Conditions of Trust

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Why a pragmatist account of trust?

Conceptual issues: instead of a singular definition or a vast array, some types of trust may be (pragmatically) distinguished.

Practical benefits: distinctions that enable empirical inquiry into *what* the type of trust lacking may be – and *how* it could be built.

What is trust?

 "[T]rust is generally a three-part relation: A trusts B to do X" (Hardin 2002: 9)—or "A trusts B with valued item C" (Baier 1986) or A trusts B in domain D (Jones 2019).

Trusting "opens one up to harm" (Jones 1996, 12; Rousseau et al. 1998, 394–5)

True "trusting can be betrayed, or at least let down, and not just disappointed" (Baier 1986, 235)

Two conditions for trust

Two key conditions:

(Expectation) The trustor, A, has an expectation concerning the trustee, B, with regard to C.

(Vulnerability) The failure of B with regard to C will result in a negative outcome from A's perspective.

An air of paradox – why vulnerable if confident in the expectation? However, a distinction between first and third person points of view.

Conceptual considerations

Prominent candidates for an additional condition for interpersonal trust include that the trustor believes or judges that the trustee:

(1) has *goodwill* towards the trustor (Jones 1996; cf. Baier 1986, 234–5).

(2) is directly *motivated* by the fact that they are trusted (Jones 2012; cf. Pettit 1995).

(3) includes the trustor's *interest* within their own because of an ongoing interest to maintain their relationship with the trustor (Hardin 2002).

(4) has a *moral obligation* to do what the trustor expects them to do (Nickel 2007; cf. Ruokonen 2013).

Types of trust

Distinction based on the content of the trustor's expectations that may concern:

Predictability: a particular action or habit

Reliance: performance that is appropriate with respect to a purpose or role

Ethical trust: ethically appropriate conduct

Trusting the machine

Predictability threatened by learning machines.

Reliability in fulfilling a purpose does not equal ethical trustworthiness.

Does *ethical trust* (ultimately) require the capability of revising ethical opinion – something that perhaps cannot be turned into an algorithmic shape? (Freedom, from one pragmatist point of view.)

Trust towards experts?

Reliance concerning services and products.

But also of a particular sort – reliance for recommendations on public and private habits, or policy.

A first problem: what if the purposes of public expertise are unclear – both to the experts and the laypeople?

A Finnish problem…

"Shocking comments" from director of

Finnish institute of health and welfare

(8 July 2022)

Ylilääkäri ja Hus-johtaja tyrmistyivät THL:n Salmisen rokotepuheista: "Kaiken kaikkiaan järkyttävä kommentti"

Mika Salmisen tuore kommentti voi vaikuttaa THL:n uskottavuuteen, uskoo Markku Broas.

⤷ JAA

Markku Broas ja Lasse Lehtonen ihmettelevät Mika Salmisen tuoretta kommenttia. KUVA: VESA MOILANEN / LEHTIKUVA, ANTTI HÄMÄLÄINEN / IS

… nicely explained

- Infectious disease doctors see patients of whom one can quite justifiably say that if they had received better vaccination protection, their severe disease would have been prevented.

- THL [the Institute of health and welfare], on the other hand, considers how many need to be vaccinated in order to prevent that one case. Based on this, they make an assessment of how to schedule and who gains the most benefit from vaccinations, remembering that vaccines are also associated with side effects.

    - Mika Rämet, director of University of Tampere's vaccine research centre

A second problem

Despite reliance concerning best ways to achieve certain (societal) goals, the analogous form of *ethical* trust may be lacking.

Are the goals of the expert recommendations – often implicit or simply assumed to be shared – in line with those of the public, or my own?

Does Dewey's problem still stand?

On the practical side, or among persons directly occupied with management of practical affairs, it is commonly assumed that the problems which exist are already definite in their main features. When this assumption is made, it follows that the business of inquiry is but to ascertain the best method of solving them. (Dewey 1938, 487)

When we turn from consideration of the methods of inquiry currently employed in political and many administrative matters, to the methods that are adopted in the professed name of social science, we find quite an opposite state of affairs. [...] The soundness of the principle that moral condemnation and approbation should be excluded from the operations of obtaining and weighing material data and from the operations by which conceptions for dealing with the data are instituted, is, however, often converted into the notion that all evaluations should be excluded. (488-9)