

A Precondition of Trust

Trust has attracted significant attention from many scholars as an important mechanism of strengthening solidarity among people and thereby keeping society stable. Thus, the existing arguments on trust, centering on the question of “what is trust?”, have focused on explaining various aspects of trust we can observe in the real world and arguing for their significance. Numerous aspects of trust have been revealed through these arguments, but they can be largely categorized into the following three kinds of trust: Trust is (1) a rational belief that the trustee is trustworthy (Hardin 2002); (2) an optimistic affective attitude toward the world and the trustee (Jones 1996); (3) normative expectations of trustee (McGeer 2008, Walker 2006).

However, all these three theories seek to define trust by analyzing some phenomena of trust that appear in reality, so their definitions are bound to be partial and selective. In other words, we cannot comprehensively illustrate the value of trust through the arguments in those theories, as they cannot explain certain aspects of trust that do *not* fit with their definitions. For this reason, I take a different approach to discussing trust in this paper. Specifically, I transform the fundamental question on trust from “What is trust?” to “How is trust possible?” and thereby suggest a theoretical framework that can provide an integrated explanation of those three kinds of trust. That is to say, my argument in this paper is not about the specific aspects of trust but about the condition of the possibility of all—including but not necessarily limited to the above three kinds of—trust, i.e., a precondition of trust.

With this intention in mind, I analyze and reinterpret each of those three theories in terms of the formative process of trust and thereby find a common premise they have. Throughout the arguments in this paper, it is revealed that the necessary premise of the emergence of trust in mutual relations is the truster’s habituation of specific normativity

through others' responses and that this *habituated normativity* is the truster's second nature that operates unreflectively and automatically in his or her inside. In other words, the above three kinds of trust are different in that they are pointing out three different ways that an agent can habituate certain normativity, but all of them clearly visualize that trust is possible only if the truster is already habituating a specific normativity as second nature. In this respect, habituated normativity is the precondition of trust that enables all trust.

Moreover, I demonstrate that if we focus not on the specific aspects of trust but on the precondition of trust—that is, habituated normativity—we can, alongside the theoretical value that we can get an integrated understanding of the existing multi-differentiated theories, derive new practical possibilities from the arguments of trust. In other words, through the examination of the formative process of habituated normativity, we can suggest a new possibility of social transformation and rediscover the value of distrust.

Words count: 491 (excluding the title and references)

References

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