assess the relationship between trust and citizens' personal encounter with the police argued that trust emerged easily in citizen-initiated contacts in which citizens seek advice from the police. He further contend that victims of crime are more critical of police work than others, and that trust in the police among victims emerges above all from policing that consider victims' experiences and needs. Subsequently, citizens' personal negative experiences will easily erode trust. His line of argument is consistent with the position of Bradford et al (2008) who also believe that crime victims are less about effectiveness of the police but more concern about treatment in encounters.

Research on public trust also provides evidence of the effect of age and perceived political power on trust. This research indicates that younger people tend to have lower levels of trust in the police than older people; and people who have political power and exert greater influence have higher levels of trust in the police (Wu & Sun, 2009). It is worth noting that, Wu and Sun's (2009) finding about the effect of age on trust is rather inconsistent with other research (see Tankebe, 2008). This therefore underscores the extent of contradictions in the literature regarding public trust and policing.

The literature reviewed so far have focused on organization factors that predict trust in the police but other studies have tend to examine factors which are external to the police organization but influence the level of trust people have in the police. For instance, in 2007, Kaariainen examined the effects of general corruption among public officials and the structure and system of government on trust in the police. He found that the level of corruption in the system of government in general decreases trust in the police.

Generally, the reviews collectively demonstrate that trust in the police is influenced by several factors which can be classified as organization- and non-

organization specific. Organization-specific factors include factors that the police have control over and can easily determine the level of public trust in the police. These include police-public encounter, police effectiveness, and procedural justice. On the other hand, non-organization-specific factors are those that the police have little to no control but can greatly determine the extent of public trust in the police. These include the level of corruption of government, the structure of government, and generalized trust in government and the criminal justice system. The present study builds on most previous studies and hopes to find support for findings that suggest that public trust in the police are influenced by factors mentioned above. The study test three key assumptions on public trust in the police in Ghana.

Modern Day policing in Ghana

Policing in Ghana today emanated from policing during the colonial era. The nature, character, and structure of modern policing did not change significantly from that of the colonial policing after independence in 1957. The Ghana Police Service has remained a centralized organization structured into thirteen administrative regions, fifty-one divisions, one hundred and seventy-nine districts, and six hundred and fifty-one stations across the country. The strength of the police service increased progressively from the few years leading up to independence and continued until the peak year in 1971. At that time, the police force numbered 19,410 personnel which served the total population of Ghana of about eight and half million (Aning, 2004). Currently, the police force is approximately 17,000 serving a population of about 25 million.

The modern police force in Ghana performs both crime-related and service-related duties. The crime-related functions of the force are stipulated in Section 1 of the Police Force Act, 1970 (Act 350). The Act states emphatically that, “it shall be the duties of the Police Force to prevent and detect crime, to apprehend offenders and to maintain public order and safety of persons and properties”. The service-related functions which are not stated by the Act include: performing motor traffic duties, vetting and issuance of police criminal check certificates, and assisting and helping the female gender to deal with traumatic and psychological problems as a result of sexual abuse (Ghana Police Official Website). To strengthen the police capacity to perform these duties, a 5-year Strategic National

Policing Plan was launched in 2010 by the incumbent government. The plan is rooted into four main objectives:

1. To increase the level of protection of life and property; increase the rates of prevention and detection of crime; speed up the apprehension and prosecution of offenders so as to enhance public confidence and satisfaction.
2. To enhance the capacity of the force by improving its human resources through training and development of personnel and by recruiting appropriate skills and competencies.
3. To acquire relevant, modern information and communication technologies that would enable the force perform its services.
4. To establish closer and more mutually beneficial working relationships with external stakeholders to improve the partnership and public image of the Police Service (Ghana Police official website).
5. It is believed that this plan will positively impact crime reduction in Ghana within the stipulated years of the plan. Crime rates in Ghana, as compared to most other countries have been very low.

Hypotheses

The primary objective of the present study was to examine three variables that may be influential in predicting the level of trust Ghanaians have in their police. In order to achieve this objective, the study tested three hypotheses. I first hypothesized that fear of crime among citizens will result in a decreased in public trust in the police. The more people are afraid of being victims of crime, the less they will trust the police. Fear of crime in this case denotes the fear of being a victim of crime as opposed to the actual probability of being a victim of crime (Farrall, Jackson and Gray, 2007; Hale, 1996).

Secondly, I hypothesized that citizens who are satisfied with the police have more trust in the police than those who are not satisfied. Public satisfaction with police have been found to increase citizens' trust in the police and contrary, poor public satisfaction ultimately lead to low level of trust in the police. The more Ghanaians are satisfied with the police, the greater their trust will be in the police and the less satisfied they are, the lower their level of trust. This hypothesis was based on the propositions of motive-based trust theory championed by Tyler and Huo (2002). The theory suggests that, if institutional motives are in conflict with

citizen motives, distrust can result, which produces perceptions of wrong intentions and unshared common interests.

The present study further hypothesized that economically marginalized citizens (low-income earners and unemployed) are more likely than their counterparts to demonstrate low levels of trust in the police. Though prior studies have not been able to find statistical evidence indicating that economic status of individuals can influence level of their trust in the police. For instance, as noted in the review, among the potential conflict variables (gender, age, education, income, unemployment, and perceived political power) that Wu and Sun (2009) tested, only age and perceived political power were found to influence public trust. This hypothesis is based on the propositions of conflict theory which argues that, persons of lower socio-economic status will tend to have little or no trust in the police due to unfair treatment of the police against them. The economically powerful class, according to the theory, will have more trust in the police since they are offered greater protection by the police as against the lower class individuals who are always under strict surveillance by the police.

Method

Study participants, and sampling technique

The present study utilized data collected between June and August, 2011 in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Data were collected on 500 respondents (18 years and above) selected randomly from different households in five communities using a structured questionnaire designed to solicit respondents' views on the police. The region was selected for this study for several reasons, mainly the size and diversified nature of its population. Four research assistants were employed to assist in the administration and collection of questionnaires. Though research assistants possessed bachelor's-level education and were knowledgeable about survey research, they were thoroughly trained on the modalities of conducting survey research and proper administration of questionnaires. Questionnaires distributed were completed on location. The collection method ensured that the right participant completed the questionnaire, and accordingly, resulted in a high response rate of 98.6%.

Measures

Dependent Variable

Trust in the police was the only dependent variable of this study and was measured using three 5-item Likert-type scale. A varimax principal component analysis was first utilized to examine the loading of scale items. Two items namely “to what extent do you trust the police to operate in the best interest of the public?” and “To what extent do you have confidence in the Ghana police to ensure adequate public safety?”(See table 1) loaded together with factor loadings of .87 and .89 respectfully. One item such as “how often do the police give honest explanation for their actions to people they deal with” did not load with the other two, it was subsequently excluded from the analysis. The trust in the police scale was therefore created by summing the responses of the two items that loaded on the same factor to form an additive scale ranging from 2 to 10 where 2 indicates ‘not at-all’ and 10 indicates ‘to a great extent’. A reliability test of the measure demonstrated strong internal consistency with a Cronbach’s alpha of .83.

Independent Variables

The study has three independent variables anticipated to influence public trust in the police: fear of crime, satisfaction with the police, and economic status. Fear of crime: This is defined as a fear of becoming a victim of crime (Reynolds et al, 2008). Fear of crime was measured using three 5-item Likert-type scales namely “I am fearful of crime in my neighborhood”, “does fear that you will be a victim worry you a lot these days?” and “as compared to last year (2010), do you fear more, less or same?”. These items were included in a second varimax principal component analysis and all loaded together with loadings of .74, .82 and .80 respectively. Hence, the responses of the three items were summed to form an additive scale for fear of crime ranging from 3 to 15. A test of reliability indicate that the three items possess acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha =.70).

Public satisfaction was measured the extent to which the public is satisfied with the police. A single 5-item Likert-type scale was used to examine the extent to which respondents were satisfied with the work of the police in fighting crime in their neighborhood.

Economic status was through the use of two items-employment and income. For the income, respondents were asked “how much, on average does your household earn in a year? Responses were (1) less or equal to GHC 5,000, (2) 5,000 – 10,000, (3) 10,001 – 15,000, and (4) more than 15,000¹. Employment was measured by asking respondents to indicate their current employment status? Response categories were (1) Permanently employed (2) Temporary employed (3) Self-employed (4) National Service Personnel and (5) Unemployed².

Control Variables

A number of variables that have previously been found to influence people’s trust in the police, such as: ethnicity³, gender, marital status and education⁴ were controlled. Other control variables included Political affiliation⁵ and corruption within the government measured by asking respondents to indicate whether they think government officials are corrupt (see table 1 for details).

¹ In terms of the US dollar, GHC 10,000 is equal to approximately \$6,700 at the official exchange rate. GHC 10,000 or below is considered to be a low annual income.

² Permanently employed person is one who is fully employed and receives monthly or bi-weekly wages as stipulated in the Ghana Labour Act (ACT 651, 2003). Temporary employed: A temporary worker means a worker who is employed for a continuous period of not less than one month and is not a permanent worker or employed for a work that is seasonal in character (Ghana Labour Act, 2003). Self-employed worker is any person working for him/herself and not for any institution, organization or anybody. This person can engage in a trade or any business of which he/she obtain profit. National Service Personnel are college graduates who immediately after graduations spend one year working for the nation without receiving salaries or wages. They only receive small remuneration. Unemployed refers to people who are not employed or are not engage in any economic activity.

³ In Ghana, there are many ethnic groups but the most dominant are the Akans followed by the Gas and the Ewes. These ethnic groups have different perceptions about the Ghana Police and consistently view the police differently. The Akans and Ewes have been known to vote for particular political parties. Currently, the Ewes have their political affiliation in power and therefore, it is assumed that they will have more trust in the governmental institution such as the police than the Akans.

⁴ Higher National Diploma is equivalent to Associate degree in US

⁵ Political affiliation is important variable to control in this study because most Ghanaians who are supportive of a particular political party tend to support every governmental institution, including the police, once that party is in power. They therefore do not consider whether the institution is performing well or not. The same can be said about individuals whose party is in opposition. They tend to be dissatisfied with every government institution no matter how well that institution will be performing. As at the time of the study, the National Democratic Congress party was in power. All respondents who answered either 1, 2 or 3, were considered to have affiliation with political parties and therefore were coded 1=yes and respondents who chose either 4 or 5 were considered not to have any political affiliation and were coded 0=no.

Table 1: Measures

Variable	Description	Scale (Likert)/Categories
Trust in the police	This item was to find out the degree to which respondents trust the Ghana police	Not at-all – To a great extent
1) To what extent do you trust the police to operate in the best interest of the public	This was to find out about the confidence level of respondents in the police	Very low confidence – Very high confidence
2) To what extent do you have confidence in the Ghana police to ensure adequate public safety	This measure was to find out whether the police explain their actions to the public or individuals	Never - Always
3) How often do the police give honest explanation for their actions to people they deal with*		
Fear of crime		
1) I am fearful of crime in my neighborhood	To measure the extent to which respondents are afraid of been attacked in their neighborhood	Strongly disagree – strongly agree
2) Does fear that you will be a victim worry you a lot these days?	This measure was to find out whether fear of been a victim worry respondents	Worries all the time – Does not worry me at all
3) As compared to last year (2010), do you fear more, less or same?	This was to find out in a comparative sense whether respondents fear more or less now than the previous year	Fear a lot more – No fear at-all
Public satisfaction	Measure the extent to which respondents are satisfy with the work of the police	Very dissatisfied – Very satisfied
Economic status	Measured in terms of annual income and employment	
Ethnicity	Ask respondents to indicate their ethnic background	1). Akan 2) Ewe 3) Ga 4) Other
Gender	Gender of respondents	0). Male 1) Female
Age	Measured in terms of years	1). 18-29 2) 30-39 3) 40-49 4) 50-59 5) 60 and above
Marital status	Find out whether respondents were married or not	1). Married 2) never married/single 3) divorce 4) separated
Education	Measures the highest education respondents have attain	No formal education – Graduate/professional degree
Political affiliation	To measure whether respondents belong to a political party and which party they are affiliated to	1). National Democratic Party 2) New Patriotic Party 3) Convention People Party 4) No party 5) Others
Corruption in government	Measure the extent to which respondents believe government officials are corrupt	None is corrupt – All is corrupt

Note: *this item was excluded from the analysis because it didn't load together with the other two items measuring trust in the police

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the study variables (N=493)

Variable	Mean (SD)/%
Trust in the police scale (2-10)	5.46 (2.27)
Female	47.1
Age	
18 – 29	36.2
30 – 39	24.6
40 – 49	20.7
50 – 59	11.0
60 and above	7.5
Married	40.1
Education level	
Less than high school	25.1
High School	33.3
More than high school	41.6
Employment status	
Employed	76.5
Unemployed	23.5
Income (Annual)	
Less or equal to GHC5,000	45.6
5,001 – 10,000	19.3
10,001 – 15,000	14.0
More than 15,000	21.1
Ethnicity	
Akan	36.8
Ewe	21.7
Ga	33.3
Other ethnic groups	8.2
Political Affiliation	74.5
Party of Affiliation	
National Democratic Congress	35.4
New Patriotic Party	53.7
Convention People’s Party	11.0
Corruption among government officials	
None	3.3
Very few	7.4
Some	22.8
Most	27.7
All	38.8
Fear of crime scale (3-15)	10.00 (2.89)
Satisfaction with police work	38.1

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the study respondents. From the table, 47 percent of the respondents were female between the ages of 18 and 29 years (36%). Only 8% of the respondents were 60 years and above. In respect of the

marital status of respondents, more than half (60%) had never married. More than half of the respondents did not complete post-secondary education. Specifically, 33% possessed a high school diploma and 25% had not completed high school. With regards to employment status of respondents, 77 percent responded that they were employed. In terms of income, 46 percent reported an income of GHC 5,000 (equivalent to approximately 3,000 US dollars), 21 percent reported an income of 5,001 to 10,000 (equivalent to US\$3,000 to 6,000), 19 percent reported an income of 10,001 to 15,000 (equivalent to US\$6,000 to 9,000), and 14 percent reported an income more than GHC15, 000. The majority of respondents (37%) belong to the Akan ethnic group (dominant group) followed by 33 percent belonging to the Ga ethnic group, whereas 22 percent belong to the Ewe group.

Analytical plan

The current study used Ordinary Least Squares regression to test the impact of the hypothesized independent variables on the dependent variable trust in the police, controlling for previously indicated demographic measures.

Results

To estimate the effect the predicted variables have on the dependent variable, I conducted a multivariate test using ordinary least squares regression analysis. Two regression models are presented in Table 3. The first model estimates the effects of the independent variables (satisfaction, fear of crime, income, and employment) on trust in the police without control variables. In the second model, control variables were included to determine whether the observed effect in the first model holds. In all, Model One explains 29 percent of the variance in trust in the police. When examining the parameter estimates, the relationship between satisfaction with police work and trust in the police is positive and statistically significant ($t=8.93$, $p<.01$). The observed effect supports the satisfaction hypothesis which states that when citizens are satisfied with the police, they will have more trust in the police compared to citizens that are not satisfied. Also significant was the relationship between fear of crime and trust in the police ($t=-3.55$, $p<.01$). The relationship was negative, suggesting that when fear of crime increases, trust in the police decreases. This lends support to the fear of crime hypothesis.

Income and employment were not statistically related to trust in the police. Therefore I did not find support for the economic marginalization hypothesis.

Model two helps to explain an additional 4% of the unexplained variance. Overall Model Two's predictors explain 33percent of the variation in police trust. After control variables were included, the hypothesized parameter effects remained. Satisfaction with police work ($t=8.82$, $p<.01$) and fear of crime were significant predictors of police trust ($t=-3.56$, $p<.01$), while income and employment remained non-significant. For all the control variables examined, only corruption among government officials was significantly correlated with trust in the police ($t=-2.03$, $p<.05$) and the relationship was negative indicating that, the more people perceive other government officials as corrupt, the less they trust the police. To sum up, the findings from the regression models give support for two of the three stated hypotheses.

Table 3
Ordinary Least-Squares Regression Models

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	b (SE)	β	t	b (SE)	β	t
Intercept	4.70 (0.53)	-	8.84**	5.52 (0.69)	-	8.01**
Satisfaction	1.02 (0.11)	0.43	8.93**	1.01 (0.12)	0.43	8.82**
Fear of crime	-0.13 (0.04)	-0.17	-3.55**	-0.14 (0.04)	-0.17	-3.56**
Income	0.08 (0.09)	0.04	0.93	0.09 (0.09)	0.05	0.95
Employment	0.38 (0.24)	0.07	1.57	0.35 (0.25)	0.06	1.37
Gender	-----	-----	-----	-0.04 (0.20)	-0.01	-0.17
Married	-----	-----	-----	-0.11 (0.23)	-0.02	-0.45
Corruption	-----	-----	-----	-0.19 (0.10)	-0.09	-2.03*
Political Affiliation	-----	-----	-----	-0.22 (0.24)	-0.04	-0.94
Age	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1.79
18-29 (ref)						
30-39	-----	-----	-----	0.13 (0.28)	0.03	0.48
40-49	-----	-----	-----	0.04 (0.31)	0.01	0.14
50-59	-----	-----	-----	0.96 (0.38)	0.13	2.53*
60 and above	-----	-----	-----	0.18 (0.42)	0.02	0.44
Ethnicity	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	1.79
Akan ethnic group (ref)						
Ewe ethnic group	-----	-----	-----	-0.14 (0.28)	-0.03	-0.51
Ga ethnic group	-----	-----	-----	-0.31 (0.24)	-0.07	-1.29
Other ethnic groups	-----	-----	-----	0.60 (0.40)	0.07	1.48
Education	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	0.16
Less the high school(ref)						
High school	-----	-----	-----	0.06 (0.26)	0.01	0.24
More than high school	-----	-----	-----	0.25 (0.26)	0.05	0.97
F-test		38.68*			10.54**	
R ²		0.29			0.33	

Note: Entries are unstandardized coefficients (b), Standardized coefficients (β), and Standard Errors in parentheses. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, two tailed

Discussion

This is one of the very few studies conducted to empirically examine specific factors determining the level of public trust in police in a developing country. The primary purpose of the current study was to examine variables that influence the level of trust Ghanaians have in their police. These variables have been supported by previous studies as predictors of police trust. Findings of the study can be summarized as follows. First, the results showed that fear of crime matters in discussing factors that shape citizens' trust in the police. Individuals often choose where to live, shop, and socialized based on their perceptions of the relative safety of different cities, towns, and neighborhoods. As a matter of fact, those who are afraid to be attacked or victimized in their neighborhoods, on the street, shopping centers or anywhere in the city will end up having low levels of trust in the police. The possible reason may probably due to the fact that such individuals view the police as not capable of ensuring their safety and security. The study results demonstrated support for this claim, and the significance of the effect persisted even after the inclusion of statistical controls. This finding conflicts with findings of Wu and Sun (2009) which did not find significance relationship between fear of crime and trust in the police.

Second, the findings revealed that satisfaction with police work is a major determinant of public trust in the police in developing countries, as it is in Western countries. When citizens are satisfied with the work of the police in their cities or neighborhoods, they have more trust in the police than when they are not satisfied. This finding is congruent with prior research demonstrating a relationship between trust and public satisfaction with the police (Reynolds & colleagues, 2008; Wu and Sun, 2009).

Contrary to study expectations, the results demonstrated that the relationship between income and trust in the police was weak and non-significant. Similarly, the relationship between employment and trust in the police also failed to reach significance. These findings therefore indicate that income and employment are not predictors of public trust in the police in Ghana. Whether an individual is employed or unemployed and earns high income or low income does not seem to matter in determining the level of trust that person would have in the police. The lack of support for the income and employment assumptions is an indication that,

all things being equal, the argument of the conflict theory regarding trust in the police in the context of a developing country is questionable and must be accepted with great caution. Specific to this finding, a great caution must also be taken against this interpretation given that both variables were utilized as individual predictors and not combined to form a scaled item.

One other important finding worth noting is the significant relationship that was observed between corruption among government officials and trust in the police. This relationship is negative, indicating that the more citizens perceive government officials apart from police personnel to be corrupt, the less they trust the police as a government institution. This finding is not only consistent with other studies such as that of Kaariainen (2007), it also affects the level of trust and beliefs people have in other government institutions. The possible explanation to this public attitude is perhaps due to the fact that citizens consider all government institutions as one and, subsequently, the behavior of one institution affects the level of public trust in another institution.

This study is not without limitations but before discussing these, it is absolutely important to elucidate the study strengths over previous studies. First, contrary to many previous findings the current study attempted to measure the multi-dimensional aspects of police trust, triangulating the concept through a scale construction of multiple items. Second, this study analyzed primary data collected directly from the respondents as oppose to utilizing secondary data. The use of primary data enabled this research to incorporate variables that were specific to the Ghanaian context such as ethnicity and perception of corruption in the government. Previous studies also utilized secondary data constraining findings to what has already been collected.

Regarding the limitations of this study, resource constraints and feasibility restricted the survey administration to only one of the ten regions of Ghana. This study is therefore geographically limited and as such, any generalizations of study findings must be made with caution. Future studies should be conducted to examine the factors that are more likely to shape public trust in the police in other regions of Ghana so as to have a national perspective of what affects public trust in the Ghanaian police. Further study should be conducted to examine the effects of additional factors such as procedural fairness, effectiveness of police

performance, public-police encounter, and distribution of police services on trust in the police in Ghana.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study have several policy implications for Ghana police administrators. Police administrators must note that public trust is influenced by police effectiveness; hence absence of trust can hugely undermine the success of police organizations. High trust in the police undoubtedly leads to police legitimacy and voluntary public cooperation with the police. Ghana police administrators must therefore strive to achieve and maintain high public trust. The survey response (not reported) indicates that 53 percent of the respondents do not trust the Ghana police at all whereas only 35 percent trust to a great extent. To achieve high public trust, the findings demonstrate that it is very important for police administrators to reduce fear of crime among Ghanaians.

Fear of crime as shown; undermines public trust in the police to a great extent. Currently, the majority of Ghanaians are either afraid of crime in their neighborhood or are worried that they would be victims of crime in their neighborhood. This fear of crime among Ghanaians, coupled with other factors, explains their low trust in the police, hence, police administrators must consider reducing fear of being victimized among the people as their ultimate responsibility and an explicit police priority. The police must incorporate fear reduction strategies aimed at reducing fear of victimization, insecurity, and to restore sense of security and safety in their routine operations. Increasing police presence in the neighborhoods, constant police car and foot patrol, reducing disorderly behavior, rapid response to calls, and assisting in target hardening (Cordner, 2010) are some of the various ways that can be adopted to promote sense of security and safety among citizens.

Another policy implication of the study is that citizens' attitudes toward the police are largely affected by the extent to which they are satisfied with the work of the police in their neighborhoods. Public satisfaction with regards to police work is not only driven by police performance but equally by the fairness of procedures used by the police in encounters with the citizens. While the police aim at ensuring better performance to satisfy the public, they must also endeavor to treat

citizens fairly and transparently. In his extensive review of police reform and the problem of trust, Goldsmith (2005) examined several factors that could possibly undermine trust in the police. These factors include neglect, indifference, incompetence, venality, extortion, discrimination, intimidation, inconsistency, excessive use of force and brutality (page 454-6). If the police are to have high public trust, they must work hard to eliminate these factors in their day to day activities so that they can be trusted by the people they police.

To reiterate, the current study aimed at examining factors that affect public trust in the police in a developing country by testing three hypotheses, two of the hypotheses were supported and one was not supported by the data collected. The findings demonstrate that factors influencing public trust in the police in developing countries do not differ from those affecting trust in the police in developed countries. Fear of crime and satisfaction with police work were found to be prominent in shaping trust in the Ghanaian police and these same factors have also been supported by studies conducted in other developed countries. Corruption among government officials is also an important factor that could determine the levels of trust people will have in their police especially among Ghanaians. In conclusion, factors that affect public trust in the police can be categorized into organization specific which the police organization has control and can influence it either positively or negatively, and non-organization specific factors which the police has no control but greatly affect public trust in the police.

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