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Trust in Symbolic Interactionist Research and in Phenomenological Investigation

Earned through honesty
Maintained by consistency
Destroyed when broken

(Kelly Kurt)

Trust the rising sun
If you dance in the moonbeams
morning will still come

(Jackie Ann)

Abstract: We will show some interpretations of trust from two perspectives: symbolic interactionist research and phenomenological qualitative research. Trust could be interpreted in many ways. Generally, the cognitive and “rational” approach prevails in researching trust in social sciences. The everyday life connotation of trust that is created by chance or in unpredictable situations because of unknown and unpredictable conditions could be treated by such research as “irrational”; however, we are interested in those meanings of trust and their research in this paper.

The symbolic interactionist perspective will help us to see how the subjective interpretation and situational features influence the creation of trust or distrust. We will analyze trust as an interactive phenomenon.

The phenomenological approach could show us the essential features of trust and also its embeddedness in the lifeworld of participants. We will see how the lifeworld is maintained or refused, how routine activities are the basis of trust, and how existential security is created.

Keywords: symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, qualitative research, trust, Buddhism, existentialism

Introduction

Trust could be interpreted in many ways. It can be seen in the bargaining perspective (Coleman 1983), and it can be treated as a commodity (Dasgupta 1988) or as a cultural resource (Fukuyama 1995). These approaches look for connections between trust and economic development. Scientific thinking pushes researchers here to look for the reasons of economic success or failure. Trust could reduce the transactional cost between economic partners and is the reason for faster economic growth (Fukuyama 1995), and it might even be the reason

for economic outcomes (Algan, Cahuc 2010). Trust can be measured and can show profits when a high level of trust exists in a transaction or in a particular economy.

The socio-psychological approach of Barbara Misztal (1996) suggests that trust is needed in any society to keep social order because people want to predict others' behaviors without intensive exploration. Sztompka (1999) sees trust in a broader perspective, in economic, emotional, cultural and social terms at the same time. Trust is also a topic of management science and writings about management practices (Bachmann, Zaheer 2006; Kramer 2006; Diehl and Witt 2017). Generally, the cognitive and "rational" approach prevails in the research on trust, and it is connoted with social systems where it is treated as a glue that keeps all the elements of the system together. The everyday life connotation of trust that is created by chance, or in an unpredictable situation because of unknown conditions, could be treated as "irrational" and dysfunctional to the socio-economic system. Generally, researchers believe the reports of interviewee reflections and what they say during interviews, which are usually standardized. The problem of trust in interviews and social research is rarely considered methodologically in the research on trust. Survey methods using standardized questionnaires prevail in research in this area (Fergus, Möllering and Saunders 2015). The World Values Survey or Eurostat could be used to measure trust and correlate it with other variables such as religion, GDP, income inequality, education, or peaceful collective decision making (Ortiz-Ospina, Roser 2018). From these sources, we can calculate how high trust is in some countries and show how trust is linked with people's religion or GDP success. For example, GDP correlates positively with trust. We can compare the level of trust between Germany and Poland and find out that in Germany it is almost twice as high as in Poland. Trust, for example, could increase the probability of becoming an entrepreneur (*ibid*). However, we do not know how trust is understood at the moment the interviews are being conducted. How is it experienced in concrete situations in the lifeworld of the participants? How is the concept of the interview understood in different countries? There is also the intercultural dimension of comparing data from different countries.

Trust is meant here as an abstract and static idea that characterizes what is basic and inside cultural values and social norms. It is almost a part of the participant's mindset regarding a particular culture or subculture. It penetrates the person's psyche and can be measured to predict other attitudes or behavior (Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman, & Soutter 2000).

We would like to take into consideration the concerns about trust from everyday life. We want to see how it is created, interpreted and lost, and sometimes how it transforms into distrust as people communicate with each other in a certain context. Symbolic interactionist (SI) theory, by concentrating on the construction of phenomena through language, face-to-face interactions, and negotiating the meanings and definitions of the situation, is very well suited to analyzing the phenomenon of trust in everyday life situations (Mead 1934; Blumer 1969). It will help us in this endeavor to see how subjective interpretation and situational features influence the creation of trust or distrust. Moreover, if trust has an interactive character, it depends on both sides of the interaction; it is not given but constructed during the interaction through communicative processes such as persuasion, negotiation, manipulation and taking the role of other.

The phenomenological approach (PH), in turn, can show us the essential features of trust and also its embeddedness in the lifeworld of the participants (Schutz 1932/1972). We

can see how the lifeworld is maintained, transformed or refused, and how routine activities that are the basis of trust, and the existential safety and well-being of the participants, are created (Rehorick, & Bentz 2008; Bentz, Rehorick, Marlatt, Nishii & Estrada 2018). Typical situations and frames of interpretations, when broken, can show what the deeper basis of trust is—what assumptions lie below the shreds of evidence that are observable and usually followed by the participants of everyday life.

We would like to reconstruct the SI and PH approaches to researching and understanding trust. After that, we would like to critically analyze these approaches from the existentialist and Buddhist perspective, which will be done in the Conclusions and Discussions section. Both perspectives, existentialist and Buddhist, were used to see the research of trust from quite a different perspective, and they inspired us to conduct research that touches often unseen aspects of trust, or aspects that are not considered by researchers and that are connected with the minding and the existential position of the participants.

Trust in Symbolic Interactionism

According to symbolic interactionism, we give meanings to objects during social interactions (or self-interaction) and interpret their utility (Blumer 2004: 54). The subject is the definer of the objects, self, and also society. The individual does this by using the mind (Charon 1998: 99).

According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, trust appears thanks to the process of socialization, when the child can get a sense of self. It is made by recognizing the point of view of the other and this is possible thanks to the process of role taking. Trust is built in social interactions and has a processual character:

The parents are saying take a shot at it, smile, be cute, make little noises with your mouth, and we'll love you no matter how you do it. We'll mirror what you do, possibly with some minor corrections or suggestions, but no matter what you do, we'll applaud you. You can trust us no matter what. Start crawling out of your cute little body and we're sure you'll like it. And we'll reward you beyond your wildest dreams (Wiley 2003: 506).

The parents' attitudes here are decisive in creating feelings and they embody the meaning of trust.

Trust, in Hegel's view, is connected with recognition. Recognition by the parents who accept the child with love and acceptance of her/his being. The parents create the self that trusts others. However, the recognition could be lost, so there is a permanent struggle for recognition (Wiley 2003: 505–506). Trust seems to be the precondition for creating the self. So, there is a social-human-existential aspect of the socialization situation that must be included in the interaction between the child and parents to create self and a healthy social relationship between them:

“For Mead, the baby's self is brought to life by the parents' prediction that this social self will be born. They are saying trust us and leap into the symbolic world. It may be scary, but we will catch you if you fall. The prediction or prophecy here is that if you try you will succeed. You can engage in symbolic flight, you can soar into the semiotic world. Just believe us, and if you do, that very belief will create you as a self” (Wiley 2003: 506; see also Johnson and Melnikov 2009: 12–13). We see that prediction or prophecy is important

for creating self here. We can also imagine that the prediction of trust could factually create it in social relations. I believe you, that you are not cheating me, and I behave as if I were in a trustful relationship and that trust will be created in our relationship. This is the beginning of the social self of a human being. Maybe it is idealized because children sometimes stop believing their parents when they deceive them, or when a child tries to deceive its parents because of something wrong the parents have done and the child wants to take revenge (Johnson and Melnikov 2009: 13). The child, of course, learns all of this from the parents and its immediate surroundings. So, trusting others is learned in a gradual process that is connected with conflict and betrayal (*ibid.*: 15).

The famous empirical study by Henslin (1968), a symbolic interactionist, on trust in the work of cab drivers, shows that trust has a processual character. It is not only a self-fulfilling prophecy, like during primary socialization, but also an interactive activity. It comes from interacting; it is also an interactive phenomenon when, during primary socialization, the child's upbringing is based on trust that is somehow communicated. "To Henslin, trust develops where 'an actor has offered a definition of himself and the audience is willing to interact with the actor on the basis of that definition...'" (Henslin *ibidem*: 140; quoted in Gawley 2007: 47). There are six stages of trust development:

- a. The proffering of a definition of self by an actor;
- b. such that when the audience perceives fit between the parts of the front of the actor;
- c. and accepts this definition as valid;
- d. the audience is willing, without coercion, to engage in interaction with the actor;
- e. the interaction is based on the accepted definition of the actor, and;
- f. the continuance of this interaction is dependent on the continued acceptance of this definition, or the substitution of a different definition that is also satisfactory to the audience (Henslin *ibidem*: 140; quoted in Gawley 2007: 47).

Gawley's research on University administrators verifies these stages of trust creation. It seems that Henslin's proposal of the symbolic interactional theory of trust is verified positively. Gawley's findings show that the visibility and the consistency of actions of the administrative staff develop trust (stages a, b, and c of Henslin's theory). Other features of the process show intentions and the tactician-oriented perspective. There are features of expressing sincerity and personalized encounters. "Showing face" is also important; it means showing one's expectation towards others, and the activities that are done to work for the interest of the truster. The willingness to participate in the relationship is also important here because sometimes academic staff refuse to see the face or ignore the visibility of the actions, intentions and plans of the administrative staff. Resistance might not be an obstacle to creating trust, however. The last element of trust relation is made from routine activities and shows that there are no exceptions to the rules. These activities are from the perspective of the trustee, of course; the other side of the interaction, the truster, should accept these efforts and the rules.

Goffman was more pessimistic concerning trust in social relations and interactions. He created the concepts that show how the partners of interactions could deceive others, cover meanings, and manipulate with symbols, etc. (Goffman 1956, 1971, 1974) The actor works on impression management. He or she must be aware of the *front* and presented *appearances*. The control of expressions is very important. Something should be

hidden from the audience. Sometimes we cooperate with the partners in teams to create collective performances for others. The true self is left for the coulisses. Trust seems to be constructed as an image that the social drama scene rules. We could call his approach a *limited confidence strategy*. Partners of interactions are suspicious of each other. They want to decipher the real intentions in the interactional, strategic games. And if this is true, the cognitive approach dominates, because the cognitive presuppositions and mentally elaborated interactional strategies and tactics are used here. The recognition of the rules and definitions of situations are also important here as in Henslin's and Gawley's results from field observations. The emotions, feelings, and embeddedness in the situation are only a consequence of the cognitive mind's workings. Emotions do not dominate the landscape of the rational man. If they appear, they should be controlled and excused. Although embarrassment is recognized as an emotion in Goffman's work, it is only a consequence of making interactional faux pas, misdeeds and losing face (Scheff 1990). The feeling on the level of embodiment is not a focus of Goffman. Embodiment is only marked with meanings that are imposed on the body's moves and postures, and the positions in the space of the situation. There is no analysis of the feelings connected with embodiment and their significance in defining a situation and interaction. We are not informed about how the feelings are experienced or how the body is experienced by the participants.

Goffman looks for the rules to collectively define the situation as normal. Values and normative expectations, as well as interactional tactics to maintain the definitions, are very important here. Interactional rules stabilize the situational order and build trust among the participants of the interactions. Routines are expected. Cognition is most important, not feelings or experiencing. When the situation is defined as normal it creates the context for trust; people start to believe each other. Trust seems to be a consequence of the routines of human activity and a definition of normality. Saving face is a trace of the interactional struggle of the participants for normality in the interaction and the situation. If the participant sees the worrying signals in the immediate surroundings (Umwelt), he or she tries to ignore them and behave normally, or he or she tries to change the situation to a normal one (Goffman 1971).

For Goffman, social interactions depend not only on routinely obeying rules imposed by society but also on our ability to express and read the intentions behind people's behavior; thus, trust is the essential background of everyday interaction, and as such, it helps us to simplify information, reduces the complexity of signals, and protects us from the ambiguity and uncertainties of many situations (Misztal 2001: 323).

Goffman's concept of frame and the transformations of frames are especially interesting here. The situations are layered, and the participant can live and act in many layers at the same time. The primary frames that are connected with the material world are basic and firm. However, the frames could be undermined by keyings, fabrication (the intentional effort of an individual or a group to give others a false belief about what is going on), misframing (an individual interprets the frame incorrectly because he or she has no access to the backstage) or a frame trap (Misztal 2001: 321). "A frame trap means that what is 'abnormal' is framed as 'the real' and consequently, it is confirmed as 'normal'" (Goffman 1974: 480, quoted in *ibidem*).

We can explain it more by referring to politics. Some politicians create a new definition of a situation from the past; they redefine history¹. It could have long-term consequences; those citizens might start not believing the other definitions of situations proposed by politicians. Distrust is created as well as a lot of turbulence in the audience's cognition of the world. A basic question can be put forward all the time: What is the truth in the political world? It is also possible that, taking the frame imposed by politicians as the truth, people might uncritically accept others' fabricated meanings without any argument. The consequence could be the tyranny of the "fabricated reality" that dominates the hearts and minds of the citizens. Trust is then based on the fabricated normality, and we trust it because the cognitive structure of the people is wholly reconstructed and they perceive the unreal (which has internal discrepancies that cannot clearly be seen from an internal perspective) as real. If the discrepancies are seen and not corrected, the cynical perspective might be taken. The deficit of trust in contemporary societies could be created by an abundance of frame traps, not only in politics but also in business and the educational world. If reality is perceived as normal in such situations then what an external observer can see as fake news, fake facts or fake interpretations, are perceived as the truth and are trusted.

Normalization is connected with trust. Does the person who normalizes situations have the power? Trust becomes the basis of control. Citizens should trust the rules defining normalcy, but what if the normalcy is faked? Should we, as citizens, trust politicians and the government? Perhaps the lack of trust among citizens could have a positive effect and be the beginning of a change to a normalcy that is not fabricated or misframed (see [Johnson and Melnikov 2009: 16–17](#)). But what else could happen? If distrust becomes the "normalcy," will social relations be interlaced with distrust? Could we rely on somebody, on institutions, in such a situation?

Trust as a Self-fulfilling Prophecy

The ideas of defining the situation and the self-fulfilling prophecy are very important in symbolic interactionism ([Thomas and Thomas 1928](#)).

If we look at the theorem of the Thomases ([Thomas and Thomas 1928: 571–572](#)), we see that an individual not only creates reality but also contributes to communities and to an atmosphere during the interaction: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." So, we can say that social reality is constructed in the process of defining the meaning of objects and phenomena, so trust is also constructed in this situation.

The self-fulfilling prophecy is based on the faith that everything could go well. However, something bad can happen too. For example, the conviction that refugees are not dangerous to society could be broken by a refugee attacking a citizen of a society and by the news of this action being broadly disseminated in the media.

If society believes that refugees or some minorities are a threat to the peace, so it will become true as a consequence of these assumptions. They become dangerous in the semiotic world of politics and the media. Politicians could prevent refugees from coming because

¹ "Hungary removes statue of anti-Soviet hero Imre Nagy" (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-46704111>; Retrieved 31.12.2018).

they “are dangerous,” *which everybody already knows*. The reaction of the excluded populations and the stigmatized minorities could be negative, and the “danger” could become real in the sense that some actions might be taken against those that refused entry to these people. Trust towards refugees and minorities is lost and difficult to rebuild.

Generally, emotions do not form the basic level of creating trust for symbolic interactionists. The exception is Randal Collins (2004), who treats emotions very seriously as part of the social order and social integration. Interaction rituals (IR) are very important parts of social cohesiveness. They represent the social form of trust, and trust also arises here at the psychological level. So, the interaction ritual and trust are two sides of the same coin, social and psychological. According to Collins (2004: XIV) “Any successful IRs produce moral solidarity, which is another word for ‘trust.’” People seek emotional energy, which is the main motive of their activities, both in everyday life and on the institutional level. Emotional energy is important in entrepreneurship and making economic investments, but trust is a precondition of such activities. For Collins, trust and distrust are emotional dispositions. Trust with the interaction ritual produces high emotional energy, which helps in prosocial activities. Distrust is aimed at outgroups because of the internal integration of the local group (*ibid.*: 121). Social capital is connected with trusting relationships, for Collins, and for this reason, political and/or economic relations could operate better in the context of there being a high degree of trust. The interaction rituals can produce a high level of trust and emotional energy, as happened, for example, in the elections campaign of Donald Trump. The public meetings with the candidate were very emotional and created emotional energy among his supporters, which was transferred to other social activities (Hochschild 2016).

Conclusions of Trust in Symbolic Interactionism

In SI, trust has an interactive and processual character. It is created during interactions and in sequences of interactions and activities. The acceptance of the definitions by all sides of the interaction is needed to build trust. The recognition of the self of the partner of the interaction is also important in the process. The prediction of trust might have consequences; in a self-fulfilling prophecy, it can create trust.

In SI, trust is researched from the actors’ perspective. The interpretations of intentions and faces, postures and prompts of the face of both sides of the interaction start the process of building trust. Interactional strategies and tactics may be used to normalize the situations and interactions. However, they are also interpreted in the moral sense and can influence trust.

SI does not concentrate on the emotional dimension of the interactions to see emotions as an important basic part of a trust situation. However, there are exceptions, as with the theory of Interaction Ritual Chains by Randall Collins, where he treats trust as an emotional disposition.

Trust in Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology connects trust with taken-for-granted knowledge in the lifeworld. Trust is the basis of knowledge, and it is usually not questioned (Schutz 1932/1972). If it is ques-

tioned, there are possible social relations and a common understanding in interactions that will be broken. Garfinkel showed this in his breaching experiments, when the basic assumptions about everyday life were purposefully broken (1967). However, this kind of trust has an ontological character and is mainly an individual problem, not a collective one. We should remember that trust is included in social relations together with convictions about the truth (Carolan, Bell 2003: 231). Trust can also be a collective product.

We can reconstruct the concept of trust taking the understanding of trust from some cases of phenomenological research of real social situations and everyday lived experiences.

For some scholars, trust is not an individualistic belief (the phenomenological approach is very individualistic) but a social and political construct, produced in social disputes—a discourse that is wider than the individual construction of what is real and what seems to be *true*. Trust in the social context is connected with the belief in “discursively created subjects,” and here Carolan and Bell want to broaden the phenomenological perspective of researching the individual experiencing trust (2003: 232). It is people’s identities that talk publicly about social issues. Moreover, when we locate ourselves in some social relations we are in some sort of culture of trust, e.g., we trust science, the church or politicians. Carolan and Bell (2003) analyzed the environmental discourse about the contamination caused by an electric plant in a city and concluded that the social relations influenced what was considered the truth, and that the truth was connected with trust. University engineers/scholars, local politicians and residents of the city thought that the power plant served public needs and they were proud of it. They denied that the plant produced dioxins. It was their truth (“our science is better than yours”). However, the truth of an outsider scholar, from a different city, and environmental activists was a different one. They said that the dioxins produced could be covered in the accumulated waste under the ground not directly sending dioxin to the environment. However, they were called “radicals,” “crazy environmentalists,” and “tree huggers” by the defenders of the plant (*degradation discourse, ibid.: 239*). The fight for the truth is the fight for trust, and vice versa.

Trust is connected with intersubjectivity, with social relations, because people are always included in the problem of trust, as we can see from the above analysis. We can analyze some stories that can provide us with the themes and essential features of trust. The stories of sex trafficking victims are full of themes of the issues of trust, although the term is not so often used. Female survivors want to make sense of their experiences. Trust is often lost on the basis of the destruction of known and accepted everyday assumptions and typifications. For example, a woman loved a man, thought that she could trust him, and suddenly the person she loved changed his behavior and started to act against the victim. However, this betrayal, as in the case of the woman being sold into prostitution by the man she loved, is a form of breaking the basic assumption. After such a situation, women lose trust in men and do not want to have anything to do with them. “I realized that I cannot keep a long-term relationship with any men, probably because I hate how men have treated me” (Sukach, Gonzalez, Cravens Pickens 2018: 1430). New knowledge and new assumptions have been created: *men are bad people*.

“Some females were introduced to the industry by their significant others, which left them puzzled due to the discrepancies between their feelings and the acts that were

committed towards them. The betrayal they experienced led to greater emotional struggles:

“His earlier promises of love and a future together were now followed by beatings, rapes, and humiliation. There was no way back for me. He was the only person I had in this world and I didn’t want to lose him. After all, I loved him” (Sukach, Gonzalez, Cravens Pickens, 2018: 1429). The loss of trust creates strong emotions such as anger in the person, but love also takes place: “‘Pimps should be gunned down, so that none of them are left in this earth.’ Despite all the emotional and physical pain, the complexity of feelings towards pimps were reflected throughout the stories on a continuum from love to hate, which highlights victims’ attempts to make sense of their experiences and relationships with the pimps” (ibid.: 1429).

The victims also felt the emotional impact of their situation: the loss of self-esteem and feeling hopeless.

The loss of faith in the legal system is another side of losing trust in society. “...the legal status of prostitution serves as a justification of men’s demands. For example, one participant stated, ‘The government says it’s ok; the law says it’s ok so why would they question it?’” (Ibid.: 1431).

The phenomenological analysis shows that trust has a communicative character. Both sides of the interaction influence the process of creating trust. When doctors in a hospital are able to communicate their diagnosis and treatment methods in an understandable way, showing openly their care of the patient, they are trusted by the patients regardless of the intention of the trustee (Brown 2009). So, trust has a cognitive provenance. Recognition is important here; however, emotions are also included. Which is more important in the interaction when the issue of trust is included? “Phenomenology elucidates that this is in many ways a false dualism and that cognition and emotion are both means of applying pre-learned ideal types as developed through past experience” (Brown, 2009: 394). The ability to recognize the emotions based on previous lived experiences is important to both sides of the interaction; the mutuality of perspectives should be activated during the interaction.

When we perceive the reality in the situation, we often ignore some aspects and concentrate on others. Terminally ill patients very often bracket off the fears related to their treatment. Trust in this phenomenological sense results from actively “putting the world in brackets” (Sartre 1939/1962, p. 25; quoted according to Brown 2009: 402) rather than from a passive consequence of external attributes (Brown 2009: 402). Brown’s research proved that interpersonal communication and direct experiences were the most effective bases of trust in the hospital setting. Mass media reports and generalizations (typifications) about the medical system were less effective sources of knowledge influencing trust. The truster can build his interpretations in such a way as to diminish his anxiety. Phenomenology shows how trust is built and shows that it depends on the interpretations of the truster and, what is most important in effectively building trust, the communicative competence of the trustee. Explaining and transmitting information about the illness builds trust. It is clearly a cognitive dimension of trust. Showing positive emotions towards the truster makes the affective interaction more effective in building trust (Brown 2009: 399; see also Wessberg, Lundgren, & Elden 2017). It is then an emotional dimension of trust; however, it has a cognitive basis connected with the schemes of recognizing emotions that were pre-learned.

Medical practitioners' presumptions about different occupational groups could be harmful to trust, as shown in a study on midwives, obstetricians, and general practitioners (Crowther, Smythe 2016). When historical preunderstandings are revealed, communication and accord between professionals can be achieved, and the care and work for the interest of the patient can be performed. Trust in such a situation can be created (Crowther, Smythe 2016).

Other research shows that distrust in school creates alienation (Schulz, Rubel 2011). When trust is broken, as sometimes happens in the educational process, pupils lose the motivation to attend classes, and often they drop out of schools. These non-completers do not believe that the school and adults are acting in their best interests. Distrust of the school starts from the lack of trust in the adults in the school. The adults have the authority to empower students or humiliate them in school. The typification of a "stupid" or "slow" student used in everyday language and interactions also creates a feeling of distrust. The auto-definition of being a "loser" only increases the feeling of distrust (Schulz, Rubel 2011). The stigma is created by such typifications, and the labels help create the feeling of alienation from the school as an institution. In the construction of trust, we see that the issue of power becomes important. As we see once again, the communicative process (the typifications used in labels) is the dimension where trust is created, maintained or lost. The theme that emerged in the research—"the participant's loss of trust in school and school adults"—was one of the main features of how the educational "losers" experienced the school and which was connected with the fear of being a failure and a disappointment to the self and the family. Moreover, powerlessness among pupils emerges. So, once again, we see that emotions enter into the structure of trust in the lived experiences of students. This, and the importance of the communication factor in creating trust, is the phenomenological input to the analysis of trust.

One interesting piece of research shows that apart from trusting others there might be the issue of trusting one's own body. For example, a pregnant woman expecting a child, and who has passed 41 weeks of gestation (post-term pregnancies), might lose trust in her body to start the process of labor and to deliver the child (Wessberg, Lundgren, & Elden 2017). However, in this situation of expecting the birth of a child, the trust of others is included, for example, the trust of midwives; they should communicate more and be more mindful about the experiences of the patients (according to the opinion and experience of the pregnant woman). If there is no information from the professionals, the woman must sometimes trust the advice of her relatives and friends (*ibid*).

Conclusions for Phenomenological Research

Phenomenology accents the importance of basic assumptions in the analysis of trust. The loss of faith and trust in some objects, people, and actions destroys everyday harmony and normalcy. People do not know how to behave. They are emotionally disturbed, they are lost in their lives, and they often feel hopeless and powerless, not knowing where the truth is. The feeling of being betrayed negatively impacts trust with all its social consequences, e.g., difficulty in creating positive social relationships (Brown 2009: 1434).

So, in phenomenological research, trust is researched in the context of deviation or stigmatization, when the basic assumptions of the lifeworld (assumptions connected with trusting the social order, people and the truth) are broken and new assumptions based on the generalized lack of trust are created. Only restoring trust in somebody can give the chance to establish new relations and leave the situation of being excluded and stigmatized.

According to phenomenological investigations, the concreteness of the direct experience in communicating trust relations is decisive in building trust because emotions are created there, on the spot. Typifications could distance people from each other, stigmatizing some of them, and ultimately creating conditions for distrust. However, we can see that the procedure of the truster bracketing many signals that could make him or her suspicious and distrustful of the lifeworld is important in communicating and building trust. When we base on some prosocial typifications with positive meanings it can be helpful in creating trust.

Trust is also connected with power. Some social actors have more chances to create relations of trust. School teachers, journalists, and scientists, who have a power advantage, can influence the tendency to trust some people and information through their communicative acts.

However, a lack of trust could be connected with beliefs about the truth. If the truth changes (or some information considered to be truth changes), trust could also be changed (Carolan, Bell 2003: 243). It can happen in politics, for example, when some politicians are discredited, and it can happen in everyday life, too, when we stop believing our friends.

Connecting both Traditions. Anthony Giddens' Theoretical Proposal

There are some similarities between both approaches, SI and PH. Giddens proposed a perspective that seems to connect both traditions. "Routinization is inherent in everyday life activities and forms of actions that are taken for granted, and when the assumptions underlying them are broken we become anxious and lose our ontological security. We can say that we lose trust. Illustrative examples of this are shown in Garfinkel's experiments with trust when the interactional rules are broken." (Konecki 2018: 100) The lack of understanding and acceptance of the broken interactions destroys the ontological security of individuals, who are hit by sudden and new situations with different options for interactions. Insecurity and a lack of trust toward others create anxiety (Giddens 1990: 98; see also Garfinkel 1967). Trust is connected with risk; however, it is not the issue of an individual activity, it is a matter of "environments of risks" (Giddens 1990: 35). This system of security is created by those socialization practices whereby we start to inculcate our knowledge of trust and skills into children's psyche in order to help them avoid situations that create anxiety. Predictability is thus based on parents' caring practices, as suggested by Giddens, following Erikson (Giddens 1984: 50). "Basic trust" is built during childhood, as stated in SI, mainly by the mother and father, and it is based even on a *somatic conviction* "that there is a meaning to what they are doing" (Giddens 1990: 95). This trust concerns not only others but also the sense of trustworthiness that becomes the basis of the stability of the self-identity (Giddens 1990: 94; quoted in Konecki 2018: 64). Giddens repeats here the SI theory of self-identity creation.

“**Trust** is an important feature of ontological security. But the social surroundings maintaining and promoting trust have changed, according to Giddens (1990: 102)... Religious cosmologies no longer deliver the one and only basic interpretation of a human action. People are oriented toward the future and not the past. In modern society, tradition no longer connects the past and the future” (Konecki 2018: 65).

“The loss of trust is, for Giddens, a source of the disintegration of traditional social structures. However, the concept of trust is a concept in our mind. Trust or not trust, this distinction is made by the individual experiences with others in everyday life. A lack of confidence is not given, it is produced by the mind, which itself is an action. The consequences of a lack of confidence are already there at the time of imagining/visualizing it, not in the later actions in the so-called outside world. The art of living begins at the moment when the mind begins to work, and our awareness of this work and our insight into it give us a new perspective of accepting impermanence and ongoing changes, including the feeling of emptiness of our self and trust, too” (Konecki 2018: 78–79).

Final Conclusions and Discussions

For Harold Garfinkel, ethnomethodologist, inspired by phenomenology, trust is connected with shared knowledge and assumptions in the situations. We typify situations and others following the same knowledge and rules (Schutz 1932/1972). Emotionally, we are attached to our definitions of reality, and when they are broken we might be in despair or fear, and we lose trust. Typical others, typical situations, and typical identities are the basis of trust. They are all reservoirs of knowledge and are cognitively achieved. In ethnomethodology, there are no analyses of the emotional background of the situations that create trust and emotions as well as the embodied basis of trust, although *normal* interactions are based here on specific emotional and corporal signals of trust.

Trust is a communicative phenomenon in SI and PH, especially from the Schutzian perspective. So, appropriate methods should be used to investigate it, methods that could penetrate the interaction and also the feelings and perceptions of the individuals. Generally, it is an individualistic approach in both perspectives, although analysis of the communicative dimension gives the chance to get to the collective level of creating trust.

The methods used in researching trust and analyzing data are qualitative ones in both perspectives, for example, individual-qualitative interviews and observations are mainly used. The social world, although considered by sociologists to be collectivistic, is seen from the individualistic perspective. Being close to the participants makes it possible to get the subjective points of view in concrete social situations (an individual one). The lived experiences are very important to reconstruct the concept of trust and its use in everyday life situations and interactions. The generated themes and concepts are based on a common-sense understanding and typifications of the phenomena.

SI research concentrates on the cognitive level. The definition of the situation and the acceptance of it by the partners of the interaction are decisive in creating trust. Intersubjectivity comes after the definition of the other and the situation and is based on individualistic interpretations of reality.

Like SI, the phenomenological approach also treats trust on the cognitive level. Phenomenologists are interested in how people make sense of their experiences. We can observe what the meaning of trust is when it is lost. The loss of trust is connected with the destruction of everyday life typifications and basic assumptions. An example could be a situation when we suddenly discover that the person that we loved (typification—“lover”)

starts to use and exploit us (we then use the typification of “exploiter”), as can happen in sex trafficking. New assumptions are created about part of the reality while following a typification (“all men are bad people”). When a situation happens with being betrayed by significant others we define the situation as a *betrayal*. We may also notice that the loss of trust (as in betrayal) creates a strong emotion, anger, which should be analyzed in the context of existing trust.

Trust is not given, it is not an epiphenomenon of the social structure, it is created by human beings in communicative processes. That is why it depends on both sides of the interaction and their definitions of self, of other and of the situation. These are the main conclusions of the PH and SI investigations on trust. Practical conclusions indicate that communicative skills in transferring information, expressing emotions, and work on emotions, including body feelings in interactional awareness contexts, can be very important elements of creating trust. The focus here is on the subjective dimension of trust. Intersubjectivity comes later, although it is important when people use the labels/typifications and participate in interactional games or in public discourse.

However, looking at trust from an existentialist point of view, we can see some absurdity in the concept. We can trust others to be lost in trust. Kierkegaard notices “...through his exposition of the story of Abraham, is both ‘absurd [and] so paradoxical that it simply cannot be thought’” (Kierkegaard 1843/1985, p. 85; quoted in Brown 2009: 392). The father offers the life of his son to God in the Abraham story. The son trusts the father until the last moment and waits for death. The father trusts God but is ready to sacrifice his son. So, the experiencing of trust could be more complicated than SI and PH can explain and offer through their formal language and methods of analysis. Trust might lead to fanaticism and extremism—when we are ready to kill the son because of some ideas. Trust could become bad faith, when people go in the self-deception; although they know the truth and believe it, when they are in the act of lying, the lies that they are telling are true (for the victim) and false (for the liars) at the same time (Sartre 1984). The situation is described well by Collins (2004) when a prostitute deceives a client: “... prostitutes during intercourse frequently simulate the sounds of being sexually aroused: moaning and stereotyped expressions of what women in the throes of passion are supposed to say” (p. 229). One side deceives the other side of the interaction and has a different truth while the other treats the messages as the truth. Everything happens in the same situation. Being in “bad faith,” as happens in some ideological traditions, religions or relations, could stop our free choices and decisions. We can follow the norms and/or expectations of others unknowingly (Camus 1988). When we try to reconstruct the themes of trust from the point of view of the social actors, the cognitive approach is not enough.

Trusting or not trusting is often connected with existential insecurity. The subject might not be rooted deeply in any social world, and not having the competence to deal with it could be lost in every sense for the lifeworld. He does not need the lifeworld, and the lifeworld does not need him. The subject is on the border of existence and not existence. No decisions have yet been taken about what to do or whom to trust. And he does not know if he can trust himself. The fear of being excluded is not only a *social fear*, it is existential anguish that has not yet created a meaningful life. Then, all situations are fearful and make no sense. “Being with the other” and “being in the world” are questioned. The trust of *Being*

and of *All Sense* is lost. The individual has reached the border and wants to change the communication with the world or to stop it completely. Everything starts in the interactions and the communicative process, but we should remember it not only starts there, it could also stop there... Jumping into an ocean of trust in bad faith could happen, or the subject might resist and live freely and fully without trust choosing his meaning of life and way of life. He is free to do it.

What is the way out of this paradox of falling into bad faith? If we look at trusting as a phenomenon from the Buddhist point of view, we should look inside ourselves. Whom should we trust and/or distrust? Why do I think in this way? What is the basis of my thinking? Do I trust myself? The problem is in the perceptions. For our goal of analyzing trust, among the *five aggregates* (*Skandhas* in Sanskrit), we can differentiate, among others², *perceptions* (*samjnya*) and *mental formations* (*Samskara* in Sanskrit). Perceptions are mental acts when we recognize objects and label them, such as the shape of a flower, or emotions such as hate, anger or love. Emotions are perceptions in Buddhism. We can dislike somebody and feel disapproval and hostility, and this can be the basis for distrust.

Other aggregates are *mental formations*. These are “conditioned things” that are triggered by the observed object; they are our constructs about how things are going on in the world (Harvey 2013). They have a *karmic* character and come from happenings, acts and thoughts of the past (Williams and Tribe 2000). They come from past interactions. They are the basis of our activities and interactions with others. They are the scripts that we received from the past and that we use to arrange our perception and interpretation of the world, including the social world. Here I give an example of the work of mental formation. We may be suspicious because we believe in “conspiracy theories” and that the social world is constructed by hidden contracts, betrayals, and manipulations. We think that people are playing games, that they do not present sincere faces or intentions, there is always something behind the front, there is a backstage of our activities (the Goffmanian vision). Suspicion and distrust seem to be inscribed into social reality. Goffman sees the world in distinct categories: normalcy/abnormality. If we believe in such a concept, then trust is difficult to create and apply in social relations. We create the distinctions not only in our perception but, in consequence, in the social structure according to the rule of a self-fulfilling prophecy. The belief in distrust creates distrust and abnormality.

The concepts of trust and distrust start in ourselves. They are mental formations. If our self clings to this concept, then suffering starts. Concepts and distinctions are the reasons for suffering. So, the source of trust and distrust is in ourselves, in our evaluative thinking, mainly in *perceptions* and in many *mental formations*, as in mental concepts (*vittaka*) or discursive thinking (*vicara*), and also in *consciousness* (the fifth aggregate) when we discriminate against things.

Do I trust myself? This kind of trust is also the basis of trust in our social surroundings. However, if our mind clings to trust and distrust in social relations, we build expectations

² There are five aggregates: 1. form or matter, which refers to the body (*rupa* in Sanskrit); 2. sensations or feelings (*Vedana*), which are experiences of objects; they could be pleasant or unpleasant; 3. perceptions (*samjnya*), recognizing objects; 4. mental formations (*samskara*), which are the mental scripts of interpretations of the causes of things and phenomena; 5. consciousness (*vijnyana*), the mental function of discrimination while being aware of the object (Harvey 2013; Williams and Tribe 2000).

that, when not fulfilled, also become the reason for suffering and many interactional misunderstandings. The expectations create demands, and unfulfilled demands create deficits and, in consequence, they create suffering. Trust could be an illusion (*moha*—another mental formation) and is, in every case, the product of our mind.

Following Buddhist concepts, clearing the mind could help to eliminate inadequate expectations of trusting and being trusted (Seung Sahn 1976: 177–179). Taking the problem of trust practically, as it is understood in Buddhism, we should stress clear communication with others, empathy, no manipulative games, no wrong speech, and treat things as they are; there should be no pre-assumptions,³ no distinctive way of perceiving, and there should be a clear mind to avoid distortions in the perceptions of others' intentions, to avoid distinctions by evaluating others' deeds, wills, and acts. We should be aware of the mental formations that come into communication and social relations. A clear mind which does not evaluate, along with clear communication, could be good for *saving all sentient beings* (Seung Sahn 1976). Trust could be a fiction at this moment. Trust without the intention of trust will appear by itself, although, do we need it then?⁴

So, we can see from the above critical and analytical remarks that the SI and PH research on trust is based on the assumption that trust is a necessary condition for social order (including normalcy) and that following basic assumptions gives the sense of consistency of the lifeworld and ontological security for the participants. Research should be done from the point of view of the actor. Frequently used methods that make it possible to get this point of view are interviews, observation/ethnography, and personal reports. The questioning of these theoretical and methodological assumptions gives rise to a search for new approaches. If we refuse the cognitive approach, we should concentrate more on the existential situation of the participants, their emotions, and the embodiment of their views. We should be more focused in our research on their experiences connected with death, happiness and suffering, and the choices of identifying with ideas and collectivities, and look at trust in these contexts of everyday life considerations about the ultimate concerns. Their feelings and experiences of embodied trust should be explicated to understand deeper what the concept does with their mind and feelings and what the feelings and mind make from the concept. How does the theme of trust connect with views on life and death, suffering, compassion and forgiveness? However, these topics require the writing of another paper.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Akihiro Ishikawa and Masamichi Sasaki for inspirations and comments on the first version on this paper at the International Workshop on Trust, Rikkyo University in Tokyo, 2018.

I would like to thank anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

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³ Here the phenomenological approach meets, on the cognitive level, the Buddhist one. Pre-assumptions and expectations could be obstacles to sincere and clear communication, and also the pre-assumptions could be a barrier of trust.

⁴ If there are no egoistic motives to create trust, is it still needed? (Hawthorn, Geoffrey 2000).

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