

Trust: Decision problem or performance?

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ABSTRACT

Established theories on trust-development explain trust as a product of information, portraying individuals as passive receptacles of trust-related information. These theories however tend to ignore the goals of the trustor. In short existing contribution on trusts tend to portray the development of trust as a decision problem. In this paper we suggest an alternative perspective of trust and trust formation, where we see trust as an intentional goal initiated performance. People trust other people in order to attain social ends. In order to effectively communicate trust people seek to influence their own subjective experience of trust. We refer to this second perspective as the Trust-as-Performance-perspective. The assumptions underlying the two perspectives are compared and contrasted. We show how the two perspectives can be seen as corresponding to different models of trust development. The final section discusses the possible relationships between the perspectives and how the two perspectives together may improve our understanding of trust in relationships.

Keywords: Trust; motivation, leadership

INTRODUCTION

Trust and questions relating to trust and trustworthiness in organizations have become more salient, more critical and more problematic (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006). People, for example, must increasingly form and sustain relationships with people across organizational divisions. Cross functional product teams brings together people who share very little common history (Randel & Jaussi, 2003). Trust is also becoming more problematic as employees spend less time with one employer (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). A greater emphasis on individualistic values as opposed to collective values mean that people can not be expected to prioritize the interests of the organization over self-interest (Smola & Sutton, 2002). While trust is becoming more challenging it is also becoming more consequential as rules and hierarchy in organizations are replaced with more fluent forms of organization in which employees have more discretion in terms of deciding who to interact with (Rousseau, 1996). Recent organizational developmental trends accentuate the need for people to manage, initiate, form, develop and maintain relationships, often in situations where people have little prior information about other people and in which people hold conflicting interests (Giddens, 1994). In short, organizational life accentuate the role of agency and choice in the formation and development of trust, elements that are almost absent in existing theories and models of trust in organizations (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camererer, 1998). Theories of initial trust formation see initial trust as reflecting a combination of a general propensity to trust other people, structural safeguards or guarantees, normalcy beliefs, and categorization processes (McKnight & Chervany, 2006; McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 1998). But in explaining initial trust these theories tend to merely remove the initial problem by transforming “weak situations” into “strong situations”. With weak situations we here mean situations characterized by “...highly ambiguous behavioral cues that provide few constraints on behavior, and do not induce uniform expectations” (Gill,

Boies, Finegan & McNally, 2005: 293). Strong situations on the other hand have “...salient behavioral cues that lead everyone to interpret the circumstances similarly, and induce uniform expectations regarding the appropriate response” (Gill et al. 2005: 293). Theories of initial trust formation leave little or no role for the trustor and fail to address the question of how and why people deal with uncertainty.

The need to incorporate agency, choice and goals in theories of trust is important not only to describe trust in “weak situations” or in the initial stages of a relationship. Trust is usually defined as a willingness to accept and live with uncertainty. The absence of choice, agency and goals in our models of trust impedes our understanding of the phenomenon of trust. Theories that explain trust by reducing uncertainty essentially ignores the defining problem with trust, that is how people move beyond knowledge to trust in what is variously referred to as a leap of faith (Kierkegaard, 1985 [1943]; Simmel, 1990 [1907]), suspension (Möllering, 2006), or overdrawing on information (Luhmann, 1979). In this paper we argue that existing theories of trust in emphasizing the role of information in the development of trust have ignored an essential and defining aspect of trust; how people come to live with and accept risk in the relationship. We develop our position by contrasting two different perspectives: The first perspective which we argue dominate the existing literature on trust sees trust as driven by information and uncertainty reduction. We refer to this perspective as the Trust-as-Decision-perspective. The second perspective sees trust as a goal-initiated performance. We refer to this perspective as the Trust-as-Performance-perspective. A purpose is to lift out and expose some of the often implicit assumptions guiding much of the existing research on trust while simultaneously offering a coherent alternative perspective. While several contributions have critiqued the dominant information centered model of trust (Williams, 2007; Möllering, 2006, Giddens, 1990) this critique tends to be piecemeal in nature. No contributions have yet

to offer a fully developed perspective that challenges the “information-centric” models of trust like that of Mayer, Davis & Schoorman’s integrative model of trust. No trust-models incorporate notions of goals, intentions or self-reflection. An important reason for the dominant position of what we refer to as the “trust as a decision problem” perspective in the literature on trust can be ascribed to the existence of a model to generate research propositions and guide empirical studies.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: We first define trust and risk and describe some of the dimensions of trust. We then offer a brief review and critique of the literature on trust in organization. In the next section we proceed to present and describe two contrasting perspectives on trust; what we refer to as the Trust-as-Decision-perspective (the dominant perspective) and a Trust-as-Performance perspective emphasizing goals and self-regulation over information. We describe the often implicit assumptions in these different perspectives. This section leads over into a presentation of the various models associated with the two perspectives. As an alternative to Mayer et al.’s integrative model of trust we present what we refer to as an agentic model of trust. We discuss the implications of these two perspectives as well as the relationship between the two. In the last part of the paper we look at implications for further research as well as practice.

We here define trust as a “psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon a positive expectation of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998: 395). Thus, trust in this paper is viewed as an intrapersonal state. Trust relates to situations that involve risk (Das & Teng, 2004), dependence (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), delayed reciprocity (Kramer, 1999), and choice (Luhmann, 1988). Risk here refers to “the extent to which there is uncertainty about whether potentially significant

and/ or disappointing outcomes of decisions will be realized” (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992: 10).

Trust, unlike assurance or confidence, implies the awareness of risk. People remain conscious of the potential danger of relying on a trustee, yet chooses to trust the trustee. Luhmann (1988) proposed the following distinction between confidence and trust: “If you do not consider alternatives (every morning you leave the house without a weapon), 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” (1988: 102).

Trust as a mental and affective state extends over time (McAllister, 1995) and is likely to change over time in terms of salience, content and strength (Jones & George, 1998).

Importantly, people’s experience of trust and changes in trust is likely to continue after people commit themselves to trusting someone. Trust thus can be described as varying with respect to constancy. Large fluctuations in trust over time are likely to reduce the effects of trust on a trustee by introducing uncertainty and ambivalence to the trustee’s interpretation of the trust displayed by the trustor (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). Depending on how a trustor experience his or her trust in a trustee, the subjective experience is likely to influence how a trustor signals and communicates his or her trust to a trustee. A trustor who feels uncomfortable about trusting someone despite claims to the contrary is less likely to come across as authentic or genuine and accordingly less likely to influence an anxious trustee in a desired direction (Cook, Kramer, Thom, Stepanikova, Mollborn & Cooper, 2004). In this sense, the subjective experience of trust we argue effectively becomes an integral part of the act of trusting as a trustor’s subjective experience of trust is likely to influence how people express and communicate their trust in a trustee.

TRUST AND TRUST DEVELOPMENT – A SHORT REVIEW

In this section we provide a brief review of the trust literature with a particular emphasis on the social psychological literature as applied to organizations (Kramer, 1999). Because we are interested in understanding the psychological underpinnings of trust we deliberately limit the review to the social psychological literature on trust as opposed to more sociological literature which sees trust as a systemic feature of social systems (Lane, 1998).

Trust has variously been viewed as a psychological characteristic or general propensity to trust (Erikson, 1968; Rotter, 1971), as a set of specific beliefs or expectations about other people and their behavior (Driscoll, 1978; Robinson, 1996) or as manifest choice-behavior in economics and political science (Arrow, 1974; Cook & Cooper, 2002). A particularly influential line of research sees trust as a psychological state, reflecting history-dependent processes (Deutsch, 1958, Boyle & Bonacich, 1970) in which “trust between two or more interdependent actors thickens or thins as a function as a function of their cumulative interaction” (Kramer, 1999: 575). Kramer (1996) thus likens the trustor with an intuitive auditor monitoring interactions and their outcomes. Interactions that confirm peoples’ expectations about other people’s trustworthiness increase trust whereas violations of trust undermine trust (Deutsch, 1958; Kramer, 1996).

In their integrative model of trust Mayer, Schoorman & Davis (1995) seek to integrate previous contributions, of which some have viewed trust as a set of beliefs, and others have defined trust as a behavior as in the form of cooperation. Mayer et al. define trust as “the willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party (Mayer, Schoorman & Davis, 1995: 712). Thus, trust as

conceptualized by Mayer et al. is viewed as a attitude towards a type of behavior that is informed by but distinct from trusting beliefs; a trustor's beliefs about the trustworthiness of the trustee with respect to ability, benevolence and integrity. This behavioral attitude influences "risk taking in relationship" (RTR) or the extent to which a trustor accepts actual risk in relationship with a trustee. The relationship between trust and the behavioral manifestation of trust is moderated by the amount of perceived risk. The higher the perceived risk, the higher the trust needed to sustain risk taking in relationship.

Later contributions have sought to expand the understanding of trust by introducing different types of trust, differentiating between cognitive trust and affective trust or trust founded on liking or a shared identity and a more rational, cool cognitive trust (McAllister, 1995). Other contributions have sought to explain the relationship between different forms of trust, Lewicki & Bunker (1996) show how the nature of trust changes over time as relationships progress: a cognitive, calculative, deterrence based and usually fragile trust characterize the very initial stages of professional relationships, whereas an affective trust based on mutual identification and personal liking sometimes replaces cognitive trust as relationships grows and develops over time (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Ring, 1996; McAllister, 1995).

Sheppard & Sherman (1998) show how the nature of trust reflects the characteristics of the relationship (Fiske, 1992). Thus, whereas trust in market relationships characterized by shallow dependence tend to emphasize reliability and performance, trust in highly interdependent communal relationships tend to emphasize benevolence and care over performance or reliability (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998).

Subsequent contributions have sought to explain the paradox of initial or “swift” trust, or trust in situations where the parties lack a history of previous interaction, by introducing other, alternative sources of trust besides experience and trusting propensity (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 1998; Meyerson, Weick & Kramer, 1998; Harrison, McKnight & Chervany, 2006). McKnight et al. differentiate between three categories of sources of initial trust, some of which influence trust through trusting beliefs and some which influence trusting intention directly. Initial trust may reflect a trustor’s disposition to trust which include the a trustor’s faith in humanity (the belief that others are typically well meaning and reliable) and trusting stance (the belief that regardless of whether people are well meaning or reliable or not, one will obtain better outcomes by dealing with people as though they were. Initial trust is also supported by cognitive processes that include categorization processes in which people infer qualities and dispositions on a trustee on the basis of some external characteristic or membership in a group, or organization (Brewer, 1981). Illusion of control processes include token control efforts in which people increase their experience of control by testing their ability to influence a trustee in some way. Token control efforts elevate the trustor’s experience of control, reduce the perceived risk and accordingly facilitate the experience of initial trust (Greenberg & Strasser, 1991; Langer, 1975). A final source is what McKnight et al. refer to as institution based trust or the belief that impersonal structures are in place to enable one to act in anticipation of a successful future endeavor. Institution based trust may be based on structural safeguards (guarantees), or the belief that a situation is normal and in proper order (Zucker, 1986; Garfinkel, 1968). Uzzi (1997) found that third parties in the New York apparel industry functioned as important “go-betweens” in establishing new relationships, enabling individuals to “roll over” their expectations from a well established relationship to a new relationship. Meyerson, Weick & Kramer exploring trust in temporary systems or work groups, argue that role clarity “leads to a decrease in expected ill will, and an

increase in trust presumes that roles in temporary systems are clear, that people act toward one another in terms of roles and have a clear understanding of others' roles" (1996: 173).

While these contributions expand on and provide a more comprehensive understanding of trust and the developmental processes that produces trust, they share a common assumption that trust is based on information and the reduction of uncertainty that comes with information. Whereas different contributions emphasize different types and sources of information, these contributions share the same assumption that it is information whether in the form of experience, institutional safeguards, categorical knowledge or normalcy beliefs that provide the impetus to the model. None of the contributions discussed above include goals in their theories but treat goals and needs as exogenous variables. Thus, Mayer et al. (1995) argue that the various properties of trustworthiness are likely to differ in importance depending on the nature of the relationship between a trustor and a trustee, but do not include the trustor's goals in their model.

Peoples' capacity for handling and living with uncertainty in social relationships constitutes the very core of trust defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability" and should be central to our theories of trust. Moreover as we see trust as intentional, willful and goal directed behavior we believe that an understanding of trust in the form of managing and living with uncertainty and risk should incorporate notions of how intentions and goals affect this willingness. If the acceptance of uncertainty and risk constitute a core aspect of trust, we not only need to explain the phenomenon, how and why people bridge the gap between available knowledge and trust but we also need to explain variation in this willingness, why people in some cases may be capable of bridging large gaps and in other situations have problems tolerating even small gaps.

While the model of Mayer et al. (1995) dominates the journals, dissenting voices can be heard. Möllering argues that "by subsuming trust as a form of rational choice, routine behaviour or reflexive reinforcement, the concept is stripped of unique explanatory behaviour" (2006: 106). He continues that it is only where decisions can not be made in a calculative way that trust becomes meaningful. Reason, routine or reflexive reinforcement can not in itself explain how people go beyond knowledge in what is variously referred to as a leap of faith, a suspension of disbelief, or over-drawing on information. This move argue Möllering constitute the essence or defining feature of trust.

Three arguments are often made in critiquing the information-centric models of trust and trust development: A first argument is that trust-research should focus on the intentional, interpersonal actions individuals use to build trust. Williams observes that "Scholars have most often described trust development as a relatively passive process of gathering data about other peoples' trustworthiness by watching their behavior in various situations over time" (2007: 595). Hardin presents a strategy of "as-if trust" as a temporary solution which enable a process whereby a trustor can gradually cease to feign trust as genuine trust develops based on the developing experience with interaction (Hardin, 1993). Giddens argues that "trust needs to be worked upon" (1990: 121) and that active trust implies a reflexive process of trust development that requires continuous communication and openness (Möllering, 2006; Giddens, 1990, 1991). Williams (2007) introduces the notion of threat regulation as an agentic interpersonal process through which people build and maintain trust. Threat regulation as described by Williams includes perspective taking or "the intrapsychic processes of imagining another's thoughts, motives, or feelings from that person's point of views" (Williams, 2007: 601; Davis, 1996). Threat reducing behavior is informed by perspective taking and involves

different strategies aimed at regulating other peoples' emotions (Gross & Thompson, 2007). The counterpart's responses to threat reducing behavior then give rise to reflection or the assessment of the impact of one's attempts to regulate other's experiences of threat (Williams, 2007). Active threat regulation argues Williams in turn influences trust and cooperation.

A second argument is that trust rather than being seen as a decision may be better understood as a performative act (Austin, 1975). Szerszynski (1999) thus argue that to trust or "take a posture of trust towards another can often best be understood not just as a cognitive judgement but as an attempt to bind the 'trusted' into a relationship and attitude of responsibility" (1999: 239). Trust reduces uncertainty by communicating expectations and reducing the perceived behavioral options for the trustee (Luhmann, 1979). Trust in this sense is performative – people perform trust in the way that trust constitute an act which "can, in the right circumstances, bring about social effects hermeneutically, through changing the definition of a situation, and of its constituent relations (Szerszynski, 1999: 245).

A third argument is how trust involves suspension or a leap of faith in which a trustor in trusting someone move beyond the available knowledge and good reasons (Möllering, 2006). Möllering (2006) cites Simmel (1990: [1907]) who describes proper trust as trust that goes beyond existing knowledge and involves an element of "socio-psychological quasi-religious faith (107)". Trust according to Simmel exist somewhere between "knowledge and ignorance of a man". Möllering suggests three explanations for suspension or the "process that enables actors to deal with irreducible uncertainty and vulnerability (2006: 110). First, trust may require an "as if" attitude towards social reality in which people live as if certain outcomes will not occur. This fiction is achieved and sustained by the individual who overdraw on information, making inferences beyond what the information can support. Bracketing

constitute a second explanation and refers to how people rather than to eliminate complexity “reduce it; that is, make it livable with, while in some sense preserving it” (Poggi, 1979).

People according to Giddens (1991) bracket ignorance and lack of information when vesting their confidence in people or abstract systems. Finally, trust can be viewed as an operation of the will (Luhmann, 1979). Whereas trust can not be justified from information alone, the actor exercises agency through his or her will to suspend with uncertainty or not (Möllering, 2006).

Actors argues James (1948 [1896]) has a right to believe in religion and other matters but faith requires the “sentiment of rationality” or that the faith is “true” in the pragmatist meaning of being useful in enabling action. Faith is needed in order for people to choose and act in the world and get on with their lives. Faith in a fact may help realize that fact as where trusting an individual makes the beneficiary of trust more trustworthy (Snyder & Stukas, 1999).

These contributions introduce an important corrective to the dominant perspective on trust as an information-driven decision problem. Yet, they fail to offer a fully developed theoretical alternative to the reigning view of trust as a decision problem. While, previous contributions have sought to explain the leap of faith, we do not yet have a parsimonious theory to explain leaping or variation in leaping. While theories of active trust highlights agency in the form of unilateral displays of trust and the active management of relations (Williams, 2007; Giddens, 1990, 1991) the same contributions uphold the view that peoples’ experience of trust is autonomous and unaffected by social goals. Thus, people may feign trust or act as if trust existed in order to set of a dynamics that will eventually lead to genuine trust, but goals are not assumed to influence the actual experience of trust (Hardin, 1994). Viewing trust as a performative act (Szerszynski, 1999) or performance we argue suggest a promising alternative understanding of trust. Viewed as a performance, we argue that trust is likely to differ with

respect to its effectiveness in influencing a trustee. The extent to which trust is effective will depend on the extent to which trust is perceived by a trustee as being genuine or authentic. The actual, subjective experience of trust here then becomes part of the performance or the act of trusting in that the subjective experience may enable or undermine the performance of trust. This is analogous to other instances in which people seek to regulate their experiences and emotions to match contextual demands (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

TWO PERSPECTIVES: TRUST AS A DECISION-PROBLEM VERSUS TRUST-AS-PERFORMANCE

In this section we proceed to describe the two perspectives on trust. We describe the usually implicit assumptions of the two perspectives and show how these differ.

Emphasis

The first and we argue the dominant perspective on trust essentially view trust as a decision problem. In this first perspective, trust is about whom to trust and whom not to trust and the immediate subsequent consequences of being right or wrong about trusting. An example might illustrate the characteristics of this perspective. A cab-driver in a rough neighborhood accepts a customer based on his appearance (well dressed and groomed) despite having no previous experience with this customer (Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Henslin, 1968). The cab-driver weighs the pros and cons of extra income generated by an extra customer against the slight possibility of the customer being a violent robber.

The trust as a decision problem is expressed in sayings such as

- “Trust but verify” (Russian proverb)
- In God we trust, all others we virus scan (Unknown author) and
- Never trust a husband too far, nor a bachelor too near (Helen Rowland)

These sayings highlight the value of prudence in social interaction.

In this perspective, trust is seen as a function of the information available to the trustor. As people gain experience and come to know the trustee and his or her qualities, uncertainty is reduced and peoples' willingness to interact and make oneself reliant on the trustee increases. It is information whether accrued from a history of interaction, from the hearsay of others (Burt & Knez, 1996), in the form of social categories (McKnight, Cummings & Chervany, 1998) or even in the form of preformed cognitive schemas or a trusting propensity (Rotter, 1980) that initiates and drives the formation and development of trust.

The second perspective sees trust as a social performance. Here a trustor's trust in a trustee is seen as influencing the trustee's beliefs, attitudes, emotions, self-concept and behaviors. Trust thus becomes not as much a decision as a mean that enable people to achieve social ends. An example may help to illustrate this perspective.

A coach believes in a promising player and decides to invest time and resources in developing the player further. In order for the player to shine however the coach must convince the player that he is good enough to play on the team. To convince the player the coach must himself believe in the player and experience sufficient trust in order to come across as believable to the player. In the trust as social performance perspective people commit to people and to trusting other people, knowing that trust constitutes a prerequisite for achieving more distant social objectives. Thus, unlike in the Trust as Decision problem, people are viewed as capable of foresight – seeing consequences that lie beyond an immediate response to the situation (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Thus, by intervening and adjusting their immediate responses, people are capable of transforming social situations (Bandura, 1989).

This second perspective is expressed in proverbs such as:

- Few things help an individual more than to place responsibility upon him, and to let him know that you trust him. ~Booker T. Washington
 - The only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him. ~Henry L. Stimson
- Sayings that highlight the virtues of giving and communicating trust in others.

Criteria used in evaluating the consequences of trust

The perspectives differ with respect to criteria used to evaluate the outcomes of trust. The criteria in the Trust-as-Decision-Problem-perspective relates primarily to whether a trustor proves to be right or wrong about trusting a trustee. Thus, a trustor may realize that a colleague entrusted with confidential information has told other people in the workplace. The cab-driver in the example above may realize that the well groomed customer is in fact a dangerous criminal. Whereas trust in the Trust as Decision problem - perspective is about the consequences of being right or wrong about trusting, the criteria in the Trust-as-Performance relates to whether or not a trustor is able to influence a trustee and shaping social interaction. Thus, the question is how effective the trustor's trust is in influencing future social interaction. Emphasis is less on the immediate consequences of trusting and risk taking in relationships but on the effects that trust has on some longer term goal.

Assumptions about trustworthiness

The perspectives also differ in the assumptions made about the trustworthiness of the trustee. The "trust-as-decision"-perspective holds that trusting a trustee in the meaning of expressing trust or engaging in risk taking in behavior does not influence the trustworthiness of the trustee. The Trust-as-Performance-perspective on the other hand sees trust as influencing the trustworthiness of other people. Trust may be seen as one form of altercasting (Turner, 19..) in

which the trustor communicates his or her definition and expectation about reality, thus defining and limiting the behavioral options for the trustee.

The trust of a trustor can influence the trustee in several non-exclusive ways. A trustor can by conveying his or her trust in a trustee increase the trustee's perceived self-efficacy where perceived self-efficacy refers to his or her "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1997: 3) and thereby improve his or her performance on a given task. Second, a trustor may also commit a trustee to a specific set of action thus reducing the perceived behavioral options to the trustee. Third, the trustor may by conveying his or her trust in the trustee enhances the trustee's opinion and sympathy for the trustee, thus increasing the likelihood that the trustee will reciprocate with trust and trustworthy behavior (Whitener et al. 1998). Fourth, communicating trust may influence the trustee's perception of his or her relationship with the trustor (e.g. a leader). The trustworthiness of the trustee in the performance perspective thus is not viewed as a fixed quality but as at least partially susceptible to influence. The extent to which trustee cooperates, engages in pro-social behavior or performs to some extent is influenced by the expectations communicated by the trustor.

Decisions in the two perspectives

The perspectives also differ with respect to where they see decisions in comparison to trust. In the Trust-as-Decision-perspective peoples' experience of trust thus is seen as leading up to a decision to act on their trust. The experience of trust is seen as preceding the decision to trust and subsequent trusting behavior. In the Trust-as-Performance-perspective on the other hand trust begins with a decision in which a trustor commits to a position or a trustee. The coach decides to invest in a specific player and seeks to communicate his trust in the player in order

to raise the self-esteem and self-efficacy of the player. Trust is an experience which the trustor seeks to maintain over a period of time in order to attain a desired outcome.

Relationship between experience and action

The perspectives differ in how they see the relationship between the experience of trust and trusting behavior or risk taking in relationship and whether they see these as separate and distinct constructs or interrelated. In the Trust-as-Decision-perspective, the experience of trusting is viewed as separate from trusting behavior or risk taking in relationships (Mayer, Schoorman & Davis, 1995). Trusting intention precedes risk taking behavior in relationships. The consequences of trusting, follows from the consequences of the behavior, not from the trusting intention. Experience informs the decision and the subsequent behavior but does not by itself constitute a part of the behavior. The trustor influences the trustee through his or her behavior, not subjective experience. How a trustor feels about his or her trusting behavior is less relevant than the manifest behavior.

In the “trust-as-performance” perspective the subjective experience of trust influences a trustor’s ability to communicate that trust to others. In effect then, the subjective experience of trust becomes an integral part of the act of trusting. The experience of trust and act of trusting and communication of trust influences each other mutually and in effect becomes inseparable. In order for a trustee to believe a trustor, the trustor will need to believe in himself.

Causal agent

The main emphasis in the trust as a decision problem is on the effect of information on trust formation and trust development. The trustor is largely treated as what ... refers to as “...passive receptacle of information”. Information sets off a series of mental operations or

“cogs and wheels” which eventually influences trust. The view on the self in existing theories on trust resembles what Bandura (1989) refers to as mechanical agency: the self is essentially portrayed as an “...internal instrumentality through which external influences operate mechanistically on action, but does...not itself have any motivative, self-reflective, self-reactive, creative, or self-directive properties” (Bandura, 1989: 1175).

Goals and intentions are central to the Trust-as-Performance-perspective. The subjective experience of trust helps facilitate the attainment of other social goals like the formation and development of productive social relationship. Because trust serves social ends, people’s motivation to attain such ends also means that people will be motivated to regulate their experience of trust to attain these ends. Thus, unlike the former perspective, the Trust as Performance perspective, emphasize the role goals over information in the formation and development of trust. Goals initiate self-regulatory processes which influence the type of situations people select, which aspects of situations people attend to and how social information is interpreted (Gross, 1994). Thus, social stimuli at least to some extent are malleable to the effects of social goals and regulatory attempts.

Quality of trust

The perspectives also differ in how they portray trust and differences in the experience of trust. The Trust as Decision problem sees trust essentially as a uniform, homogenous quantity that while varying in strength holds few other qualities (Mayer et al. 1998). The Trust-as-Performance-perspective adds the perspective of the trustee observing the trustor and his or her trust. From the perspective of the trustee, trust may differ with respect to authenticity or the extent to which trust is perceived as genuine or real or not. Trust is also likely to differ in constancy or the extent to which trust varies over time. The effectiveness of trust in

influencing the trustee is likely to be a positive function of the extent to which trust is viewed as authentic and constant over time.

Motives highlighted

The two perspectives differ in the motives highlighted. The Trust-as-Decision-perspective tends to emphasize the immediate consequences of trusting and can be subsumed under the description of seeking immediate gain while avoiding harm. The Trust-as-Performance-perspective on the other hand expands the range of motives by including motives that extends beyond immediate outcomes of exchanges. Thus motives in the Trust-as-Performance-perspective includes a motivation for growth and self-development, the motivation to influence other people's perception of oneself as well as the motivation to control one's own emotional experience. Thus, the Trust as Performance includes motives that relates to outcomes that extend into the future as opposed to the immediate consequences of interaction and include motives that relate to outcomes at different levels in a goal-hierarchy (Higgins & Pittman, 2009).

Role of self-reflection

The Trust as Decision-Problem-perspective devotes little or no attention to the role of foresight or to peoples' experience and thoughts about the processes that influences the experience of trust. Related to this, while studies have looked at the experience of trust or amount of trust people have in individuals, there is little interest in meta-cognition (Efklides, 2008) and meta-emotions (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992) or how people think and feel about their experience of trust. Instead people are assumed to attend to the immediate consequences of trusting. Trust is based on beliefs regarding the trustworthiness of the trustee and hence the consequences of trusting. There is little attention to long term consequences or to how trust may influence the beliefs and attitudes of the trustee or the long term nature of a relationship.

The Trust-as-Performance-perspective on the other hand assumes a capacity for self-reflection in which people understand and monitor the wider and longer-term consequences of their immediate consequences and accordingly seek to regulate and adjust their responses and behavior in order to transform situations (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003).

Mediating mechanisms

The two perspectives present different mediating mechanisms. In the Trust-as-Decision-perspective information influences trust through learning, people acquire experience which reduces the subjective risk of trusting a trustee. In contrast, the prime mediating mechanism in the Trust-as-Performance-perspective the mediating mechanism is self-regulatory processes in which people seek to regulate their own experience of trust (Carver, 2004).

Consequences of not trusting

Unwarranted trust in the Trust-as-Decision-Problem is viewed as costly whereas vigilance or low trust is viewed as carrying little or no cost. Thus, Coleman (1982) sees the issue of trust as a subclass under risk. The gains and losses from trusting Coleman argues should be compared to the option of not trusting which he assumes, does not alter the utility of the trustor (Coleman, 1982: 281). In the Trust-as-Performance-perspective the failure to display trust carries costs, in the form of unrealized or hampered relationships and reduced reciprocity. People have been shown to respond unfavorably to people who fail to display trust or who display too little trust in social exchanges and careful, “rational” players have been found to receive lesser inducements in cooperative games (Weber, Malhotra & Murnighan, 2005). The positive effect of trust in social exchanges moreover may be a negative function of the time spent on developing the relationship. Offering trust at an advanced stage in a relationship where the risks for doing so are very low may have little value to the trustee and offer few advantages to the trustor.

Developmental trajectory

The Trust-as-Decision-perspective view trust as developing incrementally as people gradually gain experience with the trustee. Trust change argues Boyle & Bonacich argue "...in the direction of experience and to a degree proportional to the difference between this difference and the initial expectations applied to it" (pp. 130). This elicits the image of the trustor as an intuitive auditor keeping score on promises and exchanges within a relationship (Kramer, 1996). Whereas the Trust-as-Decision-problem-perspective sees trust developing incrementally, the Trust-as-Performance-perspective see trust as developing by fits and starts – people commit to trusting other people, and subsequently seek to maintain their trust and faith in light of their prior commitments. The trajectory is uneven as people commit to a position of trust and seeks to align their experience of trust to that position.

Representative model

Trust as a decision problem is best represented by behavioral decision models (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973). The best known and most influential of which is Mayer et al.'s integrative model of trust (1995). In Mayer et al.'s model, trust is influenced by peoples' beliefs regarding the trustworthiness of the trust with respect to integrity, benevolence and ability as well as a general propensity to trust. On the basis of these beliefs, the trustor forms a trusting intention which is the trustor's willingness to accept risk in relying on someone. The level of risk finally influences the effects of trust on actual risk taking behavior, in that more trust is needed to sustain risk taking behavior where risk is high compared to in situations of less risk. Beliefs are updated as people accumulate experience outcomes from risk taking behavior. Negative experiences over time translate into more negative beliefs regarding the trustworthiness of the trustee.

Models like the integrative model of trust (Mayer et al., 1995) emphasize information while ignoring the goals of the trustor. Goals however are central to the Trust-as-Performance-perspective in that trust is seen as constituting a mean to an end and seen as an to which people aspire. Here we argue that this perspective is best represented through a cybernetic control model as described by among other Carver (1977, 2004). People seek to attain an aspired state of trust in the context of pursuing social goals and negative deviations from the aspired state motivate self-regulation which again influences the level of trust. The Trust-as-Performance-perspective show how trust can be seen as a mean to other social ends. People have social goals that initiate goal striving, including striving to project trust to other people. Thus, trust is here seen as an aspired state. Goals initiate self-regulatory efforts with the purpose of reducing a gap between actual experienced trust and the aspired state of trust. This suggests a model of trust that is essentially a feedback loop in which goals (such as forming a productive relationship or living up to a aspired self) defines a desired state or comparator (the trust associated with reaching a given goal) against which actual trust is compared (Carver, 2004; Carver & Scheier, 1981). People seek to reduce the deviance between the aspired level of trust and actual trust. As people close the gap between aspired and actual level of trust and achieve their goal, people experience satisfaction and the intensity of self-regulation abates. On the other hand, a failure to reduce the deviance leads to negative affect, motivating renewed and intensified efforts of self-regulation (Carver, 2004). The experience of trust is influenced by the social goals of the trustor. Goals as preferred end-states initiate self-regulatory processes which influences peoples' experience of trust. The motivation for self-regulation here is likely to be a function of the valence and importance of the goal, peoples' perception of the relationship between the subjective experience of trust and goal-attainment as well as peoples' beliefs about whether they are likely to succeed in the regulation of trust (Bandura, 1997). While the notion of self-regulation conjures up images of highly deliberative

and conscious processes, self-regulation can be unconscious and automatic (Bargh, 1990; Bargh, Gollwitzer, Lee-Chai, Barndollar & Trotschel, 2001).

Like in other conceptualizations of trust, trust is also influenced by what people perceive and experience but this experience is moderated by peoples' self-regulation. A possible template for understanding how people regulate their experience of trust may be found in the literature on affect regulation (Gross, 2006, 1998). Gross suggest that different strategies of affect regulation can be organized along a timeline that follows a modal model of emotions (Gross & Thompson, 2007: 5). A trustor may select the situation he or she places him/herself in. The ultimate situation selection here obviously consists of screening out untrustworthy individuals. But people may also select situations that are likely to make trusting the other person easier, such as choosing an informal setting for a job-meeting as opposed to a formal setting. Once, in a situation, that situation can be modified in order to accommodate for the experience of confidence, assurance or trust. Alternatively, people can deploy to aspects of a situation that are likely to enhance trust or that enable them to control ruminations, thoughts and feelings of uncertainty. People may also seek to influence their interpretation of events in ways conducive to an experience of trust. Finally, people may seek to modulate or suppress unwanted emotional displays. Thus distrustful individuals may seek to suppress signs of discomfort with trusting a trustee. Such modulation however carries costs in the form of reduced expressivity and stress that are likely to reduce the effect of the trust sought conveyed to the trustee (John & Gross, 2004). Finally, the extent to which people are successful at self-regulating trust is likely to reflect the situation. A situation in which people must attend to multiple concerns simultaneously is likely to detract attention and self-regulatory capacity from the task at hand (regulating trust) and reduce the likelihood of successful outcomes (attaining the desired level of trust). Prior self-regulation on the other hand is likely to deplete peoples' self-regulatory resources, increasing the chances of self-regulatory lapses

(Schmeichel & Baumeister, 2004). Table 1 sum up the foregoing presentation and describes the differences between the two perspectives.

Insert Table 1 about here

DISCUSSION

In the paper we have introduced and described two perspectives on trust; a traditional perspective emphasizing the role of information and uncertainty-reduction and an alternative perspective that sees trust as a performance motivated by social goals. This second perspective sees trust as a mean to an end and susceptible to self-regulation. This offers what we believe constitute a viable explanation for how people suspend with disbelief and move from knowledge to trust (Möllering, 2006). In the discussion we look closer at the relationship between the perspectives described here. What is the relationship between the perspectives? Do the different perspectives apply to different types of situations and relationships? Do the perspectives complement each other by describing different aspects of trust or do they describe different stages in the development of trust in relationships?

We do not believe the Trust-as-Performance-perspective constitutes a complete depiction of trust and the processes through which trust forms, in the same way that we do not believe the Trust-as-a- Decision-Problem-perspective constitutes a complete depiction. We may envision the relationship between the two perspectives in different ways: First, the perspectives may apply to different types of situations. Situations involving little and infrequent interaction and little room for influence (as in the example with the cabdriver) fit easily with the assumptions in the Trust-as-Decision-problem perspective whereas situations involving close interaction,

extensive interdependence and mutual influence as well as highly salient social goals (as in the example with the coach influencing a team-member) more easily lend themselves to the Trust-as-Performance-perspective in that trust is likely to influence the trustee and his or her behavior. But we also believe that our understanding of many, if not most, trusting situations can be improved by drawing on insights from both perspectives. People obviously do seek answers to whether people we depend upon can be trusted. But people also seek to communicate their trust and people commit to positions. People do not continually evaluating the pros and cons of relying on someone but eventually commit to and learn to live with positions (Murray & Holmes, 1993; Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). The development of trust in social relationships is likely to contain elements from both perspectives. As relationships evolve people may move between different states that correspond to each of the two perspectives. Thus, in an early stage people may see trust more or less as a decision problem (“Should I work with this person?” or “Should I date her?”). Over time however peoples’ ability to convincingly signal trust in the other party may constitute a prerequisite for further progression and people move from a Trust-as-a-Decision-phase into a Trust-as-Performance- phase in which people commit themselves to trusting for then subsequently seeking to align their subjective experience with their commitment to trust (“How can I show that I Trust him?”). Breaches of trust may cause subsequent shifts from a performance mode back to a decision mode (“Based on what he did, can I really trust him?”) (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

We may also think of relationship between the perspectives and their associated processes (decision making and self-regulation of trust) as a hierarchical relationship in that one of the perspectives represent processes that constitute a necessary but insufficient condition for the processes associated with the second perspective. Thus, people may first have to establish the

trustworthiness of a trustee (Trust-as-Decision-Problem) before engaging in the self-regulation of trust (Trust-as-Performance). This resembles the observation of how people in new relationships first seek to establish the reliability and predictability of a trustee before making further commitments to the relationship (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985).

In fact, the capacity to attend to these demands in a proper order may distinguish people who are successful at forming relationships from those who are less successful. People who continue to operate within the Trust as Decision making mode and who remain hypervigilant throughout a relationship may be unable to form strong bonds. This may suggest a different and more interesting approach to studying distrust, seeing distrust as a dynamic process rather than as a trait or personality characteristic. People, on the other hand, who regulate too much or regulate where inappropriate may find themselves the liable victims of con-artists. This raises new questions about how people manage conflicting demands of vigilance, with the need to commit and communicate trust to other people so as to benefit from the relationship.

The perspective presented here also raises a series of new intriguing questions: If trust constitutes an end to a mean and is at least partially susceptible to self-regulation, could some people be better at regulating their experience of trust to serve social and other ends? In other words, does trust constitute a skill? Can this skill be acquired through experience or training and if so how? A growing literature on emotional intelligence that encompasses the ability to recognize, forecast and regulate emotions may provide valuable insights into how people regulate their experience of trust in this regard (Mayer, 2000; Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000). The Trust-as-Decision- and Trust-as-Performance-perspectives represent different ways of thinking about trust. This raises the question as of whether these differences correspond to differences in peoples' lay theories about trust. Like people differ in their

beliefs about intelligence (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) as either fixed or controllable, we may envision people differing in their conceptions about trust as something one either feels (and hence uncontrollable) or as something susceptible to self-influence and self-regulation. People's lay theories about trust in turn may influence people's motivation to self-regulate their experiences in social contexts. People who see trust as susceptible to self-influence may be expected to be more likely to initiate and sustain new contacts whereas people who see trust as fixed and uncontrollable would be expected to stick to existing and previously established contacts. As a result we might expect people who see trust as a controllable to have more weak ties compared to people who see trust as uncontrollable who we might expect would have a smaller number of fairly strong ties (Granovetter, 1973).

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As mentioned, a dominant share of empirical studies on organizational trust can be categorized as belonging to the "trust-as-decision"-perspective. Mayer et al's integrative model of trust alone has inspired hundreds of empirical studies (Schoorman, Mayer & Davis, 2007). In contrast, the number of studies associated with the trust-as-performance perspective, are few and isolated. The agentic model of trust here represents a starting point for future empirical studies. A core element in the model and in the Trust-as-Performance-perspective is that trust reflects peoples' goals. Thus, a first step in testing the model should be to test for the effect of social goals (such as the interest in forming a productive relationship) on the experience of trust.

Merely establishing a relationship between goals and the experience of trust however will not suffice. In the model goals are believed to influence trust through self-regulatory attempts. Thus, a second objective should be to test for a mediating effect of goals on self regulation

and subsequently, of self-regulation on the subjective experience of trust. If goals influence the subjective experience of trust we need to know *how* people go about regulating their experience of trust. Future studies here might benefit from the growing literature on affect regulation (see Gross, 2007 for a review). Finally, the perspectives may be applied to future studies of trust- and relationship-development. As suggested previously, trust in different phases of an evolving relationship may differ in the way they correspond to the two perspectives. Mapping where trust correspond to either perspective as well as understanding how people move between states corresponding to these perspectives should enhance our understanding of trust-development in social relationships.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The insights in this paper we believe hold real, practical implications. Seeing trust as a decision problem suggest that trust can be resolved by introducing more information and more institutional safeguards to assure that people's interests are aligned and encapsulated with each other (Hardin, 1992). This however ignores the fact that trust and the display of trust plays an important part in organizations. People need to know that other people trust them to reciprocate trust. Introducing more information and more safeguards designed to facilitate trust may instead impede trust in that people end up having little discretion in which to display trust (Holmes, 2002). If trust is a performance it follows that this performance is likely to improve with practice. Reducing ambiguity and uncertainty may reduce peoples' experience of dealing with uncertainty in social situations and over time effectively reduce peoples' capacity to trust other people (Yamagishi, 2001). Even the realization that trust implies choice and accepting in-reducible uncertainty and that this trust is important is important we believe as it may help people shift attention from trying to eliminate uncertainty into learning how to more effectively live with uncertainty and risk in social relationships.

The notion of trust as a performance, we believe, fits better with the understanding of trust and empowerment in theories of transformational and charismatic leadership which emphasizes how leaders proactively communicate trust in employees (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Trust as a component in charismatic or transformational leadership is largely incompatible with the Trust- as-Decision perspective. Viewing trust as a performance, bolstered by self-regulatory processes on the other hand, may help cast light on the processes through which leaders motivate and empower employees, while shifting the focus from characteristics of the leader to the type of processes that supports trust.

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TABLE 1
Two perspectives on trust

	Trust as decision problem	Trust as Performance
Emphasis	Trust is about deciding whether to accept risk in having to rely on someone	Trust is about exerting influence on someone – shaping future social interaction
Criteria used in evaluating the consequences of trust	Right or wrong / consequences of being wrong about a trustee	Effectiveness in influencing the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of the trustee
Assumptions about trustworthiness	Trustworthiness assumed fixed quality of a trustee	Trustworthiness influenced by the trustor's trust in the trustee
Decisions in the two perspectives	Leads up to a decision (trust/not trust) – little emphasis on what happens later	Starts with a decision – concern with the experience of trust after a decision to trust
Relationship between experience and action	Experience of trust and the act of trust independent of each other	Experience and action mutually influence each other and are inseparable
Causal agent	Information and uncertainty reduction	Goals and processes of self-regulation
Quality of trust	Uniform – varies in quantity	Includes authenticity and

	– little concern with how trust is expressed	constancy (over time)
Motives highlighted	Utilitarian – avoid harm seek pleasure	Includes a wider range of social motives (understanding others, the motivation for growth and development, the motivation to influence other's perception of oneself, the motivation to control one's own experiences and emotions)
Role of self-reflection	Little room for self-reflection or foresight – emphasis on reactions to immediate situations and experiences.	Assumes self-reflection and foresight. See people as equipped with the ability to transform immediate responses and situations.
Mediating mechanisms	Experience based learning	Goal-seeking and self-regulatory processes
Consequences of not trusting	Few or no consequences of little trust or distrust	Little trust fatal to the development of the relationship
Developmental trajectory	Trust develops incrementally based on experience	Trust develops unevenly

	Little discrepancy between demands and actual displayed trust (incremental development)	
Representative model	Theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1973; Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995)	Cybernetic control loop (Carver, 2004)