EDITORIAL
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ARTICLE
Citizens, users and administration: the determinants of trust
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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
For a trusted society. What is the role of the public service?
Par Jean-Gabriel Plumelle

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This fourth issue of Action publique. Research and practices is a continuation of the 18th International Meeting of Public Management organised by the IGPDE on 22 May 2019 and dedicated to the relationship of trust between the administration and the citizen. Based on the exchanges and debates held during the course of this day, using round tables, workshops and cross-interviews, this issue presents an interdisciplinary and comparative reflection on trust as a driving force for the transformation of public action.

**Trust, pillar of a new public service culture**

The choice of the theme of trust reflects the growing importance that this issue now occupies in the public debate, as illustrated by the barometers of trust published by a variety of national organisations, the media or research centres, which make the unanimous observation of a crisis of confidence affecting the economic world as well as the political and media spheres.

**Trust, innovation factor in the administration**

In France, in the context of public action transformation, the issue of trust is therefore central to the State, both at the organisational level through the creation of a collective project within its administration and at the level of relational trust between users and the administration. It is on the development of this last dimension that the law of 10 August 2018 for a State serving a trusted society, known as the law of the «right to error», is focused.

Thinking trust between citizens and their administration goes hand in hand with a reflection on the place it occupies in the current programme of public action transformation, which is anchored in the transition from logic of distrust to principle of trust.

To be able to achieve this, the public service factory is now fed by innovations that accompany the implementation of a new model of administration: more autonomy and internally agile and seeking greater participation from society to the design, development and production of the public service. It is for this reason that this issue also addresses, with comparative and international anchoring, the use of behavioural sciences, the emergence of open data, the approach by design in the construction of the relationship of service and the development of digital tools to promote citizen participation.

Enjoy your reading
Citizens, users and administration: the determinants of trust

Interview between Geert Bouckaert and Thomas Cazenave

As part of the 18th International Meeting of Public Management, we conducted a joint interview of two key speakers in this edition dedicated to the theme of trust and public action. Professor Geert Bouckaert and Interministerial Delegate for Public Transformation Thomas Cazenave expressed their respective views as researchers and practitioners on this subject. We present this interview in a summary version adapted to the format of this review. You will be able to find the original interview in its entirety and in video on the IGPDE website at the following address: https://www.economie.gouv.fr/igpde-editions-publications/action-publique-recherche-pratiques

Geert Bouckaert is a professor at the University of Leuven (Belgium) and President of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS). His research focuses on the international comparison of public reforms and performance management systems of public organisations.

Thomas Cazenave has been the Interministerial Delegate for Public Transformation since November 2017. He had previously implemented the transformation of Pôle Emploi (2012-2016), then was Chief of Staff to the Secretary of State for Industry, Deputy Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Economy and Finance (2016) and Deputy Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic (2017).
How has trust come to be at the heart of the State’s challenges, especially in terms of public action transformation?

Geert Bouckaert

Trust is part of the democratic system, so it’s not something new. Much like a fish that is unaware of the water in which it is located, we do not realise the trust mechanisms that make a system work. It is when there is a shift in the system towards a growing mistrust that trust, or rather the lack of it, becomes a visible element.

The issue of trust arises especially when difficult issues emerge and political leaders fail to manage them. This is the case, for example, with economic crises, terrorism and international tensions. They generate many questions among people about the ability of leaders to solve these problems. Then comes a moment when citizens realise a complexity that elected officials and more generally the systems (political, judicial, educational, fiscal, health) fail to face. So obviously, it impacts trust.

And then, there are also other elements, like corruption, that strongly affect trust when they become visible. Of course, reality and what we perceive are two different things because there are stereotypes that sometimes do not correspond to reality. But it shows that it is necessary to communicate well, to be transparent, so as not to provoke a feeling of abandonment in the population. People feel abandoned when they are no longer beneficiaries of public policy, for example, or if they no longer have access to certain public services. This feeling is visible in many countries, particularly those of the OECD, and it causes discomfort that generates mistrust.

So I think we have highs and lows, but we are stumbling about in the dark to measure these developments, because we do not have precise data to measure the degree of trust as exists in the economic sector. It is rather the political intuition or the media that will reinforce the impact or the perception of some events. This is a reason for me to say that more scientific research and data are needed on this key concept of trust in society.

Thomas Cazenave

I was quite impressed a few years ago by the publication of La Société de défiance by Yann Algan and Pierre Cahuc. They showed the extent to which France is characterised by a high level of distrust, especially of citizens vis-à-vis their institutions, and the large collective cost of this distrust in our functioning, including our wealth creation.

Opinion studies show that the link between citizens and institutions is now damaged, that we need to contribute to reweaving it. That is why trust is one of the key axes of our public action transformation programme.

How does the question of trust in the reality of public action fit in?

Thomas Cazenave

Trust between the administration and the citizens must be found. This is the subject of a recently-passed law entitled «Law for a State serving a trusted society», which includes the question of the right to make mistakes, recognition of an administration that needs to be more supportive and more caring.

But trust is also an internal issue: trust between the administration and public service officers must also be reconquered. What we are looking for is a less homogeneous, less uniform, more personalised, more territorialised public service. And for this to happen, we must trust the officers closest to the field internally and let them develop the public service and adapt it to local issues. After all, it is an understatement to say that we are very marked in all our processes and in our organisation by distrust that explains over-control and the control of margins of manoeuvre.

So there is a bit of this double dimension, internal trust and trust in users, but one does not go without the other: we will not improve the trust between the administration and the public service users without internalising a form of revolution about ourselves, trusting our public service officer, which therefore leads to a profound managerial transformation.
Geert Bouckaert

I make a distinction between three types of trust.

First, there is the popular trust of society in the authorities. It is measured in a fairly traditional way, with for example the Gallup barometers of OECD or CEVIPOF in France, and the variations are studied.

Then there is the trust of the authorities in society which is also a remarkable thing that we tend to forget. It does have a huge impact on the way services are produced, on the level of controls. For example, to enter the metro, in some countries you have to pass several controls, they are systems that do not trust the user or the citizen. There are other systems that are open, where you go in and out of the metro without showing tickets. You see, it’s quite different, and this confidence of the authorities in the society through partnerships is very important. Because the basis of a partnership is trust. How can we have a partnership between the private and the public if there is an asymmetry in trust? Because when public authorities ask for trust but do not give it, this asymmetry is very dysfunctional.

And then, a third aspect is the trust in the public sector that you mentioned. And what we see with the New Public Management that comes from Anglo-Saxon countries, and which is based on economic neo-institutionalist systems, is the system of principal and agent that, by definition, do not trust each other. We then see directions that do not trust their services, departments that do not trust the agencies, the central level that does not have confidence in the local level. The balance of trust at all levels and in all these dimensions is indispensable.

Thomas Cazenave

Indeed, and this last aspect that you mention about the lack of confidence within the administrations themselves can be explained : because it is feared that a minority of public service officers could exploit a margin of manoeuvre or a space of freedom to get out of the framework, we put in place rules and oversight that prevent all public officials to move forward.

However, we will have to agree to be more flexible if we want to have a public service that produces more effective results and faster. So the challenge ahead is this internal conversion to a more deconcentrated organisation and more trust in the field. But this imposes many changes and profound reforms of the central administrative departments, because if you leave a lot more freedom, then what is the dialogue between the central administrations and the decentralised services? This dialogue becomes completely different, and it invites to an in-depth managerial practices assessment from the central administration.

However, I do not believe that the central administrations should give a prior confidence without accompanying it with a right of inspection. I worked at Pôle Emploi for four and a half years and with Jean Bassèrèse, the managing director, we had a very normative and prescriptive management dialogue with the Pôle Emploi agencies, and regional administrations. We have changed the paradigm by enhancing the reality on the ground, by granting more freedom, but with an increased demand on certain results such as the satisfaction of jobseekers, companies and the payment of people on time.

This experience illustrates what we are trying to do now by progressively generalising to all public services the measurement and publication of their results at the local level. For example, what is the deadline for obtaining income support from a family benefits fund? How long does it take to process a complaint filed at a police station? And these published results correspond to the final results of satisfaction and performance.

It is on these bases that we want to establish a dialogue to stop enclosing our organisation with standards, rules, and to put a collective compass on the final result, with the user at the centre. And I wish that the performance of public services be discussed based on these results.

“Trust is also an internal issue: trust between the administration and public service officers must also be reconquered.”
You talk about the «performance of public services», what does this notion cover and what tools does it take to put it in place or develop it?

Geert Bouckaert

This challenge you are describing is on the agenda of all OECD countries that have put in place a lot of reforms to develop these accountability targets around performance. But obviously this notion of performance has to be defined, especially with a contradictory debate about what we want to achieve and how to reorganise the public policy system for better accountability and greater transparency.

This is a difficult question, because it must also integrate the complexity of relations between the State and citizens. Citizens can use public services, but they can also pay taxes, they can elect representatives and therefore choose political orientations; they can benefit from social benefits... But it is not always the same person who assumes all these roles. A reform of public services must therefore be conducted with caution by assessing the consequences of the proposed changes. A debate on performance with the largest number of stakeholders should involve them, take into account their needs and therefore gain their trust.

Thomas Cazenave

It is true that it is not easy to convince all public services to measure and publish their results. At the beginning, there is uncertainty, that of being put in difficulty with the public service users, of being compared and of being put in competition.

What I observe anyway is that often the publication of the results puts forward high-performance public services, contrary to what we would expect. Certainly, we must be able to improve them, because there are things that are not going well. But public service officers gain in this approach of transparency, because it gives the possibility to objectify the performance with satisfaction rates and processing times that decrease.

I agree with you that, for the agents to adhere to the process, these indicators, these objectives must be concrete. They must be discussed within organisations; public service officers must identify with them, and they must be at the local level.

Geert Bouckaert

Yes, the publication of the results makes it possible to develop a culture of transparency and performance that opens up a debate on the efficiency of the delivery of public services.

I also think that these results are worthy of being written in a clear context, especially with data auditing because, in Britain for example, people have at some point lost confidence in performance figures. This is the worst case scenario, when you lose confidence in the reporting, and you have to make sure that it does not happen. So, from this point of view, having audit systems also makes it possible to avoid what is called “gaming”, where we play on numbers, and therefore avoid adverse effects related to the measurement of results.

The published results should also be commented and explained, because a poor performance can be explained by a lack of resources. It is not necessarily the result of mismanagement. So, from this point of view, you have to have a kind of wisdom when you measure the performance against the results, as it may have been in England. As such, benchmarking is very useful because it is not meant to punish but to improve public services and accountability. But I prefer the word “benchlearning” which focuses on learning between each other, for which learning numbers is only a means.

And at the same time, the public service is not the Olympics, and we must also ensure that schools, hospitals, regions are not competing, but are instead helped, supported and strengthened. So I think it is also a major objective, especially in France where the principle of equality is one of the principles of the Republic.

Thomas Cazenave

I totally agree with you because, indeed, there are basically two reservations to be had. The first is to avoid setting up a benchmarking that would classify indifferentedly varied situations: we know very well that the issues are different in Seine-Saint-Denis and the Creuse, that contexts and questions vary a
lot between rural and urban areas. And the second reservation to have is the individualisation of performance and therefore of remuneration, because it is in fact a very difficult exercise: the performance of a public service is very often a collective performance.

So we have to be reassuring on both points. On the first one, I often say that the use of measured data makes it possible to highlight results, the existence of problems that do not necessarily come from field agents, but also more global issues: unfilled jobs, investments that have not been made, management issues, etc. It becomes a collective issue that the authorities and the central administration must help to solve.

And so, we change the position of central administrations that are not there to set standards, but to improve the overall level of performance.

A poor performance can be explained by a lack of resources, it is not necessarily the result of mismanagement.”

You talked earlier about the personalisation of public services. Is there a contradiction between the principle of equality and the principle of equity?

Thomas Cazenave

I do not know if there is a contradiction, but it is certain that there is a strong tension between these two notions. In France, we are very impressed by this principle of equality in our functioning and in the organisation of public services.

But finally, does it make sense to promise the same offer of services when the territories, the citizens are very different. The recent decision to split CP (equivalent to Year 2) and CE1 (equivalent to Year 3) classes in the most difficult education zones is, for me, very illustrative. It was perceived as a form of breaking the principle of equality, while putting additional resources in priority areas was more a matter of equity. In 2012, when I arrived at Pôle Emploi, all jobseekers were received once a month, respecting a principle of absolute equality. But that makes no sense, because some are autonomous, very close to the job they can find on their own, while some need to be seen once a week. So we put in place a change in the service offer in this direction, but it created very deep debates.

And I see it well, for example when you try to say that the state services in the regions can be organised differently depending on the territorial specificities. The principle of differentiation, of modularity, we can visualise it, but we can see that it is a long way.

Geert Bouckaert

I think that equality means a variable geometry. It means that we must, by decentralising, change the modes of administration, make services accessible for example. Access to information is, for example, problematic for some, and you have to be able to support them. There are others that need to be supported financially from the point of view of geographic access. The lack of proximity to public services is also a problem of access. So sometimes people feel abandoned because they no longer have a sense of access to services. The OECD has completed some statistics on justice, health and education. So I really think that these are key points, and it takes variable geometry to have equality in front of the public services.

What is the link between the perception of inequalities and trust?

Geert Bouckaert

You know, the Gini index, which measures in particular income inequality, makes it possible to evaluate these variations, and I think that in Europe we are doing quite well. The Gini index in France is not bad, and it is in the OECD average. So perception is different from reality. However, we must be careful with the averages, because averages can be deceiving. So from this point of view, I think it is important to have
a system to better take into account people who feel isolated, excluded from public policies. This is a problem that is not unique to France.

We studied in Flanders to evaluate the satisfaction rates with the public services, and it was observed that 11% of the population had a huge distrust of them and were not at all satisfied with them. We carried out analyses to find out who these people were, and there was no unity: men, women, education, the newspapers they read, etc., the only factor they had in common was their vote, mostly for the far right.

We can never reduce this group to zero, but we must speak, we must speak and explain. I think it’s something that cannot be solved, but it has to be managed, and I think communication is very important for that.

Thomas Cazenave

Your observation on averages seems very fair to me. And that brings us back to our model of public policy making that is too centralised, too standardised, and we end up doing average public policy. Except that the average citizen is less and less a reality and that the average does not mean anything, because we have communities, situations and territorial diversity very varied, and that’s what we have to reconcile. This should lead us to rethink the very way in which we conceive our public policies, because when we want to deploy them in a homogeneous way, the effects of the reforms are based on averages without taking into account the complexity and the peculiarities of situations.

First, we can no longer build public policies like this, hence the interest of always having sensors, indicators, surveys of satisfaction, to know the reality of the field and understand it.

Then, I think that the users’ desire to participate, to contribute, to give your opinion on the public service orientations is enormous. I see it on the platform of the Great National Debate where 2 million contributions have been submitted, 10,000 local initiatives meetings have been organised: there is a huge desire to participate and contribute to the orientations of the public service. And I believe that these expectations can no longer be left behind by ministries and administrations, because that is no longer what is expected. And we are lucky because it will allow us to offer a public service of better quality.

And then third thing that highlights, and that refers to the first point, are the results. Because there are political commitments, programmes, and it has to translate into concrete results. But when we build our public policies and deploy them, we must have a much stronger demand for the implementation of reforms. If this is a subject for us, the State, it is that we are not strong enough now on the execution, the steering of our reforms, our transformations. This must produce concrete results: it is useless to vote a law, hundreds of decrees, if in the end you do not measure the concrete and real impact, in the homes, for the individuals.

Geert Bouckaert

Albert Hirschmann has created a typology to characterise the way individuals react to how organisations work. His typology is based on three categories: exit, voice and loyalty.

Loyalty is people who are patient and trust their leaders, they are not a problem, or at least not in the immediate future. The voice, it can also be a peaceful demonstration or a protest, and I think that the President’s initiative to listen, therefore to organise the protest, is important. The exit, meanwhile, is very dangerous, it is the example of hooliganism, terrorism and bloody demonstrations as we see them in some countries.

So this claim is very important, to listen to what is happening, and you have to capture it and analyse it. That is why I would add another element about the quality of listening and the actions that follow, because people want to have a deliberative and not just consultative voice. Of course, not everyone wants to be involved in public policy making, but there are many stakeholders, including NGOs, who are eager to participate in public policy development. There are organisations that want to manage national parks, schools, museums, etc. We can see that there is a lot of energy in society to contribute to the co-production of public services, and serving the population is no longer the monopoly of the public sector alone.

Loyalty, which is based on trust, is a positive attitude, but one that can be passive. It must then be turned into active behaviour, which materialises trust in a behaviour where we want to be a volunteer, participate, co-produce, take responsibility in our community, perhaps also in our parish, in the district and in the neighbourhood.
Thomas Cazenave

I agree, there is a whole section of the population that wants to get involved, although we also have to look at this nuance because we cannot transfer the responsibility of the public service to the citizens.

But there is space for them to be more active and to participate, and not just to gather their opinion. It is necessary that the most committed and those who want to be active have an outlet for this energy and this willingness to do so.

What is the role and place of professionals in the logic of trust?

Thomas Cazenave

Recently, a book I was reading really caught my interest: Smart Simplicity by Yves Morieux. He describes how our organisations, both private and public, have become increasingly more complex. That is to say, we put employees, and public service officers, in matrix organisations, governed by very standardised processes, and it resulted in a crisis that we observe today, with people who are bored at work, no longer find the meaning of what they do, because they have been put in a much too regulated system.

And what Yves Morieux says is that we need to find a culture of trust and cooperation.

The recruitment of public service officers is rather well done: they are well intentioned and able to find solutions locally. But yet, we do not go so far as to leave them this responsibility. We really need to give a big breath of fresh air, freedom within our organisations that have become extremely complex, with a mode of operation that has not changed for decades and a very industrial model whereas it should be in a culture of personalised service.

What is needed is greater freedom to act and therefore greater accountability which is also very rewarding for public service officers.

What we have measuring instruments, barometers, fairly standard tools, but finally public service officers tell us that there is too much hierarchical stacking, too many controls, not enough freedom, too many problems related to managerial practices. And that’s what we have to deal with, because we actually have a very good asset in our public service, with well-trained public service officers engaged in difficult missions, and we have to give them some freedom.

Geert Bouckaert

On this point, I would add that trust in professionals is essential. When doctors, nurses, police officers, teachers fill procedures that must improve the user experience, they may feel deprived of their expertise. So we also need to highlight this and reinforce the feeling they have of knowing their work, of knowing what they need to do to provide good service.

And so to organise trust in the prospect of providing quality services, this also means restoring trust in professionals and giving them a degree of freedom to judge what they can or cannot do according to professional ethics that they are able to appreciate. And that does not mean giving them free rein, it means that there is professional knowledge that we must also reinforce with ethics, values in the behaviour to be maintained towards a population, a client, a user, a citizen. It is a subject that is partly legal, but also partly related to the values that can be linked to a profession.

In this context, education must have an important place, in the universities, in the vocational schools, and also in the schools of civil servants like ENA.

Thomas Cazenave

Of course, converting to these practices, these convictions, these managerial transformations, is a real topic of formation, especially in the high civil service, because it starts with the higher management, by their exemplary value, considering their position.

It does not only need HR, budgetary or legal skills, I think we expect something else from our public managers: to create cooperation, build trust, lead teams, deploy projects. We can see that today we have to reinvent this model. This is essential.

Geert Bouckaert

I think that the question of trust also touches a little bit the loss of contact with citizens through digital,
while the direct relationship is essential for professionals. So we have to find a way to maintain this contact, because if people say they are suspicious of an institution, they have great confidence in the man or the woman at the counter, which shows the importance of this direct contact. You cannot get rid of digital, so you have to organise it, but it has to be combined with direct contact with the professional men and women who serve the people.

Thomas Cazenave

I would go even further, we need more digital. And it’s not my personal feeling, but that of a whole section of the population that often expresses a desire for greater modernisation of the public service, for convenience, for a public service 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. And then, you have a part of the population for whom human contact is absolutely necessary. We must therefore guarantee the human presence, the human relay, to fight this feeling of abandonment, this lack of confidence towards the institutions, this discomfort with digital technology.

To get out of the crisis concerning the lack of trust, do you have any advice, a perspective?

Geert Bouckaert

Studies on the theme of trust in public action reveal two points that can shed light on the subject.

The first point is that in all liberal democracies, trust at the local level is higher than at the central level. This is an observation. If this is the case, then we must decentralise and give the means to empower the local level. It also allows having the possibility to provide a service with variable geometry.

Secondly, it is scientifically proven that the basis of trust are three pillars: ABI (Ability, Benevolence and Integrity), which are three basic concepts that need to be fostered for a trust-based system.

Ability includes professionalism in the broad sense of the term. Benevolence will give people the feeling of being respected and listened to. Integrity is crucial because we must be able to demonstrate the absence of corruption at the individual level, but also the integrity of public policies and organisations that must be open, transparent and with a culture of citizen service.

And besides, there is this keyword of performance, for example the performance of the system, and this word performance has two meanings: it is the result but it is also putting something on stage to make it visible. I think a lot of public services, a lot of public servants do an awesome job and are frustrated because they are not in a position to show that. So you have to put things into perspective because it’s important to encourage and motivate people.

Thomas Cazenave

I do not have a recommendation to make; I think it is important that we continue our programme of public action transformation. We are up to the task, because I sincerely believe that public services and administrations that work better, in a more efficient way, more personalised, that include citizens more in the making of public policies, will help to rebuild the bond of trust between citizens and administrations.
Determinants of trust

Interview between Geert Bouckaert and Thomas Cazenave

The 18th International Meeting on Public Management took it to heart, as it does every year, to ensure a dialogue between researchers and practitioners from the introductory conferences. The researcher’s perspective was therefore ensured by Professor Geert Bouckaert, President of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences, who is also specialised in state reform policies and in the theme of trust in the public sector. The practitioner’s view was provided by Thomas Cazenave, Interministerial Delegate for Public Transformation, which notably implements the ESSOC law (law of 10 August 2018 for a State serving a trusted society).

A joint interview conducted in parallel with the event was also an opportunity for them to cross in greater depth their respective eyes as researcher and practitioner on the subject of these Meetings dedicated to the theme of trust and public action.

View the full interview:
For a trusted society. What is the role of the public service?

by Jean-Gabriel Plumelle
Research officer at the IGPDE

Over the last ten years, the barometers of trust (Edelman and Cevipof) show a general and globalised trend of mistrust towards the media, elected officials and the administration. In France, multiple protest movements of a socio-economic, political and ecological nature have illustrated this trend, such as the “march of the century”, the “Robin des Toits” association and the “yellow vests”, etc. Faced with the decline in trust, how can the public service react? What is its role and what are its margins of manoeuvre? How does it contribute to the problem or the solution?

In many member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the 2008 global financial crisis seems to have been accompanied by a significant decline in confidence in political, economic and social institutions. Several governments have therefore made trust an important element in their public sector reform strategy. In France, for example, the law for a State serving a trusted society of 2018 intends to «trigger a dynamic of transformation of public action by strengthening the framework of a relationship of trust between the public and the administration».

Yet, while popular and political rhetoric increasingly points to declining public confidence in the public sector, several studies based on time series and comparative data from existing international surveys do not indicate a decline in confidence levels in the long term (Van de Walle et al., 2008). The fact that public trust in the state has become a major political and social issue, despite the debates on the empirical reality of this observation, questions its role in the public sector and its inclusion at the heart of promises of public service reforms.
Moreover, the concept of trust is characterised by heterogeneity of approaches and is not the subject of a consensual definition. The only polysemy of the word «trust», visible in the distinction made by the Anglo-Saxons between trust (in the sense of «trusting») and confidence (in the sense of «having faith in»), illustrates the complexity of this task. In addition, the action levers that can be implemented to restore and strengthen the relationship of trust between citizens and public institutions are often poorly understood.

In an attempt to shed light on these questions, this article proposes, based on conferences, workshops, exchanges and interviews conducted during the 18th International Meeting of Public Management, to lay the foundations of this concept by comparing the experiences of various countries and the reflections of researchers. It will also question the limits and feedback of public policies designed to foster the relationship of trust between citizens and the public service.

How to evaluate trust: the Trustlabs experiment

The intangible nature of trust makes it difficult to collect and analyse data to measure it. To facilitate evaluation by national statistical offices, the OECD has published guidelines with international recommendations. In addition to measuring confidence in institutions, the OECD also recommends looking at trust in others, which is a real foundation of social capital. The guidelines contain five question modules, including a central module that can easily be inserted into household surveys measuring confidence in parliament, the police and the public service (OECD, 2017).

In a study based on the Trustlab project, an international trust programme carried out in six OECD countries between November 2016 and November 2017 (Germany, France, Korea, Italy, Slovenia and the United States), the OECD identifies a series of determinants of trust that lead them to make the following observations:

1. The perception of institutional performance is closely linked to trust both in public authorities and in others;
2. The perception of the integrity of the public authorities is the main determinant of the trust placed in them;
3. In addition to indicators associated with social capital, such as neighbourhood relations and attitudes to immigration, perceived satisfaction with public services, social preferences and expectations affect trust in others;
4. Government action is crucial, as a standard deviation of all major determinants of trust in institutions can result in an increase in confidence of 30 to 60 percent.

Trust: an overview of a polysemic notion

If the diagnosis of a «crisis of confidence» is indeed shared, as the need to restore confidence in the State, the concept of trust is not the subject of a consensual definition. A quick review of some analyses and explanatory frameworks will provide a general overview.

What is trust?

A multidisciplinary approach to trust defines it as «a psychological state in which we accept to be vulnerable vis-à-vis another person, in relation to the expectations we may have vis-à-vis that person, his/her intentions or his/her behaviour» (Rousseau et al., 1998). Two key components characterise this definition: the intention to accept our own vulnerability and the positive expectation that the intentions or behaviour of the other will be benevolent.

According to Denise Rousseau, a professor of organisational behaviour and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University, several challenges make it difficult to develop a relationship of trust in today’s society. Firstly, the precariousness that characterises the experience of modern man, both in his workplace and in his private life. One of the effects of the feeling of insecurity identified by psychology is the narrowing of the «cognitive bandwidth», that is to say of the way of thinking about the future and to reflect on its actions and act, which results in reduced ability to establish complex interactions. Secondly, this narrowing of the «cognitive bandwidth» caused by precariousness and job insecurity favours the development of rigidity and a set of negative emotions in the victims.

In addition, behavioural studies of the workplace and behaviour in society indicate that the feeling of having the opportunity to choose plays a decisive role in the relationship of trust. The absence of choice causes a loss of voluntarism and a reduction of social and psychological expectations, making it more difficult to build or develop trust.

And what about distrust?

In his essay, Du culte de la raison comme fondement de la République (From the worship of reason to the foundation of the Republic), the philosopher Alain states: «As trust is the health of monarchies, so distrust is the health of the republics. For Daniel Agacinski, Alain is here in a rather classical republican criticism of confidence as a tool of domination that goes back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the idea that we find in the Contrat Social that the strong being never strong enough to always be the master, he needs the approval and obedience of as many as he gets by something resembling trust. This criticism can also be traced back to Machiavelli, for whom the solidity of republican institutions is not based on trust in republican institutions, but on the contrary in distrust of those who lead them, of which we should always be wary that they seek to abuse this position and the power given to them by the institutions.

In the framework of a public service analysis and in reverse of the image of a society made of interpersonal relations only, this conception of distrust illustrates the asymmetrical character of the relationship between the user and the public service officer who manages a person-to-person relationship and at the same time embodies the State or institution he represents. The extreme asymmetry of this relationship between the public service officer and the user therefore questions the need for the institution to accept distrust as being constitutive of this relationship.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that trust and distrust are not mutually exclusive and can coexist in the same organisation (Oomsels et al., 2016). The table below goes into details about the functional and dysfunctional aspects of trust and distrust within an organisation.

The user, the client and the taxable person... and the citizen?

For the philosopher and marketing professor Romain Laufer, the intellectual authority on which the relationship of trust is based lies in law and science. He is particularly interested in two essential legal principles: the guarantees of legal certainty and the assumption that «no one is supposed to ignore the law». For Laufer, these two principles illustrate a society divided into two categories: the citizens who
are not supposed to ignore the law and the lawyers who are supposed to know it. However, when citizens doubt the ability of lawyers to really know a right that has become too soft or flexible, it can create a crisis of confidence like the crisis of the criterion of administrative law that distinguished until the 1970s the public and the private sector. This crisis of confidence therefore leads to a crisis of legitimacy and a long-term evolution towards a soft or flexible right. This evolution can be illustrated by the transition from administrative secrecy to the requirement of transparency and a reversal of legitimacy with decisions that must be justified, which is visible in a set of laws such as the Data Protection Act and the law on access to administrative documents in 1978, the principle of giving reasons for individual decisions...

This evolution of administrative law has an impact on the management of conflicts from the point of view of the administration-people relationship, which can be characterised by three types of relations that will illustrate this management: the taxable person, the user and the client. Indeed, it is necessary to question the freedom of the stakeholders to flee this relationship. For Albert Hirschmann, a relationship that cannot be overcome leads to conflict, whereas if escape is possible when a conflict arises, it avoids it. This allows us to see that: 1- the taxable person is in a situation in which neither the administration nor the people have the choice; 2- the user is in a situation where he has the choice, but the administration does not have it; 3- the client is in a situation where both parties have a choice. However, the most important categories are probably the intermediate categories: that of the captive user where the user has the choice by law, but not in fact and behaves as a taxable person, and that of the client-user where the administration has in principle no choice, but in reality can escape from the private side. These three categories refer to people seen in different ways: the taxable person as a subject of duty, the user as subject of law and the client as a subject of desire.

But a fourth character is missing then: the citizen as subject of power, who can protest.

**But what level of trust are we talking about?**

Given the variety and heterogeneity of approaches to building trust and the ways to manage it, the importance of the level of analysis plays a fundamental role.

Three levels of trust have been identified: macro-trust (towards the State, the electoral system, etc.), meso-trust (towards public policies such as security, health, education, etc.) and micro-trust (towards

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### Functional and dysfunctional roles of trust and interorganisational distrust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Distrust</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Functional</strong></td>
<td>Risk neutralisation leads to improved cooperation, flexibility, learning, innovation and collaborative behaviour, which can lead to potential - even though incalculable - savings, to more effective and efficient cooperation. more profitable and more socio-emotional well-being for intermediaries charged with creating cooperative interfaces</td>
<td>Risk avoidance leads to dispersion, regulation and control of behaviour to protect against possible abuse of people and situations of vulnerability, which can lead to calculable (but high) transaction costs and calculable gains (but weak)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dysfunctional</strong></td>
<td>Risk neutralisation leads to potential abuse of vulnerable situations in the case of opportunistic behaviour or blindness to failure, which can lead to possible - even though incalculable - cost increases</td>
<td>Risk avoidance leads to dispersion, regulation and control of behaviour, which can lead to missed opportunities and high opportunity costs</td>
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Source: Peter Oomsels et al. (2016), Functions and Dysfunctions of the Interorganizational Trust and Distrust in the Public Sector

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*Trust and distrust are not mutually exclusive and can coexist in the same organisation.*
counter services). However, since the mechanisms driving each of these levels are distinct, building trust in each of them requires different strategies. Finally, to refine this framework of analysis, Geert Bouckaert (2012) distinguishes three types of interactions: the trust of citizens and organisations towards the government and the public sector (T1), the trust of the government and the public sector towards the citizens and organisations (T2), trust within the public sector and government (T3). G. Bouckaert observes that, while T1 is commonly studied, analysed and commented on in the public space, T2 and T3 receive much less attention.

For a new relationship of trust: the user, the compass of the public service?

Soft incentives to structure user choices

Since the release in 2008 of Thaler and Sunstein’s work on behavioural economics and soft incentives or nudges, a growing use of these as a lever of design and implementation of public policies is observed in many OECD countries. Teams dedicated to behavioural sciences are now at the heart of public transformation policies, whether it is to fight against fraud or to promote virtuous behaviour in public health and in the field of the environment.

The application of behavioural sciences in the public service is based in particular on several observations concerning the implementation of public policies: 1. they can be accompanied by unwanted effects; 2. they can be implemented without taking into account the real behaviour of the users; 3. they can be implemented and deployed without testing upstream or on a small scale. To remedy this, teams specialised in behavioural sciences rely on areas of research studying human behaviour, such as cognitive science, social psychology, sociology, to focus on attention, emotion, decision-making or cognitive biases, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of public action.

The cobra effect, or the unintended consequences of public policies cobra

The cobra effect, also called “rebound effect”, occurs when the implementation of an action to solve a problem causes an unexpected effect that aggravates the original problem. It is a term used to illustrate the fact that economic models as well as public policies do not always take into account the subtlety of psychological mechanisms.

The term “cobra effect” has its origin in an anecdote that appeared in India during the British colonial rule. The government, then concerned about the amount of cobras on the streets of Delhi, decided to offer rewards to people bringing back dead cobras. Although this strategy was initially successful, some people started to raise cobras, causing the authorities to stop the programme. These cobras were released into the wild, resulting in an increase in the initial number of cobras on the streets.
The increasing use of behavioural science in public action is reflected in the implementation of tools such as nudge, which seek to change the architecture of choice by acting on the environment in which a person will make a choice to encourage or discourage a given behaviour. Nevertheless, while nudge is not intended to prohibit options, but rather to promote a particular behaviour, the way in which it is implemented, often without the knowledge of those targeted, raises ethical questions about possible manipulation of the behaviour. The nature of the intervention of the public authorities who use this tool, aiming on the one hand the common good, but masking on the other hand the modalities of its intervention aimed at achieving this common good, then question the relationship of trust between the public administration and users and feed the debate on the boundaries of the nudge.

The political and social nature of tools such as nudge also questions two assumptions on which their use in the context of the transformation of public action is based. The first presupposition concerns the individualisation of the citizen’s action, and therefore of their responsibility. With the goal of the common good, the nudge seeks to solve major collective issues, for example in the field of the environment, public health or fraud. However, by assuming that the resolution of these issues must be carried out at the individual level, the individual is held responsible for a series of realities that it is incumbent on them to solve by changing their behaviour. This can have a demobilising and counterproductive effect in building the relationship between the State and public service users. The second presupposition on which the nudge is based concerns the assimilation of social practices, such as the behaviours or lifestyles of individuals, into a series of choices. In doing so, devices like nudge would summarise life situations into a series of options, directing individuals to the option that would be most beneficial to the common good.

However, there is a high degree of approval of behavioural methods and approaches when there is a broad consensus on the purpose of the programme.

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**In the United Kingdom: The Behavioural Insight Team, pioneer of an ethical behavioural approach applied to public policies**

Established in 2010 by the British government, the Behavioural Insight Team (BIT), also known as the Nudge Unit, was the first government organisation dedicated to implementing nudge in the implementation of public policies. Its objectives are to use behavioural approaches to: 1. make public services more efficient while reducing their cost; 2. improve results by introducing more realistic modelling of human behaviour in relation to public policies and; 3. enable individuals to make “better choices”.

As the bearer of a new tool for implementing public policies, the BIT has made the explanation of its action an important axis of its communication in order to prevent the introduction of the nudge from affecting the relationship of trust between citizens and institutions. In addition, and in order to ensure transparency in its methods, the BIT has chosen to publish the research associated with all its projects, including its impact assessment protocols based on recognised qualitative or quantitative scientific methods.

Transparency on the method of assessing results is also complemented by transparency on the objectives sought, which the BIT recommends to clarify, particularly on controversial subjects, when this does not complicate the implementation of the tools. Indeed, tests have shown that the announcement of the objectives sought by a nudge does not affect its effectiveness and enhances its acceptability.
In Sweden: Experio Lab, a design approach for patient and professional-based health solutions

Launched in 2013 in Sweden, the Experio Lab is a national innovation centre dedicated to improving healthcare services. In order to improve the user experience, it relies on both professionals and users of health services to create health projects. Before being implemented, each initiative goes through several stages, including:

- The preparation stage, which develops the dialogue between the patients and the health staff in order to define the challenges and the problems;
- The exploration stage, which focuses on the known and unknown needs of users, identified through ethnographic methods such as interviewing or participant observation;
- The mapping of the needs of users to better visualise and make more understandable the journey of patients to access the health service analysed;
- The co-creation stage, with a creative and collaborative process between patients and healthcare professionals to bring out practical solutions to implement.

Experio Lab’s use of a trial-and-error method to improve health services has been more costly in the short term and slower to implement than top-down approaches. On the other hand, over the medium and long term, the possibility of gradually improving a given health service by successive iterations has enabled the Experio Lab to implement sustainable solutions with a greater user-orientation. Finally, one of the greatest successes is probably the integration of the perspective of patients in the design of health services.
and sociology such as observation, immersion in context or interview. The accumulated data therefore makes it possible to assess the user experience with nuances that are not possible by purely quantitative measures.

Based on this material and the consultation of the stakeholders during a very largely participative and coconstructive process, design thinking uses a series of tools designed in particular to break down both the user’s journey and the work of the public service officers, stakeholder issues and expectations, and the life-cycle of the user-experience and then develop solutions for improvement.

The introduction of this method in the public sector, however, faced several challenges. For example, when applied from the outside, it may be very difficult to apply design thinking in silo administrative structures that it is supposed to change quite drastically. Without the necessary authority to implement it, it is difficult to make changes in several departments and facilitate the adoption of a new user-path.

Digital participation: participating remotely to overcome distrust

The last two decades have seen the rise of the idea that the progression of information and communication technologies since the 1980s could renew democratic participation and political engagement via digital tools while at the same time mitigating a growing lack of confidence with regards to the traditional political and representative system. At the same time, a critical reflection emerged on the digital instrumentation of the modalities of participation with the fear of control of the political power on the citizens’ activities. This fear has particularly increased over the revelations or scandals, such as «the Snowden case» and «the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica scandal», highlighting the continual and massive surveillance of the activities and privacy of citizens.

This rather general context is currently part of the development of a platform society where social relations and citizenship are increasingly played out via dematerialised intermediations. As such, the

In Spain: Decide Madrid, a platform to stimulate citizen participation at the local level

Confronted with the lack of communication channels to stimulate citizen participation, the Madrid City Council decided in 2015 to create a website dedicated to exchange and discussion, so that the local population can express its needs and propose ideas concerning public services. Proposals published on the platform decide.madrid.es were associated with a discussion space open to all citizens to exchange views and discuss needs.

Since 2015, more than 350,000 users have registered and participated in more than 5,000 debates, made over 21,000 submissions and generated more than 4 million votes. Participatory budgets have created 517 new services and facilities proposed by the inhabitants of Madrid. In 2016, there was a 22.6% increase in the number of people perceiving the action of the City Council as a facilitator of citizen participation in its decisions.

Source: Nations unies (2018), United Nations Public Service Awards 2018
management and animation of digital participation tools have become essential for the maintenance, or even the extension, of a distant relationship of trust, as illustrated by CEVIPOF’s political trust barometer (Cevipof, 2019), where 69% of French respondents stated they wish to participate directly in decision-making and public action, preferably using digital tools.

Internationally, this demand has also been supported by many citizens’ movements, such as protest movements in Iceland during the 2008 economic crisis, the Indignados movement in Spain in 2011 or the 2013 protests in Turkey. In opposition to models of indirect citizen participation based on neighbourhood or non-profit associations, these movements claim a paradigm shift through requests for individual, personal and direct citizen participation. At the heart of this new model, free software and platforms occupy a central place.

Providing digital tools to link administrations and citizens in a public action transformation perspective is also at the heart of state reform in many countries. These include the Open Government Partnership, which brings together the governments of 79 countries and local governments, as well as hundreds of civil society organisations, in the same international structure. Created in 2011 and joined by France in 2014, the Open Government Partnership has as its main principles: 1- the transparency of public action, particularly through the opening of public data; 2- citizen participation in the development and evaluation of public policies; 3- the integrity of public action and public service officers; 4- the use of new technologies for openness and accountability.

For a trusted society: towards a new social contract?

In a World Bank report entitled “Towards a new social contract?” Bussolo et al. (2018) observed that the crisis of confidence in public institutions adds to a growing perception of inequality since the 2008 economic crisis and to a greater demand for social justice by many sectors of the population. Bussolo et al. postulate that these tensions question in a deep way the nature of the social contract in Europe where issues of social equality were integrated after the Second World War at the heart of the social contract. Public services have been at the heart of this contract and have resulted in one of the lowest levels of inequality in Europe. If the measurements show that the performances of this system are maintained, the perceptions and impressions as for them deteriorate.

The cycle is complete. While, as we have seen, trust is the acceptance of our own occasional vulnerability to someone or an institution because, in return, we feel durably protected by the fabric of institutions that structure social life and our individual destinies, this is altered by the diffuse feeling that nothing is now acquired.

The reflection on a new social contract that aims to lay the foundations for a relationship of trust between citizens and public services cannot act without thinking about both transparency and the place of public services. To trust is to agree not to know everything provided you have previously defined the areas on which you want to be informed. The public service could therefore play a central role as a facilitator of discussions on these elements of the contract.
Bibliography


The researcher’s eye presents summaries of articles published in scientific journals devoted to public action, recently supported theses in the field of public management and forthcoming symposia.

**Article review**

**RELATION TO THE USER**

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**Validation of a scale of citizen trust in government organisations**

Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, assistant professor, Utrecht University School of Governance, The Netherlands  

Eva Knies, assistant professor of organisational science and human resources management, Utrecht University School of Governance, The Netherlands


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**Theme**

While citizens’ trust in government has largely been studied at the global level in recent years, there is little research on intermediate-level confidence assessment of specific government organisations (e.g., municipalities or public services). The authors propose to develop a valid and reliable scale to measure the organisational confidence of citizens at the intermediate level.

**Data**

To build their scale and to more accurately determine the effects and antecedents of trust at the organisational level, the authors relied on 991 respondents in the Netherlands, who were asked about their trust in their local government. The authors compiled their questionnaires with items measuring three dimensions of trust on two samples, one of which composed of students, and the other composed of a diverse group of citizens participating in a municipal citizen panel.

**Results**

On the basis of psychometric analyses, the authors established a scale built around three dimensions: 1- ability, or the perception of an organisation as being effective and professional; 2- benevolence, or the perception of an organisation as acting in the general interest; 3- integrity, or the perception of an organisation as being sincere and fulfilling its promises. The questioning developed can therefore serve public organisations wishing to measure the trust of their users towards them.
Do the relational characteristics of the website have an impact on online client trust?

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Lova Rajaobelina, PhD student in management sciences, University of Quebec
Jean-Mathieu Fallu, PhD student at HEC Montréal
Line Ricard, Professor of management sciences, University of Quebec
Raoul Graf, Professor of management sciences, University of Quebec

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Theme

Trust is considered a central factor in understanding the commercial, transactional and communicational exchanges on the Internet. The contact interface created by the website plays a decisive role in the trust of online clients. If, in order to foster the development of trust, a website must incorporate functional characteristics (ease of access and use, data protection, confidentiality, fluidity, design, etc.), these alone cannot establish and increase client trust. The authors therefore wonder about the relational characteristics capable of substituting the human interaction and the social aspect of the relations of the real world with the virtual world.

Data

The authors asked eight groups of Quebec students who were clients of the online banking sector to answer self-administered questionnaires. Out of 250 completed questionnaires, the authors selected 227 complete ones which they then analysed to compare the results of their investigation with the documentation.

Results

The results of this research show that the quality of communication, combined with that of support and complemented by the presence of virtual communities, creates a climate of trust for clients. Providing clients with a follow-up on the website, offering online as well as offline support for any request allows the clients to perceive a social presence on the site. However, this presence must result in real monitoring during and after a given transaction, good claims management and accessible technical assistance. In addition, qualitative communication, such as sharing frequent and accurate information between partners via formal and informal channels, positively affects trust. Finally, the existence of a virtual community described as a social entity organised and maintained by an online business can facilitate the exchange between clients. Integrating this type of community allows site managers to identify potential problems, respond to dissatisfactions and better understand the needs, opinions and interests of consumers, in order to develop appropriate marketing strategies.
The role of the formal power of the superior in the effectiveness of strategies for developing trust among subordinates

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Jean-Louis Chandon, director of marketing research at INSEEC

Article published in Gestion des ressources humaines - 2016/3 (No. 101), p. 3 to 23 and available online at: https://www.cairn.info/review-human-resources-management-2016-3-page-3.htm

Theme

Realising that the crisis of confidence has spread in companies at all levels of the hierarchy, the authors are interested in this study to the factors of the development of trust towards the superior. They update two strategies for building trust and identify the leadership behaviours associated with each of these strategies: exchange leadership and membership leadership. The strategy of exchange leadership is for the superior to provide benefits to their subordinate by being reliable and consistent in carrying out their commitments. The second strategy, the membership leadership, is for the superior to bring out and to embody a strong group identity.

Data

For their study, the authors relied on 14 semi-structured interviews and conducted a questionnaire survey of 486 executives. The authors summarise their two research hypotheses and add a variable: the formal power or the ability to change or control the behaviour of their subordinate by the authority conferred by their hierarchical status.

Results

This research shows that the type of leadership to be mobilised depends on the degree of formal power of the superior. Superiors can therefore be trained to identify their position in the situations they encounter (their degree of formal power) and to adapt their behaviour to the stakes of the situation. Collectively-oriented behaviours (leadership of belonging) are to be favoured when the interests or the identity of the group are threatened by external constraints. Similarly, this type of leadership can be particularly effective in the case of project teams. Conversely, when the superior has a strong formal power because his decisions have a direct impact on the interests of his collaborators, he must adopt an exchange leadership by privileging personalised contacts, showing consideration and negotiating acceptable solutions with each of their employees.
(Re)weaving trust and new social pact: challenges and conditions for deploying human capital policies

Maria Giuseppina Bruna, professor-researcher in management sciences at ISTECA Business School (Paris)
Marc Deluzet, general delegate of the International Social Observatory (OSI)

Article published in Question(s) de management 2014/4 (No. 8), p. 57 to 72 and available at: https://www.cairn.info/revue-questions-de-management-2014-4-page-57.htm-

Theme
Main lever of wealth creation, secondary socialisation and social regulation, work creates the possibility to be in society. The authors, a researcher and a practitioner, are therefore interested in the conditions for recreating trust in this organisational field which they consider as a categorical imperative (which invites us to re-examine the relation to Ourselves, to the Other and to the Collective), a political urgency (which questions the effectiveness and efficiency of the social bond and the foundations of living together) and a strategic issue (likely to influence long-term growth and the overall performance of companies). Based on a simultaneous analysis of scientific and professional sources and a game of crossed views, this article questions the refoundation mechanisms of the corporate social pact.

Data
The authors rely on ethical pre-requisites (“recognition of otherness, search for justice through equity”), a strategic prerequisite (renewal of the cycle of trust between the company and its employees through a primary and unconditional “trust donation”, granted by management to their employees) and operational leverage (the deployment of human development policies, with the consequent redesign of HR policies and the praxis of responsible management). They also articulate an interdisciplinary literature review and analysis of qualitative data drawn from observant participation in the International Social Observatory working group.

Results
The authors describe a cycle of trust initiated by a “gift of trust” from management towards its employees, based on two elements. The first is the social and professional dialogue with the representative bodies of the personnel; they participate in negotiating and exchanging within teams (between colleagues and with managers). The second element consists of corporate social networks (physical as well as digital) that offer a triple opportunity: renew internal communication tools, participate in the renewal of managerial practices and practice cooperation in the professional field. Stimulating trans-hierarchical and trans-geographical interaction, these tools encourage the circulation and sharing of information, as well as the co-construction of knowledge. The restoration of trust can therefore be embodied in practice without contrasting the financial focus with the human and social conception of the company. It consists of developing the overall performance of a company by articulating wealth creation and individual and collective fulfilment. These practices revive a humanist conception of the company of which they reveal the human and social nature.
Theme

The decline of public trust in the public sector seems to have been established, and has even become the bedrock of a debate that plans that improving its functioning will restore citizens’ trust. However, the link between performance and trust does not work directly and mechanically, and measuring the effectiveness of the public sector as a whole is a complex task. And, how to compare trust levels when a high level in one country can be considered low in another. On the other hand, while the authors concede that a certain level of mistrust of the State is healthy, since it obliges it to report on its actions, they nevertheless note the recurrence of this debate and its international dimension. They focus on the objective reasons for distrust and whether they are based on actual results or pre-established stereotypes.

Data

On the basis of a series of international surveys - including the Eurobarometer and the World Values Surveys -, the authors have analysed changes in public confidence in the public sector, with a special focus on the countries of the OECD and the EU Member States. Noting that some indicators - such as satisfaction with democracy - are far from adequate for measuring and comparing trust in the State, they identify variations in citizens’ perceptions of the public sector.

Results

Even though some institutions have been victims of a loss of trust, the data does not confirm a long-term decline in public confidence in the public sector. The authors observe fluctuations rather than trends, and the causes of these instabilities are diverse. In the first place, the data proved to be unsuitable for comparisons between countries; the perception varies according to the political and administrative culture of the country and is not systematically linked to the adjustments made by the public services to optimise the relationship of trust. Secondly, the reforms of the administration by certain states have been able to destabilise the users punctually. Finally, companies have evolved (lower respect for authority, declining social capital), and new public service requirements have emerged. The authors note, however, that policymakers are convinced of the reality of declining citizens’ trust despite indicators to the contrary. This leads them to conclude by asking why trust from the people becomes a political or social issue at a given moment, and why it is not at other times.
The influence of transparency and trust in the relationship between corruption and citizen satisfaction

Heungsik Park, professor of public administration, Chung-Ang University, College of Political Science & Economics, Seoul, South Korea and John Blenkinsopp, management assistant, Teesside University Business School, Middlesbrough, UK.


Theme
Reducing corruption and improving citizen satisfaction are important objectives for the State, but the link between these two strategic objectives has rarely been studied. In addition, the literature shows that transparency and trust are considered to have an influence on the relationship between the perception of corruption and the level of citizen satisfaction. There is an increased demand for transparency, while the strengthening of citizens’ trust is becoming a priority issue for public organisations. The authors therefore propose to empirically analyse the perceptions of citizens to understand if the perceived level of corruption influences their level of satisfaction and what is the weight of trust and transparency on this relationship.

Data
The authors base their study on data from a survey conducted in South Korea in one of Seoul’s subdistricts, as part of a local government assessment of its quality management system for public works projects. This system was set up by the municipality with the aim of reducing corruption in the public works departments, considered to be among the most corrupt. The survey was conducted by investigators in each administrative unit of the community, 400 questionnaires were administered, allowing the authors to work on a valid sample of 348 questionnaires.

Results
The analysis indicates that the relationship between corruption and satisfaction was moderated by transparency and partly facilitated by trust. In particular, it shows that public perceptions of the authorities become positive as soon as they try to deal with corruption. It also appears that transparency serves as an important moderator; it increases satisfaction while reducing corruption. Trust also appears to be a significant mediator in the relationship between transparency and satisfaction, as well as between corruption and satisfaction. The authors also note that while enhancing transparency is a positive factor in the presence of a very low confidence level, on the other hand, when the level of confidence in the government is high, more transparency can actually reduce that trust.
This thesis focuses on the financing difficulties of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a French context characterised by a developed banking culture and recent evolutions very marked by the 2008 financial crisis. The author examines on the one hand the relationship between banks and SMEs, focusing in particular on social interactions and the relationship of trust that they perceive as privileged vectors of information allowing the creation of a climate of trust between the parties. On the other hand, it questions the effects of this contractual configuration, subject to the difficulties associated with information asymmetries, on access to bank financing for SMEs.

The author borrows two traditional approaches that constitute the transactional approach (standardised) and the relational approach (long-term relationship), of which she underlines the insufficiency and that she enriches by mobilising the theory of the social embedding and the concept of trust to better understand the loan relationship. She also conducts an empirical study based on an exploratory survey of a sample of bankers and entrepreneurs to show the relevance of the triptych - social embedding, trust, specificities of SMEs - as theoretical reference to the problem of the bank financing process.

Based on her exploratory research, the author notes and emphasises the importance of personal relationships in the relationship between the banker and the entrepreneur, which she defines according to three aspects: interactions, duration and personal knowledge. She emphasises the existence of networks (social, professional and institutional) and the importance accorded to them by bankers in terms of prospecting and collecting quantitative and qualitative information. Moreover, she observes that if interpersonal trust in the loan relationship is based on three fundamental aspects: benevolence, coherence and aptitude, both partners are more interested in trust-coherence and trust-benevolence than in trust-aptitude. For the author, building trusting relationships and social bonds between bankers and executives promotes transparency, reduces monitoring and control costs, and facilitates risk assessment while helping to improve loan conditions.
The determining factors of interorganisational trust in innovation networks. The case of the Alsace Energivie competitiveness cluster

Thesis defended on 19 May 2015 by Chaker Bouchanbouz as part of the Doctoral School Droit et sciences politiques, économiques et de gestion (Nice), under the supervision of Boualem Aliouat, professor of management sciences at the Côte d’Azur University.

This thesis is available at the following address: http://www.theses.fr/2015NICE0010

This thesis deals with the emergence of competitiveness clusters (pôles de compétitivité - PdC) as an organisational form and their mode of governance and management. Considering the French industry facing the challenge of competitiveness, the author notes the political effort to create an environment conducive to innovation, particularly through the PdC projects. This relatively young device, the priority of which is the identification and dissemination of good practices among its stakeholders, is becoming increasingly important in the speeches and studies of researchers as well as in the economic or general press, which regularly reports on changes in management practice within these organisations. The author also notes the fundamental aspect of governance in these institutions and is particularly interested in the process of collaboration of the various stakeholders and more particularly in the question of trust. He wonders how to build inter-stakeholder trust in PdCs.

In order to highlight a theoretical model of integration of inter-stakeholder trust within the PdCs, the author explores many researches carried out on these structures and on trust in the interorganisational relations. He also adopts a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in the « Alsace Energivie » cluster, which is dedicated to energy efficiency in buildings and aims at a positive energy building objective. A questionnaire sent to members of the same cluster also allowed the author to develop a quantitative approach.

The author observes that trust is closely linked to the internal environment of the cluster, that good governance of the innovation process by the PdC ensures trust and that the latter is positively correlated with the reputation of the stakeholders. He stresses the importance of independent steering in innovation networks and notes the importance for PdC members to find their own solutions and implementation conditions in an environment of innovation very marked by the freedom of the stakeholders. He underlines the fact that the managerial tools were not implemented in the form proposed, but were used as tools of reflection to design a new organisational model.
What levers for effective collaboration? The role of trust and culture: the case of the merger-acquisition between Air France and KLM

Thesis defended on 18 November 2016 by Cindy Van den Berg as part of the Graduate School of Management Panthéon-Sorbonne (Paris), under the direction of Alice Le Flanchec, professor of management sciences at Paris-I–Panthéon-Sorbonne University and Anne Gratapac, HDR lecturer in management sciences at the Paris-I-Panthéon-Sorbonne University.

This thesis is available at the following address: http://www.theses.fr/2016PA01E006

This thesis focuses on the study of mergers and acquisitions, which is one of the possible strategies for a company seeking to become more competitive. Although this is the most common external development mode, this very complex operation has, however, a particularly high failure rate of over 50%, according to several studies. Often experienced as a moment of crisis directly linked to the fear of downsizing, these feelings of anguish and fear can lead to inertia and jeopardise the achievement of the objectives of the new entity. Mergers and acquisitions go hand in hand with organisational changes; the management of human aspects is very complex, but can be considered a success factor. To achieve the objectives of the new entity, individuals must collaborate to create collective effectiveness that will add value to the work carried out. The author is interested in the determinants of interindividual collaboration, in particular with two variables that play a specific role in the effectiveness of collaboration: interpersonal trust and the culture of individuals.

In support of a qualitative empirical study based on 44 interviews and a quantitative study based on 301 responses, both conducted within the Air France-KLM commercial division, the author proposes a research model integrating the different determinants of collaboration.

The author shows that trust and culture have a particular influence when it comes to the effectiveness of collaboration and confirms, as a first step, the importance of effective collaboration by showing that 68% determine the achievement of objectives. She also observes that trust is the key element for good communication and social cohesion, which together account for 58% of the effectiveness of collaboration. Therefore, she finds that interpersonal trust indirectly influences the effectiveness of collaboration. This is also the case for culture. The hierarchical distance within the corporate culture and the avoidance of uncertainty in the national culture have a negative influence on trust and social cohesion. Similarly, she notes that there is also an indirect influence of the culture of individuals on the effectiveness of collaboration.
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**Events to come**

**Vers le haut de gamme made in France**  
(Towards high-end made in France)  
Ministry of Economy and Finance, Paris, 21-22 November 2019  
Free admission, compulsory registration

The new theories of international trade show that, in the face of liberalised international trade and rising global competition, product differentiation and rising quality may be the answers for the most advanced countries. The rise in quality avoids having to ask the question of adaptation to globalisation in terms of cost reduction (wage and tax). In addition, non-price competitiveness (or quality) refers partly to the history of a product, brand or region (regional charisma) and to its ability to tell a story, to mobilise ancestral know-how, to establish a link between a regional territory and a global consumer.

The IGPDE organises on 21 and 22 November 2019, in collaboration with the University of Bordeaux, an international symposium on the upscaling of French products. Four sessions deal more specifically with the German «model», the luxury industry, territories and historical specialities of French foreign trade. This symposium brings together academics from various disciplines and nationalities as well as leading public and private players involved in the promotion of made in France and the fight against counterfeiting.

To find out more:

**Journée interdisciplinaire de recherche sur les décisions et les comportements des consommateurs**  
(Interdisciplinary research day on consumer decisions and behaviours)  
IUT of Paris & Liraes, University Paris-Descartes, 3 December 2019

This second edition of the Interdisciplinary day on consumer decisions and behaviour organised by Paris-Descartes University focuses on the issue of mobility, which increasingly affects the different facets of our daily lives. This research day proposes to bring together researchers from different disciplines (geography, computer science, statistics, psychology, management, law, economics, communication, information systems, literature, marketing, logistics, sociology, medicine, mathematics, philosophy, pedagogy, etc.) in order to highlight the evolution of behaviours in the age of mobility and more particularly the evolutions in terms of consumption and decision-making. Its aim is to foster interdisciplinary exchanges around the theme of mobility and its impact on consumer decisions and behaviour.

To find out more:
http://alcor-institute.com/2eme-journee-interdisciplinaire-de-recherche-sur-les-decisions-et-les-comportements-des-consommateurs-jird2e/

**30th AGRH congress: Can HRM save work?**  
Kedge Business School, Bordeaux, 13-15 November 2019

Nowadays, work is experiencing multiple and complex evolutions, since the processes of neotaylorisation which lead, in certain sectors and for certain posts, to a deskilling of its contents and to a loss of meaning, to the development of the independent work and the different forms of outsourcing. The latter threaten indeed the very bases of the principle of localisation of the work of these social collectives that are the companies. Political and media discourses on the loss of the «value of work» intersect discussions of universal minimum income, while economists point to the inevitability, despite a reverse trend, of a multi-year movement towards a decrease in working time therefore questioning the temporal place and therefore, implicitly, the symbolic place of work in individual and collective identities.

The Francophone Human Resource Management Association (AGRH) will address these issues at its 30th Congress with a special focus on the role of the HR function in this complex and multi-faceted situation.

To find out more:
http://www.agrh2019.fr/