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**CAN THE ADMINISTRATION BE
TRUSTED?**

An analysis of the concept of trust, applied to
the public sector.

Working paper de l'IDHEAP 6/2015
Unité Marketing et Management publics

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Working paper de l'IDHEAP 6/2015
Octobre 2015

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
I. DEFINITION, DEMARCATON AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF TRUST	6
1. THE NATURE OF TRUST.....	7
1.1. <i>Trust in economics and managerial literature</i>	11
1.1.1. The probabilistic approach.....	11
1.1.2. The psychological approach	11
1.1.3. The transformational approach	12
1.1.4. The contributions of sociology.....	15
1.1.5. Integrative approaches.....	17
2. TRUST AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	20
2.1. <i>Definition(s)</i>	20
2.2. <i>Antecedents and the effects of trust</i>	23
2.2.1. Trustworthiness	24
2.2.2. Trusting behaviour and reciprocity	25
2.2.3. Predictability.....	28
3. OPERATIONALIZATION	30
4. THE OBJECT OF TRUST	34
II. TRUST AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR	37
1. TRUST WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR	38
2. TRUST OF THIRD PARTIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.....	38
CONCLUSION.....	41
REFERENCES	42
APPENDIX.....	56

Can the administration be trusted?

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Etienne Fivat, Martial Pasquier

Introduction

The positive effects – assumed or demonstrated – of trust have been abundantly dealt with in the literature of human sciences, philosophy, psychology, sociology, economics and management.

Generally, trust is a “lubricant” (Arrow, 1974) that facilitates social relations (e.g. Luhmann, 1973; Giddens, 1984; Zucker, 1986). From an economics point of view, a high level of trust in an institutional environment would be correlated with the performance of the national economy (e.g. Dyer and Chu, 2003). Trust, as social capital, would allow and would engender altruistic and cooperative behaviours that would have an impact on and sustain a community’s economic prosperity (Fukuyama, 1996). In an organizational framework, trust elicits more open communication and facilitates exchanges of information (e.g. Smith and Barclay, 1997; Currall and Judge, 1995), facilitates conflict management (e.g. Blomqvist, 2002) and shared learning (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema, 2004), or reduces integration costs (e.g. Bidault and Jarillo, 1995).

Despite the fact that its benefits have been demonstrated many times over, the richness and abundance of the notion of trust in organizational literature is equalled only by the glaring lack of consensus on the definition of the concept (e.g. Hosmer, 1995, Blomqvist, 1997, Rousseau et al., 1998, Seppänen et al., 2007) and how to measure it (e.g. Seppänen et al., 2007, McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011, Gillespie, 2012) – particularly as regards the distinction between its antecedents and its effects (e.g. Seppänen et al., 2007) and its relationship to control (e.g. Möllering, 2005, Gulati and Nickerson, 2008). In a literature review focusing on publications devoted to trust between 1962 and 2010, MacEvily and Tortoriello (2011) found, in 171 papers examined, 129 different measurements of trust. Based on a review of literature between 1982 and 2009, Akrouf and Akrouf (2011) observed that – despite the proliferation of studies carried out over the past two decades on relations in an organizational context and the open debate in economics and managerial sciences on its conceptualization going back more than 50 years (e.g. Deutsch, 1958) – trust “remains a relatively blurred and fragmentary concept and in need of overall coherence [...] the accumulation of definitions, models and measurement scales has by no means eliminated the uncertainty and confusion often associated with this concept” (Akrouf and Akrouf, 2011: 2).

In the first part of this paper, we present the various academic debates and, where applicable, questions that remain open in the literature, particularly regarding the nature of trust, the distinction between trust and trustworthiness, its role in specific relationships and its relationship to control. We then propose a way of demarcating and operationalizing the concepts of *trust* and *trustworthiness*.

In the second part, on the basis of the conceptual clarifications we present, we put forward a number of “anchor points” regarding how trust is apprehended in the public sector with regard to the various relationships that can be studied. Schematically, we distinguish between two types of relationships in the conceptual approach to trust: on one hand, the trust that citizens, or third parties, place in the State or in various public sector authorities or entities, and on the other hand, trust within the State or the public sector, between its various authorities, entities, and actors. While studies have traditionally focused on citizens’ trust in their institutions, the findings, limitations and problems observed in public -sector coordination following the reforms associated with New Public Management have also elicited growing interest in the study of trust in the relationships between the various actors within the public sector.

Both the theoretical debates we present and our propositions have been extracted and adapted from an empirical comparative study of coordination between various Swiss public-service organizations and their politico-administrative authority (Fivat, 2013)¹. Using the analysis model developed for this specific relationship, between various actors within the public service, and in the light of theoretical elements on which development of this model was based, we propose some avenues for further study – questions that remain open – regarding the consideration and understanding of citizens’ trust in the public sector.

¹ *Les effets de la confiance sur les organisations autonomes de service public. Une étude comparative. Thèse de doctorat en administration publique de l'Université de Lausanne, Faculté des Hautes études commerciales et Institut de Hautes Etudes en Administration Publique, Etienne Fivat* (filing date: 11 October 2013). http://my.unil.ch/serval/document/BIB_10B797BD1D9C.pdf

I. Definition, demarcation and operationalization of trust

In 1997, Blomqvist found that knowledge about how to operationalize trust was at that time “meagre”, the measurement of trust often being limited to “how much, if any, a respondent trusts the other party” (1997: 283). This approach falls far short of a holistic apprehension of the phenomenon, since trust is peculiar to specific contexts and situations experienced by distinct individuals and, hence, “idiosyncratic”: “It is not in fact quite clear whether human beings consciously measure trust in their relationships. Parkhe (1993) follows Von Neumann and Morgenstern (1947), who noted that people do not measure trust exactly but that they tend rather to conduct their activities in ‘a sphere of considerable haziness’. Nevertheless, the results of this blurry measuring are used in people's everyday lives. If we agree with the premise that trust represents a considerable economic and social lubricant, the ability to measure trust should be of great value both to scientific progress and practical know-how” (Blomqvist, 1997: 284).

In their 2007 review of the study and measurement of trust in an organizational context between 1990 and 2003, Seppänen, Blomqvist and Sundqvist identified a very wide variety of conceptualizations and operationalizations of trust. However, for no clear reason, no consensus emerges on method: “If studies based on the same theories apply different conceptualizations, then the theoretical coverage of the concept itself might be inadequate: it would thus need more research, first theoretical and only then empirical. Because of the suggested high context-specificity, and due to the fact that the concept of trust is apparently not easily quantifiable, it seems obvious that qualitative empirical studies and piloting are also called for before quantitative surveys are carried out” (Seppänen et al., 2007: 261). Lewicki, Tomlinson and Gillespie (2006) underline the complexity of perceptions and assessments at play in the emergence and evolution of trust and note the limitations of a “reductionist” approach (Lewis and Weigert, 1985a): “the rich meaning that may be latent behind the number is inaccessible” (Lewicki et al., 2006: 1015). A challenge facing research on trust is therefore to study how trust is created, felt and signalled: the way in which it develops and manifests itself (Blomqvist, 2002, Lewicki et al., 2006, Seppänen et al., 2007). The usefulness of a holistic approach to the study of trust, encompassing the various associated components and their evolution, and in its *duality* with control (Möllering, 2005), was put forward by Ping Li (2011) in his inaugural article in the *Journal of Trust Research*.

1. The nature of trust

“Trust combines good reasons with faith” (Simmel, 1908, quoted by Möllering, 2001: 411).

Trust is intrinsically bound up with free will – an individual’s free will and the uncertainty deriving from that of others. In allowing uncertainty to be tolerated, in authorizing the taking of decisions in a situation of uncertainty, “trust, in the broadest sense of confidences in one’s expectation, is a basic fact of social life” (Luhmann, 1979: 4).

The definitions and approaches to trust most frequently cited in managerial literature (e.g. Lewis and Weigert, 1985a, Mayer et al., 1995, Lane and Bachman, 1998) show the influence of the work of Niklas Luhmann (1973, 1979, 1988), who was himself influenced by Georg Simmel (Möllering, 2001). The freedom of human action means that virtually any behaviour can be adopted by any of the partners involved in an interaction. Consequently they must face *risk* and *uncertainty* before being able to interact.

In Luhmann’s theory of systems, trust plays an essential role in enabling interaction between individuals. Trust is addressed in laws and institutions (expert systems), which provide guarantees concerning the behaviour of individuals, and in norms and expectations regarding interpersonal interactions. Trust, based on shared social expectations, makes for a reduction in the complexity of one’s environment and an increase in its predictability by reducing uncertainty regarding the behaviour of actors. Preconditions for trust include on one hand a certain amount of information about the actor in whom an individual may potentially place his trust and the situation, and risk on the other hand.

Without making them completely separate, Luhmann (1988, 2001) distinguishes between *confidence* (*Zutrauen*) and *trust* (*Vertrauen*). Both concepts involve expectations that may not be fulfilled, but differ as regards perception and attribution. In a situation of confidence, an individual does not envisage any alternative (Luhmann gives the example of leaving one’s house every morning unarmed). The action is chosen despite the possibility of being disappointed by the action of others. In the event of disappointed expectations, an individual will react by external attributions. Trust, on the other hand, involves a prior engagement by the individual. It presupposes a situation of risk and, in the event of disappointed expectations, the individual will react with internal attributions (will regret having chosen to trust). The distinction between confidence and trust depends on the ability to distinguish between dangers and risks². The distinction does not involve questions of probability, whether remote or immediate: it involves knowing whether the possibility of disappointment depends on our own prior conduct (Luhmann, 2006).

² Danger implies a situation in which a person is threatened, whereas risk implies a possible danger inherent in that person's decision.

Trust therefore involves risk: placing one's trust means taking a risk (Luhmann, 1988). However, risk does not exist in isolation: it emerges only as a component of a decision and an action³: "If you refrain from action you run no risk. It is a purely internal calculation of external conditions which creates risk" (Luhmann, 1988: 100). In other words, trust is based on a circular relationship between risk and action, both being complementary requirements: "Action defines itself in relation to a particular risk as external (future) possibility, although risk at the same time is inherent in action and exists only if the actor chooses to incur the chance of unfortunate consequences and to trust. [...] risk represents a re-entry of the difference between controllable and uncontrollable into the controllable" (Luhmann, 1988: 100). Although Luhmann puts forward the idea that trust is an effective (successful) response to the problem of complexity, it does not eliminate complexity, but merely reduces it. Trust allows us to "live with" complexity, while in a way preserving it (Möllering, 2001). For Luhmann, the foundations of trust cannot reside solely in cognitive capacities, but in a "type of system of internal "suspension" (*Aufhebung*)" (Luhmann, 1979: 79, in Möllering, 2001: 409). Trust is thus a risky investment to the extent that it is extrapolated from available information (Luhmann, 1979).

It follows that trust is necessary because knowledge, information, is imperfect (e.g. Lewis and Weigert, 1985a, Blomqvist, 1997), but trust is nevertheless based on certain items of information. Granovetter borrows the words of Georg Simmel: "[...] the person who knows completely need not trust; while the person who knows nothing, can on no rational grounds afford even confidence" (Granovetter, 1992a: 39, in Blomqvist, 1997: 272). "Thus in total ignorance it is possible only to have faith and/or gamble" (Blomqvist, 1997: 272). The other side of the coin is that uncertainty is also a basis for caution and suspicion (Luhmann, 2006).

What gives meaning and importance to trust is that it is established in the process in which our interpretations are accepted and in which our awareness of the unknown, the unknowable and the unresolved is *suspended* (Giddens, 1991). This suspension makes trust "both more and less than knowledge" (Simmel, 1990: 179), even standing "outside the categories of knowledge and ignorance" (Simmel, 1950: 318, in Möllering, 2001: 414).

The foundation of Möllering's proposition (2001, 2005) lies in the work of Georg Simmel, particularly in its taking up the notion of *suspension*, and in its explicit or implicit influence on the treatment of trust (particularly Luhmann, 1979, Lewis and Weigert, 1985a, Giddens, 1990). His proposition focuses on the trustor, his interpretation of the environment and the mental process of trust. According to Möllering (2001) whether or not one places trust in future events, the perception and evaluation of risk is a highly subjective matter⁴.

³ Confidence, on the other hand, emerges in situations characterized by contingency and danger, which makes it meaningful to reflect on pre-adaptive and protective measures. The source of disappointment may be social action. Anticipation therefore differentiates between social actors. (Luhmann, 1988: 99)

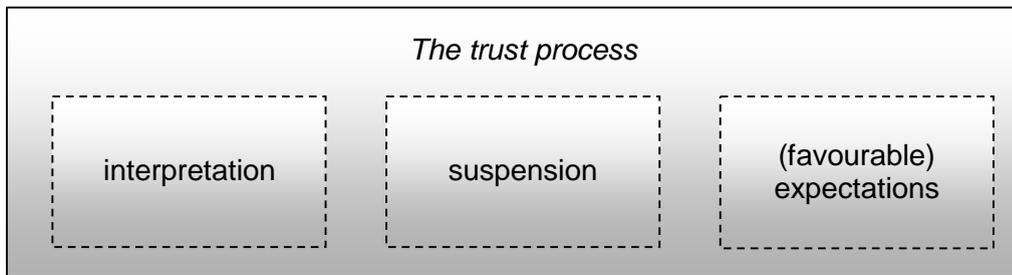
⁴ To the extent that these good reasons lie with the trustor, his approach is not explicitly and separately concerned with the trustee's trustworthiness, individual dispositions or the situation. Yet trust is always extrapolated by the trustor from available information.

For Möllering (2001), the challenge in research on trust is to embrace and translate the three elements of trust – *interpretation*, *suspension* and *expectation*:

1. The process of trust begins with *interpretation* (the *input* side of the trust process). This involves investigating the “good reasons” from the individual’s point of view (Möllering, 2001), his interpretation of the situation. Möllering adds that “trust is inherently reflexive, because for every favourable ‘good reason’ there exists probably another unfavourable for trust”. The “trick is not just to be able to live with weak interpretative knowledge of one kind or another, but to suspend contradiction and ignorance as well” (Möllering, 2001: 415).
2. *Suspension* (from *interpretation* to *expectations*) is the “mental leap” of trust, the psychological process that introduces an individual to take a risk, “extrapolated from available information” (Luhmann, 1979: 24). Methodologically, *suspension* could be conceived of as the reverse of interpretation. It is a question of grasping what constitutes a lack of knowledge or the unknowable from the point of view of the trustor (Möllering, 2001). Although interpretation and suspension always “combine,” “interpretations do not translate directly into expectations” (Möllering, 2001: 414-415).
3. *Expectations* about the actions and intentions of third parties must be considered as the output side of the process of trust⁵. They can be favourable in the case of trust, or conversely unfavourable in case of distrust. This state can become an input for action, but its effects must not be confounded with trust.

⁵ For Rousseau et al. (1998) and the many authors who take up their definition of trust, positive expectations manifest, or at least surround trust, but it does not seem to us that they are explicitly considered as an output of trust (see below).

Figure 1: The trust process (adapted from Möllering, 2001).



An understanding of trust cannot therefore miss out any of these three elements: *interpretation*, *suspension*, (favourable) *expectations*. Ultimately it is a question of comprehending the subjective reasons that enable the trustor to act, that is, to intend to take a risk. The fundamental question is the individual's capacity to establish favourable expectations of partners to whom he is vulnerable and, in focusing on the risk, the issue inevitably comes down to his relationship with control: "The concept of suspension addresses the issue that either side of the trust/control duality as well as the duality as such always leaves the actor with irreducible social uncertainty and doubt, which means that we cannot assume full certainty with regard to the actions of actors either" (Möllering, 2005: 295).

Möllering, then, conceives of the roles of control and trust as a *duality*: "trust and control each assume the existence of the other, refer to each other and create each other, but remain irreducible to each other" (2005: 284). The key to the connection between trust and control essentially lies in the creation of positive expectations. Purely theoretically one can speak of *control* when an actor bases positive expectations on the fact that the other party is constrained (Leifer and Mills, 1996) and of *trust* when positive expectations are based on the conjecture that the other party is benevolent, in other words, is favourably disposed towards us (Zand, 1972, Gambetta, 1988, Rousseau et al., 1998): "In common parlance, speaking of a trust/control duality means to say, first, that you cannot have one without the other: 'each usually requires the existence of the other' (Sydow and Windeler, 2003: 69, in Möllering, 2005: 290)". In other words, positive expectations are possible when the other party is constrained to some extent and makes use of his discretion, or whatever freedom remains to him, in a manner that is not prejudicial (e.g. Hagen and Choe, 1998). More positively, "when an actor is structurally empowered and individually benevolent, this gives others a basis for positive expectations" (e.g. Jepperson, 1991)" (Möllering, 2005: 288).

Fundamentally, the very essence of the concept of trust raises two types of questions and major problems of operationalization. First, how is one to assess a psychological state that is "highly subjective" and *partially* rational, a state of "suspension"? When does trust begin? Second, where is the operationalization "cursor" to be positioned? *Interpretation*, *suspension* and *expectations* are distinct steps, but dependent on the trust process. Without necessarily being explicit, the position taken with regard to these questions largely explains the diversity of approaches found in the literature.

1.1. Trust in economics and managerial literature

Schematically, managerial literature dealing with trust in an organizational context looks at its effects on induced behaviour on one hand, and on the other focuses on its conditions of emergence, which are seen as antecedents of or as dimensions of trust.

In summary, the *probabilistic* approach puts forward a “calculative” approach to trust and focuses on its behavioural manifestation. In contrast, the *psychological* approach opposes a purely rational nature of trust and focuses on the processes at work in its emergence. At the heart of this approach, so-called *transformational* approaches posit a dynamic evolution of trust in a relationship: the very nature of trust changes and, with it, its intensity. By situating trust societally, sociology contextualizes trust, lending it a “supra-relational” dimension: trust becomes part of shared norms, becomes intersubjective, guiding and supporting behaviours. Lastly, some authors, such as Sako and Helper and Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer, propose a definition of trust that integrates or takes inspiration from the characteristics of these different approaches.

1.1.1. The probabilistic approach

The *probabilistic* or *behavioural* approach to trust, used in game theory for example, sees cooperative behaviour as an acceptable manifestation of trust (Axelrod, 1984, Flores and Solomon, 1998). To cooperate or not to cooperate is a rational choice if it presumes an advantageous return from cooperation, all the more so if the action is repeated many times or if the timeframe is indeterminate (Kreps, 1990). The increase in the level of trust is a function of reciprocal cooperative behaviour. It declines drastically when the other party decides not to collaborate (e.g. Deutsch, 1958, Lindsold, 1978, Axelrod, 1984). Nevertheless, the calculative nature of trust maintains “ambiguous” relationships with the rationality (whether instrumental or procedural) of microeconomic theories (e.g. Williamson, 1993, Trepo et al., 1998): “When trust is justified by expectations of positive reciprocal consequences, it is simply another version of economic exchange, as is clear from treatments of trust as reputation in repeated games” (March and Olsen, 1989: 27).

1.1.2. The psychological approach

Without setting aside the behavioural aspect of trust in its conative dimension, the *psychological* tradition of trust essentially differs from the *behavioural* approach in its rational aspect that leads to action. The emphasis is on understanding the psychological processes that shape, or alter, the trustor’s choices (e.g. Lewicki et al., 2006) in a specific relationship.

Trust is presented as a functional alternative to calculation, which “begins where predictions end” (Lewis and Weigert, 1985a: 976): “Trust is a functional alternative to rational prediction for the reduction of complexity. Indeed, trust succeeds where rational prediction alone would fail, because to trust is to live *as if* certain rationally possible futures will not occur. Thus trust reduces complexity far more quickly, economically, and thoroughly than does prediction” (Lewis and

Weigert, 1985a: 969). The authors add an affective dimension: "Trusting behaviour may be motivated primarily by strong positive affect for the object of trust or by 'good rational reasons' why the object of trust merits trust, or, more usually, some combination of both. Trust in everyday life is a mix of feeling and rational thinking" (ibid.: 972). Lewis and Weigert's (1985a) definition implies that trust develops not only through a process of rational thought (*cognitive-based*), but also out of feelings or intuitions (*affect-based*). The cognitive subfactor of trust involves perceptions of the other party's trustworthiness: "First, trust is based on a cognitive process which discriminates among persons and institutions that are trustworthy, distrusted, and unknown. In this sense we cognitively choose whom we will trust in which respects and under which circumstances, and we base the choice on what we take to be 'good reasons', constituting evidence of trustworthiness" (Lewis and Weigert, 1985a: 970). For McAllister (1995), "cognition-based trust" is necessary for the reduction of uncertainty. It lays the foundations on which the "leap of faith" (e.g. Möllering, 2001), when parties "suspend their beliefs that the other party is not to be trusted" (Jones and George, 1998: 536) can occur "beyond the expectations that reason and experience alone would warrant" (Lewis and Weigert, 1985a: 970). The emotional basis proposed by Lewis and Weigert (1985a) is distinct from, but complementary to, the cognitive basis (e.g. Lewicki et al., 2006). It approaches belief in others, the belief that another can and wishes to act positively. In the view of McAllister (1995), "*affect-based trust*" is founded on an emotional bond between the parties.

Many authors make a distinction of varying degree between different "types" of trust, its cognitive basis remaining calculative rather than a noncalculative dimension (Ring and Ven, 1994, Lane and Bachmann, 1996, Ring, 1996, Rousseau et al., 1998, Sako and Helper, 1998). Nooteboom et al. (1997), for example, provide a probabilistic description of the nature of trust, as follows: "X trusts Y, to the extent that X chooses to cooperate with Y on the basis of a subjective probability that Y will choose not to employ opportunities for defection that X considers damaging, even if it is even if it is in the interests of Y to do so" (1997: 315), whereas non-calculus-based trust is "a noncalculative reliance in the moral integrity, or goodwill, of others on whom economic actors depend for the realization of collective and individual goals when they deal with future, unpredictable issues" (Ring, 1996: 156). Ring (1996) terms these two types of trust respectively as fragile and resilient. In Madhok (1995), fragile trust constitutes structural trust, essential in the building of a relationship, but is not a sufficient condition for its continuity (Delerue and Brérard, 2007). Some consider that, when speaking of trust, only its noncalculative dimension should be considered (e.g. Brattström and Richtnér, 2010).

1.1.3. The transformational approach

In the psychological approach, research most often focuses on the characteristics that the trustor relies on (Lewicki et al., 2006), the various "sources" of trustworthiness, which go into making up the "good reasons" for placing trust. The cognitive basis of trust preferably involves the perception of the other party's characteristics, intrinsic qualities, whereas its non-calculative basis depends on the history, the experience of the relationship. Within the psychological approach, authors who espouse the so-called "transformational" approach to trust (Lewicki et al., 2006) propose a diachronic evolution of types of trust: the very nature of trust changes over

time (e.g. Shapiro et al., 1992, Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, Lewicki and Bunker, 1996, Rousseau et al., 1998, Das and Teng, 2001). The models of Shapiro et al. (1992) and of Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996) seek to understand, in a transactional situation (that is, in a situation of interdependence and hence of vulnerability) the phenomenology of the construction and evolution of the nature of trust. How can “deep” trust in a “business relationship”, as opposed to romantic and personal relationships, be built (e.g. Boon and Holmes, 1991, Lewicki et al., 2006)? Shapiro et al. (1992), then Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996), for example, propose three stages in the construction and evolution of trust in a relationship, initially based on deterrence or calculus, then on knowledge, and lastly on identification of the parties.

From trust based on deterrence and calculus...

The first stage (*deterrence-based trust*) forms part of the behavioural approach presented above. Authors follow the approach of Deutsch (1958), who defines trust as an individual's positive attitude towards the results of an event in an ambiguous situation. For Deutsch, trust ensues from a (ir)rational choice that a person makes faced with the uncertainty of an event potentially leading to much higher losses than gains: “(*the trusting person*) perceives that he will be worse off if he trusts and his trust is not fulfilled than if he does not trust” (Deutsch, 1958: 266). Deutsch points out: “Trusting behaviour occurs when an individual perceives an ambiguous path, the result of which could be good or bad, and the occurrence of the good or bad result is contingent on the actions of another person; finally, the bad result is more harming than the good result is beneficial. If the individual chooses to go down that path, he can be said to have made a trusting choice, if not, he is distrustful. (...)” (Deutsch, 1962: 303). In the view of Shapiro et al. (1992), there is no immediate mutual advantage in trust. Trust exists only when the benefits of maintaining the relationship are greater than the short-term benefits of defection. Trusting behaviours are sustained only by the potential negative consequences of not keeping trust, that is, deterrence (ibid.: 366). Trust is therefore conceived as a response to, a “mechanism against”, vulnerability. Over the course of repeated interactions, the knowledge of and the perceived predictability of the other party reinforce the basis of trust. In a final stage, trust appears to be based on identification of the partners, the internalization of the other party's preferences (ibid.). This model suggests that the initial level of trust is “above zero”, with trust initially being built on “reputation as hostage” (threatening the potential trust breaker with reputation damage within his or her professional network if trust is broken) (Lewicki et al., 2006: 1009).

Following the work of Shapiro et al. (1992), Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996) propose extending and reinforcing the explanation of the causal dynamics of each “base” and the sequences of the various stages over time.

The first stage was renamed *calculus-based trust* in order to show that “this type of trust is grounded not just in vulnerability but also in the benefits to be gained from various forms of transactions in relationships” (Lewicki et al., 2006: 1011). The authors referred to Williamson (1975, 1981), whose position regarding trust is still debated in the literature. In his first work on transaction costs, trust is seen not as an independent regulating mechanism, but as a support

mechanism complementing traditional market or hierarchical mechanisms. He posits the concept of an “atmosphere” in which transactions take place. In an organization, employees can exhibit either *perfunctory* or *consummate* cooperation (Williamson, 1975). Later, Williamson (1993) essentially considers that the concept of trust is misused in respect of phenomena that can be explained by rational calculation, and also that “noncalculative” trust is not required to explain economic behaviour. Although Williamson (1993) allows the existence of relationships of trust in social and personal exchanges, in his view, bringing trust into business relations sows confusion. If he considers the concept of trust to be redundant, meaningless, even “useless”⁶, since any transaction can be reduced to calculating the cost/benefits ratio of a relationship and individual decisions are motivated solely by the risk/opportunity calculation, this is because the calculative rationality favoured by transaction-cost theory is opposed to the construction of an endogenous theory of trust (e.g. Baudry, 1999)⁷. In relationships between actors, formal contracts or institutional frameworks are substitutes for trust (Ghertman, 2006), and trust is merely calculative and reduced to the attainment of individual interests. In other words, no trust is involved, but rather an absence of immediate opportunistic behaviour. If trust is not calculative, it can only be blind and have little chance of surviving in the market (Williamson, 1993).

Yet this is the very phenomenon proposed by Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996). As its name implies, *calculus-based trust* is based on rational calculation. In the language of transaction costs, not showing oneself to be opportunistic maximizes wealth in the long term. In other words, if agents do not exploit loopholes in contracts or institutional frameworks, it is because other constraints (the repetition of interactions, reputation, etc.) will sanction them in the long term, and agents can establish a comparison between the benefits of loyalty and those of defection (Brousseau, 2000). For Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996), some relationships will not go beyond this stage. Either because there is no need, since the relationship is sufficiently defined and regulated (meaning that the level of control does not necessitate recourse to a “deeper” form of trust), or because the information obtained on the parties and/or their trustworthiness provides no incentive to take the relationship of trust further.

...Towards trust based on knowledge, and then identification

The two types of trust proposed by Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996), labelled *knowledge-based trust* and *identification-based trust* respectively, are essentially identical to those of Shapiro et al. (1992). Lewicki and Bunker’s construction (1995, 1996) emphasizes, in the shift from one type of trust to the other, knowledge of the other party learned through varied, repeated interactions. This learning does not focus solely on the discovery of the other party’s intrinsic qualities, but also on his interests, preferences and reactions, supported by the resulting predictability (Lewicki et al., 2006).

⁶ However, reputation, the essence of institutional trust, can be the starting point for the formation of a partnership relationship, formalized through a contract, a vehicle of formal control (Williamson, 1993).

⁷ The point of view adopted is rationalist, since human behavioural characteristics are defined as opportunistic and rational, even though the rationality is limited (Rizza, 2008).

Moving from calculative trust to trust based on knowledge, the parties move from concentrating on their differences and contrasts, together with the risks associated with potentially opportunistic behaviour, to concentrating on what they have in common (assimilation). From trust based on knowledge to trust based on identification, the parties create a balance between the strengthening of a shared identity and the maintenance of their own identity in the relationship. The authors refer to Rusbult et al. (1999): over time, the parties in a close relationship shift their focus from maximizing their own interests to maximizing shared results: “trust moves through three stages: predictability (consistency of partner behaviour) to dependability (reliability and honesty), and finally to a ‘leap of faith’, grounded in ‘a conviction that the partner can be relied upon to be responsive to one’s needs in a caring manner, now and in the future’” (ibid.: 442).

Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996) describe shifts from one type of trust to the other, the “transformation points”, as “frame changes,” fundamental shifts in the dominant paradigm of interpersonal relations (Lewicki et al., 2006: 1012). In the authors’ view, only a small proportion of relationships develop identification-based trust. The parties share interests, values and intentions: “One party can serve as an agent for the other, because he or she knows that they have interests in common and one’s own interests will be protected or advocated by the other” (Lewicki et al., 2006: 1010).

By making the relational dimension the focus of their analysis, these approaches incorporate social elements in trust-related choices: “their broader emphasis on social rather than purely instrumental (resource-based) motives driving trust behaviour, including consideration of how actors self-presentational concerns and identity-related needs and motives influence trust-related cognition and choice” (Kramer, 1999: 572). Kramer (1999) sees sociology’s contribution to trust as the initial impetus for these relational models, in particular in the work of Granovetter (1985) and the *social embeddedness* of economic transactions, which is essentially opposed to the pursuit of self-interest by rational, more or less atomized individuals of the “new institutional economics” (North and Thomas, 1973, Williamson, 1975).

1.1.4. The contributions of sociology

The main proponent of economic sociology, Granovetter (1985) takes up the notion of *embeddedness*⁸: economic relationships between individuals or organizations are “embedded” in networks of interpersonal or social relationships and do not exist in an abstract, idealized concept of the market. The network is largely founded on social forms such as belonging, community, or norms of reciprocity. Organizations cannot therefore be analyzed in strictly economic terms. Wider issues, including social dimensions, must be taken into account: the forms of organizations, resulting from concrete interactions between real actors, taking place in

⁸ Introduced by Karl Polanyi (1957), this notion holds that individual interest has not been dominant in human history, due to the importance of preserving social connections and community obligations (Rizza, 2008).

a singular sociopolitical environment, taking into account historic processes and the transformation of organizations (Amblard, 2005). The structure of institutions influences individual economic behaviour and constrains the choices that actors can make.

The notion of trust thus becomes central. The concept of embeddedness emphasizes the role of personal relations and network structures in eliciting trust and discouraging opportunism: “where this embedding is in fact absent, and many individuals appear to be rational profit maximizers, approximating the ‘under-socialized’ model of human action [...], economic activity is often stymied by lack of the interpersonal *trust* required to delegate authority” (Granovetter, 1992b: 7). From this viewpoint, economic theory ignores agents’ identity and past relationships, whereas the introduction of economic transactions into interpersonal networks is the main origin of trust and allows better sharing of information (without ruling out the possibility of opportunistic behaviour). The emphasis is thus no longer on trust as a facilitator of transactions, but on trust for the role it plays in concrete personal relations, which are built up in a network, which have a history and which penetrate to a certain depth into economic life (Neveu, 2004). Trust is therefore a byproduct of the embeddedness of parties, who share a common societal or cultural standard (Granovetter, 1985). In this approach, trust has a “supra-relational” component: it is situated in society and forms part of a series of values, beliefs and social expectations shared by the parties involved in an exchange.

The study of trust, then, focuses less on its intrinsic nature and more on its role in interpersonal relations, in economic exchanges and on the dynamic it creates within institutions. Lynne Zucker⁹ (1986) distinguishes between three sources that give rise to three distinct forms of trust: *process-based trust*, based on participants’ regular exchanges; *characteristic-based trust*, founded on norms of obligation or cooperation attached to appearances or social similarities of a person or group of individuals; and *institutional-based trust*, which is attached to a formal structure guaranteeing the specific attributes of an individual or an organization. Trust is then conceived of in its institutional dimension: the environment in which the exchange occurs. Zucker (1986) institutional-based trust as a reconstruction of locally produced trust: “Locally produced trust must be reconstructed as intersubjective, exterior to any given situation, and as part of the ‘external world known in common’, objective in that they are repeatable by other individuals without changing the common understanding of the acts” (Zucker, 1986: 63). Trust moves from being interpersonal to being intersubjective. Zucker distinguishes two types: the first is specific to a person or an organization, and the second is granted to intermediaries. The first type of trust is characterized by a set of signals that enable the second protagonist to reduce the field of the signal sender’s possible actions. The second refers to “guarantees” offered by intermediaries (the legal framework, for example), delegation to a higher authority¹⁰¹¹.

⁹ Zucker focused on trust in considering the historical reasons that explain the transformations of economic structures in the United States between 1840 and 1920.

¹⁰ Based on a formal social structure that guarantees the attributes of a person or an organization, such as a code of ethics, contracts or laws (Zucker, 1986)

¹¹ This dimension is close to Shapiro’s (1987) “institutional side bets”. Zucker proposes substitution of relational trust with institutional trust, while Shapiro suggests that intentions to trust at the start of

Fukuyama (1996) sees trust as “the cement of society.” Trust is “the expectation that arises within the community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of the community” (Fukuyama, 1996: 26). The capacity to cooperate is thus partly determined by the quality of the social fabric within which the actors move. An institutional environment enjoying a high level of trust would be highly correlated with the efficiency of the national economy (e.g. Dyer and Chu, 2003). Fukuyama contends that a nation’s economic prosperity, “as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by [...] the level of trust inherent in the society” (1996: 7). Trust as social capital would generate spontaneous sociability. As regards behaviours, spontaneous sociability implies a host of altruistic, cooperative and “extra-role” behaviours by members of society that would increase the collective wellbeing and the accomplishment of collective goals. In an organizational context, members are expected, for example, to invest in the accomplishment of shared objectives, to share useful information, or to use organizational resources parsimoniously. For Fukuyama (1996), trust is a central factor in the development of large organizations: by reducing doubt, trust reduces the costs of control and risk.

Seen very schematically, sociology’s contribution to trust places it societally, situating it in a historic, interactive context. In other words, it adds another dimension to trust that is defined solely in opposition to individual, opportunistic behaviour of independent individuals: trust thus becomes a shared norm that guides and supports behaviours. The psychological approach to trust presented above adds to a purely cognitive and calculative approach to the essence of the psychological process that gives rise to trust by proposing a distinction or change in its nature, situating it in a relational, diachronic context. The development of relational approaches to trust has been, in Kramer’s view (1999), informed by research involving a variety of structures at a macro level, including networks and systems of governance, recording the emergence and dissemination of trust within and between organizations (e.g. Coleman, 1990, Kollock, 1994, Burt and Knez, 1995, Powell, 1996, in Kramer, 1999).

1.1.5. Integrative approaches

In view of the limitations of a measurement of trust based solely on behavioural manifestations of cooperation, as well as an approach focused solely on attenuating the risks of opportunism¹², Sako (1992, 1998, Sako and Helper, 1998), puts forward a combined approach that anchors trust in economic, sociological and psychological theories, within the framework of

a relationship may be strong due to a high level of institutional trust. Mangematin (1998) sees them as coexisting and mutually reinforcing.

¹² Sako and Helper (1998) suggest that not placing trust in order to counter an agent’s opportunism ignores a number of situations. Considering only exposure to the risk of opportunism reduces the situation to a principal-agent relationship, in which (A) wants to have (B) perform a particular task. The asymmetry of information concerns both the skills and behaviour of agent (B). If the task is not performed correctly, the deficiency may be due to opportunistic behaviour on the part of agent (B), but also to his lack of competencies, or to random factors independent of the agent’s wishes and behaviour.

interorganizational relations¹³. Trust is defined as an expectation, a positive assessment of the predictability of the other party's behaviour: "Trust is an expectation held by an agent that its trading partner will behave in a mutually acceptable manner (including an expectation that neither party will exploit the other's vulnerabilities)" (Sako and Helper, 1998: 388, Sako, 2006: 266). This expectation reduces the field of possibilities, thereby reducing uncertainty surrounding the partner's actions (ibid.). In Sako's approach (1992), trust is defined in terms of reciprocal norms agreed upon and developed in the dyadic relationship. She puts forward an evolving approach to trust by distinguishing, on one hand, and independently, competence trust¹⁴, which requires mutual agreement about the conduct of business, and on technical and managerial standards, and, on the other hand, trust based on a contract and trust based on goodwill. The last two are postulated in an additional relationship. Contractual trust¹⁵ is founded on a spirit of shared standards, ethics and promise-keeping¹⁶; goodwill trust¹⁷ is founded on commitment in the relationship, on initiatives taken in the common interest, without seeking an unfair advantage. It can only exist if there is consensus on the principles of equity and justice. Fulfilling a minimum number of obligations constitutes "contractual trust", while fulfilling a large number constitutes goodwill trust, with a shift from the first form to the second requiring a gradual expansion in the congruence in beliefs about the definition of acceptable behaviours. Trust is not defined solely as the opposite of opportunism, but the absence of opportunistic behaviour is a prerequisite for contractual and goodwill trust (Sako and Helper, 1998). However, a lack of opportunism is not a sufficient condition for the emergence of goodwill trust: what is required is complying, beyond the letter, with the spirit of the contract. Complying with the spirit of the contract, demonstrating commitment and fair behaviour, comes close to the notion of goodwill trust (Sako, 2006: 269). Here, mutual expectations of reciprocal commitment in its most abstract form must be taken into account. Sako (1992) describes the partners' will to take initiatives, or to use their room for manoeuvre to grasp new opportunities beyond what is explicitly agreed. This "partial gift exchange" (Akerlof, 1982, in Sako, 1991) is necessary to maintain goodwill trust¹⁸. Sako's approach conceives of trust as complementing control (Sako, 1998, Sako and Helper, 1998). The predictability of behaviour is not based solely on constraints that would oblige the other party to follow a single possible path: trusting implies that the partner is free to take various alternatives during the course of the action. In the view of Sako and Helper (1998), trust, as a shared norm developed in the dyadic relationship, becomes an informal control mechanism that increases the effectiveness of transactions.

¹³ Particularly in the context of relationships between suppliers and buyers in the Japanese electronics industry.

¹⁴ Is the other party capable of doing what it says it will do?

¹⁵ Will the other party carry out its contractual agreements?

¹⁶ Sako (1998) does not explicitly mention formal contractual obligations. The basis of this type of trust is the probity of the agent.

¹⁷ Will the other party make an open-ended commitment to take initiatives for mutual benefit while refraining from unfair advantage taking?

¹⁸ This type of trust is built up following frequent interactions and open sharing of technical and business information between partners. Increasingly in the hierarchy, a looser form of reciprocity takes root between the parties to the exchange. Reciprocity can take more varied forms and longer periods may elapse between the granting of an advantage and its reward (Gouldner, 1960, in Sako, 1998).

Rousseau et al. (1998)¹⁹ see trust as a “mixed-level concept”, combining cognitive, affective and conative processes, group dynamics at a micro level, and institutional influences at a macro level. They conceive of it as “bandwidth” that can vary in type, extent and intensity. Seeing trust as bandwidth and as a function of its extent makes it possible to reconcile various approaches to trust, whether calculative or not, or, by referring to different expectations in a complex relationship, to consider trust and distrust²⁰ as independent constructs (e.g. Lewicki et al., 1998, Sitkin and Roth, 2006).

1.2. Fuzzy but reasonable logic

Bachmann (2001) finds that, overall, the dominant approach to trust combines an acceptance of the “fuzzy logic” of trust and the unshakable conviction that trust is ultimately “reasonable” (Hollis, 1998). Trust as such could therefore be described as a state resulting from a psychological process, somewhere between hypothetico-deductive reasoning and faith. Its arising is multidimensional in nature, in that trust is inherent in experience and interaction with a specific party to the exchange (e.g. Ring and Van De Ven, 1992) and that this interaction is socially situated.

The fact remains however that, as a psychological state, trust lies with the person who grants it and for the trustor, trust is always extrapolated from available evidence (Luhmann, 1979). In other words, “whether our bases for trust are more calculative or more intuitive, more abstract or idiosyncratic, what matters in the end is that they represent ‘good reasons’ for trust” (Möllering, 2001: 413). Moreover, as we stated earlier, a certain amount of information about the actor in whom an individual could place his trust, the situation in which he will place it, and the risk involved, are required in order for trust to arise (Luhmann, 1988).

In other words, on one hand, the need for trust arises in a specific, contextualized relationship where one actor has expectations of the actions of another (creating a dependence of the first actor on the second), and where the second is at least partly free to respond favourably or not (creating a risk for the first actor) and, on the other hand, the emergence of trust is based on a degree of knowledge and an assessment of the characteristics and behaviours of the other actor (his trustworthiness).

¹⁹ The approach of Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer is set out in greater detail below.

²⁰ *Confident negative expectations regarding another's conduct* (Lewicki et al., 1998: 439).

2. Trust and trustworthiness

2.1. Definition(s)

Despite dating from nearly two decades ago, the definition formulated by Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer (1998), together with the approach of Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995)²¹, remains frequently cited today, particularly for their integrated model and their distinction between trust and its antecedents²². In the literature on organizational trust, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) identify 650 references to the definition by Rousseau et al. (1998), and 1300 references to the model put forward by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995). The definition by Mayer et al. (1995) – considered to be among the most robust by Lewicki et al. (2006) in a paper setting out the “state of the art” regarding research on trust and its developments – shows strong convergence as regards the essential elements of trust with definitions found in a wide review of dominant approaches (Bigley and Pearce, 1998, Rousseau et al., 1998): 1) positive or confident expectations regarding the other party, 2) a willingness to accept vulnerability in a relationship, 3) conditions of interdependence and risk (e.g. Zand, 1972, Hosmer, 1995, Mayer et al., 1995, Bigley and Pearce, 1998, Rousseau et al., 1998, Kramer, 1999, Lewicki et al., 2006).

Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman’s definition of trust is: “the willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party” (1995: 712). This definition applies to a relationship in which another identifiable party may act and react of his own volition towards the trustor. Vulnerability implies a potential for loss, since making oneself vulnerable means taking a risk. This is the “double contingency” defined by Luhmann: there is contingency because there is the possibility of freedom of choice for the trustor in response to the actions of the other party, which depend on the latter’s own freedom of choice; these freedoms of choice create indeterminacy (Luhmann, 2001). The authors point out that trust is not in itself the taking of a risk, but the “willingness to take risks” (Mayer et al., 1995: 712). Moreover, they refer to Luhmann to distinguish between the notions “trust” and “confidence”, which are sometimes used without distinction or ambiguously in the literature (e.g. Coleman, 1990). With regard to trust, the authors maintain that a prior, initial risk²³ must be recognized and assumed (Mayer et al., 1995). Confidence involves no determined willingness to choose to take a risk. A suitable measurement is “the extent to which a trustor is willing to voluntarily take risks at the hands of the trustee”, to surrender to the other party’s will and freely decided actions (Schoorman et al., 2007). In other words, in the authors’ model, the perceived level of risk moderates the relationship between trust and risk-taking, the level of trust being an indication of the extent of the risk that is desired to be taken.

²¹ Approach updated by Schoorman, Mayer and Davis (2007)

²² Source: Publish and Perish

²³ At the end of this chapter we propose distinguishing the vulnerability inherent in the situation and the dependence in the relationship from the risk inherent in the act of trusting. The lexicology we choose differs slightly from the approach of Mayer et al. (1995), but seems to us to be in line with the double contingency put forward by Luhmann (1988).

In their 1998 article, "Not so different after all: a cross-discipline view of trust" Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt and Camerer put forward a definition that embodies the essence of the definitions found in scientific literature produced in most disciplines: "Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another" (1998: 395) (the authors add: in conditions of risk and interdependence). Trust is not in itself a behaviour (such as cooperating) or choice (such as taking a risk), but an underlying psychological condition which can imply or result in such actions (ibid.).

For Rousseau et al. (1998), risk and interdependence are inseparable from trust, but variations in these factors in the course of a relationship can affect both the level of trust and, potentially, its nature. For this reason, the authors return to the concept of trust as "bandwidth," since its extent, nature and intensity can change depending on, or in the course of the relationship (see above). The authors' objective is not to put forward a complete model for the development of trust, but to propose a framework and to understand the similarities across the various disciplines. Consistent with the notion of "bandwidth," Rousseau et al. (1998) propose a range of trust running from a calculative basis, weighing up losses and gains, to an emotional response (Kramer, 1999). They posit a dependent relationship between calculus-based trust and relational-based trust in the course of a relationship, the second growing proportionally as the first wanes. Based not only on deterrence (Shapiro et al., 1992), but also on credible information about the characteristics and intentions of the other party, calculus-based trust gradually becomes relational through repeated interactions, and through the information obtained through the relationship itself; on top of this comes an emotional component (e.g. Coleman, 1990, McAllister, 1995, Lewicki et al., 2006, McAllister et al., 2006). Being able to count on the other party (*reliability* and *dependability*) brings forth positive expectations (Rousseau et al., 1998). In other words, trust, situated socially, derives from the experience and interaction with a particular party to the exchange. Trust both describes the relationship and is created by the relationship, which itself is engendered by reciprocal expectations (Mangematin, 1998).

The authors add a third construct, an institutional trust that can facilitate and support the development of trust enabling risk-taking and trusting behaviour. The intensity of this form of trust is independent of calculative and relational trusts. Institutional support can exist at the societal level, in the form of social norms, social networks or legal provisions (e.g. Ring and Van De Ven, 1992, Gulati, 1995, Sitkin, 1995, in Rousseau et al., 1998). In the authors' view, to the extent that trust reflects a positive attitude towards the other party's motivation, it is essentially perceived as a substitute for control – which is not concerned with the parties' motivational aspect. In this they differ from Shapiro et al. (1992), who see trust as a response to, a mechanism to counter, vulnerability (see above). The benefit of the institutional dimension, unlike in Zucker (1986), is that it supports the emergence of trust by providing shared knowledge and understanding (Rousseau et al., 1998) – in other words, shared reference points between the parties. On the other hand, they do not take a position on the effects of the exercising of control on the emergence and of element of trust.

In summary, although a number of essential dimensions appear to be shared by the various approaches found, we observe differing demarcations, and even overlapping, of these

dimensions. Because of the recursive nature of trust, in particular, and in order to avoid terminological ambiguity or multiple meanings attached to identical labels, we propose the following conceptualizations and demarcations of the various elements that define and accompany trust:

- Prior conditions creating the need for trust: 1) trust is defined in relation to **expectations**, which may be satisfied or disappointed. “A, the trustor, expects B, a second actor, to show such and such a behaviour expected by A.” If the trustor is always an individual, a physical person, the other party must above all have the possibility of acting. This actor, in whom the trust is placed, may be a person, but also a group or organization (e.g. Zaheer et al., 1998). Expectations describe the trustor’s **dependence** vis-à-vis the trustee. Associated with this dependence is the (first) contingency regarding the other party’s behaviour, which engenders **vulnerability**²⁴. These expectations may change and may be generated by the dynamic of the relationship itself.
- *Input* for trust: the “good reasons” on which the individual relies in order to trust, essentially the other party’s **perceived trustworthiness** (see below) in the light of the characteristics of the relationship and its context that affect the trustor’s vulnerability²⁵ (including the potential for control).
- Trust: trust is a psychological state (e.g. Rousseau et al., 1998). The “source” of the trust is highly subjective and essentially can only refer to the individual that places it (e.g. McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011): **the trustor**. Trust is signified by **positive expectations** (or negative expectations, signifying distrust) of the behaviours and intentions of the other party, **the trustee**, regarding the expectations that describe the dependence, taking into account the contingency in connection with the trustee’s behaviour. In other words, trust is accompanied by positive expectations regarding the use that the trustee will make of his discretionary part in the realization of the trustor’s expectations.
- *Output* of trust: acceptance of vulnerability is shown by choice, the intention to take a **risk**²⁶, the second contingency. The trustor may fall back on trust or control in the face of his vulnerability. In other words, he remains the master of the risk that he takes by relying on free choice and corresponding behaviour or on means of control in order to restrict the other party’s discretionary part in his behaviour. The risk exists post-trust; it arises because the individual decides to trust. The risk relates to the trustor’s attitude to vulnerability, which exists independently of trust. We would add that in this sense, the trustor’s dependence on the trustee becomes **interdependence**. Placing one’s trust creates new expectations that may be disappointed (e.g. Quéré, 2001), in that the vulnerability that is accepted (by placing trust, by relying on one’s own conjecture regarding the goodwill behaviour of the other party

²⁴ Exposure to potential adverse consequences.

²⁵ And also each person’s propensity to trust, independent of the context (e.g. Rotter, 1967, Erikson, 1968)

²⁶ The acceptance of vulnerability needs to be distinguished from the behavioural dimension of the acceptance of vulnerability, the taking of the risk: the fact of voluntarily exposing oneself (the voluntary dimension). This distinction comes back to the differentiation between trust and its effects. Risk exists when a decision in a situation involves stakes, the possibility for gain or loss. Risk-taking behaviour is based on a decision, following on from an acceptance of vulnerability (Mayer et al. 1995).

and the expectation of reciprocity, of a favourable response from the trustee) cannot be mastered by control.

- **Behavioural dimensions** of trust: trust, or the absence of trust, is displayed to the other party by the first actor's posture in the face of his own vulnerability to the second actor, that is, risk-taking behaviours. The trustor may either increase his reliance (Gillespie, 2003) on the trustee – thereby increasing the trustee's "enablement" – or reduce it.

2.2. Antecedents and the effects of trust

For Seppänen et al. (2007), the question of causality is one of the main reasons for the ambiguity and confusion observed in the differentiation of the antecedents, dimensions or consequences of trust, and remains one of the biggest challenges (e.g. Rousseau et al., 1998, Seppänen et al., 2007).

Within the psychological approach, Ferrin (2003) identified in the literature a "laundry list" of over 50 causal elements that can be described as direct determinants of the level of trust in a relationship, or as covariants of the level of trust. Lewicki et al. (2006) categorized these elements as follows: 1) characteristic qualities of the trustor (e.g. propensity to trust), 2) characteristic qualities of the trustee (general trustworthiness, ability, benevolence, integrity, reputation, sincerity, etc.), 3) characteristics of the past relationship between the parties (e.g. patents of successful cooperation), 4) characteristics of the parties' communication processes (e.g. threats, promises, openness of communication), 5) characteristics of the relationship between the parties (e.g. close friends, authority relationships, partners in a market transaction, etc.) and, lastly, 6) structural parameters that govern the relationship between the parties (e.g. availability of communication mechanisms, availability of third parties, etc.).

Hardin (1992) conceptualizes trust as a three-part relationship involving 1) the properties of the trusting party, 2) the particularities of the context in which the trust is granted, and 3) the characteristics of the party in whom the trust is placed. If we return to the characterization made by Lewicki et al. (2006) of Ferrin's (2003) list of causal elements that could be described as direct determinants of the level of trust in a relationship, or as covariants of the level of trust, we can also form three groups:

1. Characteristics of the trustor (1): Some psychologists have defined the general disposition to trust as a personality trait (Rotter, 1967, Erikson, 1968). Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) talk of *propensity to trust*, Kramer (1999) of *dispositional trust*²⁷. Harrison McKnight et al. (1998) distinguish between two personal dispositions that influence the intention to trust differently: *faith in humanity* and a *trusting stance*. A "trusting stance" means that a person believes, independently of the other's trustworthiness, that better results are obtained in relationships by acting as though the partner were trustworthy and well-intentioned. Since this is a conscious choice, a trusting stance falls into the calculus-based approach to trust

²⁷ Das and Teng (2004) also add the propensity to take a risk.

(Riker, 1971, in McKnight et al., 1998). These personal tendencies, and not traits, are said to be “dispositional” because they reflect tendencies that manifest in different situations (McKnight et al., 1998).

2. Characteristics of the type of relationship between the parties (5) and structural parameters governing the relationship between the parties (6): more broadly, we propose to associate these causal elements, or covariants, with the expectations and the vulnerability that characterize the relationship of dependence, in other words with the norms and mechanisms that affect the trustor’s disposition to take a risk, whether these refer to institutional trust (e.g. Rousseau et al., 1998) or explicitly to formal and informal control mechanisms (e.g. Schoorman et al., 2007).
3. The characteristic qualities of the trustee (2), the characteristics of the past relationship between the parties (3) and the characteristics of the parties’ communication processes (4): we propose bringing these dimensions into a single group, because their role is ultimately to obtain information, to increase knowledge about characteristics and motivations, to observe the behaviours of the relationship partner, contributing to positive expectations associated with trust, to information leading to a gauging of the trustee’s trustworthiness. Trustworthiness allows a relationship of trust to be established that only survives if the finding of trustworthiness is validated during interactions (e.g. Pesqueux, 2009). Mayer et al. (1995) propose a “feedback loop” from behavioural manifestations of trust to dimensions of trustworthiness, a relationship that has been empirically tested by Serva, Fuller and Mayer (2005) and by Colquitt, Scott and LePine (2007), for example.

2.2.1. Trustworthiness

Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman’s integrated model clearly distinguishes between trust and its effects on one hand and trustworthiness on the other hand: “[...] characteristics and actions of the trustee will lead that person to be more or less trusted. These characteristics are important if researchers are to understand why some parties are more trusted than others. [...]. Although they are not trust *per se*, these variables help build the foundation for the development of trust.” (Mayer et al., 1995: 717).

Trust thus relates to the person who grants it, the trustor. It is distinct from the trustee’s trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995, Hardin, 2004). The notion of trustworthiness encompasses the dimensions of the trustee that favour the emergence of trust.

Based on an identification of factors that influence trust, the authors propose three categories relating to the trustee’s characteristics that go a long way to explaining his perceived trustworthiness: “Each contributes a unique perceptual perspective from which to consider the trustee, while the set provides a solid and parsimonious foundation for the empirical study of trust for another party” (1995: 717). These characteristics are: *ability*²⁸, meaning the trustee’s

²⁸ Ability: that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain (competence, perceived expertise) (Mayer et al., 1995: 717).

perceived competencies, integrity and probity, meaning the trustee's perceived adherence to a certain number of values accepted by the trustor, together with benevolence²⁹, in the sense of the trustee's perceived willingness to act favourably towards the trustor, beyond selfish motivations. The types of trust developed by Sako and Helper (1998) in an interorganizational context follow a very similar logic: 1) *competence trust*, referring to the trustee's perceived competence, including expected technical or managerial standards, 2) *contractual trust*, referring to the agent's probity, the fulfilment of the contract, and associated values, and 3) *goodwill trust*, referring to the trustee's perceived benevolence, the consideration of shared interests in the relationship, without taking unfair advantage. In other words, the first two dimensions focus mainly on the trustee's expected and perceived characteristics regarding his abilities, responsibility and associated values, while the last dimension refers to the trustee's expected and perceived posture in the face of the protagonists' interests (his own, those of the trustor, and their shared interests).³⁰

While the model put forward by Mayer et al. (1995, Mayer and Davis, 1999) posits that the trustee's perceived trustworthiness leads the trustor to make decisions concerning his vulnerability, these decisions manifesting through a variety of trusting behaviours, McEvily and Torentiello (2011) point out that few studies have truly empirically validated this causal chain in its entirety. They add that, at the same time, other studies postulate that the willingness to make oneself vulnerable does not necessarily connect the effects of perceptions of trustworthiness and positive expectations with behaviours (Colquitt et al., 2007). Colquitt et al. (2007) observe that although the trustor's positive expectations regarding the trustee's behaviours and intentions and the trustee's perceived trustworthiness are conceptually distinct, in their operationalization they nevertheless overlap and are consequently frequently considered to be of equivalent extent.

2.2.2. Trusting behaviour and reciprocity

As we have shown, trust develops over the course of interactions between the partners (e.g. Anderson and Narus, 1990, Gulati, 1995, Ring and Ven, 1994, Sako and Helper, 1998, Dyer and Chu, 2003, Poppo et al., 2008), with the partners discovering over time whether the other

²⁹ Benevolence: the extent to which the trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive (loyalty, openness, caring, receptivity, availability) (Mayer et al., 1995: 718).

³⁰ Note that some authors consider goodwill – in that it refers to the partners' motivations and interests that require them to invest in the relationship (e.g. Sako and Helper, 1998) – as the affective component of trust (e.g. Ganesan, 1994, Doney and Cannon, 1997, Kumar et al., 1995). Nevertheless, we consider that a cognitive component of goodwill inevitably comes into play in the trustee's dimension of perceived trustworthiness. This in no way precludes the involvement of affective elements in the "leap of faith" of trust at the individual level, nor the fact that these elements that generate an affective dimension can be supported by characteristics that approach perceived goodwill or benevolence; but it seems to us that a blurring of dimensions relating to the trustee's behaviour (regarding expectations that characterize the trustor's dependency and vulnerability) with trust arising out of the relationship itself, comprising a dimension that can be described as affective, leads to a degree of confusion observed in the differentiation between the antecedents, components and dimensions of trust and its consequences.

party is trustworthy (e.g. Anderson and Narus, 1990, Shapiro et al., 1992, Lewicki and Bunker, 1995). The relationship develops as a result of the frequency of interactions and the diversity of situations encountered (e.g. Lewicki et al., 1998). 1) First, the relationship provides information about the respective characteristics of the partners (e.g. Deutsch, 1958, Lindsfold, 1978), and 2) second, over time, the partners identify with each other, leading to a process of internalization and appropriation of the other party's preferences (e.g. Shapiro et al., 1992, Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, Poppo et al., 2008). Trust increases, or can decrease, as a result of the interactions experienced between the parties and the context in which they take place. If expectations regarding behaviour are met, trust increases, but if expectations are dashed, it decreases (e.g. March and Olsen, 1975, Shapiro et al., 1992, Lewicki and Bunker, 1996, Kramer, 1999, Bijlsma-Frankema and Costa, 2005).

In transformational approaches to trust (e.g. Shapiro et al., 1992, Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, Rousseau et al., 1998), relational trust (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, Rousseau et al., 1998), or resilient trust in Ring (1996), is the result of a process in which trust is founded, initially, on discovery of the partner's characteristics, tying in with Ganesan's (1994) notion of credibility, which designates both the competence and the seriousness of the partner, and then becomes endogenous to the experience of the relationship. In the same vein, the stability of the relationship and the development of shared visions and standards reinforces Zucker's (1986) *process-based* trust, but gift/counter-gift exchanges (ibid.), or the reciprocity experiences of Creed and Miles (1996) are also involved. Built over time, trust is one of the rare resources whose value increases with use (Dasgupta and Gambetta, 1998). This suggests that, at least in part, trust is a reciprocal concept that can potentially be both cause and effect (e.g. Blomqvist, 2002).

The reciprocity of trust involves its co-constructed dimension. It is a necessary condition for the strengthening of trust in a virtuous circle of the "I trust because you trust" (McAllister, 1995) or "trust begets trust" (Creed and Miles, 1996) type. Placing trust is rewarded by trust: being distrustful generates distrust (Schoorman et al., 2007). The trustor's voluntary exposure to risk – in that he decides to rely on the trustee's free choice and corresponding behaviour instead of means of control to restrict them – creates the expectation of a favourable response from the trustee, an example of the co-constructed dimension of trust. In other words, in a given relationship, conceptually, "sufficiently strong" trust can only be reciprocal (e.g. Lewicki and Bunker, 1995).

Trust then fits into a pattern of interdependence, reducing opportunistic behaviour and defining the dynamics of the relationship. From that moment, trust is no longer purely cognitive: Louis Quéré (2001) considers that it becomes itself a moral standard in the relationship³¹.

³¹ A's voluntary subordination creates a constraint for B because of a social norm (with associated sanctions) that requires trust to be honoured: on one hand B feels obliged to provide continuity of conduct or a general mode of behaviour that aroused A's trust, and on the other hand, knowing that A has trusted him, he feels obliged to honour this trust: A can thus count on the moral sense of obligation that B will feel to gauge the probability of the conduct he expects of him (Quéré, 2001:131).

In the view of Gillespie (2003), when trust is restricted to its voluntary dimension (the acceptance of vulnerability) and its behavioural dimension (the corresponding risk-taking), the trustor can display trust in two main ways: by 1) *reliance*, or by 2) *disclosure*. Gillespie's (2003) proposition, based on a review of the literature, is in keeping with the definition of Rousseau et al. (1998), in the context of interpersonal relations at work of the "hierarchical supervisor-subordinates" type. The first dimension involves a category of trusting behaviour by means of which a person relies "on another's skills, knowledge, judgments or actions, including delegating and giving autonomy" (Gillespie, 2003: 10). "Disclosure" is part of a second category of trusting behaviour, involving "sharing work-related or personal information of a sensitive nature" (ibid.: 10). A high level of trust would thus be manifested, in particular, by substantial delegation, a decision not to engage in monitoring, and open sharing of information. Conversely, distrust would be manifested by increased monitoring, interventions and checks, and the withholding of information (e.g. Colquitt et al., 2007).

More broadly, communication between partners is a fundamental question in the study of trust. Since the relationship of dependence arises because of asymmetrical knowledge between the partners, leading to vulnerability, the process of information between the partners during the relationship contributes to an acceptance of this vulnerability. When not based on the relationship, the interactions and concrete exchanges of partners, reputation – "second-hand knowledge" (Burt and Knez, 1995, Harrison McKnight et al., 1998) – is the most significant variable facilitating the emergence of trust between two partners who have never previously interacted (e.g. Akrouf and Akrouf, 2011). Regarding the relational aspect, the dimensions associated with communication are the most important determinants in the emergence of trust with regard to: the quality of the formal exchange of information (Anderson and Narus, 1990), the celerity of information exchange (Moorman et al., 1992), and the frequency and quality of communication (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Where there are shared values, communication is predominant in the quality of relationships (Joshi, 2009). Communication can then be considered as an antecedent or as a consequence of trust (e.g. Akrouf and Akrouf, 2011). Open communication can thus become just as much an expectation directed towards the characteristics or values expected of the trustee as an operational norm in the relationship. In the inventory of Mayer et al. (1995), *openness* appears not only among the principles associated with integrity (Butler, 1991), but also in the consideration of the trustor's interests, that is, benevolence (Mishra, 1996).

McEvily and Torentiello (2011) emphasize that Gillespie's (2003) proposal, concentrating as it does solely on the voluntary dimension of trust, neglects the positive expectations highlighted in the definition of Rousseau et al. (1998). In complementary fashion, Mayer et al. (1995), like Gillespie (2003), justify the notion of reciprocity by the fact that trust is manifested by the intention to take a risk in a situation of uncertainty, but also because integrity implies agreement regarding shared values of behaviour in the relationship and benevolence, a consideration of shared interests in the relationship the prerequisite for which is a lack of opportunistic behaviour. Empirically, this relationship was established by Serva, Fuller and Mayer (2005) in the development of trust between interdependent teams. In the context of hierarchical supervisor/subordinate relationships, Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000), utilizing an

extension of the model of Mayer et al. (1995), show that trust is not necessarily mutual and reciprocal. In other words, A may trust B, while B does not trust A. One of the limitations raised by the authors of the model is that the conceptualization is unidimensional and does not explore reciprocity in trust relationships (Mayer et al., 1995, Schoorman et al., 2007). Note that the integrated model of trust of Mayer et al. (1995) proposes a feedback loop in order to model changes in trust over time, proceeding from trusting behaviour towards factors of trustworthiness and not trust directly.

Moreover, in the framework of the relationships between an agency and its parent ministry, we have observed that the trust of a member of the agency towards the ministry, and his perception of reciprocal trust, that is, trust placed in the agency by members of the ministry, is always evaluated as equivalent. In other words, if the respondent's trust in the other party is strong, his perception will be that trust in his own organization will also be strong, and conversely, if his trust is lukewarm, he will also perceive trust in his own organization similarly. In addition, perception of the trust felt by the partner remains fairly idiosyncratic and is based on a variety of clues depending on the individual. Some focus on the attitude of partners and exchanges, or the content or form of communication. Others choose a more comprehensive point of view, placing value on the tangible results of coordination, the level of autonomy allowed, and support for organizational development as a whole, taking precedence over sometimes strained exchanges. The gauging of trust therefore appears to be somewhat volatile and, in some cases, subject to the influence of the immediate or recent history of exchanges with the partner. And yet, when the viewpoint is inverted, the level of trust felt by the members of the ministry does not necessarily match the level perceived by members of the agency and, although a particular behaviour of the ministry may be perceived as a sign of distrust towards the agency, it does not necessarily signify the ministry's established distrust in the agency (Fivat, 2013).

2.2.3. Predictability

Although there is a clear connection between predictability and trust, with both playing a part in reducing uncertainty (Lewis and Weigert, 1985a), if we are to make sense of trust, it cannot be limited to predictability (Deutsch, 1958).

Predictability does refer to expectations of the other party's behaviour, but does not include the notion of vulnerability (Mayer et al., 1995). Indeed, an increase in predictability is considered as an *output* of trust (e.g. Ring and Van De Ven, 1992)³². But it cannot be total, otherwise a reliance on trust would be meaningless (e.g. Luhmann, 1979, Bradach and Eccles, 1989, Mayer et al., 1995, Sako and Helper, 1998), since the existence of a contingency is required in order for the agent's trustworthiness to manifest (e.g. Bradach and Eccles, 1989, Mayer et al., 1995, Sako and Helper, 1998).

³² Confidence or predictability in one's expectations about another's behavior, and confidence in another's goodwill (Ring and Van de Ven, 1992).

Nevertheless, predictability – the result of the consistency of the trustee's behaviour – remains an essential dimension of trust (Shapiro et al., 1992, Zaheer et al., 1998). As an *input* of trust, consistency (Butler, 1991) appears as a dimension of perceived trustworthiness, in relation to the trustee's integrity in the list drawn up by Mayer et al. (1995). In other words, the partner's hitherto perceived consistency will contribute to establishing a prediction that it will continue. However, the trustee's predictability may also be due to external factors such as control mechanisms (ibid.). In addition, the "deeper" dimensions of trust – Sako and Helper's (1998) *goodwill trust* or Lewicki and Bunker's (1995) *identification-based trust* – consider that the partner will not take unfair advantage, but will serve shared interests, even in new situations in which one cannot rely on the partner's previous behaviour.

In relations between an agency and its parent ministry, we have observed that the consistency of the ministry's expectations and behaviours regarding the agency is a foundation of its perceived trustworthiness, on which the trust of members of the agency toward the ministry is founded (Fivat, 2013). The political environment of these relations makes this subject particularly sensitive, as the deleterious effects of a ministry's "*ex-post* haggling" on the trust of agencies has been raised by Binderkrantz and Christensen (2009). Nevertheless, we have also observed that, since a lack of consistency may also be due to third-party influences on the ministry, the primary factor in the building of trust in the ministry remains its intention and its use of discretionary decisional powers (Fivat, 2013).

3. Operationalization

Trust is all about one party's expectations of the other. It is defined as a psychological state marked by an intention to accept vulnerability and positive expectations regarding the other party's intentions and behaviour (adapted from Rousseau et al., 1998: 395). Trust essentially resides in a person (Luhmann, 1979) who, in the given context, bases his interpretation of the situation, of evidence, or at least of available indicators, on what he considers to be "good reasons" for placing his trust (Möllering, 2001)³³.

The trustee's dispositions that are likely to arouse trust constitute his perceived trustworthiness (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995). Consequently, the trustee's trustworthiness must be demonstrated. In other words, the trustee must have the ability to *act*, to demonstrate these dispositions that are likely to arouse trust, in order to respond favourably to the trustor's expectations. The trustor's dependence on the trustee's behaviour creates his vulnerability. The trustor's assessment of trustworthiness, based on a positive assessment of these various expectations, will contribute to the emergence of trust, or will at least provide the trustor with elements that he can use in interpreting the "good reasons" for placing his trust, if he believes that the positive assessment of these expectations will persist into the future, thereby becoming positive expectations, in this sense predictive, through the action of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998, Möllering, 2001).

The model of Mayer et al. (1995, Mayer and Davis, 1999) postulates that the trustee's perceived trustworthiness leads the trustor to make decisions regarding his vulnerability and hence the trust he is willing to grant – a trust that will only persist if the finding of trustworthiness is verified during interactions (e.g. Pesqueux, 2009). In other words, the trustor's *positive expectations* must be confirmed in interactions to come, thus confirming the trustee's *trustworthiness*.

This circular nature of the process poses a major difficulty for measuring trust and, in their operationalization, the trustor's *positive expectations* regarding the trustee's behaviour and intentions come close to the latter's perceived trustworthiness. Trust and perceived trustworthiness are therefore frequently dealt with identically as regards their measurement (e.g. Colquitt et al., 2007).

And yet, although the connection between trust and trustworthiness has been demonstrated many times, viewing perceived trustworthiness and trust as equivalent reduces the measurement of trust to the partner's knowledge (Möllering, 2013), moving away from the essential nature of trust which is "both less and more than knowledge" (Simmel, 1990: 179), although it "stands outside the categories of knowledge and ignorance" (Simmel, 1990, in Möllering, 2001).

³³ Interpretations, however, will not translate directly into expectations (Möllering, 2001). The mental leap of trust and the perception and assessment of the risk are a highly subjective matter (ibid.).

Conceptually, Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) distinguish between *trust* and *factors of perceived trustworthiness*. These factors are grouped into three generic categories: *ability*, *benevolence* and *integrity*.

Since trust is considered with regard to its effects on an interorganizational relationship, as we have presented earlier, the dimensions proposed by Sako and Helper (1998) – *competence trust*³⁴, *contractual trust*³⁵, *goodwill trust*³⁶ – are close to the generic categories of trustworthiness proposed by Mayer et al. (1995). Nevertheless, the wording of the definitions concern expectations of the partner's behaviour, and in her approach, Sako considers them as three different *types* of trust. In the same vein, Zaheer et al. (1998) define trust in its predictive dimension, with no absolute certainty, and in its cognitive, affective and conative components, in three dimensions³⁷, namely *reliability*³⁸, *predictability*³⁹ and *fairness*⁴⁰, also calling on positive expectations of the partner's intentions and behaviour⁴¹. On the other hand, in the context of interfirm alliances, Das and Teng (1998) put forward techniques that an organization can implement in order to facilitate the construction of trust: *respect for fairness*, *communication*, or *interfirm adaptation*, which shows the will to act for shared interests, rather than serving one's own interests⁴². Because the definition of trust does not explicitly include an expectational dimension⁴³, it could also refer to the trustee's perceived trustworthiness: "trust is the degree to which the trustor holds a positive attitude toward the trustee's goodwill and reliability in a risky exchange situation" (1998: 494).

This is why, in our operationalization (Fivat, 2013), we propose to demarcate and clearly distinguish trust as such, in its cognitive, affective and conative components, from the tangible or observable bases, for the trustor, on which trust relies or is founded. These involve the dispositions of the object of trust that are likely to arouse an individual's trust, since the individual is the source of trust. Whether these bases are founded on the trustee's qualities or on characteristics of the past relationship and communication, they involve perception and assessment of the characteristics, motivation, intentions and behaviour of the partner in the relationship.

³⁴ Is the other party capable of doing what it says it will do?

³⁵ Will the other party carry out its contractual agreements?

³⁶ Will the other party make an open-ended commitment to takes initiatives for mutual benefit while refraining from unfair advantage taking?

³⁷ Whether the object of trust is an individual or an organization

³⁸ The expectation that an actor can be relied on to fulfill obligations (Anderson and Weitz, 1989).

³⁹ The expectation that an actor will behave in a predictable manner

⁴⁰ The expectation that an actor will act and negotiate fairly when the possibility for opportunism is present (Anderson and Narus, 1990, Bromiley and Cummings,1995).

⁴¹ Note that in 2006, in their article *Does trust still matter* (Mc Evily et Zaheer, 2006), these various expectations are grouped into different dimensions: competence, goodwill and credibility.

⁴² Trust is earned from partners if one adapts to the needs of cooperation in partnerships.

⁴³ In their approach, the predictive dimension is associated with confidence.

The generic categories proposed are as follows (adapted from Mayer et al., 1995, Sako and Helper, 1998):

- a) Trustworthiness based on **competencies** relates to resources of the trustee that are mobilizable (abilities, capacities, knowledge, know-how) and mobilized (results that can benefit the trustor).
- b) Trustworthiness based on **probity** relates to the trustee's fulfilment of his commitments and duties, and to standards and values that are associated or expected by the trustor.
- c) Trustworthiness based on **goodwill** relates to the trustee's favourable disposition towards the trustor and his interests, without any motive to take advantage of them selfishly.

In other words, the first two dimensions relate mainly to expected and perceived characteristics of the trustee regarding his abilities, responsibilities and associated values, while the last relates to the trustee's expected and perceived posture regarding the interests of the protagonists (his own, those of the trustor, and their shared interests) (Fivat, 2013).

Moreover, although trust involves two key elements – the trustor's posture towards his own vulnerability and expectations of favourable treatment from the trustee (e.g. Colquitt et al., 2007) – it exists above all in a singular relationship, vulnerability being built into variable expectations that qualify this particular relationship (e.g. McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011). Perceived trustworthiness remains relative to the responses made to each party's reciprocal expectations, whether these expectations are the source of the dependence and associated vulnerability, or whether they are generated by the relationship itself, by the experience of exchanges.

In other words, if assessing the partner's trustworthiness involves the question "Why should I trust?", defining the expectations of the parties in the relationship answers the question "What am I trusting for?"

These expectations are not necessarily the same for both partners. From a relational perspective, they are partly built on shared behavioural expectations, but they are also dependent on the nature of the real and symbolic "contract" and both parties' respective contributions to it. In a business relationship, the buyer's perception of the supplier's trustworthiness is different from the supplier's perception of the buyer's trustworthiness (Ganesan, 1994). As Ganesan shows, the buyer (the principal) relies mainly on the supplier's reputation or credibility (the abilities and seriousness of the partner) to assess his trustworthiness, whereas the supplier (the agent) relies more on internal parameters such as satisfaction with past experiences.

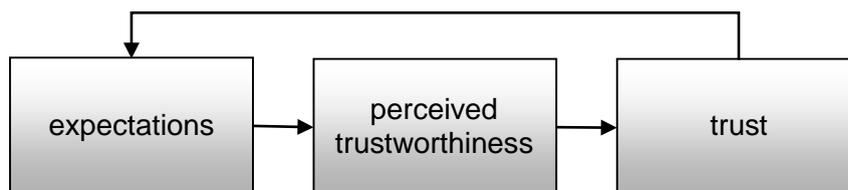
This does not prevent the other generic categories of trustworthiness (Mayer et al., 1995) from being relevant for both parties in the relationship. However, on one hand, the relative importance of the various categories could differ (e.g. Ganesan, 1994) and, on the other hand, in their operationalization, concretely, the indicators that allow them to be assessed are based on different elements, by reason of the corresponding qualifying roles and expectations in a given relationship. Nevertheless, each of these indicators will contribute to the trustee's perceived general trustworthiness.

In the view of Akrouf and Akrouf, because the perceptions of each party may diverge, “it is necessary to develop a dyadic approach to trust that allows opinions to be compared” (2011: 11). In other words, although a reciprocal dimension appears in the construction of trust, the interpretation of which results from *favourable* (or unfavourable) *expectations* (Möllering, 2001) ultimately lies with each trustor. The good reasons also depend on the context and the nature of the relationship.

In its operationalization, our proposal therefore comprises three distinct dimensions (Fivat, 2013):

- a) The trustor’s **concrete expectations** of the trustee.
- b) The trustee’s **trustworthiness** as perceived by the trustor, trustworthiness being gauged by the trustee’s responses to the trustor’s expectations. Trustworthiness may relate to the perceived competencies, probity and goodwill of the trustee.
- c) **Trust**, manifested by **positive expectations** regarding the qualities, behaviour or intentions of the trustee. Trust can itself create new expectations in the relationship.

Figure 2: Expectations, perceived trustworthiness and trust



In a dyadic assessment of trust, trust between the parties, the perspective must also be inverted for all three dimensions, with the trustee becoming the trustor, and vice versa.

In the light of the results of our 2013 study, distinct operationalizations and measurements of trust and trustworthiness based on the expectations of the specific relationship studied appear to open useful avenues. In its multidimensional operationalization, trustworthiness appears to offer a degree of “tolerance”, provided that it is judged to be “sufficiently” high overall, so that trust can arise. In other words, even if the responses made by the partner are not necessarily optimal for all expectations, a sufficient overall “threshold” of trustworthiness would enable trust to arise.

Lastly, if trustworthiness is necessary for trust to occur, it cannot replace it. The study of trust, as a complement, gives meaning to trustworthiness. It lends it a prescriptive dimension, expectations being transformed into positive expectations, with the usefulness and benefits of the concept residing, in an organizational context, in the confidence provided by these positive expectations.

4. The object of trust

Although trust, as a psychological state, remains intrinsically a phenomenon at the individual level, the object of trust may be an individual, a group, an organization or an institution. In view of the embeddedness and the interactions between the objects of these different levels of analysis, the corresponding types of trust are not independent.

From a societal perspective, institutional trust is based on formal societal structures guaranteeing the attributes of an individual or an organization (norms, code of ethics, contracts, laws) (e.g. Zucker, 1986). For Rousseau et al. (1998), institutional trust facilitates, or supports, the growth of trust between the parties, enabling risk-taking and trusting behaviour. For Giddens (1990), it is associated with “reliability and faith in the correctness of abstract principles” (Giddens, 1990: 34). In other words, institutional trust is “extra-relational”: it involves “guarantees” that the environment provides in a specific relationship between two actors.

Considering an institution as an actor, Carnevale (1995) likens institutional trust to a conviction or faith that the institution will be fair, reliable, competent and nonthreatening. Barber includes its members in the concept: “As individuals deal with each other, with organizations, and with institutions, and when organizations and institutions deal with each other, they count on both technically competent performance and on direct moral responsibility for their welfare” (1983: 165). The trustor envisages that not only will an organization or institution (understood as systems that are organized and oriented towards a purpose) take action that will be beneficial to him, but also that most of the agents making up the institution will act fairly, competently and reliably (Barney and Hansen, 1994). Whitley (1987) conceives of organizational trust hinging on the collective characteristics of an administrative organization and its top management group, which are not reducible to features of individual actors and which insure some continuity of activities and direction when those actors change. Trust in an organization, then, appears to be equivalent to a judgment of its overall trustworthiness, the characteristics of an organization and of its members considered as a whole, and positive expectations as to its future actions. More recently, Maguire and Phillips have defined trust in an institution as an expectation: “An individual’s expectation that some organized system will act with predictability and goodwill” (2008: 372).

On the other hand, inter-organizational trust involves one organization trusting another. The trusted organization then becomes also a source of trust. Hosmer (1995) found that inter-organizational trust as a form of governance is poorly defined because of its intangibility and its informal nature: the difficulties of defining the absence or the presence of trust in a constant, convincing manner has created numerous misunderstandings within and between the various disciplines. Empirical studies all appear to share the same difficulty to a greater or lesser extent, as raised by Seppänen et al. (2007) and Currall and Inkpen (2002): “misspecification of the firm as the level of theory and the person as the level of measurement is common in alliance research” (Currall and Inkpen, 2002: 481). Medlin and Quester (2002) described it as an “*inter-level generalization problem*”. Zaheer, McEvily and Perrone (1998) pointed out that this

ambiguity is particularly apparent in the literature dealing with transaction costs. This involves firms behaving in an opportunistic matter, attributing in doing so individual motivations and behaviours (micro level) to organizations (macro level), implying, for Zaheer et al., a “*cross-level fallacy*” (Rousseau, 1985): “We maintain that theories of interfirm exchange that simply view opportunism – or conversely, trust – as a property of organizations without specifying the link between micro and macro levels is inaccurate as it tends to anthropomorphize the organization” (Zaheer et al., 1998: 142).

The major difficulty in conceiving the role of trust as a facilitator of coordination between two organizations is to move from a phenomenon that exists at the individual level to an organizational level of analysis: “Not clearly specifying how trust translates from the individual to the organization level leads to theoretical confusion about who is trusting whom, because it is *individuals* as members of organizations, rather than the organizations themselves, who trust” (Zaheer et al., 1998: 141). Whereas individuals may share a common attitude towards an organization, trust remains fundamentally inherent in individuals: “interorganizational trust describes the extent to which organizational members have a collectively-held trust orientation toward the partner firm, which is quite different from saying that organizations trust each other” (Zaheer et al., 1998: 143). Similarly, Nootboom et al. (1997) acknowledge the key role of the individuals and consider that their propensity to trust is influenced by the organizational environment (and their perception of the risk). They address trust as an individual's perception of a partner organization, and their variables relating to trust are linked to the perception of mutual relations.

In a “buyer-supplier” business relationship, Zaheer et al. (1998) show that interorganizational trust and interpersonal trust are distinct but related constructs playing different roles in the performance of interfirm exchange⁴⁴. In their 1998 reference study, Zaheer, McEvily and Perrone consider the importance of interpersonal trust between “individual boundary spanners,” that is, between physical persons performing exchanges on behalf of their respective organization, in connection with the construction of interorganizational trust. The authors postulate that these two types of trust influence each other mutually and that considering only one type of trust is insufficient to explain the performance of interorganizational exchanges.

On one hand, relational trust is built up through the experience of interactions with a specific partner (Ring and Van De Ven, 1992). In addition, Zaheer et al. (1998) point out that organizations are far from being monolithic, but rather “pluralistic, divided into interests, sub-units, and subcultures” (Pfeffer, 1982: 64). Relationships with external actors are managed by individuals (Friedman and Podolny, 1992), “individual boundary spanners” (Katz and Kahn, 1978), whose orientations and motivations are not necessarily uniform with those of the organization as a whole: “Hence, when examining the characteristics of an interorganizational

⁴⁴ Operationalization is based on the following reasoning: the less cooperative the supplier is in meeting the buyers' needs, the higher the transaction costs the buyer incurs in trying to achieve its goals in the supply relationship (Walker, 1994: 583).

relationship, we need to study the individual and organizational levels simultaneously” (Zaheer et al., 1998: 143).

On the other hand, the connection between interpersonal and interorganizational trust is maintained by organizational processes and dynamics (Zaheer et al., 1998). Over time, through repeated exchanges and interactions, the connections between the two organizations develop into more stable, more profound cooperative arrangements (Gulati, 1995). Although the “boundary spanners” may change, the definition and distribution of roles persists (Ring and Ven, 1994). Informal undertakings made between boundary spanners become institutionalized over time, and organizational routines are taken for granted (Zucker, 1977). A new boundary spanner is then socialized into the current norms during exchanges (Macneil, 1980). Norms of interorganizational relations are internalized and re-created in the conduct of business and personal interactions, thus leading to interpersonal trust. At the same time, interpersonal trust becomes re-institutionalized, with the trust of boundary spanners influencing the trust of other members of the partner organization (Zaheer et al., 1998).

Examining trust in its dimension of predictability, without absolute certainty, together with its cognitive, affective and conative components (e.g. Lewis and Weigert, 1985b, Rempel et al., 1985), Zaheer et al. (1998) show empirically that interpersonal⁴⁵ and interorganizational trust are distinct but reinforce each other. Although interpersonal trust alone has effects on the costs of negotiation and the level of conflict in the dyad, interorganizational trust has a direct effect on the performance of interorganizational exchanges. Moreover, considering interpersonal trust solely as a proxy of interorganizational trust ignores institutional insertion and its effects. Personal interactions take place in and are influenced by a social context (Coleman, 1990) and by organizational rules (Sitkin and Roth, 1993). These rules are constraining [editor’s note: somewhat] and guide the actions of members of the organization, depending additionally on the institutional context of the coordination (Zaheer et al., 1998).

⁴⁵ In particular, the items related to predictability do not emerge from interorganizational trust, whereas the items related to reliability do not appear in interpersonal trust.

II. Trust and the public sector

In the public sector field, the study of trust has traditionally focused on citizens' trust in the administration, political authorities or, more generally, the public sector as a whole (e.g. Hardin, 1992, Hardin, 1998, Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003, Hardin, 2004, Carter and Bélanger, 2005, Van de Walle et al., 2008, Hardin, 2013).

Be that as it may, there is growing interest in the study of trust within the public sector, mainly in relationships between politico-administrative authorities and organizations mandated to carry out public tasks, specifically public agencies (Rommel and Christiaens, 2009, van Thiel and van der Wal, 2010, van Thiel and Yesilkagit, 2011, Rommel, 2012, Fivat, 2013). This interest is due not only to the new organizational forms that have emerged in the past 20 years and corresponding new forms of relationship between an authority and its operational entities, but also to the observed limitations of the mechanisms for coordination between these various actors (e.g. Bouckaert, 2012).

The reforms associated with New Public Management (NPM), aimed at improving public sector performance, have proposed models of governance based on a contractual relationship between the government and, an organization in charge of a public task, associated with a (partial) lifting of bureaucratic rules and procedures applying to the organization. These models of governance, derived from economic theories and models intrinsically based on suspicion between actors (e.g. Bouckaert, 2012), grant a predominant role to various control, audit or incentive mechanisms. In practice, their application has led to excessive controls running counter to the flexibility that the model is intended to achieve, and to implementation difficulties, particularly performance incentives and a heightening of the risks of conflict because of potentially contradictory expectations among the various actors (ministers, senior civil servants, agency managers, etc.) (e.g. 't Hart and Wille, 2006).

In other words, the usefulness of a study of trust within the public service essentially involves bilateral, *inter partes* trust, as *support* for coordination between various actors and entities. For the purposes of the model of governance, trust is seen as a substituting for, or at least complementing, control. The confidence provided by trust may make it possible to reduce the intensity of control (e.g. Smitka, 1994, Mayer et al., 1995, Dekker, 2004), or at least increase the effectiveness of coordination (e.g. Sitkin, 1995, Nooteboom et al., 1997, Das and Teng, 1998, Poppo and Zenger, 2002, Inkpen and Currall, 2004). At the relational level, trust is associated with cooperative behaviours (e.g. Pesqueux, 2009).

However, the interest in citizens' trust in public institutions involves primarily societal and demographic issues and the relationship of trust remains *unilateral*. That being so, if the various relationships that can be studied from the angle of trust are multiple (citizens' trust in government, parliament, the administration as a whole, a department or agency in particular, etc.; and within the public service, among its various actors: parliament, government, central services, agencies, etc.) (e.g. Bouckaert, 2012), the differing relational issues and types justify distinguishing two types of relationship in the conceptual approach to trust:

1. Within the State or the public sector, between its various authorities, entities and actors.
2. Of the citizen, or other external actor, in the State or the various public-sector authorities, entities or actors.

1. Trust within the public sector

Coordination of the various entities within the public sector and their agents involves long-lasting relationships and repeated interactions having a specific purpose. Trust therefore occurs in the corresponding dynamics – interpersonal and, by analogy, interorganizational.

In the bureaucratic conception of public administration, the law, rules and hierarchy are designed to direct the actions of its entities and collaborators towards a common goal and provide a means of guarding against any action aimed at a divergent goal (e.g. Chevallier, 1994). Coordination between its actors and entities therefore occurs in a monolithic and relatively uniform model. The reforms associated with NPM, the phenomenon of *agentification* of the public sector in particular, in OECD countries (e.g. Pollitt et al., 1998, Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004, Verhoest et al., 2012) or in Switzerland (e.g. Steiner and Huber, 2012, Pasquier and Fivat, 2013), have loosened this model, thereby reducing the predictability of its administrative actors (e.g. Spence, 1997, Torenvlied, 2000, Bendor et al., 2001, van Thiel and Yesilkagit, 2011) – a predictability that was formerly guaranteed by the conformity, hierarchical subordination and formal regularizing methods of the bureaucracy (Grey and Garsten, 2001).

In its orthodox implementation, an agency is differentiated structurally from the central administration, in principle having ad-hoc organs of governance, and disposes of financial and human resources that it can manage with a certain degree of autonomy in carrying out, in compliance with the principle of specialization, a specific mission entrusted to it. Through the distancing of operational entities, the politico-administrative authority and entities become distinct actors, whose objectives must be aligned and activities coordinated.

In this sense, even when the agency is a construction endogenous to the institution that created it, the relationship of trust, by analogy, may involve the mechanisms of interorganizational trust, and to the extent that the agency and institution are interconnected (Zaheer et al., 1998), in interpersonal trust. Trust arises in effective coordination of these two entities that are structurally demarcated and have separate purposes, and exchanges and concrete contributions between the two parties, and on the basis of repeated interactions between members representing and acting on behalf of the respective entity. In the framework of this coordination, trust is intrinsically linked to its dialectic with the various modes of control (e.g. Fivat, 2013).

2. Trust of third parties in the public sector

Citizens are the primary beneficiaries of services provided by the administration and by public bodies, but they are also the primary mandator of these services since they elect political authorities.

Citizens' expectations of public authorities and entities are plural and not limited to satisfaction with goods and services provided. Their expectations of any given public-service organization are concerned not solely with its performance, but, in keeping with the public nature of its mandate, also with the means granted to it, its methods, and its purposes. For example, services provided by a public medical establishment are not billed in their entirety to beneficiaries, but also financed by society through taxes and contributions to compulsory insurance for the entire population. That being so, any citizen is legitimately concerned and does not wish to see quality care solely because he or she is sick or may need it one day; their motives may also be civic, ethical or political (e.g. Dixit, 2002). In this sense, a citizen's trust in any institution or public establishment may be based on characteristics of trustworthiness similar to those proposed above: competence (as shown by the quality of care provided, for example), probity (proper management of resources, for example) and goodwill (not serving its own interests to the detriment of those of the community, for example).

Nevertheless, direct relationships between a citizen and government or public-service authorities are often sporadic or occur from time to time, and reciprocal *inter partes* trust does not appear overriding. Moreover, in the light of these plural expectations, it is possible to envisage a shift from trust based on a given relationship between the citizen and a public body to an *institutional* trust, in the meaning of Zucker (1986) or Rousseau et al. (1998) – that “extra-relational” trust which lends environmental guarantees to social interactions: confidence in the justice system, for example.

What then is the meaning of trust in these relationships? Hardin (2013) considers that the general relationship between citizens and government is not one of trust or distrust, but the citizens' expectation of a reliable government perceived as being trustworthy. The decline in “trust” observed over recent years should in fact be understood as the reduction in the perceived trustworthiness of government; more specifically, an inability to gauge the government's trustworthiness because of a lack of information at the citizen's disposal. Möllering counters these arguments by saying that citizens' need to trust the government arises in an asymmetry of information, *in spite of* their limited knowledge: “His analysis needs to be applied with caution, because a different understanding of trust suggests that the reason Hardin gives for why citizens should be unable to trust government is exactly the reason why they have a need to trust government: their lack of knowledge.” (2013: 53-54).

The divergence between these two authors arises from that delicate set of knowledge necessary to gauge trustworthiness on one hand, and on the other hand the lack of knowledge that is inherent in the need for trust: “[...] the person who knows completely need not trust; while the person who knows nothing, can on no rational grounds afford even confidence” (Granovetter, 1992a: 39, in Blomqvist, 1997: 272). We would add that, more than the *unknown*, the issue here is the *unknowable* that creates the need, and the necessity, for trust (e.g. Giddens, 1990). Uncertainty lies above all in the predictive dimension of trust, *positive expectations* regarding the future behaviour of the object of trust. Trustworthiness, for its part, provides a tangible and evaluative basis for the qualities and behaviour of the object of trust up to the present, trust including a prescriptive basis for these qualities and behaviours. Hence, if one can postulate a

trustworthiness threshold sufficient to allow trust to arise (e.g. Fivat, 2013), the assessment of trustworthiness must also be based on *sufficient* information.

The relationship between government transparency and citizen trust – dimensions that are frequently linked by the media and civil society – lies at the heart of this dilemma:

- a. Does greater transparency lead to greater trust (e.g. Grimmelikhuijsen, 2012)? By offering citizens more information about State activity, can the State strengthen its perceived trustworthiness, and accordingly, citizens' trust?
- b. Or does the clamour for transparency testify to a trust deficit? Do demands for transparency constrain government action, a kind of sword of Damocles to be employed as a means of control after the fact precisely because trust and the corresponding positive expectations needed in order to tolerate uncertainty are lacking?

Conclusion

The study of trustworthiness, complementary to trust, allows investigation of the determinants that support the emergence of trust and contribute to the “good reasons” to trust. With regard to practical applications, although trust, as a psychological state, cannot be imposed, the trustee can act on his trustworthiness, and on the characteristics and behaviours on which the trustor will base his assessment. The proposed analysis model has been empirically developed in the specific framework of relations between various agencies and their parent ministry (Fivat, 2013). Its relevance has not been tested with regard to the diversity of relationships identified between actors both inside and outside the public service.

The benefits of trust stem from the psychological confidence; the positive expectations that it offers regarding the object of trust and, consequently, the concrete effects and benefits of these perceived predictability.. In the coordination of the various authorities and entities of the public service, the expected benefits of trust ensue from its behavioural dimensions and essentially the dialectic of trust and control, inevitably raising the question of risk. Equating trust with the intention to take a risk largely derives from the heritage and influence of the work of Luhmann (1973, 1979), risk arising when a decision involves stakes, a possible gain or loss (Mayer et al., 1995).

Nevertheless, in the context of relations between citizens and the State, political authorities or public administration, the notion of risk carries less weight. In other words, although in these relations we find the central elements of trust: 1) positive expectations of the other party, 2) a willingness to accept vulnerability in a relationship, 3) the conditions of interdependence and risk appear to be less relevant.

Giddens (1990), for example, assumes that the practices of trust are not uniform and that hence various conceptualizations of the phenomena may coexist. He also proposes a routinized conception of trust: in some circumstances, trust is “much less of a ‘leap to commitment’ than a tacit acceptance of circumstances in which other alternatives are largely foreclosed” (ibid.: 90). Trust then becomes a “posture”: if one relies on one’s experience, or knowledge, and belief in partners’ trustworthiness, on regular features of the environment, without systematically envisaging other possible alternatives. From this point of view, trust enables a degree of vulnerability to be tolerated by letting go of the desire for certainty and systematic verifications: above all it forms an attitude that is opposed to distrust and systematic suspicion.

We can also ponder the various meanings that can be ascribed to trust in these different contexts, and the corresponding manifestations of trust. Leaving aside a normative position, what are the concrete benefits of citizens’ trust in public administration? How does trust manifest in this context?

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Appendix

Table 1: Themes associated with the trustworthiness of politico-administrative authority (as principal in an agency relationship).

Competence	Resources of the trustee that are mobilizable (capacities, abilities, knowledge, know-how) and mobilized (results of value for the trustor) (adapted from Mayer et al., 1995, Sako and Helper, 1998).
Expertise	This theme deals with the principal's aptitudes (knowledge, know-how) for providing results of value for the subordinate organization as part of coordination (Mayer and Davis, 1999, Mayer et al., 1995, McEvily and Zaheer, 2006).
Probity	Fulfilment of undertakings and duties, and respect for associated or expected standards or values (adapted from Mayer et al., 1995, Sako and Helper, 1998).
Consistency	This theme deals with the perceived stability of the principal's expectations and of the explicit and implicit operating rules governing the relationship, and with respect for decisions that have been taken, leading to the predictability that is essential for the development of trust (e.g. Zaheer et al., 1998). As a foundation of perceived trustworthiness, it refers not only to the consistency of the principal (Mayer et al., 1995, McEvily and Zaheer, 2006), but also to fulfilment of promises and corresponding actions (e.g. Butler, 1991, Mishra, 1996). The political environment of the study makes this theme particularly sensitive, the adverse effects on the trust of agencies of the principal's "ex post haggling" having been raised by Binderkrantz and Christensen (2009).
Openness	This theme deals with perceived accessibility of the principal, and in particular of information in its possession that is of interest to the subordinate organization. In its relational aspect, the quality of communication is one of the most important determining factors

	in the development of trust (e.g. Anderson and Narus, 1990, Morgan and Hunt, 1994) ⁴⁶ . As a foundation of perceived trustworthiness, openness is here considered as an expected value or standard in the relationship, a source of probity (e.g. Butler, 1991).
Equity	This theme refers to the principal's procedural and distributive fairness (e.g. Das and Teng, 1998), particularly in its arbitration role. Particularly since the means made available to subordinate organizations and development priorities depend, to a large extent, on the budget allocations decided by the politico-administrative authority. This theme relates to the principal's probity to the extent that here, it is not directly a matter of subordinate organizations' satisfaction with their needs, but of fairness as a standard of the allocation process.
Goodwill	Favourable disposition of the trustee towards the trustor and its interests, with no motive to take selfish advantage thereof (adapted from Mayer et al., 1995, Sako and Helper, 1998)
Defence of interests	In the consideration of the interests of the subordinate organization, this theme deals with the principal's role in representing the interests of subordinate organizations to institutional authorities (political, departmental or Federal authorities, for example) where immediate access to these authorities does not lie within the formal competence of subordinate organizations, and where the principal does not have the competence to take the corresponding decision alone. Essentially, this involves an absence of opportunism on the part of the principal where possible (in the absence of subordinate organizations) (Anderson and Narus, 1990, Bromiley and Cummings, 1995, Zaheer et al., 1998, McEvily and Zaheer, 2006) ⁴⁷ . This theme is distinct from consistency, where the emphasis is on the principal's <i>motive</i> .

⁴⁶ In the list of Mayer et al. (1995), openness appears not only as one of the principles associated with integrity (e.g. Butler, 1991), but also in the consideration of the trustor's interests, benevolence (e.g. Mishra, 1996).

⁴⁷ The expectation that an actor will act and negotiate fairly when the possibility for opportunism is present.

Adequacy	<p>This theme addresses the principal's concrete responses to the needs of the subordinate organization. It involves <i>interorganizational adaptation</i>, through which, adjustments made by partners to better match the needs of cooperation appear as incentives for the partners to act in the common interest, rather than serving their own interests. These adaptations also include a flexibility and a willingness to adapt or to deviate from the contract when necessary (Das and Teng, 1998). Here we consider the role of the principal in its position of authority. These deviations may for example involve adaptation of implementation guidelines (as opposed to a "rigid" implementation) that comply with the legal framework, but take into account the reality of the subordinate organization. This theme may also consider aspects connected with the means (financial, technical, infrastructure) granted by the principal to the subordinate organization, but is different from the distributive fairness associated with the theme of equity, in that here the question is essentially the appropriateness for the requirements of the delegated task of the means and tools made available by the principal for its execution.</p>
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