

Trusting the other or taking a chance?

An investigation of chance and trust temporalities

Frederiksen, Morten; Heinskou, Marie Bruvik

Published in:
Time & Society

DOI (link to publication from Publisher):
[10.1177/0961463X15577267](https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X15577267)

Publication date:
2016

Document Version
Early version, also known as pre-print

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Frederiksen, M., & Heinskou, M. B. (2016). Trusting the other or taking a chance? An investigation of chance and trust temporalities. *Time & Society*, 25(2), 374-392. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X15577267>

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal -

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Trusting the other or taking a chance? An investigation of chance and trust temporalities

Morten Frederiksen

Department of Political Science, Aalborg University,
Aalborg, Denmark

Marie Bruvik Heinskou

Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen,
Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract

Theories of modernity and risk society argue that increasing levels of risk fundamentally alter or lower the level of trust in society. In this article we argue that this assumption is based in a fallacious theoretical link between trust and risk. Rather than calculative assessment of risk and specific events, trust directs anticipation towards process. First, we outline dominant approaches to trust as a question of actions and uncertainty of outcomes, arguing that these approaches treat trust and chance as interchangeable, conflating the different socio-temporalities within which risk and trust, respectively, reside. Secondly, the issue of temporality is traced in Luhmann's work on trust and it is demonstrated how his dichotomous treatment of social time conflates markedly different temporal experiences. As a solution to this, the article presents the notion of a third temporal mode of the process present from Deleuze's concept of becoming. This is theoretically reconnected to the process present to trust theory, arguing that the uncertainty trust deals with, is connected to process experience rather than expectations of the future. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and empirical consequences of a socio-temporal distinction between trust and chance, and argue that trusting is an epistemological slip and space of non-reflexivity, that transform time to process.

Corresponding author:

Marie Bruvik Heinskou, Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen, Oster Famimagsgade 5, POB 2099, Copenhagen 1014, Denmark.

Email: mbh@soc.ku.dk

Keywords

Risk, chance, trust, becoming, temporality, Luhmann, Deleuze

Introduction

Risk and risk society concepts play an important role in sociological theorizing and discussions about modernity. The increased salience of risk within all social relations is argued to undermine or change trust in other people. In this paper we argue that this claim is based in a misconceptualization of the trust–risk relationship. Ulrich Beck (1986), Anthony Giddens (1990) and Niklas Luhmann (1988) are some of the many prominent sociologists who have insisted on the sociological adaption of the concept, to grasp reflexive social processes that produce trust or mistrust in social relations, social institutions and experts. According to Ulrich Beck modernity has turned into a risk society where threats to society and individuals are produced by society and social relations themselves (e.g. terror, environmental disasters or aids). This has led to an increased responsibility of the individual. Increased knowledge and participation in risk creation have changed the reflexivity of the modern individual and created an uncertain and ambivalent relation to future: the creation of ‘now’ can lead to the destruction of ‘future’ (Beck, 1986).

This social fact, however, only gains relevance in the discussions on trust when assuming that trust is an expectation within a linear temporality. It is, however, questionable whether it is possible at all to trust in this sense? This discussion is highly relevant – both empirically and theoretically – in relation to the assumption of calculation that immanently reign risk and trust sociology (Coleman, 1990; Hardin, 1992). Our point is that this sociological question on trust and risk underemphasise the question of ‘now’ (jetzeit) (Deleuze, 1994; Mead, 1934). Our argument is that trusting is not to calculate, since future, risk and linear temporality are abolished in trust. Trust is fundamentally different from calculation and, consequently, trust must be theoretically separated from risk. Our suggestion is that sociology needs to improve its understanding of trust by incorporating George Mead and Gilles Deleuze as a theoretical criticism of risk sociology and as a path to emphasise the weakness of risk sociology – the ‘now’. We underline how flow brings us closer to trust as a process, instead of understanding trust as a static temporal state of mind that relates to an object and objective reality. Sociologically, it makes sense to grasp trust as an embodied and temporal event which rests on uncertainty beyond reflexivity. As such we critically confront the risk sociology of Giddens and Beck and examine a new temporal approach

to trust, which seeks a new understanding of interpersonal relations of trust, where process rather than results is the centre of trust.

Turning to the seminal works on trust by Niklas Luhmann (1988, 1979), James Coleman (1990) and Peter Blau (1964) trust is characterised as a decision in the face of risk. The probability of undesirable future events is estimated to find reasons either to trust or not to trust. This type of reasoning has led sociologists to argue that trusting is like a bet or a gamble (Offe, 1999). However, this probabilistic conception of trust proves problematic when the issue is reversed. Gambling is clearly not the same thing as trusting. In the present paper we suggest that this conception of trust is based on a fallacious link between risk and trust, ignoring the different temporalities of trusting or taking a calculated risk.

Building on Luhmann's (1979) temporal analysis of events and continuity, we reinvestigate trust and risk as different temporal ways of relating to the potential futures of present interaction. Risk relates to the subjectivity of the other – alter – as a source of unpredictable action and outcomes with both transformative and destructive capacity (Heinskou, 2015). Trust, on the other hand, relates neither to actions nor outcomes, but to the indeterminable potential of the Other in the present (Løgstrup, 1997; Seligman, 1997).

Risk is linked to a temporality of decisions and actions driven by the expectation of potential outcomes, where Luhmann terms the event temporality. However, contrary to Luhmann it is our suggestion that trust relates to a process temporality: to present becoming, rather than to events and expected outcomes. Elaborating and discussing possibilities in Deleuze's (1994) concept of becoming and Mead's (1934) philosophy of the present, we argue that these particular conceptualisations of process in the present include the core temporality of trust. Luhmann's notion of the continuity temporality is characterised by the naturalized permanence and stability of the institutional and natural environment which is firmly seated in the past. This is the temporal mode of trust present in phenomenological (Brown, 2009; Vaitkus, 1990, 1991) and structuralist (Barber, 1983; Parsons, 1967) renderings of trust. In contrast, his notion of the event temporality is seated in the future through the subjects attempt to predict and project the probability of future events resulting from actions in the present. This is the temporal mode of trust presented by Luhmann (1979) and by rational action theory (Coleman, 1982; Hardin, 2002). The process temporality (or becoming), however, resides in the present. The present is the paramount form of temporality in which social interaction takes place and each individual interprets the comportment of other participants. It is in the present that we can observe things actually happening (as opposed to recalling or expecting them) (Flaherty and Fine, 2001: 150; Mead, 1934: 1). Our analysis follows Deleuze's analysis of becoming as process and Mead's

analysis of the present in arguing that trust, in contradistinction to chance, is an anticipation of a present rather than a specific expectation of things to come. Taking this point of departure, we argue that trusting is a process that resides within the temporality of becoming.

Based on this analysis we argue that contemporary endeavours to analyse trust as rational or reflexive underestimate the significance of chance in relating to the uncertainty of future events. Furthermore, we argue that trusting is a relation to alterity which directs anticipations towards process rather than calculating expectations of specific events.

First, we outline the dominant approaches to trust as a question of actions and uncertainty of outcomes, arguing that these approaches treat trust and chance as interchangeable. Secondly, we trace the issue of temporality in Luhmann's work on trust and demonstrate how his dichotomous treatment of social time conflates markedly different temporal experiences. Thirdly, we present the notion of a third temporal mode of the process present from Deleuze's concept of becoming. Fourth, we reconnect this notion of a process present to trust theory, arguing that the uncertainty trusting deals with is connected to process experience and anticipation rather than expectations of the future. Fifth, we investigate two illustrative examples of trust to assess the analytical potential of the proposed notion of trusting as process. Finally, we discuss the theoretical and empirical consequences of a socio-temporal distinction between trust and risk, reconnecting with general sociological discussions on risk and trust.

Theories of trust and uncertainty

In sociology, trust has been firmly connected to uncertainty. In Georg Simmel's (1950) influential writings on trust he states that '*As a hypothesis regarding future behaviour, a hypothesis certain enough to serve as a basis for practical conduct, [trust] is intermediate between knowledge and ignorance about a man*'. This conception of trust contains two important propositions, of which one may be found in most modern theories of trust.

One proposition is that trust is based on manifestly incomplete knowledge and consequently connected to issues of uncertainty. This has been the main sociological theme in theorising trust.

The other proposition is that trust is a type of expectation and consequently linked with issues of temporality and temporal projections. This theme has been all but absent from the sociology of trust, with the notable exception of Luhmann's work on this subject.

Trust poses a sociological puzzle because people trust others in regard to some future event despite uncertainty (Möllering, 2001), and, furthermore,

trust enable people to cooperate with and depend on each other in ways that seem unwarranted to the observer (Barbalet, 2009). Different sociological traditions have theorised different solutions to this puzzle, primarily focusing on the issue of uncertainty.

The functionalist tradition has argued that trust is the expectation that social order will prevail in some specific regard due to the perceived fiduciary obligations binding the other (Barber, 1983; Parsons, 1967). In this rendering, the future actions of the other become predictable – and thus trustworthy – to the extent that perceived normative restraints on those actions reduce uncertainty.

Within rational actions theory, James Coleman has proposed a theory of trust as the result of a rational assessment of probabilities, costs and benefits. Weighing against each other the probabilities of different future outcomes and the potential losses and benefits, the trustor may reach the decision that trust is or is not worth the risk (Coleman, 1982). Trust, consequently, is conceptualised as a calculable probability range specific to a particular situation of risk.

Hardin (2002, 1992) argues from exchange theory that the trusting is best characterised as perceived, encapsulated interest. Rather than knowing specifically what the other will do, encapsulated interest is the expectation that whatever the trustee does will take into account the interests of the trustor. The degree to which this encapsulation of interest is grounded in a personal relationship, objective interests or power structures may vary, but trust is fundamentally cognitive and consequently based on experience. The trustor expects his or her interest to be encapsulated in the interest of the trustee because experience suggests so.

Within phenomenology, Løgstrup's (1997) and Levinas' (1979, 1996) ethical analysis of trust posits that trust is directed towards an 'other' and the unfathomable will of this other. Trusting, they argue, does not depend on a constructed image of the other or the potential futures associated with the actions of the other; trusting simply delivers us into the hands of the other. Both authors anchor trust in the socio-ontological argument that human intersubjectivity is a prerequisite for subjective experience.

Furthermore, a number of theories have suggested different combinations of these three positions as the foundations of trust (Khodyakov, 2007; Kohn, 2008; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Misztal, 1996; Sztompka, 1999; Uslaner, 2002). Predominantly, these theories argue that experience and emotions combined with institutional and cultural assumptions augment the rational calculation of probabilities.

What characterises all these many theories of trust is the 'leap of faith' from the objectively insufficient grounds for trust into a positive expectation of future events and actions (Möllering, 2001). It is this characteristic that is

intriguing: trust can support actions and assumptions where objectified knowledge cannot. Trust overcomes uncertainty and enables people to interact and have expectations of each other that go beyond what is justified by the available information. This is what Barbalet (1996) terms the creativity of trust. Nonetheless, whether based in cognition, rationality, or socialised norms all of these theories inevitably fail. In different ways they attempt to explain how trust deals with uncertainty by arguing that norms, experience, human nature or assessment of probabilities somehow cause uncertainty to disappear. However, this either means that trust is based on certainty, making the notion of trust meaningless, or that trust is a gamble, making trust identical to notions of chance. In both cases there is no need to speak of trust at all since other concepts are more adequate descriptions.

It is our suggestion that a phenomenological investigation of trust and uncertainty is called for in order to understand the subjective difference between trusting and taking a chance in the face of uncertainty. In order to conduct such an investigation, it is, however, necessary to recall that uncertainty is an inherently temporal phenomenon. Consequently, we conduct an analysis of chance and trust as different temporal experiences of – and ways of dealing with – uncertainty. The following paragraphs examine this temporal dynamics of trust, taking Luhmann's theory of trust and time as the point of departure.

Trusting the other in the present?

Trust and time

While Simmel conceived trust as an expectation of the future, it is Luhmann (1979) who wrote the only theory of trust and time, where he presents a theory of time that connects trust to the phenomenological distinction between continuity and event. This distinction is used to characterise two different ways of experiencing time. The first, continuity, he argues, is the primordial temporal mode of stable social and physical environment. In a later revision, Luhmann (1988) specifies that not only the traditional order of social relations but also social institutions belong to this temporality. This is the static temporality of reversible time (Levi-Strauss, 1955) in which past, present and future are identical: that which was still is and will be in the future. Consequently, temporality is not a diachronic flow but a permanent cycle. The other way of experiencing time, according to Luhmann, is that of the event, in part corresponding to Levi-Strauss' (1955) notion of irreversible time. This is the temporality of the time flow in which future potentialities become present events and subsequently past experience.

Fundamentally, what Luhmann presents is a phenomenology of different ways of experiencing uncertainty, which underpins and expands the notion of risk present in Beck's work on risk and in rational choice theory of trust and risk. From the temporal distinction Luhmann develops both the risk/danger distinction and the trust/confidence distinction. The main content of Luhmann's temporal analysis is presented in illustration 1.

Illustration 1

Temporality	Continuity	Event
Domain	Structure (Nature/System/Institution)	Agent (Agency/Alterity)
Mode of uncertainty	Danger	Risk
Mode of certainty	Confidence	Trust

The temporality of continuity presents contingency as minimal. Gravity, bank transfers, flight safety procedures and the intersubjectivity of language are examples of things experienced as continuous. They are a stable condition of life; their workings are mostly unknown to us and experienced as completely independent of our actions and influence. Luhmann defines the fact that such conditions are taken for granted and relied upon completely as confidence: the pre-reflexive expectation that these phenomena will appear and behave tomorrow as they did yesterday. However, this does not mean that confidence is complete within continuity. Rather, the threats and disasters of the past loom equally large in the future. Danger is the other side of confidence, populating the world with dangerous phenomena beyond the control of the subject. Ultimately, neither natural disasters nor tax audits can be controlled or even avoided with any certainty. In this temporal mode, uncertainty is connected to a lack of knowledge. The future is not experienced as truly contingent but is only partly unknown to the subject.

The temporality of events presents uncertainty as immense: an infinite number of potential futures must eventually result in only one present. Since events are so strongly connected to uncertainty – the experience of contingency – they are also reflexive. Promotions, illness, exams, buying a house, or getting married are examples of things experienced as events. When the subject monitors and navigates the unceasing flow of potential events, uncertainty becomes both a property of the future and a consequence of present actions. This is the foundation of Luhmann's (1993) theory of risk as a state of mind in which present actions are evaluated in regard to the potential future events they may create. Consequently, a number of futures are reflexively developed from acting and deciding in

the present (Reith, 2004). Thus navigating the constant flow of potential adverse outcomes, risk is a state of mind striving to minimise regrets. The same temporal analysis of events is at the heart of Luhmann's trust concept. Rather than avoiding regrets, however, trust is a way of accepting potential regrets by acting as if certainty existed despite the knowledge that it does not (Luhmann, 1979, 1988).

This distinction between the event temporality of trust and risk and the continuity temporality of confidence and danger is similar to the two tier model of trust found both in Giddens' work on trust and in phenomenological theorising on trust. Drawing on developmental psychology, Giddens (1990, 1991) suggests that trust in its specific reflexive form is contingent on a basic trust as continuous ontological certainty. From a phenomenological point of view, Grøn (2010) similarly argues that trusting in any specific intersubjective form always presupposes that we are *in* trust as a general way of relating to the world. Trust must be available as a general attitude regarding the world in order to be instantiated when meeting the other. The temporal distinction between trust and confidence is a way of separating these levels of trust and linking them to the phenomenology of time.

However, the temporal distinction is basically a distinction between agency and structure. According to Levi-Strauss (1955), the reversible time of continuity is the temporality of social structure of *langue*, while the irreversible time of events is the temporality of agency, of *parole*. Consequently, both trust and chance belong to the temporalities of events and agency when dealing with uncertainty. This leaves two possible ways of distinguishing trust from chance: either they relate to different levels or thresholds of uncertainty or they relate to different temporal experiences. The predominant sociological argument has pursued the uncertainty argument relating trust and chance to different levels of probability and information. However, this is poorly supported by the fact that people often trust others with what is most important to them (Frederiksen, 2012) and by the way that trust often exceeds justified expectation (Barbalet, 2009). In contrast, our contention is that trust and chance are fundamentally different ways of experiencing temporality: chance is drawn to the potential future and trust is anchored in the process of the present. Consequently, only chance belongs to Luhmann's event temporality while trust is linked to the present only. In the following we approach Luhmann's fundamental question of uncertainty, but drawing on Deleuze's and Mead's analysis of present and becoming in defining trust.

Trust as a process of becoming

Deleuze has no concept of trust in his theoretical work, but he is interested in the relationship of the One and the Many, of univocity and multiplicity.

Thus, contrary to the phenomenology of Løgstrup and Levinas, there is no finite ‘Other’ in Deleuze’s work. Here we find a radical affirmation of the sort of possibilities for becoming that cannot be thought of in logical or moralistic terms: becoming can only be felt or sensed or conjured, which requires us to experiment in ways that affirm the vitality, the energies and the creative animations of existence as a process of trusting a potential chaos, movement and creativity. Becoming is neither the continuation of the past in the present and future nor the infinite contingency of future events. Rather, becoming is the ephemeral promises and potentialities ingrained and available in any and every present. How does trust relate to that process?

As such trusting has no final object – no defined ‘other’ in becoming – or what we term process. The ‘other’ may always be both different and the same. In becoming one can achieve an ultimate existential stage in which life is simply immanent and open to new relations and trajectories. It is endless becomings or simply affect. Becoming is not a part of history: “*History amounts only to the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to ‘become,’ that is, to create something new*” (Deleuze, 1994: 171). As such this is not a conservation of the same but the temporal process of difference *and repetition* at the same time. Trusting the other is embedded in the process of becoming that ties past, present and future together. This conceptualisation of time brings us to the point that trusting is – as a becoming – a ‘middle time’: a time in between past, present and future. Trusting the ‘other’ is born within the present. Trusting does not involve taking a chance, since this requires reflections on possible future risk and thus transgress the bounds of the present. This ‘middle time’ – or this present – is fundamentally different from the temporality of risk. Risk and chance are bound to the present, but importantly *also* bound to possible future outcomes. Thus risk is directed at the possibility of difference in itself – either positive or negative – as an event. Trust, on the other hand, is bound to the expectation of the variability of difference within the present ‘now’. The future is irrelevant to trust since trusting is directed at process temporality of the ‘now’. Further, process – or becoming – breaks with the time of risk and events – which is, as we remember – bound to the linear and controlled/regulated temporality of the future and eliminations of uncertainty. This conceptualisation of the temporality of trust follows GH Mead, who points to the importance of the empirical of the present. To quote Mead:

‘The present is empirical, since it is represented by each new gesture and utterance in the sequential flow of interaction, but the past and the future can only be found in memory and anticipation, respectively’ (Mead, 1934: 31)

What we find here is the important notion of the empirical in the present as a flow of interaction. Pointing towards this flow brings us further to the process of trusting. But from the Deleuzian's point of view this process is chaotic, and the empirical material and multiple, as we will show in the illustrative examples below.

Process may be explosive, but the point is that trust as a process is multiple and has no predefined shape – it is neither linear nor circular but *virtual*. To quote Deleuze: 'The present exists, but the past alone insists and provides the element in which the present passes and successive presents are telescoped (Deleuze, 1994: 85). The past is accessible through the virtual, which is telescoped. Put simply, this gap between the past and the present implies and defines our ability to creatively respond to a situation rather than simply habitually react, in O'Sullivan's (2009) reading of Deleuze (p. 166). This means, seen in the light of trusting, that trust is virtual; it is an image that connects past, present and future.

As Deleuze writes:

The account of a gigantic memory, a multiplicity formed by the virtual co-existence of all the sections of the 'cone', each section being the repetition of all the others... the actualization of this mnemonic virtual appears to take the form of the creation of divergent lines, each of which corresponds to a virtual section, and represents a manner of solving a problem... Difference and repetition in the virtual ground the moment of actualization, of difference as creation. (Deleuze, 1994: 212)

Importantly, the virtual then is itself a realm of difference in itself, difference undefined by the concept, as it were: chaosmosis, pure multiplicity. Further, this ground is not really a ground but more an ungrounding (O'Sullivan, 2009: 168), and we should understand the freedom of the non-mediated ground, the discovery of a ground behind every other ground, the immediate reflection of the formless (Deleuze, 1994: 67). Moreover, these are very bodily means of discovery. That means that the body becomes the very means of experimentation and transformation for a given subject – as a corporeality – as affect. It is giving back the power of nature to the body as a passage from the virtual to the actual that defines life in general and any specific life when it is lived. Bringing back the body to this process, trust is not discursive – it is prediscursive – it is an embodied sensation. That entails that trusting breaks with the Cartesian dualism between reflexivity and body that reigns within risk sociology. Trusting here embrace the partial connections between reflexivity and embodiment as a specific 'plateau' – or ungrounding, where the embodied sensibility of time makes the material ground of trusting as an immediate reflection of the formless. That is the

‘flow’ as Mead would put it – that which is making sense of events and continuity – a chaosmotic nature of process which leaves trusting out of the linear temporality of trusting. This makes the familiarity of process a competence of trusting.

Suggesting this third socio-temporal dimension of the present – characterised by the experience of process flow – allows us to reconfigure Luhmann’s analysis of temporality and uncertainty (Illustration 2). The mode of certainty associated with process is neither the firm stability of continuity nor the probabilistic experience of things risk to come. Rather, certainty in process is linked to familiar flows. Being in a state of trust means to willingly surrender to the ‘rhythm’ – as it were – of the process rather than to the potential outcome (chance) or total structure (confidence). The process temporality unfolds as the infinite flow of repetition and difference within the sequence of situations, requiring agents to interpret the present – the fundamental mode of temporality according to Mead – in making sense of both events and continuity: past and future. The interpretation and accompanying anticipation, however, is founded in neither events nor continuity. Rather, it is founded in the ungrounded – chaosmotic – nature of process, leaving only inertia as a handle for interpretation. This leaves us with a tri-part temporal classification.

Illustration 2

Temporality	Continuity	Process	Event
Domain	Structure (Nature/ System/Institution)	Situation (Interaction)	Agent (Agency)
Mode of uncertainty	Danger	(Angst)	Risk
Mode of certainty	Confidence	Trust	Chance

In the temporality of continuity, stability prevails and the future consequently mirrors the past. In this temporality, certainty in the form of confidence is grounded in this perpetual character of states and process in nature, systems and institutions. Only when these are themselves a source of harm does uncertainty surface as danger: both volcanic eruptions and lay-offs in labour markets do occur, but only by staying away from volcanoes and precarious labour market positions such calamities can be avoided.

In the temporality of process, the on-going, unfolding nature of situated interaction produces a flow or rhythm of repetition and difference which sustains an anticipation of continued interaction. The process temporality is characterised by the directedness of the flow without a specific purpose or

end-goal through which to interpret the interaction. Certainty, in this temporality, is connected to trust as being in tune with – or familiar with – the process flow of the situation. While trust is not directed at a specific goal, it anticipates an unthreatening continuation or repetition of the present because the directedness of the process is familiar and embodied. Uncertainty emerges with the loss of direction or the increasingly synco-pated rhythm of the process flow brought on by an imbalance between the level of repetition and difference. The means a loss of directedness and of familiarity which is characteristic to angst as a mode of uncertainty: the situations and flow of interaction threatens to unravel, dissolving the individual in the process (Sørensen, 1960).

Finally, the temporality of events is directed at the future as a reservoir of potential events. It is a temporal mode in which the subject objectivises the present as a means to an end: the desirable future outcome. Within the temporality certainty takes the form of chance: that despite the possibility of an adverse outcome, probabilities, need, or desire suggests a specific course of action in the present to achieve a specific outcome. Uncertainty becomes manifest as risk when trying to avoid specific future outcomes through strategic action. Both in certainty and uncertainty, the event temporality is characterised by calculativeness and reflexivity, in extrapolating from present actions to future outcomes. This is the temporal mode of risk society, calling on subjects to reflexively assess and calculate the intended and unintended consequences of actions and devising appropriate strategies.

Such conceptual distinctions and elaborations are, in the final analysis, only useful if they help hone our tools for analysing the social. In the following we engage with two important examples of trust – one fictional and one empirical – from the trust literature. The purpose of this is to illustrate and assess the notion of trust as process and becoming as analytical tool.

The temporal experience of trust and chance

In Russell Hardin's (2002) work on trust and trust worthiness, he gives an example meant to illustrate the calculations involved in assessing trust-worthiness and establishing trust. The example is taken from Dostoyevsky's 'The Brothers Karamazov' in which a lieutenant-colonel underhandedly places army funds at the dispositions of the local merchant Trifonov. Trifonov invests the money and returns them to the lieutenant-colonel with interest before each regular audit. However, when the lieutenant-colonel is suddenly relieved of command Trifonov denies ever having received any money, leaving the lieutenant-colonel to explain to the auditors what happened to the misappropriated money in his care.

Hardin's suggestion is that the mutual trust of the two characters is based in their respective interest in making the interest of the other character their own interest, what Hardin defines as encapsulated interest. However, since this encapsulation of interest was only relevant as long as the transaction was ongoing, both should expect the other to betray the others trust in the last instance. Defection was the rational choice of both once no further gains were expected.

This rendering of trust requires people to have some notions of the different potential outcomes of different actions and to take these into account in deciding upon a course of action. In other words, it involves risk in Luhmann's sense of the monitoring of potential adverse outcomes of present actions. In this regard, Hardin's approach is similar to most of the trust theories presented above.

Hardin's example is, however, problematic once we consider the Lieutenant-colonel's perspective. According to Hardin, the Lieutenant-colonel decides to engage in these criminal transactions knowing that Trifonov would only be trustworthy as long as it was in his own interest to be so or as long as external institutional structures forced him to behave honourably. However, it is questionable whether this rendering of trust is different from risk and chance-taking. Engaging in criminal collaboration would seem to involve risk calculation and chance taking and the example thus seems to conflate these phenomena with trust.

From the process perspective, trust could be an accurate description of the relationship even though Trifonov defects in the end. Approaching trust as a sensitivity to – and immersion in – the process of repetition and difference from which each instance of their relationship emerges, we can easily imagine a different scenario. While their transactions may initially have been based on calculation, the successful repetition of their illegal business may have shifted to trust and the process temporality of present situations. Building their anticipation of the interaction solely on the inertia of prior interaction will help them sustain a trust relationship. However, when suddenly the process of repetition and difference takes an abrupt turn – the new orders for the Lieutenant-colonel – it substantially changes their relation and new possibilities and process flows become possible. Trifonov opportunistically devise a strategy which suits his personal ends better: he enter the event temporality and seizes the chance of a quick profit.

No final, right interpretation exists of such examples. However, comparing the two notions of trust does show that the notion of trust as a process of present becoming suggest that people may shift between trust and chance and that trust relationship and the betrayal of trust can meaningfully be analysed as a sequences of unique situation, which unfolds as difference and repetition – chaos and inertia. Approaching trust in this way helps us

understand why trust so often seems to elude objective analysis and attempts to explain the reasons for trust: trust makes sense only from within the flow of the present and only to those participating bodily in those situations. Even to the same people trust may appear unjustified or meaningless in retrospect.

Möllering (2005) provides an empirical example which in many regard is similar to Hardin's. Möllering's analysis of the Lindner–Lafontaine case show how trust develops and eventually fails within a process of contract negotiation. The publisher Heiner Lindner negotiated with the German politician and resigned minister of finance Oscar Lafontaine on publishing a biographical book with information of the SPD-led German government. Lindner later published a diary which conveys his thoughts and reflections throughout the negotiations. The diary shows that Lindner has a pre-existing relationship with Lafontaine and throughout the negotiations he perceives this relationship as increasingly close and trustful (Möllering, 2005b). However, as it turns out Lafontaine signs a more lucrative contract with another publishing house despite promising Lindner the contract. Consequently, Lindner feels betrayed and deceived. On the one hand, the relationship between the two seems to develop in a trusting direction: Lindner is invited to a private birthday with Lafontaine and has an ongoing private relationship with both Lafontaine and his wife. On the other hand, the potential conflict between their trusting relationship and Lafontaine's inevitably having to decide on a publisher seems to loom as a threat to the relationship. Lindner, on his part, expresses trust in Lafontaine and confidence in the success of their business relationship 'He (Lafontaine) felt that I had read the manuscript with a view to letting no harm come to him. From my perspective an unlimited trust relationship had emerged between him and me. Lafontaine seems to reciprocate the trust and is consequently worried that their business negotiations might threaten the relationship: 'He (Lafontaine) says that he does not want to cause me any harm. "Look, if the others (publishing houses in the bidding) make a loss of 100,000 marks or more, I do not care. But for you?" Also, he points out that my publishing house is close to the SPD after all. And he did not want to harm it [the publisher]. Neither did he want me to stretch myself too far' (Lindner, 1999).

The Lindner–Lafontaine's example seems to suggest that trust exist despite calculation, not because of it. Lafontaine is clearly worried that the business decision he has to make will somehow have an adverse impact on Lindner and on their relationship and use their mutual trust to engage this issue. Lindner seems to trust Lafontaine profoundly and try to avoid calculating and assessing what eventually will be in Lafontaine's interest. Lindner trusts and therefore does not need to consider probabilities and

potential outcomes but simply anticipates the present to remain stable: that Lafontaine will remain a trusted friend. Lafontaine's position is more precarious since he considers Lindner a trusted friend, but the need to make a decision forces him to consider outcomes and, consequently, for him risk encroaches on trust.

Hardin's argument, which is repeated in numerous variations by other researchers, presents an objectivist account of trusting: the trustor can never in any final way know the intentions of the trustee. Trust, consequently, is a gamble that one has made a correct assessment of the trustee's intentions. The experience of giving other people a second chance or taking a chance on them in order to achieve some private purpose can appropriately be described in terms of such a gamble. Trusting, however, is a type of anticipation rather than a type of expectation directly based in reflexive assessment.

Initially, the relationship is a flow of interaction between people engaging in trusting cooperation. However, to Lafontaine it changes once he starts getting bids from other publishers and he struggles to maintain the relationship despite the impending business transaction. To Lindner, the relationship remains trusting and he struggles to avoid losing trust despite Lafontaine telling him about the other offers, forcing him to increase his own bid. Once Lafontaine finally decides on another publishing house, Lindner's trust is revoked and he starts to reconsider their relationship and friendship as a deception: in calculative hindsight risk rather than trust seems justified. What was initially trust – a flow of interaction from which neither of the participants had to extract themselves in order to assess and calculate expected probabilities – comes to a dramatic halt as risk, because questions of probabilities and outcomes are forced on the relationship turning past and present actions into evidence from which to extrapolate future events. Hardin's (and Dostoyevsky's) assumption that Trifonov intended to deceive all along is consequently problematic. Like Lindner's interpretation of Lafontaine's actions, it is produced by objectivising hindsight, rather than from the experience of being embedded in the process flow of interaction. The point is that this whether the situation is one of chance or trust is not a question which can be answered by an outside observer because it depends on the temporal experience of the situation and the way in which it unfolds (Author).

Trusting or taking a chance?

In summary we have followed Luhmann's fundamental question of uncertainty, and explored the temporality of trusting by drawing on Deleuze's and Mead's analysis of present and becoming. We have argued that it may

be fruitful to investigate the distinction between trust and chance as one of different temporal experiences rather than different levels of information. The instability of trust which becomes apparent through the notion of present becoming is helpful in both analysing and describing the complexity and instability of trust relations. The calculative approach quickly gets stuck in the quagmire on reflexive strategies and second guessing oneself in trusting. The process approach, however, allows us to analyse the sequence of situations and the sequence of situated subjectivities, thus opening up the multiplicity and indeterminability of trust. Trust is going on as trusting – a bodily, situated, and involved responsiveness to the inertia of process flows.

In conclusion our suggestion is that contemporary and classical sociology have failed to conceptualise trust in a manner that makes it distinguishable from issues of risk and chance. Rather, than considering trust and chance as two different ways of dealing with and experiencing the *same* basic kind of uncertainty, trust and chance are directed at different kinds of uncertainty and indeterminability. Chance is reflexively directed at the potential futures obtainable through the present, whereas trust is directed at the very flow of becoming in the present stemming from the tacit experience and sensation of that flow. This very present of trusting makes it almost impossible to grasp and even more difficult to predict within sociology. When trusting is multiple, it depends not only on the other but on the multiples of the other and the heterogeneity of complex situations. As such trusting is an epistemological slip and a space of non-reflexivity. But, most importantly, trusting is empirical. The consequence of this conceptualization of trust is theoretically and diagnostically critical approach to risk and chance temporalities. It also highlights a critique of the theories of modernity that emphasises risk society as a diagnosis of time. The argument that trust will either become calculative or simply disappear as a consequence of modernity is fundamentally flawed. While there is little doubt that risk and calculation within linear time are indeed increasing, this does not mean that trust is decreasing. On the contrary, the temporality of the present seems to have an equally strong hold on people leaving ample room for trust and trust relations. As we see it new ways of coming to terms with the ambiguities of modernity point towards a need of being in the present as a way of coping with risk society. Stating this, we see that the ability of being in the presence of trusting makes a difference to the emphasis on reflexivity, which traditionally has been highlighted as the capability of being in modernity. On the contrary we emphasise the space of non-reflexivity as the space of trusting. This might even lead us to recognize the growing cultural taste for mindfulness as a pragmatic ability to be fully aware in the moment (Rosa, 2014). The crucial point here is that the establishing and preservation of being in the present require a certain level of ability to

cope with potential risks in an era of incessant social acceleration and in a world of imperatives of speed and competition. Our suggestion is that sociology would benefit from our temporal diagnosis of trusting, in order to pave the way for new conceptualizations of a wider field of sociology. As mentioned above it could be the popularity of mindfulness or it could be political processes on risk management, just to mention a few. The point is that trusting is challenging rational processes and demands despite that these demands need trusting. This brings in a new temporal dilemma to modernity. A dilemma that rests in a need of being – a being in the present.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

References

- Barber B (1983) *The Logic and Limits of Trust*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers.
- Barbalet JM (1996) Social emotions: Confidence, trust and loyalty. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 16(9/10): 75–96.
- Barbalet JM (2009) A characterization of trust, and its consequences. *Theory and Society* 38(4): 367–382.
- Beck U (1986) *Risikogesellschaft. Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Blau P (1964) *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York, NY: Wiley.
- Brown PR (2009) The phenomenology of trust: A Schutzian analysis of the social construction of knowledge by gynae-oncology patients. *Health, Risk & Society* 11(5): 391–407.
- Coleman JS (1982) Systems of trust. A rough theoretical framework. *Angewandte Sozialforschung* 10(3): 277–299.
- Coleman JS (1990) *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Deleuze G (1994) *Difference and Repetition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Flaherty MG and Fine GA (2001) Present, past and future: Conjugating George Herbert Mead's perspective on time. *Time and Society* 10: 147.
- Frederiksen M (2012) Dimensions of trust: An empirical revisit to Simmel's formal sociology of intersubjective trust. *Current Sociology* 60(6): 733–750.
- Giddens A (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Giddens A (1991) *Modernity and Selfidentity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Grøn A (2010) Trust, sociality and selfhood. In: Grøn A and Welz C (eds) *Trust, Sociality and Selfhood*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

- Hardin R (1992) The street-level epistemology of trust. *Analyse & Kritik* 14(2): 152–176.
- Hardin R (2002) *Trust and Trustworthiness*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Heinskou MB (2015) Sexuality in transit – gender gaming and spaces of sexuality in late modernity. *Sexualities*. DOI: 1363460714557661.
- Khodyakov D (2007) Trust as a process: A three-dimensional approach. *Sociology* 41(1): 115–132.
- Kohn M (2008) *Trust: Selfinterest and the Common Good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Levinas E (1979) *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Levinas E (1996) *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*. Indiana University Press.
- Levi-Strauss C (1955) The structural study of myth. *The Journal of American Folklore* 68(270): 428–444.
- Lewis JD and Weigert A (1985) Trust as a social reality. *Social Forces* 63(4): 967–985.
- Lindner H (1999) Sein Herz schlägt link. *Die Zeit* 42: 22–24.
- Løgstrup KE (1997) *The Ethical Demand*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Luhmann N (1993) *Risk, a Sociological Theory*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Luhmann N (1988) Familiarity, confidence, trust: Problems and alternatives. In: Gambetta D (ed.) *Trust*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Luhmann N (1979) *Trust and Power: Two Works by Niklas Luhmann*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Misztal BA (1996) *Trust in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Möllering G (2001) The nature of trust: From Georg Simmel to a theory of expectation, interpretation and suspension. *Sociology* 35(2): 403–420.
- Möllering G (2005a) Rational, institutional, and active trust: just do it!? In: K Bijlsma-Frankema and RK Woolthuis (eds) *Trust under pressure: Empirical investigations of trust and trust building in uncertain circumstances*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 17–36.
- Möllering G (2005b) The Trust/control duality: an integrative perspective on positive expectations of others. *International Sociology*, 20(3), 283–305.
- Offe C (1999) How can we trust our fellow citizens? In: Warren ME (ed.) *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O’Sullivan S (2009) The strange temporality of the subject: Badiou and Deleuze between the finite and the infinite. *Subjectivity* 27: 155–171.
- Mead GH (1934) *The Philosophy of the Present*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Parsons T (1967) *Sociological Theory and Modern Society*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Reith G (2004) Uncertain times. *Time & Society* 13(2–3): 383–402.
- Rosa H (2014) Temporality of the good life: Resonance as a key-concept in critical theory, Oral Presentation. In: *ISA world congress of sociology*, Yokohama, 13–19 July 2014.

- Seligman AB (1997) *The Problem of Trust*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Simmel G (1950) The secret and the secret society. In: Wolff KH (ed.) *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Sørensen V (1960) *Begrebet Angest/indledning og noter ved Villy Sørensen*, 3 ed. Kbh: Gyldendal.
- Sztompka P (1999) *Trust: A Sociological Theory*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Uslaner EM (2002) *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vaitkus S (1990) The crisis as a bankruptcy of trust: The fiduciary attitude, human nature and ethical science. *International Sociology* 5(3): 287–298.
- Vaitkus S (1991) *How is Society Possible? Intersubjectivity and the Fiduciary Attitude as Problems of the Social Group in Mead, Gurwitsch, and Schutz*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing.