



## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Book Review Symposium: *Handbook of Trust Research***, edited by Reinhard Bachmann and Akbar Zaheer. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2006.

### From the Book Review Editor

Trust has long been a topic of interest in literature, philosophy, and the social sciences. Organizational researchers, who have arrived more recently on the scene, have therefore had no shortage of giants on whose shoulders to stand. Standing thus, have they been able to see farther? That may be a question more difficult to answer than to pose. Nonetheless, it seems that an important first step would be to get a critical theoretical overview of what organizational researchers have to say about this ubiquitous but famously opaque topic. This is no mean task given the already voluminous organizational research on trust. But it is precisely the task that the editors of the *Handbook of Trust Research* set out to accomplish. In this book review symposium, three (trusted) organizational scholars critically review the book and offer us an advance assessment of the future of organizational research on trust.

**Trust: A Bigger Picture**, by Karl E. Weick,  
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At the moment I was drafting this review, a *Washington Post* headline read, "At Toy Stores Recall Casts Doubt on Trusted Friends: Parents' Alarm Fed By Repeated Scares Linked to China." If we try to convert this specific event of alarm into more general terms, we might say that here is a threat that involves trust, understood as "an expectation of the partner's reliability with regard to its obligations, predictability of behaviour, and fairness in actions and negotiations while faced with the possibility of

behaving opportunistically" (p. 266). Parents buying toys routinely adopt trust in order to convert uncertainty into risk (p. 395), but they seldom experience an escalation of that risk. When parents begin with a situation where anything could happen at any time, they render that situation more manageable by selecting a small number of expectations as to how others will behave and ignore the other possibilities. They really have no alternative, since "available information is incomplete and imprecise" and it takes trust to "bridge knowledge gaps" or "to extrapolate from the given information" (p. 395). Thus, trust, while routine, is also precarious.

Doubts such as those involving toys covered with lead-based paint, or those involved while driving across long bridges after the Route 35W bridge collapse in Minneapolis (August 1, 2007), stir up issues of trust. As Baier puts it, "We inhabit a climate of trust as we inhabit an atmosphere and notice it as we notice air, only when it becomes scarce or polluted" (p. 139). When outcroppings of failed trust are stirred up, what are we to make of them? That's where this handbook comes in.

The *Handbook of Trust* offers twenty-two different ways of thinking about trust, authored by thirty-eight scholars, each chapter grounded in a significant article or project. Perspectives are loosely sorted according to level of analysis—interpersonal, organizational-interorganizational, cross-level, societal—and also by thematic clusters (listed on p. 10). The entries range across disciplines and across countries, although the perspectives tend to be social psychological, sociological, or economic. Despite the diversity of perspectives, there is surprising agreement that the concept of trust attempts to capture complex conditions characterized by risk, uncertainty, irreducible vulnerability, the necessity of concessions made in advance, incomplete information, faith-based initiatives (i.e., acting as if trust is warranted, even though the evidence is equivocal), the potential for ex-

plotation or defection, asymmetries of information and knowledge, and the necessity to act as if social vulnerability and uncertainty were resolved. A crucial property of trust is that it "requires an as-if attitude on the part of the trustor which renders irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty [as] unproblematic" (p. 365).

While each argument originates in a specific empirical site (e.g., laboratory trust game, innovation teams, simulations, piles of survey responses), connections to everyday life are less obvious and less robust. Buyer-supplier relationships tend to be used most often to illustrate contingencies of trust. Additional sites such as relationships between police and public, professor and graduate student, physician and patient, school bus driver and child occupant, experts and expert system designers, and sports team and head coach are briefly mentioned but tend to be dropped just when they start to get interesting. Perhaps the most informative setting for trust described in the book is the analysis of people with expertise in the process of smelting who are asked to give up their know-how so that it can be codified into expert systems that can allow others to increase their status and power relative to those who revealed the know-how (Chapter 10). The development of an epistemic community makes this chancy venture possible. Notwithstanding this chapter, Kramer's (p. 73) lament that naturalistic explorations of trust are in short supply is given credence by the short supply of everyday settings described in this volume.

Although the handbook could be read straight through from front to back, as I did for this review, a different sequence of reading might make more sense. Start with "a theory of trust" (pp. 393–397) to get a feel for the phenomenon of trust; sample the paradoxes of trust to appreciate the complexity of the topic (Chapter 14); read the exemplary discussion of extensions that have been made to the influential study "does trust matter" (Chapter 16); then read Chapter 1, focused on the individual level of analysis, so that you can link conceptual renderings of trust to your own experience; follow this with Chapters 4, 5, and 6, which are organizational-level discussions that bridge interorganizational and interpersonal trust; and then wade into some marvelous variations on the basic themes that include discussions of the trust taker (Chapter 18), the ethical basis of trust (Chapter 17), con-

tracts (Chapter 12), the dark side of trust (Chapter 9), levels of analysis (Chapter 15), and opportunism (Chapter 7). The remaining chapters, each one strong in its own unique way, will then be appreciated in the context of a big picture of trust research.

So what does one learn when exposed to this much variety regarding an already complex and confusing mechanism? Although the following selection is necessarily idiosyncratic, the intent is to illustrate ways in which any reader will find assertions that resonate, educate, or compel debate.

One learns, for example, that there are provocative options for defining trust that range from the compact:

1. "Trust is one's belief in another's reliability, predictability, and fairness" (p. 126);

through the psychological:

2. "Trust is the willingness to be vulnerable under conditions of risk and interdependence: it's a psychological state of mind—not simply a behavior (e.g. cooperation) or simply a choice (e.g. taking a risk) that entails 'perceived probabilities'" (p. 307);

to the relational:

3. "I define trust as a reflexive process of building on reason, routine and reflexivity, suspending irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty *as if* they were favourably resolved, and maintaining a state of favourable expectation towards the actions and intentions of more or less specific others" (p. 356).

One learns not to be put off by distinctive but elusive properties associated with trust, such as faith, mystery, and as-if action, even though others regard trust dismissively as "cheery, flattering, sanguine, non-descriptive, myopic" (p. 135). It is these very elusive properties, puzzled over by the likes of James and Simmel (e.g., p. 371), that distinguish trust from seemingly similar processes, such as weak induction and simple reliance.

One learns that little is known about repairing breaches of trust. "Too little attention appears to have been paid to forgiveness, repair, and reconstruction of trust in relationships that have experienced a breach in trust among the parties" (p. 155).

One learns that the placing and honoring of trust is often part of a routine (e.g., entrusting a child, routinely, to the care of a school bus

driver). Trust under these conditions involves "trust in the reliability of the routine in continuously producing the same (range of) outcomes and, more importantly, trust in the motivation and ability of actors involved not to deviate from the programme of action—for whatever reason" (p. 363).

One learns that crucial dynamics in a trust relationship don't always focus on the trust giver. Paying closer attention to the trust **taker** and analyzing a trust episode by first noting the performative acts the taker adopts in order to motivate the trust giver to make a one-sided advance concession (p. 319) recast the nature of the exchange involved in trusting.

One learns to pay closer attention to how trust is reaccomplished—how it is treated continuously as if it were a first moment of trusting. Trust has to be worked on: every move is a first move that recognizes the autonomy of the other and the other's freedom to continuously honor or exploit trust (p. 369). As Giddens notes, "Actors have no choice but to make trust choices . . . from what they know to be imperfect decision bases" (p. 369). If there were no contingency, there would be no trust involved.

In a related point, one learns that trust is an evidentiary construct (p. 242). It changes with evidence in favor of or against further trust. Thus, a crucial question is whether people update and recalibrate their judgments.

Trust will move, or fail to move, from one level to another based on evidence regarding the trustworthiness of a trustee person, group, or organization. This is what makes trust a dynamic construct. It is not static because there is a constant flow of trust-related evidence based on a counterpart person's, group's, or organization's behavior. This information leads the counterpart to constantly update and recalibrate their assessment of the trustworthiness of the trustee (p. 242).

One learns (though certainly not everyone learns) that trust is "ultimately dependent on the actor's leap of faith based on interpretation" (p. 356) but that institutions, norms, and conventions act as "guarantors" of trust.

One learns that older treatments of trust, such as Campbell's (1990) deconstruction of the Asch conformity experiment as a demonstration of the power of respectful interaction built on the combination of trust, trustworthiness, and self-respect, hold up well.

Finally, one learns that the development of trust may be a prototype for understanding the larger issue of what it means to organize and develop a reliable social order (p. 355).

If we back away from these intricacies of trust and think about this handbook in a wider perspective, what we have is an interesting test bed in which to examine the plea for "evidence-based management" (e.g., Rousseau, 2006). This handbook is a collection of evidence that contains fragments, occasional syntheses, and infrequent implications for practice, all focused on a complex topic. The discussions make it clear that trust is contingent (e.g., "trust is a four-place predicate: a trustor (1) trusts a trustee (2) in some respects (3), under some conditions (4)"; p. 259), infused with faith, and chronically subject to unraveling. This is an unsettling picture for some. That's not a knock on this handbook or its focus or the movement favoring evidence-based management. Rather, it's a knock on promises of guidance that simply can't be kept because of the nature of the phenomenon itself. The more we learn about trust, the less we may be able to guide practice on the basis of the evidence alone. The evidence suggests that there are durable, lingering unknowns in trust (e.g., irreducible social vulnerability that stems from trustees' freedom to honor or exploit trust). The message that seems to flow from this evidence is that, yes, we can help you managers up to a point but, beyond that, you're on your own. The danger lies in how optimistic we are when we specify that "point" and where we place it. This handbook goes a long way toward infusing wisdom into our promises.

Trust is more than weak inductive knowledge. But that "more than" is very tough to put into words, as Simmel made clear. Trust presumes a leap of faith, an irreducible leap to commitment that goes beyond weak inductive knowledge. Any person can give plenty of reasons why he or she trusts a person or a system, but "the point of such reasons is really to uphold his [or her] self-respect and justify him [or her] socially" (p. 371). Thus, trust goes beyond what the actor can account for and also beyond what scholars can account for. This handbook helps scholars account for more nuances and complications of the phenomenon of trust. But it is also a firm, intelligent reminder not to mutilate the phenomenon while crafting those accounts.

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- Washington Post*. 2007. At toy stores recall casts doubt on trusted friends: Parents' alarm fed by repeated scares linked to China, August 3: B1.

**Nascent and Complex: What Is the Focus of Trust Research?** by Joann Keyton, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, and faye l. smith, Missouri Western State University, St. Joseph

Given the number of special issues and other empirical articles devoted to trust, a handbook to record the state of trust research (both conceptual and empirical) seems timely. The editors, Reinhard Bachmann and Akbar Zaheer, representing American and European perspectives, identify trust as a major field in the domain of management and propose that the role of the handbook is to consolidate the current state of trust research and to identify research agendas. The implied message to the reader is that the handbook will represent diverse approaches to past, current, and future studies of trust. Does the handbook deliver on its promises?

Two central questions arise in evaluating any handbook. First, does the volume accomplish what scholars expect from a scholarly handbook? Second, are the essays in the collection authoritative and original? We would argue that this handbook provides a collection of essays about different aspects, components, and qualities of trust, as well as differing perspectives on trust. Chapter authors are scholars whom those who follow the trust literature (and management literature in general) will recognize. And having these scholars' opinions and perspectives in one source will be helpful to those who conduct (or expect to conduct) trust research.

There are contributions from both sides of the Atlantic. Of the thirty-eight authors in the book, 45 percent are from universities in the United States, 50 percent are from Europe and the United Kingdom, and 5 percent are from Canada. Four of the thirty-eight authors are female. Whereas the geographical representation is

fairly balanced, the intellectual "homes" of the authors are much more diverse, with a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including economics, strategy, sociology, organizational behavior, philosophy, ethics, information technology, entrepreneurship, organizational learning, and accounting. The resulting twenty-two chapters also cover levels of inquiry ranging from individual to organizational and interorganizational, cross-level, and, finally, a society and economy level. The editors and authors seem to have delivered on their stated purposes, and the reader can approach the handbook as a whole, or as separate parts that focus on a particular level of inquiry.

With such a breadth of perspectives about trust, what is missing from this diversity? Although the editors clearly state that the authors were invited from both sides of the Atlantic, Western (and male) thought dominates the network of authors, as though the United States and Europe/United Kingdom were the only meaningful locations for understanding trust at each level of inquiry. Very few of the authors address the cultural differences in other parts of the world and how those cultural differences affect trust or impact relationships and transactions. Noted exceptions, however, are Van de Ven and Ring (Chapter 8, "Trust in Cooperative Interorganizational Relationships"), Deakin (Chapter 12, "Trust, Cooperation and Contract Law"), and Banerjee, Bowie, and Pavon (Chapter 17, "Ethical Analysis of Trust"). Similarly, few authors address distrust as a related (or unrelated) concept, nor, with the exception of Dirks (Chapter 1, "Trust in Leaders"), do they place trust within a nomological network of constructs. For example, how is the construct of behavioral integrity (Simons, 2002) related to trust?

The editors' introduction points out that trust is a basic coordination mechanism (the others are identified as power and monetary incentives) in business relations. The handbook chapters are described as an opportunity for trust scholars to reflect on their seminal contributions, describe how their thinking has changed (we would have liked to know *why* scholars changed their thinking), and to provide research directions for the study of trust. Some chapters hit this mark directly; others less so. There is much more emphasis on where trust research has been than on where it is going. Currall and Inkpen (Chapter 13, "Multi-Level Co-Evolution-



ary Perspective") are an exception; their guidelines for future research are generative, practicable, and doable. Some chapters end with a future research agenda that "more has to be done" or with obvious or trite suggestions. We would have liked the editors to have written a concluding chapter engaging the debates, challenges, and questions identified by chapter authors, thus presenting a comprehensive agenda for trust research.

The handbook is organized according to levels of analysis, but this structure is somewhat artificial, since the chapters demonstrate that trust is transient, and often confounded, across levels. Thus, a reader relying on the organizing structure (as many of us do in searching for literature) will miss macro issues that are present in chapters about more micro levels, and vice versa. The editors offer thematic clustering as an alternative organizing structure; it better reflects the current strands of trust research, but such a structure would have unnecessarily drawn readers to some chapters over others. It is apparent that clear research paths have not been established, although trust may be so complicated that an organizing structure remains elusive. The chapters of the book present trust as comprising cognitive, behavioral, economic, emotional, ethical, and faith components; comprising both objective and subjective components; comprising both an antecedent and consequence; distinct from control, trustworthiness, reliance, risk, and vulnerability; both positive and negative; embedded in relationships both within and across individual, group, organizational, and societal levels; and grounded in different philosophical perspectives. Such variety suggests that the field is not mature or organized. Perhaps Banerjee, Bowie, and Pavone (Chapter 8) have identified the central problem in trust research. Their argument that trust is both universal and context specific raises the question "What are we studying when we study trust?"

After reading the handbook, what do we know? For sure, we know that trust researchers have not agreed on a definition of what trust is or is not. Although some chapters, especially those addressing individual-level research, tend to agree on the Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) and Rousseau, Sitkin, and Camerer (1998) definitions, the lack of agreement at other levels of inquiry continues to be frustrating for

future research. Chapter authors Arena, Lazaric, and Lorenz (Chapter 10, "Trust, Codification and Epistemic Communities") argue that there is little agreement about the definition of trust. Most important, only Janowicz and Noorderhaven (Chapter 15, "Levels of Inter-Organizational Trust") explicitly address the link between definitions of trust and operationalizations of trust in empirical work. We also know that the complexity of the construct offers substantial opportunity for future research, including investigating the paradoxes of trust that Nooteboom (Chapter 14, "Forms, Sources and Processes of Trust") articulates in his chapter and identifying the role of trust as a moderator, independent variable, or dependent variable as requested by Dirks (Chapter 1) in his chapter. Dirks also prompts us to ask whether future research should study a generic trustor/trustee relationship or more specific organizational roles, such as leader/follower, teacher/student, or police officer/citizen. Finally, we ask ourselves how generational acceptance of technological and information literacy and the easy access to both reliable and unreliable reports of events will impact the causal direction of trust.

A cross-chapter evaluation suggests that future research should rely on qualitative, ethnographic case studies and, especially, longitudinal field research, in addition to lab studies. If trust is as multifaceted as described above—comprising cognitive, behavioral, economic, and ethical components; comprising both an antecedent and consequence; distinct from trustworthiness; both positive and negative; having agency at individual, group, organizational, and societal levels; and grounded in different philosophical perspectives—then we may be overstating or unnecessarily confounding the scope of the construct. It may be that at the heart of each level of inquiry, whether individual, organizational, cross-level, or societal and whether codified in legal terms or not, is the role of communication. The globalization of business transactions and juxtaposition of competing and cooperating business relationships will continue to bring a focus on how trust impacts these transactions.

Every reader will likely find positions presented in the chapters they agree with; they will also find positions they object to. The book is a primary resource for those who conduct trust research. Our hope is that readers will be stim-

ulated to develop research agendas that test trust—whatever it is.

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**The Dynamics of Trust**, by Ranjay Gulati and Maxim Sytch, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

You can't shake hands with a clenched fist (Indira Gandhi).

No one doubts the value of examining trust. This complex and multifaceted construct has been a consistent topic of interest in ancient Eastern and Western civilizations—Aristotle, Socrates, and the *Bhagavad Gita* have all taken it up—and a regular theme of some of the forefathers of modern social sciences, including philosopher David Hume, sociologist Georg Simmel, and psychologist Erik Erikson. Some more recent treatments of trust suggest that it is “central to all transactions” (Dasgupta, 1988: 49). As such, the topic continues to evoke interest across a wide array of social sciences: psychologists consider the emergence and role of trust in interpersonal dynamics, relating trust to personal attributes, individual cognitions, and, more recently, emotions (e.g., Lount & Murnighan, 2007; Rotter, 1967); sociologists investigate the social and institutional factors that shape trust among individuals and collectives (e.g., Coleman, 1990; Dore, 1983); likewise, economists have begun, albeit cautiously, to embrace trust as a factor in economic and social relations, searching for its roots in the calculative mindset of rational and efficient individuals (e.g., Williamson, 1993). Trust has also evoked considerable interest among organization and strategy scholars, who have sought to conceptualize trust and understand its origins and role in the internal functioning of organizations and in their exchanges with other firms (Bradach & Eccles, 1989; Gulati, 1995).

In light of these developments, it would not be unreasonable to say that the study of trust has entered a stage of maturation. Maturing fields are frequently characterized by voluminous research exploring increasingly fine-grained but potentially less impactful questions. In these phases of incremental gain, it is quite useful to take stock of existing knowledge and reflect on some of the most promising avenues for future research. As such, Bachmann and Zaheer's volume is well timed. Along with its valuable inventory of trust research, the handbook is commendable for representing a true transnational collaboration that brings research from a range of European and North American scholars under one roof. The eclectic collection of scholars has naturally resulted in a work with myriad disciplinary foci, ranging from social psychological (e.g., Kramer) and sociological (e.g., Mollering) to legal studies (e.g., Deakin) and economics (e.g., Casson and Della Giusta). Furthermore, the diverse corp of contributors used a wide range of methodological approaches, including a case study (e.g., Arena, Lazaric, and Lorenz), experimental design (McEvily et al.), and game theory and simulation (Witteloostuijn and van Wegberg), among others. This is commendable, since the field of organizational studies is in dire need of greater scientific discourse across emergent and incumbent scientific clusters, which are often tightly unified around their unique research themes, methodologies, and different conceptions of rigor and relevance, to the extent of being impervious to valuable alternatives. It is therefore exciting to see such a diversity of scholarly lenses applied to the topic of trust, for this naturally cues follow-up research to cut across those different clusters to generate more integrative insights.

The work featured in the volume also spans several distinct levels of analysis, discussing, for example, trust between individuals (e.g., Kramer), along with trust between collectives (e.g., Arena, Lazaric, and Lorenz), thus serving as a comprehensive snapshot of a very broad field of study. The research in the volume is therefore organized by level of analysis—micro/individual, organization/interorganization, society/economy, and cross-level—which is a natural way to categorize this work. This multilevel organization corresponds to a broad and rich array of trust-related questions explored: What is the impact of individuals' trust in their leaders

(Dirks)? How do we distinguish between trust in individuals and in collective entities (McEvily et al.; McEvily and Zaheer)? How does trust develop and evolve between organizations (Van de Ven and Ring)? How can systems trust systems (Sydow)?

Despite the value of organizing the book by level, the richness of the questions above suggests that many trust-related themes will cut across levels and are worth considering with a multilevel view. Notwithstanding several chapters that explicitly invoke cross-level analysis of trust (e.g., Nootboom; McEvily and Zaheer), the unambiguous ascription of some essays to a single level of analysis can at times be overly constraining. It is hardly surprising, given that trust, as such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, naturally invites a multifocal scholarly lens. For instance, Van de Ven and Ring's essay, which examines trust in cooperative interorganizational relations, makes strong linkages to trust at the individual level by suggesting that cooperative relations between organizations may rest largely on trust-laden interpersonal ties. Along similar lines, much of Sydow's theorizing on system-level trust speaks directly to the literature on interorganizational trust.

With this in mind, one tantalizing concept that the editors mention briefly at the outset but do not fully develop is the notion of organizing our thinking on trust research by theme rather than level (pp. 10–11). Our reading of the handbook and the editors' suggestion of an alternate structure elicited several key questions/themes around which we could consider the role of trust. Approaching these questions would allow us to step out of some of the traditional scholarly grooves and methods that some of the chapters may represent and allow for a greater integration of multiparadigmatic insights that have accumulated over the years in this maturing domain of study. We present a list of these central questions here, along with relevant works both within and outside of Bachmann and Zaheer's book. While certainly nonexhaustive with respect to either this volume or the very broad field of trust inquiry, this list points to some of the more pressing unanswered questions—some of which even arise in certain parts of the book—that carry significant potential for future studies.

- *What can we say about trust as a dyadic construct, especially with regard to possible asymmetric perceptions of trust between social actors?* Beckert's chapter in the handbook approaches this general question by considering the relative roles of the trust giver and trust taker in economic exchanges, and the possible impact of information asymmetries between them. A fruitful extension to this line of inquiry would be to consider trust as a dyadic construct, where parties may hold diverging perceptions of the level of trust in the relationship. What are the antecedents of such asymmetries, how sustainable are those asymmetries, and what implications could they have for behavioral dynamics in the dyad?
- *Could trust develop over temporally distinct stages, and what are the implications of this pattern?* Currall and Inkpen share important insights in hypothesizing how trust can co-evolve across interpersonal, intergroup, and interorganizational levels and progress through distinct temporal phases. Empirical evidence suggests that instead of a frequently assumed linear process of trust development over the history of interaction, trust formation can progress in distinct temporal phases characterized by unique features. For example, a study of supplier-buyer relationships of two major U.S. automakers revealed a complex, nonlinear pattern to trust formation, including an early period of ambivalence in the relationship where trust formation was virtually nonexistent (Gulati & Sytch, in press). Such ambivalence is likely to be generated by limited opportunities for demonstrating trustworthiness early in the relationship and insufficient evidence for making judgments with regard to a partner's trustworthiness.
- *How do we make trust more robust to breach and repair broken trust?* Trust is a very fragile commodity. As Van de Ven and Ring point out, "Trust is often easier to breach than it is to build . . . too little attention appears to have been paid to forgiveness, repair and reconstruction of trust in relationships that have experienced a breach in trust" (p. 155; see also Dirk, pp. 24–26). We agree wholeheartedly. Scholars are only beginning to make strides in this arena, and the field is full of promise (Lount, Zhong, Sivanathan, & Murnighan, 2007).
- *What about the dark side of trust?* Gargiulo and Ertug present a strong review of trust's potential negative effects, including blind faith, which results in dangerously low levels of monitoring, vigilance, and safeguards; complacency or yielding to inertia by staying in a dysfunctional relationship; and developing unnecessary obligations that could decrease the relationship's performance. Admittedly, trust research is

characterized by "scant theoretical reflection and even scarcer empirical evidence on the dark side of trust" (Gargiulo and Ertug, p. 183). The idea of "too much of a good thing" resonates across multiple domains of study. For instance, there could be negative effects of "network resources," or the ostensibly valuable assets that exist beyond a firm's boundaries and lie in relationships with other companies (Gulati, 2007). Shedding light on the dark side of trust by highlighting that the benefits trust generates may have associated costs and risks will be of great value to scholars and practitioners.

- *How can we understand trust from a cross-cultural perspective?* Although some existing research (e.g., Fukuyama, 1995) and several chapters in this volume consider how culturally based variables may affect trust (e.g., Banerjee et al.; Deakin; Van de Ven and Ring), there is still much to learn in this regard. How does trust develop across national boundaries? How do trust-related practices spread from culture to culture? What are the ramifications of differences in the ways that disparate cultures develop and maintain trust? These questions await answers.

As we suggested earlier, these are not meant to represent an exhaustive set of central questions about trust. There are surely many others. But we raise them to exhort scholars to bring our understanding of trust to an even higher level. One of the guiding principles in this quest for deeper trust-related knowledge could be the development of more managerially relevant ideas for building and maintaining trust. For all we have achieved in our study of the topic, remarkably little exists in this specific domain. Perhaps this is a translation problem, in that we have not done enough to lay out our findings in a simple and accessible form. Or perhaps we need to reconfigure our basic questions to be more relevant to a broader managerial audience. However this came to be, in an increasingly globally interconnected world with trust as a central lubricant (Arrow, 1974), we must seek out better ways for managers to optimize trust equations with key partners and stakeholders. As challenging as this may be, it calls for the development of both vigorous and relevant theory of trust in management studies. This, too, is very much an exercise that will require the establishment of trust across researchers from different disciplines and academic silos. The *Handbook of Trust Research*

represents the perfect platform from which to launch such an effort.

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**Critical Management Studies: A Reader**, edited by Christopher Grey and Hugh Willmott. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Reviewed by Anshuman Prasad, University of New Haven, CT.

During the last several years, management scholarship under the rubric of critical management studies (CMS) appears to have shown



signs of considerable ferment and vitality. In general terms, CMS may be understood as a relatively restricted segment of scholarship—occurring primarily, though certainly not exclusively, within metropolitan Anglophone academic circles—seeking to critique various aspects of the “text” and “context” of management/managing and organizations/organizing. Given that CMS seems to be a rapidly expanding area of research, compiling a reader of scholarly works related to this emergent genre is clearly a worthwhile project. Apart from providing such a compilation of readings, the editors of the book under review explicitly seek (see p. 12) to make a contribution toward the currently ongoing institutionalization of CMS. Accordingly, in the course of this book review, I offer some remarks also on the *Reader's* efforts to deepen the institutionalization of this evolving field of research.

The anthology consists of an editorial introduction prepared specifically for this collection and seventeen previously published writings arranged in four separate sections. As the editors point out, Section I of the *Reader* (“Anticipating Critical Management Studies”) is a manifestation of their desire to “at least gesture towards the very large number of works which undertook the critical study of management before . . . [the] term [CMS] was in use” (p. 13). This section consists of four readings (originally published during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s) dealing with issues of management ideology; the enlistment of the academic disciplines of industrial sociology and psychology in the project of furthering managerial power and control; the neglect within organization studies of several important critical themes (e.g., power, sexism, capitalist development, etc.); and the nature and structure of the American power elite coalescing around the economic, political, and military domains.

Institutionalization processes frequently include attempts to construct a narrative prehistory—a prehistory that might lend a sense of greater “naturalness” and “inevitability” to the ongoing institutionalization at hand. Clearly, Section I may be seen as being in the nature of such an attempt to craft an “historical background” for the institutionalization of CMS in progress now. However, it would appear that the four readings figuring in Section I—readings that seemingly only “anticipate” the “future”

emergence of CMS and, hence, represent some putative “past” of the genre—could easily have been *included* within the fold of CMS “proper,” and categorized as “belonging” to the “present” of CMS. In other words, the scholarly reasons for placing these four readings in Section I by no means appear to be obvious. Hence, the *Reader* as an intellectual project (and as a project designed to promote the institutionalization of CMS) would have been significantly strengthened had the editors provided a reasoned scholarly/historiographical explanation and justification for their decision to classify these works as forming part of the past rather than the present of CMS. The explanation presumably being offered in the *Reader*—that these works originally appeared before the capitalized term CMS was in use (p. 13)—does not quite appear to be adequate, especially because the book does not spell out in detail why the emergence of this term may legitimately be regarded as a somewhat decisive historical dividing line for purposes of separating the past from the present of critical studies of management and organizations.

Similarly, the editors do not appear to offer any scholarly explanation for adopting the 1950s as the starting point for the prehistory they seek to construct. From the perspective of someone engaged in offering postcolonial critiques of management theory and practice (Prasad, 2003), it is easy enough to see how some of Mahatma Gandhi’s writings (e.g., those dealing with Gandhi’s leadership of the *Champaran Satyagraha* of 1917, which provide critical analyses of the management of Western indigo plantations in India) might have been included as part of the prehistory of CMS. Undoubtedly, other pre-1950s examples (from different times and places) of critiques of management practices can be found. Once again, therefore, the *Reader* would have been a much stronger intellectual product if it had offered a well-reasoned scholarly explanation for the choice of the 1950s as its point of departure.

The readings appearing after Section I provide a selection of post-1970s writings. Section II (“Studying Management Critically”) offers three readings that focus on “principles which might inform any critical study of management,” while Section III (“Critical Studies of Management”) presents seven readings that provide “instances of such studies” (p. 13). In simple terms, Sections II and III may be seen as seeking to differentiate

*theoretical CMS* works from *empirical* ones in the genre. However, the editors seem well aware of the problematic nature of attempts to construct *rigid* demarcations between theory and empirical research and, furthermore, rightly point to the imbrication of the theoretical and the empirical as one of the strengths of sections of CMS research. The three readings included in Section II provide discussions of neo-Marxist critical theory, "post-modernism," the contributions of Michel Foucault, and critical realism. The readings in Section III, on the other hand, analyze such diverse issues as trust in organizations, concertive control, development administration and management, charismatic leadership, sexuality at work, performance appraisal, and "the neglect of institutional analysis in behavioral studies of management practice" (p. 324). Finally, Section IV ("Assessing Critical Management Studies") is offered in this anthology as a putative exercise in intellectual stock-taking by way of three works that provide "internal and external critical discussions of CMS itself" (p. 13).

The introductory chapter of the book begins on a note of due caution, with the observation that, as an "emergent area or genre" that is yet to develop "a clear and settled identity and set of boundaries," CMS continues to be something of an ongoing work-in-progress, and "there is considerable room for debating its scope as well as its distinctive or most illustrious works" (p. 1). At the same time, however, the editors are inclined to believe that CMS is also "an already accomplished construction" (p. 2) because of a variety of factors, including numerous institutionalized activities (e.g., the activities of the CMS Interest Group of the Academy of Management and the International CMS Conference), as well as certain "common threads or themes that run through work that is widely regarded as most central to or exemplary of CMS" (p. 5).

Such an assertion hinting at the existence of "common themes" and "central or exemplary works" is at considerable odds with the forthright acknowledgment, just a few pages earlier in the introduction, of the contested nature of "the scope and illustrious works" of the genre and is suggestive of a somewhat vexing ambivalence or tension that seems to haunt the overall scholarly enterprise of compiling this anthology. As we will see during the course of this book review, the editors' refusal to explicitly confront and engage with this ambivalence at

the very core of their project has some important scholarly consequences.

In any event, as regards the ongoing institutional consolidation of CMS, the introduction warns that the institutionalization thus far achieved by the genre remains "embryonic" (p. 4), so much so that CMS continues to be "a marginal and vulnerable phenomenon" with very "shallow roots" (p. 12). Hence, the editors argue, there is a pressing need to deepen the institutionalization of CMS in a variety of forums, including "journals and funding bodies," and, in so doing, to increase the influence of CMS with a view to "changing the theory and practice of management" (p. 12). As already noted, the editors regard this *Reader* as a contribution toward these endeavors.

Anthologies, generally speaking, seem to be fairly useful scholarly devices: they make widely scattered writings conveniently available within the covers of single (or a few) volumes, they sometimes carry erudite introductory essays that are significant scholarly works in their own right, they may make important contributions toward the (often welcome) institutionalization of specific scholarly fields/genres, and so on. At the same time, most anthologies also tend to be documents of a relatively personalized nature. The decision regarding specific writings that should be included in, and/or excluded from, a given anthology is the result of decidedly personal choices made by the anthology's editor(s), and these choices are frequently mediated not only by considerations of scholarly quality, rigor, and influence but also, to varying degrees, by a number of pragmatic, biographical, and/or somewhat idiosyncratic factors, such as space requirements that often limit the number of writings to be included, the editors' disciplinary training/preferences, the editors' comfort and ready familiarity with the works of those scholars who might belong to their own formal and/or informal networks, intellectual and professional rivalries, personal friendships and antipathies, and the like. In addition, ethico-political and cultural factors may often play significant roles in an editor's decision about the readings to be included in an anthology.

Needless to say, there is no reason to assume that the *Reader* might somehow be untouched by factors like the ones mentioned above, and in all fairness, no such claim on behalf of this *Reader* is made by its editors. As a matter of fact, at several places in the introductory chap-

ter and elsewhere, the editors emphasize that their selection of readings is mediated by personal preferences, and they even point out that, as a result, "many *outstanding* pieces of work" (p. 12; emphasis added) have been excluded from the anthology. Indeed, the editors conclude the book's introduction with the following candid observation: "In the end, like a fantasy football team, *our* selection can be argued about. Everyone will have their favorite texts and their preferred authors. . . . we have chosen . . . works which we *have found* influential, valuable and provocative" (p. 13; emphasis added). After a disarming declaration of this kind—which unequivocally and boldly defines the anthology as comprising the editors' personal favorites and as a product of somewhat unique individual preferences and proclivities—any attempt to interrogate the editors' *choice* of specific readings included in the book may appear pointless, even somewhat unfair. I take up the matter of editorial choice—and the *inclusions and exclusions* that form and define this anthology—in a short while. Before that, however, it may be useful to briefly touch upon some of the writings included in the book.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, the writings included in this collection present something of a mixed bag. The book includes some valuable pieces; for instance, the four brief excerpts—from works by Anthony (Chapter 2), Baritz (Chapter 3), Clegg and Dunkerley (Chapter 4), and C. Wright Mills (Chapter 5)—appearing in Section I, as well as Marsden's analysis of critical realism (Chapter 8), Barker's study of concertive control in self-managing teams (Chapter 10), Townley's Foucauldian investigation of performance appraisal (Chapter 14), and the ethical critique of CMS offered by Wray-Bliss (Chapter 18), may all be seen as making worthwhile contributions toward developing a critical understanding of management and of CMS as a genre. However, the anthology's tendency to view the theoretical landscape of CMS primarily through the lens of readings that focus on the so-called cleavage (p. 59) between neo-Marxist critical theory and something seen as postmodernism would appear to be somewhat dated and intellectually unsound. The theoretical terrain of CMS is much more heterogeneous than what the alleged "cleavage" might suggest, and the anthology might have been better served by including writings that offer a more current,

nanced, and sophisticated understanding of such theoretical ferment and heterogeneity.

Among the relatively weaker readings included in this collection, Thompson's piece (Chapter 17, appearing in Section IV), launching what the editors call a "vitriolic attack on CMS" (p. 350), appears to be one of the least promising in terms of intellectual depth and rigor. Not only does Thompson's criticism of CMS indiscriminately bunch together postmodernism and post-structuralism (and, indeed, even postcolonialism; cf. p. 379, n. 4), but it also suffers from instances of obviously unsound reasoning. To offer one example, in the course of excoriating CMS for its advocacy of what he sees as relativistic rejection of the idea of truth, Thompson argues that the fact that people are willing to "submit themselves to surgery" suggests that science—in this instance, medical science—must have "discovered [certain] truths" (p. 367). Such an argument is exceedingly flawed because, among other things, it seems to be based on the premise that if someone (e.g., a patient) follows another person's (e.g., a surgeon's) advice, the said advice *must* represent some truth.

Moreover, Thompson's argument also appears to reveal an unawareness on his part that philosophy of medicine scholarship has drawn attention to the curious fact that surgeons themselves are often *unwilling* to undergo several invasive surgical procedures (e.g., "abdominoperineal resection with a colostomy") that are routinely prescribed for and performed on large numbers of other patients (Kothari & Mehta, 1988: 174), a research finding creating considerable problems for Thompson's claim to infer medical science's "truth" from instances of people submitting (or not submitting) to surgery. The fact that a person accepts her/his surgeon's recommendation to undergo a specific surgery does tell us something about the nature of expert power in today's world, but it does not necessarily suggest, as Thompson seems to argue, that the said recommendation has been accepted *because* it contains certain scientific truths.

Thompson's chapter is ill served also by his tendency to hastily pigeonhole theories and scholars in huge monolithic camps, sometimes with rather unfortunate results. For instance, referring to the postcolonial scholar Ziauddin Sardar's *Thomas Kuhn and the Science Wars* (2000), Thompson comments that "Sardar is in

the broadly postmodern camp" (p. 380, n. 8), completely ignoring, in the process, Sardar's own explicitly stated views on postmodernism—expressed, for example, in *Postmodernism and the Other* (1998)—which trenchantly critique postmodernism as a "pathology" and castigate it for its complicity with modern Western colonialism's ideology of "the civilizing mission" (Sardar, 1998: 15).

Needless to say, the overall nature of the *Reader* is a function not only of the scholarly rigor of the individual pieces of writing appearing in the collection but also of the various inclusions and exclusions that define and shape the anthology. In this connection, a quick scrutiny of the book's index reveals the following to be among the items missing from the list of entries: race, ethnicity, workplace diversity and multiculturalism, (neo-)colonialism, imperialism, Eurocentrism, postcolonial theory, queer theory, subaltern, and so on. These missing entries provide a tentative indication of some of the exclusions that mark the *Reader*.

In their critique of earlier organizational research (excerpted in this book itself as Chapter 4), Clegg and Dunkerley point out that exclusions like those noted above are "no accident" (p. 47). Rather, such exclusions need to be viewed as the result of carefully made choices on the part of the anthology's editors. It is certainly not the case that research on the themes listed above is missing from the current oeuvre of CMS. As a matter of fact, substantial critical management literature may be found on several of these themes. However, the editors have decided—on the basis of due deliberation mediated by intellectual, ethicopolitical, professional, and other considerations—that critical management research on such themes is not important enough to be included in the CMS anthology they wish to produce. Similarly, although there does exist critically oriented management research on issues like the natural environment or globalization (and, indeed, both environment and globalization are listed in the book's index), the *Reader's* editors have decided (once again, after due deliberation) that such research can legitimately be excluded from this anthology.

Or consider the interesting case of "deconstruction"—an item that does figure in the book's index. Deconstruction, as we know, is an extraordinarily heterogeneous and constantly mutat-

ing area of critical practice, and no authorized version of deconstructive criticism exists (e.g., Royle, 2000). Nevertheless, in general, deconstruction is seen to be associated with Jacques Derrida's thinking, and, certainly, deconstructive organizational researchers frequently tend to employ Derridean themes in their scholarly endeavors. Once again, therefore, it is definitely not the case that CMS is devoid of instances of "Derridean" deconstruction. However, what is intriguing about the *Reader* is that the editors mostly have chosen to approach deconstruction along Foucauldian themes (e.g., see p. 108 ff, p. 169, p. 305 ff) and, as a result, have excluded deconstructive management research that follows Derrida.

It needs to be clearly understood here that the foregoing brief inventory of exclusions is not intended to imply that the editors do not have the right to exclude from their *Reader* issues like racial discrimination in organizations, workplace diversity and multiculturalism, (neo-)colonialism, environmental issues, globalization, Eurocentrism, or Derridean deconstruction; of course they have that right. After all, to borrow the editors' own metaphor, they are simply engaged in assembling—by means of various inclusions and exclusions—their personal "fantasy football team" (p. 13). Hence, in pointing to the exclusions, I do not object to the editors' leaving such issues out of their anthology; I merely draw attention to what the editors think is (un)important. However, it needs to be kept in mind that this anthology is also a part of the editors' declared project to institutionalize CMS—to draw boundaries that would define what is "inside" and/or "outside" this area of research—and, in so doing, to shape the future scholarly contours of this emergent genre. From a scholarly perspective, therefore, it would have been extremely useful had the book provided a cogent explanation as to why the editors believe their version of CMS (with its unique inclusions and exclusions) to be intellectually preferable to other possible versions that might include many of the themes and issues excluded from the *Reader*. Having an explanation along those lines would have considerably strengthened the book, and the absence of such an explanation may be viewed as a somewhat serious deficit.

In her magisterial treatise, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999), the noted thinker Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak cautions us as to the dan-



gers facing critically oriented scholarship when it ceases to be constantly and actively vigilant about the distinction between two “related but irreducibly discontinuous” (1999: 257) senses of the term *representation*. On the one hand, representation (*Vertretung*) refers to the political act of “speaking for” (Spivak, 1999: 256), or claiming to function as a leading proxy for, something (e.g., a set of activities) or someone (e.g., a group of peasants or scholars). On the other hand, representation (*Darstellung*) also refers to “representation as in art or [literature or] philosophy” (Spivak, 1999: 256). There is undoubtedly a relationship between actions seeking to represent (*vertreten*) and those seeking to re-present (*darstellen*), but the critical scholar needs to always keep alive the distinction between the two.

It would appear that much of the *Reader's* ambivalence alluded to earlier revolves precisely around the book's goals to both represent (*vertreten*) CMS—in other words, claim the mantle of vanguard or leading proxy and attempt to speak for an entire emergent area of scholarship with a view to institutionalizing the field—and re-present (*darstellen*) CMS—namely, draw merely a portrait or paint a “fantasy” picture (p. 13) of the genre—and, while so doing, forgetting to exercise vigilance as to the distinction between *vertreten* and *darstellen*. As a result, the *Reader* is never able to bring itself to forcefully confront its own ambivalence and raise critical questions like why the particular form of CMS being championed is believed by the editors to be the intellectually preferred form, what might be some of the ethicopolitical interests

being promoted by the editors' variety of CMS presented in the anthology, what could be the cultural/political/economic conditions of possibility for the emergence of this specific type of CMS, and so on. In the absence of critical questions like these, the *Reader*, unwittingly perhaps, almost appears to take on the form of a political maneuver designed to claim and define the contested terrain of CMS. There seems to be an urgent need, therefore, for scholars not only to critique and debate this anthology's representation of CMS but also to bring out rival representations (in both senses of the term) of CMS (e.g., feminist CMS, deconstructivist CMS, postcolonial CMS, deep ecology CMS, etc.) that might serve as necessary correctives to this book.

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