



Introduction

INTRODUCING ETHNOGRAPHIES OF TRUSTING

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It has become a truism that trust is the 'glue' binding together the many social networks of modern democracy. From the intimate relationships of family, the web of trust stretches outside the home into the public realm: helping neighbours cooperate about school runs; making customers feel safe to consume the food displayed in supermarkets; persuading citizens vote in elections and pay their taxes; and making those who can afford it invest their savings in the global stock market. These expansive networks of trusting are immensely complex and take considerable time and effort to evolve. And yet, as has become abundantly clear during the last decade of financial trouble in Western economies, trust can dissolve rapidly, burning deep holes in the social fabric. The already massive interest in trust prior to the full-blown financial crisis of 2007 (Cook et al. 2005: 1) has grown, perhaps because of these experiences, into a situation in which 'everybody talks about trust' (Corsín Jiménez 2011: 177). Nevertheless, trusting remains an opaque phenomenon.

Trusting is a disposition, a powerful affect, a stance towards the world expressed in a confident reaching out to others. It is a social orientation towards the future nurtured by the gradual accumulation of positive experience and sometimes revealed in a leap of faith. Trust is an often-unquestioned background whisper of well-being occasionally surfacing in more conscious deliberations when events bring it into question. Trust weaves together intersubjective worlds. It is sometimes unspoken, can be suspended and, of course, trust networks can collapse altogether. The spaces trust builds are of different scale, complexity and duration depending on the specific geographical, cultural and historical location. Trusting is built over time and always vulnerable to the countervailing forces of mistrust, which can overwhelm some social spaces and biographies.

We are thus confronted with an elusive social phenomenon that is nonetheless essential for the workings of any relationship and institution. Despite its immense significance and ubiquity in our everyday existence, the complex workings of trust are poorly understood and theorized. Trust is simply *taken for granted* not only by most human

subjects, but also by scholars (Ystanes 2011). Perhaps this unquestioned quality is a side effect of the nature of trusting itself. Serving as a supporting mesh onto which other affects and emotions are wired, trust seldom surfaces in the mind of subjects as a distinct feeling distinguishable from its twinned emotions of love, hope and well-being. Rather, it tends to surface into consciousness as *an absence* precisely in those moments when trust is in doubt, a lingering suspicion that triggers thought and deliberation, both rational and irrational. It is precisely this conscious calculation that has caught the interest of philosophers, economists and political scientists, whilst the more inchoate, embodied and sensual substrata have been relegated to neuroscience and psychoanalysis. The dominant schools of trust research in the social sciences have largely ignored these primary aspects of trusting. In the tradition of Western scholarship, trust has simply been fragmented and fallen through the fault lines that divide body and mind, nature and nurture, biology and sociology.

The Emerging Field of Trust Research

While trust has a long genealogy as an academic concern, especially within the 'Western' philosophical tradition, the more recent surge in interest has led to a proliferation of publications exploring this phenomenon. Indeed, trust research has emerged as a field in its own right. Spanning academic disciplines such as philosophy, political sciences, sociology, economy and evolutionary biology, trust research is a truly interdisciplinary field, in which contributors struggle to communicate across disciplinary and methodological boundaries. There is little agreement among researchers as to what exactly trust is and how we can study it (see, e.g., Grimen 2009), or even what kind of concept it is (Corsín Jiménez 2011). It is therefore very unclear what we actually know about trust.

Indeed, reading across different arenas of the humanities and social sciences, we found 'trust' entering into equations with other concepts like 'risk', 'contract', or the game playing of rational actors. In this sort of abstract theorizing, trust was typically removed from any contamination by the complexities of intimate and public life. Trust from the perspective of the library was essentially seen as either a taken-for-granted property of the 'intimate' domain or a free floating, pure element of the 'social', a virtual domain with little location in history, culture or the other messy realities in which ordinary people face specific problems of relationship. By browsing through reports on the topic of trust from the laboratory of

natural sciences, a different kind of abstraction and omission leapt out of the page. Since genes and neurons by necessity are embodied, the biological approaches are indeed steeped in a sort of 'intimacy' but of a seriously reduced sort, involving either an individual entity only or a rudimentary collective cut from relations of consanguinity. Here the serious puzzle concerning 'trust' is not its intimate source, but rather its undeniable 'social' character. For if one believes that natural selection in the Darwinian sense can only work on single organisms or at the level of genes, and if those genes or organisms are also perceived as intrinsically 'selfish', how can one then account for the perpetuation of the altruistic properties of collectives that precisely bind trust into expansive forms of sociality. The debate waged in the laboratories about whether the evolution of trust is best understood as a matter of individual or group 'selection' is as fierce as the debate waged among scholars of a more humanistic bent, who argue from the comfort of their armchairs the finer points of contracts and risks as the foundation of trust.

Despite the large variety of approaches to trust in these disciplines, a couple of features can be observed in many of them. Firstly, there is a tendency to assume that trust is essentially produced in the same way everywhere. What surprised both editors of this volume during our encounter with contemporary thinking about 'trust', and its links to such diverse notions as 'risk', 'reciprocity', 'contract', 'obligation', 'gene' and 'neuron', was how 'thinly' it was conceived. Despite its different guises across the domains of scholarship, 'trust' seemed to be spun out of the minds of philosophers, economists and political scientists as a 'thing in itself', a universal essence, which could be easily defined, quantified, calibrated and compared. The 'trust' of the biological sciences did not seem to fare much better, being reduced to the rapid firing of neurons or the slow evolving of genes. The multifaceted, ever-evolving life-worlds in which trusting and its negation take place are therefore often ignored or superficially treated.

Secondly, and related to the tendency to treat social orders superficially, it is often assumed that we can study trust with reference to a singularly conceived subject, often referred to as 'the Truster'. This makes it difficult to conceptualize that even 'Western' selves usually do not conform to the types of self envisioned in much of this research – especially in the neoliberal version of self-governable, rational selves (Hardin 2002, 2006; see, e.g., Cook et al. 2005). As the rich ethnographic material presented in the chapters of this volume illustrates, such thinly conceived conceptualizations are ill suited to unpack the complex, manifold ways in which trust is conceptualized, formed and lived around the world. Indeed, if we are to understand trust, we must dissolve the

singularly conceived subject and focus our attention on trust not as a 'thing' that can be easily defined and accounted for, but as a composite social phenomenon arising in the interplay between bodies, minds and intersubjectivity. Trusting subjects inhabit complex social landscapes, and observe and engage with their surroundings from a variety of social positions. We must therefore explore the very conditions for trust and mistrust in each social order and take into consideration how self, sociality and subject positions are constituted in specific life-worlds. These are of course not new points in social theory per se. There has long been a concern with 'thick descriptions' (Geertz 1973) and the integration of different subject positions into the analysis – for example in postmodern experimental writing. For some reason, however, trust research appears to be excessively marked by an epistemological individualism, which takes various forms and is reflected in conceptions, methodologies and approaches to social and writing styles within the field (see, e.g., Hardin 2002, 2004, 2006; Ostrom and Walker 2003; Cook et al. 2005). The source to such a deep trust in the individual stems from the premise of economics and philosophy.

Capitalizing on Trust: Selfish or Social?

In the *Wealth of a Nation* (1776), Adam Smith asserted that it was an essential 'self-love' in search of profit that drove the individual to 'truck, barter and exchange' (Smith 2008 [1776]: 12). The claim that human beings by nature were motivated by self-interest, not only in commerce but also in all other social activities, was a well-established idea of the time. The alluring purity of Smith's deductive argument, however, that this personal desire was not only the primary cause of market activity but also the driving force behind the division of labour and thus the very foundation of society itself, has had a lasting effect on subsequent sociological and economic theory.

Karl Marx was famously concerned with the classical labour theory of economic value rather than the market. However, on those pages of *Capital* where he did discuss market behaviour he notably failed to take his colleague Smith to court for his reductionist proposition of the inherent egotism of economic behaviour. Marx seemingly accepted that people bought and sold goods out of rational self-interest, but he rejected vehemently the idea that self-interest was the best driver of increased production. Rather, he argued that the bourgeoisie developed markets in a destructive fashion by warping the system of monetary exchange in ways that confused the proper use value of commodities

with their fetishized exchange value. That the working class seemingly trusted these ruinous arrangements Marx simply put down to ‘false consciousness’, thereby inadvertently being the first scholar to question the notion that trust is invariably beneficial (Marx 1990 [1867]). We will return the various ramifications of trust later.

Ever since Smith, however, ideologically and morally laden debates about whether markets are ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for subjects and sociality have raged in scholarly discourse. On the one hand, neo-classical economists like Milton Friedman argue that social and political freedom is fostered by the individual’s ability to buy, sell and accumulate freely. James Manyard Keynes, on the other hand, is representative of the opposing school of thought of the 1930s, being of the opinion that markets need to be regulated by the state to prevent the unbridled speculation that can cause financial chaos and widespread economic crisis. Echoing this sober position are seminal voices like Ferdinand Tönnies (2001 [1887]) and Max Weber (1978 [1904]) who blamed the market for breaking up the medieval *gemeinschaft*, conceived of as circles of social trust and communion, and replacing these havens with *gesellschaft* – a pared down and disenchanting form of sociality that fostered individualism and the structural conditions for capital accumulation and modernity.

Most significantly, whether they condemned or promoted the effects of markets, none of these scholars seriously questioned the premise of the rational ‘self-interest’ at the heart of the matter. The only difference was that while formal economists located selfishness in nature, the sociologists had a more nostalgic interpretation, insisting that the selfish individual was the product of capitalism and had replaced a more communitarian antecedent. From the privileged position of the present day, with more theoretical sophistication at hand, it is easy to see how flawed this thin modelling of pure self-interest really was. We know that the buying and giving of goods participates in complex circuits of motivation and meaning, but such empirically informed insights were not available to earlier scholars. Clearly, they were all speaking of their historical moment and reflecting the dominant evolutionary views of their society and class. Seated most often in private libraries, they also shared a mode of desk study that was conducted from the rather speculative purview of the armchair.

Equipped with better methods and inspired by theorizing in contemporary anthropology, including *Money and the Morality of Exchange*, the influential volume edited by Jonathan Parry and Maurice Bloch (1989), historians have recently embarked on a revisionary project of market behaviour in early modern England. This new look on the past has revealed a starkly different picture than the older ‘thin’ European

accounts, but one which is more in line with contemporary East Africa in its nuanced depiction of the social fabric of entrustments (Shipton 2007; Broch-Due, this volume). By painstakingly sifting through archives, letters, memoirs, bulletins, court files and ledgers of tax and commerce, Craig Muldrew helps us to understand why it is that 'trust' in its dictionary usage slides so easily between personal character, credit and a cooperation of sorts.

His magisterial book, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (1998), is turning conventional wisdoms on their head. Muldrew's stage is the revolution in the English economy of the sixteenth century brought about by the explosion of credit relations, in turn spurred by a chronic shortage of coins in circulation. Credit became a barometer of trust in society. Outstanding claims consisted of a 'system of judgements about trustworthiness' which involved the entire household of individual debtors. Communities might be split by politics or religion, kith and kin might backbite one another in order to advance their personal position and remunerations, but the inescapable necessity of employing credit forced everyone to trust that those with whom they traded would honour their word and repay their outstanding debts. 'People were constantly involved in tangled webs of economic and social dependency', Muldrew writes, 'which linked their households to others within communities and beyond, through the numerous reciprocal bonds of trust in all of the millions of bargains they transacted' (1998: 97). Since attracting credit meant butter on their toast for the better off and the means of sheer survival for those on the margins, keeping a good reputation was thus of paramount concern. In the absence of regulatory instruments, personal forms of impression management, rather than the pure desire for profit, motivated both merchant and shopkeeper. The threat in these networks of loans and debts was the potential domino effect of defaults, which put a strain on relationships, though moralizing pressure was exerted on those likely to fail their repayments. Many, mostly among the poorer segments of society, were simply ejected from networks of trust and credit altogether, ending up in the debtors' prisons familiar to us from Dickens novels. Neighbours often tried to mediate disputes before they ended in such tragic incarceration but if that failed the courts stepped in to enforce the justice of keeping promises. Of course for most debtors, their defaults were not a matter of morality but simply of empty pockets.

Muldrew found little evidence from Tudor voices that they would stress private desire for profit over mutual interdependence in their own reflections on the meaning and motives of what they were doing. On the

contrary, he argues that as the market expanded so too did religious and cultural stress on the ethics of credit, resulting in a new flexible law of contract with emphasis on trusting. Thus, contrary to Weber's idea that the 'spirit of capitalism' was to be found in the Calvinist diligence, thrift and frugality expected of market-oriented individuals, Muldrew demonstrates that moral guidance was more concerned with social standing, and thus oriented 'outward into the community, not inwards, concerning belief' (ibid.: 1–2). This moral bolstering of market relations continued well into the eighteenth century. However, throughout this period we discern a gradual and subtle shift away from social trust towards more individualistic values, with the development of more anonymous form of paper credit. Moreover, a sharpening of class and gender divides takes place with the development of a firmer distinction between the public and private domains and with the advent of the middle class.

In 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd' (1971), E.P. Thompson succinctly captured the turning point occurring in the second half of the eighteenth century, showing that 'self-interest' did not filter into classical theory from 'nature' but from culture. He demonstrated that during years of dearth, popular consensus about the entitlement of the poor to locally produced grain came into conflict with a new, more absolute, utilitarian ideology of free trade. This was promoted by a new type of middleman who used the shrinking supply of wheat to speculate in higher prices. Mobilizing on the basis of entrenched communitarian values of obligation and trust, the poor took to the streets during the famous 'bread riots', seizing the grain destined for export and selling it locally at a lower and fairer price. They thus regulated the market through social action rather than the mysterious 'invisible hand' of Adam Smith's theory.

Whatever the case, the historical ethnographies of Muldrew and Thompson demonstrate that what operated in the economies of the time was *not* the calculating, autonomous, inward-looking individual envisaged by the philosophers of risk and contract, but rather 'the public perception of the self in relation to a communicated set of both personal and household virtues' (Muldrew 1998: 156). And yet the narrow focus on the individual agent continues unabated in the economic models of Western philosophy.

Trust Research and the Enquiring 'I'

The appearance of the singularly conceived subject, the Truster, is related to the origin of the academic interest with trust in philosophy.

Contemporary accounts often trace this interest back to Thomas Hobbes's book *Leviathan* (1996 [1651]). Here Hobbes argues that human beings are first and foremost driven by a concern with their own needs, desires and fears. In order to avoid a conflict of all against all, or what Hobbes refers to as the state of nature, it is necessary to establish a social contract. For Hobbes, this involves giving up our natural freedom to an absolute sovereign power, which can enforce peace, justice and distribution. Hobbes thus assumes that human beings are fundamentally untrustworthy, and that only an absolute sovereign power can secure the conditions for social trust.

The philosopher Trudy Govier (1997) points to an interesting aspect of Hobbes's argument. That is, Hobbes read humankind in himself. As he tried to estimate what motivated other people, he looked inside himself, and asked what he would do in similar circumstances, and why. This mode of knowing points to the way Western philosophers have tended *not* to conceive of themselves as Western, but rather as representative members of humankind, making arguments valid for all of its members. This epistemological starting point is reflected in much contemporary research on trust, where subjects are conceived of as identifiable with the enquiring 'I' and referred to as 'I' or 'we'. These enquiries are thus premised on the unspoken assumption that 'I' or 'we' can include all human beings. This sweeping universalism is, of course, a problematic feature for anthropologists attempting to use existing conceptions of trust to analyse their ethnographic material. The chapters in this volume illustrate that not only is there considerable variety in the behaviours and attitudes that help produce trust in each context, but the people inhabiting these contexts have radically different ways of understanding what trust is. That is, the words we normally translate into 'trust' may refer to concepts and attitudes that are quite radically different from the connotations of the English word.

Paula Haas's chapter is a case in point. The Barga Mongols she has worked with consider trust to be a virtue in and of itself: a sign that one is a good person trying to produce positive effects in the world. In contrast to the concepts of trust arising out of 'Western' philosophical traditions, the Barga Mongol understanding is entirely unrelated to the trustworthiness of others, and purely a reflection of the inner attitude of those extending trust. Indeed, to trust is associated with 'not having bad thoughts about anybody', and *being* honest and trustworthy. Extending trust towards others, even clearly untrustworthy persons, is thus conceived of as morally good and making an effort to create favourable outcomes. This latter point is related to how Barga Mongols not only understand trusting as morally good in and of itself,

but also as a way of asserting control of the people they extend their trust towards, and *making* them trustworthy.

This is significantly different from the concepts of trust formulated by academics working in Western contexts. According to these theorizations, the attitude favoured by the Barga Mongols would be considered gullible and perhaps even immoral, considering the possibility that such trust relationships are based on deception (e.g., Baier 1986).

Haas teases out the Barga Mongol notion of trust by exploring a case in which a family's land tenant has stopped paying rent and has bribed local government officials to have his name put in the cadastral register instead of theirs. Despite struggling for years to turn the situation around and regain their land, the family continued to trust the corrupt officials who clearly had no intentions of resolving their problem. They even emphasized the importance of doing so. Indeed, to not trust in this situation would be unthinkable. Because of the Barga Mongol emphasis on trusting as a moral act infused with the power to influence others towards trustworthiness and to divert misfortune, not to trust would signify resignation and make one vulnerable to misfortune. This case illustrates the analytical problems that arise when we take conceptions produced with one particular social order in mind as a starting point for exploring what trust is and the social work it does around the world. By taking this undying trusting, apparently against all reason, as her lead, Haas opens up pathways and boundaries of the landscape of trust that are much more complex and open-ended than 'Western' theorising has imagined. This not only forces us to widen our empirical scope in explorations of trust, but also to question whether the myriad words that dictionaries translate into 'trust' can be meaningfully understood to be about the same social phenomenon.

Two different approaches may arise from this question. We can rigorously define the concept we wish to explore, in any given society, regardless of how it relates to the semantic and phenomenological intricacy of words usually translated into 'trust'. This is the approach often taken in contemporary trust research, where the search for 'conceptual clarity' (Cook et al. 2005: 19) guides the investigations and produces reductionist analyses of this multifaceted phenomenon. Alternatively, we might take a more open and exploratory approach, and allow for empirical findings to guide the search for definitions. This, we argue, is the most productive and sensible approach – despite the Pandora's Box of complexity that inevitably follows. Being faithful to the values of 'thick' description does not, as some might argue, mean an end to large-scale comparison or the possibility of general theory. It simply means a different way to tackle them. Indeed, as Haas's study of the Barga

Mongol notion of trust demonstrates, it is necessary to problematize epistemological individualism and sweeping universalism if we are to deepen our understanding of the multitude of ways in which trust is formed and works on social fabrics around the world.

Trust, Hierarchy and Intimacy

Anthropologists are not alone in challenging the universalism commonplace in trust research. Some philosophers have problematized it by engaging feminist critiques, and pointing to how power differences are indeed part of the intimate sphere so often idealized as a locus of trust and mutual support, both in trust research and in the folk theories of many societies. Trudy Govier (1992) and Annette Baier (1986), for example, point out that hierarchized gender relationships are usually left out of philosophical enquiries into trust. Baier (1986) attributes this blind spot in 'Western' philosophical traditions to the fact that it is mainly contractual philosophy that has concerned itself with trust. Here, it has largely been taken for granted that contracts represent agreements between equal men. Dependent women, children, slaves and proletarians have therefore not been included in the analyses. The legacy of this origin in contemporary trust research can be observed in how trust in hierarchical relationships is often ignored or simply assumed to not exist. This is of course particularly so in game-theory experiments where trust is explored without any context whatsoever.

The political scientist Russell Hardin, who has published extensively on trust in the last couple of decades (Hardin 2004, 2006; see also, e.g., Cook et al. 2005; Hardin 2003), is very explicit about this. He argues that substantial power differences wreck the possibility and meaningfulness of trust. This view is a logical consequence of his understanding of trust as encapsulation of interests. That is, I can only trust those who have encapsulated my interests into their own, simply because they are *my* interests.

This means that for Hardin, trust depends mainly on affection, and exists almost exclusively in the private sphere of intimate relationships. He takes trust to be a type of knowledge: the conscious assessment that the persons we trust have linked our interests to their own. Trust can therefore not exist among the anonymous strangers that together constitute a complex society, or in hierarchical relationships marked by diverging interests. This is also the main premise for the argument developed in *Cooperation without Trust?*, which Hardin co-authored with Karen S. Cook and Margaret Levi (Cook et al. 2005). The central

claim of this book is that trust plays a limited role in the production of social orders in the modern era because it is so difficult to achieve outside of intimate relationships. Institutions – not trust – therefore function as guarantors for cooperation (Cook et al. 2005: 19).

There are a number of problems with such an analysis of trust. One of the most important is perhaps that it is based on a reductionist understanding of personal, professional and public relationships. By taking the smooth workings of trust in the intimate sphere for granted, as an underlying, unexplored premise, the analysis falls apart in the encounter with the kind of complex and at times troublesome intimacy presented in the chapters of this volume. Cook et al. (2005) take the idea that intimate relationships are essentially harmonious refuges from a calculating and self-serving world to its logical conclusion, and thus represent a radical position on the role of trust in complex societies. Nevertheless, the premise of their argument is not that far removed from the epistemological individualism underlying most trust research, and thus it illustrates clearly the importance of unpacking notions and experiences of intimacy and sociality as they appear in different contexts. As our chapters show, there is great variation in the ways in which people conceptualize intimacy, engage in trust relationships or find their trust in intimate others shattered.

Radhika Chopra's chapter speaks to the feminist critique of trust research by exploring trust relations in a highly hierarchical context: the relationships between colonial masters and their local servants in India. The case of domestic servants is interesting, as relations between them and the employers are usually not intended to be intimate; yet as Chopra shows, considerable, even 'unspeakable' intimacies, complicity and trust may develop through the servants' tending to the masters' physical, emotional and practical needs, as well as continuous physical proximity. Drawing upon the British colonial masters' conceptualizations of their role, their local subjects and the moral universe they inhabited, Chopra teases out the complex web of relationships between masters and servants, bonds that wavered between moralities of contract and family ties and generated different forms of trust. She shows how intimacies and trust created their own hierarchies of value within the household. Chopra brings attention to the peculiarity of the colonial household, in which intimate proximity did not automatically translate as blood kinship or family but included servitude of various kinds in a tightly controlled network of trust.

Whilst such inclusive colonial households resembled the big halls of medieval Europe, as a *habitus* of home it was rather moulded on the aristocratic mansions of later centuries in which shared space was built

and subdivided in corridors and separate quarters. Through performing their daily chores in such organized space, servants would incorporate into the rhythms of their body movement social distinctions sedimented in the structural layout of colonial homes; in addition they would also learn how to handle invisibility. These 'body technologies', in a Maussian sense, were particularly elaborated in colonial India where one not only had to behave 'properly' in spatial terms according to class and gender, but also according to race and caste. Within the interiors of the colonial bungalow, distance and invisibility were orchestrated to convey and consolidate the racial and class divides between 'white' masters and 'black' servants. Architectural innovations of domestic spaces consigned the servant to a phantom existence, a silent figure whose presence, despite being privy to all the secrets of the home, was without acknowledgement. Nevertheless, while there was an enormous cultural and spatial divide within the household, it was also clear that the 'white' members of the household were a minority within their own walls and thus had to trust their servants' discretion in private matters. Masters and mistresses were thus compelled, despite their elevated positions, to entrust their daily lives and those of their children to their native servants, including intimate acts such as being dressed, washed and fed. Despite the absolute nature of colonial power that fixed the servants into positions of virtual enslavement, the fact that servants' work and lives were intertwined into everyday domestic worlds often created the illusion of a fictive kinship and familial bonds. Feelings of intimacy bled into distinctions of class, race and caste, often becoming relations of strong affection and even love between nannies and the children in their care. Thus, sovereignty met intimacy in the kitchens and nurseries of empire, blurring the distinctions between dependence, dominance, distance and trust. The persistent familiarity induced by intimacies of care translated into a strange tension between trust and mistrust. This form of intimacy and proximity, the author concludes, still persists in contemporary India, where the huge divides in wealth make the presence of servants common in most middle-class homes.

Chopra's analysis not only challenges the widespread idea that trust cannot exist in hierarchical relations (see, e.g., O'Neill 2002; Cook et al. 2005; Hardin 2006), but also illuminate how trust and intimate relations are shaped and moulded by the social, economic, moral and spatial landscapes in which they are played out. Indeed, by paying close attention to the complexity and variety of human life-worlds, we learn that the connection between intimacy and trust is unstable, difficult to pin down, and may arise even in the relationships that people consider

to be the most inappropriate for the openness and affection that may follow. It is also clear from this case that the presumption that trust cannot exist in hierarchical relationships, that is so commonly observed in trust research (O'Neill 2002; Cook et al. 2005; Hardin 2006), is too simplistic and based on unexplored, taken-for-granted premises rather than being subjected to serious empirical scrutiny.

This exploration should not only take place in the public sphere, where it is most commonly recognized that hierarchical relations exist, but also within the intimate sphere of domestic relations, as Baier (1986) and Govier (1992) point out. For indeed, families and kinship networks are widely considered a realm of trust in many, if not most societies, despite the hierarchization of intimate relationships that inevitably follow from the power asymmetry between children and adults, and often also from the stratification of gender and unequal access to resources, networks of influence and so on. Interestingly, this association between intimate relationships and trust appears to be most explicitly pronounced in societies where family and kinship relations are most hierarchical, such as China or Latin America (Fukuyama 1996). Nevertheless, as several of the chapters here show, intimate relationships, even in contexts where they are highly idealized in the local culture, are not without complication, disappointment and estrangement.

Margit Ystanes's chapter, for example, critiques the stereotypical notion that Latin American families constitute such a tightly knit and enclosed web of trust relations that it hinders the formation of societal trust. Indeed, the *ladino* Guatemalans she has worked with do usually consider family and kin to constitute a realm of trust and intimacy, and the public sphere is marked by mistrust and confrontation. Nevertheless, in reality this boundary is highly permeable, and rests precariously on family members' continuous adherence to moral norms idealizing symbolic closures. Spatially, this distinction is epitomized in the opposition between *la casa* [the house] and *la calle* [the street], the doorway serving as the material mediator. Just as the house cannot function without a passage to the world, so the separation between these spheres is highly porous, with elements from each bleeding into the other. Ladino conceptualizations of trust and mistrust draw, among other things, upon a symbolism of blood. Those who are considered most trustworthy are related by blood; this bodily substance provides the connection that bind people together as kin, and, in the most intimate sense, to a house. Blood is a powerful, yet ambiguous symbol, evoking both good and evil within the body: life and procreation, violence and death. Blood is thus not just a vehicle for intimacy, kinship

and trust, but also for embodied notions of superiority and inferiority, social distance and mistrust.

The ways in which the blood metaphor seeps into all domains of living in the Guatemalan social imaginary is coloured by their own internal colonial history and concerns to create a racial purity in the dominant population similar to that of the European Empires. There was simultaneously a concern with the 'mixed' as 'matter out of place', and ambitions to 'whiten' the population through European immigration, strict control of elite 'white' women and their sexual and reproductive lives and 'race improvement', that is, making indigenous women pregnant by 'white' men. Needless to say, these practices produced numerous kinds of violent intimacies; from the assumption that ladino boys would practice sex with young domestic workers to plantation owners' traditional rights to the 'first night' of their female indigenous employees (Hale 2006: 160), as well as the sexual control of elite women. In such ways, private desire and public status merged in concerns over kinship and heredity, often conceptualized as 'blood relations'.

As the ladino Guatemalan conception of trust rests upon this highly equivocal foundation, this creates ambiguity in intimate relationships. It also reinforces mistrust towards those considered to be of a different kind of blood: the indigenous people. The formation of trust and mistrust in this context takes place against a backdrop of the management of sexuality, respectability and social pre-eminence, and cannot be reduced to the presence of tight-knit intimate relations. Rather, the ambiguity marking these entities means that trust formation within the family rests on an unstable foundation that reaches into the public sphere, affecting trust formation there also. Ystanes argues that rather than being an outcome of solid trust relations in the intimate domain, the arid ground for the formation of societal trust in Guatemala is related to the precariousness of trust relations amongst family and kin. Her analysis thus challenges existing notions about trust, family and intimacy in Latin societies (see, e.g., Fukuyama 1996), and thereby, the idea that trust in its essence is a taken-for-granted aspect of the intimate sphere. Such presumptions should not form an unquestioned premise upon which analysis is based, but rather, be approached as an empirical question to be explored in its own right.

Similarly, Peter Geschiere's contribution goes right to the core of intimacy, trust and the social, and forcefully illustrates how problematic it is to assume that trust usually flows naturally and unhindered in relationships between people who are connected by blood, affection and domestic proximity. Drawing on more than forty years of ethnographic engagement with Maka of Southeast Cameroon, he explores intimacy

and trust in the context of 'witchcraft of the house' – that is, witchcraft that strikes from within one's most intimate relationships. Maka, like so many others, consider kinship to be a source of trust and solidarity. However, this intimacy has a flipside: the possibility of jealousy and betrayal represented by the witch who strikes from within the kinship group. His study of Maka witchcraft also pays attention to notions of the body and worlds of both sensuous pleasure and suffering. Witchcraft is understood to be an evil creature residing in someone's belly, giving him or her special powers to transform into an animal or spirit. These abilities allow witches to participate in cannibalistic, transgressive banquets in which they each offer a relative to be devoured by the other witches. In daily life, such treason from within will manifest itself in illness or even death unless healers are able to discover the source of the illness and force the witch into the open. Maka witchcraft discourse, then, is fundamentally about the betrayal of kin to outsiders.

As Geschiere argues, witchcraft discourse can be read as the realization that intimacy is ambiguous – an essential anchor for social relations, yet burdened with suspicion and menace. From this perspective, the preoccupation of many peoples in present-day Africa with the proliferation of witchcraft no longer appears that exceptional; the fear of intimacy as potentially dangerous is ubiquitous. A case in point is the way that feminist philosophers remind us that power differences, and sometimes also violence, are part of intimate relationships, and that 'Western' philosophers' inability to engage with this fact in their explorations of trust reflects first and foremost their own distancing from the kinds of domestic complications that mark most people's lives (Govier 1992; Baier 1986). This close link between 'witchcraft' and 'intimacy' inevitably raises the question of how to maintain 'trust' in close relations if they can be so poisonous. It also emphasizes how problematic it is to take folk theories about the family and kinship network, as entirely harmonious spheres of mutual support, as an unquestioned premise for explorations of trust, regardless of whether these theories are 'Western', Latin American or African in their origin. Indeed, as the ethnographies provided by Chopra, Ystanes and Geschiere illustrates, intimacy has a darker flipside of power differences, subjugation, ambiguity, violence or betrayal, which must also be taken into consideration.

Biological Trusting

One of the fascinating linkages the phenomenon of trusting can make is to the realm of the biological and some of the new discoveries of

neuroscience. Here we are dealing with debates about the ways in which trusting may be hard-wired into our cognitive and physiological make-up, opening up the spaces of human intersubjectivity. As the expert on early baby talk and dialoguing styles between infant and mother, the psychobiologist Colwyn Trevarthen, sums up: 'the idea of infant intersubjectivity is no less than a theory of how human minds, in human bodies, can recognize one another's impulses intuitively with or without cognitive or symbolic elaboration' (1998: 17).

In *The Interpersonal World of the Infant* (1985), which bridges the divide between psychoanalysis and cognitive psychology, Daniel Stern emphasizes the significance for a child's development of the preverbal relations of early life, which envelop the infant in an intersubjective embrace with its caretaker. During childhood and adolescence, affects and behaviour linked to a neurobiological unfolding combine with epigenetic processes related to each subject's personal experiences, leading to specific emotional habits and traits. And yet all subjects grow up within specific cultural contexts and child-rearing regimes (Broch-Due, this volume). The variation in trusting we see across the essays in this volume speaks precisely to the entanglement of trust and mistrust with different cultural styles and different ways of shaping subjects and sociality. As Siri Hustvedt so succinctly puts it: 'we become ourselves through others, and the self is a porous thing, not a sealed container. If it begins as a genetic map, it is one that is expressed over time and only in relation to the world' (2012: 70).

Having established that human infants are naturally born with social skills that are shaped within biographical and cultural frames, the next breakthrough of great relevance for anthropology is the *plasticity* of the brain itself, creating new connections in its wiring along with the maturing of the experiencing subject. The human brain is a vast, elaborated edifice and scientists are only now beginning to develop adequate tools to explore it.

At the heart of this new thinking about the faculties hard-wired into our being is a discussion which bears very directly on the phenomenon of trusting: altruism. As against the old idea that humans are born as 'blank slates' on which culture then writes its various codes for sharing, trust and cooperation, more recent research suggests that humans are indeed born with these propensities. It seems that trust, cooperation and the moral emotions play a huge role in infant psychology and are not cultural scripts that have to be learnt. However, psychology and neuroscience share with philosophy an unfortunate ethnocentric tendency to generalize their findings globally. All the brains and behaviours studied in this kind of research seem to belong to subjects brought up

within Western cultures. Anthropology, in contrast, has access to a vast cross-cultural array of intersubjectivities with their different cooperative and trusting behaviours. Given the elasticity of the brain, there are thus good reasons to assume that such vast differences in habitus and experiences would affect its wiring too. This is a possible avenue for cooperation between ethnography and cognitive science.

Perhaps less attractive to the topic of this volume and puzzling to many social anthropologists is the disagreement in evolutionary biology about whether altruism, and thus trust, is possible at all. This question could only seriously be asked after Charles Darwin's *On the Origins of the Species* (1859). Before this watershed in scholarship it would have been utterly nonsensical. If anything, most would have contended that there was not enough altruism in the world. The Scottish philosopher David Hume, for example, emphasized the human propensity 'to sympathize with others' in his *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739). On this score, Darwin himself was more aligned with Hume than with many 'Darwinists', proclaiming in *The Descent of Man*: 'Any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed, as in man' (2004 [1871]: 71–72).

For Darwin, the evolution of human beings from primates depended precisely on the *continuation* of certain traits across species, emotions and empathy included. His strong belief that animals like his own dog, whose affective behaviour he scrutinized, had feelings and intentions like humans, though less sophisticated, was mocked by later generations of animal scientists. Darwin has recently been exonerated on this point of the continuity between animal and human affect. There is now widespread agreement that the evident fact that human empathy can stretch far beyond blood relatives to include even other species, is simply an incidence of 'natural' behaviour. The entrenched view of Western thinking that morality is only a thin veneer laid down by the advent of civilization to cover up an ingrained human savagery and bestiality has simply gone out of date in animal research.

One of the world's leading primatologists, Frans de Waal, takes contemporary moral philosophers to task for their holding on to the so-called 'Veneer Theory' in their conceptualization of morality and trust. Western philosophy flowing from Descartes shares with religious authorities an a priori faith in human uniqueness and separation from animals, thus rejecting evidence that points to the animal origins of human empathy, trust and rudimentary sociality. For example, monkeys and children show a marked aversion to inequity. Whilst many

scholars would reject interpretive analogies drawn between human and animals as anthropomorphism, de Waal claims that the larger danger is what he terms ‘anthropodenial’ – the a priori rejection of shared characteristics between humans and animals – ‘which leads to a wilful blindness to the human-like characteristics of animals, or the animal-like characteristics of ourselves’ (de Waal 2009: 44–49).

As anthropologists who are inclined to believe in the affective interface between animal and human but do not easily trade in universals, we would rather reserve the term ‘morality’ for its specific elaborations of meanings and matters in a human cultural context. Turkana for their part, as Broch-Due’s essay details, would enthusiastically support the idea of an ‘animal morality’, the very trait that makes cattle into such powerful gifts since they are moulded to embody the ‘moral spirit’ of their human caretakers. Similar notions of the porous boundaries between human and animal are widespread among Amazonian Indians. In her chapter for this volume, entitled ‘Trustworthy Bodies: Cashinahua Cumulative Persons as Intimate Others’, Cecilia McCallum gives us a window onto a culture that entrusts sociality to a physio-logic, expressing itself in a corporeal idiom. The corporality the Cashinahua have in mind is one of extraordinary capacities, for the body not only incorporates other bodies (human, animal, plants, spirit), but is also cumulative in biographical time. Their brand of phenomenology is almost an inversion of Darwin’s evolutionary theory. Rather than a shared nature from which springs a diversity of species and cultures, Amerindians rather think that the world consists of a single shared culture and a diversity of natures. Being human is the overarching subject position and style of perception. Those species that are conceptualized as such self-identifying humans are ascribed a ‘soul’. These souls are not seen as immaterial, as in Western thought, but substantial and active in the world. Sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied, the soul is present in a body whose flesh can easily be shed, allowing the soul to take flight and settle into another form of corporality.

Here appearance deceives; it is only by assessing behaviour that an Amerindian knows for sure one kind of body from another. Thus, a person who eats raw meat is, perhaps, a jaguar; a child who grinds her teeth whilst sleeping is changing into a peccary. By ‘becoming animal’ almost in a perfect Deleuzian sense (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), Cashinahua take on another perspective congruent with a different style of behaviour and sensory awareness. In emphasizing not the immutability of matter but rather its instability, this indigenous epistemology agrees with evolutionary thinking particularly on the generative force of time. By believing in the transformability of bodies

into bodies or things, matter into those forms of non-matter that may be felt or known through the senses (wind or sounds or sights or smells), McCallum argues, we see the defining contours of a phenomenology rooted in temporal flow – past, present and future.

Cashinahua treat trustworthiness as embodied too: that is, as materially integrated into organs and physiologies as thought, emotion and memory. Mental faculties are believed to be liquid and to circulate in the body in the form of blood. Thoughts generate particular kinds of actions, which impinge on others, thereby moulding them. At the same time, however, thoughts originate from interactions with others and become a sort of ‘experience made flesh’. Thus if someone has good thoughts, which transform into acts of generosity and kindness, prolonged contact with this kind of person will create positive memories of love and affection. These ‘memories’ will be integrated into the body, and subsequently generate sweet and positive thoughts and actions. However, since transformative interactions include those with other species and spirits, bodies may contain conflicting thoughts, both social and anti-social, good and bad, which emerge in behaviour at different points in time. Most interestingly, this Amazonian thinking seems to be in agreement with the power of trusting as an act, a performance, and thus with Barga of Mongolia and Turkana of Northern Kenya.

Whatever the case, for some contemporary sociobiologists any feeling or act directed at others, in human or animal, runs counter to the hard-programmed belief about the selfish gene: that natural selection works through sexual reproduction only and in ways that leads to the survival of the fittest (Wilson 1980). Typically, this notion of the ‘fittest’ seems to be taken quite literally, conjuring up on the page a feisty, muscular, testosterone-driven individual pushing evolution ahead by outcompeting everybody else who does not carry his own genes. Violence seems to be the order of the day, filtering even into descriptions of human pregnancy, which Richard Dawkins recently imagined as a ‘womb in warfare’, where the selfish organisms of mother and foetus were apparently engaged in lethal strife. There is not much space left for intersubjectivity, sociality or any kind of emotional complexity in such a vocabulary about the brute nature of being.

To solve this self-created enigma of altruism, some evolutionary biologists have come up with the notion of ‘group selection’ in which individuals sacrifice personal fitness on behalf of other members of the kin group (Hamilton 1996). An example would be a warrior sacrificing his life to protect his clan on the grounds that his nephews, sharing parts of his gene pool, will ensure the survival of his own selfish genes through his kinsmen’s own procreation. In this version of altruistic

group behaviour we are not allowed to imagine that some advanced types of hominids developed language as a tool of communication since that gave them a competitive advantage over those without. On the contrary, it would boil down to a single individual, having a greater linguistic capacity than others, who would, as a consequence, leave more offspring. But since 'the best talkers don't necessarily make the best listeners', as a reviewer succinctly pointed out, we would need two sorts of selection simultaneously, which only compounds the problem in evolutionary circles (Lewontin 1998).

There are more sophisticated versions of sociobiology, like the one proffered by Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, who focuses on evolution from the 'perspective of oestrogen' as it were, but is convinced that parturition does not inevitably lead to female nurturing. Since she straddles the whole spectrum of trusting from intimate to social from an evolutionary perspective, it is worthwhile for our discussion to take a closer look at her argument.

In her magnum opus *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection* (2000), Hrdy draws on literature, history, anthropology and evolutionary biology to buttress her tough-minded thesis that motherhood is not the tender state so often envisioned but rather a minefield. Her journey across species, and deep into human evolution, is littered with aborted fetuses, infanticide and abandoned infants. What drives her argument is the gendered quality / quantity of genes dilemma so favoured by sociobiology. In this narrative, the female of the species is primed to consider quality when choosing how many offspring to nurture. A human baby, for instance, requires a high calorie intake to grow up: thus a mother is inclined to choose fewer offspring or none at all, contingent upon personal and familial gains. The male of the species, in contrast, not burdened with long-term caring responsibilities, is primed to go for quantity: spreading his sperm widely around to sire as many offspring as possible in order to pass on his genes.

Hrdy's revisionist take on mothering, which she claims is not instinctive, contra her male colleagues in evolutionary biology, is curiously inspired by William Hamilton's theory of 'group selection' too. Hrdy needs to close this explanatory gap: aside from the tiny corpses left in the wake of women's tough reproductive choices during evolution, mothers are also known to love their babies fervently even if not unconditionally. On the other side of the equation, baby love is absolutely unconditional, desperately vying for all the attention it can muster from its mother. Babies are built in flesh and behaviour to appeal to adult hearts. These calculations of love on the parts of mothers and babies,

Hrdy claims, reflect the genetic logic of kin helping kin when the benefit outweighs the cost. However, the overlap in interest of mother and child is not complete. The mother needs to spread her devotion over her whole family, to those already born, but also save some energy for having another baby in the future.

From the perspective of social science, however, which takes as point of departure that individuals are born into a *habitus* organized by specific physical, social and linguistic structures, the design of which varies across the spectrum of livelihoods and throughout human history, this circular debate of whether altruism exists beyond the gene leaves a rather curious reverberation. There is an interesting echo of the universalistic and egoistic tenets of popular versions of evolutionary biology in economic thinking. Here the 'invisible hand' of the market plays a similar role as the selfish gene in natural selection, whether it concerns the survival of the 'fittest', the 'greediest', the 'nastiest' or the 'nicest'.

Trust and Anthropology

So far we have used ethnography from the chapters of this volume to problematize approaches to trust formulated within other disciplines. We might ask why anthropologists should concern themselves with this field, which appears to be going in directions far removed from anthropological methods and theorising. Our contention is that anthropology has much to contribute to trust research, mainly by giving a more serious treatment to the diversity and intricacy of notions of self and social order. Furthermore, we also argue that by approaching classic anthropological topics such as notions of self, intimacy, sociality, embodiment, kinship, morality and political processes through the lens of trust, new insights will arise.

Regarding the first point, by introducing us to a notion of trust so radically different from the often risk-oriented conceptions we find in Euro-American trust research, and using it to critique the unquestioned assumptions contained in them, Paula Haas makes a very convincing case for the contributions of ethnography in this field. Russell Hardin has pointed out that much of the literature on trust is in reality about trustworthiness, not trust (1996). As such, Haas's focus on the Barga Mongol act of trusting as something entirely unrelated to trustworthiness represents a new and unexplored angle in the study of trust. By focusing on this, Haas also opens up a social landscape where power and the act of trusting interact in ways that one might think impossible

based on conventional trust research, in which hierarchies are either disregarded, or their possible coexistence with trust relations dismissed. Similarly, Chopra, Ystanes and Geschiere deconstruct common unquestioned premises in trust research by showing respectively how trust and intimacy is formed in hierarchical relationships where the people involved strive to maintain distance, how trust in ladino Guatemalan families rests on a precarious foundation, and how intimacy among Cameroonian Maka is both idealized and feared. By attending to such messy complexities of daily life, our understanding of both trust and intimacy will become more comprehensive.

As it stands, existing approaches are analytically ill-equipped to help us advance our insights into exactly how personal and social trust is produced, and what intimacy consists of in particular contexts. By simplifying the complex nature of the biological, the intimate and the social, as well as the intricate links between them, they contribute little to our understanding of intimacy and trust, or the multiple entanglements of the personal and the social. Classic anthropological concerns such as notions of self, intimacy, sociality, embodiment, kinship, morality and political processes, on the other hand, are at the core of the matter. By exploring how trust and mistrust are produced in actual landscapes of multiple subjectivities, rather than in highly abstracted, notions of 'society', we can further our understanding of trust and its social role. Indeed, as Corsín Jiménez points out, a theory that reaffirms our trust in anthropological comparison will make a useful antithesis to the way 'social and politic theory has called upon trust as a placeholder for robust public knowledge and prudential political choice' (Corsín Jiménez 2011: 179). This kind of comparative contribution to the field of trust research is precisely the aim of this volume.

In this ethnographic comparison, it is nevertheless necessary to depart from traditional anthropological approaches to trust and intimacy. The scant theorizing on trust formation per se found amongst our older school seems as refractory and thinly conceived as in other disciplines. Most vintage anthropologists of 'trust' typically dig themselves deep into the realm of the intimate, where 'trust' is supposed to originate and remain pure. It is in the safe haven of family, kin group or community that anthropological models assume trust is most intense. Here 'trust' is a property of reciprocity, as exemplified by Marshal Sahlins's seminal model (1974 [1965]) – it is assumed to be highest at home and to diminish gradually the further out in the social network you get (see also Ingold [1986] for a more recent application). Such general modelling, bent towards the 'idyllic small-scale' of localized kinship relations, seems particularly ill-suited to explain the workings of trusting across

complex modern societies in a globalized age, but also, as the examples above illustrate, even within such small entities as households and kinship networks. There are of course noteworthy exceptions to this general disinterest in theorizing and exploring trust in its own right, and the few examples that exist come out of fine-grained ethnography. A superb contribution, and an inspiration for this volume, is Parker Shipton's monograph *The Nature of Entrustment: Intimacy, Exchange and the Sacred in Africa* (Shipton 2007). Based on the complex exchange practices amongst the Luo of Western Kenya, Shipton develops the idea of *entrustment* as a multiparous phenomenon. Taking hold of indigenous practises of entrusting children, animals, objects, money and spiritual dimensions with others throughout the whole social network of kith and kin, Shipton shows how Luo collapse the firm 'Western' distinctions between the domains of economy and religion, insurance and sacrifice, the material and immaterial, the intimate and the social. For them, credit depends on a close relationship between lender and borrower buttressed by the production of trust over time by means of frequent acts of entrustment of persons and things. In the face of modern bankers and developers who insist that the economic sphere should be ruled by rationality, profit, robust property rights and self-interest, Luo customers continue to prioritise claims emanating from the social obligations of entrustment before they will settle their bank accounts or pay their a tax bill. This study exemplifies how kin relations can indeed form the basis for mutually supportive relationships of trust, but also that such relations require conscious work to be maintained as such through ever-evolving acts of entrustment.

In so far as the ethnographic focus on trust and trusting has taken our authors along similar pathways to those envisioned in this complex notion of entrustment, it has led them to depart from the main avenue of contemporary trust research in other disciplines that seeks to pinpoint trust in a firm, unequivocal definition. Indeed, because trust continues to be an elusive concept, there is a tendency to define it as anything from social capital, expectations about the future, encapsulated interests or the willingness to trade, cooperate or take risk (see, e.g., Luhmann 1979; Roniger 1985, 1990; Fukuyama 1996; Putnam 2000; Hardin 2003; Levi 2003; Ostrom 2003; Ostrom and Walker 2003). Most approaches to trust are tied to the notion of risk and actors' calculations of other people's trustworthiness. In the ethnographic cases presented here, however, different ways of understanding, experiencing and creating trust emerge – all of them deeply embedded in local understandings and practices concerning morality, sociality and intimacy.

Towards an Anthropology of Trusting

The language used in any analysis is a good indicator of the kind of theorizing it is built upon. Classical philosophy typically employs trust in the noun mode, as an idea or essence sometimes qualified by an adjective. In contrast, we suggest that the case studies in this volume make it clear we should focus more on trust as a verb, and on *acts of trusting*. This is because trust, as a noun, tends to emphasize an individual subject's deliberation to enter a contract or take risk, while trust as a verb conjures up an intersubjective space of social anticipation binding subjects together. Adjectives conjure up how subjects inhabit a world; verbs reveal the way subjects interact with the world through endeavour and emotion. Trusting is a social phenomenon saturated with sentiment, motivation and meaning which goes far beyond any pure, cool calculation by individuals. In other words, to capture analytically this experiential complex we need to move away from a representational stance, focusing on the correspondence between phenomena like 'trust' and 'risk', and develop more performative approaches to trusting, which focus on various forms of agency.

In addition to matters of grammar, the vocabulary of trusting is also indicative of motivation, meaning and social orientation. For example, the English word 'trust' stems from medieval Scandinavia where the Old Norse *traust* connoted a person who was steadfast and sturdy as a 'pillar'. Etymologically 'trust' also sprang from *traustr* and thus 'faith'. Whilst these days the proper translation of 'trust' would be 'tillit', the Nordic roots of the English word 'trust' are a reminder of the shared ethos of Scandinavian peoples, who collectively score the highest on all available trust barometers worldwide. In Scandinavia, *tillit* is still intimately bound up with the 'personal' and the 'social', evoking moral qualities and acts across diverse arenas of life. This, then, marks a divergence from the English 'trust', which in its contemporary definitions focuses extensively on the contractual. According to the Merriam-Webster web dictionary, 'trust' has historically drawn a number of seemingly disparate meanings around itself. Archaic meanings evoke a person with characteristics such as ability, strength, truth and hope. But 'trust' then became associated with an array of legal and financial relationships. A trustee, for instance, is someone awarded the custody of a child or the care of an office, while a 'trust' in the pecuniary sense can be everything from a loan given in anticipation of future repayment, a property interest held by one person for the benefit of another, or an assembly of firms formed by legal agreement for the purpose of reducing competition.

Outside of Europe, we find that in Guatemala, for instance, the Spanish word *confianza*, which is usually translated as ‘trust’, also connotes familiarity, informality, confidence and faith. In contrast to the English term, the Spanish one is geared towards matters of sociality, kinship and closeness rather than towards contracts and finance. To say that one has trust in someone [*tener confianza con alguien*] is to say that one has a close relationship of some kind with that person. The languages of the Luo and Turkana provide yet more meanings in the vocabulary of trust. Here, there are no words that fall neatly into Western categories of the personal or contractual and it would be hard to come up with a simple translation of the word ‘trust’. Local terms for ‘trusting’ consist of a broader range of meanings and acts. And yet it is precisely by paying attention to these cultural nuances and couplings between emotions, acts and domains of experience that we can hope to come closer to the diverse experience of trusting. This, in turn, would be the empirical basis for building sounder cross-cultural models of trust.

The Problem of the Moral

We argue that sound models of trust cannot be built on taken-for-granted and ‘thinly’ conceived premises, but rather, on comprehensive empirical studies of how people come to trust in different contexts. While this effort may appear to some as hopelessly anti-theoretical, we maintain that this is not the case and that there is a common thread running through all of our chapters which presents an interesting theoretical lead for an ethnography of trusting, namely the problem of the moral. For example, Vigdis Broch-Due recounts the trouble that ensued when normally inalienable cattle, whose existence is profoundly intertwined with that of human beings, were channelled into the market as commodities. This violation of Turkana moral economy has produced a relatively new phenomenon in the Kenyan hinterland: the presence of animal witches amongst their livestock. The metaphorical interweaving of person, animal and the wider world among Turkana is not simply a semantic or conceptual artifice but a lived reality: a vital flow charged with bodily and sensory power, in which self, group, other species and world are brought together. Here trusting is a cross-species affair. When Turkana treat their cattle as social beings, this reflects not merely a metaphorical or symbolic relation but a deeper, participatory, metonymic and material involvement in each others’ lives. Cattle are a crucial part of Turkana social landscapes; they provide sustenance for human bodies

and 'pathways' to the formation of new relationships through sharing, giving and trading milk, meat and animals. Broch-Due argues that the emergence of cattle witches testifies to the challenge to this social and moral universe brought about by the increasing commodification of cattle – a process that not only affect economic life, but also brings about a reconfiguration of intimacy, trust and sociality. This relates to how the Turkana social universe is marked by the intimate interconnection of bodies and substances; without animals no trust formation is possible, according to the pastoralist ethos and cultural logic. Removing animals from their traditional sphere and inserting them into the market economy thus causes significant trouble in the realm of trust formation. By drawing on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, psychoanalysis and Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject, Broch-Due illustrates how reactions to changes at a societal level are deeply grounded in the formation of trust in the intimate sphere. It is in the context of the household and family that the harmful consequences of cattle commodification manifest themselves and unleash destructive forces. Consequently, this chapter emphasizes the significance of understanding local forms of morality, sociality and physical intimacy if we are to comprehend larger societal processes. Broch-Due's contribution also reminds us of how interconnected economic processes are with the moral, and the potential they have to create rifts in the social fabric.

Gloria Goodwin Raheja's chapter is another case in point. She presents us with a painful account of the introduction of mining in Appalachia and its destructive effects on trust relations, both in intimate relationships, among kin and community, and the wider social order. In the past, Appalachian identity was rooted in the landscape itself: each self-sufficient community occupied a distinct valley separated from its neighbours by a rim of hills. This mountain scenery shaped forms of sociality by knitting kith and kin into an intimate mesh of mutual dependency and trust. The arrival of the mining companies literally exploded this physical and social landscape, polluting rivers and flattening forests and hills. Along with these natural signposts, layers of social inscription also disappeared, such as place names, community structures and stories that anchored social memory in the landscape. Conflicts in West Virginia's Logan County in the 1920s, between miners and coal operators, over the right to unionize, were the most violent labour struggles in American history.

The oppressive nature of coal-mining labour enhanced trust formation among families as they closed ranks against capitalist incursion. In the process, however, the bonds of intimate trust became fractured, as men and women adopted sometimes conflicting and contradictory

perspectives on economic and social transformation; on the ways that family intimacy should be maintained; on masculinity; and on the nature of the trust that could be placed in local and state-level government, in representatives of organized religion and in union organizers. There were also new forces pushing people together in unexpected ways. For the labour demands of mining brought African-American migrants to the mountains, and with them came new styles of music and storytelling that mingled with the Appalachian modes into a new medley of sounds and tales, black and white. In her evocative and eloquent prose, Raheja teases out of these fusions of music and stories not only the social history of mining, but also the ways in which new networks of trust and solidarity were forged by an emergent class-consciousness that stretched across racial lines. Thus, Raheja illustrates the importance of not ignoring social and moral universes while studying trust in the context of economic relations. The rich material outlined here speaks about losses and gains – of intimacy, trust and social coherence – which can never be captured by game-oriented models of trust.

Similarly, the chapter by Misha Mintz-Roth and Amrik Heyer emphasizes the profound intertwining of economic processes with the realm of emotions. The authors explain the expansion of state-sponsored corporate capitalism in Kenya into locally embedded relations of exchange, focusing on the mobile money transfer service, M-Pesa, developed by the leading national telecom operator, Safaricom. Unlike many European nations, Kenyans have problems in imagining a truly national community. Already before the Second World War, the inaugural narrative of modern Kenyan nationalism, Jomo Kenyatta's *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), had repeatedly underlined the wholeness and completeness of traditional Kikuyu life. When Kenyatta was inaugurated in 1963 as the first president of an independent country, the 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983) of his Kikuyu tribe became the model for the nation as a whole, thereby erasing its huge ethnic diversity. This image of a nation based on the narrative of the dominant group alone has recently exploded with a vengeance to violently fragment both the idea of a homogenous nation and the privileged position of the Kikuyu within it.

Nonetheless, based on an ambitious business model whose goal was national dominance in e-finance, Safaricom set out to create an 'imagined community', if not of citizens, then at least of subscribers. Through the use of radio, billboards and print advertisement featuring landmarks, songs and snapshots of the country's huge ethnic diversity, Safaricom rallied people around the slogan 'send money home'. The

company supplied a narrative with a vision of Kenya as a nation of migrants and remitters – the slogan itself echoing the rhetoric of the legendary Jomo Kenyatta. Safaricom pictured itself as a responsible provider that would support both local migrants and households, and the nation, in one great sweep of financial service.

The authors point to the irony that Safaricom apparently succeeded in using the experience, images and sentiments of nationhood, otherwise fractured by political corruption and ethnic violence, to appeal to Kenyan consumers. At the launch of the company on the stock exchange, this 'imagined community' of mobile communicators and remitters had achieved widespread salience, judging from the long queues of people nationwide eager to purchase shares. This initial exuberance was soon dampened as the stock price quickly fell, and the bitter loss left many disenchanted, feeling that Safaricom was just as deceitful as any other government agency. The trust so rapidly built up in an enthusiastic fervour of speculation evaporated, echoing the many past narratives of such financial bubbles, from the South Sea Company to the spectacular collapse on a world scale of Lehman Brothers.

Despite the initial disappointment of speculators, mobile financial services have nevertheless gone on to become a resounding success by contrast to the preceding telecom arena, which was a sprawling morass of inefficiency, corruption, poor coverage and bad service. Companies like Safaricom have brought millions of Africans into the formal financial market, brought down crime by substituting pin-secured virtual accounts for cash, and created tens of thousands of jobs among local agents. They have also built more solid imagined communities of trust around the M-Pesa money-transfer service, not cut along the lines of the 'nation' or the 'tribe', but rather along gendered lines. Sending money home, as the initial propaganda proposed, was largely directed towards male migrants working in the city, who needed to transfer savings back to the countryside where their wives were in charge of children, farms and petty trade. While in the past, more cumbersome ways of sending money back went through the hands of men, the advent of transfer via the mobile phone circumvented this and put things directly in the hands of women. Through the mere 'touch of a button', there has been a significant transformation in the gendered flows of money and service, mainly from men to women. The power of digital technology to effect 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1991) by money transfers electronically means that men more seldom travel to rural homes. Male absence weakens the marital bond and lessens dependency on land controlled by the clan, but empowers female decision making and economic freedom. Through products such as M-Pesa, women can

claim financial support from children working far away and can more easily free themselves from the control of husbands and fathers by demanding direct access to electronic savings.

Trust networks multiplied by means of such mobile finance, Mintz-Roth and Heyer discovered, but their formation was similarly gendered, with male transfers more in line with the contractual mode of obligations that otherwise characterized patrifocal transactions. Women, in contrast, expressed their bonds with each other in a more emotional vocabulary of care and responsibility; their trust networks were matri-focal in orientation. These different sentiments were evident in their relationship to the phone itself. Whereas women personalized the device by selecting ring-tones, men saw it as a symbol of alienation and insecurity. Interestingly, men from those ethnic groups in Kenya with a strong patriarchal bent feared that women's intimate bonding with their phones and the new finance opportunities they offered would fracture male authority. Such possibilities have paved the way for new ties of intimacy and trust between women, and have undermined male dominance in family and economic matters. The authors thus argue that the M-Pesa mobile technology has opened up new social geographies of trust and intimate relations – landscapes that could not be captured by reductionist theorizing about trust we so often find in the study of transactions and economic processes.

The significance of the phones as personalized objects and technologies that contribute to reconfiguring the social landscape of trust and intimacy illustrates how the problem of the moral not only resides in interpersonal spaces, but also in objects and bodily substances. Our approach to the relationship between trusting, intimacy and the material world is inspired by Marcel Mauss' *The Gift* and his ideas about how the giving of gifts contribute to the weaving together of persons in relationships marked by reciprocity and obligation. Mauss argued (2002 [1925]) that the gift carried the 'spirit' of the giver out into the social world, making people feel 'the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to reciprocate'. In other words, donors give something of their personal being with their gifts, a potential danger to the well-being of any recipient who fails to make a return. Thus, 'the spirit of the gift' joins persons and objects in an intimate fashion. Contained within this intimacy, however, is an ambivalent tension surrounding the *obligation* to reciprocate. This disguised hint of an expected return flavours the relationship between the subjects joined by the exchange of the objects. Just as with trust, the gift has its own downsides and dangers. Broch-Due's chapter is a good example of the ways in which gifting in certain instances is a prerequisite for trusting,

but also of the ways that the spirit of the gift, in this case a cow, can turn sour, destroying not only trust but the health of the persons affected. Witchcraft accusations are intimately connected to gifting-gone-wrong across contemporary Africa and in medieval Europe too (see Geschiere, this volume), and are fused with concerns about morality and sociality.

Chris Kaplonski's contribution to this volume explores the social role of a particular kind of official papers: secret police files in post-socialist Mongolia. The uncanny paradox of this case is that in the reconciliation process, which occurred decades after the terrible events of the former repressive Soviet regime, the dignity and lifework of the long-deceased could only be pieced together from fragments and narratives left in the archives of the perpetrators. In other words, the mourning relatives had to trust in otherwise treacherous sources. It was simply the only means available to open up a path to the past and recover the wronged dead for social memory. Interestingly, Kaplonski shows that not only are the papers produced by the deeply mistrusted regime now trusted, they also become embodiments of relationships and important links to the past for the families he writes about. In a profound way, these fragments of paper served as small 'gifts', each providing a piece of the memory puzzle of reconstituting the 'spirit' of the dead and restoring them as social persons, who could then live on in public imagination as proper moral selves. Again, we find that between trusting and gifting there can be tension and unpredictability.

By exploring these processes, Kaplonski not only adds layers to the ethnographic exploration of trust and the material world, he also illustrates the usefulness of thinking about anthropological puzzles through the lens of 'trust' – by taking this approach, new insights may develop. In this case, it allows us to examine the multiple aspects of rehabilitation processes in Mongolia, rather than seeing them as single-layered and paradoxical. Furthermore, by focusing on 'trust' rather than 'respect', as previous studies have done, overlooked aspects of sociality and society in Mongolia are teased out.

Broch-Due's story about the trouble that ensued when normally inalienable cattle were channelled into the market as commodities parallels the problems of such 'new' gift phenomena as organ donations. Because the body is universally the seat of personhood, an organ is as inalienable as an object can be. In today's practice, when organs are either transacted commercially or given to total strangers, this gift of oneself can easily be turned into a commodity and dramatically confuse the boundaries between 'self' and 'other'.

A telling case of such gift-trouble surrounding the question of sperm donation by anonymous donors is discussed in Jennifer Speirs'

chapter. Physicians in the UK have carried out artificial insemination with donated human semen since the late 1930s, as a means of bypassing male infertility and helping childless women achieve pregnancy. Medical practitioners insisted on donor anonymity in order to ensure the legitimacy of children and avoid the possible consequences for the recipients if the husband was not treated as the 'real' father. The birth certificates of these children recorded the mother's husband as the father of the child, not the donor. In effect, as pointed out by Speirs, this entailed an illegal act by the person registering the birth. While the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act of 1990 enshrined the anonymity of donors in law, it was circumvented soon after by the regulations of 2005 that stated that donor-conceived children for the future should enjoy access to information about their donors. The whole legislation process spurred fierce debate.

Riding on the new wave of biological reductionism in the public imagination, donor-conceived activists reasoned that it was a human right to know one's genetic heritage, and lobbied for gamete donors' real names to be recorded on birth certificates. Adopted people, they argued, had already won the right to access their original birth certificate. Infertility clinicians opposed such revelations, claiming donors needed protection from potential emotional and financial claims from their donor offspring. It would further be a breach of contract since they had gifted their sperm on the condition of anonymity. Many parents of donor-conceived children joined commentators who also disagreed that what constitutes a parent, particularly a father, could be reduced to a matter of semen and genes only. Rather, they focused on social fatherhood, the shaping influence of the daily upbringing and the love of children in your care. This sensitive issue of donors' anonymity sparked a climate of mutual distrust between infertility specialists, parents and donor-conceived people.

Whether they were pressing for the reinstatement of anonymity, support for education programmes or annotated birth certificates, they all aimed at swaying the opinion of policy makers to their own advantage. Most significantly, Speirs goes on to argue, the state itself was acquiring the status of a person with responsibility. As in other instances of gifts-gone-wrong in the public domain, it became a question of state: whether the legal documents issued by the state on behalf of its citizenry could really be trusted. In her analysis, Speirs draws upon British notions of kinship, masculinity, fatherhood and respectability, thus locating the issue of trust also in this context firmly within a framework of morality and sociality. The fact that gamete donation can bring out such controversies involving a whole range of social institutions illustrates that

bodily substances can serve as a useful lens for exploring the social. We see this significance of flesh echoed in many cultural theories of trust in this volume, ranging from Scotland, Northern Kenya and the Amazon. Similarly, the exchange of bodily substances as an expression of the core idea of sociality is commonly understood through the idiom of gifting. Without such gifting of thoughts and actions, neither trust nor mistrust is possible, as it constitutes the very foundation of personhood, sociality and moral reasoning.

Concluding Thoughts

Our ethnographic cases highlight the nebulous quality of trust and trusting – its relations to the intimate, corporeal and personal, but also to the public and social. The problem of trust constitutes an interdisciplinary field, in which economics, philosophy and political science dominate theorizing about the ‘public’ face of trusting, while neuroscience, psychoanalysis and sociobiology dominate theorising about its ‘personal’ face. Not only has there been little cross-fertilization among these different disciplines, but contemporary anthropology has also been curiously absent from this influential debate. Crucially, the important debates about trust are being waged not only in seminar rooms but probably more significantly in the popular media and public arenas. The terms of that debate, unfortunately, tend to be highly ethnocentric, taking ‘Western’ notions of trust uncritically as universally given and valid.

The quintessential theoretical contribution of this volume to the evolving scholarship in this field is that trust formations in the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres are intrinsically interlinked. Because trust works across this broad canvas of human existence, extending through the whole lifecycle and across different domains, it becomes entangled with other emotions and experiences; the shape of this entanglement will by necessity vary across personal and social biographies, along with the diversity of cultural forms of sociality. In short, trust is an experiential multitude, being both a general and particular phenomena. By extension, this implies that any deep analysis of trusting needs to pay particular attention to the specificities of context, history and the wider connectivity of each case to translocal and global networks.

What can be drawn from the chapters of this volume is not primarily robust knowledge about what trust is. If anything, the variety of ways in which this phenomenon is conceptualised and experienced across different life-worlds illustrates the difficulty in establishing a

universally valid theory about what trust is without further investigation of its local manifestations. Any existing theorization of trust may capture and crystallize something specific, but it may not correspond to what people in other contexts think about, accept or translate as trust. The reasoning about situations and behaviours that are likely to enhance and produce trust underlying most contemporary trust research is too narrowly focused on 'Western' contexts – and often an abstraction of an imagined, generic version of such societies and relationships.

Rather, by providing a contrast to such theorizations of trust, this volume illustrates the multitude of ways in which people come to trust or mistrust intimate others, allowing ethnographic diversity rather than conceptual unity to guide the analyses. We consider this a contribution to an ethnography of trusting, emphasizing the moral aspects of such acts and the kinds of situations that enable or thwart them in complex, 'thickly' described life-worlds. Being faithful to the values of 'thick' description does not, as some might argue, mean an end to large-scale comparison or the possibility of general theory. It simply means a different way to tackle them. By placing the ethnographic cases in this volume on a broader theoretical and interdisciplinary canvas, we have tried to tease out a few variables that could generate such a variation-centred model of the triangulation of intimacy, trust and the social.

The most significant fact about trusting is that it realizes itself in the intersubjective space *between* persons. As trust scholars we need to fill this intersubjective space with matters of nature and materiality, not only the matter of discourse. We are arguing for a shift from a representational stance on 'trust' and the questions of correspondence between, for example, 'trust' and 'risk' or 'neurons', to a *performativity* of 'trusting', of practices, doings and actions. If performativity is linked not only to the formation of the subject but also to the production of the matter of bodies, as the physicist Karen Barad (2003) has so succinctly theorized on the basis of quantum physics, we can explore how 'flesh' and 'word' together forge subjects into their shape in ways that are historically, culturally and socially specific. The horizon of trusting is a promising field for exploring 'the entanglement of matter and meaning' through this brand of performative studies (2003: 3).

We have indeed arrived at the core idea behind this volume, which is precisely that anthropology offers a vital and hitherto neglected discourse that can bind together the disparate studies and ideas of trust being carried out in different disciplines, ranging from neuroscience and biology to philosophy.

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