



Article

# Trust in government institutions: The effects of performance and participation in the Dominican Republic and Haiti

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## Abstract

This article analyzes theories of institutional trust in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, two developing countries that have shared some historical legacies but currently manifest divergent economic and political trajectories. The evidence confirms that conventional theories emphasizing participation and government performance help us understand institutional trust in both countries. In addition, the analysis emphasizes the analytical leverage gained by exploring the extent to which different facets of engagement have divergent effects on institutional trust. The findings build upon previous research to underscore the importance of considering how context shapes the precise ways in which performance and engagement influence institutional trust, particularly when analyzing the developing world.

## Keywords

Institutional trust, government performance, political participation, civic engagement, religious engagement, contextual effects, corruption, security, economy

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## Introduction

Trust in government institutions is frequently considered an important indicator of diffuse political support (Easton, 1965; Newton and Norris, 2000). Moreover, institutional trust has significant consequences for citizens' commitment to democratic norms and the survival of democratic regimes (Mishler and Rose, 2005). Existing scholarship analyzing the origins of trust in institutions tends to emphasize two main streams of theorizing: explanations involving performance of government institutions (Espinal et al., 2006; Hetherington, 1998; Mishler and Rose, 2001) and those emphasizing citizens' political or civic engagement (Putnam, 1993; Uslaner, 2002).<sup>1</sup> Often, these theories focus on facets of performance and participation that are especially relevant in advanced democracies. However, the most important aspects of performance and engagement may differ in the developing world where economic insecurity, political instability and state weakness are commonplace.

Here we unpack the general arguments advanced by established theories by considering multiple facets of each concept. We also build upon previous research to consider context-contingent effects, particularly how economic and political fragility shape the effects exerted by performance and participation. We assess the applicability of conventional theories of institutional trust in the developing world and identify new expressions of these theories. In so doing, we explore the extent to which alternative facets provide insights into the formation of trust outside established democracies.

To examine how facets of performance and participation might have divergent ramifications in different countries, we analyze trust in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, two states that share an island in the Caribbean and common histories of poverty and authoritarianism, yet manifest sharply divergent contemporary trajectories. In the early 1960s, the two countries had similarly low per capita gross domestic products (GDPs) and shared records of political instability punctuated by foreign intervention and patrimonial authoritarian rule. However, since that time the Dominican Republic has had one of the region's best records of growth together with increasingly stable democracy. Haiti, in turn, has experienced dramatic economic decline and governments characterized by authoritarian patrimonialism, limited democracy and, above all, instability. As a result of these differences, we expect to observe significant variation in Dominican and Haitian trust in government, as well as variation in the ways performance and participation shape trust. These expectations are borne out in the analysis below. Despite their shared historical commonalities and subsequent divergence, which offer excellent analytical leverage for comparison, there has been surprisingly little analysis contrasting these neighboring countries.<sup>2</sup> This article capitalizes on this analytical opportunity.

We begin by reviewing the socioeconomic and political evolution of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, focusing on their divergent trajectories and the implications these differences may have for institutional trust. Then, we detail two major theories concerning the formation of institutional trust, hypothesizing about the effects of government performance and engagement. We contextualize our hypotheses based upon each country's distinct economic and political conditions. Next, we outline the 2008, 2010 and 2012 AmericasBarometer survey data that we use to analyze our hypotheses concerning institutional trust. These survey years are particularly important because they enable analysis of attitudes before and after Haiti's January 2010 earthquake, which devastated the population, infrastructure and public sector.<sup>3</sup> Then we discuss our results, comparing and contrasting the two countries. We conclude with a discussion of our findings' theoretical and empirical implications.

## Common histories, divergent trajectories

Troubled relations between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and the differences in their recent socioeconomic and political evolution have deep historical roots. When former slaves proclaimed

Haitian independence in 1804, Santo Domingo on the eastern side of the island found itself under occupation by French, British and Haitian forces, although the Spanish reclaimed control in 1809. Haiti fended off foreign invasion and in the 1820s began a 22-year occupation of the Dominican Republic. Dominicans recall the occupation as a period of brutal military rule, even as it definitively ended slavery and reinforced Dominicans' self-perceptions as different from Haitians (Moya Pons, 1985).

Both countries experienced violent, unstable politics and extensive international intervention, particularly from the United States. Indeed, the US military occupied both states for extensive periods in the early 20th century, with US policy being more controlling in Haiti, largely due to racism (Knight, 1990). The Trujillo regime in the Dominican Republic (1930–1961) forcibly demarcated the national border with a brutal massacre of Haitians in 1937. Building on Dominican antipathy toward Haiti, Trujillo cultivated a nationalist ideology appealing to Hispanic and Catholic values. Trujillo represented an extreme form of neopatrimonialism, with extraordinary personal power inhibiting institutional development (Hartlyn, 1998). In Haiti, US occupation also fostered conditions for a neopatrimonial ruler, leading to the ascendance of François Duvalier in 1957. Duvalier presented himself as a defender of black interests against the mulatto elite and successfully confronted potential resistance by strengthening support within the black middle class and parts of the peasantry and by building his security force, the Tontons Macoutes (Nicholls, 1998).

However, the trajectories of the two countries diverged dramatically mid-century. While the Dominican Republic and Haiti had similar per capita incomes just below US\$800 in 1960, by 2005 they were very different; the Dominican Republic had roughly tripled its GDP per capita to around US\$2500, whereas Haiti's had fallen to US\$430 (Jaramillo and Sancak, 2009: 324; constant 2000 US\$). Over this period, the Dominican Republic achieved one of the highest growth records in the region; Haiti experienced the lowest. On social indicators, despite Dominican failure to match economic success with similar social advances, Haiti lagged behind (UNDP, 2011).

Political patterns also diverged during this period, even as extensive US involvement persisted in both countries. Beginning with Trujillo's assassination in 1961, the Dominican Republic began an uneven process of democratization, partly influenced by US Cold War concerns. It was marked by a brief civil war and US occupation in 1965, followed by 12 years of civilian authoritarianism under Joaquín Balaguer. Then, a democratic transition in 1978 allowed the emergence of a competitive party system, initially built around the Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) and Balaguer's Reformist Social Christian Party (PRSC), which steadily declined after his death in 2002 (Morgan et al., 2011). The democratic regime survived a post-electoral crisis in 1994, and by the late 1990s basic procedural elements of democracy were well-established. The Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) emerged as significant in the 1980s as it began shifting from the left to the center-right. The PLD has increasingly dominated electoral politics, particularly since the 2003 economic downturn and financial scandal that temporarily weakened institutional trust and enabled Leonel Fernández (PLD) to defeat incumbent Hipólito Mejía (PRD) in the 2004 presidential elections (Morgan and Espinal, 2006; Sagás, 2005). Fernández won reelection in 2008, and his co-partisan Danilo Medina was elected president in 2012 (Meilán, 2013).<sup>4</sup> Despite relative stability, the Dominican Republic remains marked by inequality and poverty as well as patrimonialism, clientelism and corruption (Morgan et al., 2011).

Haiti, however, was dominated by brutal, authoritarian rule for several more decades. Whereas the United States intervened following Trujillo's 1961 assassination to limit his family's power, the death of Haiti's 'Papa Doc' Duvalier in 1971 was followed by regime continuity, as his son Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier (1971–1986) inherited control with US acquiescence. However, Baby Doc's base eroded as power gradually shifted from the black middle class and prosperous peasants

toward mulatto technocrats and businessmen, provoking popular protest, international isolation and his exile in 1986 (Fatton, 2002).

Since 1986, Haiti has been marked by considerable social and political instability and international intervention. A massacre of voters by security forces suspended the 1987 elections. Fraud and low turnout have also tainted election outcomes, and political parties have been weak (Dupuy, 1997; Gros, 1997). President Jean-Bertrand Aristide overwhelmingly won elections in 1990, but was ousted by a military intervention after only nine months in office; he was then removed again in 2004 after his return to power in 2000 (Dupuy, 2007). This led to the arrival of what became a long-term United Nations stabilization force in a context of criminal and political violence, state disarray and widespread impunity (Heine and Thompson, 2011; Mendelson Forman, 2012). Problematic elections in February 2006 produced the reelection of René Prével, who served previously in 1996–2001. Because of the January 2010 earthquake, national elections scheduled for that February were postponed until November. Following opposition charges of fraud, the government upheld an Organization of American States (OAS) recommendation concerning the run-off election and replaced the government candidate, who had come in second by a narrow margin, with Michel Martelly, a popular musician and businessman (Taft-Morales, 2011). Martelly won the March 2011 run-off and faced hostile opposition in a fragmented legislature through the 2012 survey analyzed here.<sup>5</sup> Overall, state weakness, international interference and instability still characterize Haitian politics (ICG, 2013).

In sum, while Haiti and the Dominican Republic share some commonalities in economic and political development, over recent decades Dominicans have generally enjoyed greater economic prosperity, political stability and democracy. Thus, we would expect Dominicans to have more confidence in democratic institutions than Haitians. Public opinion data from the 2008, 2010 and 2012 AmericasBarometers confirms this, although Dominicans have experienced declines in trust over this period. Haitian trust dipped after the 2010 earthquake but recovered in 2012. On a scale of trust in key government institutions that ranges from zero to 24,<sup>6</sup> Dominicans average around the midpoint with scores of 13.30 in 2008, 12.42 in 2010 and 11.29 in 2012, while Haitians are significantly more disenchanted, scoring 9.15 in 2008, 8.49 in 2010 and 9.01 in 2012. When compared to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean,<sup>7</sup> Dominicans scored among the best in the region in 2008, but moved toward the regional average in 2010 and 2012. Haitians took last place in the region following the 2010 earthquake and ranked near the bottom in 2008 and 2012. Beyond demonstrating that the divergent trajectories outlined above are associated with different levels of institutional trust, we are interested in exploring how these contrasting experiences might shape the causal processes that influence formation of attitudes toward regime institutions. We now turn to a discussion of general theories of institutional trust and explore their predictions in light of differences in the Dominican and Haitian contexts.

## Theoretical foundations

Research examining public trust in political institutions typically considers two major types of explanations. The first emphasizes the influence of perceptions of government's economic and political performance (Lipset and Schneider, 1987; Mishler and Rose, 2001). The second addresses how citizens' engagement and participation influence institutional trust, with some scholars identifying a positive relationship between engagement and trust (Putnam, 1993) and others pointing to a negative one (Brehm and Rahn, 1997). Here we explore how these accounts might explain trust in government among Dominicans and Haitians.

We consider facets of performance and engagement that are typically theorized; then we also identify facets of these theories that have received less attention in existing scholarship but may

prove illuminating in contexts like the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In particular, we explore how trust might be shaped by concerns such as insecurity, corruption and clientelism, which are prevalent issues in countries with nascent or flawed democratic institutions. Moreover, we draw on previous research on institutional trust to consider how the divergent trajectories and contemporary circumstances in Haiti and the Dominican Republic might shape causal patterns within each country. Finally, we discuss how ideology, democratic values and socio-demographic characteristics might influence institutional trust.

### *Government performance*

Considerable research has demonstrated that citizens assess governments based on perceptions of their own economic status and that of the national economy (Kelly, 2003; MacKuen et al., 1992). As governments deliver economically, citizens are much more likely to trust the institutions seen to be providing well-being. The influence of economic evaluations on institutional trust may be particularly relevant in countries with shorter democratic legacies, as attitudes about regime institutions are less deeply rooted and more susceptible to recent performance (Espinal et al., 2006; Mishler and Rose, 2001). Therefore, we expect economic evaluations to be positively associated with trust in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

In addition to economic issues, citizens likely expect government to address other concerns, such as delivering public services, guaranteeing security and combating corruption. These matters may be particularly pressing in fragile democracies where shortcomings in these arenas have the potential to undermine governance and the economy in addition to disrupting everyday life. Basic services, public safety and respect for the rule of law cannot be taken for granted in such contexts, making their provision particularly salient. Previous research analyzing less-established democracies suggests that performance in non-economic policy domains has the potential to shape trust in significant ways (Askvik et al., 2011; Mishler and Rose, 2001; Morris and Klesner, 2010; Seligson, 2002; Wong et al., 2011). In light of these findings combined with persistent threats to rule of law and state capacity in both the Dominican Republic and Haiti, we anticipate that government's political performance likely plays an important role in shaping institutional trust (see also Espinal et al., 2006; Heine and Thompson, 2011). Moreover, given the severity of ongoing policy challenges outside the economic realm, evaluations of government ability to provide services, promote security and confront corruption may weigh even more heavily than economic assessments in the formation of both Dominican and Haitian views regarding regime institutions.

### *Engagement and participation*

We also explore how civic and political participation shape institutional trust, a relationship that has been much-debated in previous research. Putnam has made the strongest case that civic engagement fosters confidence in government by creating positive social capital (Putnam, 1993), but evidence for this has been mixed (e.g. Newton and Norris, 2000). Others have argued that activism has the potential to expose a disjuncture between democratic ideals and reality, promoting critical views of regime institutions (Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Finkel et al., 2000). In addition, several studies have emphasized the importance of specific institutional and cultural contexts in shaping how participation affects trust (Askvik et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2011). In an effort to reconcile these expectations, we draw on our understanding of the Haitian and Dominican experiences to consider how diverse *kinds* of participation might have conflicting effects on trust and how different *contexts* might produce distinct causal patterns. In particular, we consider positive types of participation, including civic engagement, religious engagement and political interest, as well as more particularistic and partisan forms of participation.

*Positive participation.* As noted above, although conventional wisdom tends to view civic engagement as promoting institutional trust, there may be contexts where this expectation does not hold. While positive civic participation sometimes generates social capital, this pattern is not the inherent outgrowth of engagement, but rather hinges upon the nature of associational life in a particular context. For instance, Dominican civic associations have been extensively politicized as a result of penetration and control by political parties, and associational activism often has clientelist goals (Espinal et al., 2010). In this context, the capacity for citizen engagement to foster genuine social capital, as opposed to creating opportunities for political advancement or personal enrichment through clientelism, may be highly constrained (Choup, 2003, 2006). Thus, participation is less likely to foster institutional trust, as social capital and interpersonal trust, which are the primary mechanisms for translating engagement into pro-regime attitudes, are unlikely outcomes of civic participation in the Dominican Republic. Building on previous scholarship, then, we expect the positive potential for civic engagement to be tempered in the Dominican context (Espinal et al., 2006; Finkel et al., 2000).

In Haiti, on the other hand, associational life is more independent from the country's weak parties and state (Fatton, 2011). Civic engagement is local, occurring at the grassroots level and focusing on communities jointly confronting social ills such as poverty, housing shortages and malnutrition.<sup>8</sup> This form of engagement is more likely to generate social capital and interpersonal trust, which Putnam (1993) argued to be instrumental in fostering trust in government. Thus, despite the fact that both countries have comparatively high levels of civic engagement for the region,<sup>9</sup> the grassroots nature of civic engagement in Haiti is more likely to be positively associated with institutional trust than the partisan and clientelist kinds of participation common in the Dominican Republic.

We also explore the impact of participation in religious organizations, beyond attending services. Here we hypothesize patterns nearly opposite those for civic engagement, with more ambiguous expectations for Haiti and clearer ones for the Dominican Republic. In the Dominican Republic, although Protestantism has made inroads and the share of people without religious affiliation has increased, the Catholic Church continues to dominate religious life (Betances, 2007). With around 70% of religious Dominicans identifying as Catholic in all three AmericasBarometer surveys analyzed here, most religious engagement is still likely to occur in Catholic associations. Moreover, with limited exceptions, the Catholic Church in the Dominican Republic has maintained a posture of supporting and legitimating the state, and most Protestant denominations do not deviate from this stance (Betances, 2007). In this environment, attending religious meetings may foster trust in state institutions. The Haitian religious landscape is more complex. In the three surveys analyzed here, approximately 55% of religious Haitians identify as Catholic, one-third practice some form of Protestantism and 4% affiliate with traditional religions such as Vodou. However, syncretism between Catholicism and Vodou in the Haitian context as well as ongoing persecution of Vodou practitioners likely produces underestimates of the prevalence of Vodou (Hurbon, 2001). Moreover, Haitian Protestants typically advocate views critical of the state, and the stance of the Catholic Church vis-à-vis the state has been ambivalent (Hurbon, 2001; Louis, 2011). In this environment of greater religious diversity and less state–church collaboration, Haitian participation in religious organizations may be less likely to promote institutional trust.

Political interest is also a potentially positive form of engagement as it encourages a politically informed and active citizenry. We expect to observe a positive relationship between political interest and institutional trust in the Dominican Republic, where democracy is more stable and legitimate and government can point to tangible successes. In Haiti, where democracy is fragile and governments have failed to deliver, attention to politics has the potential to be associated with negative views of the state, undermining institutional trust.



*Particularistic participation.* Participation in which voters seek particularistic benefits is distinct from the types of engagement discussed above. Particularistic engagement involves citizens participating not to seek the public good, but to obtain resources for themselves, their family or a small set of individuals. These patterns of participation are unlikely to promote broad social ties or activate collective consciousness, as they are aimed toward self-advancement, not seeking the common good. Instead of fostering social capital and institutional trust as we might expect from grassroots engagement, exchange-oriented participation, which is frequently clientelist in nature, is likely to promote individualism and encourage resource-contingent assessments of regime institutions (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). Moreover, state ties built around particularistic exchanges have the potential to provoke disenchantment concerning the lack of impartiality in state institutions and the significance of personal connections for obtaining access. Given these features, exchange-based ties are unlikely to promote institutional trust and may weaken confidence in state institutions.

*Partisan participation.* The final form of participation that we consider is partisan in nature. Partisan ties are likely to promote institutional trust within the group that controls the state apparatus, but may undermine trust among those out of power. In this sense, the effect of partisan participation on institutional trust is contingent upon which party has the most influence in government. Building on Anderson et al. (2005), who show that electoral losers accord less legitimacy to political institutions, particularly those in developing countries with less-established democracies like those analyzed here, we expect less trust among opposition supporters and independents and more trust among those affiliated with the governing party.

### *Ideology and democratic values*

In addition, we consider how ideology and support for democratic norms might be associated with institutional trust. We expect legacies of authoritarianism to play a role in shaping the effects of these variables. In both countries, the authoritarian state apparatus primarily repressed the left while receiving support from conservative forces (Dupuy, 1997; Espinal, 1987). Given this experience, we expect respondents who identify with the right to be more deferential toward state authority and express greater institutional trust, while those on the left will be more skeptical of the state and less trusting.

With regard to the effect of democratic values, conflicting evidence in the literature leads to unclear expectations. Cultural theories hold that authoritarian polities foster distrust, which would lead us to expect a positive relationship between democratic values and trust (cf. Mishler and Rose, 2001). However, scholarship in advanced democracies suggests that those most committed to democracy may be especially distrusting of imperfect real-world institutions (Dalton, 2000; Inglehart, 1999).

## **Analysis of institutional trust**

We employ data from the 2008, 2010 and 2012 AmericasBarometer surveys conducted by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP). All six surveys used national probability samples of voting-age adults interviewed face-to-face in Creole (Haiti) or Spanish (Dominican Republic).<sup>10</sup>

### *Measurement*

We measure institutional trust using an additive scale of four survey items asking respondents about their confidence in the national legislature, Supreme Court, national election commission

and the courts.<sup>11</sup> Cronbach's alpha scores range from 0.65 to 0.79, values that indicate a reliable scale.<sup>12</sup> As discussed above, Haitians consistently displayed significantly lower trust than Dominicans.

To assess how various facets of government performance influence trust, we employ four questions gauging assessments of the national economic situation, public service delivery, security provision and efforts to combat corruption. In 2008 and 2010, Dominicans evaluated performance more positively than Haitians across all four categories; in 2012 service evaluations were the only category where Haitians rated their government worse than Dominicans. We expect positive performance evaluations to be associated with greater trust.

The analysis also includes measures of the three types of participation outlined above: positive, particularistic and partisan. Positive participation includes civic engagement, religious engagement and political interest. We measure civic engagement using frequency of attendance at community organization meetings: higher values indicate more participation.<sup>13</sup> Haitians and Dominicans manifested similar levels of participation in associational life until 2012, when Haitian participation outpaced Dominicans' after the earthquake when many Haitians mobilized to resolve community problems (Bell, 2010). Religious engagement is measured as frequency of participation in religious organization meetings. In both countries, religious participation is higher than any type of civic engagement. To capture attentiveness to politics, we use self-reported political interest.<sup>14</sup>

We tap the concept of particularistic participation through a factor score based on three questions asking respondents if they have ever sought help in resolving their problems by contacting a member of the national legislature, a local political leader or a representative of the public bureaucracy.<sup>15</sup> Contacting public officials for personal assistance in this way reflects particularistic patterns of engagement with the state in which individuals seek to extract government benefits for themselves, their family or friends. As detailed above, we do not expect this particularistic brand of participation to promote institutional trust.

The final facet of participation is partisan in nature. We use partisan identification to code respondents into three categories: those who affiliate with the president's party (Incumbent), those who affiliate with another party (Opposition) and independents.<sup>16</sup> In the analysis, we include indicator variables for Opposition and Independent; Incumbent is the reference category.

We also consider how ideology and democratic values shape trust. Our measure of ideology is the classic left–right scale where respondents place themselves between 1 (left) and 10 (right). To capture democratic values, we create a scale based on eight survey items measuring tolerance for political activism and for the civil rights of government opponents as well as gays and lesbians. Higher values indicate stronger commitment to democratic values.

Finally, we control socioeconomic status (SES), education, place of residence, sex and age. Details of these measures can be found in the supplemental material.

## Results

Table 1 displays the results of regression analysis assessing the relationships between institutional trust and independent variables measuring government performance, participation, ideology, democratic values and demographic factors.<sup>17</sup> We conduct separate analyses for Haiti and the Dominican Republic in 2008, 2010 and 2012.<sup>18</sup> The overall model fit for all six of these analyses is good; R-squared values align with conventional levels in the public opinion literature.

Upon examining Table 1, it is apparent that government performance in a variety of arenas influences institutional trust. In both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, we observe some significant effects for all four performance evaluation measures on institutional trust, although the findings in the 2012 data are not as strong as the preceding years. The findings are largely consistent



Table 1. Predictors of Dominican and Haitian Institutional Trust, 2008-2012.

Independent variable	Dominican Republic				Haiti				
	2008	2010	2012	2008	2010	2012	2008	2010	2012
<b>Government performance</b>									
Economic evaluations	0.43*** (0.15)	0.31** (0.14)	0.55*** (0.15)	0.59*** (0.17)	0.20* (0.10)	0.21 (0.13)	0.59*** (0.17)	0.20* (0.10)	0.21 (0.13)
Service evaluations	0.29** (0.13)	0.33*** (0.12)	0.19 (0.13)	0.68*** (0.14)	1.29*** (0.12)	-0.06 (0.15)	0.68*** (0.14)	1.29*** (0.12)	-0.06 (0.15)
Security evaluations	1.00*** (0.10)	1.05*** (0.11)	0.83*** (0.10)	0.26*** (0.08)	0.53*** (0.07)	0.07 (0.08)	0.26*** (0.08)	0.53*** (0.07)	0.07 (0.08)
Combat corruption	0.62*** (0.10)	0.71*** (0.11)	0.80*** (0.10)	0.64*** (0.09)	0.88*** (0.07)	1.01*** (0.07)	0.64*** (0.09)	0.88*** (0.07)	1.01*** (0.07)
<b>Positive participation</b>									
Civic engagement	-0.01 (0.14)	-0.04 (0.12)	-0.05 (0.13)	0.42*** (0.14)	0.13 (0.10)	0.25** (0.11)	0.42*** (0.14)	0.13 (0.10)	0.25** (0.11)
Religious engagement	0.28** (0.11)	0.17* (0.10)	-0.02 (0.10)	0.06 (0.11)	0.11 (0.08)	0.12 (0.09)	0.06 (0.11)	0.11 (0.08)	0.12 (0.09)
Political interest	0.28** (0.13)	0.37*** (0.13)	0.26* (0.13)	-0.48*** (0.15)	0.28** (0.12)	0.11 (0.13)	-0.48*** (0.15)	0.28** (0.12)	0.11 (0.13)
<b>Partisan participation</b>									
Partisan participation	-0.04 (0.63)	-0.92** (0.45)	0.14 (0.55)	-0.24 (0.23)	-0.44 (0.43)	-0.09 (0.44)	-0.24 (0.23)	-0.44 (0.43)	-0.09 (0.44)
<b>Partisan participation</b>									
Opposition	0.29 (0.39)	-0.02 (0.37)	-0.73** (0.35)	-0.44 (0.50)	-0.42 (0.51)	-0.83* (0.44)	-0.44 (0.50)	-0.42 (0.51)	-0.83* (0.44)
Independent	-0.05 (0.34)	-0.13 (0.29)	-0.77** (0.36)	-0.31 (0.32)	-1.59*** (0.50)	-0.82*** (0.27)	-0.31 (0.32)	-1.59*** (0.50)	-0.82*** (0.27)
<b>Democratic values</b>									
Right ideology	0.02* (0.01)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.02* (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
<b>Demographic factors</b>									
Socioeconomic status	0.10* (0.06)	0.03 (0.05)	0.14*** (0.04)	0.12** (0.06)	0.17*** (0.05)	0.22*** (0.05)	0.12** (0.06)	0.17*** (0.05)	0.22*** (0.05)
Education	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.09*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.05* (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)	0.05* (0.03)
Rural	-0.01 (0.04)	0.002 (0.03)	-0.10*** (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.03)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.03)	-0.07** (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)
Female	0.19** (0.08)	0.12 (0.10)	0.02 (0.08)	0.19** (0.09)	0.41*** (0.06)	0.14** (0.06)	0.19** (0.09)	0.41*** (0.06)	0.14** (0.06)
Age	0.02 (0.27)	0.10 (0.25)	0.29 (0.25)	-0.39 (0.24)	0.11 (0.17)	0.17 (0.21)	-0.39 (0.24)	0.11 (0.17)	0.17 (0.21)
Constant	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)	0.01* (0.01)
R <sup>2</sup>	4.69*** (0.92)	4.62*** (0.81)	6.48*** (0.89)	4.67*** (0.84)	2.88*** (0.73)	4.25*** (0.67)	4.67*** (0.84)	2.88*** (0.73)	4.25*** (0.67)
No. of observations	0.34 1507	0.39 1500	0.41 1512	0.15 1536	0.39 1752	0.22 1510	0.15 1536	0.39 1752	0.22 1510

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; 15 imputations; \* $p \leq .10$ , \*\* $p \leq .05$ , \*\*\* $p \leq .01$ . Analysis of AmericasBarometer data using STATA 12.

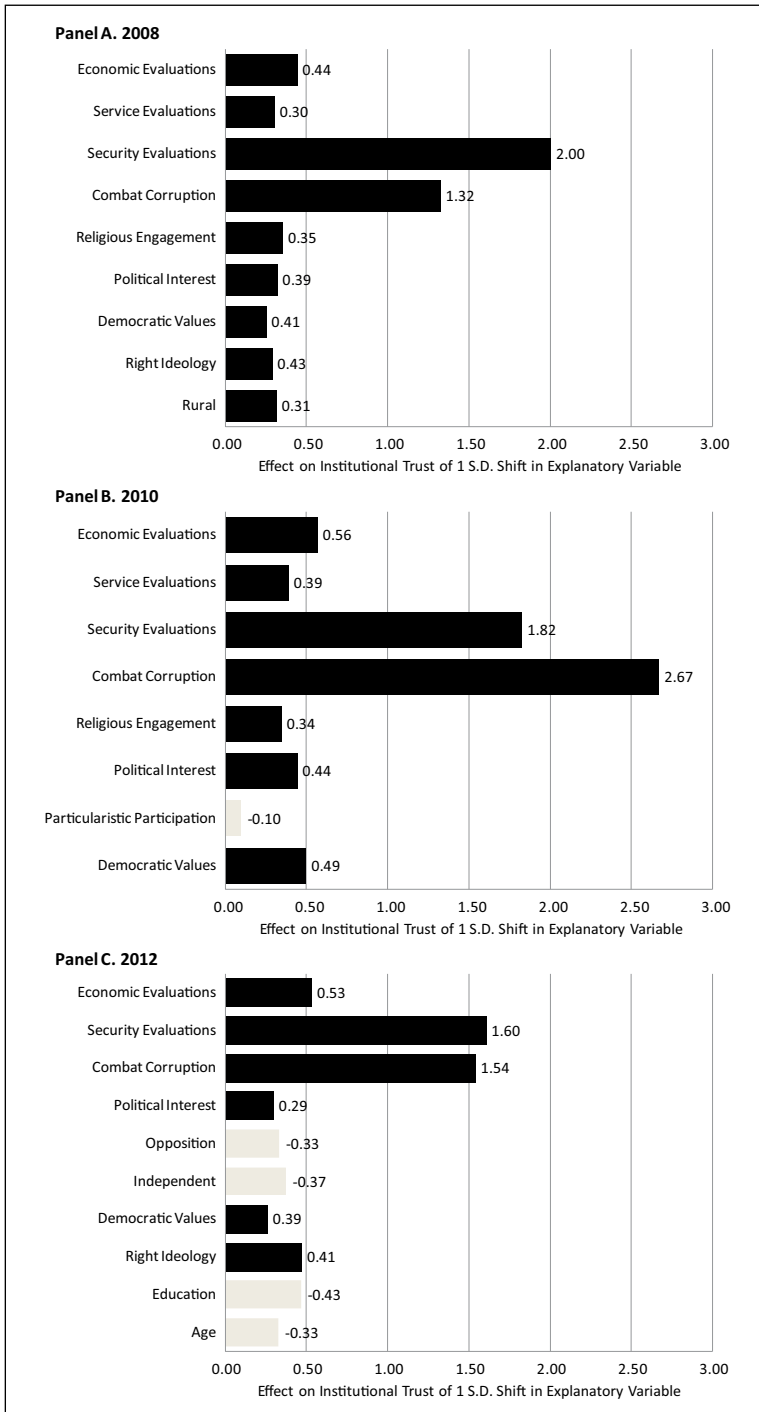


Figure I. Magnitude of significant effects on institutional trust, Dominican Republic.

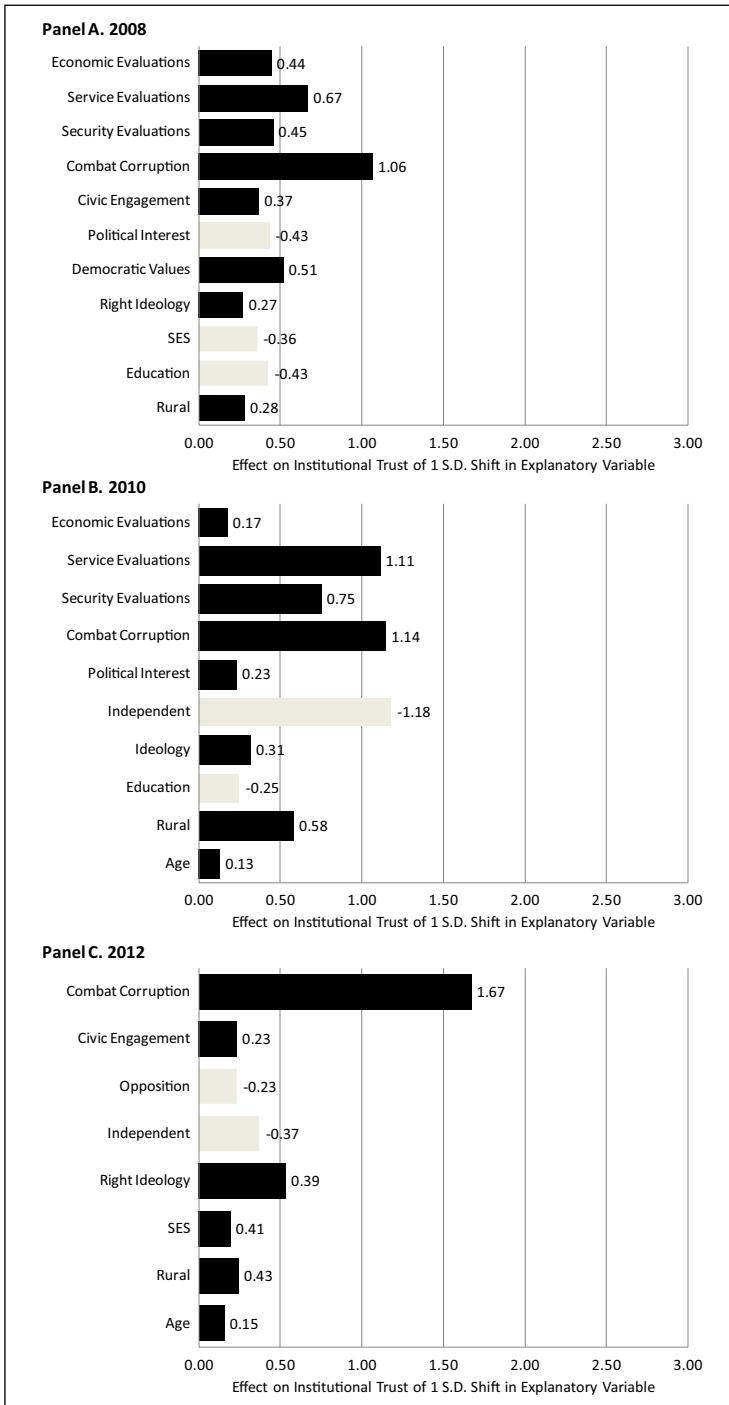


Figure 2. Magnitude of significant effects on institutional trust, Haiti.

with our theoretical expectations. To assess substantive effects of the independent variables, we calculated the influence of one standard deviation change in each significant variable on institutional trust. These estimates help us identify the variables with the largest substantive influence on trust within each country-year.<sup>19</sup> We show the results of these calculations for the Dominican Republic in Figure 1 and for Haiti in Figure 2.

While economic evaluations have significant positive effects on institutional trust in each survey except Haiti 2012, the figures clearly indicate that the effects of economic assessments are often substantively smaller than evaluations of *political* performance. In Haiti, performance in all three non-economic arenas overshadows economic evaluations in the magnitude of their impact on trust in 2008 and 2010, while in 2012 assessments of anti-corruption efforts are the only performance measure with a statistically significant effect. In the Dominican Republic, evaluations of government efforts to combat crime and corruption have effects that far exceed those exerted by economic evaluations. In both countries, assessments of government efforts to uphold the rule of law by fighting corruption and crime stand out as consistently powerful factors shaping institutional trust. One of these two variables has the largest substantive effect in every survey, and in several country-years they rank first and second in effect size. The influence exerted by security and corruption evaluations is substantively important and suggests that government efforts to protect public safety and combat corruption are particularly powerful explanations of trust in places where rule of law cannot be taken for granted. These findings coincide with previous studies on developing countries and less-developed democracies, which have also found evaluations of government performance in these areas to be particularly important in shaping trust (Askvik et al., 2011; Mishler and Rose, 2001; Morris and Klesner, 2010; Seligson, 2002; Wong et al., 2011).

The analysis also considers how different types of participation might shape institutional trust. We hypothesized that the politicized and clientelist nature of associational life in the Dominican Republic would make it less likely for civic engagement there to promote formation of trust-enhancing social capital and, in fact, we observe no significant effects for community participation on trust in the Dominican Republic. In Haiti where associational life tends to be more organic, we find a strong positive relationship between civic engagement and institutional trust in 2008 and 2012. While we find no similar effect in 2010, this anomaly may be a result of unusual circumstances following the devastating earthquake. Regarding religious engagement, we observe a significant positive relationship between participation in religious meetings and trust among Dominicans in 2008 and 2010 and no significant effect in Haiti; these results align with our expectations.

As previous research has found and we hypothesized, attention to politics is associated with more institutional trust in the Dominican Republic across all three surveys. Moreover, political interest has the largest substantive effect of all the engagement measures among Dominicans (Figure 1). The findings for political interest in Haiti are contradictory. Whereas we observe a negative relationship between interest and trust in 2008, the sign of the coefficient reverses in 2010, becoming positive and significant, and in 2012 there is no significant effect. The volatility of this variable's effect in Haiti is surprising and the nature of our analysis only permits us to speculate about the reasons. Perhaps the change from 2008 to 2010 can be attributed to politically interested people recognizing in 2010 that government was not to blame for the earthquake and hoping that the state might be strengthened through the reconstruction effort. This hope might have translated *temporarily* into more institutional trust among the politically interested. If this is the causal mechanism, then this positive relationship between interest and trust would be fleeting, potentially reverting to a negative effect over time. The insignificant result in 2012 might be part of this reversion. However, this is a hypothesis that cannot be tested with our data here; only further analysis in future research could fully explain this pattern.

In addition to these measures of positive participation, we also examine the effects of particularistic and partisan participation. As expected, we did not find that particularistic participation, measured as individuals seeking personal benefits from the state, promoted institutional trust. Indeed, in five of the six surveys particularistic participation has a negative coefficient, although its effect in undermining trust is only significant for the Dominican Republic in 2010. Moreover, the significant, negative coefficient in the 2010 Dominican survey provides limited evidence that this sort of participation has the potential to undermine social capital and institutional trust, although these results are merely suggestive.<sup>20</sup> We also find some support for the idea that engagement through partisan avenues will foster greater trust among supporters of the incumbent than among independents and opposition partisans. Negative and significant coefficients on several of the measures of political opposition and independence in both countries lend credence to this argument.

In terms of ideology, right-leaning respondents in both countries are more trusting of government than those on the left. Our findings also lend some support to the view that democratic values are positively associated with trust, as we see small but significant positive coefficients for democratic attitudes in all three Dominican surveys and in 2008 in Haiti.

## **Conclusions**

The analysis here assesses theories of institutional trust in Haiti and the Dominican Republic – two developing countries that have shared some historical legacies but currently manifest divergent economic and political trajectories. The evidence confirms that conventional theories emphasizing participation and government performance help us understand institutional trust in both countries. Our analysis also points to the importance of incorporating multiple facets of these theoretical arguments when analyzing trust in the developing world and suggests new hypotheses concerning how context might shape the precise ways in which performance and engagement influence institutional trust.

Evaluations of government performance are particularly powerful explanations of institutional trust in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, a finding consistent with much previous research. To gain a more nuanced and thorough understanding of how performance influences trust, we considered facets of performance beyond conventional economic measures. Drawing on previous studies analyzing trust in the developing world, we hypothesized that government performance in policy areas related to state capacity and the rule of law may have especially strong effects in contexts like Haiti and the Dominican Republic where the state has historically been weak and threats to the rule of law are pervasive. Our findings support this argument. In both countries, the impact of economic evaluations on trust is significant, but substantively smaller than the influence of variables measuring other aspects of government performance. Evaluations of anti-corruption and anti-crime efforts are particularly influential. These findings, together with similar evidence from previous research in less-established democracies (e.g. Askvik et al., 2011; Mishler and Rose, 2005; Wong et al., 2011), highlight the importance of considering how government performance outside the economic arena shapes institutional trust, especially in fragile democracies and weak states. If governments are to promote trust in regime institutions within these contexts, it is imperative that they foster confidence in the state itself by combating corruption, providing security and delivering basic services.

We also theorized that engagement has distinct dimensions likely to influence institutional trust in different and context-contingent ways. Scholars frequently debate whether engagement has a positive or negative effect on social capital and institutional trust. Our evidence here suggests that debating the general effect of engagement itself is not the most productive path; rather, what really matters are the kinds of ties being formed and the contexts in which participation occurs. In line with previous research pointing to the significance of partisan ties in shaping institutional trust

(e.g. Anderson et al., 2005), the analysis offers some support for the hypothesis that partisan participation increases institutional trust among supporters of the incumbent but not among government opponents and independents. We also find that particularistic forms of participation fail to promote institutional trust in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and there is some evidence that seeking personal benefits from government has the potential to undermine confidence in government institutions.

Meanwhile, our findings concerning the influence of positive forms of participation through civic and religious engagement and political interest point to the possibility that context may shape how these types of engagement influence institutional trust. For instance, the evidence supports our contention that the partisan and clientelist patterns that often characterize Dominican associational life limit the extent to which civic participation fosters institutional trust there. Meanwhile in Haiti, grassroots organizations are more central to associational life and, in this context, we hypothesized that civic engagement would have greater potential to promote trust in state institutions. We observe such a positive relationship in the 2008 and 2012 Haiti surveys. In addition, differences in church–state relations in the two countries led us to expect that religious engagement might be more supportive of institutional trust in the Dominican Republic than in Haiti, a pattern borne out in the empirical analysis. Of course, the analysis here concerning how context shapes the influence of participation rests on comparisons between two countries, making the findings more suggestive than conclusive. However, the disparate patterns in the connections between engagement and trust, which we anticipated based on contextual differences between Haiti and the Dominican Republic and that we observe in the empirical analysis, offer useful hypotheses regarding the causal mechanisms linking engagement and trust. To explore the broader applicability of these contextualized hypotheses concerning civic engagement, future research should assess them in a wider range of cases.

Our findings here suggest that distinct dimensions of performance and engagement may have differing levels of importance and even divergent effects depending upon relevant features of the institutional, social and political context. Thus, efforts to contextualize analyses of institutional trust have the potential to illuminate the causal mechanisms through which performance and participation shape trust in state institutions. Future research might delve more deeply into this aspect of attitude formation, assessing how contextual features condition the effects of performance and engagement on institutional trust.

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## Notes

1. Mishler and Rose (2005) call these approaches institutional and cultural theories, respectively.
2. Linguistic differences and limited communication among the academic communities of both countries has contributed to this pattern. Instead, analysts frequently compare the Dominican Republic to other Hispanic Latin American countries, whereas Haiti, with its cultural and linguistic differences, is often absent from these discussions. Moreover, the divergent trajectories of the two countries since the 1960s may have also led to fewer comparative analyses.



3. Heine and Thompson (2011: 1) argue this was ‘the most devastating natural disaster to occur in the Americas’ with 230,000 lives lost, 300,000 injured and 1.5 million displaced.
4. In the Dominican Republic, the three AmericasBarometer surveys analyzed below were conducted 4–26 March 2008, 20 January–9 February 2010 and 1 January–15 February 2012.
5. In Haiti, the three AmericasBarometer surveys analyzed below were conducted 1 January–9 February 2008, 13 July–11 August 2010 (6 months after the earthquake and 4 months before November elections) and 20 January–6 February 2012.
6. The additive scale includes trust in the national legislature, Supreme Court, national election commission and the courts. Higher values indicate more trust. For details on question wordings and scales, see the Supplemental Appendix.
7. The regional average was 10.8 in 2008, 11.8 in 2010 and 11.6 in 2012.
8. If associations maintain linkages outside the local context, they tend to be with private (often international) non-governmental organizations (NGOs), rather than with the state or parties (Bell, 2010; Pierre-Louis, 2011).
9. On the measure of civic engagement in the analysis below, Haiti and the Dominican Republic consistently place among the five countries with the most participation.
10. The surveys have about 1500 respondents, except Haiti in 2010 when 1752 people were interviewed in order to oversample internally displaced persons after the January earthquake. In our analyses, appropriate sampling weights are used to obtain nationally representative results.
11. For details on question wordings and scales for all variables, see the Supplementary Data Appendix. This appendix also contains the mean and standard deviation for each variable and Cronbach’s alphas for all scales.
12. Cronbach’s alpha is a scale reliability coefficient computed based on the inter-item correlations of scale components, which helps determine if creating an additive scale is appropriate. Scores over 0.6 are strong; those over 0.8 are excellent.
13. In other analysis not shown, we employed an additive scale based on participation in community organizations, neighborhood improvement projects, school-based parent associations and professional, trade or peasant associations. The results using this scale parallel those reported here. We use the single item rather than the scale because Cronbach’s alpha scores at or below 0.5 indicated limited scale reliability.
14. Ideally we could measure actual attention to political information, but such questions were only asked in 2008.
15. To construct the factor score we employ polychoric factor analysis appropriate for ordinal indicators. The three survey items load onto a single factor in all six country-years, with Eigenvalues ranging from 1.3 (Haiti, 2010) to 2.2 (Dominican Republic, 2010) and factor loadings generally over 0.7. To validate this measure’s ability to tap the concept of particularistic participation, we compared it to a question asking if a candidate or party had offered respondents some material benefit in exchange for their vote. Because this measure of vote-buying was never asked in the Haitian surveys and was only sporadically available in the Dominican data, we cannot employ it here, but it does allow us to demonstrate the validity of our factor score measure. See the supplemental material for details.
16. In the Dominican Republic, those affiliated with the PLD are coded Incumbent (45.6% in 2008, 35.4% in 2010, 31.9% in 2012), while supporters of other parties are coded as Opposition (21.5% in 2008, 17.5% in 2010, 29.6% in 2012). In Haiti, supporters of President Rene Préval’s Fwon Lespwa are coded Incumbent in 2008 and 2010 (20.6% and 3.1%, respectively), and supporters of other parties are treated as Opposition (6.2% in 2008, 22.7% in 2010). In 2012, Michel Martelly of Repons Peyizan was president. His co-partisans are coded Incumbent (20.7%), and supporters of other parties are coded as Opposition (8.3%). In both countries, those with no affiliation are Independents, a larger group in Haiti than in the Dominican Republic.
17. To avoid the potential pitfalls associated with missing data, a common issue in survey research, we used the ICE (Imputation by Chained Equations) package for STATA to impute missing values on our independent variables. See the supplemental material for details.
18. All analyses were conducted using STATA 12.0.
19. The goal here is not to compare the size of effect across different surveys, but rather to identify the most powerful predictors of institutional trust within each survey.

20. These inconclusive effects may be partly due to our measure, which is necessarily indirect. Unfortunately, questions focused explicitly on clientelism were not available in most of the country-years analyzed here. In the Dominican 2010 data, when such a question was available, we observe a significant negative relationship between clientelism and institutional trust, which reinforces our findings reported in the text (see Supplemental Appendix for more details).

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