Trust and sustainable agriculture: the construction and application of an integrative theory

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Trust and sustainable agriculture: The construction and application of an integrative theory

by

Michael Stanley Carolan

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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For the Major Program
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation represents a journey into one of the most ubiquitous and complex of all social phenomena: trust. Within this text, a wide terrain of socio-theoretical phenomena is explored, ultimately leading us to an integrative theory of trust grounded within the social relations of everyday life. As I explain, trust is an essential component of all social relations; it is what gives social life life. To trust is to possess attitudes toward what we know that we do not know—attitudes that are present in most (if not all) moments of reflexive consciousness. As such, trust is also intricately tied to relations of power, knowledge, and identity. But this attitude of our knowledge of non-knowledge should not be understood as a unitary phenomena; rather, there are four such attitudes (or, if one prefers, four types of trust): simple trust, confidence, faith, and hope. These four attitudes of trust are distinguishable by varying perceptions of risk and evidence present in a situation, and which constitute the basis of my four-quadrant model of trust. This work is not, however, merely a theoretical exploration, but also a practical one. Consequently, following the theoretical exposition, attention is directed toward an empirical case study of agricultural social change—namely, the social movement of sustainable agriculture. The goal of merging theory and research in this manner is two-fold. First, to help illustrate and corroborate aspects of the preceding theoretical model, but also to gain insight into the driving empirical question. Specifically, the dissertation examines the relationship between landlords and tenants and how that relationship impacts the adoption or non-adoption of sustainable farming practices on rented land. The dissertation concludes by highlighting some possible conceptual implications of the theoretical model of trust on other contemporary theoretical frameworks, potential practical uses for the model itself, and a discussion of policies that
could be implemented to promote sustainable agriculture in light of the preceding empirical analysis.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

But, although trust is an obvious fact of life, it is an exasperating one... When we think about it, the obvious fact that, on the whole, we manage to live together in mutual confidence turns mysterious.—Martin Hollis 1998: 1-2

Trust, in the broadest sense of confidence in one's expectations, is a basic fact of social life.—Niklas Luhmann 1979: 4

To say that trust is a ubiquitous yet essential element of social life may seem a banal proclamation of the obvious. The problem resides, however, in that sometimes the most obvious are the least understood. Trust is like gravity: it's everywhere, vigilantly shaping our everyday lives with a silence that often leads us to forget its presence. We all know what it does, and can easily demonstrate to others how it works. Yet we are still left in want to understand the deeper meaning of what trust is.

Peter Berger (1963) once wrote that the sociological perspective amounts to seeing the strange in the familiar. Looking at life sociologically requires looking at the banal and ubiquitous and "seeing" the myriad of complex webs that constitute it. Trust, it therefore seems, is the perfect candidate for the sociological perspective because it constitutes banality par excellence—to proclaim that one trusts is as banal a statement of the obvious as to say that one breathes.

Yet one cannot deny the sociological importance of trust, a view that has not been lost on social theorists. As David Good (1988: 33) so plainly states, "without trust, the everyday social life which we take for granted is simply not possible." Indeed, "with a complete absence of trust...one could not even get out of bed in the morning" (Hardin 1993: 519).
Some have even proposed that trust is becoming more meaningful and pervasive as a result of the uncertain conditions of late, or reflexive, modernity (Giddens 1990; Giddens and Pierson 1998) and due to the increasing complexity of modern systems (Luhmann 1979). No one doubts the significance of trust to our social and ontological existence. Nevertheless, we have only begun to express a desire to understand it at its deepest theoretical levels.

The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the ongoing efforts to disentangle the problematics of trust with the intention of ultimately providing a deeper theoretical understanding of the concept. I do this by highlighting trust’s inseparable interrelationship to power, knowledge, and identity. Indeed, as I will repeatedly argue, if one is to understand trust, one must understand the larger social matrixes in which trust is embedded—namely, power-knowledge-identity-trust. Trust is an essential component of all social relations, as I will later explain, and it is what gives social life life. As discussed in chapter three, to trust is to posses attitudes toward what we know that we do not know—attitudes that are present in most (if not all) moments of reflexive consciousness. But our attitudes of knowledge toward our non-knowledge are not innocuous. Thus, when we speak of trust, and we speak of its relation to knowledge, we must also speak of trust’s and knowledge’s relation to power and identity (see chapter six).

These attitudes we posses toward our knowledge of non-knowledge can vary, however, across social settings—trust, therefore, should not be understand as merely a one-dimensional concept. Rather, there are four such attitudes (or, if you prefer, four types of trust): simple trust, confidence, faith, and hope. And these four attitudes of trust are
distinguishable by the varying perceptions of risk and evidence present in a situation (all of which will become clearer in chapter three).

The main purpose of this dissertation is therefore theoretical: to assemble the conceptual tools needed to ultimately construct an integrative theory of trust. Yet, following theory construction must eventually come application—otherwise, why construct theory in the first place? A theory is only as good as its ability to provide a degree of understanding to some aspect of social life that, without the theory, would otherwise not be attained.

Given trust's pervasive presence within society—indeed, as I will argue, one could say that trust constitutes social life—a theory of trust could plausibly be applied to innumerable aspects of our societal existence. Once having constructed a theory of trust, I will then focus that theory upon one particular social phenomenon—the sustainable agriculture social movement within the state of Iowa. As I explain later in this dissertation, trust is an essential element to any form of social change. To date, however, the role of trust in regard to social change has been all but ignored by scholars; by the end of this dissertation I hope to have begun the process of filling this void. Yet this is more than simply a case of application for the sake of application. While the empirical case study is used to help illustrate and corroborate aspects of my integrative theory of trust, a deeper understanding of the case study itself is also sought—a goal I believe is achieved by the end of the dissertation.

Also contained within this dissertation is the continuation of a theoretical, social, ethical, and practical project that is currently underway by a number of ecologically-minded social theorists: to bring "nature" back into social theory. As will be described in detail in chapter four, social theory (to the chagrin of many environmental scholars) has been
grounded within a disciplinary narrative that is distinctly *outside* of nature (i.e., Catton and Dunlap 1979, 1980; Murphy 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1997). According to this narrative, the social is that which is *not* the natural. The social sciences are built upon the presumption that it is we (society) who are the prime movers. We are the agents of social change. We are the subject, distinctly separate from the world of objects around us. Nature, on the other hand, is cold. It is inert. It is lifeless. It is static.

However, this dualistic view of social life as being categorically independent of nature has resulted in not only serious ecological consequences, but serious *social* consequences as well. Even when viewed at a very basic level, we can see that the social and the natural are not ontologically independent. When we act, we shape nature. At the same time, those actions are themselves shaped by nature. The two are analytically inseparable.

This "dialogue" between society and nature is endless, and the distinction between the two seamless.¹ The two are interdependent, each mutually constituted by the other. To understand one, we must therefore not only understand the other, but the interaction *between* the two as well. In short, the dynamics of society are as much constituted through its dynamics with nature, as they are constituted through its dynamics with the social.

The point of this ontological revelation is consequently this: a social theory, by definition, must therefore not only take into account social dynamics, but equally the dynamics the social has with the natural. By understanding the social and the natural as inseparable and mutually constituted, we must therefore question those theoretical

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¹ By evoking the concept of "dialogue" I am not taking a Searlian or Wittgensteinian position and arguing that this interrelationship only exists in language. A detailed discussion of the concept "dialogue" as it relates to this dissertation will be provided in chapter four.
perspectives that view nature and society dualistically—or those that do not view nature at all. Ultimately, if the social is indeed inseparable from the natural, one should question whether these constitute as social theories at all.

The purpose of introducing this conceptual project into this dissertation, however, is not to invalidate the very narrative upon which the social sciences are based, nor is it to refute and deconstruct the theories that codify and reify that narrative. (If it were, there would be no giants upon whose shoulders I could stand.) Rather, by embarking upon this task of bringing nature into social theory, I only hope to broaden the narrative, to shift its form and interject into it new thoughts and ideas. I wish to engage, if you will, in what Nietzsche referred to as an “analysis of descent”—not to erect foundations, but to disturb what was previously considered immobile and fragment what was thought unified (Foucault 1984b).

This should not, therefore, be viewed as solely a work for environmental sociologists. Rather, its intended audience is all who wish to attain a deeper understanding of society. I hope this work will tantalize and challenge others to reassess their understandings of the social and the natural, so that they can ultimately see for themselves their inseparable and mutual constitution.

In lieu of the previous argument some may, however, contend the following: if we are to write nature into sociology’s disciplinary narrative, then why not also gender, or sexual orientation, or class, or race, or ethnicity, or anything else you can think of? If indeed our purpose is to develop true social social theory, then how else

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2 Here I am playing off of Merton’s (1965) famous metaphor, to “stand on the shoulders of giants”.
can we achieve such a goal without fully acknowledging the interrelationships between all social phenomena?

In urging sociology to rethink the nature-society divide I am not simultaneously advocating the taking of such steps down the slippery slope of relativism. The bringing of nature into sociology’s disciplinary narrative does not likewise imply the bringing of class, gender, and the like. The problem with such an argument is simply: where do you stop? If gender, why not class? If class, why not sexual orientation? If sexual orientation, why not religion? Until eventually we find ourselves arguing: If cheeseburgers, why not peanut butter? And we are left with a theoretical framework that is as large and complex as society itself.

In bringing nature into sociology’s theoretical narrative I am not inching toward these relativistic tendencies of postmodernism. Nature is not to class or gender (or cheeseburgers or peanut butter) as class and gender are to each other. Nature (as the material) is a metaconcept, without it, society would cease to exist (the same, however, cannot be said of the previously mentioned social constructs) (Jantske 1980; Wilber 2000[b]). In short, society will continue (although it would be quite different then we know it today) if there were no gender, or class, or cheeseburgers, or peanut butter, but without nature (or the material) there could be no society.
Organization of Dissertation

The reader should begin by noting that this dissertation is segmented into three parts: Part one, "Theory"; Part two, "Application"; and Part three, "Some last words". In "Part one" (chapters two through seven), the reader will find the conceptual unfolding of an integrative theory of trust. "Part two" (chapters eight through ten) then contains an application of particular components of this theoretical model to a case study of social change in agriculture. Here, the aforementioned analysis of the sustainable agriculture social movement is presented through the theoretical entry point of trust and the tools provided to us by the preceding integrative theory. Finally, "Part three" (chapter eleven) concludes the dissertation by reviewing some of the significant points of the previous ten chapters. This begins with a look forward to future potential applications of the theoretical model and a discussion of some possible conceptual implications that the model may have upon other contemporary theoretical perspectives. The chapter (and ultimately the dissertation) then concludes on a more practical note by reviewing the findings of the preceding empirical analysis in which suggestions are developed for policy makers to encourage sustainable agriculture's adoption (and particularly its adoption on rented land).

Before beginning our journey into the unexplored regions of trust, I must first survey the familiar theoretical terrain of trust that has already been explored. Chapter two therefore prepares the groundwork for the excursion ahead. In this chapter, I look specifically at what previous theoretical works on trust have revealed and what they have ignored, trying to separate bits of wisdom from theoretical and conceptual inaccuracies. This task is accomplished by directing discussion into the following topical areas: trust as a crucial aspect
of contemporary social life; the presupposition of trust within social relations; why we need an explanatory theoretical understanding of trust; and what conceptual frameworks have already been developed that aid in my forthcoming theoretical endeavor. Once this review and justification section has been completed, I then lead the reader into discussions involving how others’ have attempted to define trust, the interrelationship between trust and risk, and the interrelationship between trust and distrust.

Chapter three signifies a continuation of the previous chapter, but in the sense that we push ahead and build upon that which was addressed in chapter two. I therefore begin the chapter by presenting a working definition of trust that we will return to throughout the dissertation. The definition presented is general; a working definition I believe should allow plenty of room within which to “work”. Indeed, to concisely define the ubiquitous (such as trust) is to not define the concept at all, but rather to only limit it. As Foucault (1997) notes, we should view “positive” definitions of theoretical concepts with tremendous trepidation.\(^3\) With this in mind, I provide the reader with a definition of trust that is still broad enough so as not to set undue limits on trust’s ubiquity, but with enough specificity so to make it still useful for our purposes. Yet, ultimately, the actual “definition” of trust resides within the theory itself.

Following the presentation of the working definition, I then present the reader with the first (and arguably most important) piece of our theoretical framework—the four-quadrant model of trust. Here, trust is conceptualized as ours attitudes toward what we know

\(^3\) “Positive” definition for Foucault meant to say what something is. Consequently, Foucault, to the dismay of his critics, went to great length saying what power is not, while considerably less time providing concise definitions of what it is.
that we do not know, with there being four such attitudes (varying according to the perception of risk and evidence present within the situation): simple trust, confidence, hope, and faith. These four attitudes of trust are then visually depicted in a four-quadrant conceptual arraignment separated by the axis of “risk” and “evidence”. The remainder of the chapter is then spent elaborating upon these various attitudes of trust, and the intricacies of this initial piece of our conceptual framework.

The journey continues in chapter four. The chapter begins by taking a short trip back in time, back to the origins of an ancient philosophical division, and back to where the basic philosophical assumptions of sociology were born. The division of which I speak is that between the material and the ideal—also known within social scientific circles as the nature-society dualism.

This distinction, however, is not inconsequential, and should therefore not be viewed as something only of interest to philosophers or social theorists. This division between nature and society has significantly shaped our worldview. It influences what questions we ask and the answers we provide. It is the foundation of science and the scientific method. And as such, its effects can be seen, and consequently felt, throughout all aspects of Western culture. Indeed, this division constitutes the philosophical soil within which sociology has been placed.

Yet, sociology does not only see society as being categorically independent of nature. Typically, nature is not even addressed in social thought; all that appears to exist for the

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4 I recognize that some may take issue with my unwillingness to differentiate between the nature-society and the material-ideal divisions. As will be illustrated in chapter three, however, the distinctions are in fact fundamentally the same. Thus, to improve readability, the reader should note that in certain instances I will use “society” interchangeably with “the ideal” and “nature” interchangeably with “the material.”
sociologist is society, all else is epiphenomenon. In our fervor to denounce biological
determinism—a sentiment that reaches back to Durkheim (Benton 1991)—we have erred in
the opposite extreme, placing ontological supremacy on the social, culminating in the vulgar
extremes of social constructionism that we now see. As Murphy (1997: 11) colorfully states,
"sociologists assuming the social construction of reality [have] the same epistemological
status as a carpenter assuming the world is made of wood. To each his or her own fetish."
And as Murphy would not doubt agree, this is more then just a fetish, but it is also dangerous.

Once I have detailed the philosophical origins of the nature-society dualism, its
contemporary influence on social theory, and its theoretical, social, and ethical implications, I
then suggest a reorientation of sociology’s theoretical narrative—a reorientation from looking
at nature and society dualistically to dialogically. It is within this dialogical view of society
and nature that my theory will be grounded: in the firm footing of both the social and the
natural.

Within chapter five I detail the intrapersonal dimension of trust.\(^5\) To trust is to first
and foremost believe in one’s reality. It is to have confidence in one’s ontology and in the
rigidity of one’s existential condition. This primordial epistemological condition for trust has
been referred to by Giddens (1990) as “ontological security” and by Erikson (1965) as “basic
trust”. It is the presence of this ontological security that allows for the development of self-
identity and, ultimately, trust. In this chapter I therefore focus specifically upon the
formation of this primordial epistemological state of ontological security.

\(^5\) The various “dimensions” represented in particular chapters are purely heuristic devises and are not meant to
represent “hard” conceptual and analytic divisions.
Contrary to most sociological accounts of everyday life—i.e., phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism—I argue that self-formation and ontological security comes not from the routinized, habitualized aspects of everyday life. Indeed, it is the unpredictability, fortuitousness, and serendipity of social life that gives social life life. The psychological and existential dread that results from, as ethnomethodologists would say, "breaches" in our daily lives is in fact not a product of those breaches at all. Rather, threats to our ontological security (contrary to Giddens) result from an inability to fully engage, as Mikhail Bakhtin would say, "dialogically" in the "unfinalizability" of social life. Consequently, in this chapter I explore the constitution of a Bakhtinian dialogic self, and how that dialogical self, in turn, provides us with this primordial ontological security that we so need to be social and to trust.

The interpersonal dimension is addressed in chapter six. Here, discussion revolves around the interpersonal social relations of discourse and the effect discursive mechanisms have on the formation of trust. Building off of a Foucaultian framework, I argue that trust is discursively constituted through social networks of power/knowledge. Yet for Foucault, individuals are the subjects of power/knowledge, indeed even the creations of power knowledge, where all is the product of discourse but discourse itself is not produced. What Foucault has seemingly forgotten is that individuals, while being products of discourse, are also producers of discourse.

Thus, while discourse produces speaking selves, speaking selves also produce discourse—this we must not forget. In order to revive the author, as both a discursively constituted and constituting subject, we must therefore reinvest the individual with agential
properties. By this I mean agency as identity—as movers who are simultaneously constituted by that which they move and constitute. We must recognize that discursive social relations of power/knowledge are equally constituted through, and constituting of, social networks of identity.

Ultimately, to understand trust as an intersubjectively constituted phenomena, we must thus see it as a discursively constituted relational concept, where power-knowledge-identity constitutes trust, and where trust constitutes power-knowledge-identity. Thus, although it may be somewhat awkward to say, we must understand these social relational matrixes as power-knowledge-identity-trust. Where trust, as an intersubjectively, discursively constituted phenomena, can only be fully understood when viewed within its larger constitutive social field.

The final piece of the theoretical model is elaborated upon in chapter seven—the structurational dimension. Here, I introduce time into our theoretical model—a phenomena that has been neglected in most socio-theoretical discussions of trust. Specifically, I examine the effects time has upon the trust relationship itself and the cognitive temporal orientation of those involved in this relationship. Drawing from Giddens, I argue that over time, and given the proper conditions, trust can become structurated; it can posses both enabling and constraining properties. And as this process occurs, trust transforms from being a reflexive, risky act, to a habitualized and thus perceptibly secure act (an act which I will argue more resembles confidence than trust). I then conclude the chapter by discussing the relationship

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6 My use of hyphens, verses the Foucaultian slash, is to emphasize (following Martin Heidegger) the interconnectedness between the concepts. In addition, I believe the hyphens present the matrix in a more organized and eye-pleasing manner than the rather cluttering slash.
between institutional designs and trust. Here, I argue that when proper conditions are present, institutional designs (i.e., contracts) do not necessarily result in greater trust, as some have argued (i.e., Luhmann 1979), but rather confidence (or more specifically, what I term institutionalized confidence).

Chapter eight commences "Part two" of this dissertation. In this chapter I set the stage for the empirical analysis that occurs in chapters nine and ten. Specifically, attention is directed toward a case of social change within the production realm of agriculture set in the heartland of the United States—Iowa. The principle empirical question is the following: how does the relationship between landlords and tenants impact the adoption, or non-adoption, of sustainable agricultural techniques on rented land?

In applying aspects of the theoretical model to this case study I therefore hope to not only corroborate aspects of the model, but to also gain greater insight into our aforementioned empirical problem. Through doing this I thereby intend to illustrate the significance of trust in instances of social change and its value as a theoretical entry point to understanding such phenomena. Chapter eight thus begins this process by detailing the methods employed in the data collection process, as well as by familiarizing the reader with the context of the case itself (i.e., what is sustainable agriculture, what literature is already present on the topic, etc.).

The empirical analysis begins in chapter nine. Here, I examine the social relations as they exist within agriculture, investigating how those social relations ultimately impact trust and the adoption of sustainable agricultural methods on rented land. In chapter ten I then continue this analysis by redirecting our attention to the role of the state. Specifically, I
examine how in shaping social relations within agriculture that state is also able to influence not only trust relations but also the agricultural methods agents (namely, landlords and tenants) ultimately adopt.

Chapter eleven signifies the beginning of “Part three” and the conclusion of this dissertation. Here, we reflect upon the previous ten chapters. In doing so, however, I not only look back, but also ahead, highlighting avenues that future trust scholarship could (and possibly should) take, and demonstrating the role that this particular theoretical analysis of trust can play in the future. The dissertation then concludes with a discussion of the more practical. In this final section we take a step back and discuss what insights into the empirical problem the analysis has provided us and how those insights could be used to promote and develop policy for the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices on rented land.
PART ONE—THEORY
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEWING THE LANDSCAPE OF TRUST

Trust is therefore involved in a fundamental way with the institutions of modernity.—Anthony Giddens 1990: 26

Where there is trust there are increased possibilities for experience and action, there is an increase in the complexity of the social system and also in the number of possibilities which can be reconciled with its structure, because trust constitutes a more effective form of complexity reduction.—Niklas Luhmann 1979: 8

Although the topic of trust has a rich and enduring tradition in philosophy, political thought, and ethics, only within the last two decades has it sparked particular interest among social theorists. What could account for trust’s recent ascension as a concept of legitimate theoretical concern? What conditions of contemporary life have lead social scientists to look at trust with a wonder and intrigue that eluded traditional social thinkers? To these questions I now turn.

Trust in the “Modern” World

Unique features of contemporary society have elevated the significance of trust to a level previously unparalleled. As stated in the early pages of this dissertation, trust has become of such significance that one could not fathom social life without it. Indeed, as I will make clear by the end of this chapter, social life could not exist without trust. Let us now look at those aspects of contemporary social life that make trust such a vital component of our modern world.
Trust and Abstract Systems

To begin with, social life is becoming ever the more incomprehensibly complex. Significant portions of our taken-for-granted everyday reality have become “black boxed.”

The complexity of institutions, organizations, bureaucracies, information systems, and financial systems, and their increasingly global proclivities, have made them impenetrable to not only the lay person, but also often to professional “experts” (as Giddens [1990: 146] aptly quipped, “all of us are lay persons in” this respect [emphasis in original]). Who could possibly command a full understanding of, for example, the global financial system, national and international law, transportation systems, national and international markets, national and international bureaucracies and organizations, or telecommunication systems?

A principle aspect within this age of (depending on one’s theoretical predilections) late- (Giddens 1990), reflexive- (Beck 1992), or post- (Baudrillard 1981, Jameson 1991, Lyotard 1984) modernity, is therefore the growth of what Anthony Giddens (1990: 131) has termed “abstract systems”: those complex, impersonal technological and informational arrangements on whose principles the existence of modern society depends (such as transnational organizations, financial markets, telecommunications, transportation, and energy systems). According to Giddens (1990), trust in abstract systems, rather than in tradition, offers security in contemporary everyday life, where habitualized social practices are integrated into the system of institutions to preserve the correspondence between the

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7 “Blackboxing” is an expression—frequently associated with the work of Bruno Latour (i.e., 1979, 1987, 1999)—from the sociology of science that refers to the way scientific and technical work is made invisible by its own success. For instance, when a machine (such as a computer) operates efficiently, one need focus only on its inputs and outputs and not on its internal complexity and how it works (how many people know how their watch works let alone their computer?). The argument is therefore somewhat paradoxical: the more science and technology succeed, the more opaque and mystical they become.
order of institutionalized conventions and the subjective principles of organizations. "With the development of abstract systems, trust in impersonal principles, as well as in anonymous others, becomes indispensable to social existence" (Giddens 1990: 120). Thus, "[t]rust in the multiplicity of abstract systems is a necessary part of everyday life today" (Giddens 1994: 89).

Modernity, by the expansion of these abstract systems, therefore enlarges the arena in which we situate our life-worlds. As Niklas Luhmann (1988) so astutely noted, our life-world is a familiar world because we can, through the use of symbols, reintroduce the familiar into the unfamiliar. Within our life-worlds, "[w]e develop forms to account for the other, the hidden side of things, the secrets of nature, the unexpected surprise, the inaccessible, or (in modern terms) the complexity" (Luhmann 1988: 96). The routinization of abstract systems, through the use of familiar symbols, therefore encourages the acceptance of our social world and our ontological experience. In this sense, "[b]usiness-as-usual...is a prime element in the stabilizing of trust and ontological security" (Giddens 1990: 147). This taken-for-granted aspect of our modern social lives provides us with the ontological security to make it through the day, and avoid the Kierkegaardian dread that could overcome us if such habitualization was not in place. To quote Peter Berger (1978: 347), "[t]he world of everyday reality presents itself as self-evident facticity. In order to live a 'normal' life in society, it must be taken for granted as such."
Trust as a Mechanism of Complexity Reduction

In short, our world is a complex place, with an “unmanageable complexity [because of] the increasing diversification and particularization of familiarities and unfamiliarities” (Luhmann 1988: 105). The differentiation and specialization of roles, functions, interests, beliefs, lifestyles, and institutions have made the Durkheimian “organic solidarity” more significant than ever (Durkheim 1964a). Consequently, as Seligman (1997: 39) argues, “the greater the differentiation of system...the greater possibility for the development of trust as a social relation.” And in light of the increasing societal differentiation that is now occurring at the global level, some argue that this will only increase the demand for trust as an essential condition for cooperation (Misztal 1996).

Trust, therefore, “has the general function of social ordering, of providing cognitive and moral expectational maps for actors and systems as they continuously interact” (Barber 1983: 19). This ordering function is similar to what Peter Blau (1964: 104) refers to when he suggests that trust is “essential for stable social relationships.” Thus, trust plays the significant role, in complex modern social life, of complexity reduction: “the world presents itself as unmanageable complexity, and it is this which constitutes the problem for systems which seek to maintain themselves in the world” (Luhmann 1979: 4). Trust, therefore, serves to make our overwhelmingly complex social reality manageable. Without it, we would be prevented from even “getting up in the morning...[and]...would be prey to a vague sense of dread, to paralyzing fears” (Luhmann 1979: 4). In such a trustless world, Kierkeggardian dread would overwhelm us, making our very social existence impossible.
Trust and the Agential Properties of Modernity

Yet, with complexity also comes an increase in purposeful human action (Sztompka 1991, 1999). The eroding of traditional bonds and traditional dogmas have caused social actors to reorient themselves toward the future and recognize their agential powers. This can be witnessed in the rise of democratic procedures throughout the globe, the emergence of new social movements, and an increase in what Ulrich Beck (1992) has termed “sub-politics”—political action outside of institutionalized channels.

As Luhmann (1994: xii) has indicated, we live in a world in which “the dependence of society’s future on decision making has increased.” Consequently, one crucial aspect of this “juggernaut of modernity” (Giddens 1990: 151) is the weakening grip of tradition and fortuna (fortune or fate), which is increasingly being replaced by agency (Alexander 1988; Archer 1985, 1988, 1989; Giddens 1990), instrumental rationality (Weber 1978), or communicative action (Habermas 1984, 1987). Thus, in order to face the future actively and constructively (while still retaining a sense of what Giddens [1990: 92] has termed “ontological security”) we as purposeful actors need to employ trust as a mechanism of “complexity reduction” (Luhmann 1979: 8) in order to engage in the “future contingent action” of modernity (Sztompka 1999: 25).

Trust and the Disembedding of Time and Space

Another element of contemporary life that has made trust a salient feature of our social existence is what Giddens (1990: 20) has termed the “disembedding of time and space.” According to Giddens, pre-modern cultures linked time and space. Time, in these
cultures, was made in relation to socio-spatial symbols—"when" was made in reference to
"where" (which might have included the identification of occurrences in nature). The
decoupling of time and space therefore began with the invention of the mechanical clock and
its diffusion throughout society. The clock "expressed a uniform dimension of 'empty' time,
quantified in such a way as to permit the precise designation of 'zones' of the day (e.g., the
'working day')" (Giddens 1990: 17). However, the complete disembedding of time and
space did not occur until the uniformity in time measurement (by the mechanical clock) was
equaled by a uniformity in the social organization of time, an event that became complete
only in the 20th century. For instance, now most societies follow the same dating system,
standardized time zones, and the same concepts to understand time (second, minute, hour,
day, etc.).

As Giddens argues (1990: 18), this process has resulted in the development of "empty
space," which may be understood as the separation of "space" from "place." In the
Giddensian (1984: 1990) sense, place is conceptualized as the physical setting where social
actions occur, while space is simply the physical setting. According to Giddens (1990),
space and place are largely analogous in pre-modern societies since the spatial dimensions are
coupled with social action—action between others are localized to a specific space and place.

The disembedding of time and space therefore serves, like trust, to reduce the
complexity of contemporary social life. Take for example television or radio programming.
The uniformity of time measurement, by the mechanical clock, coupled with the uniformity

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8 A similar, though slightly more phenomenological, conceptual distinction between space and place comes from
sociology of place scholars who understand space as the material, three-dimensional coordination of things,
while place is space plus the sentiments socially prescribed to that space (i.e., Bell 1997).
of the social organization of time allows for a temporal chart of television (such as the "T.V. Guide") and radio programs. As such, it serves as a time-space ordering device, allowing us to organize thousands of television and radio programs in order to purposefully differentiate between those to watch—or record to watch later (again providing another example of the eroding lines between time and space)—and those to skip without having to be in constant view of a television in order to see "what's up next." Consequently, having a temporal chart of television and radio productions allows for the complex coordination of media-based programming across large tracts of time and space.

But this decoupling of time and space also presupposes trust. How do I know the television programming guide is correct? When I tell someone to meet me at the local coffee shop at twelve-o’clock p.m., how do I know to expect her there when my watch strikes noon? How do I know that the person on the other end of an e-mail communiqué is in fact a human and not, for instance, a "bot" (a computer program that presents itself as a person by generating conversations, including humorous retorts and a physical self-description when asked [see Turkle 1995])? Trust, therefore, becomes an increasingly important ingredient of modernity as the lines between time and space become blurred due to such technologies as, for example, supersonic travel, faxes, e-mails, and video-phones. As Luhmann (1979: 16) notes, “[o]ne should expect trust to be increasingly in demand as a means of enduring the complexity of the future which technology will generate.”
Trust and Relations with Abstract Others

Additionally, contemporary life disassociates space from place by requiring relations between absent others. With modernity, one's field of (to borrow a term from Alfred Schutz [1967]) "contemporaries" increases: "My mere contemporary...is one who I know coexists with me in time but whom I do not experience immediately. This kind of knowledge is, accordingly, always indirect and impersonal" (Schutz 1967: 67). As we increasingly adjust to the Schutzian impersonal "They-orientation," in contrast to the personal "Thou-orientation," trust becomes a paramount ingredient for making these social relations work. "Full monitoring and control of somebody's performance makes trust unnecessary" (Giddens 1991: 19). Yet as our field of action increasingly requires performances from abstract others, our ability to monitor such performances becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible. And then trust becomes of focal importance. To borrow an example from Schutz (1967 1932): 68):

When I mail a letter, I assume that certain contemporaries of mine, namely, postal employees, will read the address and speed the letter on its way. I am not thinking of these postal employees as individuals, I do not know them personally and never expect to....My social relationship to them consists in the fact that I interact with them, or perhaps merely that, in planning my actions, I keep them in mind. But they, on their part, never turn up as real people, merely as anonymous entities defined exhaustively by their functions. Only as bearers of these functions do they have any relevance for my social behavior.

Contemporary social life contains a myriad of abstract social relationships that you come into contact with when, for instance, you read your morning paper, get on an airplane, use money, drive your car, deposit a paycheck, send in your taxes, or use the internet. Although Schutz does not explicitly address the issue of trust in these "They-oriented"
abstract relations, its significance to their very existence cannot be overlooked. If one did not at least implicitly trust their contemporaries, how could they still be willing to mail a letter, accept money, or send an e-mail? In short, "[t]here is no means of bridging this anonymity gap, but resorting to trust" (Sztompka 1999: 14).

Trust and the Disembedding of Social Relations

Another condition of contemporary society which presupposes the existence of trust is the increasing interdependent relationship between the global and local. "In conditions of modernity, place becomes increasingly phantasmagoric: that is to say, locals are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them" (Giddens 1990: 19) (emphasis in original). Actions and their effects are simultaneously global and local, or "glocal" (Beck 1999; Robertson 1992). In this process, social relations become "lifted out"—or disembedded—from local contexts and spread across indefinite spans of time and space (Giddens 1990). Science and "expertise" provides a clear example of this process.

According to Giddens (1994: 84), "expertise is disembedding; in contrast to tradition it is in a fundamental sense non-local and decentered." The typical view of science, and by extension expertise, is to seek explanations not in order to understand a particular phenomenon in all its idiosyncratic complexity, but in order to understand singular identities recognizable across phenomena. Science and expertise are therefore interested not in locality but in translocality: "not in complete understanding of a specifically situated phenomenon, but in partial understanding of widely dispersed but similar phenomena" (Kloppenburg 1991:...
521). Consequently, science is engaged in the production not of local knowledge, but in what
Bruno Latour (1987) calls “immutable mobiles”—information which is invariant through any
change in spatial or social location. “In its modern guise at least, expertise is in principle
devoid of local attachments...[E]xpertise is disembedding because it is based upon
impersonal principles, which can be set out and developed without regard to context”
(Giddens 1994: 84-85). Yet the act of disembedding science and expertise from a local and
human context also requires trust. Although others have worked fervently to reveal the social
aspects of science and knowledge (i.e., Foucault 1969, 1979; Latour 1979, 1987, 1999; Law
and Fyfe 1988; Weart 1979), none have yet to implicate the significance of trust to the
creation of said knowledge.

The disembedding—or “lifting-out”—of social relations across spans of time and
space rests upon the existence of trust. As in the case of science and expertise, in abstracting
from the local to create “immutable mobiles” requires that we “blackbox” certain knowledge
and truths. How do you know that an Astronomical Unit (A.U.) really is 93 million miles?
How do you know that the speed of light is 186,282 miles per second? Have you ever
calculated π and discovered for yourself that it really does equal 3.1415972...(to infinity)?
Or that E=MC^2? How do we really know that quarks exist—have you ever seen one? These
questions are of course rhetorical because the answer to them all (unless you happen to be a
physicist or mathematician) is simply, we just do. We know that one A.U. equals 93 million
miles, that the speed of light is 186,282 miles per second, that π does equal 3.1415972...(to
infinity), that E=MC^2, and that quarks exist because that is what we were told by people and
things (i.e., books, television programs, etc.) we trust. If, for example, my grade school
teacher told me that $2+2=23$, that all dogs can fly, and then said that the speed of light is 186,282 miles per second, I most likely would not have believed her to be speaking the truth (whether she was correct or not), because I could not trust her as someone who provides me with correct information.

Knowledge (and by extension truth) prepossess the existence of trust. We cannot be everywhere at everytime—such omnipresence is only attainable by an infinite god-like figure. Consequently, what we know—what we believe to be true—is a product of who we trust. As Bell and I have argued elsewhere, trust presupposes truth, and truth, in turn, presupposes trust (Carolan and Bell 2001, [forthcoming]). For now I will leave this discussion where it lies; it will be revisited with a closer analytic focus in chapter six.

_Trust and the Disembedding of Symbolic Tokens_

Beyond the disembedding mechanisms of Cartesian reductionism and correspondingly “expert systems,” Giddens (1990) further elaborates upon an additional disembedding device intimately associated with modernity which thus further necessitates the need for trust in contemporary life—“symbolic tokens.” Although various kinds of symbolic tokens can be distinguished (such as power and language), there is one which has particularly been looked at with passion by many great social thinkers—namely, the token of money (and its many different forms—i.e., credit, cash, check, or “virtual” money). For instance, when someone accepts a credit card, he is assuming that the person legitimately possesses the card and that the credit-card company will pay him. In short, to accept a credit card requires trust. The same can be said of a personal check. In accepting a personal check, a shopkeeper must
trust that there are sufficient funds in the person’s account, that the checks are indeed real, and that the individual writing the check is the same person who’s name is on the account. Cash, too, is based upon trust. When my friend accepts my ten dollar bill for the book she sold me, she is implicitly assuming that she can later exchange that bill for goods and services, and that the purchasing power of the bill will remain relatively constant (not to mention she must trust that the bill is real). What, then, makes cash valuable? There is no inherent value in a one-dollar bill (the gold standard has not existed since the 1970s during the Nixon administration). It is only in the implicit trust that we confer onto those special pieces of green paper that the value resides.

In his famous study of money, *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel (1978) provides an historical account of how money achieves an abstract and timeless existence. In this work, Simmel illustrates how money has become a substitute for personal ties by allowing individuals to develop impersonal relations limited to specific purposes. According to Simmel (1978), money is “a promise” that an exchange can be reciprocated. This argument has been elaborated upon by Misztal (1996: 51), who states, “[m]oney functions best when people trust in it strongly, and cannot function at all without people trusting in the economic system.” For a modern economy to be sound, people must therefore trust their monetary system and others to live-up to the expectations that they too will trust money (Frankl 1977). “To use money we must trust that an indefinitely large number of other people will continue to accept that money as viable” (Govier 1997: 113). As many have been so mindful of, “money makes the modern world go around.” Yet, if this is true, than trust is the gravitational force which propels it.
Trust in a Risk Society

Social commentators have also noted how modernity is becoming increasingly pervaded with a “new species of trouble” (Erikson 1994)—an expansion of hazards and anxieties through our own making. During the earlier stages of modernity dangers were calculable, limited to within a factory’s gates—for instance, one could calculate the chance a miner had for developing “black lung,” and (typically) only those within mines could contract this debilitating pneumoconiosis. Today, however, such dangers extend far beyond the factory gates and have thus created a “risk society.” Initially coined by Ulrich Beck (see Beck 1992), “this concept designates a developmental phase of modern society in which the social, political, economic, and individual risks increasingly tend to escape the institutions for monitoring and protection” (Beck 1994: 5). In this society, the danger of being exposed to environmental hazards lie not only within, or in proximity to, a factory. Rather, the danger of exposure to environmental hazards now lies in simply living.

Thus, although the rich are more protected from risks than the poor, the protection is fleeting, and eventually the radioactive cloud will fall upon the shanties and the mansions like an impartial judge sentencing humanity to a life of dread. Nuclear radiation does not discriminate (nor does, for example, smog, dioxin, pollution, or the hole in the ozone layer), and will not stop at the city limits of, for instance, Beverly Hills. Within a risk society, we are all potential victims (although there are limits to this equality). Beck (1992: 37) refers to

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9 I should note that Beck’s conceptualization of risks has received considerable criticism (i.e., Alexander 1996; Bell 1998a; Buttel 1997; Renn 1997). To be sure, nuclear radiation (like smog, dioxin, etc.) affects everyone, rich and poor. Yet we cannot doubt that the rich are in a far better position to protect themselves from such a risk—for instance, they can purchase radiation proof bomb shelters, radiation detectors, or they can move to a place which is radiation “free”.

this as the "boomerang effect": "The formerly 'latent side effects' strike back even at the center of their production. The agents of modernization themselves are emphatically caught in the maelstrom of hazards that they unleash and profit from."

Risk society appears to be the actualization of the prophetic writings of Horkheimer and Adorno over a half century ago when they published *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1972): we have entered an age where our own creations have unexpectedly turned against us—a modern-day ecological Frankenstein. Clark and Short (1993: 384) highlight this very point when they state: "Increasing social and technical complexity elevates the probability that some key portions of the system cannot be safely counted on." In short, "[n]ow there exists a kind of risk fate in developed civilizations, into which one is born, which one cannot escape with any amount of achievement" (Beck 1992: 41).

And what mechanism allows us to live within this risky environment while retaining a sense of ontological security and existential permanence? Trust. If we were constantly thinking about all of the things that could bring harm to us at any given moment from within our environment—nuclear radiation, chemicals, viruses, ultraviolet radiation, GMOs, BSE, dioxin, etc.—we would never even be able to make it out of bed in the morning. Trust thus becomes an essential mechanism which allows us to do so (such as trust in the Food and Drug Administration to keep our food safe, in our local power plants not to pollute our air and drinking water, and in our governments to tell us when harmful toxins or radiation are present in our environment).

Additional subjective factors can also be seen as further heightening our perception of risk in contemporary life. The de-traditionalization of modern life has resulted in an erosion
of the religious and mystical worldviews that captivated our epistemological lenses until only recently. As Nietzsche (1966: 203) proclaimed over a century ago, “God is dead.” We no longer have a supreme Being to look toward for protection from these risks. Additionally, within a risk society we begin to recognize the limitations of science and expertise to the point of questioning the very epistemological supremacy of experts (Beck 1992). It appears that for every “expert” that makes the statement “X”, there appears to be another expert providing the contradictory statement “Y”—such as in the heated debate regarding global warming (Carolan and Bell [forthcoming]). Risk society is thus a self-critical society where “experts are relativized or dethroned by counter-experts” (Beck 1999: 79). Risk society is thus a highly reflexive society where the growing speed flows of information have caused a constant examining and reshaping of social practices, knowledge, and truth. The significance of trust in order to cope with the anxieties and uncertainties experienced in this risky, reflexive environment cannot be understated. In short, trust makes it possible to cope with the pervasive uncertainties of modern, risky social life.10

10 Modernity is not risky, however, because we know more or even because we know less then we did in earlier periods, for if all experience is knowledge (and I believe it could easily be defined as such), we cannot know more unless we live longer. Rather, what has changed is what we know and--more importantly--the patterns of our non-knowledge. This interrelationship between knowledge, non-knowledge, and trust will become clearer in the coming chapters.

Trust and the Stranger

The final feature of contemporary society that makes trust so significant to us moderns is the growing presence of unknown and unfamiliar people in our environment (Sztompka 1999: 14). If those whom I come into contact with were exactly like me, I would
not need to trust them because I would be able to perfectly predict their actions. A point clearly understood by Hardin (1993: 512) when he wrote, “we are merely better at predicting the behavior of those most like ourselves.” (Although some theorists understand this experimental knowledge as constituting confidence rather than trust [Giddens 1990; Luhmann 1979, 1988]).

Yet, others around me are not my identical. In fact, due to the tremendous migration and international travel which is emblematic of modern society we encounter a growing number of “strange” unfamiliar individuals everyday. As Giddens (1994: 81) remarks: “The stranger is the representative of the unknown...culturally defined space which separates off the outside from the world of the ‘familiar’, structured by the traditions with which the collectivity identifies.” To maneuver in a world full of strangers, trust therefore becomes essential.

Through the preceding discussion I have shown why trust has become an indispensable ingredient for contemporary social life. Yet, by doing this I am not attempting to assert that trust is strictly a product of modern society. Trust is the cement of social life—without it we would exist in a Hobbesian “state of nature,” where life would indeed be nasty, brutish, and short. Thus, to further legitimize the urgency for a socio-theoretical understanding of trust, allow me to now speak as to why trust is such an essential component to all societies, both “traditional” and “modern.”

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11 I will elaborate on the conceptual relationship between confidence and trust in the next chapter.
Why is Trust Important?

Adam Smith (1976: 86) once wrote, “if there is any society among robbers and murderers, they must at least...abstain from robbing and murdering one another.” Through this statement Smith reminds us that basic forms of corporation and trust are essential within any society (even one of robbers and murderers) for it to remain viable.

From a Perspective of Early Social and Political Thought

Trust has long been recognized—both explicitly, but more often implicitly—as an essential ingredient of any society. The significance of trust lies in what Immanuel Kant (1970) has termed, “man’s [sic] asocial sociality”: the ability of social bonds, such as trust, to bring an aggregate of individuals together to form an entirely new entity—society. John Locke noted that in our attempt to find security within the “state of nature”, we bestow power onto a government, thus forming a society. Yet this act requires trust: “Whom society hath set over it self, with this express or tacit Trust, That it shall be imployed for their good, and the preservation of their Property” (Locke 1988: 381). For Locke (1954: 213), trust is ultimately the “bond of nature.”

Trust is also present in Hobbes’ answer to the problem of order. According to Hobbes’, the “social contract” is the outcome of self-interested, rational, egoistic individual actions. Yet, since order among such selfish individuals is problematic at best, the only hope for protection from the brutish existence that lies in the “state of nature” is to establish a hegemonic power over society—what Hobbes (1991) refers to as a “Leviathan.”
A paradoxical question, however, still remains. Why would self-interested, egoistic individuals purposefully establish an institution that will inevitably constrain their egoism? The answer can be found in the notion of trust. By grounding the political order in a mutual distrust of others, Weil (1987: 776) argues that Hobbes “was bound to accept a new and ‘artificial’ structure of trust to ensure the legitimacy of the new regime and to limit or resolve forms of conflict that could not simply be suppressed by force. This ‘artificial’ structure of trust was necessary to close the gap in the social order left unfilled by force or reason alone.”

According to Hobbesian political thought, societies form and endure because the state, and the power that we confer onto it, is trusted.

We can also see other early contemporary political thinkers highlight concepts that come close to what many would today call trust. For instance, Adam Smith (1950 [1776]) stresses how “sympathy” supports the moral order by helping to form trusting relations. For Alexis de Tocqueville (1969)—who Hall (1992: 16) has described as “the greatest theorist of trust”—social life is based upon obligations, community, and interpersonal trust, as opposed to the impersonal social contract prescribed by Hobbes.

From the writings of Locke, Hume, Kant, Smith, and Tocqueville, one’s obligation of “promise-keeping” becomes a central strand of classical socio-political theory. For Kant, the act of promise keeping—consisting of bonds of mutual respect—is what makes a society a moral community. Locke (1988: 396) argues that “grants, promises and oaths are bonds that hold the Almighty.” Hume (1948: 181) views “a rule-dependent or convention-dependent road to commitment beyond family and friends” as being key to strong social ties. Although
often implicitly alluded to, it is clear that the significance of trust—or trust-like relations—had not gone unnoticed by some of the forbears of classical and contemporary social thought.

Following modern philosophy, a new discipline called sociology was developed to address the contradictions between the cohesiveness of the old order and the individualism of contemporary life. And, like preceding philosophical and political thought, the significance of trust (or something very similar to what we would today call trust) was again alluded to as an essential component to all societies that bond individuals together.

Saint-Simon and Comte, for instance, believed that an evolving and well-ordered society is one of moral consensus, where altruism dominates over Hobbesian egoism, in which the religion of humanity—lead by sociology—ties individuals together into a moral community. Herbert Spencer, borrowing from Comte, also saw a growing pervasiveness of altruism over egoism. In Spencer’s industrial-type society (his final stage of societal evolution), members are characterized by their interdependence, respect for others, truthfulness, and kindness. Consequently, an act such as a breach of contract, according to Spencer (1969: 177), would be considered a type of indirect aggression since it threatens normal social life and order. Spencer’s theory is therefore one not only of societal evolution, but ethical evolution as well. His optimistic vision of modern life (and life which is yet to come) depends upon an increasing fitness of society, where the human character continuously evolves into one which requires a less authoritative and coercive, but more complex and cooperative, system.

Emile Durkheim was also interested in understanding the social mechanisms that bond society together. For Durkheim, societal integration is fundamentally a matter of
morality, where the coordination of individual activity within a social system is based on personal commitment to collective standards and rules (Misztal 1996). For Durkheim, the existence of this "pre-contractual" element in all social arrangements is key to the stability of society: "men [sic] cannot live together without acknowledging, and consequently making mutual sacrifices, without tying themselves to one another with strong durable bonds" (Durkheim 1964a: 228). Durkheim believes that the principal demand society makes on the individual is selflessness. Accordingly, he states: "If man [sic] is to be a moral being, he must be devoted to something other than himself; he must feel at one with society" (Durkheim 1973: 79). Thus, "[t]he only power which can serve to moderate individual egotism is the power which embraces...the group" (Durkheim 1964a: 405). The very existence of a society, therefore, presupposes that it is also "a moral society" (Durkheim 1957: 12).

Simmel could quite possibly be considered the first sociologist to speak explicitly about the significance of trust in social relations. In fact, much of his work on trust has been developed and elaborated upon by some of today's leading social theorists—such as Giddens and Luhmann. To begin, Simmel (1950: 10) argues that society "is merely the name for a number of individuals connected by interaction." For Simmel, therefore, the dominant social relation in modern society is exchange. Exchange, according to Simmel (1978: 175), is "one of the functions that creates an inner bond between people—a society, in place of a mere collection of individuals." Simmel sees trust as a significant condition for societal exchange. As Simmel (1978: 178-9) argues: "Without the general trust that people have in each other, society itself would disintegrate, for very few relationships are based entirely upon what is
known with certainty about another person, and very few relationships would endure if trust were not as strong as, or stronger than, rational proof or personal observation." This position ultimately leads Simmel (1950: 326) to proclaim that trust is "one of the most important synthetic forces within society."

*From a Perspective of Contemporary Social and Political Thought*

Talcott Parsons was quite possibly one of the last great socio-theoretical thinkers to place the problem of order at the center of his theoretical framework, and in so doing implicitly highlighting the role that trust plays in bonding social systems together. According to Parsons (1969: 142), trust is "the attitudinal ground—in affectively motivated loyalty—for the acceptance of solidarity relationships." Trust is therefore the ability to believe that others will put their self-interest aside in favor of a societal orientation.

Trust also plays an integrative role according to Parsons. Trusting that other actors will correctly perform their roles contributes to the stability, orderliness, and integrative capacity of the system. Trust is thus essential to Parsons because it contributes to system integration, which is needed "to control and to 'bring into line' the behavior of the system's units in accordance with the integrative needs of the site, to check or reverse disruptive tendencies to deviant behavior, and to promote the conditions of harmonious cooperation" (Parsons 1971: 49). As Alexander (1989: 142) writes in regard to Parsonian theory: trust signifies that "creative individuals are allowed greater freedom and autonomy. Further, simply by facilitating cooperation among diverse individuals and groups, trust contributes to a more inclusive, cosmopolitan community."
Harold Garfinkel was also concerned with social order, but saw social order as an emergent product of decisions and actions by individuals to whom the social reality is given as immediately familiar and meaningful. Through his now famous (as well as infamous) "breaching experiments" Garfinkel was able to demonstrate that trust and shared understanding are inherent to all social interactions. In order to maintain a stable reality Garfinkel (1967: 173) cited the need for the expectation of "things as usual," so that actors have the ability "to take for granted, to take under trust, a vast array of features of the social order." Our everyday-taken-for-granted reality, therefore, is an "ongoing accomplishment" through "organized artful practices of everyday life" (Garfinkel 1967: 11). As noted by Collins (1992: 85), "[e]thnomethodology shows that actors have a preference for normalcy, and resist having to rearrange their practical actions in a way that disturbs the working consensus of everyday life." As Garfinkel's "breaching experiments" masterfully demonstrate, an absence of trust in the moral social order can produce tremendous psychological trauma to those who experience it: "[participants] were stupefied. They vigorously sought to make the strange actions intelligible and restore the situation to normal appearances. Reports were filled with accounts of astonishment, bewilderment, shock, anxiety, embarrassment, and anger" (Garfinkel 1967: 47).

12 In Garfinkel's "breaching experiments" social reality was violated in order to understand how people construct their reality (the broader term to describe this type of analysis is "ethnomethodology," which literally means the "methods" individuals use to accomplish their everyday lives). The objective of the breaching experiments was to disrupt normal procedures so that the process by which the everyday world is constructed can be studied. One infamous example of such a breaching experiment involved having Garfinkel's students spend between fifteen minutes and an hour in their homes imagining that they were boarders and then acting on the basis of the assumption. As Garfinkel (1967: 47) wrote: "They were instructed to conduct themselves in a circumspect and polite fashion. They were to avoid getting personal, to use formal address, to speak only when spoken to."
Other social theorists have also implicitly addressed the role of trust in relation to our realization of self-identity. For instance, Habermasian (1984) communicative ethics presupposes that discursive actors always infer that their speech acts satisfy a condition of mutual trust. For Habermas, intersubjective mutual understanding, and thus communicative action, is premised on the existence of mutual trust. We must trust that others involved in a validity claim understand us, for we can never unequivocally know it. Mutual understanding should thus never be understood as identical understanding (Carolan under review [b]). At best we can only hope to attain a believed degree of mutual understanding (Carolan 2000), and that requires trust.

Like Habermas, Bok (1979: 18) also highlights the significance of trust in discourse when she writes that a “society whose members are unable to distinguish truthful messages from deceptive ones, would collapse.” Putnam (1993, 2000) cites the importance of interpersonal trust in fostering democratic values and sees it as the basis for sustaining a civic community (for a similar conclusion see, for instance, Sztompka [1996, 1999] and Cohen [1999]). Fukuyama (1995) likewise illustrates how trust is essential for cooperation among strangers, a necessary prerequisite for large-scale economic organizations, and a key ingredient for modern industrial economies. Finally, Inglehart (1999) demonstrates how trust is conducive to subjective well-being and linked to the existence of stable democracies. And, as I have already discussed at length, a host of other scholars have detailed the heightened importance of trust within specifically modern social relations (i.e., Barber 1983; Giddens 1990, 1994; Luhmann 1979, 1988, 1994; Seligman 1997).
Through the course of this chapter I have presented what I hope to be substantial justification for examining trust through a socio-theoretical lens. I have elaborated upon the primacy of trust not only as a crucial mechanism for the survival of contemporary society, but also as a key component of social relations. Next, I wish to justify my claim for the need of an explanatory theoretical understanding of trust. As I have previously shown, much work has already been completed on trust, yet, as I will demonstrate, we are still without an explanatory theoretical framework. After illustrating this significant socio-theoretical void, I will then conclude the chapter by looking at how others have attempted to address the very theoretical question that I am about to embark upon answering—“what is trust?”

A Case for Further Theoretical Development

Although trust has certainly begun to enter the lexicon of social theory, I contend trust itself is still a largely undertheorized, and hence poorly understood, concept. Much of the analytic focus of recent works on trust has been toward an elucidation of what trust does in modern social systems, as opposed to the development of an explanatory theoretical understanding of what trust is.

Functional or Descriptive Theoretical Works

Niklas Luhmann (1979) has been cited as providing the first theoretical clarification of the concept “trust” (see i.e., Barber 1983; Misztal 1996; Seligman 1997; Sztompka 1999). Yet, instead of developing an explanatory theoretical model of what trust is, Luhamnn provides a functional analysis of what trust does, seeing trust and distrust as being integral to
the capacity of a system to reduce its complexity. Incorporating Parsons' (1951) media theory and his concept of symbolic generalization, Luhmann sees trust—along with truth, love, money, and power—as one of the generalized media of communication through which complexity reduction occurs. According to Luhmann, trust can be understood and compared with other functionally equivalent mechanisms only from the point of view of its function. This is to say that throughout history trust has always performed the same function, it “reduces social complexity by going beyond available information and generalizing expectations of behavior in that it replace missing information with an internally guaranteed security” (Luhmann 1979: 93). Although he provides a significant and systematic analysis of the functions of trust in modern complex social systems, Luhmann’s analytic emphasis tends to be more toward description than explanation and, therefore, fails to bring us any closer to a theoretical understanding of what trust is. Provided in its stead is merely a description of what trust does—its function—in today’s complex world.

Giddens (1990; 1991; 1994) provides us with a similar account of trust. Like Luhmann, Giddens (1990: 26) writes that “[t]rust is therefore involved in a fundamental way with the institutions of modernity.” Giddens sees the relationships between people and their environment in pre-modern societies as determined by standardized rules of behavior and tradition. Individuals in modern societies, on the other hand, through the erosion of tradition and traditional world-views (i.e., religion, mysticism, etc), have nothing left except to trust that the functional system will fulfill expectations. Trust, therefore, “offers security in the face of future contingencies” (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 108). In this light, trust provides “ontological security” in contemporary social life by serving as the functional equivalent to
the routinization and tradition that predominated pre-modern societies. This is not to say that Giddens does not provide an explanatory theoretical account of trust. Indeed, he views the work of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson as providing a major source of insight into the development of trust in individual actors. Trust is thus a product of socialization between parent and child that occurs during the early stages of child development: “To survive in life at all you need a generalized notion of trust and that’s something people get from their early emotional experiences” (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 109).

Like Giddens, I too find value in aspects of Erikson’s developmental social psychological model of trust—specifically that which he refers to as “basic trust.” Yet unlike Giddens, I see Erikson’s understanding of trust (and by extension Giddens’ own understanding of trust) as incomplete, providing only one of the many necessary pieces to completing the explanatory theoretical jigsaw-like puzzle of trust. Giddens’ theoretical account of trust, therefore, is largely one of what trust does (i.e., a source of complexity reduction, a necessity for ontological security, etc.), and only marginally of what trust is and how it arises through social relationships (what could be conceptualized as the “social becoming” [Sztompka 1991, 1993] of trust).

Numerous other theoretical accounts of trust place similar emphasis on description as opposed to explanation. In fact, I would dare say the majority of contemporary socio-theoretical analyses of trust have sought to provide greater clarity into what trust does in modern social systems, at the expense of a fuller theoretical understanding of what trust is.

13 I will detail Erikson’s theory of trust (as well as his concept of “basic trust”) shortly.
and its "social becoming." Indeed, many contemporary accounts of trust do not even claim to provide a socio-theoretical understanding of the concept.

For instance, Trudy Govier's (1997: x) "book...offer[s] a general account of trust and distrust" (rather than an account of trust) in contemporary social relationships. Barbara Misztal (1996: 9) attempts to "not just collect evidence in support of the thesis concerned with the growing significance of trust relationships", but to also "demonstrate how changes in contemporary societies require a new, more active type of trust" (here too, no account of trust is present). The work of Bernard Barber (1983: 6) seeks to "clarify the meaning of trust and to apply these new understandings to achieve a better knowledge of the present function and dilemmas of some major American social institutions", but little is said in the way of what trust is. Social psychologists Earle and Cvetkovish (1995: 1) "suggest an alternative interpretation of social trust as a strategy for the reduction of cognitive complexity" (but again, no explanatory account of its social becoming). Fukuyama (1995) provides an exposition of trust as an indispensable ingredient for prosperous future oriented economic systems, but spends little time investigating the social properties behind the concept. And Seligman (1997: 37) views trust as "an attribute of modern societies", linked with the differentiation and pluralization of roles, and the vagueness and negotiability of role expectations that results from such pluralization (here again, little is said as to what trust is).

Thus, although trust is becoming the focal point of an increasing amount of scholarly work, a review of literature reveals that much theoretical energy has been directed toward descriptive accounts of the concept, while considerably less intensity has been put forth to the development of an explanatory theoretical understanding of it and its social becoming.
I must qualify the preceding statement, however, in one instance. That qualification is made due to Piotr Sztompka's (1999) brilliant analysis of trust in his book, *Trust: A Sociological Theory*. In this work, Sztompka does provide us with a valuable explanatory theoretical model. However, it is an explanatory theoretical model on the social becoming of "trust cultures." Granted, a culture of trust is a significant explanatory variable when seeking to understand why people trust. Yet, merely the presence of a trust culture is no guarantee that people will trust. Likewise, the absence of a trust culture does not necessarily equate to a total deficiency of trust. That is to say, culture may play an important role in influencing our willingness to trust, but it does not play the only role. Thus, an explanatory theoretical model of trust *culture*, although an important socio-theoretical step forward, is far from being an explanatory theoretical model of trust. Such a model must address not only the notable influence of culture on trust relations, but also be capable of understanding, for instance, why some individuals within a trust culture still do not trust or, conversely, why individuals with an absent (or weak) trust culture engage in trust relations. Consequently, although Sztompka provides us with a valuable conceptual tool—as well as vital theoretical insight—he does not take us all the way to understanding what trust is.

*The Morality of Trust*

Other significant works on trust that do not fall within the aforementioned category of being descriptive and/or functional include a growing body of literature that addresses the morality of trust. Included within this camp are the important works of, for example, philosopher Sissela Bok (1978: 31) who claims that an atmosphere of trust is essential for
human existence: “Whatever matters to human beings, trust is the atmosphere in which it thrives” (emphasis in original). Likewise, moral philosopher Annette Baier (1986: 232) brings to light the important revelation that “[t]here are immoral as well as moral trust relationships, and trust-busting can be a morally proper goal”—a view that has been rearticulated by social theorists in subsequent years (i.e., Gambetta 1988; Hardin 1996; Sztompka 1999). And political scientist Russel Hardin (1996) makes the salient philosophical observation that what is indeed socially (and thus morally) “good” may not necessarily be “trust,” but rather “trustworthiness.” According to Hardin (1996: 29), without trustworthiness, the potency of trust—for instance, as a mechanism of complexity reduction—is lost: “[t]he best device for creating trust is to establish and support trustworthiness. As before, without the latter, there is no value in trust.”

Trust from the Rational Choice Perspective

Trust has also been placed within the theoretical crosshairs of the rational choice perspective (i.e., Arrow 1974; Elster 1989; Coleman 1990; Hardin 1991; 1999; Lorenz 1988; Uslaner 1999). The basic premise of rational choice theory is that both the truster and the trustee are rational actors, where rationality is understood in utilitarian terms as a matter of satisfying individual preference, and involves choosing action that is most likely to produce the highest utility for the actor. Grounded in the motivations and beliefs of actors, rational choice theory views action as beginning with “the logically most simple type of motivation: rational, selfish, outcome oriented behavior” (Elster 1989: 37). In this light, trust is seen as
being “eminently rational,” based upon the “essentially rational expectations about the—mostly—self-interested behavior of the trusted” (Hardin 1991: 187).

In James Coleman’s (1990) Foundations of Social Theory, for instance, we find not only the latest major work within the rational choice perspective, but also the most complete theoretical analysis of trust within this theoretical tradition. Similar to neo-classical accounts of economic behavior, Coleman views individuals not only as rational, self-interested, egoistic actors, but also as unconstrained by norms. An analysis of trust according to Coleman can thus be constructed on the examination of simple relationships between an actor’s expected gains and the expected losses from another individual.

Within Coleman’s framework, as in all other rational choice theoretical frameworks, the relationship between a truster and a trustee takes the form of an exchange relationship. Yet there is a time lag in this form of exchange, and the truster has no guarantee that the trust granted is warranted and that an exchange will in fact occur. This point was articulated almost a century ago by Marcel Mauss (1970: 34) when he wrote, “[t]ime has to pass before a counter-presentation can be made and this requires trust.” This time lag thus makes trust inherently uncertain and risky.

To capture this uncertainty Coleman (1990: 99) employs the metaphor of the bet: “The elements confronting the potential truster are nothing more or less than the considerations a rational actor applies in deciding whether to place a bet.” Therefore—like Luhmann (1988: 98) who before him wrote, “[t]rust is only required if a bad outcome would make you regret your action”—Coleman (1990: 99) acknowledges risk as being an implicit
component of all trust relationships: "If the chance of winning relative to the chance of losing, is greater than the amount that would be lost (if he [sic] loses), relative to the amount that would be won (if he wins), then by placing the bet he has an expected gain; and if he is rational, he should place it." Rational actors thus trust only when perceived potential gains are larger than perceived potential losses and when trust relationships are supported by negative sanctions.

Such a conceptualization of trust, however, leads Coleman to grapple with the following dilemma: how can individuals be privy to the level of information required for an accurate cost-benefit analysis? In short, since we are not God-like, how can we assess the trustworthiness of another individual when we can only hope to attain partial information of the situation?

Coleman finds a way out of this quandary by recognizing reputation, which he describes as a form of social capital, as a substitute for complete knowledge. For Coleman, reputation reduces the transaction costs of an exchange because it decreases one's need for total information. Reputation thus allows rational actors to trust while still remaining rational, even in the face of incomplete information. In this sense, a good reputation could be understood, as Peter Blau (1964: 259) once quipped, "a high credit rating."

Coleman's work, however, reveals a common trait among rational choice trust scholars: the emphasis on the individual exchange relationship, thus implying that trust can only exist between people and not people and things. As Russell Hardin (1999: 26) asserts, for anyone to insist that trust can be anything more "is whistling nonsense." Such a stance is
taken due to the view of trust being contingent upon the prospect of reciprocity and future benefits (remember, we are all self-interested rational egoists). If this assumption of reciprocity did not exist, rational choicers would find it difficult to explain trust rationally—that is, without somehow rationalizing such seemingly irrational (at least from a rational choice perspective) motives as altruism and selflessness.

Let us now focus upon a few other conceptualizations of trust from within a rational choice framework before pulling our analysis back to address the rational choice framework itself. One such variant understands trust as rational because of the normative rules that oblige the trustee to comply. As political scientist Claus Offe (1999: 52) details:

Trust relationships and their robustness are as much a matter of the receiving side, the trusted, as of the providing side, the truster. Trust is a phenomenon of social reciprocity. Without a social norm (sometimes strengthened by rational interest, as in ongoing commercial transactions) being observed prescribing that trust be honored, not betrayed by whoever is being trusted, trust relations would be overly risky to the truster and bound to evaporate.

Upon closer inspection, however, such a conceptualization of trust appears quite inadequate: namely, it requires that the trusted person be aware that they have been trusted, and that they have a sense of obligation towards the truster. Such, however, is often not the case.

I may, for example, trust the President of the United States, but he certainly has no knowledge of it (except in possibly the most broad generalized sense). Likewise, let us say that I trust my students not to cheat, and as a result I take few precautions to guard against them plagiarizing on their final papers. Yet, I do not tell my students of this. Consequently, being unaware of my trust, they may attribute my lack of prudence to guard against
plagiarism as a sign of laziness and indifference. Since they are therefore unaware of my trust towards them, does this then mean that what I have conferred upon them is not trust? Here then we begin to see the limitations associated with those conceptualizations of trust within a rational choice framework that place too much emphasis on norms of reciprocity and obligation—for, frequently, conferred trust is unknown to the truster, in which case norms of reciprocity and obligation become moot.

Such a conceptualization of trust also leads to some very paradoxical conclusions with regard to trust's relation to democracy and civil society (an area of literature that has experienced tremendous growth over the last decade [i.e., Habermas 1996, 1999; Cohen 1999; Cohen and Arato 1992]). Specifically, equating trust with norms of reciprocity and obligations makes it unclear how civic trust can even emerge (let alone flourish) among members of a democracy given its conditions of anonymity (i.e., the “majority” as a anonymous collective agent), diversity, and pluralism. Within a mass democracy, neither does the truster have the opportunity to know enough about others to confer trust onto them (Hardin 1993), nor are those whom are actually trusted necessarily aware of such. This would, therefore, make trust difficult if not impossible if its existence was indeed conditioned upon norms of reciprocity, an awareness on the part of the trustee that they are being trusted, and an awareness on the part of the truster of whom they are judging to be trustworthy.

One could even argue that such a conceptualization of trust could lead to the conclusion that civic trust is less problematic within an authoritarian regime then within those which are democratic. For instance, within an authoritarian regime one can actually see the
person(s) in power, and form a belief (however distorted) about that person’s trustworthiness. Within a democracy, on the other hand, the person in power is a popular sovereign—namely, the majority—thus providing us with no way of knowing what this collective sovereign is going to do (given the idiosyncratic preferences of the voting public), or even who this collective sovereign is (given the existence of secret ballots). And thus, following this particular logic, one would expect high degrees of distrust and suspicion to be a normal condition for all democracies.

The data, however, do not appear to support this claim. For instance, while numerous scholars have documented a steadily declining level of trust among the adult population within the United States since approximately 1960 (i.e., Putnam 1995b, 2000; Inglehart 1990, 1999; Uslaner 1999), trust within democracies is still significantly higher than within more authoritarian forms of governance (Putnam 1993; Inglehart 1999). Although the direction of the causal arrow is still unclear regarding whether democracy promotes trust or trust promotes democracy, there does appear to be some indirect evidence to suggest that democracy promotes trust. Extensive longitudinal data supports the argument that happy people (or people possessing high-levels of "well being") are trusting people (Inglehart 1990, 1999; Putnam 2000; Patterson, 1999; Shapiro 1987). And, perhaps not surprisingly,

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14 The argument that trust is declining within the United States does, however, gloss-over the general ambiguity of the data. Remember, data tell us nothing directly; in and of itself data is meaningless. Only through interpretation can we bestow meaning onto those numbers. Thus, as Hardin (1999) highlights, those who are trying to explain the data as illustrating a declining level of trust within the United States may be encumbered within an ecological fallacy. In fact, it is quite plausible that "those who trust people less today may be speaking of more people than those who trusted people more a generation ago. Why? Our lives today are typically more complicated with larger numbers of people with whom we interact. It is virtually a logical implication of such a change that we cannot trust more people now as much as we trusted fewer people then" (Hardin 1999: 37-8).
democracies overall have a more content populace than do totalitarian or authoritarian regimes (Almond and Verba 1989; Inglehart 1990; 1997, 1999). Nevertheless, regardless of which came first, the chicken (trust) or the egg (democracy), democracies do appear to contain a stronger level of civic trust than do authoritarian regimes. Ultimately, it appears that rational choice theories of trust that emphasize normative rules are inadequate to understand all the complexities associated with trust.

Russell Hardin (1991, 1993, 1999), arguably today's leading rational choice scholar on issues pertaining to trust's relationship to civil society and democracy (Warren 1999), has tried to improve the analytic accuracy of rational choice theory by understanding trust as an expression of "encapsulated interest". For Hardin, trust can be understood through the lens of a rational choice perspective because trust is based on the truster's judgements of the interests of the trusted. Thus, "you trust someone if you have adequate reason to believe it will be in that person's interest to be trustworthy in the relevant way at the relevant time. One's trust turns not on one's own interests but on the interest of the trusted. It is encapsulated in one's judgement of the interests" (Hardin 1993: 505). Trust, therefore, is rational because your interests are inevitably still being served. When I trust you, I am doing so because "I have reason to expect you to act in my interest with respect to the matter" (Hardin 1999: 26) (emphasis in original).

Yet, this too is a limited conceptualization of trust for a number of reasons. The most obvious resides in the fact that we often base our trust on very limited information about those whom we are trusting. According to Hardin, we would therefore never trust unfamiliar
strangers because we would lack the information needed to assess whether their interests encapsulate our own. Additionally, one could extrapolate from Hardin’s argument that trust within modern societies is becoming increasingly difficult, if not already impossible. Due to the increased mobility of us moderns, the “disembedding of time and space” (Giddens 1990), and the concomitant exponential growth of our “contemporaries” (Schutz 1967), the knowledge we have of those around us is becoming “thinner” with every new technological innovation, which severely compromises our ability to judge the interests of others and to judge whether those interests “encapsulate” our own. Yet we still do (at least sometimes) trust “unfamiliar strangers”. And we still trust our “contemporaries”, even though we have very little “rational” reason to do so.

Finally, by explaining trust as an expression of encapsulated interests, Hardin also runs into the dilemma of being unable to explain why trust exists at all within democratic societies. Although Hardin (1999) provides a compelling argument as to why there are such low levels of trust within the United States toward the government (and why this should not concern us), his conceptualization of trust leads you to wonder why there is any governmental

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15 Although the term “unfamiliar strangers” may appear contradictory, it is not meant to be. I base “unfamiliar strangers” off of Patterson’s (1999: 156) term “familiar strangers”: “he is the man from whom we buy our newspaper or subway token every morning; she is the janitor who comes every evening to clean the office...” Unfamiliar strangers, therefore, are those people whom we typically think of when we think of strangers: those we have no previous experience with and thus, often, no previous knowledge of (except, of course, inferential knowledge).

16 Take, for example, our interaction with professionals. Given the vast disparity of knowledge—that disparity is indeed what makes them professionals and experts—the client usually has no “rational” cue to assess an expert’s true proficiency except through what they have been told by other clients (who are themselves non-experts and in no position to assess the competency of the professional); and sometimes they do not even have these cues to go by. What, then, do we do to assess, for example, the competency (and thus the trustworthiness) of a dentist we have no knowledge of (either through others or from direct experience)? We frequently look at such cues as the quality of the building in which the dentist’s office is located, the art on the wall in the dentist office, the number of cars in the parking lot in front of the dentist’s office, etc. In short, neither Hardin or rational choice theory in general can account for trust that is built upon such wildly irrational criteria.
trust at all. For instance, given that leaders within democracies are actually *representatives* of the people, how could I possibly know if their interests encapsulate my own, especially in light of the fact that I do not even know who *the people* are (thanks to the right of anonymity at the voting booth)? And even if I did know who *the people* are, how could I possibly assess whether their interests encapsulate my own? In an authoritarian regime, on the other hand, at least I am being ruled by a few, which makes the assessment of their interests (however distorted that my be) at least possible. But within a democracy, however, I am ruled by the many, making any assessment of interests practically impossible.\footnote{All of which can be summed up with the following question: what would be the most rational form of governance for me to want to be part of—to be ruled by one or a few people, and thus be subject to a potential tyranny of the minority (i.e., authoritarian regime), or by a large faceless mass of people, and thus be subject to a potential tyranny of the majority (i.e., democratic regime)?}

In the end, Hardin’s conceptualization of trust unsuccessfully grasps the full complexity of the concept—a problem which appears to be endemic to all rational choice accounts of trust. Ultimately, by reducing behavior to self-interested action, rational-choicers provide a severely truncated understanding of trust—a critique which can likewise be extended to their shortsighted understanding of social action in general. Let us now take a step back and address some of the assumptions contained within the rational choice perspective itself, beginning with the assumption that human action is based on calculated means-ends assessments. In short, the assumption that all human action is rational.

Ultimately, rational choice theory sees social life in too simple of terms. One such example of this lies in its rather mundane observation that people have reasons and motivations for doing whatever it is they do—a statement of banality *par excellence*. 
Michael Bell (1998b: 188) provides the following insightful account of rational choice's tautological argument:

I recognize that, as I go through my day, I am constantly pondering what I ought to do. I am always thinking, to use the language of rational egoism, of what would benefit me most, of what my interests are in whatever situation I am considering. Indeed, it is rather unavoidable to consider it otherwise; when I am thinking about my actions, I must be thinking about what I am to do, and thus what my interests are. But here again is the rational egoist tautology: Rational egoist thinking covers everything I think about and is therefore only a way of restating that I am thinking about what I am to do when I am thinking about what I am to do.

Let me now address for a moment the totalizing assumption upon which rational choice theory rests: that all individual action is motivated by egoistic, self-serving interests. Such a perspective not only gives us too much credit, but simultaneously not enough. On the one hand, rational choice provides a flattering view of the individual in that it see us as possessing God-like qualities—who else could purposefully calculate every act of intentionally, and possess the information required to do so, except the One. On the other hand, however, rational choice debases and perverts what it means to be human by reducing us to nothing more then carbon-based calculators.

Thus, while I cannot counter the totalizing premise that humans are purely egoistic, calculating creatures with the equally totalizing statement that human action is motivated by purely arational interests (ultimately, it is probably a little bit of both), I can assert with great confidence that we do not experience all aspects of social life as rational egoists. And if we do not consciously experience social action and trust relations from a purely self-interested standpoint, than we must also be basing our actions and behavior on some other criteria.

Such super-rational behavior has been acknowledged by both Weber (1978: 24), who called
it "value-rational" action, and Tonnies (1940: 17), who labeled it "natural will." Socio-theoretical perspectives regarding motivation and action would thus do better to focus on what our experiences tell us. In doing so they would quickly come to the same conclusion as I have: while rational choice theory may explain a small portion of why we do what we do, it misses a lot. In short, something more—both within us and external to us—shapes our behavior than pure egoistic tendencies. (I will revisit this topic in chapter four).

Other related criticisms of the rational choice perspective include Wildavshy’s (1994) argument that rational choice theory is grounded within a singular view of rationality (competitive individualism), suggesting instead a culturally pluralistic theory of preference construction. Rawls (1992: 229) argues that rational choice theory fails to provide an understanding of shared meanings within conditions of trust relations by failing to address the theoretical query of "how would isolated individuals achieve meaning in common with one another?" Elster (1989) is critical of rational choice perspectives that fail to recognize the impact of social norms on behaviors and preferences, suggesting that norms provide sources of motivation that are irreducible to simplistic notions of rationality.

There is also, however, a more basic critique of rational choice theory, which has yet to be fully addressed. A quick review of such seminal works as Downs (1957) and Olson (1965)—as well as any others which emphasize a neo-classical account of economic behavior—will reveal a rather unnerving paradox: that the very term "rational choice" appears to be a contradiction in terms. Allow me to explain.

Rational choice sees human agency as a product of cost-benefit calculation in an attempt to maximize utility. Basically, it sees actors as human calculators. Although this
may be an oversimplification. I believe it is nevertheless an accurate representation. Granted, most rational choice theorists recognize the nearly impossible task of having access to all available (and unavailable) information from which to base our decisions and actions upon. Thus, although we may be human calculators, we are greatly limited in our processing capabilities. Yet, our actions are still based upon a calculation of information which is known and available to us.¹⁸

For instance, let us say I wish to purchase a baby grand piano. Following rational choice theory, such a purchase would presuppose my calculating the costs and benefits of such an acquisition to other pianos, other musical instruments, as well as to virtually any other good or service that I could purchase with the money I have set aside for a new baby grand. My cost-benefit analysis would not end there, however. Additionally, I would have to weigh the costs and benefits associated with my proposed purchase to those I could incur were I to forgo my purchase entirely—such as if I were to, for instance, place the money in a savings account, invest it in the stock market, or simply place it under my bed.

Yet, where is the choice in “rational choice theory”? Rational choice theory appears to reduce “action” to simply a product of calculatory behavior to where future trajectories are measured to ensure a maximization of utility. Within this theoretical schema, however, “choice” is something clearly lacking. Does a calculator have a “choice” when computing 2+2? Yet, this is what we are, at least epistemologically speaking, according to classical accounts of rational choice theory—carbon-based calculators. To suggest agential properties

¹⁸ This presents an interesting theoretical paradox: to claim that there is information which we do not know appears to be impossible on purely logical grounds, because to claim to know that there is an unknown is a contradiction in terms—how can we know of unknown information without actually knowing of it?
to rational, calculating, egoistic "actors" is no different than to imply that my computer possesses agency when I have it perform a statistical computation. The term 'choice', which clearly implies an existential condition endowed with agency, would be better applied to a theoretical framework which actually offers choices; a theoretical framework where serendipity, passions, and "other"-serving—as well as self-serving—interests are given equal theoretical weight.

Some may, however, respond with the following: "Maybe you are correct to portray classical accounts of rational choice theory as actually being antithetical to choice, but you unjustifiably make a blanket statement when you lump recent variants of rational choice theory with those now outdated classical works." And, indeed, you would be correct to make such a statement. But once you begin to deviate from classical accounts of rational choice theory, and begin to take into account norms, values, culture, emotions, and whatever else you care to incorporate into your framework, where do you stop? The slope is a slippery one, until you are quickly left an understanding of rationality that represents banality par excellence—that individuals have motives and reasons for doing what they do. And there is no great use for a theory which tells us something that we have all known for quite some time.

Ultimately, we must come to the realization that social life and thus trust, in most situations, is far too complex to be seen as constituted by the aggregate outcome of individual rational choices. As Rawls (1972: 28-9) remarked: "the plurality of distinct persons with distinct systems of ends is an essential feature of human society." Indeed, if human actors were the self-interested calculators suggested within the rational choice framework, maybe
the maturation of trust within today's society would be less problematic. If this were the case, following Coleman (1990: 99), all we would need is to develop incentives to hedge one's trust bet, thus making it a rational action: "If the chance of winning, relative to the chance of losing, is greater than the amount that would be lost (if he [sic] loses), relative to the among that would be won (if he wins), then by placing the bet he has an expected gain; and if he is rational, he should place it." Yet, trust is problematic, enigmatic, at times precarious, and often difficult to clearly understand, even during times when one's trust bet is hedged. There must, therefore, be more to acts of trust then purely rational, self-interested motivation. And we shall investigate what these motivational forces are in greater detail throughout this dissertation.

Trust as an Unexamined Concept

The final segment of trust literature, which I will now only briefly address, views trust largely atheoretically, employing the concept as mainly a "potpourri term." One example of such scholarly work lies within the literature of "social capital." Social capital literature frequently speaks of the importance of trust and trust relations in societal well-being, yet often fails to provide systematic socio-theoretical descriptions of what trust is. A sample of this can be found in writings of Robert Putnam. Putnam (i.e., 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1996, 2000) recurrently stresses the importance of trust in relation to social capital, yet does not elaborate upon what trust is. For instance, the concept of "trust" is used in his definition of social capital. According to Putnam (1995a: 664-665), social capital are "features of social
life—networks, norms and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives...Social capital, in short, refers to social connections and the attendant norms and trust.” Thus, “[t]he theory of social capital presumes that, generally speaking, the more we connect with people, the more we trust them, and vice versa” (Putnam 1995a: 665). We can also see trust used in his description of vibrant and virtuous communities: “Virtuous citizens are helpful, respectful, and trustful toward one another, even when they differ on matters of substance” (Putnam 1993: 89). In short, according to Putnam (1993: 171), “trust promotes cooperation.” Yet, for all of Putnam’s stress on “trust” in relation to social capital and civil society, little is said of what “trust” actually is, and how it can be nurtured in social relationships.

Unfortunately, when trust is described in social capital literature, it frequently succumbs to circular reasoning by equating trust with social capital, and vice versa. For instance, Eric Uslaner (1999:122), like Putnam (1993: 169), sees social capital “as a moral resource.” Yet, later he continues by also defining trust “as a moral resource” (Uslaner 1999: 122). Thus, by conceptualizing both social capital and trust as synonymous to a “moral resource,” Uslaner fails into circular reasoning. Understanding trust as social capital, however, provides us with little insight into its socio-theoretical existence. In the end, although there has been a noticeable recent surge in interest in trust among social capital scholars, this should not lead anyone to the false conclusion that our understanding of trust as

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19 By “potpourri term” I simply mean that “trust” is often used to mean, or be synonymous with, a medley of other similar concepts—such as “social capital,” cooperation, morality, civility, etc. Thus, in these instances trust is frequently employed as rhetorical short-hand to be the equivalent of many (or all) of these abstractions.
a socio-theoretical concept has been furthered due to this escalation of scholarly activity.\(^\text{30}\)

Overall, although considerable intellectual energy has been projected toward the incorporation of trust into social-scientific analyses, we still are without an explanatory theoretical framework through which to understand what trust is and, likewise, its social becoming. As I have shown, many have engaged in systematic analyses, and many have provided rich descriptions of what trust does and how it functions in various periods of societal existence (i.e., Barber 1983; Earle and Cvetkovich 1995; Gellner 1988; Giddens 1990, 1991, 1994; Govier 1997; Luhmann 1979, 1988, 1994; Misztal 1996; Seligman 1997; Williams 1988). Others have embarked upon the intellectual and philosophical excursion of attempting to come to terms with the morality of trust and trustworthiness (i.e., Bok 1979; Baier 1986, 1995; Hardin 1996), while others have sought to ground their understanding of trust within the (problematic) theoretical framework of the rational choice perspective (i.e., Arrow 1974; Coleman 1990; Hardin 1991, 1993, 1996, 1998; 1999). Finally, the remaining major segment of trust literature employs trust as chiefly an undertheorized "potpourri term," in which the concept "trust" is frequently used, but rarely conceptually developed (i.e., Putnam 1993, 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Inglehart 1990, 1997, 1999; Lin 1999; Narayan 1999; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). Thus, while the literature on trust is indeed quite vast, we still are without a systematic theoretical framework to help us understand what trust is and its existential properties.

\(^{30}\) Social capital literature is far from being the only body of scholarly work which has undertheorized the concept of trust (I only mention the recent work done on social capital because I view it as representing the largest component of contemporary scholarly work on trust that treats it as a "potpourri term"). Another example of atheoretical work currently being done involving trust is the notable literature being generated by Ronald Inglehart (i.e., 1990, 1997, 1999).
Yet, before moving onto the following chapter I feel it important to first elaborate upon how others have responded to the question I am about to address—namely, what is trust? While a systematic theory of trust and its social becoming has yet to be developed, this is not to say that trust has been completely neglected as a socio-theoretical concept. How then have others addressed the poignant question: what is trust?

**What is Trust?**

To gain insight into the meaning of trust, it might first be helpful to understand the etymological origins of the word. Perhaps the two oldest connotations of the word "trust" relate to the notions of faith and confidence. Etymologically speaking, the word "faith" comes to us from the Latin word *fides*, which means "to trust." Trust as faith, for instance, is the cornerstone of all religious doctrines, seeing it as the source of salvation: "Trust in the lord because He is good, His mercy endures forever", and "Blessed is the man who trusts in Jaweh and whose confidence Jaweh is" are such examples to be found in the Old Testament. Ancient Roman languages also lacked a linguistic distinction between trust and faith, using the word *fede* to imply the non-rational incalculable aspects of human action. And still today, the Hebrew word *emunah* preserves an essence of faith within its linguistic designation of trust.

The main definition of trust in the *Oxford English Dictionary* describes trust as "confidence in or reliance on some quality or attributes of a person or thing, or trust of a statement." In this delineation, the meaning of trust closely resembles the idea of confidence. We can even find in Samuel Johnson’s English dictionary of the eighteenth century no clear
distinction between trust and confidence. The etymological origins of the word “trust” comes from the Middle English word truste, which is derived from the Old Norse word traust, which means “confidence.” This indistinguishable relationship between trust and confidence can also be witnessed in languages other than English. For example, as detailed by Seligman (1997: 31), the linguistic distinction between trust and confidence in French did not emerge until the sixteenth century. In fact, the word “confide” has its etymological origins in the Old French word confider, which came from the Latin word fidere, which means “to trust” (and which also means “faith”).

In providing an etymological account of the word “trust,” I do not intend to turn this work into a non-sociological, philological exercise. Rather, I find just the opposite in such an endeavor; believing that much sociological insight can be gleamed through the practice of historical linguistics. For instance, being cognizant of a word’s lineal history gives us a glimpse into antiquated linguistic connections that might have been lost over the ages. Thus, while a historical linguistic account of the word “trust” can be interesting, its theoretical value resides in its ability to shed light on the clandestine.

In the subsequent sections I will begin by presenting classical explanations of trust, this will be followed by explanations that come from outside of the disciplinary walls of sociology, ending with contemporary socio-theoretical descriptions of the concept. Now knowing the etymological origins of the word, let us move forward and discuss how others have constituted a response to the theoretical inquisition—what is trust?
Classical Descriptions of the Concept

While the concept of trust has only recently been viewed as a legitimate area of sociological inquiry, I have already alluded to the fact that some early sociological thinkers nevertheless found intrigue in the concept. One of the first sociological thinkers to provide us with a conceptual definition of trust is Ferdinand Toennies. Toennies explicitly addresses trust in his discussion of the Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft debate. According to Toennies, trust is a by-product of familiarity and is essential to strong interpersonal relationships: “[trust] is essentially conditioned by the personalities of those who confide; that is, by their intelligence, their knowledge of human nature, and their experience” (Toennies 1988: 241). Toennies understands trust as originating out of a person’s personality and behavior toward others in society. It is a derivative of familiarity and friendship, which implies a degree of knowledge of the other as well as an equal respect for their well-being.

The other noted early sociological thinker to provide us with an analysis of trust is Georg Simmel. Simmel's understanding of trust closely parallels that of faith, existing through the belief in a person or principle. Trust, therefore, “expresses the feeling that there exists between our idea of being and the being itself a definite connection and unity, a certain consistency in our conception of it, an assurance and lack of resistance in the surrender of the Ego to this conception, which may rest upon particular reasons, but is not explained by them” (Simmel 1978: 179). Simmel makes the insightful observation that trust exists when one does not have complete information to make a full assessment of the probabilities. One must therefore choose to believe or not believe—this is trust. Trust, according to Simmel (1978:
is based on knowledge and non-knowledge and is thus the product of what he calls "weak inductive knowledge."

**Significant Literature From Outside the Discipline of Sociology**

Before elaborating on how contemporary social theorists have addressed the question, "what is trust?", I would first like to spend some time reviewing various theoretical works on trust which, while outside the purview of mainstream sociological accounts of the concept, have influenced those accounts nonetheless. In addition, by presenting this literature I hope to familiarize the reader to important concepts and ideas that will subsequently be reintroduced later in this dissertation as I develop my theoretical model. To begin this discussion I would like to turn to Erik Erikson’s work on trust, which has also been highly influential in Giddens’ understanding of the concept.

The developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, in *Childhood and Society* (1965), emphasizes the crucial role of what he terms “basic trust” in human development and lasting ego-identity. This “basic trust,” for Erikson, is acquired through an elemental interaction with an infant’s parents and is essential for normal psychological development. To quote Erikson (1965: 239):

> [Parents] create a sense of trust in their children by that kind of administration which in its quality combines sensitive care of the baby’s individual needs and a firm sense of personal trustworthiness within the trusted framework of their culture’s life style. This forms

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21 This is just one instance of many throughout this dissertation which illustrates my preference toward a multi-disciplinary approach to theorizing—or, as Merton (1976: 169) terms it, “disciplined eclecticism.” To believe that any one “discipline” (the very word itself, as Foucault poignantly made clear, suggests rigidity and dogmatism) posses epistemological supremacy to understanding the workings of social life is absurd. Some of today’s most systematic social theorists, in fact, subscribe to a multi-disciplinary approach to theorizing—for instance, Ulrich Beck, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Jurgen Habermas, and Scott Lash.
the basis in the child for a sense of identity which will later combine a sense of being ‘all right’, of being oneself, and of becoming what other people trust one will become.

Accordingly, trust implies not only the ability to rely on the sameness of the “outer providers,” but also that one must learn to trust oneself (Erikson 1965: 140). Trust in others, therefore, implies a concomitant development of an inner sense of trustworthiness, from which self-identity is derived. In short, Erikson seems to be suggesting trust as a kind of confidence in regularities. And from this “basic trust” we are able to develop an ontological understanding of our reality as one of rigidity and sameness; hence the incorporation of this account of trust into the work of Giddens (1990, 1991), so as to be able to understand our ability to attain “ontological security.”

The value of the concept “basic trust”—also termed the “trusting impulse” (Wilson 1993)—is that it is independent of any rational considerations (although it may at times support rational estimates) and recognizes that rational, self-interested agents are likewise emotional, irrational, or arational in their motivations to trust. Additionally, it allows for the conceptualization of trust as a personality trait and interjects agency into its social becoming. In essence, while the concept of “basic trust” cannot provide an account of all trust relations, it does contribute an agential component to our understanding of the concept that could not be attained through rational choice or structural accounts of trust alone.

A significant body of literature on trust is also found within the famous—as well as infamous—Prisoner’s Dilemma games developed by psychologist Morton Deutsch (1960). Although I find far less theoretical value within this collection of literature as compared to
that of Erikson’s, such “game theories” have had a significant influence in how some schools of thought addressed the concept, especially those within the rational choice camp.

Within a Prisoner’s Dilemma situation, parties are presented with the choice to trust or not. For sake of illustration, let us say that you and I are prisoners awaiting our trial. We cannot communicate with each other but are interdependent because what happens to either of us depends upon each of our actions. Within this situation, we are presented with the following choices: if we both keep silent, we will each get sentenced to two years in prison; yet, if one of us confesses and the other does not, the one who confesses will get only one year, while the one who does not will get four; finally, if we both confess, we will each get three years.

Not knowing what you will do, according to Morton Deutsch (1960), one reasons as follows. If you confess, I would get three years if I also confess, but four years if I do not. Therefore, if you confess, I would be better off also confessing. But suppose that you do not confess; then I would get one year in jail if I confess and two years if I do not. Consequently, here too I would be better off confessing. And, of course, you would also come to the same conclusions through similar reasoning.

In Prisoner’s Dilemma games, “reason” is pitted against “trust.” By both employing “reason,” and confessing, we would both get three years in jail. Yet, had we kept quiet and “trusted,” we would have each only received a sentence of two years. The Prisoner’s Dilemma is thus designed to illustrate an interesting paradox: through self-interested reason, we can both end up working against our own self-interests. It is also held up by some to
illustrate the validity behind rational choice theory, and as empirical evidence to support the belief that trust too can only be understood from a perspective that views humans as intrinsically rational creatures (i.e. Williams 1988).

As a tool for studying trust, however, the Prisoner's Dilemma is problematic because the environment which it sets up is highly artificial—it fails to recognize the extra-rational aspects that we all bring into situations that equally influence our motivations to act. For example, suppose you and I are husband and wife, best friends, siblings, or parent and child. In any of these instances we could easily conceive of a situation where both of us would keep quiet and not confess, thus only receiving a two-year sentence. Likewise, suppose you and I both promised, the moment we were taken away to separate cells, not to confess. If such a promise occurred, it would be conceivable that neither of us would confess, especially if we both believed the other to be a trustworthy person. The Prisoner's Dilemma, however, does not acknowledge the existence of these extra-rational motives.

In addition, the situation that the Prisoner's Dilemma depends on—a total lack of communication and information—is, in most instances, unrepresentative of social life. Rarely do we find ourselves in a condition where there is a total lack of communication and information; indeed, even if confronted with the situation presented in the Prisoner's Dilemma, information would exist that the game does not allude to (for instance, the relationship each prisoner has to the other, whether each trusts the other, or whether both prisoners agreed not to confess before they were separated). In short, we must be leery of conceptualizations of trust built on theoretical approaches that look to laboratory games as
empirical justification. While the Prisoner's Dilemma has fascinated social theorists for decades due to its ability to illustrate the irrationality of rationality (i.e., the self-defeating character of the individual pursuit of self-interest), it is also important to recognize the asocial character of these games due to their gross misrepresentation of everyday—out-of-the-lab—social life.

Turning to an article by philosopher H. J. N. Horsburgh (1960), we are presented with a rather significant type of trust that has yet to be addressed within most sociological accounts of the concept. In this article, Horsburgh develops the concept of "therapeutic trust," which could be understood as an act of placing one's trust in a person who is known to be untrustworthy in a deliberate attempt to evoke trustworthiness in that person. In conceptualizing this type of trust, Horsburgh was influenced by the Gandhian axiom that every human being has the capacity to respond to a moral appeal, and as a human being they deserve respect, sympathy, and consideration (see Gandhi 1963). Horsburgh's argument for therapeutic trust has familiar parallels to Merton's (1968) concept of a "self-fulfilling prophecy":

When we distrust a dishonest man [sic], we simply reinforce his dishonesty. Such a man usually develops a debased concept of human nature; for cynicism is a conventional means of combining dishonesty with peace of mind. Other's distrust of him and his own dishonest dealings with them are alike in being self-interested; and therefore is he not on the same moral footing as his partners in the distrustful relationships into which he enters? (Horsburgh 1960: 532)

To illustrate this type of trust, imagine a person who loans twenty dollars to a somewhat irresponsible friend. When asked why she loaned twenty dollars to this person,
knowing that she might not get it back, she replies, “I made it clear that I was counting on him to repay me. Besides, if no one ever shows that they trust him, how is he ever going to learn trustworthiness and how will others learn that he can be trustworthy?”

From a sociological perspective, the concept of “therapeutic trust” is interesting because it acknowledges the self-fulfilling nature of trust and distrust; if everyone behaves as if others are habitually trustworthy (or untrustworthy), then people will generally be so. By recognizing this self-fulfilling aspect of trust, we are likewise presented with yet another example of an arational motivational characteristic that can lead to either trust’s development or erosion. From this viewpoint, trust can be understood less as a matter of individual, rational calculation and more as a cohesive agent to unite people into generalized networks of mutuality.

While not acknowledging it as therapeutic trust, environmental social theorist Bronislaw Szerszynski (1999) presents us with empirical documentation of exactly this type of trust. Utilizing speech act theory, Szerszynski takes the position that the act of trust toward another can often be best understood as not just a cognitive judgement, but rather as an attempt to bind the trusted into a relationship and attitude of responsibility. Szerszynshi draws from speech act theory (specifically that of A.J. Austin and John Searle) to remind us of language’s ability to perform a number of different functions; from its ability to describe the world around us or as a medium through which we play out ascribed roles and identities, but also in its ability to change the world. Thus, in saying that we “trust” someone—or, as in Szerszynski’s example, institutions (which are simply an amalgamation of people)—we may
be engaging in a hybrid speech act of "directive declarations" to try to get a party to do something they otherwise would not have done, instead of simply performing assertive or expressive speech acts (Szerszynski 1999: 248).

As far as I can see, Szerszynski (1999) appears to be the only social scientist to date to have picked up on what Horsburgh (1960) originally conceptualized as therapeutic trust. Yet, this is indeed a concept worthy of further socio-theoretical elaboration due to the connections it allows between trust and power (although Szerszynski [1999] does not himself make this connection); connections that have yet to be developed to any degree of sufficiency. At its basic level, therapeutic trust involves deception and manipulation. In short, it involves power. Acting as though we trust someone we believe to be untrustworthy in the hopes of influencing them to become trustworthy is a form of manipulation. Likewise, by engaging in therapeutic trust, we are acting in what Sartre would call "bad faith."

Therapeutic trust, therefore, depends upon not only manipulation but also deception—deception of not only those in whom you are tying to stimulate trustworthiness, but also quite possibly in yourself.

The deception of others in therapeutic trust is likely quite clear: by telling the other, "I trust you," you make them believe that they are indeed the recipient of sincere trust, when in fact they are not. Yet, self-deception within an act of therapeutic trust might not be as evident. Now, of course, in many instances of therapeutic trust the person granting the trust knows it is insincere and is based upon the desire to stimulate the other to act in a proscribed

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22 Although other philosophers have indeed picked up on the concept—i.e., Baier (1986), Govier (1993, 1998) and Noddings (1984).
manner. Thus, in these cases the statement, "I trust you," is not interpreted by the truster as an assertive ("you are trustworthy"), nor as an expressive ("I currently feel relations of trust with you"), but rather solely as a directive ("I want you to start acting in a trustworthy manner"). It is conceivable, however, to have therapeutic trust where the trustee and the truster are both deceived. In these instances, the directive ("I want you to start acting in a trustworthy manner") is confused by the truster as being either an assertive ("you are trustworthy") and/or an expressive ("I currently feel relations of trust with you").

To help illustrate this, take the following example: a mother gives her son three dollars before he goes off to school and tells him, "I trust you when you say you are going to buy lunch with this money and not just a bunch of junk food." Now, unfortunately, the son's track record for actually buying lunch with his lunch money, and not candy bars and other sugary items, is not very good, and the mother knows it. Yet, she continues to provide her son with daily lunch money along with the accompanying statement, "I trust you when you say you are going to buy lunch with this money and not just a bunch of junk food." Of course, by saying that she "trusts" him, she might actually be trying to stimulate responsibility in her son (I would imagine this happens a lot in parent-child relations). Yet, it is indeed possible that she might actually believe what she says, confusing—as I said earlier—a directive statement with either an assertive or expressive statement. Perhaps you have witnessed this yourself. Take, as an example, the parents who know of their child's past drug and alcohol problems, yet continue to vigorously declare they trust their child when they

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23 Of course, all trust expressions are directive to certain degrees (we always want or expect the person in who we grant trust to fulfill our trusting expectations).
say they are drug and alcohol free, even though bottles of alcohol continually go missing from their home, money disappears from their wallets, and their child's bizarre actions go unexplained. In such an instance, statements such as, "I trust you," although sincere to the parents, may be more accurately understood as a combination of a directive statement and blind hope.

In all, therapeutic trust can provide a valuable access point for social theorists interested in examining the relationship between trust and power. Therapeutic trust is based on the belief that people who are explicitly trusted will feel a moral and social obligation to live up to the expectations of others, thereby shedding light on the manipulating nature, and thus implicit power relations, underlying all trust relationships. Yet, even with the abundance of social theorists enamored with issues of power, power is scantly mentioned in literature pertaining to trust. The process of addressing this void will culminate in chapter six.

Having begun the turn toward more contemporary socio-theoretical endeavors by addressing of Szerszynski's insightful work, I would now like to complete this turn by examining the works of my contemporaries which have resulted in a sustained new wave of intellectual energies directed toward trust.
Contemporary Descriptions of the Concept

As already indicated, Niklas Luhmann (1979) was the first to provide a theoretical account of the concept of trust and to elaborate upon its functional qualities within a social system. For Luhmann, in the contemporary world we no longer find ourselves within fixed social settings or roles. Thus, this newfound expansion of choices and opportunities requires a steady belief in the system to perform and maintain present conditions, rather than simply personal trust. Modern societies are consequently dependent upon the presence of "system trust," which is the belief that others also trust—it is a "trust in trust." The cognitive basis of trust, therefore, resides in the belief that "each trusts on the assumption that others trust" (Luhmann 1979: 69).

In this light, trust can be understood as an attitude about the future. Without trust, we would not be able to act due to the unavoidable epistemological gap which separates the present from the future. As described by Barbalet (1996: 82), "[s]ocial life gets its edge precisely from the crucial and unavoidable fact that the future is unknowable." 24 Thus, "we cannot gain sufficient knowledge of the future; indeed, not even of the future we generate by means of our own decisions" (Luhmann 1979: 12-13). Trust, therefore, emerges as a way to deal with this perpetual epistemological gap because, contrary to rational choice theory, free agents frequently act in ways that we do not expect them to act. This "disturbing potential for

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24 This reminds me of the famous statement by Sir Karl Popper (1964) who claimed that "prophecies" of future social events are impossible on purely logical grounds, because by saying that we can know future knowledge is a contradiction in terms.
diverse action" (Luhmann 1979: 39), or this "discretionary power of the other" (Baier 1986: 250), makes trust essential.

Luhmann thus sees trust as constituted out of both knowledge and ignorance—we know something about others but in no way can we know exactly what they will do next. When we trust we generalize from our epistemologically limited existence. This generalization is made possible through systems of representation, which are (and have to be) selective; we cannot possibly be attentive to everything within the system. This ability to trust, according to Luhmann, is developed within the family, in which we also learn how to trust by generalizing from our limited experiences as free agents.

In all, Luhmann's perspective understands trust as rational for "the system" because it is an indispensable element needed to increase a system's potential for complexity. It is important to recognize, however, that "rational" in this context refers to systems and mechanisms for their maintenance, not actors and the individual decision making process. Luhmann is, in fact, critical of the rational choice perspective for incorrectly equating trust to the calculation of correct decisions.

Shortly after Luhmann's (1979) seminal work on trust, Bernard Barber (1983) followed with The Logic and Limits of Trust. In this work, Barber (1983: 9) describes trust in terms of the various expectations individuals have about social interactions:

The most general is expectation of the persistence and fulfillment of the natural and the moral social orders. Second is expectation of technically competent role performance from those involved with us in social relationships and systems. And third is expectations that partners in interaction will carry out their fiduciary obligations and
responsibility, that is, their duties in certain situation to place other' interests before their own.

For Barber, trust is intimately connected with an expectation of the persistence of a moral social order, which he uses as the context for two more specific definitions—trust as technically competent performance and trust as fiduciary obligation. Yet Barber's description of trust is too normative, and also deficient, in that he does not specify the social mechanisms that generate trust and systematically model its social becoming (a critique that could be applied to most theoretical accounts of trust).25

Lewis and Weigert (1985) have defined trust as a property of collective social units such as dyads and groups, seeing it as a three-pronged phenomenon. Trust, in this case, is understood not as a cognitive social-psychological (an attribute of individuals in groups) phenomena but rather as a product of collective, social (an attribute of groups) relations. Lewis and Weigert (1985) distinguish between three dimensions of trust—cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. Trust is cognitive in that it first requires that social objects be placed in trustworthy, untrustworthy, and unknown conceptual categories. Secondly, trust is emotional because it is based, in part, on an affective component underlying all social relations. Lastly, trust is behavioral in that it requires an act to exist. Yet, such an understanding of trust may

25 Other more recent works on trust can similarly be critiqued as understanding trust in too normative of terms while concomitantly failing to sufficiently theoretically develop the concept. See, for instance, Francis Fukuyama's (1995: 26) understanding of the concept in his significant book, Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity, where he defines trust as, "the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community."
be too limited. Solely restricting our conceptualizations of trust to situations where an act has occurred fails to understand those situations where trust exists as a perpetual state or in conditions where action has not occurred. Other critiques of this three-fold conceptual schema could include its inability to recognize unconscious trust, or Erikson's "basic trust", as well as its lack of a theoretical framework to understand the social becoming of trust.

While writing on the "juggernaut of modernity," Anthony Giddens (1990, 1991) also provides us with some insight to an understanding of the question, what is trust? As I have elaborated upon earlier in this chapter, Giddens sees trust as an essential component of modernity that is needed for social systems to "bind" time and space. Giddens develops a conceptual schema for two categories of trust—trust in persons ("face-work commitments") and trust in abstract systems ("faceless commitments")—which can be understood as an attempt to bridge the micro-macro gap in sociological theorizing. As a result, Giddens (1990: 34) defines trust as "confidence in the reality of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, when that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles."

In addition to personal trust and trust in abstract systems, Giddens also discusses "basic trust" (borrowed from Erikson) and "elementary trust." In doing this, Giddens (1990: 32) assumes that trust is "a continuous state" (which runs counter to

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26 This has been a project of Giddens since the late 1970s.
the aforementioned account of trust by Lewis and Weigert [1985]), or a presumed foundation of all social relations. Although Giddens does at times use the concepts of basic trust and elementary trust interchangeably, there does appear to be an important and necessary distinction between the two concepts. Basic trust appears to be connected with the securing of our ontological security, whereas elementary trust is associated with habitualization and predictability of daily societal interactions.

Giddens' notion of basic trust follows that of Erik Erikson's understanding of the concept, illustrating how the development of trust during infancy establishes the core of our ego identity. Without the development of this basic trust, people could experience persistent existential anxiety and a lack of confidence in the stability of their self-identity and environment (hence its ability to establish ontological security). Elementary trust tends to be based on the development and maintenance of informal rituals. Thus, a lack of this type of trust can result in a total unpredictability of one's environment. In this respect, Giddens' understanding of elementary trust parallels that of Goffman's (1972) concept of "civil inattention," which is a way of seeing trust as an essential backdrop of social conventions. Elementary trust also has close ties to Garfinkel in recognizing its unreflective qualities. Here we can begin to see the ties between basic and elementary trust. In making our world predictable through routine, elementary trust also contributes to the development of our identity and contributes to our sense of psychological security—thus, contributing to our basic trust.

Concomitantly, without the existential consistency (i.e., ontological security) that
basic trust provides, the very routinization of social life, and thus elementary trust, would be impossible.

Giddens’ contribution to our theoretical understanding of trust resides in its ability to focus attention away from those more deterministic, functional explanations to one which provides a multi-dimensional, macro-micro sociological understanding of the conditions surrounding the concept. What Giddens provides us with, however, is not a theory of trust, but rather a theory of societal integration within the conditions of modernity, which sees trust as an essential binding mechanism for the integration of the system. Consequently, his analytic focus is not on developing an explanatory theoretical understanding of the social becoming of trust, but on how the conditions of modernity can be understood as determining the trust environment. Thus, while Giddens’ theoretical contribution is both significant and important, it is insufficient in its ability to provide us with a theory of the social mechanisms that generate trust.

To address the question, “what is trust?”, others have been more direct in their response, providing exact definitions in an attempt to operationalize the concept. For instance, Coleman (1990: 99) likens trust to “a bet”: “The elements confronting the potential truster are nothing more or less than the considerations a rational actor applies in deciding whether to place a bet.” Developing upon this idea further, Sztompka (1999: 25) likewise invokes the metaphor of a bet: “Trust is a bet about the future contingent actions of others.” Sztompka’s account of trust therefore consists of two components—belief and commitment. Being the most recent definition, as well
as arguably the most developed, I will give this final definition slightly more attention than those which have preceded it.

Following Sztompka's definition, trust first requires the existence of specific expectations or beliefs. When we trust someone or something, we have a theory about what the future holds; namely, we expect our trust to be validated, making our "bet" successful. This parallels Luhmann (1979: 10), who argued, "[t]o show trust is to anticipate the future. It is to behave as though the future were certain. One might say that through trust time is superseded, or at least that differences in time are."

Additionally, Sztompka's (1999: 26) definition alludes to conceptualizing trust as being oriented toward the future actions of others, not oneself: "Normally I don't place trust in my own actions, I simply do them." Yet, for Sztompka (1999: 26), merely possessing a belief toward the action of others is insufficient to speak of trust: "Trust is more than just contemplative consideration of future possibilities." Thus, his definition of trust sees it not only in terms of beliefs but also commitments and, ultimately, action. The second component to trust in Sztompka's definition, therefore, is the committing of oneself to action where the outcome is partly unknowable. Herein lies the metaphor of "a bet"—trust involves commitment through action in which the outcome is based upon an educated guess.

While an accurate representation of many forms of trust, Sztompka's definition appears, upon closer scrutiny, too narrow. For instance, such a definition cannot account for therapeutic trust. Understanding trust in relation to the metaphor
of “a bet” fails to recognize the influential properties of the act of trust itself. When we place a bet, whether on a horse race, a football game, or any of the many other things that people bet on, the act of the bet (typically) has no influence on the outcome of what we are betting on (in fact, when a bet might influence the outcome it is usually considered illegal—i.e., a baseball coach betting on their team). In this sense, a bet is an innocuous, powerless act. Trust, however, is not innocuous and uninfluential. To trust is to influence. Thus, to liken trust to a bet is to ignore the social relations (and, as we shall see, power relations) that underlie its surface.

Additionally, to understand trust as only oriented toward the future actions of others does not allow for a recognition of self-trust. Yet, without self-trust, all others forms of trust are impossible. Indeed, self-trust parallels basic trust in that its presence is required for existential validity. Not trusting one’s self and identity would unquestionably lead one to existential dread.

Pulling away from existential issues, we can also see self-trust as being the foundation on which all trust relations are built. Numerous theoretical accounts of trust have recognized the role of information in the formation of trust. For instance, Simmel (1950) understood trust as a blend of knowledge and ignorance. Earle and Cvetkovich (1995: 28) argued that to trust requires “the individual, at minimum, to engage in various processes of information acquisition and integration.” This is to say we typically look for some level of “cognition based trust” (McAllister 1995: 25). Yet, to see trust as a product of “weak inductive knowledge” (Simmel 1978 [1907]: 28).
174) presupposes that we trust our ability to process information. Ultimately, to understand trust as “an individual’s theory as to how another person will perform on some future occasion” (Good 1988: 33) requires that we also possess self-trust; otherwise, how could we act on that theory?

In the end, by ignoring self-trust we run the risk of over-representing the agential properties of social beings. As much as we may wish otherwise, there are limits to our free-will (much to the chagrin of many existentialists). For instance, diseases (as in the case of alcoholism), disorders, intoxication, passions, and the like are all examples of urges or drives that may influence our actions; they constrain our abilities to act for-the-moment. Thus, we can never really know how we are going to act from moment to moment; we can only trust ourselves to act a certain way. Here lies our self-trust. Consequently, for an alcoholic to say, “I trust myself being around alcohol.” does not mean they know they will not succumb to the urge to drink. Rather, it means, based on what they know, they are guessing—they trust—they will not drink. This self-trust is an essential component of our everyday existence. Our very existence, our Being, depends upon it. To slightly reword Descartes’ famous axiom, “I trust, therefore I am.” Self-trust is indeed an essential ingredient in all trust relations and must be recognized as such in theoretical accounts of the concept.

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27 Such a statement would also likely be a declarative statement in that by saying it they would hope to influence their future actions—a strategy which could be even more influential if made around peers that would be with them while they are around this alcohol (thus, if they were to drink they would not only be letting down themselves, but others as well).
I also question Sztompka's (1999: 26) conceptualization of trust as only existing through action: "Trust is more than just contemplative consideration of future possibilities...[it] involves commitment though action or—metaphorically speaking—placing a bet." Does trust exist when I say, "I trust you," but do not act on that statement? According to Sztompka, no. Yet, cannot the very presence of trust actually result in inaction? In this instance I am reminded of one of the arguments explaining low voter turnout in the United States: low voter turnout does not mean voter apathy, but that the citizens simply trust those in Washington D.C. Regardless of whether this statement is true or not, the very fact that it could be true indicates that trust can indeed exist without a "commitment through action."

Likewise, what about self trust and existential trust? Do they too require the presence of purposeful action in order to exist? When I am sleeping (and thus not in action), does that mean those intrapersonal forms of trust are no longer present? Conceptualizing trust in terms of future-oriented action provides only a narrow window through which we can understand trust. Yet trust is so much more than simply doing something. Seeing trust in terms of action ignores the potential for trust to be a type of cultural or social capital, as something that can be called upon when needed; a type of trust savings account.

Understanding trust as being action-oriented is likewise conceptually difficult to grasp when we turn our attention to such types of trust as existential trust, self-trust, epistemological trust, or ontological trust. Do these types of trust likewise
require a commitment through action? Possibly. Yet, then the problem becomes, how do we conceptualize action? Soon, everything begins to be constituted as action and the argument quickly degenerates into a tautology.

Finally, Sztompka (1991: 41) conceptualizes trust as something that is ultimately endowed only upon people: “behind all other social objects, however complex, there also stand some people, and it is the people whom we ultimately endow with trust (sometimes we are acquainted with them, but we may also imagine them, have some information about them, obtain second-hand testimony about them, etc.).” Here too I question whether his definition is too narrow to adequately understand all forms of trust.

Do not we sometimes trust roles regardless of the people in those roles; what about institutions, organizations, or corporations? When I say I trust, for instance, the United Nations, I may not be making any trust claims about individuals within that organization. Yet, this of course is not always the case. It is not unheard of to trust or distrust an organization, yet feel differently toward some of its members. Why else would corporations purchase a company for two or three times its “material” (i.e., assets, property, capital, etc.) worth? Because of its “ideal” worth (i.e., for the reputation and trust that are contained within the name, not because of the people associated with it). Take as an example the company “Kodak”. Sure, Kodak possesses tremendous material assets, but it is in their “ideal” or “symbolic” assets
(specifically the trust people associate with the name Kodak) that analysts suggest reside their real worth (I will return to this example in a moment).

Then certainly, contrary to Sztompka, it need not always be people that we endow with trust. Yet, Sztompka also implies in his definition that it is because of people that we trust: "behind all social objects, however complex, there also stand some people." And why would this not be so? Is trust not a product of social relations and thus purely a child of society? Indeed, in response to this question I would unequivocally agree. But then I would offer in response, what constitutes society? Is it purely subjective minds and ideas? Of course not—it’s people, but people being-in-the-world, in the Heideggerian sense (Carolan under review [a]).

Society, as I have already briefly discussed in chapter one (and as I will discuss in great detail in chapter four), is the social and the natural. Sztompka, like all other trust scholars before him, have been blind to the role of nature; a product of a disciplinary narrative that is distinctly hostile to nature and the material world it represents. We must therefore no longer remain blind to this interrelationship, and instead begin to recognize trust as not only a product of people (a product of society and the ideal) but of nature (the material) as well.

To go back to my earlier example of Kodak: why do so many people trust the Kodak name? I would guess primarily because they have a reputation for producing

28 For those unfamiliar with Heidegger, his use of hyphens in the term “being-in-the-world” were used to emphasize that there is no distance between ourselves and the world. According to Heidegger, therefore, we are as much a part of the world as it is part of us. Yet, whereas Heidegger was primarily concerned with issues of Being, I use his term to emphasis our (society) interrelationship with nature (see Carolan under review[a]).
quality film. If they suddenly starting producing film that took blurry photographs and whose color was slightly off their trust capital would likely soon begin to erode. Here then is a clear example of how nature (i.e., the material world) is part of trust; of where social relations (and thus trust) changed as a result of the material reality (namely, the change in the quality of film being produced). In short, we do not just trust because of language, symbols, and ideas, although these do play a significant role. Rather, we trust as a result of changing ideal and material realities. We do not just trust, we must trust something because of something. This something is a product of both the material and ideal realities.

Trust and Risk

Sztompka’s definition of trust also presupposes risk. For Sztompka, when we trust, we commit ourselves to an act with only a partially predictable outcome. In understanding trust as intimately related to risk Sztompka builds off of Luhmann, whose seminal work was first to relate trust to risk. According to Luhmann (1979: 32), “[t]rust rests on illusion. In actuality, there is less information available than would be required to give assurance of success.” Thus, “trust is only required if a bad outcome would make you regret your actions” (Luhmann 1988: 98). Herein lies the risky nature of trust for both Sztompka and Luhmann. As they understand it, risks “emerge only as a component of decision and action” (Luhmann 1988: 100), trust is therefore “activated by our actions, the choices we make, the decisions we
Therefore, "if you refrain from action you run no risk" (Luhmann 1988: 100).

Yet, does not all action, as well as inaction, involve risk? Just as trust has been understood as a theory about how others will perform on some future occasion (Good 1988: 33), action—as well as inaction—also rests upon an individual’s “theory” of the future (which is concomitantly a theory of one's past and present). Action and inaction are based upon a complex amalgamation of perceived pasts, presents, and futures. And because those various realities are perceived (Stephen Hawking (1996) has referred to this as “imaginary time”) we run the risk of acting (or not acting) according to inaccurate perceptions and assumptions. Only a God-like figure with the ability to step outside the temporal bonds of linearity can act (or not act) without risk. Humans, being the finite creatures that we are, do not possess this ability. Instead, we are forced to see the future through the crystal ball provided to us by our perceptions of past and present realities, and must act (or not act) according to those perceptions—a truly risky human fate.

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30 Hawking (1996: 182) provides some rather thought provoking questions when he distinguishes between what he terms “imaginary time” and “real time”: “Imaginary time is indistinguishable from directions in space. If one can go north, one can turn around and head south; equally, if one can go forward in imaginary time, one ought to be able to turn around and go backward. This means that there can be no important difference between the forward and backward direction of imaginary time. On the other hand, when one looks at ‘real’ time, there’s a big difference between the forward and backward directions, as we all know. Where does this difference between the past and the future come from? Why do we remember the past but not the future?”

31 As Karl Popper (1964 [1957]) noted, history only exists in the mind—it is pure interpretation—and the same could easily be said of our social present and futures.
Many theories of trust, therefore, appear to overemphasize trust's risky nature (indeed, could not trust also reduce risk by enabling people to do things that they might not be able to do were not trust present?). Trust is indeed risky, but so too is social life. Ultimately, the argument that trust is risky becomes a tautology—or a trusim—because all of social life is risky, not just trust. Such conceptualizations of trust thus begin equating trust to sociality, which get us nowhere conceptually.

And what about distrust? Is not it equally as risky? If you ask to borrow a book from me and I deny your request, do I not also place myself at risk? Do I not risk jeopardizing our friendship? Do I not risk the possibility of you not trusting me in future occasions? Do I not risk you telling others that I did not let you use my book, thus risking the possibility that others will not trust me? It appears that this preoccupation some theorists have had in unconditionally linking trust to risk is, in part, unwarranted. Nevertheless, there is still something to be said of the relationship, although it must differ conceptually from previous accounts.

In the following chapter, I detail trust's relationship to confidence. Nevertheless, I would now like to briefly partake in a preemptive discussion of that relationship with the reader's understanding that a more complete discussion will shortly follow. This discussion is in order because we can only fully grasp risk's relationship to trust while simultaneously reflecting upon confidence.

While risk pervades all acts, and all non-acts (because inaction is itself a type of action), the distinction is a matter of perception. When you trust, you are cognizant of the
fact that what you are doing is not a sure thing; you are conscious of the risks involved with your action. On the other hand, to be confident of something is to be non-cognizant of risk. Although risks are still present in acts motivated by confidence, you are unaware of them—that is what makes the act one of confidence, and not of trust (in fact, not being aware of the risks actually makes acts of confidence even more risky). The distinction to be made then is not that trust is risky and confidence is not; indeed, they both are. Rather, the distinction hinges on whether we perceive the situation as risky or not, and that determines whether the act is one of trust or confidence.

I will now leave this discussion for a moment (only to return shortly when I discuss the conceptual distinctions and similarities between trust and the related terms of faith, hope, and confidence). The point to remember, however, is that trust is not somehow inherently more risky than other forms of action. The level of risk present is not a matter of ontology, but rather phenomenology; it is not a factor of what is, but what we perceive to be the case. Any theoretical exploration into the realm of trust must therefore incorporate the aforementioned relationship between trust and risk (which then also leads to further conceptual clarity about trust's relationship to other such concepts as confidence, faith, and hope).
Trust and Distrust

In developing a greater theoretical understanding of trust, some theorists have concomitantly constructed conceptual frameworks of distrust. I, however, will not follow in those footsteps, for this reason: distrust cannot be understood as being distinct from—or as merely the opposite (or lack) of—trust, like most scholars have suggested. Distrust is not, as Sztompka (1999: 26) argues, “the negative mirror-image of trust.” Rather, when we say we distrust someone or something, what we really are doing is simply trusting something else—trust is still present. In fact, distrust presupposes trust.32

Take the aforementioned example of you wanting to borrow a book from me, but I deny your request citing the fact I do not trust you to return it to me promptly. In this situation, trust is not absent. Indeed, I must trust in something strongly enough to cause me to not lend you my book, and thus face the risks associated with those actions (i.e., losing our friendship, being denied your trust when I ask to borrow something, and so on.).

Thus, in this particular instance, my not trusting your ability to return my book is a cumulative product of numerous other trusts. It, of course, first requires various forms of intrapersonal trust (ontological trust, existential trust, self trust, and epistemological trust)—all social encounters require this—but it could also be a product of other people telling me that you can not be trusted (hence, I would be trusting them when they say you cannot be trusted). Likewise, being the good friend you are, you could have told me that you are

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32 Luhmann (1979) went as far to argue that trust requires trust, but if this is true than distrust must also require trust.
relatively untrustworthy when it comes to returning things to people on time due to your absentmindedness. Thus, my distrusting you to return the book could be the result of me actually trusting you when you told me that you could not be trusted to return things in a timely manner.

Regardless of the situation, however, all distrust requires some type of trust—at least at some level. If this were not true, we would have to distrust our distrust. Such a state, while leading down the sure road of nihilism, is also logically and theoretically incoherent. In light of this discussion it should be clear that distrust is much more than simply the negative image of trust. As Luhmann (1979: 71) argued: distrust “is not just the opposite of trust; as such, it is also a functional equivalent for trust” (emphasis in original).

Thus, to understand distrust we must understand trust. This is not to claim that trust and distrust are one in the same. We all know this from our everyday experiences—when we say we distrust something we are expressing sentiments that are distinctly different than if we were to say we trusted that something. But they are theoretically identical.

Like trust, distrust is based upon the attitudes toward what we know that we do not know. The same social processes, dimensions (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural), and realms (society and nature) that constitute trust, likewise constitute distrust. Thus, while trust and distrust vary with the sentiments they convey, they are identical in the complex social relations that go into their constitution.
It is now time to survey the terrain which we have just covered and work toward the first step in developing an integrative theory of trust. Let us now embark upon the next chapter, and in so doing take that first step.
The combined action of authority and trust which underlies both the learning of language and its use for carrying messages, is a simplified instance of a process which enters into the whole transmission of culture...[and] can be received only when one person places an exceptional degree of confidence in another....— Michael Polanyi 1962: 207.

Without being bound to the fulfillment of promises, we would never be able to keep our identities; we would be condemned to wander helplessly and without direction in the darkness of each man’s lonely heart, caught in its contradictions and equivocalities....—Hannah Arendt 1958: 237

Clearly, much intellectual energy has been devoted to disentangling some of the complexities associated with trust. Yet, it is also clear that much still needs to be accomplished. With this chapter, we enter a realm of the as of yet unexplored. Some of the pieces to this multidimensional puzzle of trust have already been assembled for us—for this I owe much to the many “giants” upon whose shoulders I stand, and who have commanded our attention throughout the previous chapter. Still, many other pieces have yet to be located. Our task, therefore, is to not only locate those pieces to this puzzle we know as trust, but to also situate them (along with those already assembled) into a coherent socio-theoretical framework.

While the previous chapter highlights the eclectic nature of trust scholarship to date, there is nevertheless one common thread that seems to remain constant, and it is from this common threat that I shall now provide a working definition of trust. Trust is our attitudes
toward what we know that we do not know (or, if you prefer, it is our attitude toward our knowledge of our non-knowledge). This definition has close parallels to Simmel’s (1978: 174), who saw trust as being based upon knowledge and non-knowledge, emerging from what he calls “weak inductive knowledge.” In short, when there are gaps in our knowledge toward someone or something, if we know that our knowledge is in want within a social setting, trust becomes important. If we were omnipresent and all knowing (or if we were simply unaware of our cognitive limits), the issue of trust would be moot; we would have no need for trust, for we would simply know the outcome of all action.

The type of attitude we have toward what we know that we do now know, however, is significant because it affects the form of trust that ensues, with there being four such attitudes: simple trust, confidence, hope, and faith. Yet, before directing discussion toward a detailed analysis of these four attitudes of trust, allow me to first review how others have grappled with trust’s relationship to the attitudes of confidence, faith, and hope.

Contemporary Accounts of the Four Forms of Trust

The etymological origins of the word “trust” reveal close affinities to such terms as faith, confidence and even hope. Yet, these affinities likewise extend much beyond mere

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33 And as a working definition greater depth is added as the dissertation unfolds.
34 These four attitudes of trust are fluid, however (as will become clearer later in the chapter), which is to say there is no specific attitudinal location where, for example, “simple trust” becomes “confidence”.
35 For instance, The Oxford English Dictionary provides the archaic definition of hope, which means “trust; confidence.”
etymology. It is clear that when we speak of trusting someone, we mean something distinctly different than if we were to say we have faith, hope, or even confidence in that someone. Thus, while these interrelated terms are indeed similar, they are not synonymous with each other. To say we "trust" is to convey and evoke intersubjective meanings distinctly different from those conveyed and evoked when speaking of such terms as confidence, hope, or faith.

How then can we understand trust as being simultaneously both related to, and yet distinct, from these other concepts? Perhaps we might gather insight into this question by being mindful of how others have attempted to answer it in the past.

One of the earliest social scientific works to conceptually tackle distinguishing between trust and faith comes to us from psychologists Isaacs, Alexander, and Haggard (Isaacs et al. 1967). Writing from a psychoanalytic perspective, Isaacs and associates argue that faith is understood as an undoubting, unconditional belief where data are ignored. Trust is thus distinguishable from faith because it connotes an affective attitude directed outward and involves a sense of comfort or confidence that certain acts and behavior will or will not occur. Consequently, while trust and faith are similar in that they both require a degree of unconditional belief, they likewise differ in their orientation towards evidence: faith is based on an unconditional belief that ignores all available evidence (which would either further support the faith or contradict it), while trust is based on a belief grounded in evidence (an understanding of trust similar to that made within a rational choice framework).

In doing this, however, Isaacs and colleagues appear to overemphasize the self-calculating rationality of the individual actor when placed within potential trust situations
(which is, as I have earlier argued, a terribly constrained epistemological view of trust). In addition, their relating faith to the ignoring of data inaccurately describes how most of us actually experience the act of bestowing faith onto something. Rather, what appears to be characteristic of faith is not necessarily the act of ignoring data or irrationality, but, as I will describe in greater detail in the following section, a non-reflexive certitude of the situation. We take, as they say, “a leap of faith”, which involves a projection of certainty regardless of the data before us. In fact, to have faith is to “leap” before even examining the evidence (more will be discussed of this shortly). What we must remember, however, contrary to Isaacs and associates, is that faith need not be associated with irrationality—indeed, if it is anything, it is arational due to its non-reflexive character.

Turning to the work of Niklas Luhmann (1979, 1988, 1993) we find a systematic conceptual distinction between trust and confidence, a distinction that has served as the benchmark for a generation of social theorists.\textsuperscript{36} Luhmann’s distinction between confidence and trust is based on the differentiation between a familiar environment (in which one has confidence) and a risky environment (in which one may make a judgement to trust). Trust, according to Luhmann (1988: 97), “presupposes a situation of risk. If you do not consider alternatives, you are in a situation of confidence. If you choose one action in preference to others in spite of the possibility of being disappointed by the actions of others, you define the situation as one of trust.” The alternative to risk, which Luhmann (1994: 23) relates with trust, is danger, which he links to confidence: “[O]nly in the case of risk does decision-

\textsuperscript{36} Luhmann’s conceptual distinction between trust and confidence has since been utilized in numerous socio-theoretical accounts of trust—i.e., Barber (1983), Earle and Cvetkovich (1995), Giddens (1990), Seligman (1997), and Sztompka (1999).
making (that is to say contingency) play a role. One is exposed to dangers.” Thus, in situations of confidence, one is exposed to dangers, yet no thought is normally given to them because they are familiar and fall within one’s realm of ability to manage. In situations of trust, on the other hand, one must choose between alternative actions, and thus alternative futures, where the possible outcome can only be partially known. 37

Upon closer inspection, however, the conceptual lines Luhmann draws between “trust” and “confidence” are inaccurate because both involve various degrees of familiarity differentiated by their attitudes toward what we know that we do not know and their concomitant levels of risk. The distinction can best be understood as that between trust as something that is based upon new, yet-to-be-routinized social relations, which therefore makes it risky (thus fitting Luhmann’s concept of “trust”), and trust as a product of habit and routinization or institutionalization, thus fitting Luhmann’s description of “confidence”. Luhmann’s “trust”, then, exists in those instances where the perception of risk is present, while his “confidence” exists in those instances where the perception of risk is minimal or non-existent.

The distinction made by Luhmann is, however, an important one (and his emphasis on risk pivotal, as I will soon explain). Yet, instead of locating the distinction as being between trust and confidence, as Luhmann has done, I prefer to distinguish between “simple trust” and

37 Seligman (1997) provides a very similar account of confidence. According to Seligman, confidence is based upon a firmness of expectations on which individual action is based. Confidence is to be found when the structure of roles is precisely and unambiguously articulated, thus one can be assured that the potential trustee will play by the rules. On the other hand, trust exists only when “there is role negotiability, in what may be termed the ‘open spaces’ of roles and roles expectation” (Seligman 1997: 24)
"confidence", both of which are then subsumed within the broader attitude of trust. I do this to reconcile the following problematic aspect of trust: how can trust be both present in confidence, faith, and hope, while simultaneously remain quantitatively distinct from these attitudes? Conceptualizing trust as our attitudes toward our knowledge of what we do not know, and then distinguishing between four such attitudes—simple trust (which is what Luhmann understands as trust), confidence, faith, and hope—solves, I believe, this apparent paradox. Let us now address this distinction in greater detail.

The Initial Four-Quadrant Model

The simplest way to illustrate the interrelationship between these four forms of trust is visually: Figure 1 thus represents the first pictorial piece of our conceptual model. A quick examination of Figure 1 reveals four quadrants: simple trust (upper-left), confidence (upper-right), hope (lower-left), and faith (lower-right). Dividing the four quadrants are two continua: risk and evidence. The vertical continuum, representing the vertical axis, is "risk", stretching from "substantial" risk on the left end of the continuum to "minimal" risk on the right. The horizontal continuum, representing the horizontal axis, is "evidence", which extends from "substantial" evidence on the upper boundary of the continuum to "minimal" evidence on the continuum's lower limit. I should remind the reader, however, that Figure 1 signifies only the first of many stages, and thus caution against it being hastily dismissed. Nevertheless, I do not wish to lessen the true authority that I believe this first stage commands, which I will detail in a moment.
Before illustrating the analytic and conceptual validity that resides within Figure 1, I would like to be clear on what the continuums of “risk” and “evidence” represent. Although I have earlier discussed this first point, it is of enough significance to repeat: when I speak of risk, I am speaking of perceived risks; I am speaking of risks within the mind (i.e., those we are cognizant of), not those of the body (i.e., those that actually exist). Indeed, one could make a persuasive argument that confidence is actually more risky than trust simply because we are less conscious of the actual risks present. When we are confident, we act as though few (or no) risks are present when in fact they are (remember, action is always risky), which is itself a very risky epistemological stance. Thus, when I speak of “risk”, I am speaking of

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38 This is not to say, however, that risks do not exist in the material sense (a point that will be made clearer shortly).
the *phenomenology of risk*, not the ontology of risk (i.e., of whether they actually exist or not). And following the phenomenology of risk, simple trust is more risky than confidence, and hope more risky than faith. In fact, risk is what differentiates simple trust from confidence and hope from faith (see Figure 1).

The other point I wish to highlight pertains to my use of the term “evidence”. I should note that I have chosen this term with much reluctance due to its hoary positivist, empiricist, and materialistic implications. For while my conceptualization of “evidence” does include the cold, objective, material type—the type we can reduce to a word, a number, or perhaps a thought—it also means much more. By “evidence” I also mean beliefs, emotions, and the moral forces that come from within: the enchantment of spirit, mood, and soul in a disenchanted world of cold material matter. In short, when I speak of evidence, I speak of both: that which originates from within, as well as that which originates from without. (In the following chapter I develop this further).

My use of evidence does not extend, however, to the purely noumenal world (that world which is inaccessible to consciousness). Rather, my conceptualization of “evidence” extends only to that “evidence” which we are conscious of. This evidence may exist “out there” in the noumenal world, but if it has yet to enter our phenomenological lens of consciousness, then it is not “evidence” as I am using the concept. Thus, like risk, when I speak of evidence, I am speaking of a *phenomenology of evidence*. I am speaking of evidence as it exists for each of us, within our own minds and within our hearts, and as we are conscious of it.
Before continuing, a few words should also be said about the continuums themselves.

The continuums are purely heuristic devices to help illustrate concepts. If they represented true continuums they would have been designed with a range spanning from "zero" risk or evidence, to "complete" risk or evidence—a range in reality which would be not only unlikely, but impossible. I have instead decided upon a more practical continuum. Given that we can never be in a situation that is completely absent of both risk and evidence (especially given my broader conceptualization of "evidence"), except possibly in death, I initiate each continuum from a point that more accurately represents social life: a point which signifies "minimal" risk or evidence. Likewise, nor can we ever find ourselves in a situation with total risk and evidence. Thus, the other end of the continuum is represented by the term "substantial".

It is also important to note why I have chosen the word "substantial" over other terms that arguably more accurately represent the antonym to "minimal"—such as the terms "maximal" or "maximum". I choose "substantial" over such terms as "maximal" or "maximum" for practical purposes, and to more accurately represent social life. For instance, "maximal" (or "maximum") evidence or risk represents a level of epistemology out of reach for the finite creatures that we are; we can never know (be conscious of) a "maximal" situation of risk and evidence. We are simply not infinite God-like creatures with an unlimited epistemological perspective. Instead, all we can ever be conscious of is a "substantial" level of risk and evidence—for there can always be more. Perhaps, then, these continuums could best be described as rays—as straight lines extending from a point. And given that there can "always be more" (that we can never be conscious of the end), the line
can therefore extend arguably to infinity. In the end, however, I have decided upon the use of continuums verses rays, for continuums provide a more systematic and orderly illustration of what I am attempting to illustrate.

I should also note that the "quadrants" themselves are purely heuristic devices; they are not intended to represent simple trust, confidence, faith, and hope as being distinctly separate entities. For instance, the exact location of where simple trust ends and confidence begins on the continuum of risk is unclear. The reader must thus keep conscious the fact that the boundaries separating all four quadrants are in reality fluid and mutable, and can conceivably change from situation to situation, and from person to person. And this fluidity is represented in the segmentation of the continuums, as opposed to a straight immutable line.

Allow me to now turn discussion onto Figure 1 itself, and illustrate some of its capabilities as a conceptual framework. Remember, this framework will be revisited throughout the following chapters as we continually add components onto it. Consequently, if this present discussion does not provide sufficient detail, I ask for patience until the final component of the model has been put into place. As I have said, the journey ahead is indeed a long one; we can no more chart the polymorphic terrain of trust in a few pages than a cartographer can chart newly explored land in a few hours (indeed, theories are basically conceptual maps and theorists conceptual cartographers). Each chapter will provide the reader with increasing clarity and detail as the model and discussions become further refined. With this in mind, let us return our attention to the model.
I direct your attention first to the upper-right quadrant: confidence. Confidence is depicted as existing in situations where risk is low and evidence is present to some substantiability. Say, for instance, that I lent you twenty dollars, and that this is not the first time I have done so. In fact, I have lent you money countless times before—and on a few occasions much more than twenty dollars—and each time you repaid me in a prompt manner. Thus, I have what I perceive to be strong "evidence" to suggest that I will be repaid (also, our friendship exposes me to moral and social forces that are themselves "evidence"—see chapter four—to support this belief). Besides, you are known as someone who is both dependable and honest (which is itself a form of "evidence"), why should I doubt such an honorable reputation?

My loaning you money and you promptly paying me back has over time also had the affect of gradually reducing my conscious awareness of risk as our exchange becomes slowly habitualized and routinized (what I discuss in chapter seven as the "structuration of trust"). I may begin to reason: "Why should I doubt you now, you've never let me down in the past". On the other hand, I may not reason at all (in the case of our exchange becoming firmly habitualized): "You want twenty dollars? O.K." Either way, the perception of risk is minimal. In this example, we thus have an act based upon ample evidence and which involves minimal risk. Looking at the model we can quickly discern that what I am experiencing is confidence—a label I believe would fit most interpretations of the situation.

Now let's change the story a little. Let's say that you approach me to borrow money, but that this is the first time you have done so. Although we have known each other for a
number of years, neither of us have attempted to borrow from the other (until now). Yet, I have come to know you as a trustworthy, honest person, and I know (or at least I think I know) you would not do anything to betray our friendship. Given this, I have what I perceive to be considerable justification or “evidence” to warrant my loaning you money.

Nevertheless, I do not take this exchange lightly. Although I believe you will eventually repay me, I have concerns over the length of time that will transpire before you do so. Granted, although you may appear to be a trustworthy person, I have never actually “tested” that trustworthiness myself. Perhaps I am mistaken? I feel, however, that as a friend I am almost compelled (or better yet, obliged) to loan you the money (as I detail in the following chapter, this perception of obligation could itself understood as a form of “evidence”). Besides, what would that say of me if I could not make this simple gesture of friendship? Thus, while “evidence” in various forms abounds, risk is also present. Looking at the model, we locate this act as one of simple trust.

Allow me to now direct discussion toward how this model “fits” with some common everyday uses of the various terms. Let’s look first at why scholars of trust have been so adamant about denying trust to non-human objects: “it seems strange to say ‘I trust there will be sunshine in Berlin at the weekend,’ or ‘I distrust the volcano.’ Intuitively we feel that trust must be vested in people, rather than natural objects or events” (Sztompka 1999:19). Indeed, it does sound strange to proclaim “I trust the sun to rise tomorrow” or to assert “I trust the headlights on my car will work”. Yet why is this?
We can start by examining the seemingly common statement, “I have confidence the sun will rise tomorrow”, and examine how the model accounts for it. First, this statement is supported by plenty of “evidence”, in all variants of its meaning—i.e., scientific evidence (Newton’s law of gravity), phenomenological evidence (the sun has risen every morning of my life, why would it stop now?), interpersonal evidence (everyone else believes the sun will rise tomorrow), and intrapersonal evidence (if I do not believe the sun will rise tomorrow I am threatening my very existential condition). In addition to all of this apparent “evidence”, there is also very little risk in making the statement. We all know that regardless of what we say, the sun is either going to rise tomorrow or not; our saying it will or will not does not affect the actual outcome. So far, the model appears to be on track in making sense of all of this.

Moreover, as illustrated in the preceding example, the model also describes why it sounds strange to say we trust something like the environment and other non-human objects: because, at least as we perceive it, those objects are beyond our locus of control (and thus there is little perceived risk). Our trusting or distrusting the sun to rise will not affect whether or not it actually rises. Our trusting or distrusting my car’s headlights to work will not actually affect whether they will work or not. The sun and my headlights will do what they will do irregardless of what I say about them. I cannot stop the sun from shining by proclaiming my distrust for it any more then I can stop the sun’s gravitational force from affecting the earth—unlike, for example, my ability to deny you use of my book (after you asked to borrow it) by denying you my trust.
Take another commonly expressed statement: “I have faith that God exists”. First, for faith to exist, what must be absent? Faith is, by definition, an act based upon a lacking (although not necessarily a complete absence) of “evidence”—hence the saying, “a leap of faith”. Indeed, the presence of sufficient evidence (which varies from individual to individual) would cause an act to no longer be one of faith, but rather something else—such as confidence (as noted by the model). Consequently, if someone who had previously had faith in God’s existence where to actually see the Deity (and they believed this encounter to be authentic), they would likely cease to label their belief as one of faith, and instead signify it as one of confidence: “Now, after having been His (of Her) witness, I am confident that God exists”.

Yet, what about using hope to describe one’s belief in God (or, if you prefer, in Brahman, Dharmakaya, Kether, Tao, Allah, Shiva, Yahweh, Aton)? Indeed, people do assert their hope in God’s existence, although this seems to suggest something quite different from those who liken their belief to either one of faith or confidence. Yet, what makes this so? Again, we can look toward the model to answer this question.

To say one has either faith or confidence in the One is to make a statement that has attached to it little risk; indeed, to our true believer, the risks lie in not making such a statement (i.e., the risk of eternal damnation). How then does this differ from the statement, “I hope God exists”? Looking at the model, we can see that like faith, hope is the lacking of sufficient evidence, but unlike faith, hope also indicates the presence of substantial risk.
Hope, thus, presupposes risk. What then does this tell us about the proclamation, “I hope God exists”?  

To have faith or confidence in Her (or His) existence, you are by definition secure in your convictions, and interpret the situation as possessing little risk because of those convictions. This, for example, is the basis of such ancient litanies as the 23d Psalm: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of darkness, I fear no evil for I know [I have faith/ I have confidence] You are with me”. To hope God exists, on the other hand, suggests the lacking of such strong convictions, which consequently leads one to interpret the situation quite differently. Specifically, you perceive the situation in more risky terms precisely because of those deficiencies in your conviction regarding His (or Her) existence.  

For instance, those that hope God exists can at best only hope for divine intervention (because their lack of one of the stronger convictions of faith or confidence in) during moments when one’s life is in considerable danger; a sentiment that presupposes the perception of tremendous risk—namely, the possibility of death. Conversely, those with an unwavering faith or confidence in a Supreme Creator would perceive such a situation with less trepidation. They will either be saved by His hand though an act of divine intervention, or they will die (and thus be Saved). Either way, He will take care of them. Every major world religion, as well as Existential philosophy, teaches not to fear death, for only through an expectance of death can we truly embrace life—an outlook that, if achieved, can truly curtail a person’s perception of risks throughout life.
The model also illustrates why the proclamation, "I trust God exists", sounds rather strange. Granted, you will find such sayings as "in God we trust" on, for example, currency within the United States, but this use of trust evokes a rather antiquated meaning of the term which today is still used in law—trust as in a legal title to property held by one party for the benefit of another. Typically, however, you do not hear someone say they are entrusting God with something, like you might entrust your child with the family car: to even suggest such a thing calls into question the very limitlessness that makes god God.

To trust (or more accurate to express "simple trust"), as illustrated by the model, is to perceive both substantial risk as well as evidence. The problem, therefore, with trusting God is this: if you possess substantial evidence regarding Her (or His) existence, you will most likely not perceive the situation as risky (regardless of the situation, at least for the true believers, salvation ultimately awaits). It is therefore logically inconsistent to say one trusts God, and actually mean it, for to trust God is to possess evidence of His (or Her) infiniteness, yet to concomitantly bring into question (and thus perceive risk) that infinitude.

Before concluding the chapter I would now like to make one final note regarding my "working definition" of trust. In defining trust, I do not mean to suppress any future dialogue surrounding the concept. Definitions should not assert "this is what the concept means, end of discussion", but rather they should be used as tools to promote discussion and thoughtful intellectual exchange. I only hope future scholars find some hints of wisdom in this work as I have found in the plentiful works of others before me. This is therefore not the end, but
rather just one more beginning in an infinite stream of beginnings. And I too will be returning to this definition from time to time throughout the dissertation.

I want to make it clear, however, that when I speak of trust, I am speaking of all forms of trust. In an attempt to create a concise definition of trust that is easily operationalizable, one can easily thwart the full essence and life-blood of the concept, and thus fail to bring us any closer to what trust is per se. Consequently, instead of developing a full theoretical understanding of trust, in all of its multidimensional glory, we find ourselves swimming in a seemingly endless list of specific variations of trust, with little discussion of the overarching phenomenon of trust itself.

Perusing the recent literature one quickly finds themselves drowning in a multitude of trust-types: “third-party trust”, “delegated trust”, “affective trust”, “intermediary trust”, and “humanistic trust” (Patterson 1999); “personal” and “impersonal” trust (Shapiro 1987); “altruistic trust” (Mansbridge 1999), “thick trust” and “thin trust” (Burt and Knez 1996; Putnam 2000; Williams 1988); “mutual trust” (Sztompka 1999); “universalized” and “experimental” trust (Offe 1999); and “generalized trust” (Uslaner 1999), just to name a few. It quickly becomes apparent that while there has been tremendous interest among scholars to more fully understand trust, those intellectual energies have been overwhelmingly directed toward detailing the various forms through which trust becomes actualized, while only marginally bringing us closer to understanding the social polymorphism of trust itself.

These numerous terms do, however, highlight a significant finding: there are indeed various forms of trust (and most of the above mentioned forms could be placed within what I
have called "confidence" and "simple trust"). But as different forms of trust (and here is where these accounts become inadequate), they are nevertheless all still trust, and must be recognized and connected as such. And through my working definition and the four-quadrant model I believe I have taken the early steps to do so.

Our journey has thus begun. With only a general definition and a simple conceptual framework in hand we shall now proceed to map the conceptual realm of trust with critical eyes and passionate hearts. While trust is indeed enigmatic, it is not indecipherable. Let us finish then what we have begun, and work toward resolving that elusive question—"what is trust"?
CHAPTER FOUR: THE DIALOGUE OF SOCIETY AND NATURE—
TOWARD A FOUNDATION OF RISK AND EVIDENCE

We reduce things to mere Nature in order that we may 'conquer' them. We are always conquering Nature, because 'Nature' is the name for what we have, to some extent, conquered.—C. S. Lewis 1955: 82-83

The question concerning our basic relation to nature, our knowledge of nature as such, our domination of nature, is not a question of natural science but stands in question itself in the question of how we are still addressed by what is as such and as a whole.—Martin Heidegger 1967: 51

Before delving deeper into the intricacies of trust itself, we must first further elucidate what is meant by the axis of “risk” and “evidence” as they pertain to the four-quadrant model. As I earlier explained, risk refers to the phenomenology of risk, and evidence to the phenomenology of evidence. What we perceive to be risks and evidence can either be present solely in consciousness (i.e., a moral force of obligation, a belief, or an attitude) or objectively (i.e., as something we can actually feel "out there"); but they must nevertheless still be experienced through consciousness to exist as a force which compels.

A goal of this chapter is to thus provide breathing room so that we can adequately address the dual ontologies of both evidence and risk—as being both material and ideal phenomena. This is a task with a significant degree of difficulty in a discipline (namely sociology) that has at best been resistant (or at times negligent) of the material realm, and at worst hostile to it. And to do this we will have to look
critically at. and in some instances call for a reorientation of, the socio-theoretical narrative of the discipline of sociology itself.

As I will soon detail, sociology has had a long theoretical tradition of claiming an epistemological supremacy over issues of the social. Sociology is the study of social facts through other social facts. This is what makes (and what originally made) sociology a distinct discipline separate from psychology, from philosophy, from economics, and from history—or so the argument goes. And as such, it is claimed our disciplinary energies should be directed toward the study of the interrelationships between social phenomenon. Anything else, it is feared, could delegitimize its epistemological claims and ultimately the discipline itself.

In this light, the very concept of, for instance, environmental sociology would appear at first glance to be an oxymoron, contradictory, and somewhat paradoxical. It’s a bit like calling someone an aqua-agronomist or perhaps an idealist materialist. Indeed, the disciplinary narrative of sociology is built upon there being an ontological distinction between society and nature, where interactions occur within, but never between, each realm (therefore sociologists are to study the interactions within society while, for instance, biologists study the interactions within nature). In this light, environmental sociology could thus be seen as nothing less than a vulgar, perverted cross between sociology and biology—a modern variant of socio-biology.

But this does not any more accurately portray environmental sociology than it does the interrelationship between society and nature. What environmental sociology does attempt to do is break down the ontological barriers which have been erected
between society and nature. In doing this, environmental sociology subverts the epistemological claims made by the founders of the discipline by studying the society-nature relationship—thus violating Durkheim’s assertion that the causes of social facts must be sought in other social facts. Environmental sociologists do not see nature as being beyond the grasp of sociological analysis, nor do they view the society-nature relationship as trivial. As argued by Arthur Mol (1995: 23), “the environment has moved from the periphery to the centre of sociological attention and is now acknowledged as a major factor in triggering institutional transformation.”

This call by environmental sociologists for mainstream sociology to “bring nature back in” (Catton 1996), however, appears to be falling largely upon deaf ears. It seems that for most within sociology, nature does not matter, at least when issues of theory are of concern. But if we hope to more fully understand social life in all of its complexity, which I assume as social scientists we all do, then nature does (and must) matter.

Social life is a product of the interrelationship between society and nature—the existence of one presupposes the existence of the other. To understand one we must therefore also understand its relation to, and its relationship with, the other. Society does not just exist. Rather, it exists in-the-world, as noted by Heidegger. We are not just conscious. Rather, to quote Husserl (1970: 33), “we must be conscious of something” (emphasis in original). We are not just intersubjective. We must be intersubjective of something—what I have earlier referred to as superintersubjectivity.
Our existence and our very being constitutes, and is constituted by, the bio-physical world around us.

Freudenburg (2000: 105), using technology as an example, details this inseparable interrelationship between society and nature:

On the one hand, technology is inherently a social product. It is the result of human ingenuity, manipulation, exertion, creativity, blind spots, and other human strengths and weaknesses, and it is often capable of changing what we understand to be 'the' physical limits of a system. On the other hand, technology is also inherently physical. It is shaped by physical factors that are sometimes likely to be taken for granted and at other times to be taken as problematic, but that in practice can rarely be ignored with impunity. (emphasis in original)

Freudenburg suggests while it is sometimes possible to separate certain elements into either category at an analytical level, this separation can by no means be fully carried out. Rather, these distinctions more represent analytical convenience than they do ontology. The quest to fully separate the social from the natural is no more possible than, as Freudenburg (2000: 105) later argues, “to saw apart the north and south poles of a magnet”.

The analogy is quite fitting: just like you cannot have a north pole without a south pole, you cannot have society without nature. The two, therefore, should not be understood in terms of their distinctiveness, but rather in terms of their inseparability. I always think of a magnet as being (philosophical pun intended) both poles—magnet is (it exists as) a north and south pole. And we should begin to understand nature and society in a similar way.

To then truly have social theory—if indeed society constitutes nature and nature constitutes society—should not one give proper due to both society and
nature? What does this say of "social" theory that does not recognize this interrelationship? Understandably, how these questions are addressed could have significant ramifications to the future of social theory and the discipline of sociology itself.

In making room in sociology's disciplinary narrative for the dual ontologies of risk and evidence I hope to also build upon my contemporaries who are working to give society and nature equal theoretical billing. It is my hope that by demonstrating the interrelationship between society and nature in the constitutiveness of something as apparently social as trust I will be able to convey onto others the importance of this interrelationship so that they, in turn, carry it with them throughout their explorations of social life. This argument is therefore not intended solely for environmental sociologists. The theoretical, social, political, and ethical implications of the separation of nature from society are too great to be ignored by all but a sub-division of the discipline. Rather, the argument is intended for all wishing to attain a deeper understanding of society. By illustrating the various theoretical, social, political, and ethical implications associated with a dualistic understanding of society and nature I thus challenge others to reassess their own understandings of the social and the natural. I do this with the hope of ultimately reconstructing the theoretical narrative upon which sociology is built, and thus bring nature into sociology.

To begin this long journey I would like to take a short trip back in time to arguably the birthplace of Western social thought itself. Simply looking back to the origins of sociology would not be far enough, however: our intellectual roots run
much deeper than that. To fully understand this distinction within sociology between society and nature we must at least be familiar with the philosophical history associated with that distinction. Only by understanding the intellectual origins of the material-ideal division (which, as we will see, is simply an older version of the nature-society division) will we have the conceptual tools to critique and ultimately reconstruct that division into one which acknowledges interdependence, mutuality, and care. And only then can we begin the process of developing a truly social theory of trust.

An Intellectual Tradition Built upon the Material-Ideal Division

The division between the material and ideal is an ancient philosophical distinction with roots in ancient Greek and ancient Chinese thought (among other cultures), and it is at the heart of sociology. This distinction in Western philosophical thought can be traced back as early as Plato with his “theory of ideas”. Specifically, the Platonic tradition presumed that what was other than, or beyond, nature was the eternal or archetypal Forms, the true perfect Reality behind appearances. Aristotle likewise differentiated between the material and the ideal. The Aristotelians regarded *phusis*, or nature, as the essential principle of change (*teleos*). Conversely, the antithesis of the unchangeable thing within this tradition were ideas—such as mathematics and immutable Spirit. The Christian metaphysic

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39 In this discussion I will focus primarily on Western philosophical thought given its heavy influence upon sociology.
tradition then extended the Aristotelian concept so that God is regarded as the creator of nature (referred to as the doctrine of "teleology"), meaning that nature in this demoted sense is distinct from God. In all of these philosophical traditions, nature—the material—is not only distinct but ontologically separate from the ideal (which contains such phenomena as Forms, God, and Spirit).

The transformation (from a mythic to a theoretic society) that this distinction represents for early Greek thought cannot be overstated. This transformation is associated with the discernment of nature and thus has the ability to treat nature as a particular kind of object (Everden 1992). Some have in fact argued that the very attention to objects or things only become imaginable at this moment when they can be construed as separate from their viewers, and thus become an object for our theoretical gaze. As suggested by Julian Marias (1967: 4), "theorizing consciousness sees things where previously it saw only powers. This constitutes the great discovery of things, a discovery so profound that today it is difficult for us to realize that it actually was a discovery or to imagine that it could have happened any other way."

Here lies the foundation of Western metaphysics: an intellectual orientation to being rather than to Being (Heidegger 1962) and the dualisms that such an orientation erects.

The implications of this philosophical tradition have been far reaching. The scientific method, environmental ethics, issues of social justice, and the Western dominant world-view all have roots reaching back to this ancient distinction between the material and ideal. But we need not go back as far as Plato or Aristotle to locate
when this division became the foundation of Western society itself, and the scientific world-view which has come to embody its culture.

*The Legacy of René Descartes*

How we perceive and interpret the world around us is profoundly shaped by the dominant Western world-view. It is a product of the Enlightenment and the influential scholars who helped to pen it (i.e., Bacon, Locke, Newton, etc.). It influences not only the answers we find to our questions, but also the questions we choose to ask. It is the view of science and the scientific method—a view that has greatly shaped sociology, and the theoretical and philosophical framework upon which it lays.

Yet to where can we trace the origins of this dominant Western world-view? Arguably, we can follow this intellectual lineage back to one individual: René Descartes. Although there were important figures in science before Descartes, none had such an influence on the requirements and consequences of scientific thought as did he. It was his mission to establish an entirely new approach to knowledge—an end to which he met with unprecedented success.

Descartes engaged in the task to understand how to attain certain knowledge. This occurred through a process Descartes referred to as “radical doubt”. Descartes asked, how can we know anything? How can I know to trust my eyes? Or my ears? Or my sense of touch? How do I know this is not all just an elaborate hoax? Or perhaps this is simply a dream? Maybe I’m just a brain sitting in a vat? As Descartes
dwelt on this problem, invoking radical doubt, he realized that there was indeed something that he was certain of: that he was doubting. And if he was doubting, then he must be thinking, and he must therefore exist. Finally, something he could state with certainty—I think therefore I am. From here his famous dualism became asserted: there are two components in the world, thoughts (res cogitans—thinking matter or thinking thing) and that which is thought of (res extensa—extended matter). Thus, the means to knowledge must be through systematic doubt. The subject must doubt what is perceived and reduce it to its basic parts, and when it can be reduced no more, knowledge will be certain (the most certain knowledge for Descartes was mathematics).

Here we find the basis of all modern science, which is exemplified in the work of Karl Popper (1992) in his process of conjecture and refutation that he termed "critical rationalism." Popper argued that scientific theories cannot be verified or proved, but only refuted or disproved. The search for ultimate truths, therefore, is a process of forming hypotheses or theories, testing them, refuting them, and then formulating new ones. Only through this dynamic process can we move closer to an understanding of the truth—an argument clearly influenced by Descartian epistemology. Popper then extended this critical rationalism to issues of metaphysics, ethics, and morality. Yet, is not this process of hypothesis construction and testing taught in the first weeks of any undergraduate sociology methods course? It indeed appears that even today Descartes' influence extends well past the "hard" sciences.
What, then, are the assumptions underlying this method? According to Descartes, not only are we not part of nature, we are not even part of a body. Instead, our subjectivity is locked away into some deep metaphysical recess that is completely disconnected from the material world around us. In this, Descartes created a "philosophy of solitude" (Hanson 1977: 175), which we still suffer from today due to this inseparable division between the cogito and the world (and thus nature) around us.

Yet, why should we believe there is any correlation between the "thinking thing" and "extended matter"? Since they are completely independent, and distinctly separate, how do we know there is—and why should we expect there to be—a consistent relationship? In building this barrier between nature and society, we can only guess what is on the other side (Evernden 1985). As argued by Warnock (1970: 39), "the Cartesian problem thus can be seen to be that of relating what I am aware of to what there is; and of course this problem would not have arisen in this form if he had not insisted that the criterion of all knowledge was an internal criteria...."

Ultimately, the barrier erected between the material and the ideal has resulted in a dichotomistic view of being: thinking thing (res cogitans) and extended matter (res extensa)—or "us" (society) and "it" (nature). Anything in between is therefore not only ignored, but impossible. There is only self and other, material and ideal, society and nature, and us and it. Any interrelationship, or dialogue, between these two categories is simply not possible according to Descartes. Consequently, Evernden's
(1992) "self-and-other" or Heidegger's (1962) "field of care" and "being-in-the-world" are therefore simply ontological fallacies.

Indeed, this is one of the many gifts given to us by modernity. Scholars from Max Weber, to Jurgen Habermas, to Karl-Otto Apel have suggested that what specifically defines modernity is something called "the differentiation of the cultural value spheres." With modernity thus came, for the first time in the history of humanity, the differentiation of art, morals, and science (or the Beautiful, the Good, and the True following ancient Greek philosophical distinctions). But unfortunately these value spheres did not just peacefully separate, they often flew apart completely (Habermas 1979, 1990). The differentiations of modernity thus went too far into dissociation, fragmentation, and isolation (Wilber 1998, 1999, 2000). It is one thing therefore to differentiate society and nature and quite another to dissociate them, yet this is what modernity, thanks in no small part to Descartes, has done.

Some may contend that by constructing a disciplinary narrative around this interrelationship between society and nature we are thereby making sociology a subversive science. They may be right—at least regarding Cartesian "science" and the ontological assumptions in which it solidifies. But is knowledge merely a product determined purely by internal criteria, as Descartes has argued? Or is it also a product of our social networks, of our culture, and of our dominant worldview?

As Bell and I (Carolan and Bell 2001, [forthcoming])—as well as others (i.e., Feyerabend 1988; Kuhn 1962; Latour 1979, 1987, 1999)—have argued, knowledge, and therefore truth, must be understood as a social phenomenon. The Cartesian cogito—as a distinctly separate entity from the world, society, and extended matter—
is a fallacy, as are its assumptions of dualisms in which it constructs. Thus, as opposed to being distinctly independent dualisms, nature-society, material-ideal, objective-subjective, and us-it must all begin to be understood as mutually constituted dialogues.

**From Dualisms To Dialogues**

The concept "dialogue" originates from the Russian philosopher and social theorist Milkail Baktin to signify the mutually constitutive character of our existence.  

40 Say you and I are talking to each other. I first say something to you, you respond, and then I respond to your response. My words are thus not entirely my words, nor are your words entirely your words. What I say is shaped by what you say and what you say is shaped by what I say. You are not treating me as an object (nor I you), like a rock, which you stare at monologically, but rather a subject, which you try to understand dialogically. As Voloshinov (1986), who was himself a member of the "Bakhtin circle", stated: "A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another. If one end depends on me, then the other depend on my addresse." 41

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40 While the term "dialogue" originates from the works of Bakhtin, Bell's application of it to express the interrelationships within social life is his own intellectual creation. My own use of the concept (i.e., Carolan 2000. under review [a]) to express the interrelatedness between society and nature has been significantly influenced by the work of Bell, including the many long conversations I have had with him on the subject.

41 Following Gardiner's (1992) use of the term, the "Bakhtin circle" indicates the group of linguists who worked around Bakhtin and thus adopted many of his ideas. There is also a bit of controversy whether Bakhtin himself wrote Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1986), Freudianism: A Marxist Critique (1976)—both of which have been attributed to V.N. Voloshinow—and The Formal Method (1985)—which has been attributed to Pavel Medvedev. Morson and Emerson (1990), however, in addressing this debate, present significant evidence to suggest that Bakhtin is the not the author of these texts.
Additionally, as we talk to one another we each pay attention to cues from the other—which in turn further shapes our future words. For example, if I see you frown, or yawn, or start looking at your watch, I will adjust my future words accordingly. And you, in turn, will most likely further adjust your cues and facial expressions according to what I say and do. The alteration, therefore, between speaker and listener is not that between active speaker and passive listener, but rather between active speaker and active listener. It's very much like a dance—but a dance where both partners lead, and where thoughts, words, actions, and reactions mediate and create the complex interaction of social forces. Where “all words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, an age group, the day and the hour. Each word tastes of the context in which it has lived its socially charged life...” (Bakhtin 1981: 293).

Much of social life has this dialogic character, as noted by social theorist Michael Bell (1998a, 1998b, 2000, [in preparation]; Bell and Gardiner 1998). It is very similar to the ancient Chinese philosophy of yin-yang, although not entirely. First, in yin-yang there is hierarchy: the yang (the material side) is below the yin (the ideal side), perhaps suggesting the ancient metaphor repeated in early Western and Eastern thought—the earth and the material world are present in the here-and-now, while ideas are up in the heavens (i.e., God, or Platonic Forms). Within a dialogue, however, there is no hierarchy. Each side is equal with respect to the other (Bell 1998).

The most significant distinction between a dialogue and yin-yang, however, is that a dialogue has an unfinished character. As Bakhtin (1986: 119-120) argued, “an
utterance is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing and
outside it that is given and final. It always creates something that never existed
before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable....” In the earlier example of you
and I talking, there was space between us. People do not talk with their months
directly against each other. If we did, how could we talk? We need at least a little
space to move our jaw, our lips, and our tongue. There is no space, however, between
the yin and the yang. But this space is essential. It allows for change and growth. It
represents the unpredictable character of social life. And it explains why no two
social situations are ever alike—what Bakhtin (1993: 2) referred to as the “once-
occurrent event of Being”. It gives social life life. Without it social life would be
static and predictable.

Here lies the conceptual utility of viewing these interrelated aspects of social
life as a dialogue as opposed to the yin-yang or the Hegelian dialectic. When you
speak to someone, their response is shaped by what you just said and your response in
turn will be shaped by what they said. But you do not know what the other person is
going to say. You may have a general inclination regarding how they might respond,
but by no means do you know what they are going to say. If we always knew what
others would say in response to us, we would never talk. What would be the point?
The most unsatisfying conversations typically occur when the other person says
almost everything we expected them to say. The most fulfilling conversations, on the
other hand, are frequently those where we hear something we didn’t expect. Social
life, therefore, is like a good conversation—we typically do not know what to expect.
Understanding the interrelatedness between such phenomenon as nature and society through the metaphor of a dialogue thus highlights this unpredictable feature of social life.

Yet, what about the Hegelian dialectic? Does it not also recognize interaction between two phenomenon? How does a “dialogue” differ from the mainstream socio-theoretical term “dialectic” when understanding issues of interaction and social change?

According to Hegel, the dialectic is the universal structure of all thought, language, and reality through which occurs the synthesizing of a positivity (a thesis) and a negativity (an antithesis). Hegel argued that every thought, word, and thing exists only as part of a system of exclusions. For instance, a thing (i.e., a table) is what it is by not being its other (i.e., the chair on the floor), yet that otherness is what defines it as a being.\(^{42}\) Accordingly, history is an eternal process of the dialectic, with each historical moment being a concatenation of contradictions between the thesis and the antithesis. And while these forces are opposed to each other, they are also mutually dependent. Eventually, the tension between these opposites destroys the historical moment, and out of its ashes a new historical moment is born. one that brings forward the best of the old moment. Here, then, lies Hegel’s optimism: progress is built into history through the dialectic.

\[^{42}\text{This is why Hegel argued that thought of Pure Being and Pure Nothingness are impossible. Thought and language only function in a system of contrasts, yet Pure Being encompasses all; hence, there is nothing to contrast with it, except Nothingness, which is nothing (Hegelian logic can be quite dizzying).}\]
There are a number of distinctions to be made between the Hegelian dialectic and a dialogue. To begin, progress is not built into the dialogue. The change to occur from a dialogue lacks any normative connotation—we will leave it up to society to decide whether the change is "good" or "bad" (Gardiner 1992). More significantly, however, a dialogue does not see the relationship as antithetical, as a relation between opposites, or as a system of exclusions—contrary to a dialectic perspective, nature is not what it is by not being society. This is, in fact, the complete converse of a dialogue. The relationship within a dialectic is predicated upon tension. Within a dialogue it is fixed within mutuality and reciprocity. Within the dialectic the relationship is based on a system of exclusion. Within a dialogue it is rooted in intimacy and symbiosis—thus, nature is what it is because of society and vice versa.

In short, a dialogue takes a less conflictual and antagonistic view of social life then does a dialectical perspective. Granted, there are tensions throughout social life, but—contrary to Hegel—I do not believe these tensions constitute a universal structure of reality. A dialogical perspective thus allow us to view social life in all of its wondrous conflictual and reciprocal complexities.

One can thus understand a dialogue as having parallels with Giddens' (1984) concept "the duality of structure." It is, at one and the same time, both the medium for social action and the outcome of social action. A dialogue thus recognizes the inseparability between society and nature that Merleau-Ponty (1964: 188-9) speaks of when he writes: "it is impossible to say that nature ends here and that man [sic] or expression starts here." A
dialogue represents, in the words of the Great Chain philosopher Arthur Lovejoy (1964), the “great continuum of being”, the nonbeing dualism, the interwoven chain of life.

Finally, I would like to briefly address Richard Norgaard’s (1994) concept of “coevolution”, as it has also been evoked by some theorists as a conceptual and analytical tool through which to understand the interrelationship between society and nature (see, i.e., Woodgate and Redclift 1998; Redclift and Woodgate 1994). Coevolutionary explanations highlight the relationships between entities which affect the evolution of the entities.

According to coevolutionary theory, “[e]verything is interlocked, yet everything is changing in accordance with the interlockedness” (Norgaard 1994: 26). In applying this concept to the interlockedness of pests, pesticides, politics, policy, and the pesticide industry, Norgaard (1994: 27) argues.

Pests evolved resistance in response to pesticides, that is easy to see. But one can just as well argue that pesticides evolve new qualities in response to the evolution of resistance among pests...But the traits of pests and pesticides were also affected by pesticide legislation and regulatory decisions, which in turn were certainly affected by the characteristics of pest problems and the types of pesticides used. Pesticide legislation, however, did not evolve in response to pests and pesticides directly, but rather evolved in response to how political interests—environmentalists, laborers, beekeepers, and farmers—were affected by pest and pesticides. Similarly, the demand for integrated pest management evolved in response to all of these.

A dialogic approach differs from a coevolutionary framework in a number of ways. First, Norgaard (1994) grounds his concept of coevolution in a cybernetic framework—utilizing such metaphors as “positive/negative feedback”, “system”, “disequilibrium”, “equilibrium”, etc. In doing this, however, a coevolutionary perspective misses a significant dimension—the important hermeneutic, interpretivistic perspective. In short, it forgets about
the subject, and in so doing provides a thoroughly materialistic account of social life and social change. Indeed, systems do interact and change according to that interaction. But also, and just as importantly, system interaction both influences and is influenced by perception and intersubjectivity—a point ignored by a coevolutionary framework. Finally, although I do not believe this to be Norgaard’s intention, co-evolution possesses teleological, linear, normative, and ontological connotations (for example, the word “evolution” commonly implies something that is “natural” and therefore “good” or “right”).

Building a Sociology around the Dialogue of Nature and Society

What impact then does this conceptual shift from dualisms, dichotomies, and dialectics to dialogues have on social theory and the disciplinary narrative in which it is embedded? Let us now shift discussion to that dominant narrative which has theoretically driven sociology since its inception in the 19th century, and examine the manner in which it has reified the Cartesian boundaries between society and nature. Such a discussion will also allow us to begin to grapple with such questions as: how do these boundaries affect our perceptions of, and our actions toward, the world and people around us; what implicit implications have these boundaries had on social theory; and, finally, what would social theory (and sociology) look like if these boundaries were removed?
A Classical Environmental Sociology?

Considerable intellectual energies have recently been directed at detailing how the classical tradition of sociology has been largely blind to the natural world (i.e., Benton 1991, 1994; Catton and Dunlap 1979, 1980; Murphy 1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1997; Redclift and Woodgate 1994). As argued by a leading scholar in environmental sociology, “there has...been general agreement among environmental sociologists that the classical sociological tradition has been inhospitable to the nurturing of ecologically-informed sociological theory” (Buttel 1986: 338). Thus, “the classical tradition can be said to be ‘radically sociological,’ in that in their quest to liberate social thought and sociology from reductionisms, prejudices, power relations, and magic, the classical theorists (and, arguably more so, the 20th century interpreters of the classical tradition) wound up exaggerating the autonomy of social processes from the natural world” (Buttel 1996: 57).

It has been argued that sociology has been constructed around a humanist world view that emphasizes a distinctive quality in humanity in relation to nature. This humanist world view has been defined by Catton and Dunlap (1979, 1980) as the “human exceptionalist paradigm.” According to this argument, all perspectives within sociology—functionalism, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, conflict theory, Marxism, etc.—are seen as sharing a common trait. And it is the ubiquitous presence of this trait that places them all within a “human exceptionalist paradigm.” Specifically, Catton and Dunlap (1979: 42) argue that a “fundamental anthropocentrism [is] underlying all of them” (emphasis in original). They thus call
for a paradigmatic shift within sociology towards what they term the “new environmental paradigm.” The “new environmental paradigm” rejects the anthropocentrism supposedly characteristic of the dominant paradigmatic view in favor of a more ecocentric view in which humans are seen as part of nature.

Recent scholarship, however, has begun to question this argument that “sociology was constructed as if nature didn’t matter” (Murphy 1996: 10). For instance, Buttel, who earlier was quoted as stating “that the classical sociological tradition has been inhospitable to the nurturing of ecologically-informed sociological theory” (Buttel 1986: 338), has since changed his tune toward classical theory:

[T]here is, in a certain sense, a classical environmental sociology. Elements of environmental sociology have roots deep in nineteenth century social thought. Not only did Marx, Durkheim, and Weber incorporate what we might regard as ecological components in their works, they did so from a variety of standpoints. Among the multiple ecologically relevant components of their works are materialists ontologies (in the case of Marx and Engels), biological analogies (Durkheim), use of Darwinian/evolutionary arguments or schemes (Marx, Durkheim, Weber) and concrete empirical analyses of resource or ‘environmental issues’ (Marx, Weber). (Buttel 2000: 20) (emphasis in original)

Some social theorists, for instance, have begun to detail various “green” aspects contained in the early philosophical writings of Marx (i.e., Dickens 1992). Others point toward his later work on political economy—specifically volume 3 of Capital, where his critique of capitalist agriculture is most fully developed (i.e., Burkett 1996, 1997; Foster 1999). Martinez-Alier (1987) has argued that ecological-society relational insights can likewise be gleamed from Weber’s writings on Ostwald’s social energetics (although these works have yet to be translated into
English). And a distinctly "coevolutionary" (Norgaard 1994) perspective between society and nature can be seen in Durkheim's generally ignored work of *Pragmatism and Sociology* in which he argues:

Sociology introduces a relativism that rests on the relation between the physical environment on the one hand and man [sic] on the other. The physical environment presents a relative fixity. It undergoes evolution, of course; but reality never ceases to be what it was in order to give way to a reality of a new kind, or to one constituting new elements...The organic world does not abolish the physical world and the social world has not been formed in contradistinction to the organic world, but together with it. (Durkheim 1983: 69-70).

By rediscovering these classical works we soon discover that earlier proclamations regarding the "exemptionalism" of the classical tradition may have been overstated. In fact, as noted by Buttel (1996), mid-20th century interpretation of classical theory was much more ecological than were the mainstream sociological theories of that time—i.e., Parsonian functionalism, modernization theory, post-industrial theory, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, etc. It appears that the founders of sociology may have not had their ecological blinders on after all. And if they did, they were able at times to see through them.

Yet this still does not take away from my original argument: that the disciplinary narrative of sociology is constructed upon rigid boundaries between

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43 This particular variant of Durkheimian thought can be seen in the work of the famous British anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard who was arguably the founder of modern cultural ecology. Evans-Pritchard (student to Bronislaw Malinowski) was part of the British structural-functionalist movement in anthropology in the early twentieth-century; a movement that was heavily influenced by French social thought and Durkheimian sociology in particular. Evans-Pritchard, however, also placed analytic importance on the environment, arguing that social organization can only be understood in relation to the material conditions of the environment. See, for instance, Evans-Pritchard's (1940) seminal work *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institution of a Nilotic People* for an excellent example of how a Durkheimian approach can be utilized that looks at both nature and society.
society and nature. The problem, as noted by Foster (1999: 368), is an issue of "appropriation": "the apparent blindness of classical sociological theory to ecological issues is partly a manifestation of the way classical sociology was appropriated in the late 20th century." In short, the dominant narrative of sociology has largely been constructed around those works which tended to ignore nature and ecological-societal relations. Yet, why did this occur? We can look toward the historical conditions at the time of the inception of the discipline for some answers.

*Conditions Contributing to the Disciplinary Expulsion of Nature*

The disciplinary foundation on which sociology stood until the early 20th century was quite uncertain. During this period, many questions were directed at where sociology’s "place" should be within the academic world (or even if there should be a place for sociology).

How is sociology different than history, psychology, or philosophy? What intellectual insight can sociology provide that cannot be provided by an already well established discipline? Questions such as these made it especially imperative for founders of the discipline to distinguish sociology from the other already established disciplines within the social sciences and humanities. All of which finally culminated with Durkheim’s famous (or infamous) dictum that causes of social facts must be sought in other social facts.

Early sociological thought was also developed as a reaction to social Darwinism, and the socio-biology (or biological-determinism) that such work
represented. Most notably it was constructed as a reaction to the works of the English social philosopher Herbert Spencer and the American sociologist William Graham Sumner. Many in sociology are in fact still afraid today to look too much toward the physical and biological world for fear of being labeled a "socio-biologist"—a term that still incites fear in those within the discipline who hear it (although there are some thinkers who are currently making some interesting connections between social theory and biology, such as social theorist Peter Dickens [2000, 2001a, 2001b]).

Finally, the lack of attention to nature can also be attributed to Western culture itself—particularly, our preoccupation with consumerism, expansionism, modernization (or industrialization), post-modernity (or post-industrialization), and most significantly science. We view the world around us in terms of objects. We live in a world of "us" and "its". To evoke a term coined by philosopher Martin Buber, we live in a world whose mode of being is based upon the "I-It" relation—a world of disconnection and exclusion as opposed to connection and inclusion. Yet how we relate to the world around us likewise has tremendous bearing on our relationship to others (these points will be discussed in detail later in the chapter).

This view of the world has also significantly shaped our view of science and what it means to be "scientific". As a culture we have long believed that the firmest footing in which to construct a discipline has been, and continues to be, science—specifically, the "science" which is deeply rooted in the doctrine of positivism. And sociology has not been immune to this cultural influence. Beginning with Comte's assertion to make sociology the dominant science, we have struggled (and some
would say, failed) to live up to those lofty expectations. Yet, scientificty—at least Western scientificty—also requires distinctions. There must be an “it”—something to objectify. There must be res cogitans (thinking thing) and res extensa (extended matter). Only within the metaphysical recesses of the mind can we obtain the one mystical property so essential to science: objectivity. The mind must therefore exist separately from, and independently of, the world around it in order for objectivity to exist. If the mind was indeed part of the world, one could not possibility observe it from a position outside of it. Yet this is what objectivity requires.

This is the epistemological culture in which sociology has grounded itself—as a social science. As Popperian critical rationalism exemplifies—the epistemological approach to knowledge embraced by most scientists (social and physical alike)—science is a natural progression toward ultimate Truths. Yet, ultimately truths require absolutes. Truth requires divisions. Truth requires subjects and objects, mind and body, thinking things and extended matter. And by adopting this epistemological approach to the world, sociology has also embraced these divisions.

*An Exclusion of Nature from Contemporary Sociological Thought*

While classical social theory may not have been as “blind” to societal-ecological relations as we might have thought a decade ago, the majority of the works embraced by our disciplinary narrative do nevertheless convey a significant degree of tunnel vision in regard to

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44 The first term Comte chose to use, “social physics”, made it clear that he sought to model sociology after the “hard” and well established sciences.
their silence about the interrelationship between society and nature. The Durkheim that we
know is not the one who wrote *Pragmatism and Sociology* (1983), and who discussed a
coevolutionary interaction between the social and the natural. Instead, we know the
Durkheim who wrote *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1964b), and who asserted that
"sociology" is the study of social facts by other social facts. This Durkheim not only
acknowledged a division between society and nature but also believed this distinction
essential for sociology to become a legitimate discipline. Given our understanding of
Durkheim, it is not surprising then when some proclaim that Durkheim had a "narrow
fixation of the social" (Murphy 1994: 9).

Similarly, the writings of Marx taught to most undergraduate and graduate sociology
students describe a Marx with an almost Promethean attitude toward nature. This
interpretation of Marx can be seen, for instance, in the following argument by Michael
Redclift (1984: 7):

> [According to Marx, the environment served] an enabling function but all
value was derived from labor power. It was impossible to conceive of a
'natural' limit to the material productive forces of society. The barriers that
existed to the full realization of resource potential were imposed by property
relations and legal obligation rather than resource endowments.

According to this interpretation of Marxian theory our relationship to nature is static
and thus unable to serve as a source of social change in society (Redclift and Woodgate
1994). The "problem" in this non-ecological reading of Marx therefore is not the
environment or environmental limits. Rather, the problem lies within the material relations
of production. Consequently, as societies progress toward communism the "environmental
problem" will be resolved. Ultimately, we are left with a Marxian interpretation whose
"concern with transforming the exploitative human social relations expressed in class systems does not extend to the exploitation of nature" (Giddens 1981: 60).

It is the socio-theoretical works of the mid and late 20th century, however, where we begin to see a hermetically sealed society come forth from social thought. It is here where we find the boundary between nature and society to thicken and solidify. Where nature is not simply just ignored, but at times—in its most vulgar a-ecological form—does not even exist.45

For example, symbolic interactionism's concern is primarily with the processes by which actors endow the forces acting upon them, as well as their own behaviors, with meaning (Blumer 1969). Within this theoretical framework, as noted by Mead (1962), the starting point is therefore society, and it is through society that we give our world meaning. But nothing is said of how the forces acting upon the individual influence that construction of meaning. Nature within this theoretical framework thus appears to be little more then a blank slate, where actors are the supreme artists determining what is to be painted on that slate, and how that slate is to be ultimately perceived.

The same can be said of the theoretical framework of Parsonian functionalism, and later the cybernetic framework of Luhmann. Here, the environment is reduced to a system through which action occurs, but is itself not influenced by that action. In fact, "the environment" within functionalism and systems theory does not equate to our typical

45 This is not to say, however, that no deliberate effort has been made by some in recent decades to construct formal theory that gives equal conceptual weight to nature. See, for example, ecological modernization theory (i.e., Huber 1985; Hajer 1995; Mol 1995; Spaargaren 1997), reflexive modernization theory (i.e., Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994), and risk theory (i.e., Beck 1992, 1999) for examples of contemporary sociological theory which attempt to incorporate nature or the environment into their conceptual analyses.
understanding of the term—such as relating it to a material reality “out there.” Rather, it is a metaphor to describe areas within the subsystems through which action occurs. Parsons (1951: 488) was remarkably clear on this when he stated the following: “But quite clearly we have advanced no theory of the interdependence of social action processes and the biological and physical factors of their determination” (emphasis in original). Thus, here too nature has been ignored.46

A more significant theoretical shift occurred, however, as a reaction against these cybernetic frameworks and against Parsonian functionalism in particular—an interpretive shift rooted in phenomenology. This interpretive shift redirected sociological inquiry away from an examination of system dynamics towards the study of meaning and interpretation. This resulted in an interpretation of the world in terms of social constructions—a world in which nature is distinctly absent.

The phenomenological approaches of Husserl and Schutz, for example, start and end at consciousness (with the subject) ignoring the existence of a material reality “out there” and the effect that such reality has on consciousness (and the subject).47 The influence that this shift to social constructivism has had upon the discipline in the late 20th century can be seen in the words of Randall Collins (1975: 470), when he argued, “social construction of reality is a key to all sociology.”

46 In all fairness to Parsons (1951) he did include the “behavioral organism” as one of his four action systems, but he had very little to say about it. For Parsons, it referred to the genetic constitution of a system and was the source of energy for the rest of the systems.

47 Even the work of Habermas with his utilization of the Schutzian “lifeworld” fails to fully address the interrelationship between society and nature. Thus, while Habermas is often quite critical of phenomenological approaches (including that of Schutz), because he regards them as starting from the subject (as Husserl did) rather than the already meaningful intersubjectivity of the social, he incorrectly externalizes the role of nature in the construction of meaning.
An interpretivistic approach, however, forgets that there must be something “out there” for us to socially construct. We cannot bestow meaning onto nothing, nor do we socially construct arbitrarily. Rather, our constructions are significantly shaped by the material world around us. A purely social constructivist approach ignores the influence the material world has on the subject and on consciousness. Here, for example, social theorist Scott Lash (1994: 77) highlights the limitations of viewing nature from purely a hermeneutic lens:

The socialization of nature means much more than just the fact that the natural world is increasingly scarred by humanity. Human action, as mentioned, has long left an imprint upon the physical environment. The very invention of agriculture means clearing the natural ecosystem so as to create a habitat where humans can grow plants or raise animals as they want. Many now familiar landscapes of ‘natural beauty’, such as some of those in southern Greece, have actually been created by soil erosion following the placing of the land under cultivation in ancient times.

In Lash’s account of nature we begin to see the mutual constitutiveness between society and nature, and why, therefore, a phenomenological approach by itself is incomplete. As Lash notes, even the “natural beauty” of Southern Greece is a constitution of both social and natural processes—an interrelationship that is not, and cannot, be addressed by hermeneutic approaches alone. Thus, although our perceptions of “nature” follow human history, as Raymond Williams (1980) has argued, human history, it seems, also follows nature.48

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48 For an interesting example of how history follows nature see Stephen Pyne’s (2001) recent work, *Fire*. In this book Pyne provides a compelling story of how fire has shaped human history.
Ulrich Beck is also critical of what he views as “naïve constructivism.” Regarding a purely social constructivist perspective, Beck (1999:26) points to the contradictory logic implicit in such a perspective when he states: “It fails to recognize, as it were, that constructions of reality which are meant to last (and to guide action) must cancel their very constructedness—otherwise they will be constructed as constructions of reality and not as reality” (emphasis in original). In short, Beck notes that there must be something “out there” for us to socially construct, and thus to reference our actions to. Ultimately, those who suggest that reality is socially constructed appear to forget the reality part of that statement.

Some have, however, pointed to the human ecology tradition as illustrating an early and continuing attempt in sociological thought to deal with these boundaries between the social and the natural worlds (i.e., Spaargaren et al. 2000). Originating from the Chicago School (i.e., Park et al. 1925) onward, human ecology argued that there exists a realm within society that is shaped by non-social factors—what has been termed the “biotic community” (Nelissen 1972). As Spaargaren et al. (2000: 5) argue: “Within this biotic sub-sphere of society there are facts and phenomena that can and must be explained with reference to the realm of the biological and natural sciences. The biotic community is counterposed to ‘society’ and ‘culture’, and both realms are supposed to have their own, different logics or dynamics.” They thus determine “it can be concluded that crossing the society-nature border within the human ecology tradition means taking us ‘beyond the social’ in a very specific way” (Spaargaren et al. 2000: 5).

But how far beyond the social does this tradition really take us? As Michelson (1970) and Catton (1992) have argued, nature was still largely absent from the human ecology
approach. This point has been echoed by Murphy (1994: 11-12): “‘Natural areas’ and ‘Natural processes’ had more to do with what human ecologists regarded as normal social processes than with the interaction between society and nature.” However, even if the human ecology tradition does concede a degree of dynamic between society and nature, the boundary between the realms is still clear. As Spaargaren et al. (2000: 5) have themselves noted, the biotic and social realms each “have their own, different logics and dynamics”. Thus, if the logics of nature and society are distinct and separate, then so too must they ultimately be distinct and separate, and the division therefore remains.

The Socio-Theoretical Implications of Ignoring Nature

What, then, are the implications of this distinction? How do these boundaries affect our perceptions of, and actions toward, the world and people around us? And, what influence, if any, do these divisions have on who we are—on our identity?

The society-nature distinction, like any other distinction in social life, is built upon power relations—a process known to Foucault (2000: 326) as a “dividing practice”. The division between society and nature, therefore, is discursively constituted through “games of truth” and “relations of power”, which are themselves linked through what Foucault calls “power/knowledge”. Foucault evokes the term “power/knowledge” to highlight the inseparable interrelationship between knowledge and power relations. “There is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault 1979:27).
Foucault's approach to power, however, is radically different from that which is typically used. Following Nietzsche, Foucault does not equate power to sovereignty nor as negative and repressive; indeed, he views this understanding as being too limited and thus works to go beyond it. Thus, "power is not an institution, a structure, or a certain force with which certain people are endowed; it is the name given to a complex of strategic relations in a given society" (Foucault 1981: 236). Consequently, power is always already there—no one is ever outside of it.

Yet, power is also positive. This is due, in part, because we construct our identities out of these relations of power/knowledge. But there is a much more practical reason behind power being positive: "If power were anything but repressive [or negative], if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (Foucault 1981: 119).

Let's go back now to the division between society and nature. From a Foucauldian perspective, anything that attempts to stand apart from the flow of history—and from power/knowledge itself—is profoundly suspicious. Yet this is exactly what we have set nature up as. Nature is that which is not social. Nature is the other. It is free from the discursive disciplinary mechanisms of society and thus removed from the "always already there" relations of power (Foucault 1981: 141). Yet in separating nature from society, as we
have done, we make it absolute. Nature is Truth. Nature is right. And frequently, but by all means not always, nature is good.\footnote{We should also be weary of many contemporary "environmental ethics" because of their tendency of advocating "naturalistic" and "moralistic" justifications due to these same "intrinsic" divisions between society and nature. Thus, like God or Truth, "nature" itself becomes another normative yardstick (with its own relations of power) to impose itself on human behavior and values. For a discussion on what a Foucaultian environmental ethic might look like see Darier (1999).}

Semiologist Roland Barthes (1973), for example, discusses the significant role society has on our interpretations of nature, which can lead to what he has termed, "the 'nature' myth." Barthes describes why we need to recognize the social in the natural (as opposed to seeing the two as distinctly separate), and thus begin to see nature as once again historical. Barthes argues that we should be especially sensitive to myths because myths frequently act as mechanisms through which social injustices become entrenched. Barthes (1973: 108) thus argues:

\[T\]his myth of the 'human condition' rests on a very old mystification, which always consists in placing Nature at the bottom of History. Any classical humanism postulates that in scratching the history of men [sic] a little, the relativity of their institutions or the superficial diversity of their skins...one very quickly reaches the solid rock of a universal human nature. Progressive humanism, on the contrary, must always remember to reverse the terms of this very old imposture, constantly to scour nature, its 'laws' and its 'limits' in order to discover History there, and at last to establish Nature itself as historical.

Here, Barthes highlights the dangers that can occur when we erect a false barrier between society and nature. Once we place something within the realm of the natural we thereby relinquish our ability to critique it. It is then, by definition, outside of us and thus beyond criticism: that's just the way it is, it's not my fault, nature made it that way. In categorizing something as part of nature, it becomes beyond reproach and enters the realm of
the absolute. What we soon discover then is that not only does history rest on nature, but also the reverse: nature rests on history. In short, it is a dialogue. While our interpretations of nature are culturally influenced, those very cultural perceptions are themselves products of the bio-physically constituted world around us.

Turning to Foucault we can begin to tease-out the power relations hiding just below the surface of the nature-society divide. While Foucault provides no deconstructive critique of nature, he does furnish a description of the way in which the term has functioned in discourse. Specifically, he describes the way the “naturalness” of sex and sexuality have acted as powerful mechanisms to normalize individuals and the social body: “Situated at the point of intersection of a technique of confession and a scientific discursivity...sexuality was defined as being ‘by nature’: a domain susceptible to pathological processes, and hence one calling for therapeutic or normalising interventions” (Foucault 1980a: 68). The naturalization of sexuality is therefore an example of “biopower”, which represents, quite literally, the “entry of life into history”: the process where normative disciplines were able to gain control over the actual conditions of life, so as to control the entire life process of the social body (Foucault 1980a: 141).  

The process of naturalizing sexuality thus serve a number of purposes. First, it is an identity generating mechanism. In the case of sexuality, a person who engages in same-sex acts is a homosexual—that is their identity—and they are “treated” (medical pun intended) as such. Additionally, by defining this essence as “natural” we likewise relinquish our ability to

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50 See Rutherford (1999) and Sandilands (1999) for applications of “biopower” to contemporary environmentalist discourse.
critique. It becomes removed from history and beyond reproach. Thus, what is natural is discovered, not invented (Levy 2000). Consequently, debates over whether heterosexuality is actually "natural"—and any other form perverse and "unnatural"—are moot. As Foucault (1980b: vii) states, such questions as, "do we truly need a true sex", become irrelevant. When sexuality has a "natural" state—namely, heterosexuality—we therefore have powerful justification for societal intervention to "correct" any variations from it. Specifically, the argument goes, we have an obligation to "fix" those abnormal individuals who exhibit unnatural tendencies—such as the homosexual. Finally, by naturalizing heterosexuality we produce a self-policing subject, and thus a self-policing social body. As a society we therefore know what is "natural" and thus "right" with regard to human sexuality—heterosexuality—and we act accordingly so as not to deviate from that norm or from what is natural.

Seen in this light, nature begins to eerily resemble knowledge and truth. In separating nature from society, nature becomes the absolute, the right, and truth. It becomes an object, removed from the subjective, emotionally laden vulgarities of social life. The use of "nature" or "natural" to assert moral legitimacy is based upon deception because these terms attempt to seduce without argument (Quigley 1999)—much like scientific claims of truth can be deceptive (Rorty 1998). As Hannigan (1995: 76) has argued, we must understand "science as an environmental claim-making activity". Thus, like "will to truth" (Foucault 1973), there is also "will to nature."

Our understanding of nature is context specific, emerging from a specific worldview. Yet, we have killed "the author", and thus so too the social and historical specificity of
And like there is no absolute Truth (specifically, Truth as asocial, ahistorical, and asubjective), only "games of truth" (Foucault 1988: 16), there is no absolute nature. Nature—like knowledge and truth—is intricately social, undeniably historical, and inherently subjective.

Nature, therefore, is not a world elsewhere. It is not that which "is independent of us" (Elliot 1995: 79), or which "is human neither in itself nor in its origins" (Passmore 1995: 129). Nature is a place we have created and a place that creates us. But, likewise, it is a place that some have created as a tool of oppression. The reasons for incorporating nature into the disciplinary narrative of sociology are therefore more than just metaphysical—beyond issues of being and ontology. Rather, they are ultimately tied to matters of social justice.

By ignoring the dialogue of society and nature we risk exacerbating social inequalities. If we simply preserve what’s left of “nature”—as in forests, lakes, etc.—without acknowledging the intimate connections people have to that nature, we risk a further intensification of global injustices. In erecting a division between society and nature we construct—and legitimate the construction of—divisions between groups and individuals within society.

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51 I do not, however, suggest that nature is only discourse. Some could argue that, at times, Foucault lapses into a form of postmodern functionalism, where all is the product of discourse, but where discourse itself has no product (Carolan and Bell [forthcoming]). I do not mean to suggest this. Nature is indeed discursively constituted and context specific, but it is also and equally a product of a material reality “out there”.

52 I do not mean to suggest that there is no truth, however. I am only highlighting that so-called empirical, objective knowledge (truth) presupposes subjective knowledge (truth); objectivity cannot exist alone. The objective worldview cannot account for its own status: “it [the objective worldview] could prove objects but could not prove the exclusiveness of objectives—could not prove itself—but rather was taken, literally, on blind faith…” (Wilber 2000 [b]: 429). In short, where is the empirical proof to the empiricist statement, “empirical proof alone is true knowledge” (Wilber 2000)?
While nature discourse has often been used to separate society from nature, it has also been used to identify some groups with nature, thus distinctly separating them from the rest of "society". The use of such terms as "savage", "barbarian", or "animal" are frequently employed in these instances to maintain the distinction between society and nature, while simultaneously discursively subjugating certain groups of society to the category of the "other". Such discourse has been the foundation for many of the social injustices of the past, present, and even the future (such as with the issue of [over] population and "limits to sex" discourse [Sandilands 1999]). It has been used to justify Western colonization, slave-trading, the displacement of millions of people in poorer nations in the name of development and globalization, and to control the reproductive functions of females in developing countries.

On the other hand, dominant nature discourse has also been used at times to classify groups of people (or whole societies) as being distinctly anti-nature—as in the case of poor communities living in the forgotten about inner cities or in the surrounding rural landscapes (i.e., DeChiro 1998; Haraway 1989). Images of these people are often used to depict excessively high fertility rates, slashing and burning agricultural practices, and other ecologically "incorrect" actions. Such images are used to frame these people as being anti-nature or out of touch with the "natural order of things", all of which has been used to justify paternalistic forms of intervention so as to protect the "global commons" for all of humankind (except, of course, for those who are not considered human and part of society).

Nature, therefore, also centrally involves issues of identity. The nature-society division creates social affiliation and social disaffiliation. Those deemed as part of society constitute their identity in part by locating themselves within that category's history, as well
as its social present and future that it implies. But, likewise, those located within society also constitute their identity around *not* being nature, or those located within nature. Consequently, the relations of nature identities constitute us as we constitute them. As asserted by post-structuralists, identities are constructed through difference causing them to be inherently unstable, divided, and haunted by the liminal presence of those “others” from whom they seek to distinguish themselves (i.e., Lacan 1977).

Nature is one of these discursive mechanisms of differentiation and as such it is an important source of identity. This is why as social scientists we should be wary of any theoretical approach that does not explicitly acknowledge the interrelationships between the social and the natural. If we view nature and society as distinct phenomena we lose the ability to critique nature—nature, then, becomes “right” (and thus beyond reproach) simply because it is nature. But, likewise, if the nature-society distinction becomes absolute, then the identities we construct around them likewise become absolute.

The point, therefore, is not to remove the categories of nature and society altogether—as I will later argue, these categories in fact serve a vital purpose in social life. Erasing the divisions entirely would likewise result in an erasing of a potentially important source of identity. As Foucault (1997) notes, even the negative discursive subjugation of “homosexuals” as being “unnatural” has resulted in a positive mechanism for identity politics and resistance. While discursive disciplines of power/knowledge have attempted to control the bodies of homosexuals by constructing them as “abnormal” and “unnatural” (thus separating them from the rest of “normal” society), these constructions can likewise be used as entry points to resistance. Homosexuals have thus redirected this negative identity into a
positive mechanism of social affiliation. The reconfiguration of this disciplinary discourse by
the gay community has thus resulted in a "queer" ethic—where identity revolves around not
being "natural" or "normal". As Halperin (1995: 62) argues:

Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the
dominate. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers....
'Queer,' then, demarcates not a positivity but a positionality vis-a-vis the
normative—a positionality that is not restricted to lesbians and gay men but in
fact available to anyone who is or who feels marginalized because of her or his
sexual practices... (emphasis in original)

That task, therefore, is not to remove these distinctions because these distinctions
make us who we are. Rather, the task is to make these distinctions less rigid, and thus by
doing so making identity less ridged as well. We can think of the nature-society division then
similarly to how Foucault (1997: 69) understands power: "[N]ot all power is bad, but all
power can be dangerous". In short, the nature-society division need not be all bad, but it can
be all dangerous.

The division between society and nature can be dangerous when we do not recognize
the fluidity and exchange—or the dialogue—between the two realms. By understanding the
nature-society divide as not fixed, but constantly changing in a dialogical manner, so too
would then be our understanding of identity. Such an act would therefore not only once again
reveal "the author", but show that in part the author is also each of us. This leads to a
significant theoretical, as well as ethical, implication: how we relate to nature likewise
significantly influences how we relate to the world around us, including ourselves.

In removing nature from sociology's theoretical narrative we make it something other
than society. We objectify it. It thus becomes an inert, infinitely malleable object—
something we can shape, but not something that can shape us. And while nature is something
other than society, it is nevertheless there for society—hence, the designation natural resources. But in objectifying nature we likewise objectify the world around us, and in doing so we objectify ourselves. Allow me for a moment to turn to the work of Martin Buber to detail this point.

Buber (1970) contrasts the objective "I-It" relationship with the reciprocal "I-Thou" (or, depending on translation, "I-You"). The "I" contained within both relations, however, are different in each case. Specifically, the person (the "I") is transformed by the kind of relationship established, the two "I's" therefore are not the same. Living in an "I-It" relationship one is surround by a world of objects. It is a world that is distinctly separate from their being. This relationship sees nature as being distinct from society. The theoretical tradition of sociology could thus be understood as having firm footing within the "I-It" relation, where our "I's" are not seen as being part of, but rather opposite to, nature. The "I-Thou" relation, on the other hand, acknowledges the reciprocity of the relationship. Thus, in the "I-Thou" relation, the "I" is (it represents) the interrelationship with its surroundings. In the "I-Thou" relation, being is constituted by inclusion, whereas in the "I-It" relation it is constituted by exclusion. These contrasting relationships (or, if you prefer, modes of being) are most eloquently characterized by Buber in his discussion of a tree.

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53 Martin Heidegger has written extensively on how the tradition of Western metaphysics, originating with Plato, has caused us to view nature as a "standing reserve" (and thus its being is define through us—what he referred to as "present-at-hand") as opposed to something that is equally part of us (which he called "ready-to-hand"). Heidegger consequently argues for a post-metaphysical philosophy (actually, he called for the end of philosophy and began a new endeavor he termed "thinking") which removes our technological attitude (which he argues has been the source of all ecological problems) in favor of one that emphasizes "care". By emphasizing care, we recognize the interconnectedness among all thing—that the being of all things are part of Being as a whole (what he called "being-in-the-world"). See, for instance, Evernden (1985, 1992), Foltz (1995), and Haar (1993) for detailed discussions of Heideggerian thought as it applies to environmental ethics.

54 Buber's "I-Thou" mode of being is remarkably similar to Heidegger's "being-in-the-world" mode of being.
Throughout all of this the tree remains my object and has its place and its time span, its kind and condition. But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate the tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It....There is nothing that I must not see in order to see, and there is no knowledge that I must forget. Rather is everything, picture and movement, species and instance, law and number included and inseparably fused. Whatever belongs to the tree is included: its form and its mechanics, its colors and its chemistry, its conversion with the elements and its conversation with the stars—all in its entirety....One should not try to dilute the meaning the relation: relation is reciprocity....What I encounter is neither the soul of the tree nor a dryad, but the tree itself. (Buber 1970: 58-9)

Note in Buber's remarks the significance of our perceived relationship to the world and nature. The way we address the other (whether we are speaking of nature, groups of people, or specific individuals) is therefore all-important because it sets the stage for everything else. It influences not only how we perceive the world and ourselves, but likewise the questions we ask about that world and how we go about answering those questions. There is thus a relatedness between the relational stand we take, the situations we find ourselves in as a society, and our response to those situations.

For instance, our relational stance will determine not only whether we are in an environmental crisis, or are the environmental crisis, but also how we respond to that crisis. If we are in an environmental crisis, we objectify the problem believing it is due, for example, to inefficiencies in production. Thus, our response would be to further “close the loop” between production, consumption, and pollution. But, on the other hand, if we are the environmental problem, our response would be considerably different. It is we who need to change—in our actions and in our values (arguably, however, if we had an “I-Thou” mode of being there would be no environmental crisis).
Our relational stance toward nature also significantly influences our action toward others. In speaking of Buber’s modes of being, psychoanalyst Harold Searles makes explicit how our relations to nature affect our relations to society. Searles (1960: 118) argues, “the kind of relatedness which the mature human being experiences toward the nonhuman environment is identical with that relatedness which he [sic] experiences toward fellow human beings.” The division we have erected between society and nature thus influences so much more than simply how we interact with the material world around us. It constitutes our relationship to the entire Kosmos. This is a relationship which Merleau-Ponty (1970: 122-3) describes as he writes: “There is a kinship between the being of the earth and that of my body. This kinship extends to others, who appear to me as other bodies, to animal whom I understand as variants of my embodiment, and finally even to terrestrial bodies.”

What, then, does this say of a discipline which sees nature as sealed off from society? A discipline where nature is understood as an object, and thus our relationship to it is one of objectification? As I have argued, sociology sees nature as an “it”, and our relation to it is as an “it”. But, as Searles asserts, an “I-It” relation to nature presupposes an “I-It” relation to everything, including other human beings. It simply is not possible to have an “I-Thou” relation with only other humans, but not with nature. An “I-Thou” relation cannot be qualified, it requires total inclusivity. Recognizing the dialogic relatedness between society and nature allows us to likewise acknowledge our interrelatedness—an interrelatedness that

55 The Pythagoreans introduced the term “Kosmos”, which is typically translated today into “cosmos”). But unlike “cosmos”, which usually means the physical universe, “Kosmos” means (as used by the Pythagoreans as well as by today’s great perennial philosophers [namely Ken Wilber] all domains of existence: from the physiophere to the biosphere, the noosphere, and (depending upon your philosophical inclinations) the theosphere.
will affect not only how we perceive and act toward nature, but likewise how we perceive and act toward others and ourselves.

Reconfiguring Sociology by Acknowledging the Dialogue of Nature and Society

Murray Bookchin (1987: 72) once argued that "the view we hold of the natural world profoundly shapes the image we develop of the social worlds, even as we assert the 'supremacy' and 'autonomy' of culture over nature." Here, Bookchin is eluding to the intimate dialogic relationship between society and nature. This relationship not only shapes how we perceive and act towards nature, but as Bookchin explains, also shapes how we perceive and act towards ourselves and others.

I am not suggesting an eradication of categories altogether, rather, just a blurring of their lines. Categories serve an important social purpose, they help to provide a little order in a very chaotic world—indeed, without them we could not speak or think about anything. Categories give social life life because they provide it with difference (Bell 2000). Nothing could more accurately portray death than a world of sameness and homogenization. Regardless of whether the structuralist assertion regarding the universal need among humans to create categories is correct (i.e., Leach 1974) the analytic and conceptual value of categories is very real. The problem lies, however, in their reification.

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56 Or, as Murphy (1994: ix) has argued: "The sociological construction of the relationship between the social and the natural must be done in a way that maintains that importance of social construction without reducing reality to a social construction."
Take the category "nature" for a moment. If we did not at least establish some blurry conceptual distinctions between society and nature, then everything would be nature—including pollution! Such a relativistic and vulgar postmodern strategy—namely, the deconstruction of all categories—gets us nowhere and we would be worse off because of it. Moreover, it is logically incoherent. To even suggest that categories do not exist, presupposes that categories exist, otherwise the statement would not make any sense.

Such arguments are, however, correct in one important aspect: we do indeed make these categories—this we must remember. The categories of nature and society are not universal, they vary according to culture—we need only look to anthropology for verification of this (i.e., Geertz 1973). We must, therefore, remember the following: categories equal culture, not ontology.57 Acknowledging this might provide us the fluidity needed to begin acknowledging the interrelations (the dialogues) that maintain and constitute these constructions.

For those unconvinced of the dialogue of society and nature, or for those who simply believe this represents more a philosophical diversion than it provides any meaningful theoretical insights, allow me to present the following example. Let’s say, hypothetically, that I am a farmer that owns some farmland that had been at one

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57 I feel compelled to briefly address the materialist and realist response to the idea that ontology is dialogically constituted. This is largely due to their unwillingness to accept "phenomenological reduction" and because many consider the noumenal world to have ontological primacy over the phenomenal lifeworld. That is, they argue that being is more than a matter of "being-for-us"—phenomenology is not ontology. Thus, "existence" ("being") is in no way contingent upon whether or not it is party to a given phenomenal lifeworld. Although phenomenologists and existentialists have attempted to resolve this ontological problem (see, i.e., Foltz 1995; Harr 1993; and the later works of Heidegger [i.e., 1967]), I will address it no further, for those who hold such extreme views could not be convinced otherwise in the limited space I intend to devote to this argument.
time designated (by a government agency) as a "wetland". Consequently, I have had encountered difficulties raising crops on this land. Let us then say that I decide to drain the wetland to make conditions more suitable for crops. In its present drained state I label it "good farmland." Taking this arbitrary example, let's break it down according to the dialogue of nature and society.

The draining of a wetland is a conscious act to improve the agricultural value of the land, although it may be detrimental to the ecological status of the land. The material status of the land therefore changes because of a material reconstruction, based on a normative assessment of the land’s value in its pre-drained state. Material reconstruction then allows for normative relabeling. Specifically, in its drained state I referred to it as "good farmland," inferring that it was not before it was drained (the actual label "wetland" is also as much contingent upon social conditions as it is upon material conditions).

Overtime, however, the drains become clogged due to cultivation of the soil. Natural processes will in time materially reconstruct the land, causing it to once again become an agriculturally unproductive wetland. Yet, these "natural processes," due to the cultivation of the soil, are also contingent upon social conditions—such as, for instance, social pressures and/or government policies that encourage (or discourage) various tillage methods that, to various degrees, cause soil erosion thus causing plugged drainage lines. In the meantime, the importance of agricultural production to society may have changed—or the value of wetlands to society may have changed (i.e., they could begin to be valued for their aesthetics or their ecological benefits)—
causing a normative rearrangement of the value we place on wetlands (which is actually currently occurring in the United States). In such cases the normative labels placed on wetlands may change from something that is perceived as being "bad", "ugly", and "worthless", to something that is "good", "beautiful", and "priceless". This relabeling could occur due to a number of reasons—for instance, society may come to recognize how wetlands provide habitat for "important" and "increasingly rare" (labels which are also a product of the nature-society dialogue) wetland species.\textsuperscript{58}

Within this example we can begin to bear witness to the intimate, inseparable relationship between society and nature. But, likewise, this example demonstrates the value this approach can have to sociology. He can see that by bringing nature into our analysis we do not undermine our legitimacy as a discipline, rather, we strengthen it. But this strength does not come from intellectual exclusion. Just as sociology needs to begin to blur the lines between society and nature, it likewise needs to begin to blur the lines of its disciplinary boundary. We no longer need to exist as a discipline on our own little epistemological island; that may have been a case of necessity a century ago, but it is no longer so today. We therefore should not be afraid to engage in dialogues with other disciplines—social and physical sciences included. And we should not be afraid if they wish to do the same with us.

\textsuperscript{58} I would like to thank Graham Woodgate for his suggestions in this example.
Trust and the Dialogue of Society and Nature

Like the disciplinary narrative in which they are grounded, socio-theoretical understandings of trust have completely ignored nature. Some readers, however, might find this exclusion understandable: “How could trust be anything but a product of social relations?”, they may ask. Yet, while trust may indeed be a product of social relations, those social relations are themselves products of a more fundamental relation: the nature-society dialogue.

Of course, at the ontological or metaphysical level we do not just trust. Rather, we must trust something—thus implying a material reality “out there”. But I am also referring to an interrelationship that exists at a lesser level of abstraction. Frequently, when we endow something with trust, we do so in part because of material conditions.

Recall my earlier example in the previous chapter regarding the high level of trust frequently associated with the corporate name “Kodak”. Why is Kodak such a trusted name in the photography business? Largely because of their reputation for producing quality film. Yet, if suddenly their film quality began to noticeably decline—thus implying a change in the material constitution of the film—then so too would likely their cultural reserve of trust.

This example may indeed appear to be almost commonsensical, and, in fact, it is. But if it is so obvious, why has it not been addressed in the previous trust literature? It is in part, I believe (for reasons I have earlier detailed) because of our disciplinary bias toward the social at the expense of excluding the natural. But
nature's exclusion is also because I do not think this interrelationship is always as visible as in the case of Kodak. Allow me to provide another agricultural example to illustrate this point.⁵⁹

In order to further illustrate this point, allow me take an example from the empirical case study that is to follow this theoretical analysis. Let us therefore say that we are speaking of a failing landlord-tenant agricultural relationship. In this relationship, the landlord does not trust their tenant nor does the tenant trust their landlord. The landlord locates the origins of this distrust in the tenant's inability to be a "good farm manager". The tenant, on the other hand, cannot understand why they have been so labeled when they pay their lease on time, keep up with all necessary farm repairs (i.e., fix fences), and in general run a profitable operation. The origins of this tension, however, reside in their differing interpretations of what it means to be a "good farm manager".

For the landlord, field presentation represents a good indicator of a farmer's abilities as a farm manager. According to the landlord, a weed-free field equals a good farmer. The tenant, on the other hand, believes a good farm manager is one who is concerned with what is in the field and in the soil, and less of what the field may look like from the road. Thus, the tenant chooses not to over-apply chemicals for fear of what it might do to the soil, and as a result the tenant's rows display a few more weeds from the road then the landlord would like to see.

⁵⁹ Agriculture represents an interesting interface between society and nature (what Woodgate [1992] and Woodgate and Redclift [1998] have termed "agroecosystem") and thus provides a useful operational context to illustrate the dynamics between society and nature.
In this example, trust is just as much a result of material conditions as it is a result of social dynamics. Granted, there is a significant social dynamic at work here—namely, differing understandings of what a “good farm manager” is. In fact, a typical sociological investigation into this dispute would indeed suggest that this is mainly an issue of differing perspectives or of possibly distorted communication. But this social dynamic is also a result of the material conditions of the field. If the field was weed-free, as the landlord would like, this tension would likely not exist. Yet, the dialogue of nature and society can even be witnessed at a deeper level.

Why, for example, does the landlord equate “clean fields” with “good farmer” in the first place? In part, because of the cultural constraints which exist in agriculture. Agriculture—as the name would suggest (agri-culture)—has a significant historical and cultural dimension to it. One of those cultural “habits” within agriculture, or more accurately the “habitus” of agriculture—to borrow a concept from Bourdieu (1977)—is to associate a weed-free field with someone who knows how to farm properly. Consequently, the rationale goes, if you have a proper background in farming you will know various weed control strategies and employ them when needed. It is thus from within this habitus of agriculture where the old saying, “you can tell a lot about a farmer just by looking at their fields”, is culturally derived.

Yet this cultural habit also has a material dimension to it. Weeds, for instance, place undue stress on crops, causing them to compete with the crops for nutrients and
water, which can ultimately affect yields. Likewise, certain weeds attract pests, thus further stressing the crop and further depressing one’s yields.

The tenant’s motivation for not keeping the fields weed-free also has a material dimension to it. For instance, they may not want to destroy the earthworm population within the soil (due to their agronomic benefits) with an over-application of herbicides. The tenant may likewise fear ground water contamination from chemical run-off. In addition, the tenant may not wish to engage in certain methods of cultivation for fear of losing precious top-soil. Finally, the tenant may have concerns with what agricultural chemicals may do to the actual commodities themselves out of a concern for food safety.

Ultimately, the landlord’s and tenant’s mutual distrust is a product of more than simply social dynamics. What this approach reveals is that mutual distrust can be much more than simply a matter of Habermasian "distorted communication" and a breakdown in intersubjectivity, where the solution would be simply to open up discursive channels between the tenant and landlord until consensus is ultimately reached. Indeed, this example hints at the true ubiquity of material-ideal relations in social life. Granted, sometimes this dialogue may not be as apparent in the previous example, but do not mistake its concealment for nonexistence for it is omnipresent.

I also do not mean to suggest that a change in perception only occurs with a concomitant change in material conditions. Indeed, ideal conditions can and do

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60 Even if this solution were possible, consensus should itself be looked at very critically (i.e., Carolan under review [b]).
change without a corresponding change to material conditions, and vice versa. This does not, however, deny their mutual constitutiveness. In short, we must remember the following: sometimes we have to look beyond the ideal to the material in order to attain a fuller understanding of the ideal.

Looking at the material thus provides insight into why the cultural habitus of "clean fields equal bad farmer" exists in agriculture—insight that could not be attained by looking at the ideal alone. Thus, while the aforementioned disagreement between landlord and tenant may in fact lie within the realm of the ideal—specifically with regard to differing perceptions of what constitutes a "good" farm manager—a dialogic approach allows us to trace the origins of such ideal perceptions to the mutually constituted interrelationship between the material and ideal. Hermeneutic perspectives are therefore incomplete in themselves because they do not tell us the whole story as to why we perceive and think what we do. They do not tell us entirely why cultural interpretations are the way they are. They look within the realm of intersubjectivity, but fail to explore beyond. Intersubjectivity therefore shapes all, but nothing shapes intersubjectivity.

By giving equal footing to both the material and ideal, and by understanding their interrelated character, we can begin to look beyond the intersubjective to understand that which shapes it. Contrary to Descartes, we are not a bodiless and worldless subject. And if we are not, then surely neither can be trust.
Nature as an Entry Point into the Realm of Society and Ideas

Until now we have addressed nature as something that exists "out there"; as the cold, objective, material bio-physical reality that is experienced only indirectly through consciousness. But nature also exists, perhaps paradoxically, in the social, as a product of pure idea and consciousness (although this apparent paradoxical quickly dissolves giving the intimate aforementioned dialogical relationship of the two realms). And as such, nature also therefore provides a valuable theoretical entry point into action and thus ultimately trust.

Interests and Action

Much of the contemporary discussion regarding social action can be traced to the Enlightenment debate over whether instrumental rationality or morals and norms are at the root of all individual action. The philosophical individualism found within the early period of the Enlightenment—such as with John Locke's rejection of tradition and simultaneous elevation of individual experience—provided the intellectual climate through which the "free-will" of the "free-agent" were able to break free from the chains of tradition and the religious doctrine of teleology.

In response to this view of the individual as a rational, self-interested creature, others—most notably Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Romantics—emphasized what could best be described as a type of natural foundationalism. Here, moral will and nature become the guiding force for human action, as opposed to instrumental rationality and egoistic self-interests. These two opposing views of social action—rational-utilitarian and nonrational-
normative—eventually came together in the writings of Kant and have since served as the theoretical groundwork of action for such social theorists as Jeffery Alexander (i.e., 1988), James Coleman (i.e., 1990), Jurgen Habermas (i.e., 1984), and Talcott Parsons (i.e., 1968). Indeed, one need not consider himself or herself a Kantian to recognize the value of understanding action as involving both rationality and something else, something more—what could be understood as super-rationality. We have, as Nietzsche (1956) so eloquently explained in *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*, both Apollonian and Dionysian characteristics.\(^61\)

In chapter two I argued that we do not consciously experience social action and trust relations from a purely self-interested standpoint. Instead, actions and behaviors are often just as equally based on some other criteria. Jeffery Alexander (1998: 107-8) presents the following insightful critique towards traditional rational action theory:

> Actions like economic exchange appeared to be thoroughly utilitarian only because theorists looked at them from the outside, in an empiricist way. Seen from a more analytic point of view, every 'unit act' is composed of several different elements, not only the rational ones. Norms, values, means, ends, and effort are all present, in tension with one another and with various kinds of physical and nonphysical environments.

A significant theoretical problem with such rationalistic perspectives lies in our inability as finite beings to see and know all of the ends. For every possible end we are able to associate with each “unit act”, there are numerous others that we will never know. Rational calculation and evaluation therefore become impossible. Parsons (1990) called these unknowable ends “transcendent ends”, because they reflect an actor’s desire to achieve

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\(^61\) Apollonian is that which is of a theoretical or rational nature; it is based upon critical-rational power. Dionysian, on the other hand, is ecstatic or irrational in nature; it is characteristic of creative-intuitive power.
ends associated with an inner state of mind that the actor may not always be conscious of.

Rationalistic theories thus appear to be inadequate by themselves to fully grasp the complexities associated with action. Indeed, it is not difficult for one to come to the conclusion that action is probably an amalgamation of both rationality and something else, what could be understood as super-rationality (i.e., the normative, moral, emotive, and sentimental dimensions of action). And as Alexander (1998: 177) notes, although this assertion may appear almost commonsensical, “it is surprising how rarely in the history of social theory this interpenetrating has actually been made.” This is not to say, however, that social thought has been completely oblivious to this super-rational dimension of action.

Super-rational criteria have been acknowledged by both Weber (1978: 24) as “value-rational” action and Toennies (1940: 17) as “natural will.” This criteria—as the prefix super suggests—is “above” or “beyond” mere internal, egoistic motives. Such action is that “which is determined by a conscience belief in the value for its own sake” (Weber 1978: 24). It is the uncalculated, fortuitous action based on tradition, affection, moral, and normative sentiments. Thus, while action (and ultimately trust) is based in part on egoistic self interests, we should not forget that other super-rational criteria also play a role. This point that was not lost on Toennies (1940: 17) when he argued that “intellect and reason belong to natural will as well as to rational will.”

Upon closer inspection, however, we find nature lurking beneath the surface of both rationality and super-rationality. I call this nature-based dimension of action naturality—action based upon natural interests. Naturality’s criteria for action is the eternal. When we confer trust based upon naturality, we are trusting simply because it is the right thing to do. It
is natural. It is good. It is true. In short, naturality is action based upon nature. Previous scholars have in fact alluded to this natural dimension to trust but have failed to go to any degree of conceptual depth to investigate it, seeing it instead as just another manifestation of super-rationality. For instance, Barber (1983: 9) describes trust in terms of the various expectations individuals have about social interactions, the most general of which being the "expectation of the persistence and fulfillment of the natural and the moral social orders" (my emphasis). John Locke (1954: 213) saw trust as being even more fundamentally tied to the natural order of things when he stated trust was the "bond of nature." According to Toennies (1988: 241), trust is in part conditioned on one's "knowledge of human nature", and is thus a product of our "natural will" (Toennies 1940: 17). "Natural will" is a concept that Wilson (1993) has also referred to as our "moral impulse" and Fukuyama (1995) as our "innate sociability". In fact, many of the greater thinkers of political and moral philosophy—from Locke to Hume, Kant, Smith, and Tocqueville—speak of the significance of "promise-keeping" within the context of a moral community. For all of these scholars (and numerous others) nature plays a silent yet significant role in the formation of trust.

Upon closer scrutiny we can quickly see that rationality and super-rationality are in fact both shaped at least in part by naturality. In order to have normative based action, or a

62 Natural interests thus have affinities to Bell's (1994) concept of the "natural conscience". But while Bell's "natural conscience" equates to the moral faith in a realm beyond the social, naturality is the moral faith in the material (objective, with-out) realm because it is beyond the social (subjective, with-in realm) but which still exists within (or through) the social. Naturality can be understood as the force that motivates all forms of rationality, as I will soon explain.
moral will as described by Rousseau, requires a belief in the absolute, a belief in truth, and ultimately a belief in nature. Super-rationality thus presupposes nature by its projecting of action in reference towards this normative yardstick.

In rationality, an image of the individual is constructed, which is no longer blinded by the vale of tradition and religious dogmas. Instead, it perceives an individual which is calculating and thus capable of uncovering truths and absolutes; an individual which is able of manipulating and developing a mastery over nature. As an early champion of Enlightenment (and thus rational) thought Bacon for instance argued, “let us learn the laws of nature so that we can be her masters, as we are now, in ignorance, her thralls; science is the road to utopia” (as quoted in Rossi 1968: 23).

Yet, what is naturality? How does nature influence social action and ultimately trust? Before addressing these questions I would like to first stress that the distinctions between rationality, super-rationality, and naturality are analytical; all three are to be found, in varying degrees, within any instance of action. Thus, while it is possible that one or another of these three dimensions might predominate in any given instance of action, it is not possible that any of these three will not be present at all.

Additionally, I would like to make explicit my conceptualization of the term “action”. When I speak of action I am speaking of purposeful, reflexive, conscious action. To act thus implies agential properties. Action, however, is not agency. As Alexander (1992: 2) argues, equating actors or action with agency renders one guilty of misplaced concreteness, “actors are much more than, and much less than, ‘agents’”. Action is embedded within the temporal-relational context of agency and the structurational capacities of recurrent social practices.
Thus, “there is no hypothetical moment in which agency actually gets ‘free’ of structure; it is not, in other words, some pure Kantian transcendental will” (Emirbayer and Mische 1998: 1004).

The Naturality of Action and Trust

Naturality is an agenic property based upon absolutes and the eternal. Naturality thus motivates action and ultimately trust through a belief that the act is simply the right or natural thing to do. It is the component of action based upon some greater moral imperative; or, possibly, it is the component of action based upon some existential immutability—such as the belief some may posses that trust is what makes humans human, and is thus an essential component of our “human nature”. Such overtones of naturality can be found in Thomas Hobbes when he argued societies (and humanity in general) form and endure because the state, and the power that we confer onto it, is to be trusted. Trust then for Hobbes is an essential ingredient of civilization—it is the lifeline that keeps us from the savage (and thus inhuman) state of nature.

We can see signs of naturality underlying such statements regarding trust as: “I know I should be a more trusting person”, or “I’d like to think of myself as a trusting and trustworthy person”. Here, trust is seen as possessing a moral force unto itself. Trusting and being trustworthy is thus something that is good, where trusting is the right thing to do because it is part of our nature and is part of what makes us human. This impulse we frequently feel that urges us to trust simply because we know we should is the impulse of naturality.
Yet this impulse we sometimes feel to trust need not always be a manifestation of what is in our “nature”. Sometimes the moral force of naturality arises from our history of interaction with the trustee as a trustee. Consider an instance where you continually grant trust onto someone. Like all initial trust encounters it begins risky; the newness of the situation provides little direct experimental knowledge about the prospective trustee from which to base the trust relationship on. Yet over time, as you accumulate more experimental knowledge on the trustee as to their trustworthiness, the relationship becomes less risky (as I discussed previously, the reduction in risk need not exist in fact but only in perception)—a process I will later describe in chapter six as the “structuration of trust”.

As trust extends into the future (and thus concomitantly into the past) a number of emergent social forces appear, one of which is the moral obligation to both honor and grant trust (the other social forces will become enumerated in chapter seven). As trust relations between truster and trustee begin to accumulate it not only becomes easier to trust (that is to say it becomes in part habitualized), but likewise it becomes harder not to trust (and harder not to honor that trust when you are the trustee). Trust therefore begins to not only oblige the trusted (because of the moral stigma attached to the act of betraying trust, especially in those cases where trust has become built-up over time), but also the truster (because of a perceived moral obligation not to deviate from the historical trust relation the truster and trustee have accumulated more experimental knowledge on the trustee as to their trustworthiness).

\[63\] Of course, the actual level of this experimental knowledge varies greatly from situation to situation. For instance, whether the prospective trustee is a “familiar stranger”, “unfamiliar stranger”, or someone we know quite intimately greatly influences the level of experimental knowledge available to us to assess the trustworthiness of the prospective trustee. And what about therapeutic trust’s relation to experimental knowledge? While the assessment of trustworthiness becomes less relevant in instances of therapeutic trust it is still present. If we knew there to be no chance of a therapeutic trustee living-up to the moral and social obligation of being trustworthy we would not bother conferring therapeutic trust onto that person.
developed). As Offe (1999: 50) describes, "it is thus not just the truster's time series of accumulated past experience which generates the expectation of future behavior, but, perhaps in addition, the reliance, on the part of A [the truster], upon some moral force that binds B [the trustee] as a result of past interaction" (emphasis in original). But likewise the truster, as a result of past interaction, feels a moral force to continue to renew the trust relation. Thus, "the concession of trust can [but by all means not always] generate the very behavior which might logically seem to be its precondition" (Gambetta 1988: 234).64

Let us say for means of clarification that you have repeatedly used my snow-shovel every winter to clear your sidewalks of snow and ice. In these instances I have thus trusted you with my snow-shovel (a snow-shovel which I am very fond of). In this instance you therefore feel (I hope) a moral obligation to validate my trust not only because it is the right thing to do (because you know of my fondness to the snow-shovel), but also because that is simply what responsible "good" people do (notice the force of naturality here). Over time, therefore, a moral force begins to present itself to both you and I. Once trust becomes repeatedly revalidated over time (what I refer to in chapter seven as the "structuration of trust") you begin to feel compelled to honor my trust simply because of that history, for that is what you have done in the past. And the same moral force can also be said to be felt by me.

Normative obligations, moral forces, ethical proclivities, whatever you wish to call it, they all point to the same thing: naturality. And while the magnitude of these forces vary

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64 Naturality can thus result in what Hardin (1993) has referred to as "optimistic trust", which occurs when the truster overestimates the trustworthyness of trustee (i.e., you overestimate my trustworthyness because just like you feel a moral force compelling you to trust me, you believe I too feel a moral force which compels me to honor your trust, even though I might not).
with the situation, they are an inextricable ingredient to any society. As noted by Durkheim: “men [sic] cannot live together without acknowledging, and consequently making mutual sacrifices, without tying themselves to one another with strong durable bonds” (Durkheim 1964a: 228).

Naturality can also be found at an even more primordial level of action, however. When we act (and by extension when we trust) we are doing so with the conviction that we are doing the right thing for that moment and for that situation. In making this assertion, however, I am not suggesting the presence of an unencumbered agent with complete free-will; we may have choices, but those choices are limited by our temporal-relational location. In addition, I am not suggesting that all action is rational, at least not in the traditional sense—even schizophrenics believe their actions to be right at the moment those actions are committed. Rather, I am suggesting that all action is based, in various degrees depending upon the situation, on moral judgements, on absolutes, and on claims of nature (as the material, objective world “out there”). All action is therefore shaped in part by naturality.

To act (and ultimately to trust) is to thus assert a moral judgement. I am not, however, suggesting that we are neo-Kantians (whether we are conscious of it or not), driven by the belief in Kantian transcendentalism and the moral imperative therein implied—one’s philosophical and religious proclivities are insignificant to the argument at hand. What I am proposing is not bound to any one particular philosophical stance.

Reflect upon, for instance, your own life. Why are you reading this dissertation? In response you may say: “Why, it’s because I want to, not because of some moral judgement!” Being both the agnostic and Bakhtinian you are, you continue by asserting: “Indeed, why do I
do anything? Surely not because of some larger moral imperative, but rather because of the unfinalizable dialogue between ends and means that are developed coterminously within the context of the situation, which is itself ever changing.” Yet, your unwillingness to view the reading of my dissertation as a moral act makes the reading of my dissertation a moral act. Even the most rigid advocates of nihilism assert a moral statement when they argue that all values and morals are baseless and relative. The point, therefore, is that at some level all acts are precipitated by, and indicators of, moral assertions, although the level to which we assert those moral judgements vary greatly depending upon the situation.

Let us retain this example of your reading of this dissertation. This act may be based upon such fully conscious moral judgements which could include the following: knowledge and the quest for knowledge are good and thus ends in themselves, or possibly the belief that colleagues have a moral obligation to read the work of others and provide valuable input. In all likelihood, however, your reading of this dissertation is not the result of such explicit conscious moral forces. Rather, it is probably the product of various semi-conscious moral beliefs. For instance, you may say that your reading of this work is consciously motivated by your love for social theory, and indeed I would not doubt your honesty in making such a statement. However, I would then ask you from where that love for social theory originates. I would venture to guess that it is not “turtles all the way down”, but rather that it emanates from some semi-conscious moral force that can be revealed upon reflection—such as the belief that the quest for knowledge is good, or the belief that humans have an innate inquenchable appetite for knowledge.
Naturality, therefore, need not always exist in the realm of consciousness to become actualized through purposeful action, although it nevertheless can—such as in choosing not to drive a car while intoxicated out of a fear of hurting yourself or others (action based upon one’s consciousness of the perceived moral imperative “thou shalt not kill”). Typically, however, naturality is more subtle, acting more as a semi-conscious guide behind the stage of individual action, such as within the aforementioned example of the conscious forces compelling you to read this dissertation. Here, your love for reading social theory is an emergent property of one (or numerous) semi-conscious forces which can be traced to naturality (i.e., the belief that knowledge is an end itself, the belief that humans have an insatiable appetite for knowledge, etc.).

All action and all acts of trust are thus based in part, and depending upon the situation, on a referencing to something “out there”, to the moral proclivities of truth and nature. In some instances, naturality motivates at the level of consciousness—as in the case of choosing not to drive when one is intoxicated out of a fear of doing harm unto others. In others, naturality hovers somewhere at the level of semi-consciousness—as possibly in the example of your reading this dissertation. Regardless of the situation, however, naturality (like rationality and super-rationality) is always present, shaping our actions and influencing trust.

To fully understand trust we must therefore begin to look beyond merely the realm of the social. As Durkheim asserted, society is more than the sum of its parts. But how much

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65 I would like to be clear on my terminology. When I speak of forces, I speak of influencing mechanisms of and toward action. Forces do not determine or condition action, they only shape and help give form to action. I am not proposing, therefore, a deterministic view of human action.
more has been in debate and sociology has always seemed to be missing something because of it. Part of that something, I believe, is nature.

But in looking toward nature we nevertheless find ourselves returning to the social, as in the case of naturality (just as when we look toward the social we soon discover ourselves engaging with the natural), all of which only further reaffirms the gravity of my earlier argument: a fuller understanding of society is readily at hand for sociology if we can only commence upon bridging the divide between society and nature and thus begin to recognize their dialogic interdependence.

**Revisiting the Theoretical Model**

We can now return to the original goal of this chapter: to make room for the dual ontologies of both risk and evidence. First, I highlighted the role that nature as the material plays in our conceptions of the social, which was then followed by the role that nature as the ideal plays in that same conception, all to support the argument that the social cannot be understood apart from the natural. Through this, suitable justification has been presented to allow for the dual ontologies of both risk and evidence.

Let us first turn toward what is meant by the dual ontology of evidence. Evidence still means the objective, materialistic, empirical facts—the hoary positivist view of the concept. Yet I also mean something more—but what? The dialogue of society and nature can serve as entry points into this "something more".

According to the dialogue of society and nature, two types of evidence exist, although each is embedded within (or in perpetual dialogue with) the other: material (nature) and ideal
(society) evidence. The point of this chapter has been to argue that both forms of evidence are important if we hope to develop any type of understanding of everyday life. And while this definition still includes evidence in the purely material sense, it also (through, for instance, the concept of naturality) reminds us of that evidence that comes to us from a purely subjective vantage point; namely, that "evidence" which emulates from within one's heart, one's soul, and one's mind, and through which has no material correlate in the sensate world of objects. Sociology, for epistemological reasons earlier described, has historically favored ideal evidence (or more accurately intersubjectively mediated ideal evidence)—which has taken radical fervor in recent decades through vulgar forms of constructionism and postmodernism.\textsuperscript{66} Others disciplines, on the other hand, such as Behaviorism or Physics, have sought explanation through the material world. The material and ideal, however, are each in constant dialogue with the other, and as such any understanding of "evidence" must include both realms.\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{66} Of course, postmodernism, in an attempt to liberate humanity from such hegemonic forces as grand narratives, Western elitism, materialism, idealism (basically all "-ism's" to have ever existed), argues that there is no Evidence, only evidence; all that exists are varying viewpoints, with none possessing epistemological privilege over another. The problem with such an argument, however, is that it undermines itself—specifically, postmodernism is itself (at least in its radical form) simply another grand-narrative which prescribes and often forces onto others its own worldview (not to mention it is itself Western in origin). One, therefore, cannot logically accept its arguments, because in doing so requires their simultaneous rejection. This paradox is well articulated by Colin McGinn (1997: 12) when he writes, "[t]here is a dilemma here: either announce the debunking account of reason as the objective truth, or put it forward as merely an instance of its own official conception of truth. In the former case, the subjectivist contradicts himself, claiming a status for his utterance that according to him no utterance can have; but in the latter case, the claim is merely true for him and has no authority over anyone else's beliefs. If the subjectivist's statement is true, then we can ignore it; if it is not, then it is false. In either case it is not a claim we can take seriously."

\textsuperscript{67} Even the "hard" physical sciences (i.e., psychics) heavily rely upon ideal evidence. Mathematics and logic are, for example, forms of ideal evidence embraced by the so-called "objective sciences"; yet when was the last time you saw a negative one or a square root in the material world? In addition, the evidence itself utilized in the "objective" physical sciences is "experiential" evidence (although you do not have to directly experience it, you do have to experience something—such as a machine—that informs you of its existence); it is rooted in your consciousness, and thus ultimately rooted in the dialogue of the material (that which we experience) and ideal (the actual experience).
Evidence is therefore evidence in both the ideal and material sense. When we trust, that trust is in part an amalgamation of sensory perceptions of the world around us, which includes not only other people, but in addition the broader insentient material reality around us. Yet trust is also catapulted from within, from moral forces of obligation to transcendental beliefs about humanity and the human condition. It is this motivational force that tell us we should trust others because it is “good” and “right”, and which leads us to believe our trust will be honored in return (because of the belief that others feel a similar moral force to reciprocate and honor our trust). Beyond materialistic forms of evidence there is also then evidence that originates from within the inner doors of consciousness, and through which can be located within the realm of ideas and society—evidence which I have so labeled “naturality”.

Evidence, therefore, is not simply that which we can touch, taste, see, and feel—although this is definitely part of it. But it is also those beliefs and forces of honor, obligation, respect, and morality that we all so often feel when we are presented with a situation to trust or not. When these forces are present, and if the call of naturality is strong enough, conferment of trust is likely. That evidence may present itself in the form of simply a moral obligation, “this is what I should do”, or it may present itself in the form of perceiving the other person’s moral obligation, “she should feel an obligation to honor my trust”. Regardless of the form this “inner” variation of evidence might take, if it is (in conjunction with the more “external” forms of evidence) present in sufficient amounts, trust will result (or confidence if the perception of risk is minimal). This can be understood as the
dialogue of evidence—evidence of both material and ideal forms (which is precipitated by the dialogue of nature and society).\footnote{One might, however, question why “faith” is not also precipitated by evidence (according the model, faith and hope are both products of lesser forms of evidence, otherwise, they would be trust or confidence). My answer is that faith, by our common understanding of the concept, is something that is not based upon evidence; the lack of evidence is in fact the very basis for the saying “leap of faith”. Faith is an expression of sentiments that have very little evidential substantiation. With that said, most people therefore who claim to have faith in, for instance, God, are actually expressing a type of sentiment closer to that of confidence, because that belief is often based upon some form of experiential evidence—i.e., the beauty of nature, the bible, etc. I am not, therefore, claiming that people of Faith are expressing an unsubstantiated belief. Rather, people of Faith are actually expressing something closer to confidence, than actual faith. Their Faith is not a product of a “leap of faith” (a lacking of evidence), but instead a product of undeniable (at least as they typically perceive it) evidence, which is best described as confidence.}

Yet, with the dialogue of evidence there is also the dialogue of risk—risk in both the material and ideal forms (which is again precipitated by the dialogue of nature and society).

Risks do not merely exist in the material sense, for they too can come from within the depths

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Figure 2. Dual ontologies of risk and evidence incorporated into the four-quadrant model of trust

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of perception and consciousness, as noted by both Beck (1994, 1999) and Freudenburg (2000). Our perceptions of risk therefore vary according to both material and ideal factors; it is, like evidence, an undeniable production of the dialogue of nature and society. Figure 2 represents this dual ontological nature of both risk and evidence by re-illustrating the vertical and horizontal axis with a segmented line intertwined with the repeated phrase “material-ideal-material-...”.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE INTRAPERSONAL DIMENSION OF TRUST

The perceived subject undergoes continued birth; at each instance it is something new. Every incarnated subject is like an open notebook in which we do not know what will be written.—Maurice Merleau-Ponty 1964: 6

The processes that basically define the content of the psyche occur not inside but outside the individual organism, although they involve its participation.—V.N. Voloshinov 1986: 25

Trust (and by extension simple trust, confidence, faith, and hope) presupposes the presence of a primordial intrapersonal state. Before we are able to express particular expectations, sentiments, and beliefs about the future toward either people and/or things (and thus confer trust), we must likewise possess similar expectations, sentiments, and beliefs about our ontology, our identity, and our very being. To trust is to first and foremost believe in one's reality. It is to have confidence in one's ontology and in the rigidity of one's existential condition. This early epistemological condition for trust has been referred to by Giddens (1990) as "ontological security" and by Erikson (1965) as "basic trust", and it is the presence of this primordial state of being that allows for the development of self-identity and ultimately trust. As articulated by Giddens (1990: 98), "[t]he predictability of the (apparently) minor

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69 Within this chapter I use ontological security and basic trust interchangeably. These terms are used to convey the general belief we need from our reality that our very being is not going to end the moment we close our eyes. Such a belief is tremendously important for trust formation because to not believe in one's reality is to fundamentally not trust one's existential condition. And without this primordial form of trust, all other forms of trust become unattainable.
routines of day-to-day life is deeply involved with a sense of psychological security. When such routines are shattered—for whatever reason—anxieties come flooding in, and even very firmly founded aspects of the personality of the individuals may become stripped away and altered.”

**Routine, Habit, and Trust**

Routine, habit, and the normalizing practices of social interaction are understood as being particularly important for ontological security and ultimately trust formation. Blumer (1969), for instance, points to the repetitive and stable character of everyday life as being essential for intersubjectivity. Berger and Luckmann (1967: 21) likewise emphasize the habitualized makeup of daily social life when they argue, “the reality of everyday life [is] an ordered reality”. And for Mead, the rigid monolithic character of the social allows for the sharing of symbols which is essential for communication and the continuance of the social. As Mead (1962: 54) writes, “[i]f there is to be communication as such the symbol has to mean the same thing to all individuals involved”, which is only possible when life-worlds are similar and coterminous. Such a view of reality is based on the pragmatic assumption of similarity, where worlds, standpoints, and even consciousness are interchangeable (Schutz and Luckmann 1973). Consequently, “just as we assume that every fountain pen functions in the same way and base our acts according to that assumption, so I assume that every consciousness is like my own” (Bender 1998: 183).
But this routinized character of daily life has also been understood as the primary ingredient of trust. Goffman, for example, sees normality and routine as essential components in trust formation. For Goffman (1971: 283), normalcy means it is “safe and sound to continue on with the activity at hand with only peripheral attention given to checking upon the stability of the environment”. As Misztal (2001: 314-15) notes: “By preserving the routine of daily life, they [people] reinforce, in themselves and in others, the feeling of normality which conceals the unpredictability of the reality, thus increasing the perception of general security and trustworthiness.”

The routinization of daily life is thus seen by many as being the source through which we maintain the psychological security needed to guard us from the existential dread that so concerned Kierkeggard. It is seen as being an essential ingredient in the formation of trust and the source through which we maintain our existential condition. One need only look to the breaching experiments of Garfinkel for support of this claim. Such experiments provide seemingly clear illustration of the emotionally disturbing affects experienced by individuals when their sense of “reality” becomes breached, when routines become de-routinized, and when normalcy becomes threatened.

Yet, while Garfinkel’s experiments do illustrate the psychological distress accompanying such breaches, they also show a continuation of the participants’ existential condition. They illustrate that while we may experience a moment of existential shock as a result of a threat to the normalcy of everyday life we
nevertheless continue to exist. Ontological security may therefore be threatened, but
typically never shattered.

When a routinized aspect of everyday life becomes shattered we still typically
feel confident that tomorrow will bring another day. We do not lapse in a state of
severe psychosis and withdraw from society into some deep recess of the mind.
Rather, we continue; we get out of bed in the morning and make it through the day.
Our basic trust may waver during times of a breach but it does not shatter. It
continues and thus so too do we.

Yet, why is this? Some scholars have attributed trust to the routinization of
everyday life. Thus, when we perceive the situation to be in order (i.e., normal) “we
tend to feel comfortable enough to trust others in the situation” (Misztal 2001: 314).
“The perception of the situation as normal [therefore] results in the development of
trusting intentions toward others in the situation” (Misztal 2001: 314). Others, such
as Giddens, while not equating trust to “normal” situations, have at least seen these
habitualized structures of daily life as essential for the development of ontological
security and basic trust—intrasubjective phenomena which are vital for the eventual
development of interpersonal trust.

Trust, however, is more then merely the product of a perception of normality
as Garfinkel and others have argued. Indeed, if that is all there is to trust this
dissertation could have been significantly shorter. What I wish to focus critically on
within this chapter is the latter argument presented by Giddens: that ontological
security is the product of the habitualized aspects of social life. The topic of
ontological security is significant for the issue at hand because it is essential for trust (for, as I argued earlier, to trust is to have confidence in one's reality), indeed, it is the lifeblood of trust.

The main problem with Giddens' assertion is the following: if ontological security is the product of the routine of everyday life, why then do we continue to retain said ontological security in the face of a Garfinkelian breach to that very routine? Ontological security must, therefore, be built upon more than just habit. But what?

The foundation of this ontological security can be found within the same processes that constitute the self. From a Bakhtinian framework I argue that like the self our sense of reality is dialogically constituted and so too is this primordial intrasubjective state of being. It is not, therefore, "breaches" that threaten our existential shell, but rather an inability to engage dialogically with our surroundings—an inability to engage fully in, to use a term of Bakhtin's, the "unfinalizability" of social life.

The Unfinalizability of Self and Society

The dialogic self of which I speak is not the self of post-structuralism or Lacanian psychoanalysis; a dialogic self does not reside within the text nor does it pronounce an affirmation of the "author's" death. A dialogic self understands Lacan's (1977: 2) aphoristic maxim as incomplete: "The unconscious [subject] is the discourse of the Other." While the subject may indeed be a dialogue of the other (in
this, Lacan is correct), the other is concomitantly a dialogue of the subject: a point
denied by post-structuralism. Thus, instead of displacing the individual in favor of
the text and therefore proclaiming the death of the author, I suggest recasting the
individual as both the author and product of discourse.

A dialogic self recovers the author not as a unified center for all knowledge
and discourse, but as an author that is an active part of the networks of social relations
and discourse through which it is also constituted. Thus, while discourse does create
speaking selves, speaking selves also create discourse—this we must not forget. The
dialogic self is a self of both subject and object. It is a self that exists within the
"unfinalizability" of dialogue. Thus, while the self is indeed decentered (as
poststructuralism has proclaimed), it is not erased altogether and reduced to mere text.

Within contemporary theories of everyday life specific individuals do not exist
(Bender 1998). Following the pragmatic assumption of similarity any individual will
do since standpoints and consciousness are interchangeable. The individual is society
but not vice versa: "the part [the individual] is explained in terms of the whole
[society], not the whole in terms of the part or parts" (Mead 1962: 7). All selves are
the products of the generalized other (not others), and all selves are thereby similar.

Mead in particular believed that the "me" and the "I" are both directed toward
the "generalized other" (which he understood as society or a community) from which
emerges a self. Specifically, Mead (1962: 158) argued the following:

The self reaches its full development by organizing these individual
attitudes of others into the organized social group attitudes, and by thus
becoming an individual reflection of the general systematic pattern of
social or group behavior in which it and others are involved—a pattern
which enters as a whole into the individual’s experience in terms of those organized group attitudes which, through the mechanism of the central nervous system, he [sic] takes towards himself [sic], just as he [sic] takes the individual attitudes of others.

The ability to become anyone (through taking the role of the generalized other) is essential according to Mead for communication and mutual understanding to occur. In the end, our roles and ultimately our reality become determined to a large degree by the a priori social understanding of these roles. Acts, the self, and ultimately reality becomes monolithic, stable, and invariable because the generalized other in which they are based is likewise monolithic, stable, and invariable.

Such an understanding of self and reality, however, forgets the other half of the formula needed for the social conferring of meaning to occur—namely, individuals. We are consequently left with an over-socialized vision of the self and an over repetitized version of reality—a self and reality constituted solely from a priori interactions, products of an always-already society which itself has no product.

Yet the self is not stable and neither is the reality in which it is embedded. Indeed, I could think of no better understanding of death than a world of uniformity, invariability, and constancy. Rather, self and the epistemological immutability through which it exists are “unfinalizable” (indeed, to finalize anything is to suggest death).

Specifically, Bakhtin argues individuals participate in specific locations that are unique to that event and that event alone. In a direct critique of neo-Kantian transcendentalism (which finds meaning for life events in a priori moments) Bakhtin argues that selves are products of particular acts and cannot be understood as being
interchangeable (and thus neither can their moral imperatives). In doing so he emphasizes (in contrast, for example, to symbolic interactionists) the uniqueness and unrepeatability of acts. Whereas for Mead consciousness is a product of a generalized other, for Bakhtin it is a product of numerous others. In positing a self in relation to numerous others Bakhtin is suggesting a self that is multiple, decentered, and variable in comparison to the over-socialized self of symbolic interactionism.

In taking emphasis away from a shared "world-view" Bakhtin is thereby proposing a radical alternative to symbolic interactionism's understanding of social interaction, reality, and the self: that everyday life is given life when people do not share meaning. As argued by Bender (1998: 193), "we cannot learn or progress from shared meaning; we only learn by encountering new ideas and acting them out in intersubjective ways". The ability to act, to respond, and to answer to the world around us is the process through which emerges a self. If the self was merely the product of repetitive, habitual structures of everyday life we would have no reason, nor the ability, to act, respond, or even answer to the world around us. Yet everyday life is full of variable acts, responses, and answers. Everyday life, self, and reality are complex, sometimes chaotic, and always unique phenomena. In fact, one could argue that the serendipity of social life (and not its routinization) is what gives social life life.

What then do we respond to in this unfinalizable dialogue of social life? What we respond to is the mutual mis-understanding that we share with others and society. As I have earlier argued, the best we can ever hope to achieve is a believed degree of
mutual understanding with ourselves, others, and society (Carolan 2000). We will never know for sure if we completely and accurately understand anything. I think I understood you and you understood me when we last spoke—but I cannot be sure. I think I know what the author of the last book I read was trying to convey to her readers, but I could be mistaken. I hear perfectly clearly what is being said over the radio but, given the “looseness” of human language, I can never be completely confident in knowing what the announcer is attempting to communicate to his listeners.

Here we see why the dialogue of social life is (and must be) unfinalizable, and why mutual mis-understanding is an essential component of this unfinalizable dialogue. If mutual understanding were to be achieved social life would surely die. Mutual understanding presupposes the death of dialogue and thus the death of society itself. For why would dialogue need to exist in a place where all understood one another? Indeed, to mutually understand is to be the same. Yet this is not a trait of society, it is antithetical to it, for society presupposes difference, variability, and fluidity. Social life in fact is not only about difference, it is difference.

One can actually see this trait of society borne out in theoretical physics. For example, you may able to see your experiences today as comparable to those of previous days (or numerous previous days). You may even go as far to say that they are practically identical (such as, for instance, if you have been sick and lying immobile in bed for the past few days). In actuality, however, you have never
experienced a day that was exact to a previous day. Indeed, I could go as far to claim that you have never even experienced a second that was exact to a previous second.

This seemingly audacious assertion refers to the commonsensical statement (that is backed up by Einstein's general theory of relativity) that no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time. Thus, my place in social life is unique if only because when I occupy a space no one else can occupy it. When I am here, you must therefore be somewhere else, and although we may be close to each other we are nevertheless apart. If we were to exchange places, however, time will have elapsed. Consequently, although we are now each in the other's previous geophysical location, we are not in each other's previous same space-time location. In short, since previous situations can never be repeated (unless we develop a way to alter the fabric of space-time) we can never see, know, or experience the exact same thing as anyone else. Mutual understanding is thus impossible at the very least because of this inability to alter space-time.

Thus, as we act and as we respond to others' (including society's) acts, we shape the structure of the social setting, which in turn shapes us. Each person's response is unique to that situation and to that space-time—what Bakhtin (1993: 2) has referred to as "once-occurrent events of Being". There is no way for self, other, and society to avoid this answerability and response since the very quality that defines social life is the ability to answer and to respond (Clark and Holquist 1984). The self, therefore, is never fully constituted by its own apperception. Rather, it is the product
and producer of these infinite responses. And how we ultimately respond is how we take responsibility for ourselves as a self.

But while the self is constructed out of difference I do not mean to suggest what Derrida (1991) has famously termed “diffe’rance”, for I do not suggest a total deconstruction of the subject. A dialogic self is still an active and engaged agent, rather then simply an affect of external power-relations or modes of signification (Carolan and Bell 2001). Indeed, such post-structuralist accounts of the self have managed to reduce here-and-now individuals to the immutable laws of language. This has had the alienable effect of understanding subjects as no longer being present in the world as, to quote Bakhtin (1993: 7), “individually and answerably active human beings.”

A Bakhtinian approach would reject such vulgar extremes of relativism because they assume a priori the total incommensurability of viewpoints—an assertion that renders dialogue unnecessary and a dialogic self-contradictory (Gardiner 1998). Thus, although our responses in the unfinalizable dialogue of social life are constructed from our unique space-time vantage point (and are thus irreducibly pluralistic) our responses are predicated upon other’s responses (including those of society). Consequently, while our vantage points may be irreducibly pluralistic and unique to us they are nevertheless products of a collectively shared dialogue between self, other, and society (or generalized others).

As argued by Merleau-Ponty (1964: 16), our relational constitution to the world can be seen as a “horizon of an indefinite number of perspectival views which
blend with one another which define the object in question.” This understanding of self allows for a decentered-centered quality while avoiding the pitfalls encountered in postmodern and post-structural accounts of the concept. This can be seen in their tendency to narrowly frame social practices as discursive and signifying, thus confining critical practice to deconstructive textual strategies (Seidman 1997).

How, then, does this dialogic self help bring us closer to an understanding of our everyday reality and to the security and/or anxiety we ultimately feel toward that reality, a security which ultimately serves an essential function in the formation of trust? If social life and ultimately the self is constituted dialogically, as Bakhtin suggests, then would you not also suppose the same origins for our ontological security? To these questions let us now turn.

The Dialogic Constitution of Ontological Security

There can be no last word in social life. The unfinalizability of social life resides in its ability to surprise, in its ability to delight, and in its ability to instill awe. The dialogue between self and society thus differs little from the dialogic relation between speaker and listener. As Bakhtin (1986: 119-120) asserts: “[It] is never just a reflection or an expression of something already existing outside it that is given and final. It always creates something that never existed before, something absolutely new and unrepeatable.”

To be social is to possess the insatiable thirst to engage in this unfinalizable dialogue, what psychoanalytic theorist Klein (1975) has referred to as our
"epistemophilic instinct"—our innate appetite for knowledge. Indeed, one could argue that our appetite for knowledge is what constitutes life. It is the air, sun, food, and water that sustains our being. To terminate that search for knowledge is to terminate the dialogue that gives social life *life*. It is to finalize the unfinalizable—which can only result in death.

This psychological security that we so depend on to trust and ultimately to exist has its origins within this desire to respond to the unfinalizable dialogue of social life. Such a conceptualization of ontological security, however, differs significantly from other contemporary perspectives that orient this inner psychological confidence within the routine structures of daily life. Arguably the most well-known of these arguments is that proposed by Anthony Giddens in *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990) and *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991).

Drawing from Erikson and Winnicott, Giddens relates a creation of a transitional realm between infant and other to a broader interpersonal organization of time and space. The transitional objects that bridge the space between the infant and others are seen as a basis for "going-on-being" in the world; the cultivation of a sense of self that, in turn, protects that infant from unbearable anxiety. And what matters most in this forging of self, according to Giddens, is the establishment of routines and habits.

Drawing heavily from Erikson (and his concept of "basic trust"), Giddens argues that unconscious anxiety leads the infant into a transitional realm of self and others, and only through an early involvement with parental routines and habits is
such anxiety then contained. A sense of self, trust, and object relationships is therefore forged through a transitional realm of routinization. Through this Giddens (1991: 39) concludes the child receives "a sort of emotional inoculation against existential anxieties—a protection against future threats and dangers which allows the individual to sustain hope and courage in the face of whatever debilitating circumstances she or he might later confront" (emphasis in original).

For Giddens, the postulation of a relatively stable, reflexively grounded self is a precondition for any lasting and meaningful engagement with the modern world. Such a position thus places Giddens in opposition to post-structuralism and postmodernism, which instead theorize a decentered subject, thoroughly fragmented in and through a text which itself has no author. Instead, Giddens acknowledges that the self is not immune from dislocation and dispersal. Thus, as Giddens (1991: 185) argues, "the narrative of self-identity is inherently fragile".

Yet, by embracing object relations theory to the degree he has, Giddens likewise becomes susceptible to some of its critiques. One fundamental problem with object relations theory is that ego and object are inseparable (Elliot 1994). The ego is bound up with objects from birth, and disturbances in object relating arise through immersion in this interpersonal field.

The issue I shall take up with Giddens, however, is the conceptual emphasis he places on the habitualized, routinized aspects of social life, aspects he views as being the essential for the formation of ontological security. As Giddens argues (1990: 98), "routine is psychologically relaxing". But is it the routine that is relaxing?
Or rather is it our ability to respond (and engage in a dialogue with) our social situation that is relaxing? Do we become most psychologically distressed when we encounter a new, unexpected situation (and experience a breach in routine), or when we are unable to make sense of a situation (and experience restrictions to the unfinalizable dialogue of social life)? I would think the latter best represents the root cause of most, if not all, of the threats we experience to our existential condition. It is through the ability to answer, respond, and to be responded to in kind that we attain the psychological and emotional security that Giddens speaks of, and not habit and routine per se.

Like Giddens, I too wish to point to the "breaching experiments" of Garfinkel to support my argument. What specifically did those individuals within Garfinkel's experiments experience when they had their everyday reality breached? Did they lose their sense of ontological security, thus causing them to lapse into a severe state of psychosis? Did their reality shatter around them? Did they lose all ability to trust? Of course not. While these individuals did indeed experience a level of psychological and (one can assume) ontological distress, they did not cease to be, nor did they cease to trust. What we can therefore conclude is that this primordial state of being (i.e., ontological security) must reside outside of mere habit—or at the very least habit alone cannot explain it. We must, I believe, look at the dialogic constitution of the situation for a clearer understanding of this existential condition.
Ontological Security as Respond-ability

Every second of our lives we encounter social situations that are to some degree or another new. Yet we do not lapse into the feared state of existential dread, where our anxiety becomes so great that we retreat to some deep recess of the mind, a state where we cease to be dialogic, we cease to be social, and we cease to live. But neither do we experience all situations similarly. Sometimes we do encounter situations that, while they do not cause us to retreat into a neurotic shell, do inflict upon us some level of ontological anxiety and psychological distress.

Why is this? Why do some social situations cause us this anxiety and others not? Indeed, sometimes the braking of the seemingly most banal norm can cause a sever disturbance to someone’s existential condition. Yet, that same person may not perceive any ontological threat from the breaking of some habitualized aspect of social life that many would consider to be of much greater significance. Drawing in part from Bell’s (2000, 2003) concept of response-ability, I believe the answer to this quandary resides in what I call the respond-ability of the social situation—the level to which we are able to engage in the unfinalizable dialogue of social life.70

Social life is unpredictable, variable, and wondrous. Yet how we experience the serendipity of daily existence is dependent upon our ability to be alive through an engagement in the unfinalizable dialogue of social life. Some circumstances, however, allow for greater respond-ability between self and society then do others, yet

70 While Bell’s (2003) concept of “response-ability” and mine of “respond-ability” are similar in that they both emphasize the dialogic character of social life, Bell has not extended his concept to issues of being and the state of ontological security.
they all allow at least some degree of dialogue, otherwise you would be dead. The respond-ability of a situation thus inversely reflects the degree of existential dread experienced by the individual as a result of the situation. Indeed, if death (i.e., the lack of existence) is a situation in which the unfinalizable dialogue of social life becomes finalized, then it makes sense to understand situations where that life-giving dialogue is constrained as resulting in an inching towards death. Perhaps some examples will better elucidate this thinking.

Let us again look toward the Garfinkel breaching experiments. In one particular experiment Garfinkel asked his students to spend between fifteen and sixty minutes in their homes imagining that they were boarders. Based upon this role he instructed his students to act on the basis of that assumption. “They were instructed to conduct themselves in a circumspect and polite fashion. They were to avoid getting personal, to use formal address, to speak only when spoken to” (Garfinkel 1967: 47).

Following the experiment, students reported that family members displayed significant levels of distress as a result of this “breach” to their everyday reality—distress whose origins in part also resided in the individual’s inching toward ontological insecurity. As Garfinkel (1967: 47) explains: “Reports were filled with accounts of astonishment, bewilderment, shock, anxiety, embarrassment, and anger, and with charges by various family members that the student was mean, inconsiderate, selfish, nasty, or impolite”.

Most revealing, however, is the process through which family members sought to cope with such breaches. Namely, they sought existential sustainment
through dialogue. They asked questions. They pursued answers, responses, and sought dialogue in kind. Yet the situation was purposely designed to be constraining in its degree of respond-ability. For those brief moments, family members perceived their reality inching toward a state of finalizability, a state of decreasing dialogue. The following recorded statements between a perplexed and anxious parent toward their “breaching” child illustrates this:

Parent: “Did you get fired?”
Response: “No”
Parent: “Are you sick?”
Response: “No”
Parent: “Are you out of your mind or are you just stupid?” (Garfinkel 1967: 47).

The anxiety experienced by the parent is clearly seen by the third and final question posed to their breaching adolescent. The parent was unable to make sense of the situation not because the situation was new. Indeed, all situations are new. Rather, the parent was unable to understand the situation because of an inability to constitute the situation dialogically. Were the situation one of respond-ability—where parent and child each spoke, listened, responded, and were respondent to in kind—I greatly doubt the parent would have experienced the level of anxiety that they did. (Anxiety that can be clearly seen in the third question: “Are you out of your mind or are you just stupid?”)
The fear we experience in such circumstances then is not of the unknown, for all of social life is unknown—that's what makes it social. Rather, it is a fear that runs much deeper and is much more pervasive. It is a fear of the termination of social life itself—a fear of finalizing the unfinalizable, which is equivalent to death. It is a fear of the loss of the social, and our agential properties with constitute and are constituted by the social.⁷¹

We need not look toward Garfinkel’s breaching experiments though to illustrate the psychological comfort we take from being able to dialogically engage with our surroundings. Being an American citizen, I quickly think of the existential dread and severe psychological anxiety I experienced as I watched passenger jets filled with civilians fly into the two colossal twin tower skyscrapers in New York city and into the Pentagon. For possibly the first time in my life, I caught myself questioning my very existence and ontology. On that day—September 11, 2001—the frailty of my reality became all to readily apparent.

Giddens, for example, would attribute this anxiety to the fact that the constancy of my reality was severely breached that day—as it arguably was for people all over the globe. Yet, I would argue it was more complex than that. The anxiety was not the result of the breach but because of the lack of respond-ability within the situation. We may not encounter situations as unexpected as those that occurred on that fateful day of September 11 every day, but they do nevertheless occur—loved

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⁷¹ Indeed, in placing emphasis on the routine character of social life, Giddens’ conceptualization of ontological security more accurately reflects ontological immutability, which best describes death for it represents the cessation of the unfinalizable dialogue that gives social life life.
ones die, accidents happen, you could be struck by lightning, or you could win the lottery. And we handle all of these situations differently, with some having a greater impact on our existential condition than others. Yet why is this? It is because each situation has contained within it an accompanying degree of respond-ability. Each situation provides us—depending upon our temporal-relational location—with its own structurational and enabling capacities through which we are given access to the unfinalizability of social life.

As I sat at home on September 11, 2001 watching those terrible acts occur before my eyes there was no opportunity for me to respond and to be responded to in kind. I could not understand the information that my senses were providing me. I could not question. I could not ask. I could not answer. Stimuli were shaping my reality and my self but I could not in turn dialogically shape those stimuli. Here resided the origins of my existential dread, in this inability to respond, ask, question, and shape my surroundings in a dialogic manner. Contrary to Giddens, it was the unrespond-ability of the situation that caused the existential dread I encountered, not the breach itself.

Yet, once the respond-ability of the situation improved, so too did my ontological security. Upon arriving at work later that morning I was able to “make sense” of the situation through others, as they did through me. By “making sense”, however, I do not intend to suggest that I routinized the situation—indeed, as I have already argued, no situation can ever be routine (especially this particular one). To “make sense” of a situation is simply to dialogically constitute, and to be dialogically
constituted by, the situation—to be both an active author and active listener in the unfinalizability of our social locality.

Breaches themselves, therefore, are not the root causes of ontological security as Giddens argues. Rather, restrictions to the unfinalizability of everyday social life cause us this anxiety, for it is the unfinalizable quality of social life that gives social life and us with it, life. And when that unfinalizability inches toward finalizability so too do we, and we concomitantly experience anxiety because of it.

Goffman, although writing of routine and the normality of social order, in fact at times suggests something very similar to the unfinalizable dialogue of social life. For Goffman, normalcy is socially constructed. It is constructed through the establishment of face bridges (what Goffman [1959] referred to as “face saving mechanisms” or “impression management”), through ritual bridges (what Goffman [1961, 1963] referred to as “interactional rituals”), and through rule-ational bridges (what Goffman [1961] referred to as “situational properties”—forms of social interaction essential for a perception of social order).

In short, Goffman was referring to a dialogue. Situations are normal and routine because we can engage in them dialogically—because of their respond-ability. Yet, although Goffman alluded to this, he continued to place conceptual emphasis on routine and normality instead of the unfinalizable dialogue through which such routine and normality is constituted. It is not surprising, therefore, when others’ (who themselves stand on the shoulders of Goffman) make the same error by placing conceptual emphasis on habit versus dialogue. This is the case, for example, with
Giddens and his error of misplaced concreteness regarding ontological security—specifically in his locating its origins in the routinized aspects of everyday life instead in the unfinalizable dialogue of everyday life.

The significance of ontological security to the topic at hand resides in that it is fundamental to the constitution of trust. If we do not feel this ontological security then we cannot trust our reality. And if we cannot trust our reality then we cease to be social creatures, thus making interpersonal trust impossible. We need only look toward those individuals where such security no longer exists (i.e., in severe cases of schizophrenia) to witness the effect it has on an individual’s ability to be social and ultimately on their ability to trust.

**Revisiting the Theoretical Model**

As I have argued, the primordial psycho-social state necessary for trust (and ultimately for all social action) is the belief in the stability of our reality, the ego, and in our own existentiality. Yet, if this intrapersonal condition is not present in any substantial way, a debilitating ontological and existential dread is sure to follow, where the self retreats from social reality into the depths of the mind, making it impossible to trust and to engage in the unfinalizability of social life.

If we are to understand trust we must therefore also understand the intrapersonal condition through which trust (and social life in general) becomes actualized. Hence, the purpose of this chapter: to gain insight into the ontological, existential, and conscious states in which trust thrives. This *primordial state of being*
is represented as the milieu in which the four-quadrant model is embedded (as depicted in Figure 3).

Figure 3. Primordial state of being incorporated into the four-quadrant model of trust

Indeed, if you are to take anything from this chapter it is this: **issues of ontology and existentiality are not purely individual or subjective problems, but rather social ones.** Thus, when we speak of a person's subjective, existential, and/or phenomenological states, we must recognize them in the context of their social surroundings (in the following chapter I take this analysis further by addressing those social surroundings in particular). Ontological security may reside within, but it is a manifestation that arises out of the dialogic dance one has with others through
intersubjectivity. Thus, while the aphorism, "I think, therefore I am", my indeed still be accurate, it needs to be followed the neologism, "I am intersubjective, therefore I persist".
CHAPTER SIX: THE INTERPERSONAL DIMENSION OF TRUST

I know that knowledge can transform us, that truth is not only a way of deciphering the world (and maybe what we call truth doesn’t decipher anything), but that if I know the truth I will be changed. And maybe I will be saved. Or maybe I’ll die, but I think that is the same anyway for me.—Michel Foucault 1997: 130-131

Boundaries and identity can be seen as occupying the centre stage of the memory and trust debate... The people excluded by our boundaries are those whom we do not trust and those whom we trust are included.—Barbara A. Misztal 1996: 141

Phenomenologists have long noted the importance of trust in the taken-for-granted character of social life, as in the trust “breaching” experiments of Garfinkle. In these instances trust was often understood as an individual ontological problem, not a collective one. Yet, as I indicated in the previous chapter it is people we trust, if we trust our ontology, and not merely the facts of our existence. Within this chapter I wish to take this analysis further by examining this intersubjective character of trust.

This intersubjective phenomenological character of trust also has implications to our earlier working definition of the concept. As discussed in chapter three, to trust is to possess attitudes toward our knowledge of what we do not know: attitudes that are present in most (if not all) moments of reflexive consciousness. But attitudes toward our knowledge of our non-knowledge are not innocuous. By involving knowledge these attitudes likewise therefore involve power (Foucault was, of course, the first to popularize this relationship between power/knowledge). Thus, when we speak of trust and its relation to knowledge, we must also
therefore speak of trust’s and knowledge’s relation to power and identity (what I shall refer to as power-knowledge-identity-trust [or simply P-K-I-T]). Teasing apart this social matrix of P-K-I-T is thus the focus of this chapter.

This social phenomenology of trust depends upon the play between discourse and intersubjectivity—what I have earlier referred to as superintersubjectivity (Carolan and Bell 2001). We cannot be just intersubjective, we must be intersubjective with someone, and that someone is in part constituted through discourse. Superintersubjectivity is thus simply an intellectual reminder of the dialogical interrelationship between discourse and phenomenology. It reminds us that the very actors we seek to be intersubjective with—whether it be friends, enemies, neighbors, or experts—must be discursively constituted for there to be subjects through which we can attempt intersubjectivity with.

And trust is ultimately a product of superintersubjectivity. It is constituted dialogically and intersubjectively within the unfinalizability of social life. Trust is not therefore something that is created from within the subject to be released into the social field. Rather, as a discursive product of social relations trust manifests from within this social field and thus influences those within its constitutive social network.

Trust, therefore, is not innocuous. As a discursively constituted and constituting phenomena trust is both shaped by and shapes those engaged in its fabrication. To trust is thus to influence. Whether we confer trust or receive it, we become influenced (however
slightly) accordingly. One could therefore argue that we are who we are because of trust.\(^{72}\)

Trust is consequently also inseparably tied to identity. Who we are is a product of what we know, and what we know is contingent upon who and what we trust, which is itself inseparably tied to power. To fully grasp the complexities of trust thus requires placing it within the context of this broader conceptual framework, where trust's constitution becomes the product of a larger relational amalgamation of power, knowledge, and identity.

In the pages that follow, drawing on insights from Foucault, I argue that trust is discursively constituted through social networks of power/knowledge. But these social relations equally constitute, and are constituted by, identity. Trust, therefore, although it may be somewhat awkward to say, can only be understood as an inseparable component of the larger social matrices of power-knowledge-identity-trust (or if you prefer, \(P-K-I-T\)).\(^{73}\)

**The Social Relations of Trust**

To trust is to be intersubjective. It is to be social. But likewise it is to be enmeshed within discursive relations of power-knowledge. Yet, how does power-knowledge presuppose trust and trust presuppose power-knowledge? And if trust can only exist within social networks of power-knowledge, how then can trust be anything but repressive and constraining? Moreover, can trust ever be enabling?

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\(^{72}\) I should note that power has not been completely ignored by trust scholars. Baier (1986) and Hardin (1993), for example, describe how the three-way relationship between truster, trustee, and a valued good set up a potential power relation where the trustee gains the potential to exercise power over the truster, owing to the trustee’s control over resources needed or valued by the truster. This, however, is a very limited conceptualization of the relationship between power and trust, as I will later illustrate.

\(^{73}\) As noted in chapter one, my use of hyphens as opposed to the Foucaultian slash is to emphasize (following Martin Heidegger) the interconnectedness between the concepts. In addition, I believe the hyphens present the matrix in a more organized and eye-pleasing manner than the rather cluttering slash.
To Know is to Trust

As philosophers and sociologists of science (from Kuhn to Feyerbend to Latour) have argued, knowledge must be placed within an interpretative context. As creatures of the Enlightenment we have been indoctrinated to the belief that knowledge is something that exists “out there”, independent of the irrational, chaotic world of subjectivity, emotions, history, and the social. Knowledge, therefore (especially “True” knowledge) is asocial and ahistorical. It is objective. It is natural. It is universal.

Yet many have never completely embraced this view. Even some of the Enlightenment’s most stanches defenders have acknowledged its epistemological frailty. For instance, Karl Popper (1962: 34) once wrote, “all science rests upon shifting sand”. Many doubters have thus intensely sought to remove the vale upon which knowledge rests and to expose it for what it is—as a product of society and social relations. Knowledge, therefore, is social. It is historical. It is us.

As Martin Heidegger has argued, knowledge is an inseparable product of our world and of our being—it thus has “thrownness” (Heidegger 1962). Accordingly, knowledge “is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us” (Heidegger 1962: 191-192). Rather, as Heidegger would go on to argue, is it always guided by fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception. In more understandable terminology, knowledge can only exist within a social network for it to have significance and meaning. For instance, we can only understand (or give meaning to) the “fact” that the earth is 93 million miles from sun if

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74 Heidegger (1962) traces the etymological roots of the term Verstehen (understanding) to Virstehen (fore-standing) to signify our (and knowledge’s) enmeshment with the past, present, and future (which he describes as our “thrownness”).
we can relate it to our lifeworld where one mile is a brisk 15 minute walk and 20 miles is a good day's hike. We do not simply experience raw, uninterpreted sense data. All sense data, from sounds and smells, to something someone tells us, rests upon temporal social relations.

Yet, what distinguishes "facts", knowledge, and truth, from mere conjecture, opinion, and belief? If all knowledge is social, then what causes us to elevate some knowledge out of the quagmire of temporality, while relegating other knowledge to the trash-heap of speculation? This process of elevating or subjugating knowledge rests upon trust.

Whose knowledge thus becomes as important as what knowledge (Bell 2003; Carolan and Bell 2001; [forthcoming]). Throughout our everyday lives we are besieged with information. From the television, to newspapers, to friends, to experts (the list is practically endless), we continually find ourselves presented with "facts". And what do we typically do to sort through this information? How do we determine which information to accept as knowledge (to accept as the "truth") and which to discard as nonsense? We do this by identifying knowledge.

Perhaps we ask from where the information was received. Maybe we inquire into how many other people have said similar things. Look throughout this dissertation and you will find an abundance of examples where I identify knowledge—academics are incessant about this. Every time I reference an idea, a concept, or a statement, I am identifying that knowledge. I am placing it within a historical and social context by identifying it to a particular scholar. I am thus giving it its own history and its own identity. I am saying, "you can trust that I am speaking the truth because others (who themselves can be trusted through
processes of peer-review) have made similar assertions”. Indeed, we do this throughout life, although we may frequently not even be aware of it.

Whenever we are provided with information, whether it be from a friend, a spouse, a colleague, or even an “expert”, we typically ask, “where did you hear that from?” Was it from a friend? From a television program? Perhaps it was something you read over the internet? Thus, when we encounter knowledge we not only ask what knowledge it is, but likewise whose knowledge it is so we can determine how it fits within our own social web of existence. And it is this process that ultimately allows us to elevate some knowledge to the hegemonic heavens of truth, while casting other knowledge to the earthly depths of opinion and speculation.

This is not to suggest, however, that knowledge cannot be “public”, that it is possessed and judged only in terms of its proponents. I do not deny the extensive acceptance of scientific knowledge of botany and physics, of Linnaeus’s categorizations and Mendelian genetics, and of Boyle’s Law and Brownian motion. But most of us are not botanists or physicists, however. Thus, we must trust those who are if this accepted scientific knowledge is to have any meaning (and any truth) for us. Indeed, these previous examples of scientific knowledge (Linnaeus’s categorizations, Mendelian genetics, Boyle’s Law, and Brownian motion) only further illustrate the importance of identifying knowledge. Here, knowledge is named, literally. And by naming knowledge we establish its social relations and our own relation to them.

Thus, while universal Truths may indeed exist (as well as the immutable mobiles of Cartesian reductionism) what makes them true is not their immutability. For centuries our
ancestors believed, as a universal truth, that the earth was at the center of the universe. What made that belief true was not its immutability nor its accuracy. Like all truths, it was believed the earth was at the center of the universe because individuals trusted those that proclaimed it as such.

What makes truths true, then, is not their transcendental universality, rather, it's trust. The statement, “two plus two equals four,” is true because we trust those who told us so; we trust our senses which seem to “prove” this proposition (indeed, one only need to look to George Orwell’s 1984 for an example of a reality where two plus two equals five), and we trust the deductive logic upon which that proof is based. And the same can ultimately be said of all truths.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) provides us with one of the first and still most accurate and devastating critiques of empirical theories of knowing, which he argues cannot even account for the simple case of “the bark of a tree.” Meaning and thus knowing (and ultimately truth), Saussure argued, does not come merely from objective points, but from intersubjective structures that cannot themselves be totally objectively pointed to. Knowledge, and thus truth, are products mediated within and through intersubjectivity and language.

My position, however, is not that of “anti-foundationalism” (i.e., Rorty 1979, 1991)—the argument that because we have yet to develop epistemological foundations for objective evaluations, the search for truth should be abandoned. I am not suggesting a refutation of all cognitive truth. Truths do exist, but only in the context of discourse, and only in the social relations of social life. Thus, while I do suggest an abandoning of the hope that a single
ahistorical, asocial standard of truth can ever be established, I am not suggesting that truths do not (and can never) exist. But when they do they exist as products of discursive social relations—their constitutive make-up is our own.

When we seek knowledge and the truth we likewise seek individuals in whom we trust as being someone who would provide us with the truth. Trust, therefore, requires truth and truth requires trust. Indeed, as Bell and I (Carolan and Bell 2001) have previously detailed, the words “truth” and “trust” share a common etymological origin. Tracing the etymological lineage of trust and truth we discovered them to share a mutual ancestry to the Old English word *treowth*, which means “faithful”.

Whom do we most often trust as providing the truth? Typically we seek experts, scientists, and people with Ph.D.s (in fact, the more letters after someone’s name the better). These titles signify trustworthiness regarding issues of truth and knowledge. In locating knowledge within a certain social network we are thus able to assess the trustworthiness of that network, which then allows us to assess the *truthworthiness* of that network. For what do letters and titles after someone’s name signify? Do they signify the knowledgeability of that person? In part, but there are plenty of people without letters after their names who are likewise very knowledgeable. More significantly they signify someone who has knowledge that can be *trusted*. They signify the trustworthiness of the person with regard to a particular area of knowledge, thereby making them truthworthy.

Yet, trust also requires truth. When we trust someone or something we are basing that trust on previous knowledge. We do not trust without justification (indeed, in recalling the model trust presupposes substantial perceived “evidence”). We trust because we possess
a belief in a future that could come true. And how do we come to that belief in the future? Because of knowledge we accept as the truth—which is true because we trust the social network from where it came.

Yet what we know and what we trust also have inseparable ties to power. The social relations of knowledge and trust are continually contested through discursive challenges in order to establish something as true (or untrue) and someone as trustworthy (or untrustworthy). Yet this is not an easy task, for social relations also involve relations of social interests, thus indistinguishably tying them to power relations (Carolan and Bell 2001).

Of course, Foucault (1979: 27) has made us partially aware of this when he argued that knowledge and power “directly imply one another”. Consequently, “[t]here is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault 1979: 27). In this light, truth and knowledge are not asocial entities existing outside of history and outside of power. Rather, they are themselves discursive products of power. “We are [therefore] subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (Foucault 1981: 93).

Yet Foucault had nothing to say of trust and its correlative constitution within the field of power. Indeed, this is rather surprising given Foucault’s proclivity to illustrate historically how power/knowledge has become increasingly ubiquitous and insidious. Power/knowledge has become so efficient and pervasive that we scarcely know its presence. As Foucault has gone to great extent to illustrate, whereas power/knowledge was once exercised from outside the body in, it now permeates from inside the body out. This latter
and most recent state of power/knowledge Foucault has termed the “technologies of self”: the specific practices by which selves constitute themselves as subjects within and through systems of power/knowledge, often seeming to be either “natural” or imposed from above (Foucault 1986).

This process of internalizing power/knowledge, however, seems to rest largely on issues of trust. We fail to “feel” these ubiquitous power relations because we trust the constitutive fields from which they arise. The disciplinary mechanisms of modernity have become so penetrating, while retaining their benign appearance, precisely because of the trust we confer onto them. A panoptic society, therefore (and almost against commonsense) is a trusting society. The success of an Orwellian world requires that we trust that “big brother” is indeed watching—at least sometimes. If this trust was not present, then the process of shifting power/knowledge from outside the individual to within could never have occurred, and power would have had to remain negative and repressive. As Gambetta (1988: 221) points out, “Societies which rely heavily on the use of force are likely to be less efficient, more costly, and more unpleasant than those where trust is maintained by other means.”

I should also note that the ubiquity of power is not a bad thing—or, at least, it need not be. Power is not something we should seek emancipation from because such emancipation would be misguided. Indeed, the moment we think we are free from power is when power becomes most insidious, because such freedom is an illusion and those who believe in it are the ones’ fully shackled in the cave staring at shadows.

Yet, neither should we see ourselves trapped within power relations. Thus, while we can never remove ourselves from these power relations we can nevertheless change them.
Consequently, power relations need not only imply constraint but also quite the reverse—freedom. Power implies freedom, and freedom implies power. In an interview, Foucault (1997: 292) describes this apparent paradoxical inseparability between power and freedom:

> Power relations are mobile, they can be modified, they are not fixed once and for all. For example, the fact that I may be older than you, and that you may initially have been intimidated, may be turned around during the course of our conversation, and I may end up being intimidated before someone precisely because he is younger than I am. These power relations are thus mobile, reversible, and unstable. It should also be noted that power relations are possible only insofar as the subjects are free... Thus, in order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides....[And] if there are relations of power in every social field, this is because there is freedom everywhere.

Power implies freedom, therefore, because power implies resistance and thus the potential for change. If there was no resistance there would only be obedience, which indeed is negative and oppressive. Power, on the other hand, is freedom because it presupposes this ability to fight back, to resist, and to (potentially) change.

The quest, therefore, is not to rein-in the correlative field of power through which knowledge and trust become articulated. We could no more remove trust and knowledge from these fields of power then remove ourselves from society. Such an act would be the death of not only trust and knowledge but of our selves as well. Rather, we must work to emancipate the power relations themselves. As argued by Foucault (1981: 133): “It’s not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time”.

Yet, Foucault is peculiarly silent on how we go about doing this. The reason for this silence resides in his silencing of the author. In an effort to free our selves from the Cartesian
cogito, Foucault lapses into a type of discursive functionalism—where all is the product of discourse but discourse itself has not product (Carolan and Bell 2001). For Foucault, discursive relations of power/knowledge create speaking selves, but from where these discursive relations themselves emulate Foucault is largely silent. By reorienting this theoretical framework to acknowledge the individual (and thus recognize that speaking selves also create discourse) we can emancipate power, ultimately freeing the agent from the hegemonic forms of modernity.

The Social Relations of Identity

As argued in the previous chapter, our identity is a dialogically constituted, intersubjectively mediated, phenomena. Yet, given the conceptual scope of that chapter (namely, the intra-personal level) I did not delve into the intricacies of that intersubjectivity. I did not detail the complex web of social relations that constitute societal interaction. Nor did I specify the discursive relations of power, knowledge, and trust that structure, and are themselves structured by, identity and self-formation. Here, then, I shall build upon the argument begun in chapter five, and more fully explore the discursive constitution of discursively constituting intersubjective selves.

Although we create knowledge and truth we do not all know the same thing. Knowledge thus creates and is created through difference (Bell 2002; Carolan and Bell 2001). What I know makes me who I am. But likewise what I know makes me who I am not.

Knowledge is also a thing of this world—it is temporal. Thus, when we attach ourselves to a particular knowledge, we attach ourselves to its past, present, and future. And
we attach ourselves to the social relations associated with that knowledge, thus becoming part of that past, present, and future.

But likewise by affiliating which a particular knowledge (and the social network which it implies) we simultaneously disconnect ourselves from other alternative histories and social networks. Knowledge therefore creates social affiliation as well as social disaffiliation. Knowledge creates me’s and you’s, us’s and them’s. Who we are is thus an amalgamation of who and what we know.

Yet what we know (and thus who we are) are not discursive products of a Habermasian “ideal speech situation”. Rather, the creation of knowledges and identities occur through discursive challenges to social relations. As I will detail in chapter nine, social relations of knowledge and identity (as well as those of power and trust) occur within a discursive battlefield. The process of superintersubjectivity, and the social relations in which it is embedded, can become transformed in what Bell and I (Carolan and Bell 2001) have earlier termed moments of phenomenological challenge—discursive moments which confront and threaten the dominant social relations of power-knowledge-identity-trust (P-K-I-T). And when a phenomenological challenge is strong enough to the dominant social relations, new social relations emerge and social change ensues.

Social relations are therefore not stagnant and immobile and neither is discourse. We must therefore not fall into the trap of post-structuralism by forgetting that while discourse produces speaking selves, speaking selves likewise produce discourse; for in doing so we reduce social change to a mirage. It becomes a product of language and linguistic structures,
of “free floating” signifiers anchored in nothing but power, prejudice, and ideology, with no object truth. only interpretations.

Here resides the answer as to why Foucault provides little explanation into how power relations can change and thus be freed from the hegemonic patterns of contemporary society: Foucault provides little, if any, entry point through which discourse can become altered. In an effort to free us from the modern absolutes of Cartesian science, Foucault (perhaps unknowingly) simply redirects us into a new form of absolutism. For Descartes, knowledge is a product of objectivity—an epistemological position only possible through the Cartesian division between res cogitans and res extensa. Yet for Foucault, knowledge is also objective, in the sense that it comes from outside of the individual. For Foucault, the agent is largely silent; it (and the agent is indeed an “it” for Foucault) is a product of discursive inscription. Foucault provides us with a form of intersubjectivity without subjectivity—which is simply objectivity. In the end, Foucault simply leaves us with a form of discursive objectivity, where an authorless discourse creates the subject.

This is not to suggest, however, that Foucault is silent on issues of identity and the individual. For instance, Foucault (1981: 98) argues: “[I]ndividuals are the vehicles of power, not its point of application...The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle.” Yet, while individuals are the “effect” and “vehicles” of power/knowledge, nowhere does Foucault understand power/knowledge as being the effect of individuals.
Foucault also discusses at length what he has termed the “care of the self.” Yet this “self” is largely an *intrapersonal* self, lacking any social embeddedness—a point that becomes all the more exposed when he likens the “care of the self” to the “cultivation of the soul” (Foucault 1986: 45). As Foucault (1997: 227) argues, to take care of one’s self, one must thus “search every corner of his [sic] soul.”

Foucault also frequently invokes the concept of the “technologies of self”—practices by which selves constitute themselves as subjects within and through systems of power/knowledge, frequently seeming to be either “natural” or imposed from above (Foucault 1984). Accordingly, Foucault (1997: 177-178) views “self technology [as implying] a set of truth obligations: discovering the truth, being enlightened by truth, telling the truth. All these are considered important either for the constitution of, or the transformation of, the self.”

Yet, with all of his discussion of selves, individuals, and identity, little is said about what selves and individuals do as *selves* and *individuals*. There is little agency. And there is little action. Only discourse seems to exist—and from where it comes we do not know.

Thus, while selves do exist for Foucault, these selves are the subjects of power/knowledge (indeed, even the creations of power/knowledge)—what Foucault has been known to call the “anonymous system without a subject”. Thus, it is not the I (the subject) who speaks, but rather the impersonal language and linguistic structures which speaks through the subject (or more accurate the object for the subject is reduced to an “it”). We must therefore bring the individual (the subject) back into the analysis, and recognize that if there is power/knowledge
(because it must originate from somewhere) there must ultimately be power-knowledge-identity.

*Power-Knowledge-Identity-Trust*

Yet, power-knowledge-identity also presupposes trust. Earlier I detailed how knowledge and truth require trust and vice versa, where *whose* knowledge thus becomes as important as *what* knowledge. By identifying knowledge we locate it socially and historically, which thus ultimately allows us to determine whether we can trust it as representing the truth. Without trust, therefore, power/knowledge would cease to exist. But likewise, without knowledge (and its correlative field of power) trust would cease to exist. Thus, knowledge-trust connect as do power-knowledge.

But likewise, as earlier argued, power presupposes trust. Power is as ubiquitous as it is (a ubiquity noted by Foucault) precisely because we trust the constitutive field from which it comes forth. If we did not trust the fields of power that pervade and constitute social life they would cease to exist, and force would then have to fill this vacuum. Trust is what makes power *powerful*. Without trust, power would be replaced by force—which is certainly a less efficient mechanism of influence. As I said earlier, the success of an Orwellian world requires that we trust “big brother” is watching. Trust, therefore, is what gives power its insidious, saturating, and anonymous influence. Thus, power/trust connects as does power/knowledge and knowledge/trust, leaving us with power-knowledge-trust.

Yet, the social matrix is not quite complete: identity also constitutes, and is constituted by, power-knowledge-trust. What we know, and how we are situated within its
corollary relations of power, makes us who we are. Thus, while power/knowledge affects our identity, likewise our identity greatly influences what we believe to be the truth, or not.

Yet identity additionally presumes trust, and vice versa. As I earlier argued, who we know determines what we know—and who and what we know affects who we are (our identity). Moreover, who and what we know are significantly influenced by who and what we trust. Knowledge creates social affiliation and social disaffiliation. It creates us's and them's, insiders and outsiders, in-groups and out-groups. But the erection and maintenance of social boundaries also requires trust. That's what makes an in-group an in-group and an out-group an out-group—trust. If we expressed similar sentiments to those in an out-group they would cease to be an out-group. As Russel Hardin (1993) notes, we tend to trust people most like ourselves. Thus, trust is inextricably tied to identity, because without it we would cease to be who we are. If there was no trust, there would be no power, no knowledge, no me, no you. We would all be the same. The unfinalizability of social life would become final. Social life would cease to be social. Social life would cease to be life.

There is also a more central reason, however, why identity connects up with power-knowledge-trust: fundamentally, it is people who trust, it is people who know, and it is people who influence. Without individuals, the discursive relations of power-knowledge-trust would fail to exist. Therefore, while we must be weary of understanding the individual as the unified center of all knowledge and discourse—much like Descartes did to the contempt of Foucault—we must not err in the opposite extreme by erasing the individual of all agential properties altogether (an error arguably made by Foucault). Rather, we must reconstitute the individual as an active participant in the networks of social relations in which
they both constitute and are constituted by. In the end, therefore, if we are to speak of powerknowledge-trust, we must likewise recognize its inseparable constitutive relations to identity, ultimately therefore leaving us with the somewhat awkward term, *power-knowledge-identity-trust*.

**Revisiting the Theoretical Model**

Figure 4 represents the model in light of the analyses of this chapter. A quick examining of Figure 4 reveals our most recent conceptual addition: the ubiquitous rays of power-knowledge-identity-trust (P-K-I-T) emanating throughout each of the four-quadrants—an always-already precursor in the social field of trust. And the form in which trust takes—whether it is simple trust, confidence, faith, or hope—is a direct product of these social relations.
P-K-I-T, thus, helps to further enrich our working definition of trust. For if trust resides in our attitudes toward our knowledge of our non-knowledge, and what we know (and what we do not know) is indeed a product of our social relations, then P-K-I-T has a powerful pull on the shape those attitudes take and the form of trust that ensues. Thus, trust, and the form that it takes (i.e., simple trust, confidence, faith, or hope), can only be fully understood when the analysis includes the social relations out of which it develops.

The social relations of P-K-I-T are omnipresent, and pervade all facets of social life. Indeed they are social life. Without them, the unfinalizability of social life would come to a halt, dialogue would terminate, and social life would cease to be social and thus cease to be life.

Moreover, our “primordial state of being”—the milieu described in the previous chapter which allows our existence to be possible—is likewise imbued with these ubiquitous social relations. These social relations therefore not only shape who we know, who we trust, and who we are, but also the reality we perceive, ultimately giving meaning to our subjectivity, phenomenology, existentiality, and ontology. The true ubiquity of these social relations can therefore not be overemphasized. And their significance should likewise not be ignored.
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE STRUCTURATIONAL DIMENSION

But the fundamental question of social theory, as I see it...is to explicate how the limitations of individual 'presence' are transcended by the 'stretching' of social relations across time and space.—Anthony Giddens 1984: 35

Experience in its vital form is experimental, an effort to change the given; it is characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown; connection with the future is its salient trait.—John Dewey 1981: 61

Time is an essential component of social life (Archer 1988, 1989; Giddens 1979, 1984). As the unfinalizability of social life suggests, society presupposes temporality. To be unfinalizable is to be stretched endlessly across time and space, whereas finalizability implies the transcendence of such temporal bonds—a state in which, at least for us mortals, connotes death. And trust too possesses this unfinalizable temporal quality.

As a thoroughly embedded social phenomenon within the unfinalizability of social life so too is trust fixed within this realm of temporality. Previous theories of trust, however, have yet to address time explicitly, treating the process of temporal extension as self-evident and taken for granted. Yet, time is of significance and must be explored as such for any comprehensive theoretical understanding of trust to be achieved.

Trust, at least to some degree, must exist within social life precisely because of the extension of social relations across space and time, extensions that constitute the very fabric of society. If, for example, society were to exist within what physicists call a “singularity”—a point where the fabric of the universe, and thus space-time, breaks down (which, of course, is impossible and antithetical to our very understanding of society)—trust would be of no
use. If we lived in a universe where there was no past or future but only the now, trust would be moot, as would all forms of exchange. Trust is a creature of temporality. It provides the elasticity that allows for the stretching of social relations across vast amounts of space and time. In short, to trust is to possess a past, present, and future.

Herein lies the significance of our ontological security that I discussed previously. In order to exist as temporal creatures we must feel secure (we must trust) in that temporality. We must not harbor unnecessary anxieties about our projection into the future. We must be firm in our belief that tomorrow will indeed come.

Yet, beyond issues of ontology, the social relations in which we find ourselves embedded are themselves scattered across the fabric of space and time. Social interaction does not occur instantaneously; if it did, we might possibly be able to exist within a singularity, for one infinitely small point in space-time would be all that is needed. Rather, social life is a product of yet another dialogue—what I call the dialogue of time, where the past, present, and future mutually constitute, and are mutually constituted by, each other. All of social life becomes actualized through the dialogue of time, and the same can be ultimately said of trust (I will revisit this in a moment).

Yet the dialogue of time is also of significant consequence to individual action. Giddens (1979, 1984) notes that the temporality of social life results in both a constraining and enabling of the actor, what Giddens (1984) refers to as “structuration”, and the same can be said of trust. Simply stated, when our trust becomes validated, we typically find it easier

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75 Specifically, a singularity in theoretical physics (or, more exactly, Einstein’s general theory of relativity) is a point where the density of the universe and the curvature of space-time is infinite; a point which, at least according to Einstein’s general theory of relativity, denotes the state of the universe before the big bang.
to trust (or harder not to trust) when placed within similar situations in the future. The process of this revalidation of trust over time is what I refer to as the *structuration of trust*.

Before delving into the complexities associated with the relationship between trust and time and the concomitant process of structuration, allowing me first to take a step back and detail the interrelated nature of time itself. The interrelationships discussed in the following section therefore ultimately serve to set the stage for when I later address the structurational properties of trust which accompany its temporality.

**The Past, Present, and Future in Trust**

St. Augustine (1961: 264) once wrote:

> Of these three divisions of time, then, how can two, the past and the future, be, when the past no longer is and the future is not yet? As for the present, if it were always present and never moved on to become the past, it would not be time but eternity. If, therefore, the present is time only by reason of the fact that it moves on to become the past, how can we say that even the present *is*, when the reason why it *is* is that it is *not to be*? In other words, we cannot rightly say that time is, except by reason of its impending state of *not being*. (emphasis in original)

What are we to make of Augustine's riddle? I believe Augustine is pointing to the importance of recognizing time not as a timeline—what Heidegger (1962: 462) describes as a "sequences of pure 'nows'"—but as situated in the past, present, and future. It is another dialogue—the dialogue of time, where the past, present, and future each constitute and are constituted by the other. Let us look briefly at the dialogue of time to further elucidate this point.

It is probably quite clear how the past gives shape to our present and future; sociology and cultural studies place great emphasis on how our "biography" shapes who we are, what
we do, and who we will ultimately become. Perceptions of the past shape the lens through which we view the world. I am who I am in large part because of my past. My actions, trust, and so on, are significantly shaped by this phenomenological historical record. My future is thus in part my past (although it is also much more, as we will soon see). For instance, recalling a happy childhood may instill in some the belief that they too will someday have children. Remembering getting sick from eating too much chocolate cake may cause one to denounce chocolate for the rest of their lives, thus removing chocolate from their perceived future. In short, our perceptions of the past are of notable significance to how we think and act not only in the here-and-now (the present), but also how we think of the not-yet-now (the future). Heidegger (1997: 158) states this succinctly when we wrote, “we are [what] we were, and we will be what we receive and appropriate from what we were…”

Yet, we are not merely a product of yesterdays—today (the present) also breathes life into our being. Even semiconscious routine dispositions must be adjusted to the exigencies of the moment—what Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 994) refer to as the “contextualization of social experience”. As I earlier argued, experience and reality never perfectly match. Never do we experience a second that is exact to a pervious second; this is what makes social life unfinalizable. Thus, as Taylor (1993: 570) perceptively notes, “[a] rule doesn’t apply itself; it has to be applied, and this may involve difficult, finely tuned judgements…. There is, as it were, a critical ‘phronetic gap’ between the formula and its enactment.”

Yet, in giving shape to the moment, the present also gives shape to the past and future. Our perceptions of the here-and-now shape our perceptions of the no-longer-now and the not-yet-now. Say, for instance, you were raised in a poor family. This “fact” of your
life, however, is only part of you (part of your identity) as you enter into the always-already present. Let us say that you have since become a writer, and as such you perceive your past as a source of inspiration and stories, and as a source of struggle from which spawned your creativity as an artist. If such a life does not suit you, however, let us say instead you are a president of a multi-national corporation. Now, instead of viewing your past as a source of stories and a fountainhead of creativity, you see it as a life of deprivation, hardship, and full of material want. Thus, just as the past shapes the lenses through which we view the present and future, the present shapes the lenses through which we view the past.

Memories of the past, therefore, according to Halbwachs (1992), and building off of a Durkheimian perspective, are “collective”. An individual can only interpret the past while being embedded in the present, which connects the past to a particular set of ideas of one’s collectivity. Our comprehension of the past therefore is structured by group identities, culture, and intersubjectivity, in the here and now of the present (Misztal 1996).

Yet, the present, perhaps not surprisingly, also molds that which is yet to be—the future. To go back to the earlier example, as a writer you also view your future through the phenomenological “eyes” of a writer (as well as through the “eyes” of whatever else your temporal-relational location is for that moment). The present is the temporal locality in which consciousness becomes actualized; we cannot be conscious in the past or future, only the present. And as such the past and future are contingent upon the forces through which consciousness is itself influenced by, whatever those forces maybe—i.e., emotions, physical pain, exogenous social forces, etc.
We must not, however, forget about the future and its place in the dialogue of time. Heidegger (1962, 1972) claims that the future is, in a way, a source of the past. In one instance he writes: “The actuality of what has been resides in its possibility. The possibility becomes in each case manifest as the answer to a living question that sets before itself a futural present in the sense of ‘what can we do?’” (Heidegger 1984: 72). Here, Heidegger highlights the significance of possibility (which can only exist in the future, otherwise it ceases to be a possibility) as a signifying source of the past and present.

As conscious, reflexive creatures, we possess this wonderful ability to think. And as thinking beings we frequently, as the saying goes, think before we act—at least regarding conscious action. Yet, what is reflexivity? Is it not, at least in part, projecting ourselves into the future? When we think before we act, are we not playing certain future possible scenarios out in our minds?

Only purely routinized automatons act with a lack of future projection. Such creatures live only in a hermetically sealed temporal realm of the now, a realm dialogically disconnected from both the past and the future. Yet, we are not such creatures. Instead, as Emirbayer and Mische (1998: 989-90) suggest, “actors playfully insert themselves into a variety of possible trajectories and spin out alternative means-ends sequences, thereby expanding their flexible response to a given field of action”. These possible trajectories thus give shape to our perceptions of the present and past by coloring our lens of consciousness. For instance, a perceived future of pleasure and happiness shapes our views of the present and past in ways different then a perceived future of misery and grief.
All of social life is ultimately actualized through this dialogue of time, and the same can be said of trust. To trust is to reflect upon the past. It is thus, to a degree, recursive. When we trust, we act in part according to judgements based upon past experiences (which are themselves filtered through our perceptions of the present and future). Trust, therefore, like all action, is firmly grounded in the phenomenological "ghosts" of history (as well as, as I will soon detail, the "ghosts" of the present and future).76

Yet trust is also contingent upon the moment, and thus has a present. The unfinalizability of social life is an active process subject to, and dependent upon, the serendipity of the instant. Trust is therefore, in part, a dialogic process constituted in the here-and-now. It presents itself to us as a dialogically mediated phenomenon, embedded within the social relations of power-knowledge-identity-trust in the always-already temporality of the present (which is itself in perpetual dialogue with the past and future).

Finally, trust implies a future. It requires a conscious reaching into the not-yet-now so that possible trajectories of action can be plotted and predictions made about outcomes and actions. Indeed, if there were no future there would be no trust, only acts. If we knew the world would end in one hour, would we care whether or not someone could be trusted to return the five dollars we just lent them? Of course not. Trust requires that there be a tomorrow, and that we will be there to see that tomorrow (namely, ontological security).

Trust, like all social action, contains various dimensions of each of these three temporal dimensions—the past, present, and future. Yet they need not exist equally within

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76 By this I am referring to such philosophers as Hegel and Popper who argued that history no more exists than do the experiences that frequent our dreams every night (I can no more touch Caesar then the unicorns I dreamt of when I was a child). The historical artifacts conjured in our minds are thus like ghosts; we cannot touch them, but they still very much hunt us in our thoughts and through our actions (i.e., Bell 1997).
all expressions of trust. Indeed, depending upon the situation, one or another of these three aspects might well predominate. In fact, the levels to which these three temporal dimensions exist also influence whether trust will develop in the form of simple trust or confidence. And the process through which this occurs is structuration, which is the topic of the following section.

The Structuration of Trust

The conceptual core of Giddens' theory of structuration resides in his ideas regarding the interrelationship between agency and structure—what he refers to as the "duality of structure" (Giddens 1984). Giddens contends that the concept of "structure" in itself is of no use to sociology, urging us in its stead to speak of the "structuring properties" of social interaction. In doing this Giddens places "the idea of recurrent social practices at the core of what social sciences are about, rather than either starting with 'the individual' or starting with 'society'" (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 76). Giddens thus offers a conceptualization of structure different from the Durkheimian pattern which views structure as external to, and coercive of, the individual. Rather, "structure only exists in and through the activities of human agents" (Giddens 1989: 256).

Moreover, because structure is only actualized through individual action, it "is always both constraining and enabling" (Giddens 1984: 25, 163). Thus, while structure does indeed limit action (and sociology has gone to great lengths to emphasize this) it also allows us to do things we might not have otherwise been able to do (think, for example, of all the wonderful things that have been opened up to us because of language). Structure and agency,
therefore, cannot be conceptualized as being independent from one another; they are two sides of the same coin.

In evoking aspects of Giddens' theory of structuration, however, I do not intend to re-open (that is, if indeed it was ever closed) the proverbial "can of worms" known throughout the social sciences as the "agency-structure debate". Nor do I intend to address the various critiques since directed at Giddens regarding his theory (i.e., Archer 1985, 1988, 1989; Baber 1991). Rather, the significance of this approach resides in its ability to make sense of the interrelationship between trust and time, an interrelationship that has been only superficially addressed in the past.

*Simple Trust, Habit, Confidence, and Time*

Some scholars of trust differentiate between trust that is based upon recurrent personal experience and trust that is the product of generalized norms—what has been labeled "thick trust" and "thin trust" (i.e., Burt and Knez 1996; Putnam 2000; Williams 1988). "Thick trust" is quite simply trust that has been around awhile. It has had a chance to develop, mature, and become, to a degree, routinized. Thick trust is, in a sense, "old trust".

Thin trust, on the other hand, is trust that is fresh and new. Thin trust is, therefore, precarious. It can either become validated, in which case it embarks down the road of structuration (where it eventually becomes "thick"), or not (which can greatly undermine its future existence). Thin trust could therefore be likened to "new trust". In short, thick trust is the trust you express toward your neighbor of twenty years when he wants to borrow your chainsaw—a chainsaw he has borrowed innumerable times, always returning it on time with
a full tank of gas and a sharpened chain. Thin trust, on the other hand, is the trust you convey onto someone you have only recently met—say, for instance, a coworker whom you have just been introduced to.

The temporal orientation of action thus varies according to whether it is based upon thick or thin trust. For instance, while still possessing agential properties directed toward the present and future, thick trust is based significantly upon experience, routine, and the past. Thin trust, on the other hand, because it lacks the social recursiveness found in thick trust (while still being oriented in part to the past), possesses a temporal orientation to the present and future to greater degrees than that found in thick trust.

Take the earlier example involving your chainsaw-borrowing neighbor. Say your neighbor approaches you tomorrow and requests, yet again, to borrow your chainsaw, and being the good neighbor that you are you again entrust him with it. That trust, I would venture to guess, would be more the result of a cognitive temporal orientation to the past then it would be to either the present or the future. It has already established itself as being “safe”, a conclusion based upon a significant amount of experimental evidence (“Every time he has borrowed the chainsaw for the past twenty years he has returned it, with a full tank of gas and a newly sharpened chain no less, why should he stop now, right”?). This is not to say that the present and future are uninfluential in your ultimate decision to trust your neighbor with your chainsaw or not, but their presence is negligible, overshadowed by a cognitive alignment to the past manifested through a perception of routine and habit.

Thin trust, on the other hand, differs from the previous example of thick trust by involving (to an equal or greater degree) the present and future in respect to the past. Let us
examine thin trust more closely through an example. Going to work tomorrow you are introduced to a new co-worker, someone you have neither previously met personally or by reputation. You have therefore no (or at least very little) direct knowledge of her or his trustworthiness. Consequently, any trust you convey onto her during those first few early encounters requires that you base that trust on something other than personal experimental knowledge. Your epistemological justifications for trusting her are therefore different from those that exist between yourself and (as in our earlier example) your chainsaw-borrowing neighbor (in which case a wealth of experimental knowledge as to his trustworthiness is present).

This is not meant to imply, however, a nullification of all past cognitive temporal orientations entirely, you may (and likely will) refer to numerous past life experiences to assist in the evaluation of your co-worker. Nevertheless, because you have yet to accumulate any direct knowledge of your co-worker's trustworthiness, and because the exchange relationship has yet to be habitualized or structurated, your cognitive temporal orientation toward her must also be in the present and future. For instance, you may look toward the social situation itself for experimental evidence. Perhaps you are in a church, synagogue, or mosque, places which would all likely be conducive to evoke feelings of trustworthiness. Maybe your coworker's role can provide clues to their trustworthiness—for instance, the role of nun or chaplain would likely convey a level of trustworthy different from that of a used car
salesperson or a politician. Or, possibly, you may look at your coworker’s appearance for social cues as to her trustworthiness—such as her demeanor, clothing, mannerisms, etc.77

In addition to the contingency of the moment your temporal sights would also be directed toward the future. You may think about what the future holds for yourself and your coworker (i.e., will you be working a lot together?) and how trusting or not trusting her now might affect that future relationship. Likewise, you may think about how your actions now might impact future possible exchange relationships—especially when the situation is reversed and it is you requesting her trust. In short, the “newness” of thin trust forces consciousness to contemplate both the exigencies of the moment as well as the possibilities of further moments precisely because it cannot rest upon habitualized past moments.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that while one’s temporal contemplation varies with each passing situation, the past, present, and future are each inevitably always present in all forms of social action, including acts of trust. I am not therefore suggesting that in some situations the past is only present, while in others exist only the present and future. Instead, and as implied by the dialogue of time, the past, present, and future are each embedded within the others. Ultimately, for one temporal direction to exist, they all must exist. Thus, while I speak of certain instances where one or two may be predominant, that predominance is not to suggest permanence or exclusivity.

In review, thick trust is characterized by the existence of recurrent social practices. Over time, these practices result in the continuous revalidation of trust—a layering of trust

77 Unfortunately, we too often look at such superficial cues for immediate information about others—hence, the expression about the importance of first impressions.
that gives it this "thick" socio-relational quality. This layering quality can also, however, lull us into a state of false consciousness with regard to the trust relationship at hand. We begin to underestimate the risks involved in the act of trusting by looking to history as our chief guide: "I've trusted you in the past, and you have honored that trust. Thus, why should I believe you will cease to honor that trust now?" Thick trust, then, is trust oriented substantially in degree to the past. It is, in short, trust that has become structurated.

Thin trust, on the other hand, is trust that while temporally oriented toward the past, is also significantly oriented toward both the present and future. It is trust, as I earlier described, that is new, risky (at least it's perceived as such), and quite precarious. It is trust that has yet to be stretched temporally across social relations, and thus it is only in the initial stages of structuration.

In the end, however, is this distinction between "thick" and "thin" trust really valid? When you lend your neighbor your chainsaw, the same chainsaw you have been lending him every year for the past twenty years, are you really trusting him anymore, or is it perhaps something else? Does "trust" (as in simple trust) best encapsulate the social phenomenon that is occurring between yourself and your neighbor or would perhaps "confidence" better express that action?

Let us say that you have had the same person deliver your morning paper every day for the last ten years. After ten years, through rain, sleet, snow, and ice, they have unabatedly managed to have your paper on your doorstep at six a.m. every morning, exactly when you like to sit down and have your morning cup of coffee—an impeccable record that over time can be easily taken for granted. In this situation, would it be accurate to say that you trust
your delivery person to have your paper on your doorstep every morning at 6 am, or has that trust since developed into confidence as a result of habit? Are you still conscious about whether or not the paper will be on your doorstep every morning when you open your door at six with the aroma of freshly brewed coffee in the air? Do you pour yourself a cup before you get the paper knowing the paper will be there? Or do you wait and get the paper first before pouring yourself a cup? In short, is the delivery of your paper a conscious, not totally certain, and thus still somewhat risky everyday occurrence, or has it become as routinized in your semi-consciousness as the sunrise itself? Is it (simple) trust that you feel or is it something less conscious and possibly more taken-for-granted?

It appears therefore that as trust becomes extended over time through processes of continual validation, habitualization and routinization occur. In short, it becomes structurated. And as it becomes structurated it increasingly becomes less risky—it becomes, as I earlier described, perceptively “safe”.

But before redirecting our attention to the theoretical model and incorporating into it what we have discussed up until this point I first wish to further discuss the properties of the structuration of trust in regard to action. As Giddens (1984) demonstrates, the phenomena of structuration not only possesses constraining properties (which is the conventional understanding of structure) but also enabling properties. And the same ultimately can be said of the structuration of trust. Let us then first direct our attention to the constraining properties associated with the structuration of trust and follow by a redirection of focus to the enabling properties therein contained.
The Structuration of Trust as both Enabling and Constraining

The structuration of trust as a constraining phenomenon is readily experienced in everyday life. Specifically, the longer trust endures over time the easier it becomes, or harder it becomes not to, (simple) trust. After having repeatedly trusted someone overtime, and having in turn that trust validated, we not only become lulled into habitualizing the act but we likewise feel a responsibility to continue trusting that person until they give us reasons not to. Having trusted creates the conditions of future trusting in part because the expectation of trust is present. In short, we feel obligated to extend the relationship indefinitely as long as our trust is honored. Thus, even if we wished to discontinue the relationship we often find it difficult to do so given this perceived moral obligation (it thus begins to take on characteristics of what I have earlier described as “naturality”). Trust, therefore, once structurated can virtually bind the truster into a behavioral pattern complying with the requests of the trustee because of previous precedent and the moral forces of obligation which therefore ensue. And it is this force of obligation that arises from the stretching of trust across time through its structuration that causes trust to take on constraining properties.

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78 Other have also noted the impact that personal resources have on one's ability to trust and to be trusted (i.e., Coleman 1990; Offe 1999; Sztompka 1999). As argued by Offe (1999: 53), “the rich, the powerful, and the well-informed can afford to trust, as they can comfortably survive the contingency of the trust being disappointed, whereas the less powerful on either the supply or demand side of trust may suffer badly from the breakdown of the trust relation.” Often, however, personal resources—such as wealth and power—do not so much result in trust, but rather confidence. Being rich and powerful means that often you have less to risk by trusting others—of course this too depends on the situations (sometimes, being wealthy means you actually have even more to risk). Loaning a friend one hundred dollars would likely be a somewhat risky act for someone making minimum wage, but not likely for a billionaire. And, as I have previously established, acts which are not perceived as risky are not acts of trust. Rather, they are best conceptualized as acts of confidence.

79 Throughout the remainder of this chapter, when I refer to “trust” I am not referring to the overarching attitude that includes simple trust, confidence, faith, and hope. Rather, I am referring to simple trust (I do this for stylistic purposes).
Allow me to now return to our previous example involving your chainsaw-borrowing neighbor for further illustration and clarification of this point. In doing this let's add the following twist to this story: you have recently heard from others within your neighborhood that your chainsaw-borrowing neighbor has lately become increasingly untrustworthy (for whatever reason). Specifically, he has failed to return a hedge trimmer, a drill set, and a set of music CDs from various individuals within your neighborhood. He then shows up at your front door one day and asks to borrow your chainsaw. What do you do?

Judging from the recent experience of others you doubt you will see your chainsaw anytime soon if you let him use it. Thus, you would prefer not to let him use it. On the other hand, you have been letting him use the chainsaw for the last twenty years, no questions asked, and feel almost obligated to trust him given the precedent that has already been set. In addition, you know not letting him use it could greatly strain your friendship as well as any relationship you wish to have with him in the future. What, then, do you do?

I am sure we can all relate to similar examples of trust taking on this constraining quality. For instance, just the other day I had a friend ask to borrow money from me—not much, only a few dollars. They have done so many times in the past, but they have not always been in great haste to repay me. Even so, I have always honored their request for money when they have asked. I always thought, “what’s the harm of lending them a few dollars, right?” But this last time I felt different. I have always been quite annoyed that they took so long to repay me, but I had never really let it bother me. This time, however, it did bother me and I decided to tell them I would not let them borrow money from me. As I thought this, however, I felt a great sense of guilt about what I was on the verge of doing. I
knew they where expecting me to say “yes” and lend them the money, and I knew if I was to say “no” I could be jeopardizing our friendship. I also then realized that by saying no my friend could possibly go to others and tell them I am an untrusting person and if I ever asked to borrow something from them that I too should be denied. I thus felt an impending force of obligation to continue validating my friend’s trust even though deep down I did not want to. So what did I end up doing? I lent my friend the money.

The structuration of trust does not result in merely the constraint of individual action, however. While trust does indeed act as a limiting force it also possesses liberating qualities. In short, trust allows us to do things with greater ease and efficiency then if there was no trust. Allow me now to highlight how the structuration of trust can likewise act to enable human action.

When trust becomes structurated it can substitute for resources of social control and helps to economize on transaction costs—I do not have to monitor those with whom I have structurated trust nor do I have to force them to do what I expect them to do (or at least these perceptions are present). Structurated trust allows, for example, spouses to part from each other’s company allowing them to go to work everyday without the fear of infidelity and a perceived need to spy on the other’s daily activities. It allows old friends to lend each other books, music CDs, and even chainsaws without the need of contracts and other time consuming and costly legal documents. And it allows us to use the mail service even though we do not know exactly what transpires once we place the letter in the mailbox.

Some have also highlighted the money saving properties of trust, pointing to yet another enabling property. As Clays Offe (1999: 53) describes:
An illustration on how trust can be money saving can again be taken from public transport. If I trust my fellow citizens, I shall not hesitate to use public transport at night. If I do not trust them, I either have to pay the extra expenses for using a taxi or private car or I have to pay the costs of forgone opportunities, i.e., the cost of staying home. (emphasis in original)

Indeed, the very currency system within the United States is based upon a reified form of trust, without it domestic and global markets would collapse. In short, without these structurated, “old”, perceptively secure forms of trust, life would be unmanageable. The question still remains, however: is this still trust? Such will be the topic of the following section.

It is now time to reintroduce the conceptual model into our discussion. But the chapter will not end here, however; further theoretical elaboration and analyses are still to follow. We are close to having completed our journey, but we are not yet finished.

**Revisiting the Theoretical Model**

Figure 5 depicts the conceptual pieces that have been discussed within this chapter as they fit within the larger conceptual framework. The structuration of trust is depicted by the dashed-lines at the top of the model beginning in the upper-left quadrant (simple trust) leading into the upper-right quadrant (confidence).
Yet, over time, as simple trust becomes reified through processes of continual validation, it becomes perceptively less risky. It becomes habitualized. It becomes routine. It becomes an act teetering on the brink of semi-consciousness. It becomes, as I have earlier argued, structurated. We can all relate to personal examples of where just such a phenomena has occurred—as in the earlier examples involving your chainsaw-borrowing neighbor or your tenacious morning paper delivery person.

As an act of simple trust becomes habitualized, routinized, and pushed into the realm of semi-conscious action it loses its risk and precariousness. What then does this mean when looked at in the context of our broader conceptual framework? Is the act still one of simple trust? Can there be such a thing as safe (and thus riskless) simple trust?
It appears that as simple trust becomes structurated, as it becomes more secure and safe, at some point it ceases to be simple trust and develops into confidence. Earlier we discussed how “thick trust” can be equally understood as “old” or “safe” trust, while “thin trust” can be understood as “new” and “risky” trust. It appears, however, that those two distinctions of trust (as being “thick” or “thin”) are not completely accurate. As has already been established, simple trust is by definition risky. Thus, any act that is not risky cannot by definition be simple trust. Yet, this is what thick trust is: it is safe and without much risk. Thick trust therefore could best be conceptualized (at least according to the four-quadrant model) as confidence, and thin trust equated with simple trust.

In addition, Figure 5 depicts something I have yet to address: the temporal asymmetry of trust building. As others have noted, trust building is a time-consuming activity, while the complete (or near complete) destruction of those ties can occur in an instant (Offe, 1999; Slovic 1993). Think again of your chainsaw-borrowing neighbor. Let’s say the next time he borrows your chainsaw, after twenty years of borrowing and returning it, he finally fails to return it promptly. Four months then go by until he eventually does, and when he does you soon discover that the chain is broken and it no longer runs. Would you still let him use it again in the future out of mere semi-conscious habit as you had in the past? Or would this single act of invalidation plunge the act back into full consciousness where risk and precariousness reside? Could those years of validation (those years of trust structuration) be erased with a single act of invalidation? Very often the answer is, yes.

Think of the unfaithful spouse. Could a single act of infidelity undo what only decades of trust structurating fidelity could foster? Or perhaps you lent a friend your car—an
act you have done on numerous pervious occasions, which has eventually resulted in it becoming habitualized. This time, however, your friend wrecks it. Could that single act of invalidation erode numerous previous examples of validation? This is what is meant by the temporal asymmetry as depicted in the model regarding the structuration of trust. The structuration of trust involves the continual revalidation of trust over time, yet it can all be undone through only a single act of invalidation. And then, often, the process must start all over again.

The Role of Institutional Designs

Scholars have also been quick to point out the effect of institutional designs on trust (i.e., Hardin 1993; Seligman 1997). As I see them, institutional designs can act to immediately establish trust's structuration. In short, they work to diminish risks and thus establish confidence.

Institutional designs, often in the form of laws, can shape the context of an act to make it perceptibly safe and secure. Previous theorists have also noted this (i.e., Hardin 1993; Luhmann 1979; Warren 1999; Zucker 1986). Yet, in doing so they saw such structural devices as precipitates for trust, whereas I argue they are mechanisms leading to confidence. For example, Luhmann (1979: 34) argues: “Legal arrangements which lend special assurance to particular expectations, and make them sanctionable, are an indispensable basis for any long-term considerations of this nature; thus, they lessen the risk of conferring trust.” He then later states, “the possibilities of sanctions produce a generalizing effect in the context not only of hierarchical relations, but also of those between equals. They stabilize interaction
through the anticipation of extreme contingencies," which thus leads to trust (Luhmann 1979: 37).

Yet, if the institutionalized designs reduce risk, which they so often do, then would not they result in confidence rather than trust? If I lent a friend five hundred dollars, even though I have substantial reason to believe they would pay me back, it would still be an act of trust (five hundred dollars is a substantial sum of money for me, thus causing me to perceive the situation as possessing a fair degree of risk). On the other hand, if there was a legally binding contract between myself and my friend, I would perceive the situation in less risky terms—specifically, because I would possess legal recourse in the event of not being repaid. And if the perception of risk is low enough, the act could be more likened to confidence than to trust.  

Take, for instance, the national currency system in United States. In the mid-nineteenth century trust in currency became institutionalized with the development of standardized government currency. In short, it became less risky to use currency because the federal government was now backing each and every dollar. And as a result, when was the last time you worried about the dollar losing its worth? Instead, we continue to use government currency in this country as though it contains within it some inherent value (we often forget it is little more than green ink applied to special parchment that has printed on it, "this note is legal tender for all debts public and private"). Our trust in U.S. currency has

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80 Going through the courts to get enforcement, however, also possess costs: time, court and lawyer fees, etc. Institutional designs, therefore, do not guarantee a perceptible reduction in risks (I will revisit this discussion later in the text).

81 Even before then, however, one could argue that trust toward currency was institutionalized as it was individual banks that guaranteed their own currency's value.
become institutionalized and thus structurated. We therefore use the dollar without (typically) thinking about whether or not it will still be worth the same tomorrow as it is today. Our use of it has become a semi-conscious, habitualized act with little if any perceived risk. The trust we once had in currency, it seems, has long ago turned into confidence.

But this is not to say, however, that confidence—in the form of institutionalized trust—cannot denigrate back into trust. If the institutionalized designs become revoked, or if their perceived legitimacy is undermined, the perception of risk can again enter one’s stream of consciousness, thus causing confidence to revert back into trust. Take the following example: the collapse of the monetary system in the former Soviet Union—specifically in Russia. Before its collapse, confidence kept the ruble a relatively stable form of currency (of course, the arrows of causation point in the other direction as well—the stability of the ruble kept confidence in it high). However, the unstable nature of Russian political and economic life after the fall of communism caused the institutionalized confidence (both nationally and internationally) in the ruble to shatter. This resulted, for at least a period, in making the ruble virtually worthless, while making other commodities, which required less trust due to their “use-value”, more valuable and stable forms of “currency” (i.e., cigarettes). For the ruble to therefore once again become a stable form of national and international currency (which it is slowly becoming), trust in it must be nurtured and institutionalized by a stable form of government so that trust can eventually be transformed back into confidence.82

82 To support my argument that confidence is simply institutionalized trust, it is worth noting that what Luhmann refers to in an earlier work as “system trust” (Luhmann 1979) later becomes renamed “confidence” (Luhmann 1988, 1994).
Likewise, if institutional designs begin to be burdened with too many "transaction costs", risks fail to be mitigated, causing trust to reappear where confidence once stood. Take the earlier example where my friend has approached me and has asked to borrow five hundred dollars. As I have already established, a legally binding contract between us is no guarantee that my perceived risks of the situation will be reduced (and thus no guarantee that my trust will be transformed into confidence). For example, if enforcement of the contract becomes even more costly for example, I may no longer perceive the contract to have any worth in an exchange involving five hundred dollars (maybe the transaction costs involved can now only be justified in exchanges of one thousand dollars or greater); or, possibly, the enforcement entity itself (i.e., the state) is no longer legitimate—such could have been the case if my friend and I lived in Russia in the early 1990s. In short, while institutional designs may diminish the perception of risk and transform trust into confidence, the social conditions can always change thereby lessening the impact of those institutional designs, thus causing confidence to revert back into trust.

A three-dimensional representation of this analysis is displayed in Figure 6. As is illustrated, if the institutional designs are perceived as legitimate, the perception of risk diminishes and a feeling of confidence ensues. Moreover, Figure 6 illustrates that legitimate institutional designs not only transform trust into confidence, but transform faith and hope into confidence as well.
Recall that hope and faith are themselves predicated upon a lack of sufficient evidence. For example, lending five hundred dollars to a complete stranger, of whom you have no knowledge of their trustworthiness, would likely be an act based upon hope. If a legally binding contract was in place, however, and if transactions costs were low enough, this act would then become one of confidence. If fact, most economic exchanges that occur today would be based upon hope if legitimate institutional designs were not in place. Indeed, how many people really know anything about the people they do business with? Were it not for the institutionalized confidence instilled by legal contracts, capitalism (and particularly its global variant) would surely perish.
PART TWO—APPLICATION
CHAPTER EIGHT: SETTING THE STAGE

Sustainable agriculture is unquestionably one of the most significant social movements in motion today.—Personal interview

If sustainable agriculture is going to work, its got to work first on rented land.—Personal interview

With this chapter I begin the process of illustrating and corroborating pieces of the preceding theoretical analyses of trust by use of empirical evidence—specifically, by examining an instance of social change within the realm of production agriculture. Social change and trust are intricately intertwined. Social change presupposes some form of social reorganization, and when there is social (re)organization there must also be trust. Allow me to explain.

That which is social presupposes trust. It does so because the social is complex, multidimensional, and forever changing. Only in an unchanging world, a world where everything remains permanent, constant, and invariable, could one imagine there being no need for trust (nor distrust since distrust presupposes trust—see chapter two). In such a world there could be no dialogue, no exchange, no respond-ability, no society. The unfinalizability of social life would not exist (not even as an idea, for ideas are the fountainhead of change).

Luckily, however, we do not live in such a world. Our world is social. It is one of change. And it thus must too be one of trust.

Social change is in part a product of what society and its members trust. Although this is a gross oversimplification (but I think it succinctly makes my point), if individuals still
trust the "old" way, then social change is unlikely—especially if they do not yet trust the "new" way. How social change occurs, how fast it occurs, in what manner it occurs, and ultimately what changes, are thus all intimately connected to what and who we (and society) trust.

An examination into particular social relations of trust can provide, therefore, an entry point into understanding cases where social change has either occurred, is occurring, or even in cases where attempts at social change have failed (or at least have not yet occurred). Dual motives are thus present for including this particular empirical case study within my dissertation. First, the case provides a means through which to clarify, illustrate, and corroborate my earlier theoretical analyses. In this sense it provides a "real world" arena to assess the accuracy of some of the theory's assumptions, propositions, and conclusions. In doing this, however, we also gain a deeper, critical insight into the case study that we would not otherwise have had. Thus, in utilizing the case study to illustrate and corroborate aspects of the theoretical model my hope is to also understand some of the social complexities encountered within the case itself.

This process thus begins with this chapter. Here, I present justifications for selecting the particular case study that I did; I discuss the particular methods utilized for collecting the data; and I explain the validity of those methods. This will then be followed in chapter nine with an analysis of the social relations within agriculture to investigate how those social relations ultimately impact trust and the adoption of sustainable agricultural methods on rented land. In chapter ten, I continue this analysis by redirecting our attention to the role of
the state, looking specifically at how the state shapes social relations within agriculture and in doing so how it also influences trust and the methods of production ultimately adopted.\textsuperscript{83}

Chapter eleven thus signifies the end of this work. Here, we turn around and reflect upon the previous ten chapters. In doing so we not only review some particular points of significance, but we also push ahead highlighting areas in which future trust scholarship should head, and how the particular theoretical analyses of trust contained within these pages can help us accomplish just that. Chapter eleven then concludes on a more practical note, with a discussion of possible suggestions for public policy involving adoption of sustainable agriculture practices on rented land.

\textbf{Setting the Scene}

The case study focuses on an issue revolving around production agriculture in the state of Iowa. The empirical question I hope to address through this research is as follows: how does the landlord-tenant relationship impact the adoption or non-adoption of sustainable

\textsuperscript{83} While the analyses contained in chapters four (the nature-society dialogue) and five (the intrapersonal level) are not given primary analytic emphasis in the following chapters do not take this to suggest insignificance or omission. For instance, (in regard to chapter four) the dialogue of nature and society is ubiquitous to all realms of social life, and as such we must be vigilant of its presence within all of venues of social analyses. With that said, however, we need not be explicit about it with every theoretical and empirical assertion that we make—there are simply not enough hours in the day for us to do so. Instead, we must remain mindful of this interrelationship for those times when it does becomes necessary to look at the material in order to gain a clearer understanding of the ideal. Likewise, while not explicitly discussed in the following analyses, the intrapersonal level (chapter five) is nevertheless present (particularly via grounding our analysis within the context of what I call a “phenomenological challenge”). In chapter five, I argue that our ontology is not purely an individual or subjective problem, but rather a social one. When we speak of a person’s subjective, existential, and/or phenomenological states we must therefore place them in the context of their social surroundings (and in chapter six I build off of this argument by describing this context as P-K-I-T), as I do in the following analysis by contextualizing the case study within the broader “phenomenological challenge”.

farming practices on rented land? Before going into any greater detail let us first briefly
discuss the justifications for examining this particular case study.

Why This Particular Case Study?

Why examine such a specific, relatively uncommon case study? Roughly two and a
half percent of the adult population in the United States are still involved in the production
end of agriculture (with even fewer involved in "sustainable" agriculture). 84 Why not
therefore select a case study involving an issue more people can relate to, such as perhaps
something involving private businesses, or family, or maybe even “community”? We can all
relate to these everyday examples, so why select a case study so removed from most of our
everyday lives?

But this is a case involving something we can all truly relate to. Most of us do not
live on farms, but they are nevertheless still there with us three times a day, and often even
more. When you eat you are likely connected, in some way, to agriculture. As sociologist
Michael Bell (2003) has written, food makes farmers of us all, whether we are aware of it or
not. The story told here is therefore in part your own story. You are connected, whether you
know it or not, to the various voices within this case study.

Recall the age-old adage, “you are what you eat”. If this saying still holds true today,
then, as Joan Gussow (1991: 116) cunningly notes, “someone out there is growing you.”
Food not only nourishes our body, but likewise our being. Within food we find our identity
(Bordo 1998) and we find our culture (Mintz 1996). Food grows us as much as we grow

food (Belasco 1999). To examine and understand the individuals that work to cultivate the
soil from which our food comes forth is to understand the soil from which we all grow.

But this research is also a glimpse into the future of agriculture. According to the
1997 census of agriculture, fifty-four percent of all farmland in Iowa is rented. Issues of
tenancy are thus issues of significance to the future of agriculture, particularly in the
Midwest. We would therefore do well to examine those issues today before they become
problems tomorrow.

What the future holds for agriculture, however, is still relatively unclear for it is
currently at somewhat of a crossroads. The industrialization of agriculture has been touted by
many as a blessing: never have so many been fed by so few, and never before have so many
been emancipated from the land. No longer are people required to sacrifice a portion of their
lives to producing their own food. Now, people are free to live in the city, confident that
food is only the nearest grocery store away. Without industrialized agriculture we could not
as easily have computers, automobiles, airplanes, doctors, and scientists. Without the leisure
that the industrialization of agriculture has allowed there would be less art, less music, less
philosophy, and fewer literary masterpieces—or, at least, so the argument goes.

A recent reexamination of the industrial model, however, has identified a number of
problems. These include environmental degradation (Bultena et al. 1992; Lighthall, 1995;
Lyson and Welsh 1993), negative impacts on rural communities (Flora, Brown, and Conby
Heady and Sonka 1974; Lobao 1990), and issues of food safety and security (Hamilton 1994;
Strange 1988; Welsh 1996). This is where sustainable agriculture, and its proponents, come in.

Those within sustainable agriculture view the industrial model with mixed emotions. For instance, they ask, while the industrialization of agriculture has helped to bring on the conveniences of modernity, when does it reach a point when it starts creating more harm then good? And, more importantly, has that point already been reach? They will point to such statistics as, for every bushel of corn that is raised in Iowa one bushel of top soil is lost to erosion and ask, “does that sound sustainable to you?” 85 The point those within sustainable agriculture are making is this: although slightly over two percent of adults in the United States farm, are they really farming for all of us? If someone is growing you, are you comfortable that they are growing you with you in mind? Are they farming for rural communities, families, the environment, and for consumers? Or are they solely farming for a profit and for themselves? Proponents of sustainable agriculture view the industrial model emphasizing the latter, while themselves promoting a method of agriculture that promotes the former. Yet, given the increasing prominence of tenancy in the Midwest, for sustainable agriculture to have any future it must reside in the tenant-landlord relationship. As one tenant declared, “If sustainable agriculture is going to work, its got to work first on rented land.”

This then is not just a case about farming, it is also a case about relationships—familial, ecological, communal, and otherwise. Food, family, business, community, environment, these are all-important aspects of our everyday lives—what could possibly be less foreign to us? This then is not just a case study involving, and of relevance to, landlords,

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85 Calculation based upon figures from Pimentel et al. (1995).
tenants, agricultural professionals, and the like. Rather, it is a case study of relevance to us all.

**What Do I Mean by Sustainable Agriculture?**

Definitions of sustainable agriculture vary greatly. According to the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act (FACTA) of 1990, Title XVI, Subtitle A, Section 1603,

Sustainable agriculture means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term: satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Another common definition views sustainable agriculture as a three-legged stool, taking into account the long-term economic, ecologic, and social implications of what it does.

Within this research sustainable agriculture has no prescribed set definition. This was done purposefully so that respondents could feel free to apply and convey their own interpretations of the concept. It was believed that the inability of some tenants and landlords to communicate with one another about issues pertaining to sustainable agriculture could, at least in part, be due to the very slipperiness of the concept. For instance, the landlord and tenant may both embrace something they each call “sustainable agriculture”, while in reality they are thinking of two completely different processes. On the other hand, they may be contemplating similar processes, yet one calls it “sustainable agriculture” and the other does not.
When pressed to provide a definition, however, one was provided, namely, sustainable agriculture is that which is ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible—this is the aforementioned tree-legged stool analogy. Yet, in doing this, I made sure the definition itself was couched in terms of variability. For instance, I might have said, “this is a definition commonly used to describe sustainable agriculture, do you agree?” This therefore provided breathing room for those whose own understanding of sustainable agriculture did not quite fit with that which I provided.

Challenges in Adopting Sustainable Agriculture on Rented Land

The adoption of sustainable agricultural practices on rented will not occur overnight, however. Rented land poses special challenges that must be first overcome if sustainable agriculture is to be a dominant model of agricultural production in Iowa and throughout the Midwest. For instance, sustainable techniques of production, such as conservation and organic methods, require long-term investments in management and (sometimes) equipment. In addition, the instability of tenure inherent in rental arrangements, communication issues, and conflicting goals for the land may all lead to difficulties in adoption, even when one or both parties in the landlord-tenant relationship wish to implement sustainable techniques of production.

Social structural factors also seem to stack the deck against the proliferation of sustainable agricultural techniques on rented land. Intense competition for land base leads to narrow profit margins as farmers compete with each other to offer the highest rents, particularly in cash-rent situations. The increasing trend toward cash-rent in Iowa and
elsewhere may be accelerating this tendency. For example, cash-rent is usually associated with greater turnover among the farmers (Pieper and Harl 2000), mitigating against long-term management investments and the formation of good communication ties between landlords and tenants. Also, the pressure for increased land base, combined with intense competition for rented land is leading to situations where an increasing number of farmers are working widely scattered fields that are many miles apart. And, as travel times increase, farmers may feel pressure to adopt low-management and less sustainable methods.

Social constraints also exist which can hinder the adoption of sustainable techniques. Landlords frequently want a “neat and tidy” appearance to their land (Constance et al. 1996). Consequently, tenants can become wary of utilizing certain sustainable methods—such as reducing pesticide use through banding or other techniques—they believe might result in an appearance of weediness and thus possibly compromise their future tenancy.

The advanced age of many landowners may also lead some to regard their land primarily as a pension fund, with lower concern for the future of the land beyond their own lifespan. For example, Constance et al. (1996: 577) found that what little participation landlords have in farm decision making in Missouri is “predominantly based on economic, rather than social or environmental, factors.” This is not to say, however, that landlords overwhelmingly call the shots while tenants remain passive and subordinate. For example, According to Pieper and Harl (2000), the percentage of cash-rent leasing arrangements in Iowa (out of all forms of leasing arrangements) has increased from 48.8 percent in 1982, to 54.2 percent in 1992, to 57.1 percent in 1997, while crop share arrangements in Iowa have decreased from 48.8 percent in 1982, to 44 percent in 1992, to 38.8 percent in 1997. A recent national Gallup Poll of large farmers and ranchers indicated when asked about adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, 17% cited “landlord won’t allow” as a reason for not adopting sustainable agriculture methods.
Gilbert and Beckley (1993) and Constance et al. (1996) found that landlords and tenants agree overwhelmingly that tenants make most of the decisions with regard to farm operations, including soil conservation, pesticide use, and water quality practices. This is what Gilbert and Beckley call a “dominant tenant-subordinate landlord” model.

Gender relations may also affect the adoption of sustainable methods on rented land. Rogers and Vandeman (1993: 566), for instance, report that “women farm landlords are less likely than men landlords to participate in farm management decisions with direct environmental implications” (emphasis in the original). As the number of female landlords continue to increase, typically through inheritance (i.e., widows, daughters, and sisters) and in the form of absentee landlords (landlord does not live on or near the land they rent), these communication barriers in cross-gender relationships between landlords and tenants will become increasingly important to resolve for sustainable agriculture to thrive.

Additionally, many landowners are far removed from the land, making communication with the tenant(s) and agriculture professionals more challenging. In other cases, landlords who are themselves retired farmers may be suspicious of alternative approaches to farming that threaten long-held ideas. The relative invisibility of sustainable agricultural benefits—it is hard to “see” lower rates of soil and nutrient loss, improved soil structure, higher levels of beneficial soil micro-organisms, and the like—means that the improvements sustainable management makes to the land may not be readily apparent to the landlord. These factors may help account for why sustainable producers often report feeling constrained to farm more conventionally than they would like on their rented land, despite the
relative autonomy reportedly granted to tenants in farm operation decision-making (Constance et al. 1996).

The scene has now been set and we are nearing the moment where we take our theoretical model of trust out for its first “test run”. Yet before doing so, one item still needs to be addressed: how the data were collected.

Method of My Methods

The impetus of this case study was due more to fortuity than any foresight on my part. In the winter of 1999, I was approached by Professor Michael Bell and Diane Mayerfeld to participate in the writing of a grant to investigate landlord-tenant relationships to understand how those relationships impact the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices on rented farmland. Considering the role Iowa State University (the institution Mike, Diane, and I are affiliated with) plays as a leading land-grant university within the United States we felt that such a topic would be of great interest to many both within and outside the confines of our institution. After having conducted various searches and rummaging through numerous professional journals we quickly discovered that little research had been conducted on the subject. Given these factors we immediately went to work on our grant and within a few months we received the good news: we had been awarded the grant. The research conducted in this dissertation is thus the result of this grant funded through the North Central Region SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) program.

Yet, as I thought more about the landlord-tenant relationship and spent more time “in the field” collecting data, I continually found myself coming back to the issue of trust. For
instance, why did some individuals not trust sustainable agricultural methods, while others not trust more "traditional" (industrial) methods? If tenants and landlords trusted each other, why was there still disagreement about what farming techniques to adopt? How could trust in sustainable agriculture be improved? Thus, while this case study serves to illustrate and corroborate aspects of the preceding theoretical model of trust, it has also provided an empirical setting for inductive theorizing.

I do not believe in research for the sake of research, however. Research should not be viewed as an end in itself. Thus, by incorporating this case study into my dissertation I hope to not only illustrate and corroborate aspects of my theoretical model, but also I wish to highlight the social conditions within which sustainable agriculture thrives. Thus, it is ultimately my hope to provide solutions to improve relations between tenants and landlords—relations that grow in significance as land rental arrangements across the United States continue to increase. In a sense, therefore, this research has affinities with what Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor (1990) have termed "optimistic research": research that is seen as a means and not as an end in itself.

I recognize that some may view this proclamation as evidence of biased scholarship. Quite frankly, they would be right. The sentiment that social scientists can suspend and completely ignore their own values and biases is not only incorrect, but also absurd. Indeed, the most value-free (if such a thing is even possible) social science may well turn out to be the most value-less (Seidman 1994, 1997; Bell 2003). Why even conduct research if not for some underlying values? In declaring my values to you the reader I am not therefore suggesting that what I am about to undertake is any less rigorous than if I did not possess
these values. In fact, I feel this practice can only be of benefit to the reader and to scholarship in general. Through social researchers becoming aware of their values and communicating them to others allows them, and as well the reader, to take those values into account when formulating and evaluating research and its arguments.

Gathering the Data

Data were collected through three stages: state-wide scattered informal personal interviews, followed by the utilization of focus groups, and concluding with an in-depth examination of one Iowa county. Beginning in June of 2000, I began contacting and interviewing landlords, tenants, Iowa Department of Natural Resource agents (DNR), Iowa State University County Extension agents, Natural Resource and Conservation Service Agents (NRCS), and farm managers from around the state of Iowa. Names of prospective respondents where obtained using a snowball sampling technique, beginning with respondents known to myself and others involved in the project. The purpose of this phase of data collection was to familiarize myself with the issue as well as to direct the focus of, and highlight further areas of inquiry which could be addressed in, the subsequent focus groups. Interviews in this stage of data gathering lasted anywhere from forty-five minutes to two hours.

In this first stage of research—between June and December of 2000—I conducted twenty-nine personal interviews, which included three farm managers, eight Iowa State University Extension agents, two DNR agents, three NRCS agents, seven tenants, and six landlords. Of these twenty-nine interviews, ten were tape-recorded. In nine instances,
respondents did not feel comfortable with having their responses tape-recorded. In the remaining ten cases, interviews occurred so serendipitously that the use of a tape-recorder was impractical. When a tape-recorder was not employed, extensive field notes were taken both during and after the interview. See Table 1 for a demographic breakdown of the sample in stage one.

According to Table 1, five females and twenty-four males were interviewed during the first stage of research. One respondent was between 21 and 30 years of age, five between 31 and 40, fifteen between 41 and 50, six between 51 and 60, and two between 61 and 70. Finally, the total acres of land rented between the six tenants and seven landlords is as follows: one landlord and two tenants rented between 1 and 50 acres of land; two landlords and one tenant rented between 51 and 100 acres; one landlord and one tenant rented between 101 and 200 acres; one tenant rented between 201 and 300 acres; one landlord rented between 301 and 400 acres; and one landlord and two tenants rented between 401 and 500 acres.

The second phase of data collection occurred between September 2000 and January 2001. Here, focus groups were employed. Prospective focus group participants were again obtained through a snowball sampling technique. In all, four focus groups were conducted: one of landlords, one of tenants, one of NRCS agents, and the fourth consisting of Iowa State University Extension agents and DNR agents. Focus groups lasted approximately two hours, with conversations tape-recorded and later transcribed. The size of each focus group ranged

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88 For example, this occurred on more than one occasion while I was at a local farmers' market. I had attended the farmers' market not expecting to conduct research but to purchase food items but soon I would find myself talking to a producer about their rental relationship.
Table 1. Demographics of study sample within first stage of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Landlords (n=6)</th>
<th>Tenants (n=7)</th>
<th>Extension (n=8)</th>
<th>DNR (n=2)</th>
<th>NRCS (n=3)</th>
<th>Farm managers (n=3)</th>
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<th>DNR (n=2)</th>
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<td>na</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

from four to nine participants. Beyond information gathering, the focus groups also served an important function in helping to further direct the focus of, and construct questions for, the final phase of data collection—the extensive countywide study. See Table 2 for a demographic breakdown of the sample in stage two.

According to Table 2, eight females and nineteen males were interviewed during the second stage of research. One respondent was between 21 and 30 years of age, seven between 31 and 40, ten between 41 and 50, seven between 51 and 60, and two between 61
and 70. Finally, the total acres of land rented between the nine tenants and eight landlords is as follows: one landlord and one tenant rented between 1 and 50 acres of land; zero landlords and three tenants rented between 51 and 100 acres; two landlords and two tenants rented between 101 and 200 acres; three landlords and one tenant rented between 301 and 400 acres; and two landlords and two tenants rented between 401 and 500 acres.

Table 2. Demographics of study sample within second stage of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Landlords (n=8)</th>
<th>Tenants (n=9)</th>
<th>Extension (n=4)</th>
<th>DNR (n=3)</th>
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<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Total acres of land being rented</th>
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<th>Extension (n=4)</th>
<th>DNR (n=3)</th>
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</table>
The final phase of research entailed a detailed countywide study, consisting of in-depth personal interviews. The county selected for this stage of information gathering was chosen largely for two reasons: the ease with which I had access to a large network of prospective respondents (from preestablished personal and institutional ties), and competition over rented land as a major issue in the county, causing this study to be of great pertinence to many within the county. Between January and September of 2001, twenty-eight interviews where conducted (consisting of three I.S.U Extension agents, eleven landlords, and fourteen tenants). Each interview lasted between forty-five minutes and two and a half hours. Out of the twenty-eight interviews, twenty-four respondents allowed our conversations to be tape-recorded. In those instances where interviews were not recorded, extensive field notes were taken both during and after the interviews. See Table 3 for a demographic breakdown of the sample in stage three.

According to Table 3, eleven females and seventeen males were interviewed during the third stage of research. Three respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age, ten between 41 and 50, ten between 51 and 60, three between 61 and 70, and two between 71 and 80. Finally, the total acres of land rented between the fourteen tenants and eleven landlords is as follows: one landlord and three tenants rented between 1 and 50 acres of land; three tenants rented between 51 and 100 acres; three landlords and four tenants rented between 101 and 200 acres; one tenant and one landlord rented between 201 and 300 acres; three landlords rented between 301 and 400 acres; two landlords and one tenant rented between 401 and 500

The identity of the county in Iowa will not be revealed to protect the identity of those voices used within this dissertation (for example, because there are very few Iowa State University County Extension Agents within each county, their confidentiality could be compromised by my revealing the county's identity).
acres; one tenant rented between 701 and 800 acres; and one landlord rented between 901 and 1,000 acres.

Table 3. Demographics of study sample within third stage of data collection

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<th>Age (years)</th>
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<th>Extension (n=3)</th>
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<th>Extension (n=3)</th>
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<th>Extension (n=3)</th>
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I entered each interview with, for lack of a better term, an “interview guide” as opposed to a questionnaire. Doing this allowed me to engage in an inductive—or co-constructuring—interviewing technique. This allowed me to continually refine the interview guide during the course of the fieldwork, using the method of “grounded theory” until
"theoretical saturation" has been approximated (Glaser and Strauss 1967). It was therefore my aim to provide a few questions and probes to begin the conversation in a given topic area, and then see where the respondent would take me with it. Of course, not all respondents were always talkative and did not take the opportunity to co-structure—hence, the varying lengths of interviews. In those instances I treated my interview guide more as a traditional questionnaire, yet always probing hoping to engage the respondent in a co-structuring dialogue. In total, all three phases of my research resulted in hundreds of pages of transcripts and a seemingly immeasurable stack of field-notes.

Some may still, however, be unclear as to the value behind my choice of a more qualitative methodological approach, as well as to the utility of a single extensive county wide case study. Allow me to now address these concerns.

**The Value in these Methods**

The approach I have taken could be best understood, according to Herbert Gans, as ethnographic—an approach he views as being “the most scientific for understanding social life” (Gans 1991: xi). According to Gans (1991:xii), “[e]thnography is now becoming an umbrella term to cover fieldwork, participant observation and informal interviewing. To me, it means being with and talking to people, especially those whose activities are not newsworthy, asking them thoughtful and empathic questions, and analyzing the resulting data.”

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90 “Grounded theory” is a strategy in which specific research and interview questions emerge through a systematic interplay of inductive and deductive reasoning during the actual course of the research. In this way, both the research focus and in the information generated is closer, or “grounded” in, the actual field context.
By stating this I do not claim epistemological superiority of one research method over another, however. Rather, there are many ways to know reality, no way need be superior to the other. The social survey can be one of the most effective and efficient tools available to the social sciences. Yet, as the data are abstracted from the people described a certain "thickness" (Geertz 1973) and contextual richness is lost. Engaging in ethnographic methods allows one to embark on an extensive analysis of the very social fabric that the actors are embedded within resulting in a rich contextual understanding. I thus have strived to achieve what Clifford Geertz (1973) has termed "thick description": an ethnographic technique that strives for a deep (or rich) understanding of the social fabric under study—a level of understanding that could not be attained by survey instruments alone.

The utilization of the in-depth county case study is a vital component to achieving this thick description. By concentrating my ethnographic investigation to a fixed and limited "place" I can more thoroughly understand the myriad of complex social relations as they exist within this socio-relational site. Of course, any attempt within the social sciences to represent any form of collected data entails some distortion, as social life is far too complex and enigmatic to be reduced to numbers or words. Nevertheless, enveloping oneself within a particular context—a "place"—through ethnographic techniques allows one to "see" more of these complex social relations then could be "seen" by, for example, the use of surveys alone.

91 Here I am referring to "place" in a sociological sense. There is a socially prescribed distinction to be made between "space" and "place." Space refers to the material, three-dimensional coordination of things, while place is space plus the sentiments socially prescribed to that space (i.e., Bell 1997).
The path has now been prepared for our analysis. Let us now see how well the model depicts the truth about trust. And in so doing, let us see what insights can be gleaned by this application to aid in our understanding of the social movement of sustainable agriculture in general, and the adoption of sustainable agricultural techniques on rented land in particular.
CHAPTER NINE: THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF AGRICULTURE

I know who I trust, and trust who I know.—Personal interview

The only thing you can really trust is in the belief that people are generally untrustworthy.—Personal interview

Although its parameters are not clearly defined, sustainable agriculture provides its proponents with an alternative discursive narrative to that of the industrial model. Yet, sustainable agriculture’s narrative is not merely a benign alternative discourse. It is also a challenging discourse which threatens the discursive supremacy of the industrial model and those who are embedded within it resulting in what has been described earlier (chapter six) as a “phenomenological challenge”—discursive moments which confront and threaten the dominant social relations of power-knowledge-identity-trust (P-K-I-T). Indeed, the jostling for discursive ascendancy can be seen through the very title of the contesting discourse: sustainable agriculture. This title seeks to discredit the industrial model by implying what it is not—namely, sustainable.

A phenomenological challenge can yield two possible outcomes. The dominant social relations can either prevail or the breach can result in new social relations. Herein lies the impetus of social change. Social change is a reorganization of existing social relations (specifically, a reorganization of the social relations of P-K-I-T) through discursive challenges to those relations. Phenomenological challenges are the acorns from which sprout the oaks of revolutions and social movements; they are the seeds of social change.
Our interest here is thus beyond merely understanding the communicative dynamics between landlords and tenants; indeed, it has to be, at least at first. For us to understand the barriers that restrict the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land we must first discursively contextualize the tenant-landlord relationship itself and reveal the social networks of P-K-I-T that surround it.

Our analysis thus begins broadly, addressing the challenge to the dominant social relations of the industrial model by proponents of sustainable agriculture. With a wide analytic net we can contextualize our case and the individuals within the case according to their particular social networks, and from there slowly focus in upon our empirical problem: what are the barriers that restrict the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land?

The Discourses of Agriculture

Farmers are known to feed the world. In Iowa, as throughout the Midwest, they raise everything from corn and soybeans, to cattle and hogs, to St. John’s Wort and grapes. But there is also something which they all raise. This something cannot be purchased, sold, or cultivated—at least, not in the conventional sense. It cannot be found on the shelves of your local grocery market, nor in a bin at your local seed dealer. It is something present in us all: a sense of self (and the social relations of P-K-I-T in which it is enmeshed).

This self is not merely a product of individual ontology, however. Rather, it is rooted in discourse and phenomenology. Phenomenologists have long noted the importance of “trust” in the taken-for-granted character of most of social life, as in the trust-breaking experiments of Garfinkel. The loss of trust in those experiments, however, was understood
as an individual ontological problem rather than a collective one, causing phenomenologists to frequently understand "trust" as a metaphor for ontological issues. Yet, as argued in chapter five, this metaphor also speaks to the implicit importance of the social character of our ontology. Ultimately, it is people that we trust if we trust our ontology, not merely the intrasubjective "facts" of our existence (Carolan and Bell 2001).

The creation of this social phenomenology of trust depends upon the play between discourse and intersubjectivity—what I have earlier referred to as superintersubjectivity (Carolan 2000; Carolan and Bell 2001). We cannot be just intersubjective, we must be intersubjective with someone, and that someone is in part constituted through discourse. Likewise, however, discourse is not the creator of intersubjectivity with itself having no maker. Rather, just as intersubjectivity requires discourse, discourse it seems requires intersubjectivity. Contrary to poststructuralists the author is not dead. Rather, the author is constructed within and through intersubjectivity.

Superintersubjectivity is thus an intellectual reminder of this dialogic relation between discourse and phenomenology. It reminds us that the very actors with which we seek to establish intersubjectivity with—such as friends, neighbors, family members, and even the state—must be discursively constituted in order that there be subjects through which we can attempt intersubjectivity with, or not. And it reminds us that actors are behind all discourse as opposed to more discourse "all the way down".

This process of superintersubjectivity, and the social relations in which it is embedded, can become transformed, however, in particular moments of phenomenological challenge—discursive moments that confront and contest dominant social relations. In this
process. the dominant social relations of power-knowledge-identity-trust (P-K-I-T) can be maintained, or they can result in new social relations. The sustainable agricultural movement provides just such an example of a phenomenological challenge. Yet, in so doing (as I will demonstrate) it also provides an entry point to understanding some of the complexities associated with the tenant-landlord relationship, and how this relationship can erect barriers which restrict the adoption of sustainable farming practices on rented land.

The aforementioned phenomenological challenge lifts social networks out of mere intersubjectivity and into a discursively constituted realm of superintersubjectivity, bringing to a discursive level who is where with regard to networks of P-K-I-T—namely, do you place yourself within the social networks of the sustainable agriculture movement, or do you identify with the dominant networks linked to the industrial model? Thus, the phenomenological challenge constitutes the very networks of superintersubjectivity that constitute it, and the social relations of P-K-I-T within which they are both embedded.

To understand those social relations requires that we first examine the case from the perspective of it representing an example of a phenomenological challenge. From here we can then gain greater insight into the social relations of the case in general, and the social relations of P-K-I-T of the tenants and landlords in particular. Once this is accomplished we can extend our analysis to include other dimensions of our theoretical model, their corollary constituting affects upon trust, and the social relations in which that trust is embedded.
Sustainable Agriculture as a Phenomenological Challenge

The discursive narrative of sustainable agriculture and the phenomenological challenge that it represents can be seen in the following comments provided by some of its proponents.

"The future of farming just does not exist within the industrial model. It just can't."

"People just do not realize that you can remain small and profitable at the same time. Look at what we're doing."

"The current model of production agriculture is just not sustainable. I mean, it might be from an economic perspective, but even only then it is because of government subsidies. Holistically speaking, however, taking into account not only economics but also the environment and community, the current model of production is simply not sustainable."

"Sooner or later people are going to realize that we need a paradigm shift in agriculture."

"The way people farm now relies too much on chemicals and other things to replace labor. But it's replacing labor at the cost of the environment, biodiversity, family, and communities. We need to start finding solutions with our minds and not in a can [referring to the staggering increase of chemical inputs during the last fifty years in agriculture]."\(^{92}\)

It is clear from these statements that advocates of sustainable agriculture view its discourse as contesting the dominant model of production agriculture. And it is through this challenge—this phenomenological challenge—that the social relations themselves become

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\(^{92}\) According to the Census of Agriculture, the total annual expenditure in Iowa for chemical fertilizers has increased from $351,000 in 1939 to $636,785,000 in 1997 (unadjusted for inflation).
contested and defined. Notice the language respondents used to define who they located within which discursive network. In regards to the industrial model, respondents clearly placed themselves outside of this discursive socio-relational strand: “People just do not realize…”: “Sooner or later people are going to realize…”; and “The way people farm now…”. Yet, when speaking of sustainable agriculture, respondents took a more inclusive posture placing themselves within the narratives: “Look at what we’re doing”; and “We need to start finding solutions…”.

During a phenomenological challenge, discourse is continually being contested, repositioned, and shaped as the discourses, and social relations of those discourses, do battle against one another—what could be understood as discursive manipulation. In instances of discursive manipulation discourses work to continually define, shape, and reposition each other in an attempt to gain advantage. We can see examples of discursive manipulation in the aforementioned remarks as respondents attempted to define not only what sustainable and industrial agriculture are, but also (and just as importantly) what they are not. Such comments as “[t]he current model of production agriculture is just not sustainable…”, and “[t]he way people farm now relies too much on chemicals and…[is]… replacing labor at the cost of the environment, biodiversity, family, and communities…” illustrate respondents’ attempt to reshape what the industrial model represents in a manner that best fits their discursive positioning within the phenomenological challenge.

Yet, like battlefields of war, phenomenological challenges also result in resistance and retaliation. This resistance need not be met with bloodshed and bayonets, however (although it can and has at times unfortunately resulted in just such extreme actions). What I am
talking about is what Bell and I have earlier referred to as discursive resistance, and one frequent form this resistance takes is degradation discourse—the discursive infliction of normative or affectual labels to weaken the communicative power of a group and/or individuals (Carolan and Bell 2001).

We can see instances of degradation discourse from both sides. On the one hand, terms such as “radicals,” “hippies,” and “old-fashioned, small-time farmers” were used by proponents of the industrial model to inflict discursive violence upon those associated with sustainable agriculture. On the other hand, similar tactics of discursive violence could be witnessed from proponents of sustainable agriculture through the use of such terms as “greedy”, “materialistic”, “selfish”, “closed minded”, and “old-fashioned” (note how similar terms can be used by both sides of such discursive tactics). The ultimate purpose (for both sides), therefore, to weaken the social networks within which the opposing actors find themselves embedded and in so doing compromising their ability to engage in a deliberative exchange of validity claims and thus reducing their discursive authority.

Through acts of discursive resistance, lines become drawn in the sand; in-groups and out-groups become constructed and reified, and intersubjectivity is lifted into the discursively constituted realm of superintersubjectivity. Within a phenomenological challenge discourses are thus not the only things posturing for position and embroiled in battle—people are too, through both their actions and words. While discourse battles discourse we must not forget that it is ultimately people which are behind discourse. Thus, the drawing of battle lines during moments of a phenomenological challenge not only cause the discourses themselves
to shift and change, but also the discursive relational properties of the groups and individuals themselves which are behind the discourse.

Within the context of a phenomenological challenge—and the superintersubjectivity that this challenge represents—Dan is no longer just “Dan the farmer”. Rather, he is also one of “us” if you locate yourself within the social relations of the sustainable agricultural movement or one of “them” (or, in an act of degradation discourse, one of “them hippy organic farmers”) if you locate yourself within the networks associated with the industrial model. Bill is no longer just “Bill the field specialist”. He is also someone “who’s nice, but of little help” if you consider yourself a proponent of sustainable agriculture or “someone you can turn to for most of your information needs” if your network envelops industrial agriculture. And Monsanto is not “just another company”. It is also an organization “that only cares about profits and large scale agriculture” if your networks include that of sustainable agriculture or “an important agricultural innovator” if your networks embrace the discourse of industrial agriculture. Phenomenological challenges therefore not only involve the contestation of social relations and a possible repositioning of those relations in instances where the challenge is successful. They also involve a positioning and construction of individuals themselves.

How this repositioning occurs, however, ultimately depends upon the social relations of P-K-I-T. In order to create a significant phenomenological challenge and breach existing social relations sufficient discursive artillery must first be present. Not just anyone or any group can create a phenomenological challenge to contest the dominant social relations. Say I believed in “meditative farming”—a practice which utilizes visualization and meditative
practices to control weeds and increase yields (this is merely a hypothetical, such a practice to
my knowledge does not exist). Could I alone create a phenomenological challenge to the
dominant relations of industrial agriculture? Probably not—nor could likely a thousand
people given our rather extraordinary methods. Legitimate phenomenological challenges
require just that—legitimacy. And this legitimacy is in part a product of a group's relation to
relevant networks of P-K-I-T.

The general parameters of our phenomenological challenge have now been described
leaving us on the verge of detailing the social relations of P-K-I-T embedded within that
challenge.

*The Social Relations of Power-Knowledge-Identity-Trust*

“People who know me trust me.”

Dan is a fifty-something tenant who has been renting land since he began farming in
the early 1970s.\(^{93}\)

“So does that mean everyone you know, and everyone who knows you, trusts you?” I
asked.

“Well, I wouldn't say that,” Dan replied. “But those who don't trust me don't know
me too well either. And they're not necessarily people I care to know myself. Now the
people that really know me, they trust me, and that's all that really matters. Those
other people, I couldn’t care less about what they think of me.”

\(^{93}\)Names and other defining characteristics have been changed to guarantee the anonymity of those who
participated in this research.
Here, Dan is describing the socio-relational aspects of trust. As described in chapter six, trust both creates and is created through social affiliation and disaffiliation. As Misztal (1996: 141) writes: “The people excluded by our boundaries are those whom we do not trust and those whom we trust are included.” In short, we trust who we know and we know who we trust, and who we know, and ultimately who we trust, is superintersubjectively constituted through discourse—particularly during moments of a phenomenological challenge.

But also who we trust makes us who we are—it gives us our identity. It gives us “in groups” and “out groups”, “us” and “them.” These groups become even further reified during moments of phenomenological challenge and the superintersubjectivity which those moments represent. Dan was very clear on this. For him, the social network in which he embedded himself was defined, in part, by those whom he knew and trusted, and who knew and trusted him in return. Those who did not trust Dan were outside of that social network and thus were not part of who he was, not part of his identity, and with whom he felt no affiliation.

Dan is also a proponent of sustainable agriculture. On the land he owns he has utilized a number of different sustainable practices over the years: organic agriculture, rotational grazing, late-spring soil nitrogen tests, and no-till, just to name a few. In addition, Dan is a member of a statewide farmer’s organization that works to promote sustainable agriculture: PFI—Practical Farmers of Iowa.

It is from this organization that Dan obtains much of his agricultural knowledge. Yet, knowledge is not all Dan acquires from this group of agriculturally like-minded individuals.
He also obtains a part of his identity from this group and the sustainable agriculture movement that this group represents.

Dan may have an alliance with these particular social networks of knowledge and identity for a number of reasons. It may be due in part to a sharing of similar ideologies, beliefs, and values. He may also genuinely like the people of PFI and then generalize that belief to include everyone associated with sustainable agriculture. Likewise, not to disappoint rational choice theorists, there may also be some self-serving rational reasons for Dan allying himself within these particular social networks. Indeed, I do not doubt that some of these factors—or possibly even all of them—are at work here.

But I believe there is something else within which all of these others depend—one common thread that unites them all: trust. If we look at each close enough we recognize there is a reinforcing relationship between trust and these aforementioned motivational mechanisms. Thus, while they all may encourage trust, trust likewise can encourage them.

We may trust those who think similarly to us. But likewise people may think like us, in part, because we trust them (perhaps so as not to lose that trust). We may trust those we like. But also (since you can trust someone you do not like) we may learn to like those we trust (perhaps to reduce the cognitive dissonance that may result from trusting someone you do not like). And we may trust someone out of purely individualistic motives. But likewise individualistic motives may emerge from trust (particularly in instances when trust becomes structurated [as discussed in chapter seven]).

Thus, while Dan obtains both knowledge and identity from sustainable agriculture in general, and PFI in particular, those networks are dialogically sustained through trust. Dan
views the knowledge provided to him through these networks to be true because of the trust he attaches to these networks and those located within these networks—all of which ultimately leads to social affiliation, social disaffiliation, and identity formation.

"Those are my kind of people." Dan remarked regarding other members of PFI. "And I know I can trust the information they provide."

"Trust the information how?" I asked.

Dan paused, and then replied in a slightly excited voice, "You know, that it's correct. That you can trust it to be true. Sometimes you just can't trust the information you get from the seed or fertilizer guy because you just don't know if they have your best interests in mind. But with these folks [referring to PFI members] you know they can be trusted."

*That you can trust it to be true.* Here, Dan touches on yet another central interrelationship—that between trust and truth. What we believe to be true is, at least in part, a product of who and what we trust. Knowledge, like trust, creates and is created through difference. When we attach ourselves to knowledge we attach ourselves to the social networks in which that knowledge is embedded. The knowledge Dan trusts to be true is thus due partially to those who Dan affiliates himself with and the socio-relational networks accompanying that affiliation. But it is also due to the social disaffiliation Dan experiences from those alternative discourses and the social networks from which those discourses arise—such as from perceived proponents of industrial agriculture. Thus, in locating himself within this particular social network Dan concomitantly disconnects himself from alternative social networks and those embedded with those networks.
Those I spoke to frequently base the truthfulness of something by the trustworthiness of those whom they obtained the information from (indeed, we all do this, not just farmers). And what insight does this give us into the tenant-landlord relationship? Namely, who tenants and landlords trust thus greatly influenced what they believed to be true, or not (we’ll get back to this insight later in the chapter).

When I asked Dan if he trusted the information provided to him by Iowa State University to be true his response was rather decisive: “No. By all means not all of it.”

“What do you mean by that?” I asked.

“I’m just a little uncomfortable with their relationship to ‘big business’. I mean, Iowa State is a business, right? And they need money just like any other institution to survive. And where does that money come from? From the Monsantos and Pioneers of this world. Now can these large corporations make money from sustainable or organic agriculture? Of course not, so what type of research do you think these corporations want to see done at places like I.S.U? Research that makes the farmer more dependent on them and their products. Not sustainable agriculture!”

Dan makes clear from this statement that his social relations and those of the sustainable agricultural movement in general are at best marginalized from (and at worst external to) the social relations of Iowa State University. According to Dan, sustainable agriculture is an unattractive option for many agricultural corporations (for instance, petro-chemical companies) because sustainable agriculture’s methods are antithetical to corporate profitability and growth. Yet, these very companies fund some of the research which occurs at such land-grant institutions as Iowa State University. Dan’s concern therefore resides in
whom Iowa State University associates with and the social relations which accompany that association. For by associating with “big business” (even if this perception is purely fiction) Iowa State is simultaneously (although they may not be aware of it) dissociating itself from those antithetical to “big business”—which in this case are those within sustainable agriculture, and Dan in particular.

Yet, what we know, what we trust, and who we are (our identity) also have inseparable ties to power. Social relations of knowledge and trust, particularly during moments of phenomenological challenge, are continually contested through discourse in order to establish something as true or untrue and as trustworthy or untrustworthy. Degradation discourse, discursive violence, and discursive manipulation are all only as effective as their attachments to networks of power. In challenging social relations one also challenges social interests (which we all hold dear, for interests are intimately tied to identity and our sense of self), and there is power in that. But likewise groups and individuals obtain power through the social relations of knowledge and trust themselves. Knowledge and trust therefore presuppose power, and power, as I have earlier detailed (see chapter six), presupposes knowledge and trust.

If I were a possessor of great power, I could tell you what is true and what to trust—one only need look to the work of Foucault for numerous historical examples of this. Yet, this is an extremely inefficient allocation of power (as Foucault also made clear) that more resembles force than actual power—real power, in fact, needs no force. True power exists in a dialogic relationship with knowledge, truth, and identity. If you trust me as speaking the truth, you endow me with tremendous power, which then only makes my
knowledge even more true, your trust towards me even stronger, and my power even greater (note the dialogic interaction). But also this influences who you think you are, who I think you are, who you think I am, and who I think I am. In short, it shapes our identities toward ourselves and others. In seeing me as a legitimate (power) source of knowledge, as someone who can be trusted to speak the truth, you are ultimately shaping who I think I am while concomitantly shaping who you think you are (identity). Power, knowledge, identity, and trust therefore all feed into each other in a dialogic exchange with no beginning and no end. Thus, when I speak of one of these elements I am also (if not explicitly) referring to the others.

But power is also a product of what and who trusts you as speaking the truth. If you have a mass of people who trust you, but who possess little power, and thus little societal legitimacy, would that give you power? Probably not much (unless we are talking about a lot of people). As I have already argued, however, this is not the case of the sustainable agriculture movement and for those embedded within its discursive network. The phenomenological challenge could have never been brought about were it not for sustainable agriculture’s relational links to legitimate sources of power.

“[A member of the Iowa State Extension field staff ] showed me the numbers. That’s when I first saw that rotational grazing [a sustainable farming technique] might actually work,” declared a recent sustainable agriculture convert.

A field specialist who is herself a devoted sustainable agriculture proponent, likewise remarked: “I remember seeing [a distinguished Iowa State Agriculture Economist] talk about [sustainable agriculture] at a workshop and I knew we’ve finally made it.”
Here, we can begin to understand just how sustainable agriculture and its proponents went from quasi counter-culture status to a legitimate discursive contender: their networks began to include those who are perceived as being legitimate by those within the dominant social network. In short, they began to include those who are trusted as speaking the truth by “mainstream” agriculture. Once “respected” institutions and people—such as Iowa State University and distinguished agricultural economists—began to connect themselves to sustainable agriculture, sustainable agriculture began to garner legitimacy and respect by association.

But here also resides insight into why sustainable agriculture has not yet received dominant status and prevailed in its phenomenological challenge. Many individuals with whom I spoke with that located themselves within the discourse of the industrial model did so, in part, because they did not yet see sustainable agriculture’s links to “legitimate” social networks.

For instance, Jon is a retired farmer who now rents his land and prefers that it be farmed in a more “conventional” manner. “I just don’t think it’s feasible. I mean, I have concerns about the profitability of sustainable or organic agriculture. And I haven’t seen anything from [ISU] Extension or Wallace’s Farmer [an agricultural periodical] to really show me otherwise.”

Sam, a tenant who prefers to farm conventionally expressed similar concerns. “I just don’t know. If it’s [sustainable agriculture] as great as some people make it out to be why aren’t more people doing it? And then places like Iowa State, why aren’t they promoting it if it’s so great?”
Thus, while the socio-relational links appear to be there for a potentially successful phenomenological challenge, those links must be strengthened for the discursive relations of sustainable agriculture to ever achieve dominant status. For if people and institutions with mainstream legitimacy and respect trust sustainable agriculture as speaking the truth, then others’ will as well. And the phenomenological challenge will result in a breach from which will come forth new social relations of P-K-I-T.

What, however, does this have to do with tenant-landlord relations and our investigation into the barriers that restrict the adoption of sustainable farming practices on rented land? Up until now I have been setting the socio-relational milieu within which our tenants and landlords found themselves embedded. This is not to say that all tenant and landlord relationships are centrally located within these particular social relations and the phenomenological challenge that these relations represent. While all tenants and landlords are at least marginal participants to this particular phenomenological challenge, due to linkages they must all have at least some discursive strands of the challenge (because of their social location within the field of agriculture), they cannot all be said to be central actors in this discursive contest. But for the particular individuals represented here they can all be said to have a firm footing within these relations (although many may not be aware of it). In fact, they can be said to represent the vanguard of the challenge. Their relationship impacts more than just words, it determines whether the words becomes transformed into action. Thus, to understand these particular tenant-landlord relations requires that we first understand the discursive field in which those relations are firmly embedded, such as we just have done.
Having an analytic grasp on the milieu within which our tenants and landlords are located we can now move forward and begin to address how these social relations affect the tenant-landlord relation itself. In so doing we can also begin to untangle the complexities associated with trust within this relationship and the role it plays in assisting or hindering the adoption of sustainable farming techniques on rented land.

_To Trust or Not to Trust: Tenancy and Sustainable Agriculture_

"Yeah, I'd say I trust him. My family has known his family for over three generations. I farmed with his dad. My dad farmed with his granddad. He's a good man."

Chuck is a recently retired farmer who now rents his land to Billy—a middle-aged cash-grain farmer. Chuck has known Billy ever since Billy was born. This familial relationship in fact goes back to Chuck’s dad and Billy’s grandfather. Billy, it turns out, even dated one of Chuck’s daughters back in high school. In short, the two families have quite a long history together.

But this long history together also suggests more. Not only do Chuck and Billy share memories, the past, and now farmland, they also share a similar social network. Granted, this network is not identical—their generational gap and separate kin ties ensure this—but I would guess that it does overlap in more than a few places.

Thus, who Chuck knows is very likely similar to who Billy knows, and there is comfort in that. Chuck’s trust in Billy thus does not merely reside in their long history together, although that is indeed a significant part of it. But also Chuck trusts Billy because of who he is, and part of who Billy is (his identity) is who he knows—his social network.
“What else causes you to believe that Billy can be trusted?” I asked.

Chuck thought for a moment before answering. “Oh, there’s a lot of things. Well, it’s not just me. He’s just someone you know that can be trusted. I guess you could say that he’s just got a reputation for being someone you can trust, a hard worker. You know, things like that. People respect him. I know this because I’ve had people actually come up and tell me how lucky I am to have such a good tenant.”

*He’s just got a reputation for being someone you can trust.* Here Chuck refers to the social network through which his trust is based. Yet this “reputation” is more than just what people are saying, also important are *which* people are saying it. Influential reputations are quite simply, influential, through both their words and their origins. This is to say that reputations gain their influence through the social networks from which they originate. If they originate from perceptively illegitimate sources then they too will be perceived as illegitimate. But if they arise from sources who networks are deemed legitimate, knowledgeable, and trustworthy, then they too will be perceived as such.

Indeed, Chuck can trust Billy’s reputation to be true because he has “had people actually come up and tell” him so. Yet these are likely not just any people. They are people that Chuck can trust as speaking the truth, whose networks likely overlap those of his own, and within which he derives a part of his self. In short, part of the reason why Chuck trusts Billy is because others, who Chuck also trusts, do.

This may, however, seem like an extremely un-insightful observation, but it highlights something that, while we are all semi-consciously aware of it, would not come immediately to mind to most observers: the embeddedness of Chuck’s trust in Bob. It
reminds us that this trust is not merely a product of previous exchange relationships (although this is no doubt a part of it), but that it is also a socio-cumulative product that originates out of the networks within which they locate themselves and each other.

Where then are these so-called barriers to the adoption of sustainable farming techniques on rented land? Since most landlords and tenants are typically located in close geo-physical proximity to one another (this, however, is rapidly changing, as we will discuss later) most of their social networks frequently overlap—as we saw with Chuck and Billy. It would be one thing if all people interested in sustainable agriculture were recent migrants to the Midwest. Then we could possibly locate the origins of this phenomenological challenge, and ultimately the barriers to adopting sustainable farming techniques, to divergent social networks that are the result of recent migrant trends.

Such is not the case, however. Most of those interested in sustainable agriculture are long-time members of the community. They went to the same school as those who follow the industrial model and its discourse. You will also find that they go to the same church, eat at the same restaurants, and drink the same water. In fact, most of those who located themselves within the discourse of sustainable agriculture know many of the same people that those of the industrial model do.

What then is the problem? Why are tenants and landlords alike finding it difficult to get their landlord and tenants respectively to adopt sustainable agriculture? The answer resides in trust. What is interesting, however, is that the trust I speak of is not necessarily that which is directed toward one’s tenant or landlord. In fact, all tenants and landlords I spoke with expressed tremendous trust toward the other (I don’t suppose one would rent to, or rent
from, someone whom they did not trust in the first place). These barriers reside, rather, in what and who one trusts in a manner external to strictly the tenant-landlord relationship itself.

Allow me to explain this point for it is central to the investigation. Rented land is indeed a significant barrier for sustainable agriculture as much for reasons of trust and its effect on communication and coordination as it is for purely economic reasons (indeed, as I will discuss later, even these “economic reasons” are themselves based within relations of trust). These “barriers” exist not because tenants and landlords distrust one another. In fact, it’s quite the contrary; they seem to have great trust for each another (they probably would not be in the relationship if they did not). Rather, the barriers seem be located in the social relations themselves (specifically, in the social relations of P-K-I-T)—in who and what they each trust as speaking the truth, and to what degree those networks overlap, or not.

This is where the aforementioned phenomenological challenge becomes such an essential component of our analysis. The barriers which restrict the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land appear to be located within which socio-relational networks the various actors place themselves in, and the concomitant values, beliefs, and knowledge (and, of course, trust) associated with those networks. Frequently, however, these socio-relational barriers masquerade as being based in purely economics, as the following statements attest.

“it simply comes down to one thing—money. If landlords and tenants do not perceive sustainable agriculture as profitable, then they’re going to shy away from such methods.”

“Money. It’s all about money. As long as profitability is the mindset, sustainable agriculture will continue to struggle on rented ground. What we need is a paradigm shift so that something other then merely profitability is embraced.”
“It’s simple, landlords want the highest rent they can get. But those offering those sky-high rents are fellas with a large operation base where they can spread those costs out. Unfortunately, however, those farmers are not your sustainable farmers.”

“It’s all about who can get the highest rent. It’s all about the green stuff. I mean, they care about the environment and stuff, but remember this is their livelihood. So if they don’t think they can make a buck farming in a more sustainable method, they won’t: period.”

These statements emphasize the very real economic barriers that exist in agriculture toward the adoption of sustainable agriculture, especially on rented land. Sustainable agriculture is perceived as being not as profitable as more conventional methods of production. For instance, many respondents were unconvinced that anything but a corn-bean rotation could be profitable—although this perception is partially justified due to the way the current government farm subsidy programs are set-up (we will address farm programs in more detail in the next chapter).

In addition, competition for land is intense, and landlords frequently spoke with great pride at the amount they were able to obtain from their tenants in rent.

“I don’t like to mention numbers but I can tell you that I’ve got one piece of land that gets me over one-sixty [$160] an acre.”

“I’m lucky, I probably get some of the highest rents in the county.”

“I would say I am quite happy with my relationship right now [referring to his relationship with his tenant]. But if something goes wrong he knows that I have a dozen others that are willing to take his place.”
Nor did they mind mentioning (as indicated by the last quote) how many others have
approached them to rent their land.

“They’re like vultures [referring to those looking for land to rent]. I mean you just
have to mention at [the local diner] that you’re looking for someone [a tenant] and you’ll
have twenty people pounding down your door within twenty-four hours. I know because it
happens to me every time I’m looking for a new tenant.”

Landlords alone, however, cannot be blamed for perpetuating this economic, highly
competitive environment, tenants must also bear some of the responsibility. Although they
did not speak as frequently of this, some tenants spoke with almost a sense of pride at how
much they could afford to pay for land and in some instances at how they were able to outbid
other tenants within the community for the best land.

“I’m in a pretty good situation. If I want a piece of farmland I can typically just
outbid anyone and get it.”

“Well, my landlord has actually seen my books. I really want to have an open
relationship with him. But now after he has seen how much I make he’s started to ask for as
much as one seventy-five [$175] an acre.”

“I do pay a lot of rent, but I can afford it. It’s good land and I can still make a good
profit off of it.”

A closer analysis reveals, however, that these economic barriers are themselves rooted
within trust. It is not, therefore, just “the economy, stupid”, as some might be so quick to
assert. But rather an economy of trust, where the transaction costs and benefits of trust
become assessed and weighed, shaping social networks, societal interactions, and ultimately social organization.

Take the aforementioned economic barrier that sustainable agricultural methods are unprofitable. Why is this perception so? Regardless of whether this perception is accurate (indeed, this is not a question to which one can provide a simple “yes”/ “no” answer), what makes it true—and likewise what makes it false—are one’s social networks.

Some respondents were quite adamant about the profitability of sustainable agriculture and the raising of alternative commodities. Others, on the other hand, were equally adamant about the economic deficiencies that surround such methods. Who is right and who is wrong is not at issue here, however. What is important is that these divergent perspectives exist. And what are these divergences grounded within—trust and its concurrent social relations. Quite simply, who and what you affiliate with, and disaffiliate from, will have a significant bearing on whether you perceive sustainable methods as being profitable or not, ultimately shaping the apparent viability of those methods for both landlord and tenant.

The aforementioned competitive culture between landlords and tenants can also be found rooted in networks of trust and distrust. Yet, this competitive spirit can also be seen as a barrier to the proliferation of sustainable agriculture on rented land. Only the largest of operations can typically afford to pay the inflated rents that were being reported while still remaining economically viable. Yet, most large-scale farming operations in the Midwest are capital and chemical intensive—indeed, most have to be. Only with such machinery as a four-wheel drive tractor and a twenty-four-row planter can one be expected to farm 5,000
plus acres. In addition, the limited capital and land base of small farms make it difficult for banks to approve loans which producers typically require in order to afford these high rents.

This is not to say, however, that sustainable agriculture presupposes small-scale agriculture, for it does not. But sustainable agriculture does not typically mean operations of over 5,000 acres either. Sustainable farming seeks to substitute labor for capital and petrochemicals. It seeks to reduce commercial inputs (i.e., chemical fertilizers) and replace them with more “natural” inputs (i.e., manure). It seeks profits not through narrow profit margins and a high scale of production, but through wider profit margins (i.e., through using fewer purchased chemical inputs) and a slightly smaller scale of production. Ultimately, this scheme of production does not justify paying the higher-end rents that are currently being paid for land throughout the Midwest (a view which, as earlier mentioned, is also held by most creditors).

What then are the origins of this rental juggernaut that has caused land rental rates to creep steadily upward (even during times of depressed commodity prices)? Why do some landlords seem to relish the number of courtiers they have and the high rents some of them are able to procure? And why did some tenants convey almost a sense of pride in how much they could afford to pay to rent an acre of land?

While we could point to purely economic factors to explain this (i.e., demand is greatly out-pacing supply), I believe there is also something else going on. If this were purely a product of economic factors landlords would continually strive for the highest rent. But this was not the case. Landlords repeatedly commented on how they have had higher rental offers in the past but in the end decided to remain with their current tenant (and thus receive a
slightly lower rent) because of their satisfaction with the current relationship. Such sentiments can be seen in the following statements.

“I had some guy offer me fifteen dollars more an acre last year. But I turned him down: he’s from two counties away. I’m happy with the situation now.”

“I’ve had higher offers, but we’ve [referring to himself and his tenant] got a long history together”

I believe there is thus more going on here then simple economics. But what? The answer cannot be found by evoking such sentiments as greed, selfishness, or mean spiritedness—although, no doubt, they are sometimes an external manifestation of the cause. Instead we must ask: what causes these sentiments to manifest in the first place? What causes people to take pride in obtaining the highest rent in one’s community? And what moves people to a sense of pleasure by out-bidding others for valuable farmland? The answer we seek inevitably resides in the social relations of trust and its concomitant relations of power, knowledge, and identity. For it is not only corn, or soybeans, or hogs that these farmers raise, but it is also a sense of self—their identity. And only within the soil of P-K-I-T can one cultivate this identity, so it is here then that we must continue in our quest for answers.

*The Economics of Trust, Gender, and Identity*

Identity politics are particularly contentious in agriculture. Here people are judged, and they in turn judge themselves, by any number of factors: the size and year of one’s tractor, the number of acres you farm, how many “hired hands” you employ (and if you have
any), how "clean" your fields look, how much you can get for rent, and even how much you
pay for rent, just to name a few. What you have and what you do is thus central in agriculture
(just as it is in all faucets of life) to who you are.

Landlords who want that higher rent, therefore, do so not necessarily because they are
greedy (although some tenants would disagree with this analysis), but because of the identity
politics associated with it (which is intimately tied to one's social relations of P-K-I-T).
Landlords who are able to secure high rents are looked upon by others within their social
network with a degree of envy, as someone who is perhaps a shrewd businessman (I'll get to
issues of gender in a moment), and as someone who is hard-nosed and aggressive. These
sentiments were all expressed to me during the interviews.

"They [landlords] sit around the coffee shop inflating both the rents they are getting
and their egos."

"It's an ego thing. There's this status thing about who can get the most rent for their
land. And when they get together in town for coffee on weekends they see who has the most
status by comparing their rents."

And the same could be said for tenants—at least for some of them (again, it depends
upon their social network). Tenants who are able to afford these sky-high rents were
typically looked upon by others within their social network as someone who must be
successful (how else could they afford these rents?), aggressive (because of their willingness
to so easily out-bid others for land), and a real "go-getter"—characteristics which are also
given particularly highly value within their "proper" networks.
“I must admit, I don’t know how he can afford to pay that. I mean, I say he’s nuts for doing it, but I must admit there’s a part of me that’s actually impressed that he can afford to do it.”

“I think he gets a real kick out of telling people how much he pays for some of the land he rents. And I suppose some people are actually impressed by that.”

But there is even more to it than simply identity politics, something I alluded to only moments before: gender politics. Much of what is also going on here is as much based upon “doing gender” (West and Zimmerman 1987)—and “doing masculinity” in particular—as it is on “doing identity.” The two are, in fact, interdependent (at least in contemporary Western culture where gender makes up so much of who we are).

I say “doing” in part because I wish to emphasize gender’s preformed quality. Masculinity (as well as femininity) is not something that we have, it’s something that we do over and over again. The qualities of gender do not reside in the body, but in the symbols and acts we express outward toward society. The world is indeed a stage (as Shakespeare and later Erving Goffman have noted), and gender is something we all perform on this stage whether we are aware of it or not.

As such, however, we cannot speak of masculinity in the singular. Rather, there are masculinities (Connell 1995). It is, in the words of Robert Connell (1995), a “relational concept”. Masculinity is thus not only preformed in relation to femininity, but also in relation to other masculinities (i.e., you cannot have a “hard”, “tough” male without also having a “soft”, “gentle” male). It is something we “do” by taking cues from our social network, cues which are particularly strong in agriculture (Bell 2003; Campbell and Bell
In doing identity one is therefore simultaneously doing gender. We can see this interaction played out on the grand stage of our case study.

Here, social networks of trust shaped which image of masculinity one “does” and how they “do” it. If your social networks link masculinity to issues that have a direct bearing on tenancy, then you will likewise link masculinity to your rental situation and act accordingly. In these instances, tenants and landlords alike took masculine pride in their abilities to be strong and aggressive. For landlords, that pride lay in their no-nonsense attitude which allowed them to raise rental rates every year.

“You’ve got to be fairly hard-nosed about this whole thing. Too many landlords, and tenants too for that matter, forget that this is a job. And because it’s a job we need to treat it as such. We need to make money. Let’s just say I’m pretty good at my job.”

For tenants, that masculine pride lay in their abilities to be aggressive risk takers. These attributes are believed to be necessary for success in the very competitive economic sector of production agriculture.

“If you don’t mind me saying so, too many in agriculture are simply ‘pussies’. Now, don’t get me wrong, I don’t mind that because they make it easier for guys like me who are willing to take chances. But too many people have become gun-shy at getting into a little debt. Now that’s not going to work. You gotta be aggressive and a little bit of a risk taker. As the old saying goes, ‘you gotta to spend money to make it’. And that’s what I do.”

Too many in agriculture are simply ‘pussies’. Here the relational and homosocial quality of masculinity is all too apparent. Let’s call the speaker of these last lines Ted. Ted constructs his masculinity in relation to other “weaker” (less masculine) masculinities. Ted is
"willing to take chances". He is "aggressive, and a little bit of a risk taker". Other men, on the other hand, are "pussies." This is truly a degrading comment indeed, for in not only subjugating these other men's masculinity to a weaker form, it also places into question their very masculinity—a form of discursive violence second to none in the tough, cowboy masculinity so prevalent in agriculture.

Yet, Ted’s masculinity is "relational" in another respect as well. While Ted constructs his vision of masculinity in relation to other masculinities, his very vision of masculinity is itself constructed by his relation to others—specifically, through his social network of P-K-I-T. Thus, who Ted trusts as speaking the truth not only has significant bearing on whether he associates himself with sustainable agriculture and its proponents, but also on what type of masculinity he displays and how he displays it.

This likewise provides understanding into why not all tenants and landlords think and act like Ted. Some may not view their rental relationship as being so central to who they are and as being important to the type of masculinity they present. Maybe some perceive their masculinity as centrally embracing issues of sustainability (not only economically, but also ecologically and communally), level-headedness (as someone who takes only limited risks), and familial responsibility (which goes past the image of "bread-winner"). If one's image of masculinity and consequently their identity were to encompass such sentiments it is quite conceivable then why they would not perceive issues of tenancy with the same aggression and fervor that other tenants and landlords did, whose social networks embraced more hegemonic types of masculinity.
The same can also be said for the few (but growing) number of females within agriculture. How they act and respond to their rental relationship is also a product of who they know and who they trust—i.e., their social relations. Some women in agriculture for instance felt the need to adopt masculine traits in order to be taken seriously in the masculine world of agriculture, as the following statements reveal.

“Agriculture has to be the last bastion of patriarchy in this world. It is truly a man’s world here. And if you are not a man, then you need to at least act like one if you want anyone to listen to you.”

Other women, however, rejected the dominant discourse of masculine hegemony altogether.

“Agriculture should not be about out-doing your neighbor. Sure, this is my livelihood. But it can still be my livelihood without destroying our communities, other farmers, and the environment.”

The processes are therefore the same for both men and women. How, and in relation to who, you construct your identity—and thus gender—significantly impacts your perspective toward your rental relationship. But also it shapes whether or not the relationship is restrictive or conducive to sustainable agriculture. For instance, if you are a landlord who constructs your identity around a hegemonic form of masculinity (which embraces such characteristics as risk taking, aggressiveness, and a highly competitive spirit), you will likely seek high rents that are typically only obtainable by the largest of farming operations, thus concomitantly creating conditions ill-suited for sustainable agriculture (for reasons already mentioned).
Identity and gender can also be found at the root of one particular cultural constraint that has greatly hindered the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land. The cultural constraint of which I speak resides in the emphasis on weed-free fields and the cultural belief that weed-free fields equate to a "good" hard-working farmer.

Recall from chapter four that there is a material reality “out there”, and this material environment is of particular significance when one speaks of the social relations of agriculture (as noted by Woodgate [1992] and Woodgate and Redclift [1998] with their term “agroecosystem”). The relative invisibility of sustainable agriculture’s benefits means that the improvements sustainable management makes to the land may not be readily apparent to those not engaged in its implementation—namely, it is hard to “see” lower rates of soil and nutrient loss, improved soil structure, higher levels of beneficial soil micro-organisms, and the like. This means land farmed through the use of sustainable techniques may just appear like a weedy, poorly managed field to your average observer.

Yet, how does this tie into issues of identity and ultimately constructions of masculinity? Traditionally in industrial agriculture (at least in the United States), a clean weed-free field was equated with the masculine pride associated with hard physical labor. Of course, having one’s rows spotless today has very little to do with labor; now you can get such results from a can (i.e., the purchasing of chemical herbicides). But I suspect a few generations ago, before the petrochemical revolution took agriculture by storm, there indeed was a correlation between labor and weeds in an individual’s field. Such a correlation does not hold true today, however.
And who were perceived as being the ones who tended to, and labored in, these fields during the days of our grandparents and great-grandparents? The perception is of men, with their hard-charging, work-until-you-die form of masculinity in-tow. Yet, while farmers today no longer need toil in fields to the same degree as their great-grandfathers (thanks to the many technologies that have allowed the continual substitution of capital for labor), this anachronism remains: clean fields equal a "good" hardworking, and thus masculine, farmer.

"It's quite simple. People in agriculture still tend to equate weedy fields with a bad farmer."

"It seems that they think you're lazy or something if you've got a few weeds poking-up in your rows."

"I like to see my fields relatively free from weeds. It just gives me some sort of indicator of what type of tenant he is. You know it doesn't take a lot of work to control weeds anymore so when I see a field that's not managed properly you can't help but bring into question the farmer's work ethic. And that's something I really look for in a tenant: if he's a hard worker. That pretty much tells you everything you need to know."

Of course, this view is not held by all—again, one's social relations influence whether you hold this view dear or not. But even for those who did not make this association the societal pressures to conform to it were felt nevertheless. Ultimately, therefore, who your social relations of trust encompass will influence whether you believe the "weedy field bad farmer idea" to be true or not.
"You may know that the whole 'weedy field bad farmer' idea is just a myth, but you also know that many others don't. So you do feel some pressure to conform simply because you don't want others to think you're something you're not—like being a bad farmer."

In contextualizing gender and identity politics within the social relations of P-K-I-T, however, we should be careful not to make essentializing statements. To quote Chodorow (1978), we all begin with a strongly "feminine orientation, and we are all capable from time to time of varying degrees of masculinity." We must therefore beware of polarizing stereotypes, and recognize the fluidity that exists within gender and identity politics (we will be returning to gender relations later in the chapter).

*Culture, Structuration, and the Social Relations of Trust*

Ultimately, constructions of identity and of gender, particularly within agriculture, are intimately intertwined with something I have yet only alluded to: culture. Culture, however, should not be seen as a unitary concept; there is not culture, rather there are cultures.

Consequently, we should understand the culture of agriculture not as being singular, but rather as plural; not as epiphenomenal (as Marx may lead us to believe), but as based upon social relations. The dominant culture of agriculture is quite simply the dominant social relations' culture of agriculture. And which culture—which social network—you link yourself to will have a significant impact on how you perceive agriculture, identity, masculinity, femininity, and gender relations.

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94 Although there is considerable literature on the personality differences between men and women (such as the groundbreaking work of Carol Gilligan [1982] who argues women are more "relational" while men are more "rational") it is easy to overemphasize these differences and thereby reify them.
Culture, as Margaret Archer (1988, 1989) has so brilliantly detailed, is a morphogenetic field through which action occurs and as such it is both constraining and enabling. Culture is a product of intersubjectivity, language, and social action stretched across space and time. But it is also a product of trust, and the social relations of P-K-I-T within which that trust resides. Yet, as trust becomes "stretched" over time, as I described in chapter seven, certain processes transpire that transform trust and the temporal cognitive orientation of the truster—what I have called the "structuration of trust". Let us now address this process of the structuration of trust as it relates to the social relations of our case study.

"It's not that I have anything against those folks, but I just don't think that stuff [sustainable agriculture] is for me."

Mark is a retired farmer who now rents his land to his nephew Stan, who has at various times expressed interest in raising organic soybeans. Mark, however, has been quite resistant to Stan's requests, and has been adamant about only allowing more conventional farming practices to be utilized on his land.

"What do you exactly mean by 'I just don't think that stuff is for me'? Why isn't sustainable agriculture for you, but it is for other people? What makes you different?" I immediately asked.

Mark's response was quick and firm. "I've been taught that you're supposed to farm a particular way. You know, my dad taught me and his dad taught him. This land is my livelihood, I don't have the luxury to go off gallivanting trying things that haven't been tested in time like those farming methods I've been raised on. You know those work because they have for generations, but you can't say the same thing about organics or whatever."
You know those work because they have for generations. With this phrase Mark highlights an important underlying moral force that many within agriculture feel: the force of history, of generations past, and of tradition. It is, in a word (echoing back to chapter four), naturality—the moral force that compels action based upon the belief that it is the right or natural thing to do (thus, you should farm a certain way simply because that is the right thing to do).

But how does this force come to be? Yes, one could attribute this force to being merely a product of culture and leave it at that (such a cut and dried answer is indeed frequently given). But then what even is culture? In peeling away the layers of naturality, or more conventionally culture, we find a whole myriad of hidden social relations. We find trust and the social relations of P-K-I-T through which that trust becomes actualized. But we also find trust that is stretched across vast amounts of space and time. We find trust and its correlative social relations which have become structurated.

Culture is thus itself a product of the social relations of P-K-I-T and as such it too can become constituted through moments of phenomenological challenge. Indeed, as I earlier stated (at the risk of sounding too Marxian), the dominant culture is itself nothing more then the dominant social relation’s culture. Yet culture, at least as we experience it, appears also to have a very “real” quality to it. That is, it seems to be more than simply contesting discourses and the social relations within which those discourses reside. Culture, at least to those of us embedded within it, is very real: it is hard; it is a commanding source of identity, of knowledge, and of trust; and it’s power to influence is certainly present. Archer (i.e., 1989) was correct to attribute to culture both constraining and enabling qualities. And the
process that confers onto culture (and the social relations it represents) this very "real" and thus reified super-discursive ontology? Namely, this quality resides in its temporal extension into the past and through the process of structuration.

_You know those work because they have for generations._ Here, Mark is highlighting his embeddedness within social relations which themselves have an embeddedness in the past. These social relations act upon Mark with the moral force of naturality, compelling him to act with a decreased level of reflexivity and cogency. Yet, this also points to a quality inherent in all social relations of trust and their concomitant correlates to networks of power-knowledge-identity: as products of society they are all inherently temporal phenomena. This temporality is not, however, evenly distributed throughout all social relations. As social relations further extend themselves through time they become reified, they become hard, in a word they become structurated. They begin to compel action out of forces of habit and routine and through the ghost of voices past—a force that is clearly present in our case study.

As I have previously argued, someone’s truthfulness is in part based upon their trustworthiness, which is ultimately shaped by the social relations of P-K-I-T within which they are embedded. Over time, however, that trustworthiness (and likewise that truthfulness) becomes habituated and routinized. Here, truth becomes less a condition of trust, and trust becomes less a condition of truth. Rather, the past becomes the guide and habit the lighthouse that illuminates the way.

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95 I do not mean to suggest here that Mark is a mere puppet to these forces emulating from his social networks and from the past, but they do allow Mark to take a relatively unreflexive epistemological stance toward these issues.
This is in part why dominant social relations remain dominant social relations and why phenomenological challenges are often unsuccessful: dominant social relations typically have deep temporal roots into the past. Take, for example, the dominant social relations in agriculture. These relations have historical roots dating back to when machines first began being used as a substitute for human and animal labor (which some cite as the origins of the industrial model [i.e., Cochrane 1993; Welsh 1996]). In short, the dominant social relations have been the dominant social relations for quite some time, and as such they have had time to become reified, habitualized, and routinized, developing into a semiconscious force that motivates from within. They have had time to extend their socio-relational reach, thereby tapping into new social networks (and the resources that those networks possess) and thus securing their hegemony.

A successful breach to these social relations therefore requires an invalidation to those very relations—a process which has already occurred (and is still occurring). Recall from our model that trust becomes structurated through processes of continual validation. Yet, there is also an asymmetrical nature to trust: a single act of invalidation can cause unrisky structurated trust (i.e., confidence) to erode back into risky (simple) trust. (Throughout the remainder of the chapter, when I speak of trust I am referring to the specific attitude of simple trust; I do this to improve the flow and readability of the text.) In order to therefore successfully challenge the dominant social relations, and the structurated trust upon which those relations are so thoroughly embedded, requires acts of invalidation. Such acts of invalidation which have already occurred to various degrees of success have been the various critiques directed toward the industrial model (i.e., regarding its effects on the environment,
communities, etc.). Of course, the success these acts of invalidation will ultimately have upon the phenomenological challenge are in no small part influenced by which social networks trust these acts of invalidation to be true. And only time will reveal the outcome of this.

Having now briefly addressed the structuration of trust as it pertains to our particular case study, let us now use this insight to further understand certain cultural phenomena that presented themselves during the research process that were deemed to inhibit to the success of sustainable agriculture on rented land. Like many occupations, agriculture is a significant source of identity for those involved in it. But unlike many occupations agriculture is also a way of life. In fact, one could understand agriculture (and those within it) as embodying a distinct culture(s) in and of itself. In agriculture there is little separation between work and home, between public and private, and between formal and informal. And while these lines are indeed beginning to blur within other sectors of the economy they have always remained fluid in agriculture.

A significant cultural force within agriculture resides in its respect for tradition. We can see this by the value those within agriculture place on “Century Farmers” (farms that have remained within a kin line for at least one hundred years) and on their “homestead” (the house, and by association the land, where someone was raised [often it was also where their parents and grandparents were raised]). For many, therefore, it is almost as though their ancestors are still with them. They can still see their grandfather climbing up on his

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96 Indeed, farmers could almost be thought of as a quasi-ethnic group: traditionally children from farm families have tended to marry others who are themselves from farm families (although this is starting to change), they have their own language (or at least farmer’s jargon), and frequently share similar values, ethics, and moral structures (i.e., agrarianism, a land ethic, etc) (i.e., Bell 2003).
“Waterloo Boy” John Deere, and they can still hear their grandmother ringing the dinner-bell. With these phenomenological “ghosts” of the past (i.e., see Bell 1997) there is thus value in respecting ways which have “worked” in the past. You are therefore taught to honor your father and your father’s father not just by working the same land that they did, but also by doing it in a similar manner.

“It’s very difficult to get these guys to change. It’s ingrained in them that this is how you are supposed to farm. There’s no easy way to change that.”

“When you’ve become used to farming a certain way it takes a lot of convincing to do it another way. There’s a lot of comfort in the old ways. You know what you can expect, or at least you think you do, because your dad and granddad did it in a similar way.”

“People just get kind of stuck in this rut about how farmers should farm. A farmer should be this, a farmer should be that. Why? Why, because that is what we’ve done for generations. It’s hard going to fight something as powerful as tradition, especially here in rural Iowa.”

Here resides a further clue into why the discursive relations of sustainable agriculture have yet to succeed in their bid for a phenomenological challenge: in challenging the dominant social relations of agriculture they are concomitantly challenging its culture, and that’s a powerful thing to confront. It is one thing to adopt sustainable farming techniques on land that you own. It is quite another, for instance, if you are a tenant trying to convince your landlord (who may themselves be suspicious of sustainable methods) to allow the use of such methods on their land, especially if they still hear and feel the pull of these phenomenological ghosts of the past.
And where do these “ghosts” reside and how do they manifest? Perhaps not surprisingly, they reside in the social relations of trust and manifest through its structuration. By following these moral forces of authority—or if you prefer, naturality (i.e., this is how one should farm because this is how it was done in the past)—the individual can begin to use the past as a guide and habit to direct their way. In this sense, to use a termed associated with Bourdieu (1977), the “habitus” of agriculture becomes literally that: the habit-us of agriculture—the habit of us. It directs our cognitive temporality away from the fully conscious, reflexive realm of the here-and-now toward the semi-conscious, habitualized realm of the yesterdays long since past—processes which become reified through the phenomena of structuration.

But the habit-us of agriculture is a traditionally male “us”, resulting in a barrier that many women still perceive as being present in the very male-dominated (and masculine) world of production agriculture. The 1997 census of agriculture records the percentage of female owner-operators as 5.1 and growing (up from 3.9 percent in 1992). This figure, however, is somewhat misleading for it under-emphasizes the true presence women have in agriculture. The growth in widows, and other female kin-relation, inheriting farmland has actually resulted in an increasing presence of women in agriculture. A statewide survey conducted in 1997 by Pieper and Harl (2000) discovered that females owned 46.2 percent of all Iowa farmland, and 51.3 percent of leased farmland. These findings emulate a larger national trend occurring throughout agriculture (Rogers 1991).

97 Indeed, if we were to understand the term “farmer” in a less patriarchal fashion, given the significant contribution women make to most farming operations in Iowa, the presence of women in agriculture would be perceived to be much stronger.
“It’s very difficult being a woman in agriculture. We have no ‘ol’ girls club’ so to speak like men do. We’ve got no network. It can really make you feel isolated.”

“The problem I have being a woman is I can’t go anywhere for advice without having someone treat me like I’m this stupid woman who doesn’t know a tractor from a combine.”

“I must admit, I don’t know much about the technical aspects of agriculture. But where does a woman go to become knowledgeable in this? I mean, even on my land I only know what my tenant tells me.”

For these women, their social networks were decisively marginal to those of both sustainable agriculture and industrial agriculture. As the aforementioned statements illustrate, these women perceive themselves as lacking the socio-relational ties of their male counterparts and as such they feel as though they must defer to those who do have access to those agricultural social relations of P-K-I-T—namely, men. And which social relation (that of the industrial or sustainable mode) is dominant among men? Why, the social relation dominant among men is, of course, the dominant social relation—namely, that of the industrial model.

By empowering women and thus giving them access to its social networks, sustainable agriculture can concomitantly further empower itself. Providing women access to sustainable agriculture’s social relations of P-K-I-T gives women access to agricultural networks they have never had. In doing so it would give women access to resources which could allow them to make important land-management decisions about their land, thereby no longer making them dependent upon their tenant (who would likely be a man) and their tenant’s concomitant social relations of P-K-I-T (which are themselves in all likelihood
embedded within the discursive relations of the industrial model). What women would trust
to be true could therefore be a product of their own social relations as opposed to those of
their tenant, and there is tremendous empowerment in this. Thus, by empowering women
and providing them access to its social networks sustainable agriculture can also further
empower itself.
CHAPTER TEN: THE STATE

As long as the government continues to promote the industrial model of agriculture through its current farm payment programs sustainable agriculture will never be adopted on any wide-scale.—Personal interview

Let's not forget about leasing contracts; they have quite an influence on whether you choose to adopt sustainable farming techniques or not.—Personal interview

Up until now discussion has revolved around strictly issues of discourse and the networks of P-K-I-T within which those discourses become contested. Our analysis has thus yet to be extended to include such phenomena as risk and the state. Yet both, as we will soon see, are essential if we are to gain an understanding of the case study in general and to the barriers which restrict the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land in particular. And both must be addressed if I wish to illustrate and corroborate their significance as conceptual components within my theoretical model. Let us then begin by looking into how the state helps to shape social relations.

The State, Risk and Trust

Just as discourse creates speaking selves it too creates speaking states, and just as speaking selves in turn create discourse so too do speaking states. One must not lose sight of the fact that the state is an active participant in social relations of P-K-I-T. Yet, to acknowledge the state as an active discursive participant is not to deny that it is also a product of discourse. Foucault (1979), for instance, saw the state as a discourse producing
mechanism that constrains individual action through the use of "technologies of power" and through the production of normatively subjugated knowledge (i.e., using the veil of science and "truth" to elicit and differentiate between "right" and "wrong" behavior).

Yet we must not forget that the state is also people—people embedded in networks of social relations and that are both produced by and who in turn produce discourse. Thus, while the state can indeed constrain and construct individual action through the production of discourse (in this Foucault was correct), it can also be constrained and constructed through discourse—such as in the case of a successful phenomenological challenge. "The state" is, therefore, a phenomenological event constituted through superintersubjectivity. Its actors—such as environmental advocacy groups, business leaders, religious leaders, and the politicians themselves—must be first discursively constituted before intersubjectivity can occur.

As an actor involved in the constitution and maintenance of social relations, the state also helps shape our identity. For instance, not only does entry into the state influence who we think we are and the social relations of trust we feel affiliation with, but the pretenses on which that entry is based also determines the social networks we place ourselves in (through this the state thus possesses significant power). There are numerous reasons for being granted discursive access into the state. For instance, whether we are brought into the public sphere (i.e., the state) with the goal of consensus through an open argumentative debate, or merely as a means of pacification will greatly influence how we trust, what we believe as the truth, our identity, and ultimately the power of our social networks.
In our case study, the discursive influence of the state could not be overstated. Although the state did not explicitly tell farmers what to produce, it did in significant part influence why many of them produced what they did. Although it did not explicitly preach anti-sustainable agricultural messages, it did shape conditions that made their adoption impracticable and in some cases financially infeasible. In short, although the state may proclaim to be a neutral bystander in the aforementioned phenomenological challenge, its neutrality can certainly be questioned given the discourse and institutional conditions that it helped to propagate.

Take for instance direct government payments to Iowa farms. Between 1995 and 1999, these payments averaged $1,006 million per year. During this same period, Iowa averaged 33 million acres in farms. This calculates into a per acre subsidy of $30.48 (Bell 2003). Additionally, farm subsidies in Iowa have been traditionally based on “cash grain” crops (namely corn), thus encouraging their production while concomitantly discouraging the production of less traditional, more “alternative” commodities (whether they be organic soybeans, high-oil corn, or green peppers). 98

From 1995 to 1999 we also find that the estimated cost of producing corn exceeded the average market price farmers received in three out of the five years (and in one of the two years in which prices exceeded crops [1996] the margin was only three cents a bushel). During this same period soybean producers appear to have had it a little better—although not 98 The “Freedom to Farm” Act of 1996 has, however, made this connection between direct government payments and the production of traditional Iowa cash crops less direct. It also removed the “corn-base” provision of earlier farm subsidy policies (the provision that required a certain percent of farmland to be devoted to the production of corn). On a couple of occasions I nevertheless had respondents explain to me why they thought the “corn-base” provision will be reintroduced in up-coming farm bill legislation, which caused them to be resistant to raising non-traditional commodities in anticipation of this possible legislation.
by much. From 1995 to 1999 the estimated cost of producing soybeans exceeded the average market price farmers received two out of the five years (Bell 2003). What these figures ultimately indicate is that without government subsides, the production of corn and soybeans is a marginally profitable venture at best, and a sure road to bankruptcy at worst. These numbers do not go unnoticed among those in agriculture.

"Conventional methods are only profitable with government subsides. Take those away and suddenly the numbers work to the advantage of more sustainable methods."

"I can’t really blame someone who wants to stay with a corn-bean rotation. I mean, checks from the government are nice. It’s a great way to hedge one’s agricultural bets."

"Honestly, without government payments the conventional model of production wouldn’t stand a chance. You take those away and sustainable and organic ag. will sweep across the countryside."

For these individuals, the state is very much a discursive participant in the pending phenomenological challenge. Through its direct payment programs the state has shaped conditions that are directly supporting the dominant social relations and their mode of production agriculture. Through these programs the state can thus influence what is raised and indirectly how it is raised (i.e., the larger the operation, the larger the government payment, but large operations for reasons earlier described typically do not employ sustainable agricultural techniques).

The state, however, should not be viewed as an inherently antithetical entity to sustainable agriculture and to the social relations within which it is embedded. Rather, the state as a superintersubjective entity must likewise be discursively contested and breached so
that its social relations include those of sustainable agriculture and its proponents. The state’s social relations of P-K-I-T (and particularly its power) are an invaluable resource to any contesting discursive social network. Thus, any successful challenge to the dominant social relations within agriculture must likewise include a successful discursive challenge to the state itself. Only then can the aforementioned farm payment programs be reconfigured to be more amiable to sustainable agriculture. And only then can a successful phenomenological challenge occur.

Indeed, if sustainable agriculture is to have the promising future that many hope, it can only be in a world where its social relations at least in part encompass those of the state. One significant role that the state can play, particularly within the realm of production agriculture (through, for instance, direct government payment programs), is to reduce risk (and agriculture is indeed very risky, as I will soon explain). The incorporation of the state into our analysis thus allows us to begin to corroborate and illustrate a key conceptual component of our theoretical framework: the interrelationship between trust, risk, and confidence. Through doing this we can also gain a deeper understanding of the tenant-landlord relationship itself, and of the barriers that present themselves in this relationship when issues of sustainable agriculture are raised.

The risky nature of production agriculture is difficult to overemphasize, especially in regard to the industrial model (Carolan 1999). Farms utilizing single-purpose equipment, buildings, and machinery are obligated to focus their scope of production on only a few (or possibly one) commodities. Farms that use technology designed to produce one product tend to forsake alternatives making themselves vulnerable to market shifts because of a narrow
margin of error (Strange 1988). Such operations must also rely upon purchasing their inputs because they can no longer (unlike a more diversified operation) produce them for themselves. For instance, the cattle-feed-lot operator must buy corn and is vulnerable to any increases in its price. Likewise, specialized corn growers lose the advantages of soil fertility and weed and insect control they could have from rotating several crops. In short, when operations become locked into producing one or two crops, are heavily invested in specialized equipment, and dependent on a specified rate of purchased inputs, they become economically vulnerable. They experience, in a word, risk.

Of course, risk is endemic to agriculture in general and is not limited to just specialized producers. The weather, for instance, is one such uncontrollable risk. The spring can be too wet, the winter too dry, the fall too cold, and the summer too hot—all of which can have a significant effect on one's yields. Likewise, there could be pest infestations that affect one's crops, or viral and bacterial epidemics that affect one's livestock. Then there's the unpredictability of the market. All of this (and much more) introduces a significant amount of risk into virtually every realm of production agriculture.

What does this then tell us about the sentiments those in agriculture have toward issues pertaining to agriculture? Recall our theoretical model of trust and the interrelationship between trust, risk, and confidence. If there were no risk-reducing mechanisms to counter the risky nature of production agriculture, then much of the sentiment conveyed within agriculture would be those of either trust or (if little evidence is perceived to be present) simply hope—a very worrisome condition indeed if it were true. Fortunately, however, such is not the case (at least not completely).
Risk-reducing mechanisms do exist within agriculture and the state plays a significant role in this regard. Yet, rather than instilling trust I believe these “payment programs” most frequently result in confidence (specifically “institutionalized confidence) [see chapter seven]), due to their ability to reduce the perception of risks—a perception that provides great comfort to many.

“I’m not going to lie to you. It’s nice to know that the government is going to be there for me if the market goes in the crapper.”

“I don’t know if I could still farm if those programs [farm payment programs] weren’t in place. They saved me on a couple of occasions.”

“It’s [farm payment programs] a nice safety net for those years when you’ve got severely depressed market prices.”

But these risk reducing farm payment programs are concomitantly hindering the adoption of more sustainable farming techniques—techniques which are themselves “risk-reducing”. And in situations involving rented land this is no exception.

“We rent from my wife’s grandfather and he requires that we have so much in corn and beans so we qualify for those programs. So even if we wanted to try and raise something else we couldn’t.”

“As long as the government is going to pay me to raise corn, I’m going to raise corn. Now, if the government were to stop paying me, or if they were to include other commodities in their subsidy package, then sure I would consider raising something else.”

What we therefore have is a model of agriculture (the industrial model) which has instilled within it a degree of confidence due to the risk-reducing mechanisms implemented
by the state. Sustainable agriculture, on the other hand, does not have these risk-reducing state-induced mechanisms. Consequently, it is likely to be perceived in slightly more risky terms and with a lesser level of perceived confidence (and in its stead trust or hope) attached to it.

Granted, sustainable agriculture does have within itself its own risk-reducing mechanisms (although to say that this risk reduction is enough to instill confidence in its proponents is questionable, as I will later discuss). One common practice of sustainable agriculture is the risk management strategy of diversification. Operations which employ sustainable farming techniques frequently utilize human, natural, and financial resources in optimal combinations. Diversified cropping patterns and livestock holdings help to ensure a year-round use of labor, full use of land of varying quality, and buildings, while reducing dependence on a single market for income. Diversification is also seen as an economic precaution against price risks as well as a means of producing internally many of the farm’s inputs, for example, soil nutrients from manure and crop rotations. Diversification is also looked upon as an efficiency strategy because it allows more complete use of some inputs, such as general-purpose tractors and buildings over several crops grown in different seasons (Strange 1988). These risk-reducing (and possibly confidence inducing) properties of sustainable agriculture can be illustrated in the following statements.

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99 While diversification is a risk-reducing mechanism employed by most sustainable farmers do not assume that all small farms are diverse, for they are not (i.e., Carolan 1999).
“My land base may not be as large, but my profit margins are considerably higher than most of my larger, more conventional neighbors because my input costs are so much lower.”

“I don’t have payments to make on a hundred thousand dollar piece of equipment. I don’t have to buy nearly as many chemical inputs or diesel. Sure, I make up for that by doing a little more manual labor, but I’m not complaining. My profit margins are twice what they would be if I were farming more conventionally.”

“Sustainable agriculture is my safety net. I don’t have all of my eggs in one basket like some of these guys who have all of their land in corn or soybeans.”

The dilemma for sustainable agriculture, however, resides in that these risk-reducing mechanisms are not enough to outweigh those already provided by the state in support of the industrial model (through, for instance, farm subsidy programs). Consequently, sustainable agriculture remains reliant upon sentiments of trust due to the inability of these aforementioned risk-reducing mechanisms to successfully reduce all, or most, perceptions of risk. On the other hand, the state is able to instill institutionalized confidence in the industrial model through such institutional designs as direct farm payment programs. As a result, sustainable agriculture’s attractiveness to possible converts becomes minimized, thus subverting its chances of producing a successful phenomenological challenge. This consequently begs the question: is confidence preferred to trust?

When both options are available, confidence is preferred to trust. Would you rather trust that a friend pay you back the ten dollars you lent them, or be confident that they will do so? Would you rather trust your partner not to be unfaithful, or would you prefer to be
confident about their non-adulterous ways? Would you rather trust that your farming operation will at least “break even” (i.e., sustainable agriculture), or would you prefer a situation where you are confident in your ability to do so (i.e., the industrial model through, for instance, government support programs)?

Thus, while sustainable agriculture does reduce risks, it does not minimize them to a significant enough degree. Indeed, only through an institution with the vast social networks of a state could such a task be accomplished. And it is upon this that I earlier argued: for sustainable agriculture to successfully challenge the dominant social relations of agriculture requires that it likewise successfully challenge the dominant social relations of the state. As long as the state continues to support the industrial model (and thus instill within it institutionalized confidence), at the expense of the sustainable model, sustainable agriculture will continue unsuccessfully in its bid to challenge the dominant social relations. Interestingly, therefore, the barriers to the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land appear to have as much to do with issues of confidence and risk as they do with trust.

*Leasing Contracts as Risk Reducing Mechanisms*

This leads us to yet another institutionalized risk-reducing mechanism that is common to tenancy arrangements, but which also constitutes a further hurdle to the utilization of sustainable agricultural techniques on rented land—leasing contracts. As mentioned in chapter seven, if transaction costs are low enough, contracts can perform a vital function: institutionalizing confidence in a situation. This function is clearly present in our case study.
"You just can't not have a contract these days. They just make it so you have one less thing to worry about."

"I've always had one [a written leasing arrangement]. At the very least they just let me sleep a little better at night."

Indeed, while trust is nevertheless essential within the tenant-landlord relationship, it appears that here again when the option between trust and confidence is present (and the transaction costs of confidence are low enough), individuals tend to choose confidence, thus engaging in a contractual relationship. As stated by one respondent: "You might as well have some type of written contract. It takes no work whatsoever to get one, but they sure do provide you with that little extra security just in case, if you know what I mean." The sure scope of many of the respondents' contracts attests to their purpose of institutionalizing confidence throughout practically the entire tenant-landlord relationship, leaving little need for trust in most instances. (Note: the following statements are in regard to cash-rent arrangements).

"We've really got it all covered [in the contract]: the amount of herbicides to be put on, the amount of fertilizer, cultivation practices, even the type of seed to use. It's quite comprehensive, I leave little to chance in it."

"No, we cover all that stuff in the lease. Weeds, how much will go into corn and [soy]beans, chemical applications stuff, who will fix the fences if they need repair, it's all there."

"Our contract is much more than who gets paid how much and when. It also details how I want my tenant to farm. You know, what should be grown and how much, when to
apply fertilizer and at what levels, and what repairs he is responsible for, you know, like fence repair."

Yet, this begs the question: leasing arrangements, particularly in agriculture, reduces risk for whom? These contracts do appear to institutionalize a level of confidence that is unattainable without them, but confidence for whom? For both the landlord and tenant? It does not appear so. While written rental contracts do indeed guarantee certain rights for both parties, they nevertheless provide the greatest reduction of risk for the landlord.

Nearly all respondents reported being in a one-year rental arrangement (an observation which appears to be consistent throughout Iowa [Pieper and Harl 2000]). Of course, such an arrangement can be beneficial to both tenants and landlords. For tenants, it provides them flexibility to get out of their rental arrangement after every growing season, while for landlords it gives them the ability to renegotiate price annually as well as the ability to release their tenant if they do not appear suitable for the position. Often, however, it is the landlord who feels the most security from one-year leasing arrangements, as the following statements from tenants illustrate.

"Although I'm quite positive that my contract will be renewed you can never be completely sure. You never know if there's someone lurking out there to out-bid you and swipe the land from under you."

"Well yes, if I could I would certainly choose a multiyear contract than a one year. The one-year doesn't give you much security. I mean it doesn't if you're the tenant, if you're the landlord it gives you plenty."
The confidence institutionalized through these one-year contracts appears to favor the landlords. Indeed, about the only confidence that these type of leasing arrangements appear to provide tenants with is confidence in not being sure if they will be leasing the same land next year or not, thus causing them to have to rely upon trust or possibly even hope. Of course, there is nothing wrong with trust and hope per se. But with them also comes the perception of risk, and the emotional and psychological baggage that risk brings (i.e., stress, depression, etc.). Trust and hope can certainly be powerful and useful sentiments, but when your livelihood and your family's livelihood is at stake it is likely one would rather rest those livelihoods upon something with perceptively less risk if at all possible. And thus, as I have earlier stated, when there is a choice between the two—trust and confidence (whether it is institutionalized or not and if transaction costs are low enough)—confidence will most often be chosen over trust, especially in instances of perceptible importance (such as where the livelihood of a farm family is concerned).

Yet, what does this have to do with sustainable agriculture and to understanding the barriers to adopting sustainable agriculture on rented land? The point of this is to highlight the effects contracts have upon whether or not sustainable agriculture becomes adopted and to what extent it does so. As I discussed, while reducing the risk for landlords, one-year leasing arrangements overwhelmingly make sustainable agriculture a more risky venture for the tenant. These sentiments were particularly well articulated by the following tenant (and thus I feel it necessary to present this rather long quotation in its entirety).

"One-year leases are quite antithetical to sustainable agriculture. I know this from first-hand experience. Sustainable agriculture requires a long-term approach. It takes time to
build up soil fertility naturally. I once farmed some land I was renting organically—built up the soil, made it more fertile than it probably had been in decades. Well, after doing that for five years the landlord decided to go with another guy at a price I just couldn’t afford. All that work I did building up his soil for what? So he could go and reap the benefits of it by giving it to a higher bidder. I tell you this: that was the last time I did anything sustainable on the land I rent. Now, get me a long-term contract, say five years, and then maybe I’d consider doing it again. But with a one-year [contract], forget it.”

_But with a one-year, forget it._ This appeared to be a common attitude among most tenants, and consequently could be viewed as one of the greatest hurdles that must be overcome if sustainable agriculture is to ever be adopted on a large scale on rented land.

Again, most tenants which have adopted sustainable practices have done so out of trust: trust that their contract will be renewed at the end of the year, and trust that their landlord will not replace them for a higher bidder after they have “built-up” the soil. But again, trust may not be enough in issues of perceptible significance—such as in issues involving your livelihood and your family’s livelihood. For sustainable agriculture to thrive on rented land tenants must therefore be provided with confidence—confidence that their contract will be renewed at the end of the year, and confidence that their landlord will not replace them after having “built-up” the soil. This is why long-term, multi-year leases are essential to sustainable agriculture’s future as a viable method of agricultural production (and essential if sustainable agriculture is to create a successful phenomenological challenge to the dominant social relations of agriculture).
Yet, not all respondents reported having written contracts. In some instances, a simple verbal agreement was all tenants and landlords reported to have. What conditions were therefore present in these relationships to lead them to choose a verbal, non-legally binding contract over a written, legally binding lease? And how does this relate to sustainable agriculture's adoption or non-adoption on rented land?

In some instances, a verbal agreement was chosen over a legally binding written contract because the transaction costs of the latter were perceived to be too great. Indeed, as I argued in chapter seven, while institutional designs can lead to institutionalized confidence, they may not if the perception of costs associated with those designs is too significant. For instance, the enforcement of the institutional design of a written contract also come with the following costs: time, court and lawyer fees, etc.

"I just can't see the what the big deal is with having a written lease. When you really look at it there's just not much teeth to those written contracts. I mean, in my case I don't have the money to throw around to take a tenant to court if they broke their contract anyway, so why bother even having one?"

Overall, however, I believe the answer to this puzzle can be found by looking at the social relations within which tenants and landlords embedded themselves. In basing the rental arrangement on a verbal agreement, landlords and tenants were grounding the relationship significantly upon trust. Tenants had to trust that their landlord would not change the stipulations of the verbal lease mid-growing season and landlords had to trust that their tenant would abide by their verbal contractual requests—a sentiment that was based in no small part on the social relations in which the tenants and landlords were located.
“No one’s going to welch on a verbal agreement around here. They can’t afford to. I may be at little old fashioned for saying this but I really mean it: a man is only as good as his word, and if you trust his word there should be no need for a contract.”

“I’ve been told that you should trust your tenant. Now, if I had him sign a contract, what type of image would that send?”

“I’ve always kind of believed that if you can’t trust your tenant why even have him as your tenant? So there should be little need for a fancy written lease.”

Yet, while these instances point to examples of a deep trust between the tenant and landlord, the trust was often still not deep enough to allow for the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, thereby further supporting my earlier argument: given the presupposition of risk in relation to trust, confidence may be required in instances of perceptible significance, where risk would otherwise be too great if one were to rely merely on trust (such as where one’s livelihood is concerned). Consequently, while tenants and landlords both reported significant sentiments of trust in these instances, the risks, particularly for tenants, were still perceptibly too great to constitute pushing the issue of sustainable agriculture onto their landlords.

“Yeah, well I think one of the reasons he trusts me like he does is exactly because I don’t bring up sustainable agriculture all the time. If I did I would probably scare him off.”

“Trust can only take you so far, you know? I mean, if you think about it, if I were to continually hound him about various sustainable methods, over time I think that could in fact dampen our trust.”
Trust can only take you so far, you know. Indeed, trust, it appears, can only take you so far, particularly when issues of “life and limb” (or in this case, the family farm) are at stake. This is not to say, however, that sustainable agriculture was not adopted in any of the instances where a verbal agreement was chosen over a written contract. But in those few cases the perception of risk was significantly reduced, thus suggesting the presence of confidence rather than trust.

“No. I’m not concerned that I don’t have a written contract. I mean, I know I’ll be able to rent this land as long as I want, which is, I know, quite a luxury. I mean, it allows me to farm organically without the threat or worry of ever losing it which can be a concern if you want to do organics on land you rent.”

No, I’m not concerned...I know I’ll be able to rent this land as long as I want...without the threat or worry of ever losing it.... Does this sound like the perception of risk is present to any significant degree? No, sustainable agriculture worked within this relationship precisely because those risks were absent (remember, when I talk about risk I am referring to the perception of risk—or the phenomenology of risk). The tenant in fact sounds quite confident in the security of his tenancy.

Yet how was this security attained? The confidence with which he speaks was not institutionalized because no written contract was involved. The confidence resides within the social relations of the relationship itself—namely, his landlords are his parents. Thus, not only does this tenant perceive significant “evidence” to support his belief of the future, but (and this is what makes it confidence rather than trust) he also perceives little risk associated with this belief, namely because his landlords are his mother and father.
The Disembedding Social Relation: The Absentee Landlord and Tenant

In addition to being stretched across vast amounts of time, social relations within agriculture are likewise becoming increasingly scattered across vast amounts of geo-physical space. Whereas landlords and tenants alike once lived either on or near the land they rented, today ever increasing distances are separating tenants and landlords not only from the land, but from each other as well. For instance, according to Pieper and Harl (2000), in 1997, 13.8 percent of all land in Iowa was owned by non-Iowa residents, and 20.1 percent of all leased farmland in Iowa was owned by non-Iowa residents, figures up from 12.1 and 18.9 in 1992 respectively.

As tenants and landlords become increasingly separated by space, however, so to do their social relations. The further apart we are in geo-physical space the less likely it is that our social networks of P-K-I-T overlap, in which case my social relations of knowledge (and likewise my social relations of power, trust, and identity) become less likely to overlap your social relations of knowledge. In short, the people we know (and thus those we trust) are probably quite different (particularly if great distances are involved).

In these instances, trust can become not only increasingly risky—when, for instance, proper monitoring mechanisms are not in place that can act like a “safety valve” to ensure against any potentially dangerous scenarios. But also such situations can lead to an increasing insecurity of trust itself—again, for instance, if monitoring mechanisms are not in place, sufficient “evidence” may not be getting to the landlord to support their sentiments of trust (and, according to the model, when this happens trust erodes to hope). Mechanisms are
thus often employed by both tenants and landlords in these situations to help act as a splint to repair the socio-relational wounds that the geo-physical distance between the two has inflicted upon the relationship. The specific mechanism that I am referring to is the written contract, and the treatment that written contracts can provide to a tenant and landlord's relationship suffering from distance pains is institutionalized confidence.

Although there are no figures which illustrate how many “absentee” rental arrangements in the state of Iowa rely upon written contracts versus verbal agreements (in part because the very term “absentee landlord” is difficult to operationalize), agricultural economists seem to agree that most, if not all, absentee rental arrangements rely upon some form of written lease.100 And what do written contracts provide (if transaction costs are perceptibly low enough) that verbal agreements cannot? As argued in the previous section: institutionalized confidence. It is not too surprising then to discover that most absentee rental arrangements utilize a written lease, particularly in light of my previous observation: given the presupposition of risk in relation to trust, confidence may be required in instances of perceptible significance, were risk would otherwise be too great if one were to rely merely on trust (such as where one’s livelihood is concerned). Absentee landlords, like all landlords, have the option to trust their relationship (in which case a verbal agreement would be all that is required) or the option to be confident in their relationship (in which case a written lease would be required). Both options are typically available to them. And which option do they usually choose? When both options are available, when the situation is of perceptible significance, and when transaction costs are

100 Personal communication, Bob Jolly, Iowa State University agricultural economist, January 5, 2002.
low enough to justify the institutional design, confidence will most often be chosen over trust. This argument is supported by my experiences in the field, as the following statements from absentee landlords suggest.

"Well [laughs], it really has nothing to do with whether I trust him or not. I mean, the fact is I don’t get to be in the area all but once or twice every year. And when you’re talking about as much land as I’ve got, quite frankly only a fool would attempt to rent that without a lease."

"I think it’s simply a matter of common sense. If you have the option of a contract you take it. And this just becomes all the more true when you start talking about someone like me [an absentee landlord]."

"I don’t think contracts really have anything to do with trust. It’s a form of cheap security in the very unsecure, knockdown world of agriculture. And quite frankly, I don’t want to get knocked down."

What then are the implications of this reliance upon written leases to the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land? As I earlier argued, contracts are not themselves antithetical to sustainable agriculture; indeed, contracts appear to be essential if sustainable agriculture is to create a successful phenomenological challenge to the dominant social relations in agriculture. The form a written contract takes, however, can have a significant impact on the type of agricultural methods utilized on the land. Yet, unfortunately for sustainable agriculture and its proponents, the form most contracts currently take (and this is particularly true in absentee rental arrangements) are non-supportive (and often hostile) to sustainable agricultural techniques.
In addition to most absentee rental arrangements being based upon a written contract, many of those written contracts are renewed annually and are of the cash-rent variety (Pieper and Harl 2000). In regard to annual contracts, as I have earlier described, sustainable agriculture requires long-term management strategies. These strategies become increasingly difficult (if not impossible) to implement when faced with the continual uncertainty that this year might be your last to rent a particular parcel of land. Additionally, cash rent arrangements can further restrict sustainable agriculture’s adoption on rented land, particularly when cash-rents are exorbitantly high (as they are becoming in some portions of the state). Statements similar to the following were frequently heard from tenants:

“Sustainable agriculture needs to be a team effort involving both the landlord and tenant. If both parties are not involved it’s not going to work. That’s why I think it [sustainable agriculture] could only really work in a crop-share arrangement. Cash rent situations are too antagonistic or oppositional. I think the landlord needs to be involved for it to work.”

“The problem with cash-rent is not cash-rent. It’s the unbelievable rents some of these guys [landlords] are asking and getting. But no bank is going to O.K a loan to support these rents unless you run a capital-intense operation, which no sustainable farmer does. What we need to do is show landlords the profitability in sustainable ag. Then they can see that they will still make a really good profit by going with the crop-share arrangement, and they would be improving their land as well. Everyone would win.”

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101 In a “cash rent” situation the tenant pays a flat annual fee to the landlord. This is different from a “crop share” arrangement where the tenant and landlord both split costs and profits in some equitable manner. According to Pieper and Harl (2000), in 1997 approximately sixty percent of all leasing arrangements in Iowa were of the cash-rent variety.
Absenteeism appears to be a phenomenon that will increase as time goes on. Even agriculture—the bastion of tradition and the past that it is—is not immune to the disembedding mechanisms of modernity. Here, as in all facets of social life, time and space are being increasingly stretched (or, if you prefer, “disembedded” [Giddens 1990]). Now, landlords can manage their land (whether they do so effectively is still a matter of debate) from anywhere in the world, all thanks to e-mail, fax, the phone, or the friend or family member who lives near the “homestead” and who does the occasional “drive-by” to check the fields. Would sustainable agriculture be better served if absenteeism disappeared? Possibly. But that question is now moot; absenteeism is here, and it will remain here for a long time. If sustainable agriculture is to create a successful phenomenological challenge to the dominant social relations of agriculture it must work to integrate itself into the discursive networks of P-K-I-T that absentee landlords locate themselves in, thereby reorienting the content and structure of contracts that absentee landlords produce.
PART THREE—SOME LAST WORDS
CHAPTER ELEVEN: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

To breed an animal capable of promising (das versprechen darf)—isn't that just the paradoxical task which nature has set herself with mankind, the peculiar problem of mankind?—Friedrich Nietzsche 1956: ii-i.

[Although trust is an obvious fact of life, it is an exasperating one. Like the flight of the bumblebee or a cure for hiccoughs, it works in practice but not in theory.—Martin Hollis 1998: 1.

We are now nearing the end; the literature has been critically reviewed, a theoretical framework of trust has been proposed, and components of that theoretical framework have been applied to a case of social change. Yet, before the curtain comes down allow me to first address some concluding points. First, I reflect upon some of the significant theoretical points that have revealed themselves through the course of the preceding ten chapters. Once this is completed I then direct the reader’s attention to points with practical significance that came out of the empirical case study involving issues of the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land. But first, how does this work contribute theoretically to our understanding of trust and thus go beyond earlier accounts of the concept?

First, this dissertation highlights the material-ideal dialogue that underlies all trust relations by pointing to the dual ontological nature of both risk and evidence. The detailing of the material and ideal constitution of both risk and evidence allows for a fuller understanding of how our attitudes are shaped toward what we know that we do not know, thereby giving insight into the social becoming of the form of trust that ensues (simple trust, confidence, hope, or faith). Also highlighted within these pages is an emphasis on not only the social character of our ontology, but also on the social character that allows us to feel
secure in our ontology—the latter of which is essential for trust to occur. When we feel secure in our existence (and thus possess what Giddens [1990] calls, "ontological security"), we do so in part because of our intersubjectivity with others and because of the "respond-ability" of the situation (as described in chapter five).

But intersubjectivity and respond-ability are themselves embedded within the social relations of power-knowledge-identity-trust (P-K-I-T). One can therefore see the social relations of P-K-I-T as the soil from which spouts the infinite tomorrows of social life, and as the basis of all trust relations. Indeed, if trust is the attitude we possess toward what we know that we do not know then it is also inseparably tied to issues of power, knowledge, and identity; for not only do social relations shape who and what we know and who we are but also who and what we trust and do not trust (see chapter six). In acknowledging this, we can begin to fill another conceptual void in the scholarship of trust—namely, trust's inseparable ties to power, knowledge, and identity (ultimately leaving us with power-knowledge-identity-trust [or P-K-I-T]).

Yet, this social character of trust also presupposes temporality—a characteristic of trust neglected by previous trust scholars. This is a significant insight, however; for when trust becomes "stretched" over time certain phenomena transpire which cause trust to become "structurated" (chapter seven). Placing trust within its proper temporal framework thus reveals it as both a constraining and enabling phenomena; not as the benign sentiment that many have perceived it to be (this process of structuration can also be short-routed through institutional designs, as I discuss in the latter pages of chapter seven).
Yet, arguably the most significant contribution to come out of this body of work is the four-quadrant conceptual model itself; the construction of which was first initiated in chapter three and then elaborated upon within each chapter henceforth until chapter seven. Specifically, I am referring to the model’s parsimonious ability to conceptually illustrate the interrelatedness of simple-trust, confidence, hope, and faith along the vertical and horizontal axis of evidence and risk. Future trust scholarship could be directed toward assessing the validity of this four-quadrant conceptual schema. While anecdotal and reflexive evidence were used in chapter three to assess the validity of this interrelated depiction of simple trust, confidence, hope, and faith (and it was indeed supported by this analysis), future research could be directed at providing a more quantitative assessment of the four-quadrant model’s validity.

For instance, the horizontal (risk) and vertical (evidence) axis of the model could be developed into a “Likert-like scale” (Berg 2001: 168). From here, respondents could then quantify their levels of perceived risk and evidence to a given situation. Once completed they could then pinpoint where, on the four-quadrant model (the quadrant of simple trust, confidence, faith, or hope), their sentiment lies and compare it to the actual sentiment that they are experiencing toward the situation.

Indeed, if this four-quadrant model proves to be valid, its potential for application is practically boundless. For instance, it could be used to assess the sentimentality—that of simple trust, confidence, faith, or hope—that people feel toward their government (and through an examination of the social relations of P-K-I-T one could further understand why certain people possess the sentiments that they do). Similar analyses could be conducted for
institutions and organizations (i.e., to assess the form of trust individuals' have toward Iowa State University), as well as toward particular roles (i.e., to assess the form of trust individuals' have toward politicians). The four-quadrant model could also be utilized to assess social sentiments toward social movements, groups and clubs, policies, and global trends.

**Insight into Contemporary Theories of Modernity**

This last item, global trends, should be of particular interest to social theorists and scientists, however, because much socio-theoretical energy has been directed in the last half century toward its understanding. From Parsonian functionalism to Luhmannian systems theory to Giddensian reflexive modernization theory, global social change has been in the cross hairs of social scientists for a number of decades. Yet, one particular contemporary theory of modernity comes to mind that could have much to gain (or lose) if the preceding theoretical analysis of trust proves to be compelling: Beck’s risk society theory.

Briefly, Beck (i.e., 1992) portrays the period after industrial society (or “simple modernity”) as “risk society” (“reflexive modernity”), a society with an apocalyptic future, organized around the negative process of distributing ecological risks. For example, the anthropological shock caused by the Chernobyl disaster was not only due, according to Beck, to the fact that disasters considered to have a low probability of occurring could actually happen (and happen with significant consequences), but the shock was also due to the total

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102 Beck's risk society theory was also addressed earlier in chapter two.
trust or confidence (although Beck does not use such terms) the residents of Chernobyl had toward the experts that assessed the situation. What Beck is highlighting here is that many of today’s disasters cannot be experienced with simple sensory perception. Whereas waste matter, smog, smoke, and noise can be directly perceived by lay actors, radiation, dioxin, global warming, and the hole in the ozone layer cannot. Lay actors must rely upon experts (or more accurately the experts’ instruments) to do their perceiving for them. As Beck (1992: 256) writes: “none were so blind to the dangers as those who continued to trust their eyes.”

But, according to Beck, this reliance upon experts is waning. In our current epoch of reflexive modernity, science is proving itself no longer capable of being the impartial judge that it earlier appeared to be and is therefore incapable of providing the security that people seek from it to reduce anxieties and fears. This demystification of science has thus instilled an institutionalization of doubt, which will eventually transform into institutional fear and anxiety, becoming a permanent fixture at all levels of society.

While Beck is remarkably silent toward issues of trust (particularly because he has written so extensively on risk), he does appear to attach importance to sentiments that resemble trust in the stage of simple modernity when he speaks of lay actors’ dependence (i.e., trust) upon experts. But in a risk society, it appears that those sentiments of trust toward experts and science disappear: “[p]eople must say farewell to the notion that administrations and experts always know exactly, or at least better, what is right and good for everyone…” (Beck 1997: 122).

But, is Beck correct to imply that simple modernity is predicated upon trusting experts and science, while reflexive modernity (and specifically risk society) is predicated
upon an unequivocal distrusting of experts and science? According to the four-quadrant conceptual depiction of simple trust, confidence, hope, and faith, if we are really in a period of modernity permeating with risk, as Beck believes, then we must likewise be in a period of modernity permeating with simple trust (or hope).

If Beck's assessment of modernity (and his depiction of its transformation from "simple" to "reflexive") is correct, then what really existed in simple modernity was not simple trust toward experts and science, but more accurately confidence. The risks of which Beck speaks did not exist in our realm of consciousness (to any significant degree) during this period of modernity precisely because we had confidence (or maybe even faith) in experts, science, and the administrative institutions of that time (recall the relationship between confidence and faith via risk). One could say that during the phase of simple modernity our simple trust in science had become structurated—it had become habitualized and routinized, directing a significant portion of our cognitive temporal orientation to the past.

In a risk society however (if indeed that accurately reflects our current conditions of modernity). this structurated trust (i.e., confidence) has become invalidated, causing us to once again become reflexive in our attitudes toward science and in the simple trust we convey onto that science (hence the designation "reflexive modernity"). A risk society therefore, contrary to Beck, is a society that is even more dependent upon simple trust than those societies of simple and pre-modernity. The problem, however, resides in keeping that simple trust from inverting into hope (which differs from trust only in the amount of "evidence" perceived), and thus ultimately despair, anxiety, and depression.
By incorporating the insights provided to us by the four-quadrant conceptual model into Beck's risk theory we can avoid some of his apocalyptic visions of the future. Risk society then becomes not a period of relativism, nihilism, and dread as Beck believes, but a period where we begin to see science for what it is: as a product whose origins reside in intersubjectivity, and the social relations of P-K-I-T through which that intersubjectivity becomes actualized. And we can begin to see risk society not as a society predicated upon a lacking to trust, but quite to opposite: as a society whose new reflexivity has lifted trust to a state of paramount importance.

Simple Trust or Confidence?

This bring us to another point that has been highlighted in chapter ten: is simple trust the sentiment of choice, as many (from politicians to citizens to social scientists) believe it to be, or perhaps should we be working to build confidence (i.e., in our institutions, governments, groups, people, and organizations) instead? Anecdotally, confidence does appear to be preferable to simple trust—particularly during instances of perceptible significance, such as when one's livelihood is at stake (as I earlier argued in regard to the aforementioned case study). I would rather have confidence that my employer will not fire me in the next year rather than merely trust (referring here to simple trust) that they will not do so (of course, in either case I could still be wrong and lose my job, but this point is moot). Having confidence in the security of my job presupposes the perception of little risk, whereas simple trust presupposes the existence of risk (and most likely therefore a lot of sleepless nights, providing not the most satisfactory socio-psychological conditions). My point in
mentioning this is not, however, to downplay trust's essential role in society. Certainly, its place is secure as a fundamental component of social life. In fact, we can still unequivocally say that trust is essential. The question, however, is which form of trust do we see as possessing the most value?

Solutions and Policy Intervention

I would now like to direct attention to issues of a more applicable nature. Having since applied aspects of this integrative theory of trust to the case study of sustainable agriculture's adoption on rented land, what suggestions could be developed to help guide future public policy? In short, what can we do to encourage the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land? While some may call for a return to the owner-operator (see i.e., Freyfogle 2001), such a return appears increasingly unlikely. Tenancy is the future of agriculture, and to ignore it is to be left out of that future. If sustainable agriculture is to successfully challenge the dominant social relations of the industrial model that challenge must be in no small part directed to issues of tenancy. Let us then review some of the major points, arguments, and findings that the previous analysis has provided us, and then transform some of those insights into suggestions for public policy to promote sustainable agriculture's adoption on rented land.

The social relations of sustainable agriculture represent a phenomenological challenge to the dominant social relations of the industrial model. The discourses of sustainable and industrial agriculture are not benign, they create individuals, groups, enemies, and friends. These contesting discourses are thus constituted through the interplay between
discourse, phenomenology, and intersubjectivity—what I referred to as superintersubjectivity. Through this process, social relations of P-K-I-T become lifted to the discursive intersubjective level for all participants to "see". Superintersubjectivity accomplishes this by drawing lines in the discursive sand in regard to who stands where in the phenomenological challenge—namely, do you place yourself within the social networks of the sustainable agriculture movement or do you identify with the dominant networks linked to the industrial model? Thus, the phenomenological challenge constitutes the very networks of superintersubjectivity that constitute it, and the social relations of P-K-I-T within which they are both embedded. If we therefore wish to understand the hurdles to adopting sustainable agricultural practices on rented land, we must place those hurdles within their proper social context. In this case, this is the aforementioned phenomenological challenge and the interplay between discourse, intersubjectivity, and phenomenology that this challenge represents.

*Trust per se is not an issue between landlords and tenants as much as their divergent social relations of trust.* The simple fact was that landlords and tenants overwhelming trusted each other: indeed, it is rather unlikely that a tenant would rent from, or a landlord would rent to, someone whom they did not trust. The barriers instead resided in *who* and *what* tenants and landlords trust—specifically, where their social relations of P-K-I-T were embedded. If your social relations were embedded within the discursive relations of sustainable agriculture then sustainable agriculture would likely appear to be a profitable, viable, and respectable management practice. But if, on the other hand, your social relations overlapped those of the industrial model, then likely your view of sustainable agriculture
would be less positive. So-called “economic” barriers that restrict the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land thus quickly deconstruct into “trust” barriers. What then makes sustainable agriculture profitable or not is contingent upon who is providing you the information, and whether you trust them as someone who speaks the truth. Ultimately, therefore, whether you trust sustainable agriculture, and whether you allow its adoption on rented land, is due in part on who you trust as speaking the truth, and if that truth is favorable (or not) to sustainable agriculture.

Social relations of trust shape constructions of identity and gender which in turn shape the social environment’s conduciveness to sustainable agriculture’s adoption on rented land. Social relations not only shape whether or not one affiliates with sustainable agriculture and its proponents but also their identity and the type of gender that they “do”, which itself has significant bearing on whether or not sustainable agriculture becomes adopted on rented land. For instance, social relations of trust shape which image of masculinity men “do” and how they “do” it (and the same can be said of women in agriculture). Thus, if your social networks associate masculinity to issues that have a direct bearing on tenancy (i.e., “real” men take risks and can thus afford to pay high rents), then you will likewise link masculinity to your rental situation and act accordingly. Ultimately, social relations not only shape who you trust as speaking the truth, but also your identity and your performative construction of gender. And as I earlier illustrated, what gender you “do” and how you “do” it significantly impacts whether conditions are optimal or prohibitive for sustainable agriculture’s adoption on rented land.
The structuration of the social relations of trust have resulted in the emergence of cultural constraints that are resistant to sustainable agriculture and to its adoption on rented land. When we deconstruct culture we find at its core a whole myriad of social relations. We find trust and the social relations of P-K-I-T through which that trust becomes actualized. The dominant culture is itself thus nothing more than the dominant social relation’s culture. Yet within culture and its concomitant social relations we also find trust that is stretched across vast amounts of space and time. And as this occurs the social relations of trust begin to transform, individual temporal cognitive orientations become redirected, and routinization sets in. In a word, trust (and with it the culture that it constitutes) becomes “structurated”. It begins to motivate action out of forces of habit and routine, through the ghost of voices past, and in some instances with the force of a moral authority (what I have earlier described as “naturality”). In these instances, the past thus becomes our guide and habit the lighthouse that illuminates our way.

One such example of this, which has manifested itself as a cultural barrier to the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land, is the emphasis within agriculture on tradition, the past, and on heritage. Within agriculture there is a value placed in respecting the ways which have “worked” in the past. You are taught to honor your father and your father’s father not just by working the same land that they did, but also by using the same methods that they used—methods which are frequently not in step with today’s sustainable agriculturists (particularly in regard to those ancestors that farmed in the post-World War II period).
Another cultural constraint restricting the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land was traced to women’s marginal positioning to agricultural social networks. This is not to say that men are more interested in the industrial model and women more interested in the sustainable model. Rather, as being marginalized from the discourses of agriculture women have had to rely upon their tenants or farm managers (who are typically male) and their social relations of P-K-I-T to make most of their farm management decisions. And which of the two contesting discursive relations are most of these individuals (read, “men”) embedded within? Namely, the dominant agricultural social relations are the discursive relations of the industrial model.

By embracing women (which is beginning to occur) sustainable agriculture can begin to provide women with access to their own agricultural social relations of P-K-I-T. Thus, women can be provided with the resources to make their own farm management decisions, instead of having to rely upon someone (namely men) and their social relations. Indeed, as I have earlier suggested, quite possibly the outcome of the phenomenological challenge may hinge on this issue regarding women’s access (or lack thereof) to social relations of P-K-I-T within agriculture. Sustainable agriculture would do well to empower these women; within that empowerment lies the potential for the empowerment of sustainable agriculture itself.

Any successful challenge to the dominant social relations within agriculture must likewise include a successful discursive challenge to the state itself. As noted, the state was itself an active participant in the aforementioned phenomenological challenge. Through, for instance, direct payment programs, the state had created conditions conducive to the dominant social relations of the industrial model while concomitantly making conditions ill-
suited for the challenging social relations of the sustainable model. Through these programs the state was therefore able to significantly influence not only what was raised, but also the manner in which they were raised. Consequently, the state (as a superintersubjective entity) must likewise be discursively contested and breached so that its social relations become increasingly inclusive to those associated with sustainable agriculture. The social relations of the state, particularly its ability to influence (its social relations of power), are an invaluable resource to any contesting discursive social network, and as such any successful challenge to the dominant social relations within agriculture must likewise include a successful discursive challenge to the state itself.

*Given the presupposition of risk in relation to trust, confidence may be required in instances of perceptible significance, where risk would otherwise be too great if one were to rely merely on trust.* This is indeed a significant finding for it suggests something quite novel: that quite possibly our interests might be better served to build confidence rather than trust when conditions are suitable to do so, particularly in instances of perceptible significance (such as when a person’s livelihood is at stake). Agriculture is by nature (both figuratively and literally) a very risky venture. And while various risk-reducing mechanisms exist, often they do not have the ability to reduce the perception of risk entirely, thus instilling trust (versus the less risky confidence). However, thanks to farm payment programs implemented by the state, a degree of institutionalized confidence has been instilled into agriculture. More specifically, it has been instilled into industrial agriculture. This is not to say that sustainable agriculture is not without its own risk-reducing mechanisms; indeed, sustainable agriculture is itself a risk-reducing strategy. Yet, these strategies are not as
successful as the institutional designs provided by the state in their ability to reduce risk.
Consequently, while sustainable agriculture is still heavily reliant upon sentiments of trust, the industrial model, thanks to the state, can rely upon a degree of institutionalized confidence to help refortify its positioning as the dominant social relations.

Based upon this I argue the following: when both options are available (both confidence [whether its institutionalized or not] and trust), confidence will be preferred to trust if the situation is of perceptible significance and (if institutionalized confidence is involved), if the perceived transaction costs are low enough. This is why, in reference to our previous discussion, the state must be seen as an important actor to be included in our understanding of the broader phenomenological challenge. Only through an institution with the vast social networks of the state could sustainable agriculture successfully reduce the perception of risk to a significant enough degree to instill confidence in its proponents. And only then can sustainable agriculture expect to equally compete with, and thus fully challenge, the social relations of the industrial model.

*The stretching of social relations of trust across geo-physical space, such as that which occurs in instances of rental absenteeism, taxes those relations, thus making institutional designs (and thus institutionalized confidence)—such as the use of written contracts—all the more attractive.* As tenants and landlords become separated by increasing distances so to do their social relations. As a result, institutional designs are utilized to fill the socio-relational gap created by thus gulf in geo-physical space—namely, the written contract. This is not to argue, however, that written contracts are incompatible with sustainable agriculture. In fact, they may indeed be key to sustainable agriculture’s bid to
create a successful phenomenological challenge to the dominant social relations of the industrial model. The form a written contract takes, however, can have a tremendous impact on whether or not sustainable agricultural techniques are adopted on rented land. And, unfortunately for sustainable agriculture and its proponents, the form that written contracts currently take overwhelmingly favors the industrial model of production agriculture—i.e., one-year and frequently in the form of a cash-rent versus crop-share arrangement.

So what then can we do to encourage the adoption of sustainable agriculture on rented land? How do we translate these aforementioned “discoveries” into actual policies to encourage social change? The following are some suggestions for policy makers, the state, and institutions and organizations to help promote sustainable agriculture’s adoption on rented land and in some instances on farmland in general.

Legitimacy presupposes access to legitimate social networks. For sustainable agriculture to create a successful phenomenological challenge it must gain access to social networks that are perceptibly legitimate by those currently embedded within the dominant social networks of the industrial model—such as the state, respected experts, Iowa State University, and respected agricultural organizations (i.e., Farm Bureau). If sustainable agriculture is to successfully breach the existing dominate social relations within agriculture it must do so in conjunction with the social networks of these aforementioned actors, it cannot do it alone.

Sustainable agricultural organizations also need to become even more inclusive of women. If sustainable agriculture can open its social networks to women, given that women own slightly less than half of all farmland and slightly more than half of all leased farmland
in Iowa, it can gain significant discursive advantage in its challenge toward the industrial model. In addition, as increasing legitimate social networks begin to encompass those social networks of the sustainable agricultural movement, thereby legitimating sustainable agriculture and its proponents, women could find themselves gaining a sense of legitimacy that is greatly needed in the patriarchal world of production agriculture.

The dissemination of knowledge by legitimate sources in regard to sustainable agriculture is also essential. Recall how the social relations of trust have been deeply structurated over generations. Culture, tradition, and heritage are given great importance in agriculture. The methods of "agriculture past" are no exception, all of which tend to be rooted within the discursive relations of the industrial model. Thus (following our theoretical model), an invalidation of aspects of these structurated social relations of trust are therefore required to break this temporal cognitive orientation to the past, to habit, and to routine in regard to issues pertaining to production methods. A particular example of how this might occur: Iowa State University (a "legitimate" voice to most within the dominant social relations of agriculture), and respected "experts" within this institution, could begin to detail the profitability of sustainable methods, particularly in relation to more conventional methods, thereby shattering the discursive myth that sustainable agriculture is unprofitable.

The state can also play a significant role in this issue. Namely, it needs to develop institutional designs that, instead of penalizing sustainable farmers, encourages them and provides them with a sense of security and confidence. As long as government programs are in place to provide institutionalized confidence to those discursively situated within the industrial model, and sustainable agriculture cannot provide equal mechanism of risk
reduction, the dominant social relations will be retained and the phenomenological challenge will remain unsuccessful. Yet, if the state can develop incentive programs that encourage sustainable agriculture, concomitantly making it less risky for the producer, sustainable agriculture will also be able to provide institutionalized confidence. In being endowed with risk-reducing mechanisms that are equal or greater to those of the industrial model, sustainable agriculture will posses the capabilities to successfully challenge the dominant social relations and the barriers to adopting sustainable agriculture on rented land will be greatly reduced.

Finally, the state could develop incentives to encourage long-term contracts and crop-share arrangements. Sustainable agriculture requires a long-term farm management approach that is greatly undermined by annual leasing arrangements. Long-term contracts need to be in place to instill confidence in the party wishing to adopt sustainable methods on rented land. In addition, and to further reduce risk in adopting sustainable agricultural methods, crop-share formulas should be encouraged. In spreading the risk across both parties, crop-share arrangements could be one method employed particularly by landlords looking to encourage the adoption of sustainable farming techniques on their land. The acceptability of a crop-share arrangement could also be enhanced were the state to institutionalize payment programs to support sustainable agriculture, thereby further reducing the risks associated with sustainable agriculture.
Some Final Words

We have reached the end of our journey. Through the course of this dissertation much terrain has been covered, some old and some new. We have looked upon the face of trust and discovered that it is us—us in relation to nature, to others, to time, and to ourselves. Herein resides the multidimensional character of trust. Any theoretical approach that fails to approximate this multidimensional quality must consequently be looked upon as being short-sighted, only presenting a narrow representation of trust at best and an erroneous and misleading representation at worst. We should be cautious, therefore, of frameworks that do not acknowledge all of the faces of trust: as something that can be both good and bad, as both constraining and enabling, and as something that always presupposes power.

Trust is indeed a complex, multidimensional phenomenon—a truly essential component of social life. Without it, social life would become unfathomable, intersubjectivity would be impossible, interactions incomprehensible, and communication enigmatic and esoteric. Indeed, without trust, social life would cease to be social, and thus cease to be life.
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