

U

Suspending disbelief,
gaining confidence and
developing trust: watching
you watching us watching
you ...

B

Professor Tony Bovaird

July 2007

TOPICS

- Introduction
- Trust in communities: the potential benefits
- Disentangling affective, conative and cognitive trust
- Distinguishing belief, confidence and trust
- Mutual trust between citizens and community organisations
- Mutual trust between community organisations, public sector and private sector organisations
- Mutual trust between citizens, community organisations and public sector organisations
- Conclusions and implications

Recent Relevant Research

- Overarching evaluation of Local Government Modernisation Agenda, 2002-2007

- Carrying out Governance Tests in municipalities in:
 - Calderdale, UK
 - Carrick, UK
 - Barcelona, Spain
 - Ulm, Germany
 - Baar, Switzerland, Spain
 - Six cities and towns in Turkey

Trust in systems as well as in persons

- Trust conditions the degree to which joint working is likely to be undertaken as a serious and sustainable activity.
- This applies to both system trust and personal trust: “In the modern world we are no longer placed in a fixed social setting and these new conditions of expanded choices, opportunities and dependencies require commitment and a sustained belief in the ability of systems to perform and maintain conditions, rather than personal trust” (Miztal, 1996)
- Trust is a means to cope with uncertainty in complex systems; it serves to increase the potential of a system for complexity, and its function is the reduction of social complexity by increasing the tolerance of uncertainty (Luhmann, 1999)

Potential benefits of civic trust

- “There exists considerable empirical evidence that that a considerable amount of civic virtue exists amongst citizens and that it is [reinforced] by a constitution that puts faith in its citizens” (Frey, 2000: 43).
- Frey concludes that a good constitution achieves a balance between faith in civic virtue and protecting citizens from the actions of those who would seek to exploit them.
- In essence: trust decreases transaction costs, increases expected outcomes and may even be a cause for greater wellbeing in and of itself

Withering of trust in communities?

- Putnam (1993; 2001)
- J.S. Nye, P.D. Zelikow and D.C. Kings (eds), Why People Don't Trust Government. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- J.R. Hibbing and E. Theiss-Morse (eds), What is it About Government that Americans Dislike? Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- **But ...**
- ... Etzioni and the communitarians
- ... Perri 6, Diana Leat, Kimberley Seltzer and Gerry Stoker (2002), Towards Holistic Governance: the New Reform Agenda. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave.

Different foundations for trust

- Trust based on **BELIEF** (non-evidence based) - it can be dangerous to society if this is too high
- **AFFECTIVE** trust (based on emotions) and **CONATIVE** trust (based on assumed intentions) – both grounded in personal experience.
- Trust based on **CONFIDENCE** (cognitive, based on factual evidence) - e.g. about competence, reliability, integrity - this can be the locus of system trust, embedded in organisational structures and routines
- So, '**TRUST**' is not a single category, nor should it be modelled as such
- Whatever the actual level of trust, we need to understand how to increase it (cf IPSOS Mori research)

Mutuality and trustworthiness

- It is probably essential that trust is MUTUAL if it is to be sustainable
- “Generalised reciprocity is a community asset, but generalised gullibility is not. TRUSTWORTHINESS, not simply trust, is the key ingredient [in trustful communities]” (Putnam, 2000: 136).
- This appears to refer mainly to affective and conative trust. But it also emphasises ‘TRUSTINGNESS’
- TRUST is the outcome of a large series of TRUSTWORTHY-TRUSTING pairings. BOTH of these need to be ‘managed’

Changes in the level of trust between different parties depend on ...

- The *types of parties* concerned – it will be easier to increase trust between people than between people and organisations (and even harder to increase trust between people and systems or institutions). By the same token, however, people can quickly LOSE trust in each other.
- The *types of organisation and the context of the sector* – where interactions are more likely to be frequent, intensive and personal, then trust relationships can more easily be built up (and damaged).
- The *type of relationship between the parties* - cognitive, affective or conative. It will be easier to change the level of the trust if the relationship moves towards an affective basis.
- The *evidence base* which is most used by the parties in determining how much trust to place in each other – tangibles, ideology, experience or empathy? The more the evidence base is rooted in personal experience or empathy, the more easy it will be to change the level of trust in a relationship.

Case study I - Mutual trust between the individuals in the community and their community organizations:

Asian Women's Reading Group in Blackburn

- Started in a local health centre, where health visitors invited a number of women to join (with partial funding from the PCT) . The women read books in English – most had not read for pleasure since leaving school. As their reading has developed, it has enabled them to talk openly about their experiences and offer each other mutual support. Initially some were hesitant about reading again but a sign of their growing confidence and self esteem has been the recent successful application by two of the women for Reading Families Millennium Awards – and the group has grown.
- Rehana: 'When I got married I didn't know anybody and, though I've always really enjoyed reading, I didn't know anybody else that did'. From feeling isolated and lonely, Rehana now promotes reading to the women of her community in an informal way, through playgroups and in people's own homes. The Library and Information Service supports her with advice and guidance on books and reading; other partners will provide mentoring.

Case study II - Mutual trust between community organizations, local public sector organizations and private sector partners

The Caterham Barracks Trust

- A local community trust took advantage of the redevelopment of old military barracks in a rural village with long-standing housing and social problems to start a series of projects which have significantly improved the local quality of life.
- The project initiators brokered a s.106 planning agreement and then worked closely with the private developer (donating over £2m for social facilities) and council to get community involvement in the design and construction of a new concept in village living.
- The private developer, suspicious at first that the arrangement was an attempt to lower densities and profit margins on the site, eventually cooperated fully with the Community Trust to put in place an unparalleled set of community facilities.
- Local villagers, also suspicious of being swamped by 'incomers', have come round to play a major role.

Case study III - Mutual trust between citizens, community organizations and local public sector agencies

The Beacon Estate in Falmouth

- Originally one of the most deprived social housing estates in Britain, the original initiative came from community health workers but its success quickly led to local community groups being formed and a series of small but significant projects with the council. These groups grew rapidly and took major new initiatives on their own behalf. Local residents, who had previously been actively hostile to local public agencies, became involved in (and often took the lead in) in health, social care, environmental and employment initiatives within the estate. Furthermore, some of the local residents became councillors, one became a national housing inspector for the Audit Commission and several of the other key players became active in national policy making bodies. Unemployment and illness went down by huge margins, children's educational attainment went up hugely.

Perception of different groups of the current situation with regard to quality of life and governance issues on Carrick Housing estates

	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Life Issues					
Liveable Environment: quality of housing	Carrick Housing Staff	Board members	Voluntary groups	Carrick District officers	Public officials
Liveable Environment: quality of housing services	Carrick Housing Staff	Board members	Voluntary groups	Carrick District officers	Public officials
Liveable Environment: quality of surroundings	Carrick Housing Staff	Board members	Voluntary groups	Carrick District officers	Public officials
Community safety	Young families	Media			
Health, social well-being and disability issues	Disab. Tenants	Board members			
Education and Training	Young People	Business			
Governance Principles					
Transparency	Young families	Board members	Media		
Partnership working	Carrick Housing staff	Board members	Public officials	Voluntary groups	
Sustainability	Carrick District officers	Young people			
Honest and fair behaviour	Disab. Tenants	Private contractors	Business		

Lessons emerging from case studies

- Obviously, three case studies can't illustrate, never mind provide conclusive evidence for, the importance of trust for successful community outcomes – but they do illustrate some of the salient features of trust-based working
- It seems clear that affective trust is the most powerful motivator of 'suspension of disbelief' at the start of community initiatives
- The main drivers of improved community outcomes do not appear to have been the 'clever initiatives' used to trigger and consolidate local involvement, but rather the commitment to co-production (from service users, citizens, communities and other partners) which was achieved

Conclusion: the paradox of trust in communities

- 'Provider-centric' models of public services have major limitations, hence move to 'co-production' and 'relationship marketing' models based on trust (Zeleny, 1978; Lovelock and Yound, 1979;; Percy and Parks, 1981; Ostrom et al, 1982; Normann, 1984)
 - But lead to continuing battles in professional bureaucracies, where there remain tendencies towards creation of dependence rather than independence or inter-dependence
- However, once service clients and community activists become engaged in co-production alongside professional staff, the trust-based networks which are created may behave not as 'managed networks' but as complex adaptive systems – hard to understand, never mind control

Contact

□ T.Bovaird@bham.ac.uk