

Summer June 1, 2015

Navigating the Life Cycle of Trust in Developing Economies: One-size Solutions Do Not Fit All

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ABSTRACT

Trust is critical to the development and maintenance of collaborative and cohesive relationships in societies, broadly, and in organizations, specifically. At the same time, trust is highly dependent on the social context in which it occurs. Unfortunately, existing research involving trust remains somewhat limited to a particular set of developed economies, providing a window to explore a culture's stage of economic development as a key contextual determinant of trust within organizations. In this article, we review the state of the scholarship on trust and identify those qualities of trust that are common in organizations at similar stages of economic development,

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referred to as its *etic* aspects. We then also distinguish those elements of trust that are, to the contrary, culturally specific or *emic* in nature. We structure our discussion around the “life cycle of trust” (i.e., the *creation*, *maintenance*, and *postfracture repair* of trust) and consider unique factors in its application to developing economies. In doing so, we ground our examination in expository examples through field experience in Haiti. We conclude with the proposal of a framework for future research oriented toward the resolution of remaining theoretical and empirical queries as they relate to trust in developing economies.

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes we, as scholars, face pragmatic imperatives for which we do not have answers. So we faithfully turn to our colleagues and their tomes of research to inform our actions, relying on knowledge to piece together solutions. However, every so often we find that, while existing scholarship may offer compass points, there is insufficient detail to provide us with a realistic map toward the answers we need. The current study presents a case of field experience in connection with cross-cultural trust building in a developing economy—Haiti—that confronted distinct challenges. These hurdles involved efforts to embed trust in organizational culture, sharp bidirectional trust fractures, and subsequent efforts at trust repair. Questions central to trust arose in this context of a highly salient, albeit developing economy. For example, in a socioeconomic environment where trust is not entirely supported by the surrounding culture, what factors are imperative to creating and maintaining trust? Are breaches of trust more likely to occur in this environment since the embedded vulnerability of each party is more acute, and therefore, the perceived risk is higher? Ultimately, how should an organization respond to a trust disruption in an environment where trust is not supported?

Certainly, there have been studies that have demonstrated the integral role that local culture plays in fostering trust—most notably with regard to a country’s classification as either collec-

tivist or individualist, or according to its quality of power distance (Casimir et al. 2006; Wasti et al. 2007). Yet, these studies have remained conspicuously grounded in a North American setting (e.g., Dirks and Ferrin 2002) or have expanded only to larger “Western” or “Northern” contexts (Gillespie et al. 2014; Stahl et al. 2011). In this article, however, we propose that, in addition to these variances in culture, the stage of a community’s economic development also is a highly relevant feature of impact in trust relationships, and it is this aspect of trust relationships in emerging economies that has remained largely unexplored. Specifically, we identify the unique dilemmas that trust presents for and within organizations in developing or emerging economies, including and beyond Haiti, as one illustrative example of an emerging economy. We orient our discussion around the experience of one organization in Haiti and then ground that experience in “life cycle of trust,” that is, the *creation, maintenance, and postfracture repair* of trust.¹ We conclude by revealing those cavities where existing solutions or guidance from scholarship may remain incomplete or off target in this environment.

At first blush, the focus on Haiti, or even on developing economies, might seem hyper-geo-specific, representing unique cultural qualities that are not necessarily imputable to any other country or circumstances. However, probing deeper, one learns that Haiti’s stage of economic development is common to other cultures and therefore allows us to compare those shared qualities, as well as to problematize its economy vis-à-vis the life cycle of trust (Hsiung 2012). Exploring trust within its local frame is valuable since trust relationships do not function devoid of their social contexts, and culturally specific elements must be taken into account in order to grasp the most complete understanding of the basis of trust in relationships (Ferrin et al. 2006). Scholars advocate both a culture-specific or *emic* construct of trust, in addition to an *etic* or universalist perspective (Wasti and Tan 2010; Zaheer and Zaheer 2006). *Emic* and *etic* approaches are indeed complementary; “the first without the second gets stuck in case studies that cannot be generalized, the second, without the first in abstractions that cannot be related to real life” (Fontaine and Richardson 2003; *citing* Hofstede 1998, p. 19). We argue that while culture-specific differences may result in *emic* variances among trust qualities, the stage of a culture’s economic development is

material as an *etic commonality* across cultures, and also must be considered. We submit that diverse cultures may share similar qualities relating to trust creation, maintenance and trust repair after disruption when they are at similar stages of economic development.

In order to offer context for the case that follows, we first discuss the role of trust in developing economies, followed by a brief description of the social and economic environment in Haiti. We then turn to our case illustration involving a rural school in Haiti, l'Ecole de Choix, to demonstrate the role of the country's economic development stage in trust relationships. Next, we briefly review the trust life cycle in the extant literature, identifying areas where it has or has not been applied to developing economies. We conclude our examination by offering an agenda for future research.

The Function of Trust in Developing Economies

Trust serves as a foundation of relations between human beings, is essential to social order, and therefore is necessary for political and social development (Lewis and Weigert 1985). Trust is baseline for any form of economic growth (Cardenas and Carpenter 2005; Wolfe 2002) and is "a necessary condition for an international business morality" (Brenkert 1998, p. 294). In modern macro-economics, "trust is . . . a necessary condition for successful functioning of markets. . . . We know from recent advances in complexity economics, . . . [that] the positive feedback from trusting and trustworthy behavior could be quite substantial," and it could explain phenomena such as the correlation of high GDP per capita and trust (Schram and Berre 2009, p. 5). However, "while trust is widely recognized as central to the establishment of an effective market economy, *research on transition economies offer little for a focus on trust*" (Humphrey and Schmitz 1998, p. 43, emphasis added). Further, a number of scholars have pointed to the death of qualitative studies in this particular area as challenging to our continued understanding of the role of trust in developing economies (Cheng et al. 2009; Wasti and Tan 2010).

Trust develops within economies when institutions create reliability, such as the means by which properly to enforce existing

laws and regulations, the processes and forms by which to settle disputes, and the methods to protect creations and innovation (Schram and Berre 2009). Schram and Berre trace this stability standard to Adam Smith who wrote, "Commerce and manufactures, in short, can seldom flourish in any state, in which there is not a certain degree of confidence in the justice of government" (Smith 1776, Book V, Ch. III, para. 7).

Economic development and trust evolution are interwoven, though on different trajectories. When economic development is at an earlier stage, it is represented by more diffuse relationships and is less grounded by institutions of power and coordination. To the contrary, trust at its early stage is represented by "highly personalized trust relationships, in small and tight, localized communities, in which people are involved with most of their personality" (Nooteboom 2007, pp. 30–31). As economies develop, so too do institutions develop, along with regulatory structures and the power of enforcement (Sen 1977). However, Nooteboom (2007) suggests that interpersonal trust evolves into "more abstract, depersonalized relationships, in each of which people are involved only with a limited part of their personality," thus developing in a direction altogether different (p. 31).

Roth (2009; *citing* Whiteley, 2000) explains that economies' experiences are impacted in three ways by enhanced trust. First, there is direct support for economic growth through the reduction in transaction costs brought on by greater trust. Where environments fail to provide protections for property rights or structures for monitoring or managing contractual obligations with external stakeholders, individuals and organizations must expend capital to do so, diverting those resources from other areas of economic activity. He then points to a second effect of similar attention that organizations must devote to internal stakeholders, such as employees. This need to attend to internal stakeholders would be reduced in a high-trust context (Roth 2009) and consequently also would reduce the cost of doing business (Fukuyama 1996, p. 27). Third, in an environment of high trust, members of a social group are able more effectively to resolve challenges faced by the collective. For example, higher trust allows the social group to act with concerted efforts and to respond collectively to issues of free riders. Serritzlew et al.'s (2012) meta-analysis of the literature evaluating the interaction between trust, corruption, and economic

development concludes that “there is widespread agreement in the literature that trust promotes economic growth” (2012, p. 131).

Given the intertwined nature of trust and economic development, an evaluation of the phase of economic development of the political and social economy within which the organization is situated offers insight and clarity into significant parameters impacting trust development and other phases of its life cycle.

Haiti: Evolving Trust in Economic Development

The trust environment in Haiti offers *emic* cultural qualities while also presenting *etic* aspects common to countries at similar stages of economic development. Understanding these aspects provides insights both for our case and also for its applications to other contexts and countries. For example, Joseph suggests that “[i]t should be noted that Haiti and Africa, in spite of geography, remain irreversibly connected through racial, linguistic, cultural and other shared characteristics that are the direct result of their colonial experience” (Joseph 2014). They are so closely linked in this regard that Haiti is the only non-African nation with full associate membership status African Union of 54 other members (Joseph 2014). Notwithstanding the fact that Haiti represents both the first country in the Caribbean to earn independence from colonial rule as well as the only black republic to overcome oppression on its own, it remains a culture that has been sent consistent and repeated messages that it is unable to solve its own problems (Hortop 2014).

To have a better sense for the baseline distrust in Haiti, we turn to James’s (2010) description of post-1994 reconstruction Haiti. He explains that there existed not only as a climate of violence but also a “political economy of trauma” for what was termed the Haitian *viktim*—James’ adopted shorthand creole term for those Haitians who experienced human right abuses and subsequently emerged on the world stage as an image to be exploited by the very human rights organizations that were in business to protect them. The entrepreneurial, or some might say anarchistic, economy created internal incentives toward the assumption of *viktim* status where individual, intimate trauma rose to the level of currency and was bartered for gain (Mazzeo 2013, p. 791). In other words, there was a financial value tied to the status of *victim*, ready to be exploited far more value than

would be earned from the status of *survivor*. The subsequent 2010 earthquake further crushed Haiti, creating additional victims as well as other natural and political hurdles that could be said in the past to have caused and continue to cause Haitians to misconstrue the concept of reliability and thereby trust.

Since well before the 2010 earthquake, outsiders have stepped in to “help” Haiti to respond to its political challenges and natural disasters, reinforcing a sense of dependence but also creating a mindset for Haitians that they cannot trust even themselves (BMS World Mission 2014; Zephyr and Córdova 2011). Though there is no intent to fault those in the developed world, the instinct to jump to “help Haiti” at each turn may fuel these unintended consequences—not only a sense that they are unable to rely on themselves but they are unsure if and when they can rely on others. This dependence and distrust are supported by research that found that Haitians report the lowest levels of interpersonal trust in the Americas—32 points on a 100-point scale—and the highest proportion in the Americas to have its population “victimized by corruption” (53.6 percent, defined as having to pay a bribe to a public official over the past 12 months) (Zephyr and Córdova 2011, pp. 9, 11). Yet, Haitians also are told that they cannot trust the NGOs, as former president Clinton suggested,

... it was a mistake to work outside of the Haitian government, creating parallel structures that are unaccountable. Every time we spend a dollar in Haiti from now on we have to ask ourselves, “Does this have a long-term return? Are we helping [the Haitians] become more self-sufficient? ... Are we serious about working ourselves out of a job?” (Schuller 2010)

Haitians, therefore, are left with both a distrust of themselves, cultivated through a learned helplessness, as well as a distrust of those who have stepped in to assist them.

While all of the above elements contribute to Haiti’s environment of high distrust (Lewicki et al. 1998), Haitians’ persistent hope and reticence in the face of these hurdles lead to the simultaneous development of staggered elements of trust evolving throughout its ecosystem, as well. Zephyr and Córdova (2011) found that 64 percent of Haitians maintained high support for democracy as the best possible form of government (p. 6).

Respondents' level of education had a positive and statistically significant impact on the extent to which they supported democracy. The relevance of this figure in light of high levels of distrust discussed above demonstrates the population's willingness to develop and maintain its trust in the social institution of democracy while, at the same time, demonstrating distrust in some of the actual institutions that comprise the current political system.

Linking Theory with Practice in a Developing Economy: L'Ecole de Choix/The School of Choice ("Choix")

The specific experience of two of the authors in Haiti illustrates implications from many of these findings in connection with their establishment and ongoing operations of a trilingual, high-quality elementary school in Haiti's Central Plateau region. The school—l'Ecole de Choix/the School of Choice ("Choix")²—was founded in 2011 and is funded almost entirely through contributions from the United States; has oversight from a nonprofit organization based in the United States with a Board of Directors comprised of both Haitians and non-Haitians³; implements the Haitian National Curriculum; and maintains an all-Haitian staff on campus, except for its Director of Operations, a white woman from the United States.

The school was established following the 2010 earthquake, during a period of little to no government infrastructure, and it has proceeded with only slight institutionalized oversight within Haiti. As a result, and along with the concurrent challenging economic situation in Haiti, relationships in the organization have developed on the basis of a reciprocal exchange between parties of unequal power. While, in developed economies, trust might aggregate over time under these conditions (Rao et al. 2005), in a developing economy, where relationships begin and continue with high risk and low rewards for the trustors, not only did trust fail to develop, its crevasses deepened.

From its inception, Choix's board and local administration (jointly referred to as the Choix administration) sought to create a strong culture of trust based on its ability in education and the implementation of a pedagogical strategy. From one perspective, the mission of Choix was one of participatory management, where ideas from all stakeholders were encouraged and respected. On the other hand, the Choix administration also provided significant

pedagogical support through curriculum design and development, including access to Haitian and global experts. It was anticipated, originally, that both of these elements were critical to building trust because, prior to working at Choix, these teachers had always been told precisely what and how to teach on a daily basis. The administration understood that professional development was in crisis, not just in Haiti but throughout the developing world (OECD 2009), and its objective was to provide its teaching staff with support, independence, and autonomy within the parameters of the Choix academic mission.

The Choix administration also sought to develop trust by representing a culture of integrity throughout its academic environment. Among a variety of other measures, that meant acting consistently with its mission, maintaining significant transparency surrounding financial matters, and involving staff as decision makers in connection with key issues that would affect them. However, the historical, embedded, cultural differences and Haiti's economic development stage posed significant threats to the creation of trust within Choix. Instead of an increase in trust, small, apprehensive, and wary cliques tended to emerge on campus. Though supplies were plentiful as a result of arduous efforts by the board to ensure adequate resources, materials were constantly hoarded, even stolen, in case of potential subsequent scarcity. A culture of "us versus them" developed where trust was not cultivated but instead a more instrumental exchange relationship matured, based on a mutual dependence (I. Cassens, personal communication, Jun. 16, 2014).

Going deeper, there are *emic* qualities unique to Haiti that might implicate trust on the Choix campus. Certainly, some of these elements might overlap with other cultures of countries to some extent, but because of Haiti's history, there is a provenance of distrust from the very origins of the relationship between Haitians (originally, native *Tainos* or *Arawaks*) and outsiders, especially white outsiders. When Columbus claimed the island of Hispaniola for Spain in 1492, there already existed an indigenous population of approximately 1 million *Tainos* living on the island. They dwindled in the sixteenth century and, by the eighteenth century, Spain had lost the territory to France, who had enslaved the remaining half million inhabitants (Library of Congress 2006). In 1804, Jean Jacques Dessalines led his followers to overthrow

Napoleon's rule, and Haiti emerged as the first Black-led republic in the Western Hemisphere. Class and racial conflicts have persisted in Haiti since this time and continue today, influencing the environment of trust throughout its culture and organizations. While there is Haitian representation on Choix's board and Choix's entire teaching corps is Haitian, Choix's campus director of operations—the campus leader—is a white American woman.

Our first example of the intersection between culture, economic development and trust at Choix involve teacher preparation and training. In hiring teachers, the Choix administration sought to provide to its target population—children of families living in extreme poverty—a high-quality education. Therefore, the board hired faculty with university degrees and teaching certificates. The school also wanted to hire Haitian instructors to serve as effective and culturally relevant leadership role models. However, these teachers did not arrive at Choix with the complete preparation necessary to offer the students with the education that Choix envisioned. The pedagogy and process of teaching—progressive, interactive, communication-based—still needed formation.

Teacher preparation is directly related to both unemployment in Haiti and to poverty. Like many other developing economies, Haiti has an extremely high rate of poverty, fueled by unemployment. Almost 80 percent of Haitians live on less than \$US2.00 each day, and almost half of all Haitians are out of work (Central Intelligence Agency 2014). The government pins partial responsibility for this situation on a failure in its education system (Haiti Libre 2014), where fewer than two-thirds of children attend elementary school, and of those students, only 20 percent will continue to secondary school. Of those secondary students, only 1 percent will continue on to university. As a base cause, fewer than half of Haiti's teachers are qualified, and in many cases, they have only about a sixth grade education themselves (Franz 2013; Luzincourt and Gulbrandson 2010), and as a result, children fail to learn—49 percent of Haitian children entering third grade are unable to read a single word (U.S. Department of State 2013).

Even Haitians with access to advanced education are taught through methods that have not progressed over the course of the past 50 years—basic rote learning and repetitive tasks—and teachers lack not only training in current pedagogical methods but also the books or supplies that might support other

techniques. Since its inception, Choix provided its teaching staff with access to professional development. However, staff was customarily silent at all times during these gatherings, whether they consisted of Skype sessions with experts or on-site visits by Haitian curriculum practitioners (I. Cassens, personal communication, Jun. 16, 2014). On one occasion, the board invited a colleague from a local school in Port au Prince, a Haitian woman with decades of experience in curriculum implementation, to visit for a week-long “in service” program during which she visited each of the classes and offered a significant amount of support and guidance. Three days into this 5-day program, two of Choix’s senior faculty refused to participate and failed to attend school. Upon further discussion surrounding these and circumstances involving the ongoing silence when asked if anyone had any questions or input (whether during this session or at regularly scheduled teacher meetings), Choix’s Director of Operations and the visiting expert learned that these two faculty feared that, if they offered any questions, they would display their lack of knowledge in that specific area, thus losing the trust of the administration and also jeopardizing the trust that the board had in the entire teaching corps, overall (I. Cassens, personal communication, Jun. 16, 2014). Further, they disclosed that the board’s decision even to offer professional development left them with the impression that the board did not trust their judgment in the classroom and that the board questioned their ability. While the faculty were reminded that even Olympic athletes have ongoing training, trust between the parties involved had experienced significant damage and the board sought guidance for its repair.

In October 2013, Choix experienced a severe trust disruption—one which the administration perceived to be bidirectional. At the time, the administration had developed a significant level of trust in its staff. Administration sought staff perspective in connection with curriculum purchases, with substantial budget outlays and other areas. Faculty voice was central in decisions surrounding students, and staff was left in charge of the campus and students when administration was needed to be offsite, among other evidence of confidence in their abilities and judgment. The administration perceived that these actions demonstrated to the staff their trust in them and also believed that the staff trusted the administration, as well. However, given the deeply embedded

culture of distrust in Haiti, and also the obvious cultural diversity on the surface between the administration and the staff at Choix (race, national origin), these perceptions may have been misplaced. The question of whether the disruption was bidirectional or unidirectional is relevant since if trust *never* existed on the part of the staff, then the focus would be on its creation rather than its repair.

At the time, the Choix administration called a meeting of its faculty—the six highest paid members of the Choix staff—for the purpose of sharing significant financial challenges the school was facing at the time, and distributed copies of the school's budget. At the time, to ensure a living wage, the faculty at Choix was paid as much as eight times the salary mandated by Haiti's Ministry of Education, and the lowest paid faculty member at the time was paid almost five times that mandate. Other staff at Choix were paid somewhat less, with some making minimum wage, which in Haiti was equivalent to about \$5.00 per day. Unfortunately, however, if the Choix administration did not make a budget change, they explained, there would not be enough money to complete the year. At the end of the meeting, the faculty was informed that in order to balance the budget, and *only until the fundraiser scheduled about a month from that date*, the school would need to reduce faculty salaries by 10 percent, as permitted by their contracts' provision for "economic exigency." The school already had made deep cuts in every other area possible, and if it did not implement these reductions, it would not have sufficient funds to complete the year. When the administration asked if the faculty had any questions, none arose.

School proceeded without incident the next day; however, when the Director of Operations arrived on campus the second morning after the meeting, the gates were closed to her, and she found the entire staff inside the school preventing her entry, including the school security guards. A lock-out without prior negotiations is against the Haitian *Code du Travail* (employment code), but no prior discussion had occurred. The staff felt that they had suffered a significant breach of trust by Choix's administration since at least the teaching faculty had relied on a promise of a certain amount of salary, notwithstanding any contract provision allowing a modification. On the other hand, Choix's administration felt a deep betrayal by its staff, whom they had trusted to share a

common mission to act at all times on behalf of the students and community. By engaging in this lock-out, the administration perceived that the staff put their needs ahead of the children's, and further, the safety and security that they created on the campus were at risk.

The staff, led predominantly by the faculty, prompted a telephone conversation with the board of directors and conveyed a list of "demands." Over the next few days, the board learned that the reduction in pay served as the tipping point for the entire community, after what the staff perceived to be numerous slights, acts of disrespect, and breaches of trust on the part of the administration. The strike occurred on a Friday prior to the first day of school, the following Wednesday. Choix's administration was unable to meet the employees' demands since they asked for more money and more days off, neither of which were possible while still meeting a budget for that fiscal year. The strike damaged the trust the administration thought they had created with the staff in the several years they all had worked together. Again, this belief was based on the administration's perception and certainly could have been entirely incorrect. Indeed, the strike and its substance may have served as a window into the "true" nature of the relationship.

Not knowing whether they would have the funds to complete the year, the administration offered what are called in Haiti "term contracts," contracts for a specified amount of money and for a specific period of time. The Choix administration informed all staff members that, contrary to their original "permanent" or annual contracts, all staff would be offered term contracts that would terminate at the end of December 2013. As long as fund-raising proceeded as planned and everything at Choix progressed as expected, the administration would offer additional term contracts through the end of the school year. All employees except one signed the contracts and school opened on Wednesday as planned.⁴

Notwithstanding the end of the strike, there was massive destruction of trust on both sides of the employment relationship. Choix's director of operations reports, "it was painful to return to campus, but how could I not? It was my home, just as it was theirs. We had built it together. But now, I walk around campus and people won't even look me in the eye. I won't avoid their eyes,

but they avoid mine. They know what they did to us, to our Choix culture” (I. Cassens, Director of Operations, l'Ecole de Choix, personal email communication, October 3, 2013). For their part, the employees have been slow to return to speaking up in meetings in the same manner in which they used to do so; they do not reach out to board members for counsel or input under any conditions when they did so on a regular basis in the past; they chose not to communicate with board members at all. They adopted an acrimonious stance with administration on campus, and any window of partnership rather than adversary appears closed.⁵

Trust repair is vital for progress, though it will be challenging due to the bidirectional nature of the disruption. The impetus for our current exploration is the challenge in identifying appropriate options for repair for Choix's administration. While the extant literature offers valuable strategies, they seem somewhat misaligned for Choix and for the environment of a developing economy, as we will discuss below.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF TRUST

Stage One: Creating Trust

Though a highly complex, deeply rich, and socially shaped phenomenon, scholars tend to agree that trust can be defined by two components: *positive expectations* and a *willingness to accept vulnerability* (Fulmer and Gelfand 2012). The trustor is willing to trust when he or she believes that the trustee will act in a particular way (Mayer et al. 1995). Based on these positive expectations, the trustor develops a willingness to accept vulnerability and thereby engage in interactions with the trustee.

When exploring trust, it is important also to distinguish distrust, especially given the experience of both at Choix. Nooteboom (2007) suggests that the presence of trust is central to the development of social capital, whereas distrust can severely impair or even eradicate interpersonal relationships. While one might presume that trust and distrust lie at opposite ends of a single spectrum, defining one as the absence of the characteristics of the other (Schoorman et al. 2007), it is not a universally accepted

proposition (see Saunders et al. 2014 *for review*). Rather, distrust can be defined as “a lack of confidence in the other, a concern that the other may act so as to harm one, that he does not care about one’s welfare or intends to act harmfully, or is hostile” (Kramer 1999, p. 587, *citing* Grovier 1994, p. 240)—suggesting the distinct nature of trust and distrust (Hardin 2002; Lewicki et al. 1998; M. N. Saunders et al. 2014). In this section, we discuss how trust is created and the influence of particular contextual variables, including that of economic development.

In considering how to create trust, much early research focused exclusively on the trustor (Rotter 1967, 1971). However, this perspective fails to account for social nature of trust interactions and, therefore, omits the target of one’s trust. Recognizing that trust is fundamentally interpersonal, Mayer et al. (1995) turned their attention to the trustee and asked what would shape perceptions of trustworthiness and identified three primary attributes of trustees that lead them to be more or less trusted: *ability*, *benevolence*, and *integrity*. Ability refers to a demonstration of influence within a specific domain of expertise (also referred to as competence or skills). Benevolence is defined as wanting to do good by the trustor, “aside from an egocentric profit motive” (Mayer et al. 1995, p. 718). They presume by this second element both a specific attachment as well as a positive orientation between the trustor and the trustee. The third construct element is integrity, the trustor’s reliance that the trustee will adhere to a set of principles acceptable to the trustor. Of note, this same set of characteristics is not limited to individuals and can be extended to organizations (Fulmer and Gelfand 2012; Schoorman et al. 2007).

Additionally, for a complete understanding of the environment both at Choix and in an *etic* consideration across developing economies, we must also examine the socially dynamic nature of trust. Kramer explains that “trust between two or more independent actors thickens or thins as a function of their cumulative interaction” (1999, p. 575). Here, an exchange-based perspective can be particularly helpful in shedding light on the pivotal role of social interactions in trust building. Beyond traditional contracts that serve as safety nets to ensure that trustees will behave per the trustor’s expectations (Lyon and Porter 2009), psychological contracts, “an individual’s system of beliefs, based

on commitments expressed or implied regarding an exchange agreement with another,” also play a central role in the development of trust (Rousseau 2011, p. 191). Psychological contracts can include expectations of the exchange of economic or material resources (e.g., wages) as well as socio-emotional or relationally-based resources (e.g., social support), with the latter being particularly focal to trust creation. Situations of perceived contract fulfillment are associated with elevated levels of trust, whereas instances of perceived contract breach can generate fractures in trust (which we delve into later) (Rousseau 2011; Zhao et al. 2007). Of particular importance is that psychological contracts are comprised of *mutual* obligations between two parties—laying bare the idea that both parties can simultaneously act as both the trustor *and* trustee (Dabos and Rousseau 2004).

Of significant relevance to our inquiry, these exchange relationships are shaped profoundly by elements of the social context (Rousseau 2011). Thus, it is necessary to go beyond examinations of dyadic interactions to consider the broader organizational, social, and national contexts (e.g., culture, identity) within which these interactions occur (Mayer et al. 1995); “the building of interpersonal trust is conceptualized as both calculation and actions shaped by institutions, routines, and cultural norms” (Harris and Lyon 2013, p. 116). Social context shapes the very meaning of trustworthiness as well as the process by which trustworthiness is established. To this point, Doney et al. (1998) call attention to the power of social context in stating that “[a]lthough trust may form in a variety of ways, whether and how trust is established depend upon the societal norms and values that guide people’s behavior and beliefs” (p. 601).

Building on our understanding of trust as a socially dynamic and constructed phenomenon, we turn our attention to one contextual variable that profoundly shapes the meanings and processes associated with trust: local culture. In particular, local culture “results in different norms and values, the processes trustors use to decide whether and whom to trust may be heavily dependent upon a society’s culture.” (Doney et al. 1998, p. 601). Trust involves some basis in shared or common values, and though individuals or organizations with diverse values can forge trust, a common objective offers a basis for shared expectations (Brenkert 1998). Scholars traditionally have examined culture

through the lens of individualism–collectivism in an effort to understand cultural distinctions of trust (Hofstede 1980). For example, Wasti and Tan (2010) examined the different manifestations and relative importance of ability, benevolence, and integrity in Turkey and China. They conclude that there are both shared and distinct criteria for trusting others in different cultural contexts.

While such work sheds light on between-culture differences in the development of trust, scholars should be cautious in assuming the presence of or grouping an entire nation by particular cultural dimensions (McSweeney 2002; Safi 2010). Cultures are not bound by national borders and arguably are defined by more than four or five dimensions. Further, many of the studies drawing upon Hofstede's framework are limited by the types of economies that they strive to compare, which we will discuss below. Instead, we anticipate that there are idiosyncratic, *emic* nuances among cultures that impact the creation, maintenance, and repair of trust. This claim holds true through a variety of levels of cultural analysis. For example, even within one (developed) country, such as the United States, there are regional, cultural, racial, gender, and religious differences that critically implicate trust. The situation that arose in Ferguson, Missouri, in which racial tensions escalated following the shooting of young African American male by a police officer, illustrates an intracountry, cultural dimension of trust fracture (Gordon 2014; Johnson 2014).

Creating Trust in a Developing Economy

While the highly influential role of national culture on the creation of trust is well established in the literature, the vast majority of studies are conducted among “WEIRD” cultures (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) (Fulmer and Gelfand 2012; Henrich et al. 2010a, 2010b), rather than environments such as Haiti. Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (Henrich et al. 2010b) criticized reliance in behavioral sciences on research using subjects solely from WEIRD populations. Specifically, studies have relied largely on population samples from American undergraduates, and they observed that “sampling from a thin slice of humanity would be less problematic if researchers confined their interpretations to the populations which they sampled” (p. 63).

However, the field of psychology promulgates the notion of generalizability even though data are not representative of the complex spectrum of cultures around the world. Henrich et al. (2010b) noted that there are differences among cultures in terms of visual perception, fairness, and cooperation in economic decision making, spatial cognition, antisocial punishment and cooperation, motivation to conform, moral reasoning, and personal choice. Because of these limitations, we can neither assume that criteria for trust nor the processes by which trustworthiness is determined can be extended universally to developing economies, and applying those lessons to Haiti without translation or adaptation could have disastrous results.

Further, the role of institutions in supporting trust creation in developing economies is vital, and economies diverge to the extent that they have such institutions. If there are strong institutions, trust creation can be linear. However, "to the extent that there are no such institutions, trust must be built entirely from relationships, and without institutional support that can be laborious and such trust can be fragile" (Nooteboom 2007, p. 30). In an environment such as Haiti, where the infrastructure and government could be considered nonsupportive, erratic, and weak, Rao et al. (2005) found that managers create "networks of mutually committed personal relationships" (p. 105) to manage relationship voids left by the lack of government presence. Where a government fails to support impersonalized exchange relationships, individuals must rely on their personal relationships to provide a similar infrastructure. It is for this reason that, in societies where the government lacks infrastructure, counter-intuitively, communities may develop *higher* levels of trust among pockets of individuals.

There is a common perception that the government of Haiti is, at best, not reliable and, at worst, embodies a level of corruption that reinforces historical wrongs and inequities (Human Rights Watch 2013). Rao et al.'s (2005) work would suggest that the colleagues at Choix should have developed a close-knit network of personal relationships to provide their community needs otherwise left unmet by the government. Yet this did not occur. Even within the staff side of the "us versus them" fiefdoms that formed, there was a sense of each person was isolated in their decision making. It is as if the group could distrust easily, but only trust,

even among themselves, was high risk. We wondered why. There is no universal agreement on this question of causality—specifically, whether informal, interpersonal trust successfully supplants (or exceeds) the macro-cultural type of trust that a strong and established governmental infrastructure creates, and further investigation is warranted. When evaluating trust in developing economies with weaker infrastructures, there is conflicting evidence of a *lack* of interpersonal trust. This consequence may be due to a lack of organizing structure, which results in mutually suspicious and distrustful “fiefdoms” (Boisot and Child 1988). Recall the wary cliques that emerged on Choix’s campus. Based on Haiti’s historical lack of infrastructure, deficiencies in oversight, and pervasive fear of unemployment, an aura of secrecy and skepticism prevailed, scarce supplies were coveted, and trust failed to develop.

Pearce (2001, cited in Rao et al. 2005) offers another perspective, explaining that trust is never really created at all in circumstances such as those at Choix. Instead, the parties to the relationship are simply necessary dependents on whom parties must rely as a matter of course. Not only is trust absent in organizations in these economies, but distrust is prevalent, self-perpetuating, and “reflects the societal-level distrust associated with non-facilitative governments” (Rao et al. 2005, p. 109). The empirical work represented by Rao et al. demonstrates that an environment like that at present in Haiti, with a weak rule of law and high levels of corruption, obstructs the development of trust, no matter a managers’ attempt to build strong, significant personal relationships (see also Serritzlew et al. 2012).

In connection with the creation of trust, we are left not only with a scholarly vacuum in terms of developing economies but also discord in the conversation that does exist surrounding expectations in environments of weak infrastructure. Why would Choix’s culture have developed toward Boisot and Child’s fiefdom’s rather than Rao et al.’s potential tight community, emerging to meet the needs unmet by the infrastructure? We will return to these gaps in the literature in our final analysis.

Stage Two: Maintaining Trust

Trust is created through repeated interactions over time, which contribute to confident positive expectations regarding another’s

conduct (Lewicki et al. 1998, p. 439) and a willingness to accept vulnerability. Maintaining trust is dependent on the ongoing preservation of those expectations, which involves some risk.

Mayer et al. (1995, p. 724) posit that risk is simply a manifestation of the willingness to accept vulnerability in a trusting relationship; so, risk-taking in a relationship ("RTR") is the continuing outcome of a trust-based relationship. RTR might seem counter-intuitive since the more we trust someone, the *less* risky the relationship feels. However, Mayer et al. describes RTR as mediated by the trustor's utilitarian analysis in weighing the risk context, certainty/predictability, and other influences. It is similar to walking a tightrope with a safety net. The more you trust that the net will save you, the greater risk you will take on the tightrope. Applying the metaphor, an organizational culture can serve as that safety net, encouraging greater risk-taking in organizational relationships, and can have a significant impact on the ongoing sustainability of trust within its environment. When the trustor receives feedback from an individual or from the organization, each data point positively encourages greater risk to be taken, and thereby sustains the trusting relationship (or the contrary can occur). The balance of RTR relative to trust is recalibrated to incorporate this new information—data points—on a real-time basis.

Building on this understanding of RTR, Williams's (2007) formulation identifies specific data points to feed into the Mayer et al. model. She proposes that organizations influence the environment in ways to strengthen that safety net, or regulate the threat, to use her vocabulary. Williams' interpersonal threat regulation model involves a three-step process of *perspective taking*, *threat reducing behavior*, and *reflection* (p. 596). Perspective taking involves forethought and empathy, both of which encourage interacting parties to consider both the others' point of view, as well as the implications of their actions. These considerations persuade toward the second step, cooperative—threat reducing—behavior, decreasing the likelihood that their actions might be perceived by the other as threatening, allowing them to be more comfortable accepting vulnerability. In other words, the actors are better able to anticipate how their actions will serve either as positive or negative data points. The third step, reflection, comprises ongoing monitoring of the precision of the perspective, and the

effectiveness of the behavior, allowing for mid-stream or *ex poste* corrections.

If the Mayer et al. and Williams models apply cleanly to developing economies, one would expect to see evidence of William's processes of threat regulation utilized toward the maintenance of an environment where RTR is prevalent, as outcomes of trust-based relationships. We examine that question in this next section.

Maintaining Trust in a Developing Economy

While there is a great deal of scholarship on creating trust, issues of maintaining trust remain relatively untapped—particularly with little attention to *etic* differences of trust across different cultures. The challenge presented by the sustainability of trust in a developing economy is heightened by its particular qualities of risk and vulnerability.

The maintenance of trust throughout an organizational culture in any locale takes constant nurturing and consistent reinforcement of confident positive expectations. However, aligned with Williams' first step toward perspective-taking, trustees seeking to sustain a culture of trust in organizations based in developing economies must be especially sensitive to trustors' potential propensity toward "trust flight." In other words, if trust is not a natural element of the surrounding cultural ecosystem, the trustors' equilibrium may be in a state that is monopolized more by distrust than trust. Further, where there is little or no stability or consistency in surrounding institutionalized supports, individuals have no choice but to rely on their personal relationships (Zaheer and Zaheer 2006). As a result, and as Williams suggests in her second step involving threat-reducing behaviors, cultural norms and behaviors in these circumstances are mutual and self-fulfilling prophecies, as each depend on the other in a cycle. Therefore, until members of a local culture experience the manifestation of trusting behaviors in consistent and repeated, reliable manners (e.g., threat-reducing behaviors), the existing and sustained cycle will not be broken nor replaced with a distinct and new sustained cycle of trust. Further, these norms are firmly anchored in the historical depths of the economy and "cannot be easily expected to evolve spontaneously when they are needed to make economic exchanges viable" (Humphrey and Schmitz 1998, citing Platteau 1994, pp. 533–534).

Circumstances at Choix in Haiti provide an example of an environment where repeated and reliable interactions do not necessarily contribute to the maintenance of a stable trust environment and, instead, likely are to be perceived as one-offs by virtue of its embedded history. For example, notwithstanding year-long contracts for all staff members at Choix, employees do not sense the same job security—and therefore, positive reinforcement of trust—that this same contract would otherwise provide in a developed economy. Risk and vulnerability remain so great because of the lack of formal institutional structures that would otherwise exist to enforce these agreements; as a result, uncertainty remains and long-term, trusting relationships are limited. Any subsequent breach of the contract (and therefore, breach of trust) by Choix's administration would leave the staff member with no (perceived or, in fact, actual) legal infrastructure through which to pursue a remedy, no social support because of the perceived power differential between the staff member and the administration, and/or no economic potential for redress. Given the high unemployment rate in the region, Choix employees believe that the school could hire one of the many waiting laborers to re-fill their position, leaving a terminated staff member with few or no options to support her or himself and a family.

Though Choix has never breached a written contract with a staff member, Haiti's history has reinforced this above scenario for its workers, bolstering the lesson that there is (and also appears to be) no gain from the risk or vulnerability required from trust. Further, when Choix reduced the pay for just six of its over 30 employees, following contract provisions to the letter, staff nevertheless saw the administration as fulfilling an unspoken original prophecy that management could not be trusted (*see earlier discussion of the strike*). As a result, when the relationship between Choix and its workers is perceived through the filter of a developed economy, one would see an employer committed to its employees, offering reliable work. However, when the same relationship is filtered through the *etic* commonalities of a developing economy, one is more likely to understand the trepidations the workers have in relying on that contract since the vulnerabilities and risk involved in trust do not reap the rewards available in more developed economies. The institutions that are required to scaffold and sustain those threat-reducing behaviors simply do not (yet) exist.

While these examples may demonstrate hurdles to trust, trust can be sustained eventually in developing economies (Humphrey and Schmitz 1998; Nooteboom 2007). However, it only emerges when legal systems and institution-based trust are developed sufficiently to reduce the uncertainty described above. This is an area ripe for further exploration since the directive is qualitative rather than quantitative, and the concept of “sufficiency to reduce uncertainty” remains wholly undefined. We turn now to the more traditional methods of trust repair in order to examine whether they might yield insights for overcoming these historic fissures, whether they are due to actual and overt fractures or instead to underlying cultural norms that have evolved over time.

Stage Three: Repairing Trust after Disruption

In order to examine any question of trust repair, we must first consider the disruption that gave rise to the need for repair in the first place. We use the term disruption as a catch-all term to represent the complementary, yet discrete, family of events that causes trust to dissipate or cease to exist. A disruption of trust can emerge through erosion, breach, violation, or betrayal (Chen et al. 2011). When a disruption occurs, the fate of the relationship is dependent on both the actions taken by the trustee and the response of the trustor (Tomlinson 2011). Though there is some overlap among these disruptions, each has distinct qualities (see Table 1).

Kramer and Lewicki (2010) offer examples of ways in which trust can be disrupted, including disrespectful behaviors; communication issues, which include not listening and not working to understand the other party; unmet expectations, broken promises, breaches of confidentiality or rules; ineffective leadership; unwillingness to take responsibility for mistakes or issues; performance issues, such as mistakes; incongruence, which means not honoring core values or missions; and structural issues, which could include changes in systems or procedures. Note that the examples offered by Kramer and Lewicki help to illuminate our discussion of trust repair, yet the articulation of trust disruptions lacks the heuristic filter of application to a developing economy. Certainly, each of these practices could implicate both *etic* and *emic* qualities.

TABLE 1 Forms of Trust Disruption

Forms of Trust Disruption

Erosion of trust	The “reconsideration and decline in trusting beliefs in another” (Chen et al. 2011, p. 94)
Breach of trust	A cognitive realization that another has “failed to fulfill an expectation” (2011, p. 94)
Violation of trust	Linked to emotional responses such as distress, anger, or a sense of betrayal (2011)
Betrayal of trust	A violation of expectations that manifests in actions, such as coercive or threatening behavior, broken promises, lying, or disclosing secrets (Elangovan and Shapiro 1998)

Postdisruption Trust Repair

Trust repair describes situations when the trustee has taken advantage of the trustor’s vulnerability, and “seeks to restore the willingness of that party to be vulnerable in the future” (Kramer and Lewicki 2010, 249). It is important to note an asymmetry with regard to repair in connection with trust and distrust, and their trajectories. As we explained above, trust is created through the experience of repeated interactions over time, which contribute positive data points that build and reinforce the relationship. To the contrary, distrust can be spawned through just a single interaction or experience (Kramer 1999). Further, as a result, where distrust has formed or exists, further trusting engagement is often unattainable, while the opposite trajectory is a more facile transition (Hardin 2002, p. 90).

Several studies of trust repair use Mayer et al.’s (1995) model of ability, benevolence, and integrity in order to evaluate trustor responses and to analyze potential for repair (Chen et al. 2011; Gillespie and Dietz 2009; Kim et al. 2006; Schweitzer et al. 2006; Webber et al. 2012). They suggest that the reason for a trust disruption is key to understanding a trustor’s experiences. For example, Chen et al. (2011) posit that, when expectations are breached surrounding benevolence, there is a deeper level of trust erosion than when integrity or ability expectations are breached (p. 97). Tomlinson and Mayer (2009) agree that the reason for the disruption is key, but they found that disruptions associated with matters of integrity, or principled action, result in the greatest

decline of trust, while matters of ability tend to have mixed results. One of the distinctions in the Tomlinson and Mayer study, and relevant to the Choix case, is that they looked not only to *causal ascription* (the reason for the disruption) but also to *causal attribution*, which is comprised of several factors, including whether the trust disruption was the trustee's fault, the extent to which the trustee had control over the situation, and history and the pattern of recurrence of the disruption.

Strategies of Trust Repair

Trust is fragile and hard to repair; however, most scholars believe that it can be repaired after a disruption. There exist both defensive and proactive strategies for repair, each with varying levels of success in different situations. Defensive strategies include apologies, denials, and reticence, with apologies differing from the others in that they may be used to "reestablish the equilibrium by restoring the relative standing of the parties" (Dirks et al. 2009, p. 72).

Apologies might be a natural reaction if one disrupts trust in an interpersonal relationship, but scholars disagree as to their success. Schweitzer et al. (2006, p. 15) does not find apologies to be effective in trust recovery, while Kramer and Lewicki (2010) concluded that apologies play a significant role in trust repair, suggesting at the very least that offering an apology is a more effective strategy than not offering one. They explain that apologies are most compelling when the trustee and trustor have a good relationship, when offered soon after disruption, when the trustee assumes responsibility for the trust disruption, and when the breach was seen as an isolated event.

Because the offer of an apology inherently acknowledges guilt, which might augment the negative results of the disruption, a denial possibly could be seen as a more effective response because the trustee could avoid blame altogether (Ferrin et al. 2007). Alternatively, reticence might be perceived as an optimal strategy since a denial speaks directly to the disruption, while reticence would avoid it altogether. However, Ferrin et al. determined that, even when "used for legitimate purposes" (such as protecting someone's privacy), reticence is a poor response to allegations of trust disruptions (p. 906).

Proactive behaviors to trust disruptions include explanations, reparations, and anticipatory solutions to minimize future disruptions. Explanations that are perceived to be merely self-serving excuses, aimed solely at reducing one's responsibility, are ineffective. However, explanations that instead actually serve to create greater understanding between the trustee and trustor may lead to a deeper empathy and compassion (Schlenker et al. 2001, pp. 25–26). Trustors who have suffered a disruption also have been found to value reparations significantly (i.e., where a trustee seeks to “make it up to” the trustor). This is especially true when the trustor perceives that they have suffered material harm from the disruption (Strang and Sherman 2003, p. 23). Finally, where the trustee implements solutions to ensure the disruption will not recur, the trustee will look to specific behavior by the trustor since a mere promise to act at this juncture will not be considered reliable.

Trust Repair in a Developing Economy

Given the tenuous and fragile balance that trust represents across developing economies, it is vulnerable to disruptions at the slightest infraction. As an *etic* commonality to developing economies, there are no reserves of trust stockpiled, nor infrastructures on which to rely, such as might exist in a developed economy. Repair after a disruption, therefore, neither begins merely from a few steps back, nor even from the starting point to begin trust anew. In environments of low trust and high distrust, trust disruptions reinforce and entrench deeply held beliefs surrounding distrust and move the starting point well below neutral.

Accordingly, methods of repair must take this renewed and augmented suspicion into account with sensitivity when responding to disruptions. Similarly, neither Chen et al.'s (2011) nor Tomlinson and Mayer's (2009) models of affective responses to trust disruptions offer delineations on the basis of economic development phase. So, while a trust disruption attributed to a breach of benevolence (or integrity) *may* still elicit a response of the highest intensity—a question for further research, in itself—the nature of the emotions elicited may be distinct, depending on the economic development phase of the culture involved.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Throughout this article, we have sought to reveal the lacunae in current scholarship, where there does not appear to be guidance surrounding the three phases of the life cycle of trust, specifically in connection with developing economies. Our purpose is to build on prior scholarship to scaffold a deeper inquiry into the divergent ways in which trust is created, sustained, and repaired in developing economies. Seminal constructs that describe trust, trust creation, maintenance, disruption, and repair (e.g., Kim et al. 2006, 2009; Kramer and Lewicki 2010; Mayer et al. 1995) act as springboards for initial exploration of trust in developing economies. While the literature has matured to the point where answers are provided in these seminal arenas, the results are not necessarily transferable to developing economies.

In order both to illustrate application and denude the voids, we grounded our investigation in a case study of Haiti, a country pockmarked by a historical and confounding array of interventions originally designed to “help” its people. As we mentioned at the outset, no two countries offer precisely similar characteristics—hence the value of the dual *emic* and *etic* analyses, examining both country/culture-specific distinctions while also recognizing the significance of cross-country scholarship of the impact of economic development phase. In encouraging similar *emic* studies, Tsui (2004) advocates for what she terms “indigenous” research, aimed at theory development within the context of specific cultures. Contributing additional contextualized scholarship to existing Northern or Western catalogs will only serve to enhance our understanding of diverse typologies and allow us more effectively to integrate these competencies into a comprehensive and holistic perspective on trust (see also Dar 2014).

Not only are there areas where trust has been explored already that could be extended to developing economies but our discussion evidences new areas for inquiry that may not even have been considered. We offer in Table 2 a blueprint that presents both future directions for exploration as well as possible methods by which to examine those research questions. Among a variety of approaches, we suggest the exploration of history, politics, culture, population, economy, and epidemiology of specific countries that are low on the Human Development Index (United

TABLE 2 Future Directions for Exploration

Future Directions for Exploration: The Life Cycle of Trust in Developing Economies	Suggestions for Research Methods and Foci
Creating trust in a developing economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What unique factors need to be considered when creating trust in a culture of distrust? • How do the meanings attached to trust and trustworthiness vary by economic development context? • Where no strong infrastructure yet exists in a developing economy, does a stronger interpersonal trust emerge or does a stronger distrust grow in its place? • What organizational and social factors may help alleviate the evolution of fiefdoms? • Do Mayer et al.'s three elements of trustworthiness bear the same relevance and weight in trust creation a developing economy as in a developed economy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research that examines the contextual environment of countries in the developing stages of economic development, including history, political structure, culture, educational system, and demographic composition. • Comparative analyses of other organizations operating in Haiti. • Specific analysis of developing countries, with a focus on <i>etic/emic</i> distinctions such as power distance. • Macro-level quantitative research that offers insights into interpretation and manifestation of ability, benevolence, and integrity throughout the life cycle of trust.
Maintaining trust in a developing economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can trust be reinforced in developing economies, in the absence of broader legal "safeguards"? • How does the historical context of developing economies shape perceptions of risk? • Given conflicting literature pointing either to a reliance on personal relationships or the creation of distrusting "fiefdoms" where there is no external organizing structure, what guidance can organizations glean about trust creation in these environments? • Research suggests that trust will emerge in developing economies only when legal systems and institution-based trust are developed sufficiently to reduce the uncertainty. How do organizations contribute to support risk-taking and reduce threat in order to reduce the uncertainty involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study research representing experiences of organizations in developing economies in maintaining a trust culture, including both those organizations emerging directly from those economies, as well as those that are established solely by or through partnerships with nonprofits or for-profits based in other countries. • Historiographic analyses of the relationship between the level of economic development and the extent to which trust engenders peace, prosperity, and stability.
Repairing trust after fracture in a developing economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under what conditions are bidirectional disruptions of trust in developing economies most likely to occur? • What issues of power, existing or historically, need to be considered in the repair process of organizational trust relationships in developing economies? • How could research on affective responses to disruptions be delineated on the basis of economic development phase? • Trust in a developing economy has a distinct vulnerability, and the consequence of a disruption in that environment has not yet been examined and quantified with <i>etic</i> specificity. What are the applications of repair research from other environments to a developing economy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative research that uses a critical incident methodology of episodes or circumstances under which relationships have been negatively impacted due to perceived disruptions of trust. • Quantitative replications of Chen et al.'s 2011 and Tomlinson and Mayer's (2009) studies on levels of trust erosion to determine delineations for emerging economies. • Both qualitative case analyses and quantitative research on the outcomes of trust disruption in organizations in developing economies and the impact of varying forms of repair efforts.

Nations Development Programme 2013). We also suspect the cumulative effects of mistrust, both intracountry as well as inter-country (and interorganizational), self-perpetuate in a vicious and thickening cycle within a context such as Haiti. This looping effect perhaps contributes to self-fulfilling prophecies about the futility of offering intervention in developing economies, even where the contributions are designed to build trust, demonstrating sincere forms of Mayer et al.'s (1995) conception of ability, benevolence, and integrity. Next, we unpack and discuss further a few of our recommendations.

First, in connection with the creation of trust, we note that the very definition and meanings that individuals attach to the concepts of trust and trustworthiness likely vary both as a function of cultural context and economic emergence. For example, individuals' understanding of (and importance placed on) the trustee characteristics set forth by Mayer et al. (1995)—ability, benevolence, and integrity—may vary significantly from a culture in a developed economy to one in a developing economy. We anticipate that these distinctions will be material to future scholarship, consistent with the ways that Dar (2014) has interrogated the interplay of written language and indigenous customs, resulting in what she calls “multivocal” communication. An in-depth understanding of the *emic* composition of these three components may prove vital for the initial creation and ongoing maintenance of trust within organizations.

Second, we question under what conditions bidirectional disruptions of trust are likely to occur and what unique factors must be accounted for when trying to repair trust in such a circumstance. Fulmer and Gelfand (2012) acknowledge that the vast majority of studies on trust take the perspective of the employee, ignoring situations in which *both* the employee and employer perceive disruptions of trust, such as that which occurred during the strike at Choix in 2013. In developing economies, where trust is not necessarily supported by the broader social system, bidirectional fractures of trust may be more likely to transpire. Developing economies such as Haiti are characterized by acute levels of vulnerability, which create conditions that are ripe for bidirectional breakdowns in trust.

Third, while both the creation and disruption of trust are bidirectional in nature, they are not necessarily symmetric. Thus,

we suggest an examination of trust in developing economies with attention to *etic/emic* distinctions such as power dynamics between the trustor and trustee that are likely shaped by the surrounding context within which these bidirectional interactions occur. We prospectively argue that those who are in positions of power are able to wield greater influence over the trust repair process because they have the ability to gather and deploy resources in order to initiate repair efforts. Alternatively, those who are in greater positions of power might be more suspect for these very reasons: They are seen as having the ability to access and control resources. As revealed in our example from Choix's strike, though the administration may be in a position of greater power, its ability to dictate the terms of repair after disruption is limited. Further, people in power "may face difficulty convincing others that their transgressions were somehow induced by the situation" and may be perceived as lacking in integrity rather than in competence (Kim et al. 2009, p. 415).

Fourth, the willingness to accept vulnerability—necessary for trust to evolve—is dependent on variables both internal and external to the relationship, including the varying levels of economic development of the cultures involved. Haiti is ranked ninth on the *Fund for Peace's* Fragile States Index, which measures indicators of power and vulnerability that can have significant impact on trust development, maintenance, and repair such as human rights, uneven economic development, poverty and economic decline, public services, state legitimacy, and external intervention, among others (Fund for Peace 2014a, 2014b). Exploring further the impact of these types of economic development factors can enhance trust research.

Overall, trust research also could be enhanced through studies that are qualitative in nature. In particular, case studies and ethnographic studies may help to uncover nuances within and between trustors and trustees in specific contexts (Merriam 1998), framed around problems such as trust disruptions and fractures. Qualitative research is an excellent tool for in-depth investigations of processes, including that of the life cycle of trust, within particular contexts. Such work enables researchers to become deeply familiar with their subjects and their environments—allowing for researchers to reveal the "meanings in use by societal members to explain how they directly experience everyday life realities"

(Gephart 2004, p. 455). At the same time, researchers must approach the collection of such research with extreme care and caution, with particular attention to the development of the research team and issues of credibility (see Lincoln and Guba 1985, *for review*). Noted previously, issues surrounding trust are highly complex, particularly within developing economies, and warrant an interdisciplinary approach. We encourage scholars to consider working collaboratively to enable sociological, historical, psychological, and philosophical perspective-taking as a means to create multiple lenses through which to collect and interpret the data. With regard to credibility, when entering new cultural contexts, researchers should strive toward *prolonged engagement*—that is, investing the time to learn about the culture they are entering as “it is not possible to understand any phenomenon without reference to the context in which it is embedded” (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 302). Researchers also should consider the importance of *persistent observation* or the practice of identifying the most relevant issues and focusing on them in great detail. Additionally, *member checks* are likely to be of great value when conducting research in contexts such as Haiti—particularly when non-Haitian researchers collect the data. “Playing back” the research findings to members (i.e., subjects) can help to generate overall greater accuracy with regard to the members’ intentionality and the researchers’ interpretations of the data (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 314). Taken together, these activities may help to build trust between the researchers and subjects, enabling the production of higher-quality research. Ultimately, conducting such qualitative research within specific cultures and organizations offers a window through which to understand particular contexts and challenges related to the life cycle of trust.

CONCLUSION

We have explored the ways that trust is a resource, a lubricant for relationships of and within organizations, and for their concomitant and necessary transactions. Because trust is a crucial component of productive organizational functioning, it is valuable to examine the specific constraints that limit opportunities for trust

to gain a solid and consistent foothold in developing economies, such as Haiti. Through our analysis of the life cycle of trust, with a particular focus on developing economies, we have sought to highlight the ways in which existing literature can inform efforts to establish and maintain trust in organizations within those contexts. Understanding that our observations perhaps provoke more questions than offer answers, we suggest that in a world becoming more and more complex, exploring trust within developing economies can contribute to this body of knowledge in a way that helps to address real and practical problems that such countries face. Additional scholarship is paramount to equip decision makers, particularly those in multinational companies and international nongovernment organizations, with the tools necessary to move beyond mere speculation based on observations to sophisticated and analytical guidance for organizational governance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge the generous contributions to this article of Ronald Duska and Patricia H. Werhane.

NOTES

1. Certainly, we do not claim that all organizations experience all phases of the life cycle but simply that these comprise potential elements of trust evolution.

2. While we will provide details regarding the school as relevant to our discussion herein, additional information may be found at www.ecoledechoix.org.

3. Two of the authors serve as members of the school's Board of Directors.

4. The Kitchen Manager used this opportunity instead to part with Choix amicably and return to her family in Port au Prince.

5. The authors caution that the factual circumstances of the strike are reported in this manuscript predominantly from the perspective of the Choix administration, and the authors are not able to speculate precisely how Choix staff might frame the resolution of the strike if they were to describe it themselves. However, as one helpful reviewer

suggested, the act of striking, in itself, demonstrates significant intra-group trust among the staff. Further, it also *may* illustrate trust of the administration, since the staff might have believed that they would not be fired for striking. Again, this note is simply an acknowledgment that the case might have a slightly different perspective if that voice were included. However, the reality and sensitivity of the ongoing socio-political situation involved prevented that, for now.

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