

Personal, Systemic and Transsystemic Trust: Individual and Collective Resources for Coping with Societal Challenges

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Abstract In the light of complex societal conditions associated with a high degree of abstraction of interdependencies, trust gains importance as a regulating element. Against the background of the differential theory of trust, personal and systemic trust will be highlighted, but also the transsystemic component of trust, as well as collective processes of trust development. Furthermore, we will deal with the question of a constructive contribution of distrust. Finally, we will focus on trust as a moderating variable within the process of social responsibility in association with the concept of mindfulness as a reflexive component.

Keywords Personal • Systemic • Transsystemic trust • Distrust • Collective trust processes • Social responsibility

1 Introduction to the Subject

(More) complex social conditions – characterized through keywords like globalization, technologization, individualization and demographic change – bring along new, risky and uncertain developments that social systems have to deal with. Within the (amongst others political) discourse of (organizational) social responsibility and sustainability that has been discussed increasingly for more than two decades now, we can observe efforts to identify ways to cope with social challenges (see Senghaas-Knobloch in this volume, Mallocc 2013; Lamberti and Lettieri 2009; UNDSO 1992). Looking at solutions like the “fair trade” (see Castaldo et al. 2009; Hira and Ferrie 2006) labels and the visualization of the consumption of “virtual water” by personal footprints (see Hoekstra and Chapagain 2008), one will notice

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that these are characterized by inextricably interwoven social, ecological and economical factors.

When facing these challenges, trust as a regulating element gains importance on both the individual and the collective level (see Eilfort and Raddatz 2009; Konisky et al. 2008; Larsson 2007), even though at first, trust building is made considerably difficult. To sum it up: The higher the feeling of subjective insecurity, the more important will trust be, and the more difficult (i.e.: more risky) it will be to invest trust (see Banerjee et al. 2006). Notwithstanding, trust is able to structure processes of social perception and cooperation in a fundamental way that enhances action orientation.

This function of trust will be under examination in the article at hand, where the focus will be on two different perspectives: On the one hand, in extending the differentiation between personal and systemic trust (which is prevalent in trust research among the social sciences, see Poppo and Schepker 2010; Sydow 2006), the significance of the *transsystemic component of trust* will be highlighted: Transsystemic processes as part of abstract cause-and-effect relationships are being postulated (see Strulik 2011), which, in subjective perception, aggravate the possibility of reference to practically acting individuals or organizations, respectively. Especially those social processes and developments that are ultimately uncontrollable and which do not seem approachable through experience-based trust building are affected by this. On the other hand, looking at the level of societal challenges when dealing with trust, it becomes necessary not only to draw into consideration the role of the individual, but also to put a stronger emphasis on *collective processes*. Against the background of the *differential theory of trust* (Schweer 1996, 2008), one can systemize the components of personal, systemic and transsystemic trust, which can be looked at from either an individual or a collective perspective. In addition to a basal paradigmatic approach, we will discuss both central fields of research in selected areas and the connection between concepts of social responsibility, sustainability and mindfulness.

2 On the Differentiability of Trust as a Social Resource for Societal Challenges

According to Schweer (1999), trust can be understood as the subjective feeling of security allowing to put oneself in the hands of other persons or institutions. However, this experience of security may vary considerably depending on each person and setting. This interindividual variance as well as the (perceived) setting-related specificity of trust exhibits two central presuppositions based on the differential theory of trust (Schweer 1997), which by no means come to an agreement within the field of multidisciplinary trust research (see Lewicki and Brinsfield 2012; Schweer 2010).

In accordance with this differential approach, we are able to theoretically conceptualize the construct of distrust, an independent social phenomenon which increasingly attracts attention within the scientific discourse (see Keyton and Smith 2009; Schoorman et al. 2007). Regarding both theory and method, discussion concerns the question of whether trust and distrust, firstly, are to be looked at as two poles of one dimension, or secondly, have to be considered as two completely separate concepts. Within the first one of these approaches, Rotter (1971) uses his *Interpersonal Trust Scale* to measure a generalized trust expectation versus an expectation of distrust, so the arithmetic average of the scale empirically separates individuals who are more likely to trust and those who are more likely to distrust. If otherwise, a two-dimensional approach is pursued, distrust, contrary to trust, shows a qualitatively different dimension – a lack of trust does not (yet) necessarily correlate with the experience of distrust. So it can be stated that one may be biased meeting a new business partner, however, this does not automatically indicate for an attitude of distrust.

Schweer (1999) therefore considers *distrust* as the social attitude which does not allow for placing oneself in the hands of other people or institutions without exposing oneself to a high, subjective danger of risk violation and the potential damage linked to that.

Distrust, in organizational networks as well as in the political field is said to bring along a positive contribution (Funken and Thoma 2012; Lewicki et al. 1998). Considering the approach of two separate dimensions, a certain degree of trust by all means accounts for a critical glance in terms of distrust.

Still, as our own findings on subjective distrust within the *VERMIKO* research association (*Trust Management Systems for Innovation Co-operations in Processes of Developing Products and Services*, see Schweer and Siebertz-Reckzeh 2013), which is funded by the *Federal Ministry of Education and Research* (FMER), the *European Social Fund* (ESF) and the *European Union* (EU) show, 61.7 % of the interviewed persons (N = 107) within participating companies stated that distrust in job-related practice is more likely to be considered the opposite of trust. A differentiation between trust and distrust is not always made in everyday life attitudes. Nevertheless, the constructive contribution of distrust may certainly be helpful to reflect on ways of looking at problems in society.

The differential theory of trust follows the *dynamic-transactional approach* (see Mischel 2004; Bergmann et al. 2003) to the extent that trust which has been experienced and the options of action derived from this fact, function as a complex interplay of personal and situational factors in their respective chronological dimension (*historicity of the situation*, see Holmes 2000). The so called *Bochum School* (Rosemann and Schweer 1996; Rosemann and Kerres 1985) in regard to this approach especially emphasized the aspect of situational perception of individual experience and behavior. This approach can be assigned to the analysis of the phenomenon of trust: In addition and dependent on each personal original condition, both the subjective definition and assessment of situational attributes become psychologically relevant. Thus we can observe that identic situational constellations in conjunction with trust relevant previous experiences lead to

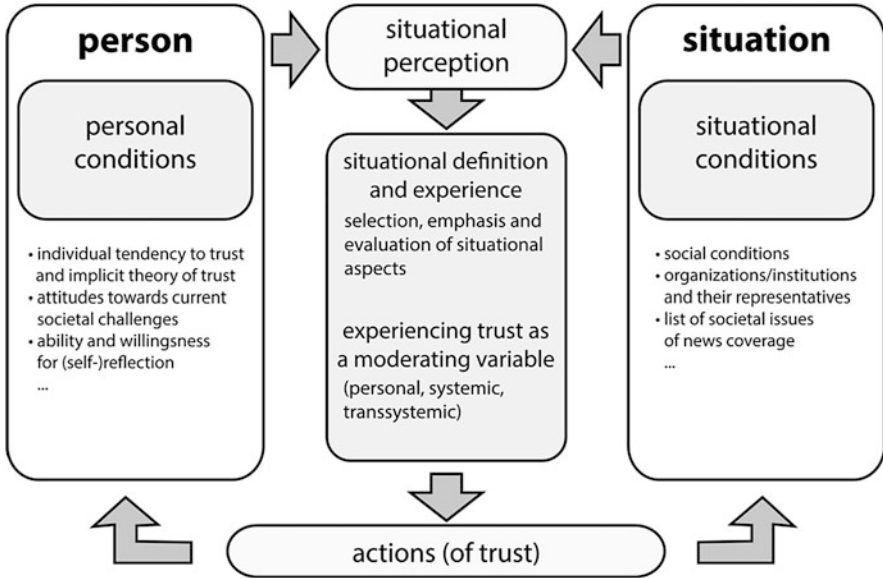


Fig. 1 Trust as a moderating variable of socially relevant patterns of action

different situational experiences. In order to identify inhibiting as well as facilitating factors of trust actions (e.g. trust in the energy transition i.e., changing provision of energy by sustainable resources), it will therefore not suffice to show generalizing factors which can commonly indicate trust (e.g. professional expertise of a female politician). Only a differential analysis of subjective patterns of perception and evaluation will provide a clear picture of trust experience and options for action, which will in turn influence the continuing interaction between person and situation (see Fig. 1).

Hence the stated differentiability provides a basis for approaching trust as a social resource on the societal level; personal, systemic and transsystemic components of trust are at the same time both requirement and result of a proceeding interaction between person and situation. At collective and individual level, acquired attitudes and experiences as well as the ability and willingness to deal with individual constructions and action orientations, influence the perception of social agents and organizations.

3 Facets of Trust in Their Complex Interplay

Personal, systemic and transsystemic trust represent three facets of a phenomenon, which are not at all independent from each other. However, there is still a need for theoretical and empirical research on the question of how – especially regarding

transsystemic trust – this interplay will develop in dealing with practical requirements.

3.1 *The Component of Personal Trust*

Personal trust means trusting one or more stakeholder (see Banerjee et al. 2006). Previously made, trust relevant experiences will echo, on the one hand, within the *individual tendency to trust* as subjective beliefs regarding certain spheres of life (e.g. politics) and how these spheres generally allow for relationships of trust. This tendency towards trust therefore functions as a pre-condition for perceiving practical situations within the respective area of life. Even though this may change due to long-term inconsistent experiences, it is more likely to show a tendency of stabilization in the course of information selection and information processing (see respective findings of social psychology, Fiske and Neuberg 2008)

Taking into account the construct of the implicit personality theory, the *implicit theory of trust* characterizes normative expectations towards existing interactive partners. There are, for instance, empirical findings at hand regarding normative expectations of students towards the teacher (Schweer 1996); the structures of this expectation are composed of a professional dimension (competency and assistance), and a social dimension of personal devotion, respect, accessibility and straightforwardness. The differentiability of normative expectations only becomes empirically evident since emphasis and accentuation of single aspects among these dimensions may distinctly vary interindividually. Based on a theoretic model, a differential approach especially proves to be significant regarding the methodology of empirical analyses as well as recommendations of action deduced from it. *Implicit theories of trust* may contain not only aspects which are applicable to more *general* contexts, but also those aspects characteristically for special contexts. Thus, we found that the management context shows social and professional dimensions of expectations that are certainly comparable to those of the educational field (see Schweer et al. 2013a; Bijlsma and van de Bunt 2003). When transferring this to social systems, e.g. politics or the health care system, there is a need to consider the area-specific variance of implicit theories of trust (Schweer 1997). According to the differential approach distrust results also from the interplay between practical situational frameworks and both the *individual tendency to distrust* and the *implicit theories of distrust* of a person.

The personal antecedents described above structure the process of situational perception. On the base of a more or less advantageous trust tendency, normative expectations towards trustworthy protagonists will be verified with perceived actions. The social proximity of interpersonal relationships allows for immediate experiences. This option is a fundamental condition for the process of trust development: On the one hand, the proximity of other people accounts for their attractiveness, on the other hand, processes of group dynamics (structuring of social relationships, formation of group norms etc.) come into effect during direct

interaction (see Oswald 2010; Schweer and Thies 2003). In group processes, trust relevant normative expectations can generally be exchanged, adjusted and revised. In addition, reciprocal trust actions of interactional partners can be experienced immediately, and actions possibly inhibiting trust may directly be addressed. Direct experiences can show that trust is both a condition for and a result of a satisfactory quality of relationships.

Still, personal trust often develops only based on indirect experiences (e.g. through the media or third party conversations). This phenomenon is explained by Political trust researchers by the construct of vertical trust, e.g. in politicians (see Kaina 2009).

Structural frameworks of potential trust relation may remarkably affect the experience of the relationship. This especially is held true for the understanding of reciprocity (initiation and extent of giving and taking). Relationships within the family as well as in educational and on-the-job training areas are characterized by varying degrees of voluntariness and asymmetry (e.g. formal power, age, knowledge and experience, see Schoorman et al. 2007). Also, distal trust relationships can be described on the basis of structural frameworks – this may apply to the expertise of a scientist or politician characterized by an aspect of asymmetry. The suspicion of a leap of trust that is only motivated by strategic self-interest (Schweer 2008) is closely connected with (perceived) asymmetry: proximal asymmetric relationships (e.g. superior-subordinate-relation, betrayal of trust, see Zhao et al. 2007) are assumed to be characterized by the fact that the leap of trust from a subordinate person is connected with the suspicion of strategic self-interest. Such an action allegedly bears the intention of a person willing to reach a beneficial position in the eyes of a more senior person, although it is just as conceivable, that the reverse possibility also exists. Within distal relationships, no anticipated interactional link of a direct kind exists, so it is possible that actions of purely strategic self-interest are more likely to be perceived as short-term advantages (e.g. political campaign pledges, fair trade product advertisements relying on the participation of a well-known business person).

3.2 *The Component of Systemic Trust*

Systemic trust (see Schweer 2012; Sydow 2006) refers to (sub-)systems of society, such as institutions or organizations from an internal (e.g. members of the organization) or external (clients, patients, etc.) perspective. To what extent systemic trust always integrates a personal association is a controversial issue within the field of trust research (see Zhang et al. 2008; McEvily and Zaheer 2006; McEvily et al. 2002). However, it often occurs that building and stabilizing trust in a social system depends on the representatives of that system (ergo the process is personalized). The extent of perceived prototypicality of a system's protagonist is essential for this process. *Prototypicality* refers to the degree of compliance of the protagonist's actions with ethical and moral principles that are (or should be)

associated with the respective social (sub-) system. Within empirical research, fairness, appreciation and justice proved to be especially relevant in this respect (see Oswald 2010; Uslaner 2010). Thus, the systemic component of the phenomenon of trust can be experienced through established norms and action requirements, both system-internal and system-external, that can be found in organizational culture, corporate principles and party programmes. In the field of economy such an organizational fit (see Zaheer and Harris 2006) plays a key role with regard to interorganizational cooperation and networking, under the assumption that trust building aimed as output of a company requires a corresponding culture of trust within the own system (see Sydow 2006).

Referring to the differential theory of trust, the systemic component of a *individual tendency to trust* now depicts the underlying conviction that it is not clear whether organizations or institutions in a distinct area of life (e.g. economy and industrial branch, politics, jurisdiction) can even realize trust relevant principles. Accordingly, the *implicit theory of trust* characterizes normative expectations towards trustworthy social (sub-)systems, in which the perception of the systemic level is more or less abstracted from the individual representatives (for example, this holds true for the relationship of trust between customers and financial firms, when a longtime customer advisor leaves the organization).

Relevant *structural attributes* affecting systemic trust may be the size and power of an organization. Furthermore this allows a differentiation between single sectors like the economy (sectors and industrial branches), public administration authorities, the public health system and the political field with their respective legal framework and the connection of these sectors to areas of life that can immediately be experienced (see Greenwood and Van Buren III 2010). Older findings (Schweer 1997) show a higher degree of trustworthiness of social institutions in comparison with the trustworthiness of commercial enterprises and political organizations. In the case of current events, they mainly influence the trust verdict if there is a direct personal effect or an immediate reference to the individual environment. Monitoring instruments like the “GPRA trust index” (2012) provide empirical evidence – in this case, a loss of trust in energy companies was caused by news reports at the turn of the years 2012/2013 about the German Association of Energy Consumers criticizing the increase in energy cost (that was justified by companies through invoking the energy transition).

3.3 The Component of Transsystemic Trust

Looking at the level of society, both components of personal and systemic trust relate to acting protagonists and their (sub-)systems), more precisely, commercial enterprises, associations, political parties and their respective representatives. In addition, the transsystemic level now resorts to complex action contexts, that make it nearly impossible to relate trust to specific individuals or systems (on the so-called world/- risk society see Beck 2007). An example for a transsystemic

action context would be the so-called energy transition, a relatively abstract construct which, by including different interests and inventories of knowledge and expertise, does not allow for an overview of all actions of each individual protagonist. But what we know from trust research is that trust building happens in small steps (see Neidhardt 1979; Petermann 1996), and that experiencing reciprocal relationships is crucial for this developmental process.

With regard to transsystemic processes, gaining trust in the energy transition therefore also means there is a possibility of (at least indirectly) gaining experience by weighing up the odds of realization of intentions with their potential risks and attaining comprehensible clues to achievements put into practice. Such action contexts are beyond individual control, and so they emphasize the significance of trusting in other individuals or authorities. On the systemic level, the question of the discussion on an experience of reciprocity is to what extent, if at all, an organization can actually return trust (see Schoorman et al. 2007; Schweer and Thies 2003; McEvily et al. 2002). Within even more complex contexts, the question is accordingly being raised, what base or anchor of perception in such a context can even generate direct or indirect experiences of mutual trust.

With regard to the differential theory of trust, the transsystemic component, which so far has not undergone extensive systematic research, comprises the subjective situational perception as a relevant source for gaining action orientation and the process of trust development. The *individual tendency to trust* in this respect includes the fundamental question on how highly complex, abstract action contexts can still realize ethical and moral principles and thus build up trust relationships. Following our example of the energy transition, the Shell Youth Study (Schneekloth and Albert 2011) provides evidence for a growing carelessness of approximately one of four in the upcoming generation (which will be influenced by climate change to a much larger extent) linked with skepticism towards predictions about climate change and therefore also towards measures taken against it.

If there will be an intensification of the belief that, within the environmental field, no trustworthy expertises nor an integration of effective measures exist, it will become challenging to overcome the often bemoaned discrepancy between environmental knowledge and effective action.

Transsystemic elements of the *implicit theory of trust* include normative expectations towards regulation and orientation of guidelines of action. Individuals or organizations particularly provide for prototypical models for dealing with complexity, when they obtain the perceived attribution of authenticity. Credible moral integrity, closeness to citizens, supportive dedication, a recognizable use for the solution of societal problems and an awareness of an accountability towards society are dimensions of normative expectations that play an important role in this process (Schweer 1997). Further interest regards the question of how, and to what extent incalculable outcomes influence the expectation of respect towards the person concerned (e.g. from politician to citizen). On a systemic level, open communication, transparency and participation are three central effective principles of trust (see Bijlsma and Koopman 2003; Norman et al. 2010), and realization of those also becomes trust relevant in transsystemic processes. For example,

commercial enterprises can transparently display – to both employees and customers – an environmental awareness in their own facilities (e.g. by handling the waste of energy) through disclosing places and conditions of production. Expectations and willingness to (having to) deal with balancing social, ecological and economical (follow-up) costs may differ. In the media, news about such (supposedly) newly uncovered risks have become quite frequent: An example of a current issue would be news coverage about serious supply difficulties of the pharmaceutical industry (in production and transport of drugs), since drugs that are essential for survival had to be replaced by alternative products with heavy side effects – obviously highly alarming for the concerned population (see SZ December 2012).

Looking at the *situational framework*, superordinate organizations (such as institutions for accreditation and certification, rating agencies, etc., see Strulik 2011), which are important in terms of orientation regarding the complex distribution of interests, power and information, gain priority on the transsystemic level. Furthermore the essential for transsystemic processes and trust relevant experiences is the proximity to an immediate area of experience (Konisky et al. 2008), e.g. the set of problems of virtual water (see Jahn et al. 2009; Hoekstra and Chapagain 2008): these are mostly invisible to the ultimate consumer and therefore do not trigger appropriate needs of action.

Thus, the empirical evaluation of transsystemic trust requires a survey of substantial beliefs and attitudes on both an individual and a collective level (esp. tendencies to trust and implicit theories of trust). Moreover, it has to be determined how the relationships to individuals and systems represent a central anchor of perception of transsystemic contexts (see in the context of public trust, Uslaner 2010; Bentele and Seidenglanz 2008) – the question must be: How, and to what extent are patterns of perception and evaluation providing directions for action responsible for subjectively understanding transsystemic contexts either as an interaction of systems, or as personalized processes?

4 Trust in the Context of a Societal Culture of Social Responsibility

Trust is said to be of fundamental importance regarding societal cooperation, the social ability to integrate and the quality of democratic systems altogether. In this regard, researchers especially refer to the function of trust in the sense of Luhmann's reduction of complexity (Luhmann 2000), which, on an individual as well as on a collective level, both reduces insecurity in the subjective experience and facilitates control. Due to the feature of risk which is imminent to every kind of trust, we find certain problems linked to this: besides the suppression of potentially harmful side effects of trust actions, these may definitely create further risks (e.g. when analyzing transsystemic trust, Strulik 2011 speaks of "risk dynamics").

When facing these conditions, one question is raised: In what ways can trust make an important contribution in promoting a societal culture of social responsibility, based on classical humanist ideas (see Auhagen and Bierhoff 2001), combined under the aspect of mindfulness this volume focuses on.

4.1 Trust as a Moderating Variable Within the Process of Social Responsibility

The construct of social responsibility emphasizes (possible) behavioral outcomes regarding their perception and evaluation under a perspective of morality. Regarding this, the construct is always embedded in a societal framework, thus “under an authority or towards an addressee” (Lenk 1992, p. 79, quoting Bierhoff 2000). For example, social responsibility affects the actions of a politician- towards his or her voters, the teacher’s behavior towards the students, the action of food manufacturers towards customers, or even the media’s action towards recipients.

Socially responsible actions respectively actions in terms of sustainability are seen as moral judgement and actions that may be largely affected by emotional components (see Kals and Maes 2002). This is mostly true for dilemma situations (see Osbaldiston and Sheldon 2002), which one can only decide through weighing out factors (e.g. in the case of a low priced product that is produced under conditions not socially acceptable). In these cases, psychological burdening dissonance effects are likely, that can only be actively reduced through cognitive restructuring.

How does socially responsible action develop as opposed to these principles of action? Bierhoff (2000), considering literature published hitherto, refers to two psychological approaches we can put in the context of a dynamic-transactional model and that we can directly link to the phenomenon of trust: Either, responsibility is designed for a specific sequence of action in terms of attribution theory, or a consistent sense of responsibility is stated in the context of behavioral dispositions (u.a. Berkowitz and Lutterman 1968). Against this background, social responsibility as a personal variable is linked to the willingness to act in a reliable and fair way of personal commitment towards legitimate expectations of others (on measuring instruments referring to this, see Bierhoff 2000). The listed facets coincide with key elements of perceived trustworthiness, therefore, in the context of reciprocity, they create a counterpart to normative trust expectations:

Classing the reliable dealing with hazard potentials of the nuclear energy among normative expectations of trust, the perceived moral integrity of a politician respectively a political party (see Schweer and Thies 2003) in terms of an effect of concordance is essential for progressive development of trust. Within this process it may be expected that perception and attribution of social responsibility is promoted by a certain amount of established trust. Social responsibility can therefore be initially experienced by actions – thus, the way of action and the

consequences of actions have to be recognizable and it is necessary to enable an attribution of responsibility in terms of weighing an action. Regarding this process, trust is an important moderating variable.

In addition to such external attributions in the context of social responsibility (see Greenwood and Van Buren III 2010), self-attributions play an important role. For example, when regarding a company's action on environmental protection, we do not only observe if external customers perceive reliability, but also if the same is true for members of the organization itself (see Schweer and Thies 2003). The subjective assurance concerning the effectiveness of one's own (organizational) action significantly satisfies the psychological need for control. The other extreme would result in the feeling of being at the mercy of organizational action. Even if, naturally not every potential outcome of such action is actually totally under control, integrating an organization internal and external effort to build trust in the context of social responsibility may lead to the development of a transparent and authentic way of dealing with possible action outcomes. With regard to the perceived reciprocity of trustful experiences, which is of great importance, a producing company on the one hand depends on trust regarding its responsible action, which means offering fair trade products, on the other hand, the organization needs to invest trust in its customers regarding their willingness to spend more money on such a product (see Castaldo et al. 2009).

Trust in the sense of information processing therefore moderates the procedures of internal and external attributions of responsibility. At the same time, the development of trust is embedded within the perception and anticipation of responsible action – trust, and the construction of responsibility correspond, while with regard to a societal culture of social responsibility, personal, systemic and transsystemic components of trust are equally important. In this context it is essential to what extent a basis for trust referring to transsystemic processes can even be developed, that allows for socially responsible action. Furthermore, we need to examine to what extent, within this conceptional context, individuals or institutions are able to serve as a model for the corresponding moral orientation.

4.2 Collective Perspectives of Trust: Regulatory and Resulting Element of Societal Processes

In the light of the foregoing conceptualized personal, systemic and transsystemic trust from an individual perspective, so to speak, against the background of individual learning and previous experience. But to appropriately analyse the phenomenon of trust with regard to dealing with societal challenges, we increasingly need to draw into consideration *collective* structures and processes of the genesis of trust as well. *Collective trust* means socially shared trust, that among other things develops in social courses of interaction for specific clusters, and is, as well as individual trust, subject to mechanisms of progressive and retrogressive

developments (Schweer 1999). Collective perspectives of trust form a regulating element that is key for democratic states, but at the same time these perspectives are a result of societal processes.

Within the organizational framework (see Salamon and Robinson 2008), we often find formal or informal (sub-)groups, whose implicit theories of trust and experiences of trust are relatively homogeneously (and thus, collectively) shared. Diagnostically, the degree of trust concerning this matter can be measured through the instrument of the *Vertrauensampel* (Schweer and Siebertz 2013; Lachner et al. 2013). Especially when analyzing specific factors of influence, the collective level of analysis plays an important role, e.g. when looking at demographic change. In a way similar to the differences (between young and old employees in the sense of birth cohorts with different backgrounds of socialization) in expectations towards work (for example the discussion about the psychological contract, see Hauff 2007) or in the effectiveness of specific principles of organization and work, those employees' expectations may differ with regard to how trust within the organization can be identified (above all, these expectations are not independent of other significant expectational structures). Corresponding influences on the experience of trust are the consequential outcome. The growth of enterprises, altered channels and styles of communication and the introduction of new management instruments prove to be trust sensitive changes. Regarding these changes, *systemic historicity* as an expectation within an organization influences patterns of perception and evaluation (Schweer and Siebertz-Reckzeh 2013), which again, may vary between different operational generations. An analysis of collective demographic structures as conducted within the DOMINNO research association (*Demography-Oriented Concepts of Measuring and Promoting Innovative Potentials*, see Schweer et al. 2013b), which is funded by the FMER, the ESF and the EU therefore provides important information on how intraoperational trust can be promoted.

Collective perspectives of trust that transcend the level of direct interaction are mostly brought up under the issue of public and horizontal trust (see Ingenhoff and Sommer 2010; Chrysochoidis et al. 2009; Milankovic and Wilke 2004). When trust is generated and modified within a collective process, its guiding function in the sense of a reduction of complexity is to be emphasized. However, the way of intermediation plays a special role the so called mass media (see Schweer in print, Ingenhoff and Sommer 2010), for example, by reporting trust-sensitive content temporarily decides on what the public current issues are. But then, the reception of messages delivered through the media may largely vary. The individual selection and processing of information mainly concentrates on confirming existing attitudes. In addition, one's orientation towards the attitudes of fellow human beings to a high degree influences the process of developing personal opinions. For this reason varying public opinions are only temporary, while affective components in particular are said to have a high influence on dynamics of collective processes (see Gamero et al. 2011).

Besides others, competency, consistency and authentic communication are said to be typical features of the genesis of public trust (see Schweer in print, Bentele and Janke 2008). Yet when looking at authentic communication a conflict of

Chart 1 Components of trust from an individual and collective perspective concerning the energy transition

	Personal trust	Systemic trust	Transsystemic trust
Individual perspectives	A citizen trusts in a politician	A citizen trusts in a political party	A citizen trusts in the energy transition
Collective perspectives (vertical)	The citizens share trust in a politician	The citizens share trust in a political party	The citizens share trust in the energy transition
Collective perspectives (horizontal)	The voters of a politician trust each other regarding their ambitions towards being conscious of energy (consumption)	The voters/members of a political party trust each other regarding their ambitions towards being conscious of energy (consumption)	The citizens trust each other regarding their actions towards a consciousness of energy (consumption)

interests is often suspected – this may be true for a company with the primary goal of profit maximization or for a political party with the primary goal of reelection (Strulik 2011). For this reason, a transparent display of their actions is of special importance for these social systems. In this regard, results of a comparable study (Fetchenhauer and van der Vegt 2001) show that trust correlates with the moral evaluation of “financial honesty”, and economic growth is seen to be inspired by a corresponding positive “climate”.

Further gainful considerations with regard to a societal culture consist of research on political attitudes: what is meant by that is that mutual trust between citizens serves as a fundamental element for the development of a communal consciousness (see Kaina 2009). Therefore, horizontal trust serves as an alternative draft working against the development of radicalizing social tendencies.

We finally see a gainful research perspective when differentially analyzing collective perspectives of trust. When doing so, we gain valuable evidence for the establishment of trust as an action principle in a societal culture of social responsibility. We can relate both individual and collective perspectives on personal, systemic and transsystemic trust, respectively (see Chart 1).

A differential analysis of the collective experience of trust is connected with along these lines shared patterns of perception and evaluation. For example, the question might be to what extent a consensus of individual tendencies to trust and implicit theories of trust exist in groups of voters or members of a party or associations, and which psychological clusters become apparent in a comparable experience of trust.

4.3 *Mindfulness as a Reflexive Component of a Societal Culture of Social Responsibility*

The concept of mindfulness aims at the ability of self-observation and -reflection, that in the context of anticipation, refers to possibly unthoughtful and unintentional outcomes of one’s own behavior. Therefore we may consider it to be an individual

ability to reflect on and possibly change subjective patterns of perception and evaluation (s. Becke et al. 2012). The fundamental condition for a mindful attitude is, in the first place, the willingness to question such well-rehearsed patterns that developed over a long period of time. On a systemic level, the organizational mindfulness (Becke 2013) especially sheds light on innovation processes. The ability to question existing routines, as well as considering and uncovering unintentional outcomes of changes, proves to be a valuable organizational resource. With this potential, which gains importance through forming and fixing of reflexive processes, the concept of mindfulness is discussed on a societal level (Senghaas-Knobloch in this volume). A close connection exists with the concept of sustainability, which now is an issue of economic and social importance beyond the original ecological perspective (see Senghaas-Knobloch 2009; Littig and Griebler 2005). In this regard, not only is there a focus on a stable, resource-saving development, but also on previously not included, possibly severe outcomes. Mindfulness therefore defines the basis for reflection, which is closely connected with sustainability and the development of social responsibility.

In the context of complex constellations of problems, the significance of the so called non-knowledge (see Dorniock and Mohe 2011) is high: Through new knowledge (e.g. as part of innovation in technology), with outcomes that have not been studied yet, those outcomes constitute another kind of non-knowledge, which in turn increases uncertainty. An equally active and reflected handling of non-knowledge challenges research on trust and mindfulness.

In this regard, reflexive processes in the sense of mindfulness always require the willingness to invest trust. Only this will allow for the acquisition of fundamental action orientation and the reflection on options of possible innovation. Still, trust itself may be embedded in a reflexive process due to its successive development based on experience (see Neidhardt 1979; Petermann 1996). This reflection may proceed institutionalized (e.g. through public awareness campaigns by different associations) or through media-based exchange (e.g. message boards).

A mindful development of trust may be applied to the reflection on normative and anticipatory expectations. For a genesis of trust, there is a general need to highlight to what extent potentially trustworthy objects are in accordance with the normative expectations in perceived reality which result from the implicit theories of trust (trust concordance), or are not in accordance (trust discordance, Schweer 1996, 2008).

The historicity of trust relations allows for two approaches: Firstly, in a progressive manner, both normative and anticipatory expectations are in accordance with each other, secondly the expectations can be directly opposed – for example, an individual may normatively expect that scientifically proven consequences of climate change (should be) considered by policy makers, however, if the anticipatory expectation that principles of action will not be applied in the future is being confirmed, this will most probably result in a retrogressive development of trust.

Figure 2 gives an overview of the different effects of discordance and concordance, based on an initial contact, that can either relate to a person, a system or an abstract problem.

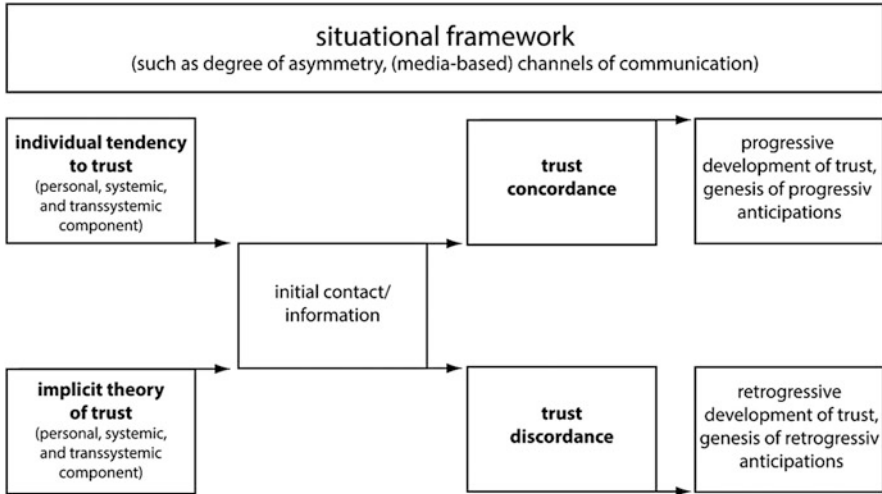


Fig. 2 Progressive versus retrogressive development of trust

Distrust, by aiming at subjectively experienced hazardous potentials, can unfold a positive function within this reflexive process. Such a critical observation of possible intentions and outcomes of action is under discussion as a protection against abuse of trust and power, distrust as well is under discussion (see Schweer in print). However, these observations often aim at blind trust, which is not based on experience, so what would be beneficial for further research is a systematic analysis of the normative and anticipatory expectations linked to distrust.

5 Conclusion

Based on a dynamic-transactional approach and against the background of the differential theory of trust, we are able to identify two central determinants of trust for processes of social perception and social cooperation and interaction. Due to the complexity and the high degree of abstraction of many challenges, the consideration of a transsystemic component in addition to the personal and systemic components of trust is increasingly necessary. Besides, the research perspective needs to focus on collective processes of the genesis and development of trust – especially regarding the question to what extent such processes can be attached to a societal culture as a fundamental element.

Trust, social responsibility and mindfulness influence each other: Trust supports the social construction of mutual responsibility, mindfulness promotes the reflexive development of trust. Depending on the respective implicit theories of distrust, this can make a contribution to a critical, positive consciousness.

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