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Ethnographic Approximations

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Introduction

Approximating Mistrust

Florian Mühlfried

When in 1968, the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann (2014) wrote a book about trust, he noticed a surprising lack of empirically-backed knowledge about this phenomenon at the heart of social life. This deficit has long since been remedied as, over the last few decades, a significant variety of publications on trust have emerged. Trust, now, is seen as the glue of society, a substance supporting social cohesion and the functioning of institutions – particularly important under the conditions of modernity, which is characterized by a reliance on externalized expert systems beyond the reach of most (Giddens 1990).

Mistrust, in contrast, is noticeably understudied. If scrutinized at all, it is usually treated as the flip side of trust, as an annoying absence, a societal failure, or an obstacle to be overcome.[1] But mostly, there is just silence. For what reasons? Perhaps it is simply the inertia of not thinking about mistrust as a case sui generis or because many do not like to concede that mistrust is not an exception to their social rules, but the norm. But maybe, this silence is indicative of a blind spot in a larger agenda. This is not to be taken from granted, however. After all, the simple fact that something is understudied does not mean that it is relevant – not all social phenomena are equally worth studying and the mere fact of escaping the attention of most social scientists is not a good enough reason to demand further examination. One way to shed light on the silence

1 | This is slowly changing, however, and some ground-breaking publications have recently been published or are about to be published. The first to treat mistrust/distrust as more than the evil twin of trust was 'Distrust' by Russell Hardin (ed.) 2004. In 2016, a monograph dedicated to 'Figures of Mistrust' was published in German by Sinje Hörlin and a special issue of the journal Tracés on 'The Art of Mistrust' in French by Olivier Allard, Matthew Carey et Rachel Renault. Finally, Matthew Carey's book, 'Mistrust: An Ethnographic Theory' is scheduled for release in October 2017 – unfortunately I could not read it during the time of writing. My own analysis of mistrust is widely inspired by and based on the work of the above-mentioned authors.

surrounding the phenomenon of mistrust is to look at some other notions that have also been long overlooked by social anthropology and ask whether there is a common reason for the neglect of these concepts.

Maybe the most prominent example for a very present yet diligently overlooked phenomenon is the state. Nowadays, there is hardly any anthropological study that does not implicitly or explicitly acknowledge the presence of the state. Yet, until the 1970s the state was largely absent in ethnographic depictions of the world at large. This void is indicative of anthropology's colonial past and the accompanying tendency to neglect the power relations in which it is embedded. It is an active investment into an absence that is at stake here, the maintenance of the impression that something is not there.

In other cases, it is precisely the investigation of social phenomena construed as absences that are lacking in anthropological endeavours. Whereas, for example, sharing is a popular topic in recent anthropology, practices of not sharing are mostly overlooked or taken as inherently problematic – think of the often-invoked 'parallel worlds' or 'ethnic ghettos' as obstacles to arriving at a common sense of citizenship. In the field of interreligious relations, too, much attention has been paid to the sharing of sacred sites as venues for (real or potential) cooperation and the fostering of solidarities (Albera and Coroucli 2012, Hayden and Walker 2013, Barkan and Barkey 2015). Practices of not sharing sacred sites, however, largely go unnoticed, although in certain cases, keeping the sacra apart may contribute to getting along well (Mühlfried forthcoming).

Not sharing is often seen as problematic because it entails detachment from one's surroundings, at least spatially, it not emotionally. Detachment is another such concept that has only recently been brought to the fore. In a book dedicated to this issue, the editors write (Candea et al. 2015: 1):

> Engagement has, in a wide range of contexts, become a definitive and unquestionable social good, one that encompasses or abuts with a number of other seductive cultural tropes, such as participation, democracy, voice, equality, diversity and empowerment. Conversely, detachment has come to symbolise a range of social harms: authoritarianism and hierarchy, being out of touch, bureaucratic coldness and unresponsiveness, a lack of empathy, and passivity and inaction. Yet as this book argues, in a wide range of settings detachment is still socially, ethically and politically valued, and the relationship between detachment and engagement is not simple or singular.

With almost no changes, the same could be said about mistrust – only the word 'engagement' would have to be replaced by 'trust' and 'detachment' by 'mistrust'. Could it be that this coincidence helps to answer the question whether the omission of the notion of mistrust from academic discourse is indicative of a bias in social anthropology?

It seems that both mistrust and detachment are neglected by social anthropology because both concepts are taken to denote absences: in the first instance of trust, in the second case of relations. Trust and relations represent noteworthy presences, mistrust and detachment negligible absences, indicative only for the lack of trust or relations. The absence of trust and relations are equated with social failure. Within this logic, mistrust and detachment foster the disentanglement of citizens from each other and from institutions like the state. In a similar vein, practices such as fraud are seen as problematic because they entail the manipulation of social bonds for selfish aims. The neglect of these relations could indeed indicate a hidden agenda prevalent in social anthropology, namely the fetishisation of social cohesion. The problem then is not so much relational thinking, as the editors of 'mistrust' (Candea et al. 2015) are hinting at, but the focus on socially constitutive practices with the branding of the 'other' practices as (negligible) deviations.

This presupposition brands social anthropology as a 'moral' endeavour dedicated to improving understanding and thus fostering proximity. And for this reason, mainstream anthropology of morality discredits and pays no attention to 'disentangling from constitutive relationships' (Zigon 2014: 1) – a stance which stems, according to Jarrett Zigon (ibid), from a 'reliance on philosophical frameworks (...) of the neo-Aristotelian and Foucauldian bent'. Jörg Wiegratz (2016: 4) also sees a 'heritage of the takes on morality by major thinkers from Marx to Smith, Durkheim and Weber' as blocking our perception of social practices deemed problematic. It is thus necessary

> to 'unblock' existing research (...) from one of its core limitations: its focus on pro-social actors and practices, i.e. matters of altruism, solidarity; virtuousness, reciprocity, cooperation, care, social obligations and the like, and its neglect of the morals of actors and practices that are regarded by such approaches as bad, harmful, immoral or amoral (ibid: 8-9).

From my perspective, the agenda pursued here – unblocking our view on 'social practices deemed problematic' – is not new, but neglected. A case in point is Marcel Mauss's (1990 [1925]) authoritative work 'The Gift'. As an epigraph to his work, he cites few stanzas from the poem Havamal, part of the Edda. Among them:

You know, if you have a friend
In whom you have confidence
And if you wish to get good results
Your soul must blend in with his
And you must exchange presents
And frequently pay him visits.

But if you have another person
Whom you mistrust
And if you wish to get good results,
You must speak fine words to him
But your thoughts must be false
And you must lament in lies.
(ibid: 2)

Whereas the 'exchange of presents' mentioned in the first part is the centrepiece of Mauss' following elaborations, the 'right way to mistrust' declared in the second part is not paid any attention to in the book at all.[2] Hence, while topics such as mistrust and fraud appear, they are of no particular interest in contrast to techniques of bonding such as the exchange of gifts. The positive connotation of bonding is also reflected in the etymology of the word 'trust', which is 'probably the reflex of an unattested Old English *trust (perhaps cognate with Middle High German getrüste company, troop, and the Frankish etymon of post-classical Latin trustis retinue, bodyguard (...))' (OEC 2015).[3] According to this genealogy, trust is needed for the establishment and functioning of military and protective units. So we find that the very word that today represents a positively inflected emotion was once used for agents of, or protectors against violence. Mistrust, then, would be seen to undermine the essence of formations such as troops and bodyguards and thus be seen as unsocial from the point of view of governments.

Before getting into the actual ethnographies of mistrust, a few things need to be said in order to define mistrust as an empirical phenomenon, and this will be done in the following sections. These sections centre on the questions of how a.) mistrust relates to trust, b.) mistrust works, c.) mistrust differs from distrust d.) mistrust translates to the world, and e.) mistrust affects culture. These elaborations partly draw on references to the chapters in this volume.

How Does Mistrust Relate to Trust?

Without trust, Luhmann reminds us, we would not get out of bed in the morning, as '[u]ndetermined anxiety, paralysing horror' would befall us (Luhmann 2014: 1). That is not to say a mistrustful person would remain bed-ridden as, in all likelihood, even the most mistrustful people would develop strategies to reduce the complexity of the word – an essential function of trust for Luhmann. Like trust, mistrust constitutes a relation to the world, but the nature of the

2 | I owe this reference to Daniel Künzler who has found it in Ogino 2007.

3 | My thanks go to Bruce Grant for this hint.

relation is markedly different. If trust reduces the fear of failure in transactions and facilitates decision taking, mistrust initiates a search for 'defensive arrangements' (ibid, in German 'defensive *Vorkehrungen*'), i.e., ways to spread risks and weaken dependencies.

Both trust and mistrust are attitudes of engagement (Hartmann 2011: 57, in German '*Einstellungen des Engagements*'), which is why they cannot be understood as opposites (Reemtsma 2013: 37). They both emerge in situations of uncertainty; once certainty is obtained, trust and mistrust are obsolete. Trust also does not necessarily disappear with the advent of mistrust.

A striking example of the coexistence of trust and mistrust is provided by Jan Beek in this volume, who analysis cases of romance scammers in Ghana defrauding their victims by writing credible love letters. The scammers try to create credibility by drawing on globally shared idioms of romantic love. Once they have established rapport, they ask for money. Usually, their recipients react by scrutinizing the online representations of their ostensible lover and signalling their mistrust. At a certain stage, however, some women decide to suspend mistrust and to invest into trust, not least by sending money. As apparent in the email conversations, their mistrust never disappears but lingers on, flaring up again and again.

On a more abstract level, trust and mistrust have to be seen as mutually constitutive: mistrust needs to be possible for trust to come into existence (Reemtsma 2013: 37). The opposite of trust as a way of being in the world is rather crippling fear, or the 'paralysing horror' described by Luhmann. Trust and distrust are modes of relating to human beings and the world as a whole. In the case of trust, people invest in the strengthening of their relations, in the case of mistrust in the weakening of these relations or in alternative relationships. The effect, Luhmann argues, is the same: the reduction of complexity. Although he concentrates on the elaboration of trust as a functional means for reducing complexity, he also states the following: 'Whoever doesn't trust, (...) has to rely on functionally equivalent strategies for the reduction of complicity (...). Mistrust, too, supplies simplification, at times gross simplification' (Luhmann 2014: 93).[4] Yet, a mistrustful person must assume that a transaction may fail – in contrast to a trustful person who expects a positive outcome. A mistrustful person also does not know whether the effects of an encounter will be good or bad and is more prepared for unknown outcomes. This simple observation indicates that mistrust may precisely reside in the acknowledgement of complexity. Taking this into account, the relationship between mis-

4 | Jan Philipp Reemtsma (2013: 36) similarly sees trust and mistrust as complementary modes of reducing the unreliability of expectations ('*Reduktion von Erwartungsunsicherheit*').

trust and the task of complexity reduction is more nuanced and needs to be addressed empirically before coming up with sweeping generalisations.

Some of the chapters to this volume tackle this relationship, bringing arguments both in favour and against the idea that mistrust means simplification. The most outspoken critique of this paradigm is Michael Bürge who argues that mistrust 'urges people to inquire (...) into things as they are and possible alternatives and, thus, to engage with complexity' (page 110). His ethnography is situated in northern Sierra Leone, where trust is a scarce resource both socially and politically. Missing trust, Bürge argues, people try new practices and endeavour into unknown venues, at times even increasing their engagement with the particular individual with whom they had not been able to create trust.

Nicolai Ruh, by contrast, argues that 'mistrust is a functional equivalent of trust in that it allows the reduction of complexity against the background of uncertainty' (page 32), drawing conclusions from research into the political crypto community. 'Crypto community' denotes a network of globally dispersed internet activists who develop cryptographic tools with the goal of preserving social principles like autonomy, accountability and trust. What unites these activists as a community is their commonly shared experience of ontological mistrust, resulting from state-sponsored cyber surveillance that became public in the wake of the NSA scandal, as well their in-depth knowledge of the working principles of digital technologies.

My own chapter provides plenty of examples how profoundly mistrustful persons tend to investigate the reduction of complexity by dividing the world into 'trustworthy' and 'untrustworthy'. My focus is on a mode of mistrust oriented towards radical detachment, that is, the attempt to distance oneself from the environment as much as possible, resulting in the sacrifice of one's life. In order to outline the cultural syntax underlying such radical practices, I concentrate on three groups originating from the Caucasus over a period of two centuries: the bandit-come-rebels Abreks, elevated in the nineteenth century to resistance fighters, the 'thieves in law', a criminal elite caste originated from the Soviet prison camp system, and Caucasian jihadists committing suicide bombings in the Caucasus and beyond. While concluding that in all these groups mistrust translates into a gross simplification of the world, I nonetheless argue that such kind of simplification is only one mode of mistrust.

Lost trust in the world may lead to apathy and depression; if it translates into action, it may lead to extreme violence (see above). It may also spur investigation; a critical examination of the world with the aim to come to terms with it (unlike the characters above). The German word '*Auseinandersetzung*' reflects this well: it indicates separation ('*auseinander*', similar to the prefix 'dis-' in 'distrust') that triggers a process of investigation, albeit not a 'friendly' one, which is captured in the fact that this word also denotes quarrel. This is when mistrust becomes distrust. The effect of the 'distrustisation' of mistrust is sim-

ilar to the Cartesian idea of doubt as it fosters a radical and incredulous investigation of facts. It differs, however, as the locus of investigation is not a radically detached ego, but an entangled 'participant observer'. The ruthless distruster acts in the world just as we social and cultural anthropologists act in the 'field'.

One of the few thinkers who came to acknowledge the creative potential of mistrust in the production of knowledge was Friedrich Nietzsche. Against the grain of most other thinkers who see mistrust as an annoyance, for him mistrust is a virtue: 'the more mistrust, the more philosophy' (Nietzsche 1954 [1887]: 211). Trust, for Nietzsche, leads to inertia, whereas mistrust necessitates tension, observation and reflection (Nietzsche 1974 [1886|87]: 282). Once more, Nietzsche advocates a revaluation of values. And it is it this kind of revaluation in respect to the notion of mistrust that is at stake here.

How Does Mistrust Work?

Instead of lying in bed and doing nothing, it is thus much more likely that a mistrustful person would rise and make some arrangements with the world, albeit in a distanced manner. This 'defensive arrangement' (Luhmann 2014: 1) should allow for a 'tempering' or 'domestication' of unknown forces.[5] The mistrustful person does not know if these forces are beneficial or malevolent. A well-studied way of dealing with such a challenge is the tradition of hospitality (e.g. Pitt-Rivers 1968), which was established to help come to terms with the presence of a stranger, an unknown power with which it is difficult to establish trust (see also Luhmann 1998: 643). However, the stranger can be domesticated by means of integrating him or her into the rules of hospitality. The potential danger emanating from the stranger is not completely averted but integrated into the most central part of the household, at least temporarily. This creates bonds of solidarity permitting the host to participate in the power of the guest.

In addition to domestication, distancing represents another 'defensive arrangement' arising from mistrust. Such a distance is, of course, relative. It concerns reserving things, thoughts, emotions or spaces in such a way to limit the access of others. Not all resources are shared, some are kept behind in case the transaction fails (as the mistrustful assumes). In this way, not only risks are spread, but a particular mode of interaction is defined, a mode based on reservations. Interactions with the world are not avoided (as in case of being befallen by 'paralysing horror'), but never entered at full stake, in order not to deplete one's reserves (Hauschild 2008, 2003).

5 | For attempts to 'temper' or 'domesticate' the state, see e.g. Hann 1990 or Mühlfried 2014.

It is probably this trait of never totally subscribing to something or someone that makes a mistrustful person so objectionable. He or she does not seem to be willing to substantially share his or her thoughts, emotions, passions, riches, or belongings. Thus, it is difficult to know whom one is dealing with. Yet, 'holding back' forms the backbone of most transactions, as Annette Weiner (1992) has shown: value is crated by keeping certain objects out of circulation. In this sense, 'defensive arrangements' are part and parcel of everyday interactions.

Sometimes, the 'defensive arrangements' born out of mistrust are rather explicit. Ilya Utekhin in his contribution to this volume draws our attention to the inventiveness of the inhabitants of communal apartments in (Soviet and post-Soviet) Russia, who were constantly worried that their property may be damaged by their involuntary cohabitants. Some locked their fridges with chains, others kept their own toilet seat in the bathroom. For Utekhin, the behavioural patterns discernible in communal apartments are intrinsic to Russian culture, which places mistrust alongside denunciation as a particular way of relating to authorities.

In other cases, mistrust 'surfaces' in and then shapes the process of an investigation. This has been observed by Stephanie Bognitz, whose analysis is based on cases of mediation in post-genocide Ruanda, where mediation has been re-introduced in 2004 as institutionalized and regulated space for dispute settlement governed by law. Mediation embodies various modes of practices and articulations for actors in dispute. In the process of mediation, developing mistrust is not necessarily supressed, but rather fostered as a means of producing new encounters resulting in new possibilities for action, ultimately legitimising the idea that law is capable of dealing with mistrust.

Instead of 'surfacing', mistrust rather remains tacit yet omnipresent in Melanie Brand's analysis of domestic violence counselling in South Africa. During the initial counselling encounter, the stories women tell to legitimize their stay at a shelter are met with mistrust by the counsellor, who suspects they may be falsified. This mistrust, however, never becomes explicit. The kind of communication employed by the counsellors with their clients is thus marked by tacit mistrust. I suggest that in order for mistrust to remain tacit and not to become explicit – for example, in the form of accusations – mistrusting actors need to be able to walk a thin line, engaging in concealment and information-generating practices simultaneously. Here mistrust as a 'defensive arrangement' finds its expression in a distinct double-layered communicative strategy, in which one layer has to remain invisible – just like in some conjuring tricks that work with double-layeredness in a very concrete sense.

Are Mistrust and Distrust the Same?

Some authors try to differentiate the workings of mistrust and distrust. For Victor Vakhstayn (2016), mistrust is embedded in a general state of being like the state of nature outlined by Hobbes, whereas distrust is directed towards something or somebody. This definition is theoretically valid, but highly difficult to operationalize empirically, as it would involve an unreasonable amount of guesswork to differentiate between mistrust as a 'state' (of society or of mind) and a relational process. In quotidian usage, mistrust and distrust are used interchangeably (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms 1984: 263), which seems to suggest that in the logic of practices, they are interwoven into one fabric. Leonardo Schiocchet (this volume) argues for heuristically differentiating between empirical expressions of mistrust and distrust as an absence of trust. Distrust, for him, never exists in practice as an ideal type, whereas mistrust is a suitable sociological category that allows for ethnographic approximations.

This book deals both with mistrust as a mental and emotional state or attitude and with distrust as it manifests itself in relational practices of a certain kind. We do not try to disentangle attitude from behaviour and pay particular attention to individual and collective experience in informing states of mistrust and practices of distrust. Hence, we treat mistrust as a complex phenomenon including affective (emotional, attitudinal) as well as cognitive (knowledge, perception) aspects. The starting point for most endeavours, however, is cases of distrust, understood as ways of relating to the world based on mistrust. It is only when the mistrustful person described by Luhmann gets out of bed that mistrust becomes observable, hence when mistrust manifests itself in distrust without disappearing as a conviction, feeling, and motivation. This means that relational practices are in the fore of this book. We care for what people actually do or say when they mistrust, and how distrust affects their being in the world.[6]

On the semantic level, the concept of mistrust is intimately related to the notions of doubt, suspicion, and detachment. For this reason, the book contains conceptual interventions on the semantic fields of (1) doubt, suspicion and mistrust (2) mistrust, distrust and suspicion, and (3) mistrust and detachment. In contrast to the other chapters to this volume, these interventions are not embedded in ethnography, but situated on a meta-level. Therefore, they are not to be mistaken with staple contemporary anthropological journal articles but should be read as essays encouraging research on the given topic. Rather than

6 | The illustration on the front cover depicts the queen of the Isle of Lewis Chess Game, which is presumably about 1000 years old. She seems to be paralyzed by horror and the question is: will she remain seated or will she get up? Only if she got up would she qualify as an object of study in the given thematic scope. This. however, looks a rather unlekely prospect, given the expression of her face.

looking for indelible ethnographic proof of the chapter's suggestions, these are better understood as propositions, or starting points for new research avenues.

The first intervention is provided by Mathijs Pelkmans, who has recently opened up the field for ethnographic investigations and anthropological conceptualisations of doubt (2013), showing that a focus on doubt is indispensable for grasping the role of ideas in social action. In this text, Pelkmans takes off from the current 'post-truth' context, which is characterized by apprehension and loss of trust in experts, and, by implication, a loss of faith in 'truth'. In this situation of uncertainty, a new breed of politicians, who are often referred to as 'populists', try to capitalize on widespread sentiments of distrust towards the political establishment and the media by doubting existence of 'facts'. This in turn, increases the doubt of their opponents in their credibility.

Leonardo Schiocchet, who came to be interested in the dynamics between suspicion and trust while doing fieldwork in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and then among Palestinians in different places in Brazil, Denmark, Austria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem (Palestine), investigates the tension between mistrust, distrust and suspicion under the title 'Essay on the Anthropology of the Fiduciary'. Semantically, he differentiates mistrust and distrust by referring to the first as 'misplaced trust' and the latter as 'the absence of trust'. The quest for trust, he argues, is especially urgent in cases of its absence and manifests in processes of 'entrustment' that are to be located both within the real of mistrust and of trust.

The relation of detachment to mistrust is tackled in the afterword written by Thomas Yarrow who is one of the editors of the previously mentioned book on 'Detachment: Essays on the Limits of Relational Thinking' (Candea at al. 2015). By revisiting the chapters of this volume, Yarrow takes up the question raised in this introduction whether the common unwillingness to study practices of detachment or mistrust empirically and address them in their own right is indicative of the current state of social sciences. In a socio-political climate of increasing mistrust in what was once accepted as truth, Yarrow furthermore argues, Foucauldian inspired deconstructions that have sought to make apparent a misplaced trust in experts should be reconsidered.

How does Mistrust Relate to the World?

Whether mistrust is always a mode of reducing complexity is still an open question. What can be said with certainty, however, is that mistrust is usually relational, a way of perceiving and relating to people, institutions or things. Thus, mistrust does not oppose engagement, but is rather a particular form of it and one that deserves attention in its own right. In contrast to trust that creates proximity, mistrust results in the cultivation of distance. Paraphras-

ing Weiner (1992), the working of mistrust is characterized by the 'paradox of withholding-while-participating' (a close relative of Weiner's 'paradox of keeping-while-giving').

As Alexei Yurchak (2006) demonstrated in respect to the late Soviet Union, irony can be a means of participating in a 'distanced' way. The citizens he is dealing with do not subvert or resist the state outwardly. At the same time they are not zealous or faithful followers. In order to understand them, one has to relinquish dichotomies of resistance and compliance. Yurchak's way of looking at irony thus bears some similarities to the way of making sense of mistrust outlined here: both phenomena are situated beyond the narrow frameworks of being-in-favour or being-against, and both phenomena entail forms of restraint and investment at the same time – forms which are fairly impossible to disentangle. The withholding of mental or material reserves during interactions are other relational forms of mistrust, as is the taming of the unknown in the form of hospitality referred to earlier.

Is mistrust thus always relational? Or are there also absolute forms of mistrust, resulting in the will to break free from all ties? Is it possible to completely detach one's identity from a surrounding that is profoundly mistrusted? Time and again, people have tried to completely disentangle themselves from the word. The musician Sun Ra, for example, claimed that he was born on planet Saturn (Grass 2009); by locating his identity in the elsewhere, he stopped belonging to the world he was living in. Religious groups like the Indian Jains try to detach their existence from this world as far as possible, some of them by fasting to death (Laidlaw 2015). Death, in the end, is the ultimate break with the world, and thus the symbolism of death often surrounds groups that try to break away from a world that does not deserve any trust (e.g. the Manson Family).

With the relocation of identity, trust is relocated, too.[7] This leads to a doubling of the world. The world 'out there' is radically distrusted and delimited from one's own world, in which trust is placed, for instance in the world of the family or the village. The sociologist Charles Tilly refers to these second worlds as 'networks of trust' (Tilly 2005). Often, these networks are based on metaphors of kinship, such as brotherhoods. The new brothers and sisters are united by mutual trust and mistrust towards the environment. Mistrust may thus lead to a displacement of trust.

The relation to the 'outer world' in trust networks differs. In some cases, the world is simply avoided (like in the case of secret brotherhoods like the Waldensians), in others it is ridiculed (such as in Sicilian fish markets). Keeping worlds

7 | Only very few groups such as the Jain ascetics do not relocate identity but tempt to get rid of identity (hence the world, hence themselves) altogether. In most cases, the detachment of identity is a relational process.

separate is often hard work, as demonstrated by the cryptographers studied by Ruh (this volume) who work against the intrusion of the state into private digital spheres. In other cases, the outside world is legitimate target of crimes (as for the Mafia or for politically motivated hackers). In yet other cases, it is to be destroyed (as for jihadists). Disentanglement, here, is again relational, and more often than not, the new world is embedded in the same semantic system as the old world (Mühlfried this volume). Radical forms of mistrust are difficult to live.

How does Mistrust Translate to Culture?

On the 25 anniversary of the German reunification on 3 October 2015, the German-based, internationally operating Volkswagen Company published a full-page advertisement in leading German newspapers stating the following:

> Actually, we wanted to say at this place how happy we are that Germany became one country again. Actually, we wanted to say how proud we are to have shaped this country during the last twenty-five years together with all. Actually, this would have been the right time to say thank you – for the trust of our costumers in our vehicles and the great popularity that Volkswagen enjoyed in these years in Germany. Actually, we wanted to pay tribute to the work of our employees and suppliers all over Germany. All this would have actually been right. But we would like to say only one sentence now: we will do all and everything to regain your trust.[8]

This 'trust campaign' of the Volkswagen Company was a reaction to a large-scale cheating scandal referred to as diesel-gate by some: the company manipulated the emissions of their cars so that less pollution would be noted in testing conditions. With these practices becoming public, the Volkswagen Company was obviously highly concerned about having converted the trust of their buyers into mistrust, and that this might affect their reputation and sale. They were afraid, in other words, that mistrust may motivate their former clients to cut their ties and to turn away.

The concern of Volkswagen is far from unique. When in 2013, Edward Snowden blew a whistle and revealed to which extent people worldwide are surveyed by the National Security Agency (NSA) and their partners, the scandal that followed was often said to undermine the trust of the citizens in the state – a trust which is proclaimed an absolute prerequisite to its functioning. Again, mistrust was frequently depicted as undermining essential relationships, in

8 | See: https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article147187813/VW-entschuldigt-sich-mit-riesiger-Werbekampagne.html

this case with the state. Germany has been hit by another crisis recently that triggered similar concerns after a terrorist right wing group, referring to itself as the 'national-socialist underground' (NSU), was discovered in 2011. Subsequent police investigations revealed that state officials had been so deeply embedded in the structures of violent neo-fascism in Germany that many were either part of the movement themselves or were aware of the organisation but did not intervene. This scandal, too, was believed to corrode trust among citizens toward the state by many commentators in numerous articles.

Although mistrust would have been a reasonable reaction to all these crises, the undermining potentialities of mistrust have been brought to the fore in discrediting ways. Mistrust, according to the dominating voices, only seems to be able to destroy, not to constitute. But is this really so? As indicated above, mistrust may lead to a translocation of trust into trust networks. Here, mistrust is constitutive, but immediately replaced by trust towards the insiders. The question is, then, whether or not mistrust itself may be shared and if this sharing creates bonds. This is another open question that cannot be answered here, given the lack of empirical evidence on hand. As some studies in this book indicate, however, mistrust does seem to posses some constitutive potential. In Ilya Uetkhin's chapter on communal apartments in soviet and post-soviet Russia, the everyday interactions of the inhabitants are shaped by a high degree of mistrust, resulting in a mutual process of surveillance. Both the shared mistrust and the mutual surveillance transforms the inhabitants of communal apartments into members of communities of mistrust, defined by common practices and perceptual patterns. These communities may be seen us unhealthy, but they are still, nonetheless, communities.

In other cases, performances of mistrust articulate the needs and claims of unheeded communities (Somparé and Botta Somparé this volume). This was the case when, during the Ebola epidemics in Guinea, state-sponsored campaigns to curtail the crisis were met by attitudes of reticence and resistance in urban and rural communities. Resistance mostly revolved around the idea that the disease did not exist and was the result of a conspiracy organized by the state with the help of the international institutions. The epidemic constituted a specific configuration where mistrust was seen as the proper way to engage, and thus express mistrust towards the authorities, and, in more general terms, mistrust toward intellectual elites, who were perceived as corrupt and uninterested in the well-being of local people.

Beyond Academia

I would like to conclude this introduction with some remarks beyond the scope of academia. As an entry point, let me reformulate the opening question: is the popular discrediting of mistrust indicative of political concerns? I would argue it is for two reasons. First of all, there seems to be a general anxiety – shared, among others, by academics, journalists, politicians, and civil society members – that taking mistrust seriously means legitimising so-called *Wutbürger* ('angry citizens') and Trump voters. Both groups express open mistrust towards media coverage and political representation. *Wutbürger* started to flood German streets around 2010 and are nowadays mostly organized in far-right non-parliamentarian protest groups such as Pegida (abbreviation of 'Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident'). They often refuse to talk to the media because they mistrust their intentions and claim to be more legitimate in expressing the concerns of the people *(Volk)* than the government. Trump voters have equally expressed their mistrust in the media, electoral and political system before the elections and put their trust in Trump to overturn this system. Both Trump voters and *Wutbürger* are often said to live in a post-factual world by their adversaries, a world where mistrust-driven sentiments are valued higher than objective evidences. Taking their mistrust seriously is not be equated with taking their political positions seriously, however. And perhaps, acknowledging the sentiments of mistrustful people could contribute to more accurate election forecasts the next time.

Secondly, there is a concern that looming mistrust in the wake of the NSA crisis or diesel-gate may undermine the very basis of our polity: the state and the market. This would explain the frequent appeals of politicians and corporate spokespersons to regain the trust of citizens. For them, the worst-case scenario seems to be that when citizens lose their trust, they refrain from civic participation (or consumption) and thus stop 'feeding' the state (or the market). Hence, it is inertia that is mostly feared. This inertia, however, is not to be confused with mistrust. As Luhmann has elaborated, trust and mistrust are functionally equivalent strategies of engagement. It is the lack of trust and mistrust that results in inertia. Mistrust is not only a reasonable reaction towards the revelations, it may also be the first step towards critical political engagement.

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Trusting the Math and Mistrusting Humans

How Politically Sensitized Engineers of Cryptographic Systems Cope with Ontological Insecurity in the Digitally Augmented Life-World

Nicolai Ruh

> While I pray that public awareness and debate will lead to reform, bear in mind that the policies of men change in time, and even the Constitution is subverted when the appetites of power demand it. In words from history: Let us speak no more of faith in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of cryptography.
> Edward Snowden (cited by Greenwald 2014: 24)

Politically aware designers and implementers of cryptographic systems conceive of the internet as the 'nervous system of the 21st century', one that permeates virtually all aspects of the social fabric.[1] This diversified community is united by a shared epistemic perspective on the digitally augmented life-world. This specific approach to the world is informed by their expert knowledge about the internet's technological foundation principles. These constitutive conditions that underlie digitally mediated social relationships are invisible for the common internet user. It is this exclusive knowledge within the tech-community that leads to a collectively shared awareness of trust problems that are idiosyncratic for the way information is being (re-)produced and distributed in a network environment. This chapter pursues the goal of providing new insights into the social functions of mistrust as well as into its relationship with the phenomenon of trust. The chosen field of research is of specific interest

1 | The analogy of the internet being the nervous system of the 21st century was formulated by Cory Doctorow in his article 'The internet is the answer to all the questions of our time'. See: https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/jun/15/internet-answer-questions-of-our-time

in this regard, since the builders of cryptographic systems pursue their goal of solving trust problems within the context of a fundamentally mistrustful communication environment. As it turns out, trust and mistrust fulfil interrelated functions in this field. I argue that developers and implementers of cryptographic systems do not fully suspend trust, but source out specific elements of nescience to the sphere of mathematics. My thesis is that by doing so, they create an isolated domain of calculability and provability that allows them to cope with the complexities and fundamental insecurities of an increasingly digitally organized life-world.

The goal of modern cryptographic protocols is to allow communicating parties to communicate securely over a fundamentally insecure channel. Cryptographic protocols therefore make sure that no third party ('man-in-the-middle') has the ability to either impersonate itself as a trusted end-point (reflecting the concept of 'authenticity'), manipulate the data from one point of the communication channel to the other (the concept of 'integrity'), or record the data in transit (the concept of 'confidentiality') (Schneier 2000: 85). The security of asymmetric cryptographic systems rests on the (yet unproven) assumption that mathematical problems exist that are computationally unfeasibly to solve, even for the most sophisticated and technically best equipped attacker (which today most likely is the NSA). The exchange of private keys over an insecure channel (public key cryptography) and the employment of digital signatures to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the communication rest on two assumptions. Firstly, that it is easy for the communication parties to compute a mathematical calculation in one direction and, secondly, that it is computationally infeasible for an attacker knowing the result of the calculation to redo the calculation process in order to break the encryption. System designers develop cryptographic protocols against the assumption of an omnipresent 'man-in-the-middle' who is trying to intercept and manipulate information on its way from sender to receiver (Schneier 2000 ibid). It is this generalized mistrust in the sense of an awareness of the omnipresent potential for an internet user's experience to be manipulated by unknown third parties on the invisible and intangible technical layer that developers of cryptographic tools take as a starting point for the conceptualization of trust models based on the assumed hardness of specific mathematical problems.[2]

In the following, I will examine how politically sensitized developers and implementers of cryptographic tools cope with what I term ontological insecurity. Drawing on the concept of 'ontological security' (Giddens 1990), I will

2 | This generalized mistrust also finds its expression in cryptographers' terminology for anticipated adversaries: 'Eve' stands for any possible eavesdropper and 'Mallory' for any malicious entity which is trying to forge the content of information or to impose itself as a communicating endpoint (see Schneier 2000: 85).

develop the concept of ontological insecurity in order to describe the specific epistemology of the analysed actors towards trust relationships in the digitally augmented life-world. What is revealed is that this way of approaching trust is characterized by a fundamental questioning of the givenness of specific pre-conditions for trust relationships. These problems only become visible underneath the level of the actual communication experience – the level of the networks and protocols that make up the internet.

From a Sociology of Knowledge perspective, I will show that generalized mistrust has a constitutive function for establishing reliability in a life-world that is increasingly inhabited by a multitude of unknown actors with opaque interests. Cryptographic systems are a reaction towards a social environment that is increasingly pervaded by fundamental insecurities and characterized by a lack of acquaintance of its inhabitants with regards to its underlying trust conditions. It will become clear that from the perspective of politically sensitized system developers, the reliance on mathematical assumptions constitutes the last remaining trust anchor for a new social contract that is implied in the introductory quote by Edward Snowden.[3] Snowden's epigraph points to a fundamental erosion of trust assumptions towards human institutions. I will point out that this fundamental mistrust goes as deep as to the ontological layer of our epistemic approach to the world that is increasingly structured by digital technologies. Snowden's urge for a new social contract based on cryptography implies that mathematics contains within itself specific qualities that allow cryptographers to replace trust in human institutions with systems that regulate social behaviour in an unambiguous and tamper-proof manner.

This chapter is structured in the following way: After a brief portrayal of the community of politically sensitized engineers of cryptographic systems, I will contextualize their epistemic perspective of ontological insecurity in the context of the specific characteristics of the digitally augmented life-world. I will then discuss relevant literature on trust and mistrust. Subsequently, I will critically discuss these concepts in their relation to the characteristics of the digitally mediated life-world. Based on these theoretical considerations, I will delineate the approach of generalized mistrust as a strategy of engineers of cryptographic systems to cope with the problem of ontological insecurity and the associated lack of acquaintance with regards to the trust modalities in this new social sphere. In the final part, I will briefly outline a worldview within which mathematics and the associated ideas of transparency and provability be-

3 | In this quote Snowden paraphrases a statement by Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's original quote goes as follows: 'In questions of power, then, let no more be said of confidence in man, but bind him down from mischief by the chains of the Constitution.' This statement is part to the Kentucky Resolution from 1798.

come the cornerstones of a post-social contract that locates the feasibility of social principles in a sphere beyond the social realm (Knorr Cetina 2001, 2007).

The Community of Politically Sensitized Engineers of Cryptographic Systems

When I talk about the community of politically sensitized engineers of cryptographic systems, I am referring to a highly diversified network of people and institutions. This community is comprised of complex expert systems that include cryptographers from the field of applied mathematics, system developers, coders, and hackers. These technically versed experts work on different parts of cryptographic systems. Mathematicians develop cryptographic primitives that encompass mathematical problems, which build the foundations of cryptographic protocols. Cryptographers develop the protocols that specify the modalities in which communication between parties takes place. System developers draft the applications in which the protocols are embedded and implementers write the code that transfers these concepts into running software. The boundaries between the areas of responsibility are fluent in practice. Many of these experts work on different aspects of cryptographic systems and have a broad understanding of the underlying problems. However, what became apparent during my research was the existence of experts in each of these specific domains whose expertise is decision-relevant for the other community members. This is due to the complexity of the field and the diverse professional knowledge that flows into the design and implementation of cryptographic systems.

Coming from a qualitative research perspective, I approached the field openly following the snowball principle in arranging interviews. I entered the field by looking at two organizations: the Chaos Computer Club (CCC) in Germany and the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) in San Francisco. Berlin and San Francisco turned out to be two hot spots of tech-activism with strong networks among the respective communities. The CCC is Europe's largest association of hackers and, according to the club's website, it offers 'information about technical and societal issues, such as surveillance, privacy, freedom of information, hacktivism, data security and many other interesting things around technology and hacking issues'.[4] Attending the Chaos Communication Congress in Hamburg in 2014, as well as attending other conferences, provided me with new insights into the existence of strong networks between the CCC and various other projects and organizations like the Tor Project[5], the Free Software

4 | This quote is taken from the club's English website, see: https://ccc.de/en/

5 | Tor is an onion-routing network that allows for anonymous communication online. See: https://www.fsf.org/

Foundation (FSF)[6], and the EFF to name but a few. What unites these institutions is their members' strong believe that cryptography is a key technology for preserving social norms like privacy or freedom of speech.

The EFF is the most prominent civil rights organization focusing on digital rights issues in the United States. The organization employs lawyers, activists, and IT-experts. Aside from litigation work, EFF's tech staff is working on technical solutions for surveillance issues. The 'Let's Encrypt' project for example was realized by the EFF in cooperation with the Mozilla Foundation.[7] During my research I conducted interviews with people from various crypto-related projects that I encountered in the immediate surroundings of these organizations. What unites these people is the commonly shared awareness that their work as system engineers has strong political and moral implications. A commonly shared attitude within the community is the idea that technological design decisions have regulatory effects on a societal level. Lawrence Lessig – a legal scholar and former member of the EFF's Board of Directors – made famous this notion with the concept of 'Code is Law' (see Lessig 2006). One system implementer I talked to in San Francisco argued that a lot of people within the community would tie normative assumptions to this notion of code having similar regulatory effects as legislature. He further stated that many community members would adhere to specific idealizations of how the internet should be. The following quote by Bruce Schneier, a prominent figure within the politically sensitized cryptographic community, exemplifies a self-conception that I encountered quite frequently within the community: the self-understanding that there is a moral responsibility facing system developers: to design the internet according to specific social norms. In the wake of the publication of the NSA's and GCHQ's secret surveillance programs, Schneier addressed the engineering community with the words:

> Government and industry have betrayed the internet, and us. By subverting the internet at every level to make it a vast, multi-layered and robust surveillance platform, the NSA has undermined a fundamental social contract. The companies that build and manage our internet infrastructure, the companies that create and sell us our hardware and software, or the companies that host our data: we can no longer trust them to be ethical

6 | The Free Software Foundation (FSF) promotes user freedom. It is a non-profit organization whose developers publish free and open software under the GNU Public License, see: https://www.torproject.org/

7 | For further information about the EFF see the organizations website, available online under the URL: https://www.eff.org/. For further information about 'Let's Encrypt', see: https://letsencrypt.org/

internet stewards. This is not the internet the world needs, or the internet its creators envisioned. We need to take it back.[8]

In this moral wake-up call Schneier is referring to the fact that US-companies like Google and Facebook, who, either voluntarily or under legal pressure, cooperated with intelligence agencies by sharing user data. Framing this cooperation as the breaching of a global social contract is characteristic for the idealization of this technology. In fact, many of these morally sensitized tech-experts grew up with the pre-commercialized internet of the 1980s and early 1990s and still uphold the promises, hopes and expectations that a lot of internet pioneers invested in the technology in its early days. One commonly shared idealization of the internet is the idea that digital networks enable the free flow of knowledge and thereby prevent censorship and increase individual autonomy.[9] Tied to this assumption is the promise that computers can improve humanity's understanding of the world. This idea became an important pillar of the 'hacker ethics' that was formulated by Steven Levy in his 1984 book 'Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution' (Levy 2010) and has since been circulated within the politically sensitized engineering community.

Before I proceed with a discussion of the concepts of trust and mistrust as different strategies of coping with uncertainty, I will delineate the problem of what I term ontological insecurity. I argue that politically sensitized developers of cryptographic systems perceive the current IT-infrastructure to be characterized by radical uncertainty with regards to the actual properties of trust relationships. I will show that their systems approach this problem of uncertainty in a specific way.

The Problem of Ontological Insecurity in the Digitally Augmented Life-world

Digital information technologies increasingly affect virtually all spheres of the contemporary life-word. Especially proprietary internet services like Facebook, Twitter, and Google have become natural tools for sharing personal information and gathering information about what is going on in the world. However, the fact that internet users produce more and more data means their utterances

8 | Schneiers' article 'The US government has betrayed the internet. We need to take it back' was published in the Guardian on September 5th 2013, see: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/05/government-betrayed-internet-nsa-spying

9 | This idea was famously formulated by John Gilmore – one of the early cypherpunks – in his statement 'the Net interprets censorship as damage and routes around it'. See: http://www.toad.com/gnu/

of life become more traceable and subject to further scrutiny by a variety of social actors like governments, private corporations or criminals. A large part of these manifestations of life is being emitted unwittingly in the form of so called metadata. Metadata is a by-product of computation and provides information about when, where and with whom communication took place. The looming 'Internet of Things' – the meshing up of everyday 'smart' objects with the internet and the algorithmic evaluation of personal data – has added a new quality of how knowledge is generated and how it takes effect in contemporary life. According to Couldry and Hepp this data driven stock of knowledge shapes the 'ontology of everyday interaction' in a way that social actors often are unaware of and do not have control over (Couldry and Hepp 2017: 126). I argue that the temporally and spatially decontextualized procession of our utterances of life by globally dispersed unknown entities increasingly restructures our system of orientation in the world in ways intangible for the networked individual (Ruh forthcoming).

Bruce Schneier refers to this imperceptible, spatially and temporally unbounded social dimension of the life-world in his blog post 'Data Is a Toxic Asset'.[10] He argues that personal data is being emitted over insecure networks, stored on vulnerable infrastructure and analysed by entities that the individual is unaware of. The equation of data emission with environmental pollution that resonates in the title of Schneier's blog post is a common interpretation scheme among crypto-advocates. In that vein, one San Francisco based system developer I spoke to argued that he considers data to be something 'that can possibly harm you in the future.' Like radioactive contamination, it would take effect underneath the level of an individual's experience with its disastrous consequences surfacing only in the future. One year prior to the leaking of the 'Five Eyes' surveillance programs by Edward Snowden, Julian Assange highlighted the physical delimitation of our utterances of life and the invisible social dimension of the current internet infrastructure:

> When you communicate over the internet, when you communicate using mobile phones, which are now meshed to the internet, your communications are being intercepted by military intelligence organizations. It's like having a tank in your bedroom. It's a soldier between you and your wife as you're SMSing. We are all living under martial law as far as our communications are concerned, we just can't see the tanks – but they are there (Assange 2012: 33).

10 | The post is accessible on Schneier's blog 'Schneier on Security', see: https://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2016/03/data_is_a_toxic.html

This risk awareness is characteristic for 'reflexive modernity' in that the sources of the underlying problem are framed as being invisible and its possible effects to be locally as well as temporally unbounded (see Beck 1992). The imperceptible, locally and temporally unbounded dimension of the life-world is one feature of what I term ontological insecurity. However, ontological insecurity – as I deploy the concept – has a further dimension that is characterized by a general suspicion towards the truthfulness of digitally mediated information and a generalized mistrust towards social institutions.

The publication of the Snowden material not only demonstrated the extent to which intelligence agencies are tracking global internet traffic in a passive manner but also gave insights into how these well-funded arcane institutions actively undermine the current IT-infrastructure in order to set up covert false-flag operations and corrode trust within oppositional communities. For instance, it turned out that one of GCHQ's strategies to damage a target person's reputation is to hack their social network and email accounts in order to send fabricated information to friends, colleagues and neighbours. These strategies of deception are explicitly aimed at 'using online techniques to make something happen in the real or cyber world'.[11] In addition to the exploitation of the internet's current infrastructure, the very providers of the underlying technology are frequently criticized for their opaque algorithms and their attempts to manipulate the way internet users experience social reality. One famous example of the manipulation of internet users' perception is Facebook's secret psychological mood experiment on nearly 700,000 users in 2012. The social network hid specific emotional words from peoples' news feeds in order to analyse the influence of emotional expressions for users' behaviour to 'like' and distribute posts (Kramer et al. 2014).

The suspicion of the deliberate distortion and algorithmic manipulation of digitally mediated representations of reality by diverse social actors has become a recurring topic over the recent years (van Dijck 2014). The most current debate over the manipulation of internet users' perception and experience is centred around accusations made by US-intelligence agencies against the Kremlin and President Putin regarding the influencing of the US-election campaign in 2016 by ordering the leaking of confidential material from the Democratic National Convention and influencing public opinion in favour of Donald Trump

11 | This quote is taken from the publication of a GHCQ document entitled 'The Art of Deception: Training for Online Covert Operations'. In his article 'How covert agents infiltrate the internet to manipulate, deceive, and destroy reputations', published on the website The Intercept, investigative journalist Glenn Greenwald analysed the document and came to the conclusion 'that these agencies are attempting to control, infiltrate, manipulate, and warp online discourse, and in doing so, are compromising the integrity of the internet itself.' See: https://theintercept.com/2014/02/24/jtrig-manipulation/

with the help of 'fake news' distributed by automated social-bots. What makes these allegations critical is the problem of evidentialization of authorship, the challenge of providing proof for the manipulation of information in an online environment.[12] One consequence of the problem of providing proof for the authorship of a hacker attack is that it is easy for state actors to instrumentalize these attacks for political ends.

The omnipresent potential of the manipulation of internet users' experience of trust relationships is another feature of ontological insecurity. This involves the technical ability to distort the perception of digitally mediated representations of reality. I use the concept to refer to a specific attitude towards the world that informs a generalized mistrust against social entities of all kinds. The concept is, in some sense, related to Anthony Giddens's notion of ontological security. For Giddens, ontological security is closely connected to the concept of trust (Giddens 1990: 92). He defines ontological security as the 'confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy in the surrounding social and material environment of action' (ibid: 92). Giddens conceptualizes ontological security as a psychological phenomenon in the sense of an unconscious emotional state of mind that brackets out reasonable feelings of insecurity in an increasingly complex life-world that is characterized by existential threats.

He distinguishes two types of actors that exclude ontological security in their way of looking at the world: philosophers and schizophrenics. These two categories of actors who take over a perspective of ontological insecurity differ in what Schutz and Luckmann call the 'specific epochē' that characterizes their cognitive style of approaching reality (Schutz and Luckmann 1973: 27). In the mental sphere of scientific reasoning, the philosopher renders problematic ontological assumptions about the world whereas in his everyday attitude these problems are being excluded. For the schizophrenic however, doubts about the givenness of ontological security pervade what Schutz and Luckmann (with reference to Edmund Husserl) call the 'natural attitude of everyday life' (ibid: 3). As a consequence, the schizophrenic ties a relevance of action to his problematization of the world. Giddens points out that the anxieties of the schizophrenic are 'hardly expressive of a mental lack' but are 'more the result of emotional supersensitivity than irrationality' (Giddens 1990: 93). Against this background, I argue that the attitude of generalized mistrust shown by system engineers is the result of a specific approach to the world that is informed by their perception of ontological insecurity. This perception of ontological insecurity is not really an emotional gut feeling; rather it stems from their expert knowledge

12 | For an in depth discussion about the political and technical problems of evidentialization see Bruce Schneier's blog on the DNC hack: https://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2017/01/attributing_the_1.html

about the foundational principles of the digitally augmented life-world. In this regard, it is telling that a lot of activists who were referred to as 'tin-foil-hats' by community outsiders saw their deepest fears about the manipulation and surveillance of global internet communication vindicated in the wake of the Snowden publications.

In the following, I will look at the prevalent literature on trust and mistrust in order to contextualize my observations. I argue that mistrust is a functional equivalent of trust in that it allows the reduction of complexity against the background of uncertainty. Furthermore, I contend that in the case of engineers of cryptographic systems the specific function of mistrust is to enable them to establish a context of action that is characterized by calculability. Extreme negative expectation allows them to suspend ambiguity with regards to the anticipated intentions of the mistrusted entity. As we will see, in the case at hand, this strategy of suspending ambivalence is supplemented by a flanking strategy of 'trusting the math' and thereby transferring the element of nescience to an isolated province of meaning.

Trust and Mistrust as Attitudes to Deal with Uncertainty

Social scientists have paid scarce attention to the phenomenon of mistrust. When we look at definitions of mistrust, we can find some common positions in the existing literature. First of all, mistrust is commonly characterized as a subjective attitude that is grounded in a specific mode of experiencing the world. This is also one main feature that is commonly assigned to trust. Martin Endress locates mistrust on the extreme negative end of a scale that describes an individual's inner attitude towards the experience of the latent fragility of social reality. According to Endress, mistrust is the result of a juggling act emerging from having to deal with aspects of the life-world that are taken for granted and aspects of the life-world that have become problematic and make necessary new strategies for action and sense-making (Endress 2002: 8). In this characterization, we find a characteristic that can also be found in Luhmann's approach towards trust as well as mistrust. Luhmann argues that trust and mistrust both presuppose a certain degree of acquaintance or familiarity with aspects of the life-world. Only if we have a certain degree of knowledge about the constitutive conditions of social situations, we can develop an attitude that is characterized either by trust or mistrust. According to Luhmann, acquaintance is a precondition for the development of expectations of a specific type (Luhmann 1973: 83). Simmel also emphasizes the importance of knowledge as a precondition for trust. He argues that trust takes place in a state of uncertainty between knowledge and nescience (Simmel 1992: 383). Guido Möllering digs deeper into the

space between knowledge and nescience characterizing it as a 'leap of faith'. He thereby focuses on the irrational element of trust, arguing that 'trust combines weak inductive knowledge with some mysterious, unaccountable faith' (Möllering 2001: 413). Udo Thiedeke also emphasizes the irrational element of trust by stating that trust – due to the lack of knowledge – makes reasonable calculation impossible (Thiedeke 2007: 175).

If trust and mistrust both refer to specific attitudes that stem from an uncertainty with regards to specific aspects of the life-world, then the question remains: what are the qualitative differences between those two attitudes and what are their functionalities? It is a common argument in the literature that trust is an attitude characterized by the suspension of doubt. According to Luhmann, trust is characterized by the acceptance of risk with the goal to reduce social complexity (Luhmann 1973). He points out that mistrust is not the flipside of trust but its functional equivalent. Following Luhmann, trust and mistrust both reduce social complexity. He argues that the attitude of mistrust is characterized by a maximum negative expectation. This radical negative expectation would then rule out specific types of action and allow for instrumentally rational behaviour (ibid: 78).

On the basis of these considerations, I argue that in a life-world that is increasingly characterized by ontological insecurity, instrumental rationality, provability and calculability can become highly desirable features.[13] This argument will become more evident when we take a closer look at how crypto-advocates contextualize their work in the bigger picture.

Generalized Mistrust as a Constitutive Element for the Preconditions of Trust

In the following, I will delineate the productive dimensions of generalized mistrust for the construction of cryptographic solutions for trust problems in the digital age. It will be shown that generalized mistrust indeed reduces social complexity. In the case of the developers of cryptographic tools, the premise of a fundamentally hostile communication environment functions as a starting point for developing protocols that provide the 'integrity', 'confidentiality', and 'authenticity' of communication as a precondition for trust. Within this perspective, the concept of trust still plays a crucial role in that the designers of

13 | One counter strategy in dealing with ontological insecurity can be identified in the fundamental abandonment of the expectation of truthful behaviour. This attitude is characterized by the acceptance of the lie as a persuasion strategy. It finds its political expression in the often-quoted term of 'post-factuality' that was elected 'Word of the Year' in Germany in 2016.

cryptographic tools externalize trust towards specific assumptions about the mathematical features of their protocols. We will see that the 'leap of faith' that, according to Möllering, is characteristic for dealing with uncertainties, is still a relevant feature within crypto-activists approach to the world.

However, I argue that generalized mistrust towards any possible intermediary in the communication process creates an isolated sphere of predictability and provability. This isolated domain allows designers of cryptographic protocols to develop technical tools that substitute acquaintance towards the constitutive principles of the life-world with reliance on specific features of its underlying technical infrastructure. These features of 'confidentiality', 'integrity', and 'authenticity' are aimed at providing the preconditions for the accurate experience of trust relationships in the digitally augmented life-world in that they force humans towards trustworthy behaviour. In this regard, mistrust allows cryptographers to shift from trust to reliance in that the features of their protocols claim to be mathematically provable in an objective sense.

In order to get a clearer picture of how system engineers conceptualize trust problems in an increasingly digitalized life-world, we need to take a closer look at how crypto-advocates locate their work in a bigger societal context:

> People are used to a world where most of the time they can just assume that their trust relationships are functional. They assume that you can walk into a hospital, that there is a person sitting at the desk, that that person (...) is authorized to take your information. You give them your information and you assume that it will be communicated with the doc. (...) In the world we come from (...) trust and fraud, malice is the cost of making business. We institute some level of procedure to make sure that that's happening. We are now transitioning to a world where (...) operating on a level of assumed trust is no longer viable. (...) It costs you personally and the people that you interact with and society at large too much to just simply assume trust. Verifying trust manually is also too expensive. We cannot possibly do that. So what we need is our machines to verify the trust for us. (...) We need a machine that you trust to simply go in and check all of these relationships. And just do it quickly, seamlessly and only tell you if something is a mess and do that in a reliable way (...). So what the fundamental nature of cryptography is, is to embed in systems trust relationships and then verify that those trust relationships are correct before proceeding through mathematics. That's the fundamental goal. (Interview with founder of Silicon Valley start-up, Skuchain. June 2015, Mountain View, California.)

This quote is part of an interview I conducted with the founder of the Silicon Valley start-up Skuchain. The initial idea behind Skuchain was to make it possible for end consumers to trace the supply chain of consumer products via digital signatures that mathematically proof the origin of the single components

of a particular good.[14] It therefore utilizes the Blockchain technology, which is at the heart of the crypto-currency Bitcoin.

This interview snippet embeds the work of politically motivated cryptographers and designers of cryptographic systems in the context of a fundamental cultural paradigm shift with regards to the functioning of trust relationships in the digitalized world. It captures and condenses the bigger societal picture of their endeavour: to build cryptographic tools in order to restore the functionality of trust relationships in a world where 'operating on a level of assumed trust is no longer viable.' This brief extract describes the fundamental problem facing designers of cryptographic tools. According to this argumentation, the risks underlying trust assumptions have increased in a digitalized world to a level that makes the suspension of doubt as an irrational element of trust impracticable. Therefore, my interview partner argues for a solution where 'our machines verify the trust for us' in a 'reliable way', since 'verifying trust manually' would be too expensive.

Following his argumentation, trust in the analogue world of physical encounters is an implicit phenomenon that is characterized by mutually shared implicit knowledge about the nature and contexts of social relationships. In this world of physical encounters, relationships characterized by trust rely on the ability of individuals to know the social entities that are engaged in a specific context of action. In the quotation above, this would be the receptionist who communicates medical information to the doctor. The founder of Skuchain considers this acquaintance with regards to typified role expectations (Goffman 1959) as a prerequisite for an attitude of trust. He further specifies the function of cryptographic systems. They basically fulfil two purposes: they (1) 'embed in systems trust relationships and then (2) verify that those trust relationships are correct before proceeding through mathematics'. The interviewee further points out, that cryptographic protocols undertake this task underneath the level of the actual communication experience in that these technologies inform the communicating parties only if 'something is a mess'. In the first approach, we can characterize this process as the substitution of human cognitive processes based on acquaintance or familiarity towards the life-world with erecting and enforcing mathematically provable protocol sequences. We will see that most cryptographic tools do not make trust dispensable but rather provide the pre-conditions for trust that are becoming fundamentally problematic in a communication environment that does not guarantee the properties of 'authenticity', 'integrity', and 'confidentiality' in any tangible way.

14 | Over the course of my field work the start-up's focus shifted towards the deployment of financial products (Brackets) that are aimed at facilitating B2B Trade and Supply Chain Finance. See https://www.skuchain.com/

For a better understanding of how this substitution process works we have to take a closer look at how designers of cryptographic tools translate mistrust from a social into a technical problem. Politically sensitized IT-experts treat increasing tendencies of centralization and intermediation of the global communication infrastructure to be fundamentally problematic, since this trend facilitates the surveillance and manipulation of information flows on a mass scale. These experts know about the general insecurity of software applications and the specific vulnerability of centralized systems. The incomprehensibility of the multitude of possible malicious actors that try to attack and undermine centralized systems on a global scale leads to a commonly shared threat model among cryptographers and system developers. This threat model is characterized by a general mistrust towards any known and unknown entity with the ability to successfully attack a communication network. One activist put it the following way:

> Any entity that sits between (or next to) the user and the endpoint they're communicating with represents a potential threat. The list of threatening actors includes institutions of all sorts (businesses, universities, etc.), governments, internet service providers, malevolent network administrators, and random hackers (Slepak 2014: 13).

This incomprehensibility of possible attackers makes necessary specific strategies for anticipating and preventing possible attacks, since the anticipation of the motivation of each single attacker is impossible. One strategy of cryptographers and system developers is to transfer this generalized mistrust from the social sphere to the level of the technical infrastructure. In a talk held at the Chaos Communication Congress 2014 in Hamburg, Seth Schoen – Senior Staff Technologist at the Electronic Frontier Foundation – called upon the hacker community to develop a broader understanding of the fundamental technical insecurity that the digitally augmented life world is based upon. He stated:

> We need a much stronger vision that the things around us are communications networks that are actually attacking us all the time on a large scale, routinely. That these networks are untrustworthy and that we need to protect our communications against them, for many reasons, for many threat models, against many attackers, in many different situations. And there isn't just one reason for that. There is a whole panoply of reasons why we ought to think of networks as untrustworthy and why we ought to think of network protocols as needing to protect communication against the networks. (...) The network operator, everyone along the path has the full ability to spy on everything that you do, and to modify it and to inject things.[15]

15 | This quote is part of a transcription of Schoens' talk on 'Let's Encrypt' held on the Chaos Communication Congress 2014. See: https://media.ccc.de/v/31c3_-_6397_-_en_-_saal_6_-_201412301400_-_let_s_encrypt_-_seth_schoen#video&t=209

Schoen characterizes the digitally augmented life world as being permeated by an omnipresent network infrastructure that is attacking trust relationships between end users permanently and routinely on a large scale. In this technical portrayal of the life-world, human adversaries and their motivations fade into the background and the infrastructure itself becomes the source of ontological insecurity. It is this fundamentally unsafe technology that allows for fraudulent and malicious behaviour and therefore reinforces a generalized mistrust towards any entity that potentially sits between the communicating parties.

Blinding out the motivations of an attacker reduces social complexity and has tremendous implications for conceptualizing a trustworthy network infrastructure on a global level. First of all, treating all possible nodes of a network as untrustworthy imposes the same rules on everybody. Secondly, transferring mistrust from the social to the technical sphere creates an isolated domain, in which trust problems become calculable. It is crucial to understand cryptographer's reference to the extra social realm of mathematics and physics in this regard. Without going into the theoretical and technical details of modern cryptographic protocols, it is important to understand the equalizing role that cryptographers assign to mathematics when developing solutions for trust problems on a global level.

Trusting the Math to Create an Isolated Domain of Provability

As mentioned in the introduction, the goal of cryptographic protocols is to safeguard the principles of 'authenticity', 'integrity', and 'confidentiality' of digitally mediated communication against the assumption of the hardness of specific mathematical problems. These mathematical problems are embedded in the cryptographic primitives that form the basis on which cryptographic systems are built upon. Developers and implementers of cryptographic systems usually utilize established cryptographic primitives that are listed in so-called 'cipher suites' according to particular areas of application.[16] Politically aware system developers deduce an empowering aspiration from these assumptions. Jacob Appelbaum, a former developer of the Tor Project, put this capacitating and equalizing quality of mathematics the following way: 'One must acknowledge with cryptography no amount of coercive force will ever solve a math problem' (Assange 2012: 61).

It is important to understand these dimensions of 'empowerment' and 'provability' as interrelated elements for crypto-activists' goal of providing

16 | One such cipher suite that is recommended by the NSA is called 'NSA Suite B Cryptography'. See: https://www.nsa.gov/what-we-do/information-assurance/

'authenticity', 'integrity', and 'confidentiality' as a precondition for trust. The equalizing quality of cryptography not only rests on the assumed hardness of specific math problems, but also on Kerckhoffs' principle. It states that the security of a cryptographic system is reliant on the secrecy of the private key and on the disclosure of the cryptographic algorithm (Kerckhoffs 1983). Only cryptographic systems that can be studied in public and that withstood attacks over time are believed to be secure. As a consequence, the same cryptographic primitives are being deployed on a global scale. Politically motivated system developers see this as equal fighting chances for everyone. Many crypto-advocates therefore characterize cryptographic systems as bipartisan technologies. One spokesperson of the Chaos Computer Club put it the following way during a debate in Berlin:

> There is an inherent refusal [among state officials] to accept the fact that math does not care about your intentions. And computers most of the time do not. They are unable to differentiate whether what they are currently doing is good or bad.[17]

This statement is a reaction towards state officials' demand for the regulation of strong cryptography in the context of fighting organized crime and terrorism. Cryptographers argue that undermining the cryptographic standards would weaken the overall global IT-security and pose a threat to the global communication infrastructure.[18] In addition to these empowering and equalizing qualities that activists assign to mathematics, relying on mathematics creates an isolated sphere of clarity and calculability that allows cryptographers to shift from trust to certainty. Within the academic cryptographic community, there has been a strong tendency towards the promotion of formal security definitions. It is a common narrative within the academic community that modern cryptography has shifted from an 'art' to a 'science' and that one crucial condition for this scientific turn is the creation of highly contextualized formal security definitions. Koblitz et al (2001) define a 'security proof' or a 'reductionist security argument' the following way:

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17 | Linus Neumann, one of CCC's spokespersons, made this statement at the 'Open Debate on the Politics of Encryption', a podium discussion held in Berlin in July 2016. See: https://cdn.netzpolitik.org/wp-upload/2016-07-20_Open-Debate-on-the-Politics-of-Encryption.mp3

18 | As a reaction to US- and British government officials' claim to restrict the use of strong cryptography after the attacks on the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in January 2015, leading cryptographers published an expert assessment with regards to the feasibility of these proposals. The experts concluded, that weakening the cryptographic standards would pose a threat to the overall IT-security. See: https://www.schneier.com/academic/paperfiles/paper-keys-under-doormats-CSAIL.pdf

> What a 'security proof' – or, as we prefer to say – a reductionist security argument [57] – actually does is show that an adversary cannot succeed in mounting a certain category of attack unless a certain underlying mathematical problem is traceable. (Koblitz et al. 2011: 20)

This form of generalized mistrust as a scientific epistemology reduces social complexity in that it brackets out the motivation of an attacker by creating an isolated domain of definition. Security proofs only take into consideration clearly defined categories of attacks as well as assumptions about the computational capacities of an attacker and his or hers sophistication in solving particular mathematical problems.[19] At this point it is important to note that the formalization of security proofs is part of a discourse within the academic community that aims at locating cryptography in the field of the natural sciences. This community only partially overlaps with the politically sensitized community of system developers and implementers. The latter is more concerned with 'real world problems' than with formal definitions (Rogaway 2015). However, I argue that the basic idea of the provability of specific security parameters against a generalized attacker still is an important aspect of their mind-set. In the wake of the publication of the Snowden documents, Bruce Schneier addressed the engineering community with the words 'Trust the math. Encryption is your friend.' He argued that properly implemented, cryptography would remain the last tool to protect the internet user even against the most potent adversary.[20] One system implementer I spoke to in San Francisco told me that this notion of trusting the math was taken over by the engineering community as 'a gospel'.

Koblitz et al (2001) however, notice that in practice, cryptography still has a strong subjective element in that intuition plays a crucial role in conceptualizing cryptographic systems. This intuitive element stems from the fact that applied cryptography is a future oriented endeavour that has to take into consideration possible computational developments or mathematical breakthroughs. Cryptographers thus have to take into account the temporal aspect of the digi-

19 | It is important to note that basic research in cryptography takes place in a highly opaque research environment. Aside from public academic research there exists a highly arcane cryptographic community within the intelligence community that has a longstanding tradition, which predates public research for decades. It is assumed that this highly funded arcane community might be ahead of the game with regards to specific mathematical breakthroughs or in the field of applied quantum computing. Breakthroughs in the latter field of research would render most of the current cryptographic primitives unusable.

20 | Schneier's article is called 'NSA Surveillance: a Guide to Staying Secure', see: https://www.schneier.com/essays/archives/2013/09/nsa_surveillance_a_g.html

tally augmented life-world.[21] Koblitz et al (2001) therefore characterize cryptography as a highly speculative field of research:

> Part of the reason why cryptography has such a strong subjective element is that speculation is central to the field. When deciding on the basic type of cryptography to use (RSA or ECC, for example), when choosing the type of a protocol for a given application (e.g., whether or not to use identity based encryption), and when selecting parameters (for instance, random generation versus enhanced efficiency), one has to make a guess about future developments in order to evaluate the fundamental issue of safety of the system. One has to ask: what types of adversaries are we likely to encounter, and what will be their most likely avenue of attack? Will there be any breakthroughs in bringing down the asymptotic running time to solve any of the supposedly intractable mathematical problems? Will quantum computing (...) ever become practical? What new 'side channel' attacks (...) might be devised? (Koblitz et al. 2011: 32)

This contrasting of the ideal model of cryptography as a highly formalized discipline that is characterized by mathematical clarity on the one hand, and the rather 'fuzzy' practice of cryptographic work, which takes place in a complex, contingent and dynamic environment is an observation that is not addressed in academic work that aims at reductionist definitions (Goldreich 1999; Katz and Lindell 2008).

I argue that the problematizations in Koblitz et al (2001) indicate a field of tension that people working in the field of applied cryptography have to cope with: the necessity of reducing the complexity of the 'real world' against the background of ontological insecurity and yet still having to take into consideration contingent aspects of future developments that are not theoretically graspable. One San Francisco-based system implementer told me that, over the years, awareness has grown within the community that the reliance on predictions that are based on the assumption of calculable regularities (e.g. Moore's Law that describes how computation power will increase over a longer period of time) has turned out to be highly problematic. He explained to me that this insight would be the result of system developers increasingly having to cope with 'once-solved problems' that are a consequence of lock-in phenomenon and false speculations made against the backdrop of a highly complex and contingent environment. Furthermore, the community of system implementers has to struggle with the fact that transferring mathematical problems into executable code carries with it the risk of human failure. In fact, programming errors in the form of 'bugs' turned out to be the most frequent causes when cryptographic systems fail in practice.

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21 | Practically speaking they have to take into consideration that the NSA is storing encrypted data in order to decrypt it when it has the possibilities in the future.

It is important to note that there are strategies within the engineering community to cope with the problem of intended and unintended human decisions and their unpredictable consequences. For example, the community is working on concepts like 'machine provable computation' and 'machine provable compiling' (MacKenzie 2001). These reductionist strategies aim at bridging the 'semantic gap' between 'pure math' and software as a 'social construct' by 'getting rid of or at least detecting human idiosyncrasies' as the system developer put it. This mathematization of the translation process – as I would term this strategy – is informed by the idea to create an isolated domain of calculability in a complex and contingent environment. Developers and implementers of cryptographic systems thereby pursue the goal of eradicating the 'leap of faith' – the gap of knowledge – that is characteristic for trust and switch to a position of transparency and calculability.

However, the strategy of mathematically purifying applied cryptography at least currently seems to have its limitations. Confronting him with Schneier's appeal to 'trust the math' against this set of problems, the system implementer replied: 'It is such a contingent claim, that I don't believe it anymore, even though I depend on it.' It is telling that a lot of cryptographic systems that have found widespread application, were designed within an activist community that is not directly associated with the academic world. The papers that describe these protocols often lack the formalized 'security proofs' that have become a standard within the academic world.[22]

I interpret this lack of security proofs as the suspension of doubt that underlies the call to 'trust the math'. I argue that this 'leap of faith' fulfils specific social functions. It strikes me as fundamentally relevant for understanding their perspective that many politically sensitized system builders, while reflecting its flaws, continue to adhere to this notion of math being the last remaining anchor for trust. I argue that this suspension of doubt – the exclusion of the problems behind assumptions about the reliability of the underlying math – enables activists to reduce the complexities associated with having to deal with unpredictably potent adversaries while at the same time still being able to uphold

22 | In his paper 'The Moral Character of Cryptographic Work' that he addressed at the academic crypto-community in the wake of the Snowden publications, Phillip Rogaway criticized the academic community for not taking into consideration real world problems when formalizing security proofs. Rogaway, who himself is part of the academic world, pointed to his observation that the politicized community would develop practicably usable systems that do not come with security proofs. In his paper, which was positively received within the political community, he called on the academic world to cooperate with the practitioners and provide them with proofs for their models. He argued that, although lacking formal security proofs, these systems would work in practice and that security proofs could be stated ex ante (see Rogaway 2015).

the concept of a generalized attacker. This reduction of complexity also allows developers of practical applications to focus on specific features that address problems of the digitally augmented life-world. Furthermore – and probably – most importantly, it allows them to hold on to the empowering qualities that they assign to mathematics.

As a last point, I will illustrate how politically motivated designers of cryptographic systems develop trustworthy alternatives for centralized systems that take into consideration the temporal dimensions of the digitally augmented life-world that I described at the outset. I will portray the features of Perfect Forward Secrecy and Plausible Deniability in order to show how these actors transfer a generalized mistrust towards any social entity into protocols that aim at establishing the foundations for a post-social contract that makes trusting institutions dispensable.

'Perfect Forward Secrecy' and 'Plausible Deniability' as Features of a Post-social Contract

What unites the projects aiming at rebuilding the internet is removing the necessity of having to trust any centralized institution or any specific node in the network. In this vein, one Berlin-based system developer told me that he does not want to have to trust anybody anymore. The projects try to achieve that goal by developing decentralized, distributed systems that supplement trusted third parties with cryptographic systems that allow the verification and proof that certain trust assumptions are correct. Digital signatures, for example, allow the receiver of a message to use a secret signing key to compute a mathematical value out of a sender's message and public key. This allows the receiver of the message to verify the authorship of the sender.

In recent years, politically motivated designers of cryptographic ciphers developed sophisticated versions of digital signatures that especially take into account the above mentioned temporal aspect of the digitally augmented life-world. The developers of the OTR-protocol (Off-the-Record), for example, introduced two features that found widespread application: Perfect Forward Secrecy and Plausible Deniability (Borisov et al. 2004).[23] Perfect Forward Secrecy describes a feature of the protocol that prevents an attacker who intercepted a long-term private key from getting access to the stored encrypted data of end users by introducing session keys that expire after the communication took place. After it had become known to the public that the NSA is storing vast amounts of encrypted communication with the goal of analysing it retroactively

23 | In the initial paper on OTR, the authors use the term reputability when referring to Plausible Deniability.

after the encryption had been reversed, this feature became highly supported by the politically sensitive engineering community.

Plausible Deniability is a communication feature that was developed against the background of protecting dissidents against coercion. It allows communicating parties to mathematically authenticate their communication parties during the communication but to make it impossible for any of the parties to verify to a third party that communication took place. This feature is one example of the constitutive quality of mistrust that arises both from the implications of the digital communication infrastructure and from assumptions about mistrustful behaviour of social actors. One activist put this the following way: 'If laws and courts were rational and just, and governments responsible and ethical, plausible deniability would not be a necessary, or even a desirable feature' (Slepak 2014: 4). This line of argumentation is common within the cypherpunk community[24] – the idea that human institutions are fundamentally untrustworthy and that cryptography is a tool that forces these institutions to act in a trustworthy manner.

A prominent theme within the politicized community is the differentiation between the laws of physics and the laws of men. One San Francisco-based activist told me that 'if the laws of men fail then the laws of physics still work'. The probably most famous example of the idea to use cryptographic protocols in order to force institutions towards trustworthy behaviour is the functional principle of WikiLeaks' dropbox for whistleblowers. It exemplifies how fundamental mistrust towards any social entity and the outsourcing of trust to the sphere of mathematics is mobilized with the goal to establish a political environment where trusting institutions is replaced by the idea of making their behaviour verifiable. WikiLeaks' dropbox utilizes a set of cryptographic procedures (OpenSSL, Tor among others) that allow sources to anonymously upload information that they perceive to be in the public interest. It is the architecture itself that takes fundamental mistrust into human institutions as a starting point. In that the communication between the dropbox and the uploading party is cryptographically anonymized, it incorporates the feature of Plausible Deniability and it stops any third party, including WikiLeaks, from identifying the source.

24 | Cypherpunks are a globally dispersed community of activists who seek to achieve social change through the proactive use of privacy-enhancing cryptographic technologies. The movement dates back to the late 1980s. Cypherpunks initially communicated their ideas with the help of electronic mailing lists. Their fundamental ideas are captured in 'The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto' by Timothy C. May and the 'Cypherpunk's Manifesto' by Eric Hughes. Modern cypherpunks include Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks. For May's Manifesto see: https://www.activism.net/cypherpunk/crypto-anarchy.html and for Hughes' Manifesto see: https://www.activism.net/cypherpunk/manifesto.html

The idea of embedding social relationships in a framework of mathematical clarity and thereby restoring fundamental human rights in a world that is perceived to be increasingly governed by opaque interests is what is at the heart of crypto-activist ideas of a new social contract. Edward Snowden's call for a social contract based on cryptography has to be understood against this background. This argumentation about the unreliability and contingency of human institutions, which are prone to manipulation by interests of power is a theme that I encountered quite often during research. One system developer I talked to in the Bay Area argued that he is not too much interested in questions of the US-Constitution, which he considers to be an important but also a contingent historical outcome. Instead, he was interested in asking 'what does the physics say in a five hundred year sense'. He is thereby referring to the dynamic interplay between cryptography and cryptanalysis (the breaking of cryptographic ciphers) that is driven by mathematical breakthroughs. Against the background of this perspective, the validity of social norms like privacy is not reliant on a public consensus or any other form of exercise of power but on the question whether these social norms proof to be universally executable in a scientific sense.

This outsourcing of the practicability of social norms into the realm of mathematics and physics leaves unanswered questions of consensus. It disguises the concrete motivation of the designers of these protocols as well as their political agenda. Lawrence Lessig pointed out early on that cryptography would be a Janus-faced technology, since it would allow for systems that enforce anonymity and systems that allow for the unambiguous identification of individuals (Lessig 2006: 52). The answer to the question of whether there is a global public agreement on the desirability of decentralized systems is also far from unambiguous. Cryptographic systems that work on the premise of generalized mistrust and that replace trust in human institutions with trust in mathematically enforced protocols also blind out questions of accountability.

A current example of the problem of accountability in so-called 'trustless systems' is the case of the DAO hack. It was still heavily discussed in the tech-community during my last fieldtrip to the Bay Area in December 2016. The DAO (decentralized autonomous organization) was an extreme example of a libertarian cypherpunk technology that completely replaces trust in human institutions with a technological system that enforces contracts on the basis of mathematical verifiability. The DAO was a stateless decentralized autonomous organization based on the Blockchain technology. The organization was crowd-funded and only existed in the form of software code which has been made available open-source by its anonymous backers. The company was autonomous in the sense that there existed no Board of Directors or any other human institution that had any legal authority or executive control over its businesses. Richard Waters of the Financial Times described the company as

'a form of investor-directed venture capital fund' since its designated business was to invest in other businesses. The idea behind the company was to get rid of any interference by a third party that might take money for favouring the investment into a particular business.[25] The decisions about specific investments were supposed to be made by the companies' stakeholders based on a consensus model. Stakeholder rights to vote were tied to their shares that were expressed in the form of 'Eth', a crypto-currency based on the Ethereum Blockchain. [26] The consensus model as well as the enforcement of decisions was governed by so-called 'smart contracts' that were also part of the Ethereum Blockchain. However, in June 2016, unknown hackers exploited a vulnerability within DAO's source code and directed one third of the funds to an anonymous account. This led to panic among the company's stakeholders who had altogether raised an equivalent of 120 million USD. The DAO hack raised an intense dispute within the Blockchain community that centred on questions of accountability. It was heavily discussed what social entity could be held liable for the financial loss of DAO stakeholders given that contracts in the DAO environment are being established anonymously and enforced through software code.

Conclusion

The goal of the chapter was to examine how politically aware designers and implementers of cryptographic systems cope with ontological insecurity in the digitally augmented life-world. What we find is that this digitalized social sphere is characterized by its temporal and spatial delimitation. Furthermore, this vastly complex environment is characterized by a lack of acquaintance of its inhabitants with regards to the concrete nature of social relationships that unfold within this physically intangible sphere that is occupied by a diverse set of unknown actors with unpredictable intentions. In this social realm, trust becomes fundamentally problematic since it presupposes some sort of familiarity with the constitutive conditions of social relationships. I pointed out that the politically aware community of developers and implementers of cryptographic systems is tied together by a commonly shared epistemic perspective that is informed by their in depth knowledge about the technological underpinnings of this social sphere. This specific epistemology informs a shared problem aware-

25 | For Waters article 'Automated company raises equivalent of $120M in digital currency' see: http://www.cnbc.com/2016/05/17/automated-company-raises-equivalent-of-120-million-in-digital-currency.html

26 | Ethereum is a crypto-currency based on the Blockchain, but has slightly different functionalities than Bitcoin.

ness within this 'community of communities': these actors share knowledge about the omnipresent possibility of the manipulation of trust relationships between end users by unknown third parties. This knowledge creates a generalized mistrust towards any possible intermediary with the ability to undermine these trust relationships.

Furthermore, it became clear that this perspective of generalized mistrust has a productive quality for dealing with trust problems on a global scale. Translating generalized mistrust into a technical problem allows this community to establish an isolated domain of calculability. Creating this clearly circumscribed sphere that presupposes a generalized and omnipresent attacker allows these experts to make social trust problems calculable and to reduce social complexity. Within this realm of provability and calculability, system designers and implementers ostensibly suspend the irrational 'leap of faith' that according to Möllering is characteristic for trust. However, it also became clear that the unpredictable, erratic element of trust is still efficacious. The builders of cryptographic tools transfer the element of doubt from the social sphere towards trusting the empowering quality and the hardness of mathematical problems. As it turned out, questions about the hardness of mathematical problems cannot be answered unambiguously in a complex and unforeseeable real world environment. Not only do these questions depend on incalculable future breakthroughs in the field of mathematics, but also on highly contingent 'human idiosyncrasies'. Nevertheless, outsourcing the element of trust to the mathematical domain fulfils specific social functions that probably have not been covered exhaustively in this article. Here, I focused on the observation that 'trusting the math' allows the builders of cryptographic systems to shift from an attitude of mistrust to a perspective of unambiguity when implementing the concepts of 'integrity', 'authenticity', and 'confidentiality' as the preconditions for trust on a protocol level.

Another interesting unanswered theoretical question is the one of a possible threshold between trust and certainty. Providing the 'integrity', 'authenticity', and 'confidentiality' of an encrypted email still allows Alice to subvert the expectations of Bob. She could unintentionally send him false information or tell him a lie. Smart contracts however, enforce a predefined agreement without leaving the agreeing parties any room for deviant behaviour within the logic of the protocol.[27] Here, it might be interesting to take a closer look at specific cryptographic technologies in order to analyse the junction between trust and certainty. The idea to establish a social contract that is characterized by mathematical unambiguity can be found in its most pronounced manifestation in cryptographic systems developed within the cypherpunk community. These

27 | Note that the DAO hack was a software hack that utilized a weak spot in the code, not in the protocol itself.

systems fundamentally aim at replacing the necessity for trusting human behaviour by mathematically enforcing and disabling specific behaviour that the systems' designers deem to be (un-)desirable. As the example of the DAO hack showed, transferring authority from human institutions to mathematics leads to questions of responsibility and accountability that have not yet been answered.

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How Not to Fall in Love

Mistrust in Online Romance Scams

Jan Beek

Hello my name is Seidu just saw your profile and just cant believe it we still have people like u on earth,well I can see my destination and i can hear my call,no more hesitation this time i am going for all out cause i know where light this road leads to and i therefore will rise and believe this dream will come true and will soul the sky.I love to get in touch with some one special just like u, .would love the one to guide me and stay by me and set me free therefore know it will come to pass.but i wish I could read your mind and u could read mine as well. (...) take care love and light. (Email from Seidu, 2010[1])

These lines are from an email that Seidu, a 24-year-old Ghanaian scammer, sent to Lina, a 50 year old woman from Lithuania.[2] It marks the beginning of an exchange of romantic emails. Seidu took on a fictional persona, a construction worker from Alaska called Albert Duncan. After one month of writing ever more passionate love emails, he wrote that his son got ill during his business trip in Ghana and his credit cards had stopped working. Naturally, he asked his newfound love for money. This is a standard script – referred to in scammers' vocabulary as 'format' – for a romance scam.[3] Since the 2000s, romance fraud has become one of the most widespread and successful forms of cybercrime.

When I was given access to Seidu's email account, what astonished me most was how many of the women responding to his emails perceived them as credible and to what extent they imbued them with emotions and meanings. A Chinese woman writes: 'I feel I come back to the teenager when reading and

1 | Spelling unchanged.

2 | Names, dates and locations have been anonymized.

3 | A 'format', the word scammers use for a genre, consists of both the story and the procedure of a certain type of fraud. In other words, a format is both about content, for instance a tale about hidden gold, and the script, for instance the use of an arc of suspense in romance scams.

writing to you (...). We love each other even before we meet in person, unbelievable for me! But I hope we will love each other more an more after meet, and have a lasting relationship, live with each other, and our John (Seidu's fake son) forever.' A woman in the US writes: 'You have made the sunlight shine in my life, more than you'll ever know.' A British woman first recognized that Seidu was a scammer, but then apologized and sent money again because she felt so enamoured. These women were convinced that they had fallen in love. In other words, they thought they had started a genuine romantic relationship. Yet these feelings solely originate in an online email correspondence with someone who lives far away.

From an anthropological perspective, our astonishment about people believing so strongly in emails from someone they have never met offline is as interesting as the respondents' genuine reactions. This astonishment suggests a shared understanding of online interactions as being initially untrustworthy and as not being able to foster genuine romantic emotions by themselves. It is this mode of generalized mistrust that scammers have to engage with in romance scams. They have to convince their targets to suspend their mistrust to such an extent that they send money to someone they have never met face-to-face.

Based on a close reading of email correspondence and fieldwork in Ghana, this paper explores romance scams as a particular form of online, transnational interaction. As the interaction largely consists of writing and reading, the first question is how scammers write romantic texts that are both credible and fascinating to their audience. Secondly, this chapter examines how the women believe in, doubt or reject those stories in the course of the email interaction. Scammers persuade their targets by drawing on and adapting an idiom of romantic love to create this credibility. Despite the aforementioned quotes, however, the whole interaction takes place in the shadow of mistrust. The women responding to these emails are constantly engaged in practices of mistrust and only temporarily suspend them.

Mistrust is a key aspect of online communication, especially on online dating platforms, because users are painstakingly aware of the differences between front and back stage. Each user on these sites carefully crafts their online persona, and is well aware of the discrepancies between it and their private self. Scholars explore online interactions with Goffman's concept of dramatic interactions, which he originally developed to explore face-to-face interactions such as restaurant visits (Hogan 2010; Robinson 2007). For Goffman, actors constantly suspend their disbelief, or to phrase is differently, suspend their mistrust. They do this because they are interested in upholding a 'veneer of consensus' in any given situation (Goffman 1959: 3). In offline interactions in order for the collusion between performers and audience to succeed, the passage between 'front stage' and 'back stage' – in which 'illusions and im-

pressions are painstakingly fabricated' – should be hidden and closed (Goffman 1959: 69-70). On dating platforms, however, the back stage's existence is obvious to all, because all users metaphorically walk this passage when they craft their online persona. Additionally, the other's back stage is not closed but absolutely barred due to the anonymity of the interaction. Users largely have auctorial freedom concerning their online persona's gender, age, location and backstory. In other words, these sites allow an unchecked presentation of the self; to confirm this it is enough to try the sites yourself. As Mühlfried argues in this book's introduction, mistrust is a mode of relating to other actors, and the level of complexity in online interactions make it a dominant mode in this landscape. In contrast to the interactions that Goffman describes, interactions on dating platforms are characterized not by a 'veneer of consensus' but by a veneer of mistrust. Such transnational email correspondences are also a site at which different understandings of the relationship between front and back stage clash; or, in other words, what degree of inconsistencies people accept between the performances on these two stages.

The online conversations enabled by dating platforms are supposed to lead to an offline date. Yet to even consider such a date, users have to be prepared to suspend mistrust beforehand, a decision predicated only on texts and pictures, which they have received online. All users have to deal with this problem. When looking closely at the email exchange between Seidu and his various victims, it becomes obvious that playing the role of a lover in a romantic relationship with a foreigner is a tremendous challenge for him. He is a young Ghanaian with limited schooling and has to play the role of a romantic lover for women from very different societies so convincingly that his texts evoke real emotions. Like regular users on online dating sites, he has to create a narrative about himself and the potential relationship that is both credible and fascinating, a narrative that convinces them to suspend their mistrust. To enable this suspension, he draws on globally circulating narratives of romantic love and introduces Ghanaian romantic practices to non-African audiences to evoke fascination. Above all, by engaging in narration – in storytelling – he establishes a relationship between him and his reader that in literary studies has aptly been described as a 'narrative contract' (Gabriel 2004: 21). It is this particular relationship that grants the storyteller certain privileges and entices readers – similar to the suspension of disbelief – to suspend their mistrust.

However, these scams are not one-way persuasion strategies but dynamic online interactions. While scammers like Seidu try to tell convincing narratives, the readers are oscillating between maintaining mistrust and believing in the scammers' tales. Exactly because the women's feelings of mistrust endure, the concept of mistrust seems to be more applicable than the concept of gradual developing trust. While a superficial reading of these exchanges would suggest that the responding women believe in these emails, these women are

actually well aware of the differences between front and back stage peculiar to online interactions. Their lingering mistrust becomes apparent when the scammer asks for money, at which point the great majority of responding women explicitly point out the unknowable back stage and stop the interaction. The few women transferring money are aware of the possibility that they are being scammed, they continue to mistrust the scammer. Yet they prefer to continue to suspend their mistrust and to remain in the front stage of the interaction because of the emotional rewards it provides. In his paper on the anthropology of trust, Corsín Jiménez (2011: 193) argues that trust is an inherent quality of relationships which always also contains – and reverts into – mistrust. All relationships are necessarily imbued with both qualities, and the relationship between scammers and their readers brings to the fore the dynamic tension between the two in the course of the interaction.

This paper explores scams as interactions between one particular scammer, Seidu, and the women who respond to him, based on a close reading of these emails.[4] The Ghanaian police provided me with access to the account that contained these email conversations. The Police officers had confiscated it during their criminal investigations of Seidu for fraud.[5] In the course of these investigations I spoke both to him and to one of the defrauded women. However, this paper will largely focus on the way he and the women interacted online via text. Using a confiscated email account for research purposes is ethically difficult. While one side perceived these conversations as private and part of a genuine relationship, the other did not. To deal with this dilemma, this paper anonymizes all participants and only selectively quotes the correspondence. It aims at a non-normative exploration and looks to bring the agency of both sides to the fore.

First, the paper will introduce both actor groups and explain the basic workings of romance scams. Secondly, it will discuss the scammers' emails and their textual practices of telling stories that are credible and fascinating in a framework of underlying doubt. Thirdly, it will explore the way the women react to these emails and develop the dynamics of maintaining and – sometimes – suspending mistrust. Finally, the paper then discusses the distinct understandings of front and back stage – and of mistrust – on both sides of the transnational, online interaction.

4 | This study was supported by the Africa's Asian Options (AFRASO) project at Goethe University Frankfurt, sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. For critical comments, I am grateful to Florian Mühlfried, Ute Röschenthaler, Frank Schulze-Engler, and the two anonymous reviewers, especially their ideas concerning the 'narrative contract'.

5 | This happened during my 16-month-long fieldwork on police work in Ghana (Beek 2016b).

Scams and Romance

Originally created in the USA in the late 1800s, advance fee fraud as an African phenomenon spawned in the late 1980s in Nigeria. While the first scammers mostly told stories about oil and used regular mail, scammers further developed both stories and means of communication, and these fraud schemes spread to other African countries. More recently, African entrepreneurs have carried this fraud schemes to Asian countries. Many scholars understand the origins of scamming as a response to the political and economic marginalization of young people in Africa. Research on scamming has mostly focused on economic scams, and studied these as a symptom of the excesses of global capitalism or corruption in Nigeria (see Smith 2008, Apter 2005). Yet romance scams had already emerged in the early 2000s, with the advent of online dating sites. Since then, the format has become more diversified, targeting both women and men in various dating scenes (Burrell 2012: 73). Since the 2010s, romance scams are probably the most prevalent and prolific format. The common means of communication are emails, phones with fake European numbers, instant messaging and web 2.0 dating platforms.

In some poor neighbourhoods in urban Ghana, many young people engage in cyber fraud, what they call 'browsing'. They experience a huge gap between their meagre income and their necessary expenses, and a gulf between their expectations of advancement and the available opportunities. As one scammer explained to me: 'The middle class is a mirage!' The jobs they want are either not available or are only available with connections. Many of the people engaged in scamming today did not get into this practice with the intention of becoming criminals. During their youth, they wrote letters, emails or chat messages to foreigners out of curiosity. As Burell has shown (2012: 42-5), many young Ghanaians experience internet cafés as spaces in which they can connect with people from the exotic world of the abroad, even if many also hope to receive gifts. A few of them become full-time scammers. They either operate out of internet cafés or, as soon as they have gained sufficient funds, out of their own apartments with laptops. Scammers work in loosely connected groups of 'friends', and depend on each other for knowledge on the inner workings of these schemes and additional support when frauds become more complex.[6] Often they pass on clients to other scammers to proceed with the storyline in such cases. In a typical romance scam targeting a male victim, the first scammer establishes contact via email, then a female friend of his does phone calls. Cassiman (2016) writes in great ethnographic detail about the aspirations and everyday struggles of young scammers. She explores not only how their connections

6 | In a way, all scammers work jointly on new narratives, not as an organized effort but as an effect of co-authorship in their loose groups.

to 'paypals' (victims) abroad is enabled by their friendships among each other, but also how the money they earn destabilizes these social connections.

Seidu, the author of the emails explored here, has a biography similar to that of his peers. When I met him at the police station, he presented himself as a career criminal who is unafraid of the police. At court, his lawyer described him as an innocent family man who had suffered tremendously in prison. In his early emails, he writes to his mother and claims to do well in school, while he is already fully engaged in writing scam emails. He often converses with friends more experienced than him, who send him texts that he can use, outline storylines he can tell and give him stolen private photo albums from American men. Over the years, Seidu became quite successful and managed to acquire a car and a house. Still, his earnings fluctuated dramatically; at one time he wrote to one of his friends: 'brother i need ur aid now, im in very desperate situation, only god knows (...) i dont even have money to send my wife to hospital'. He also has many falling outs with his friends, decrying them as 'heartless' when they do not support him in times of need or fail to return his loans. In contrast to these intense, emotional letters, he uses business vocabulary when conversing with his friends about his scams. Women who respond to his emails he calls 'clients', and his interactions with them 'transactions' or 'deals'.

The victims of romance scams are even a more diverse than the scammers. Worldwide, online dating platforms have become an important medium to search for a partner. Both men and women, hetero-, bi- and homosexuals, people from all countries, educational backgrounds and income levels fall victim to romance scams. Romance scams remain largely invisible because victims feel ashamed and do not report it. Scholars estimate that about 230,000 people fell victim to romance frauds up to 2011 in the UK alone (Whitty and Buchanan 2012: 182). The U.S.-based IC3 reports yearly losses of fifty-five million USD, although the real amounts are probably much higher.[7]

Seidu's email account provides insight into his scamming practices from 2006 to 2010. During this time, he signed up for more than fifty online dating sites, including American, German, Chinese, Lithuanian sites, as well as Indian matrimonial sites. He wrote more than 1,000 emails and had several hundred targets. Seidu searched for people that fit a certain profile, namely women in their 50s. Whitty (2013: 675) interviewed victims and argued that many of them held idealized romantic beliefs. Based on the knowledge provided in these emails, the women did not seem special in any way but had hopes that everyone can relate to. The main commonality among these women seemed to be that they desperately longed for an affectionate relationship, either because they had never had one or had experienced failed partnerships.

7 | Internet Crime Complaint Centre. 2012. Internet Crime Report.

Writing Credible and Fascinating Love Emails

During his career as a romance scammer, Seidu employed the same general format. He uses a fake name, Albert Duncan, and claims to be an affluent construction worker from Alaska. He claims that he is divorced with a young son and enjoys a middle class lifestyle.[8] Having been disappointed too often, he writes, he looks for a woman with 'moral values'. In 2009, Seidu's first sent users the message that I have quoted in the introduction. This message sounds very lyrical, and this is not surprising considering the source; except for the first and third sentence, the text is directly copied from the R. Kelly song 'spirit'.[9]

In one of the rare papers to cover romance scams, Whitty (2013: 667; 671) claims that romance scams work by using marketing techniques and by exploiting certain cognitive biases (see also Koon and Yoong 2013). Instead, I would suggest that romance scam messages work just like regular messages at online dating sites. In a word, scammers have to craft texts that are both believable and fascinating. They, like all other users, have to make two claims believable: the claim that the writer has genuinely fallen in love and that his online persona does not deviate too much from his offline one.

Interestingly, Seidu does not achieve this by copying regular messages from other users but by adapting romantic narratives directly from popular culture, romance novels, self-help literature about romantic relationships and other sources. His addition to the text of R. Kelly's song is minor but important. In the first sentence, he alludes to the victim's profile. Such explanations are commonly used persuasion strategies for online dating sites that create the illusion that both sides are connected. Still, his reference is very vague, and Seidu can use this text for all his targets. Many of his emails are directly copied from various sources. A text about the 'qualities of a good relationship' originates from a female American blogger.[10] He appropriates another text from American religious literature for women.[11] Most of his emails are a collage of such contemporary sources. In one email, Seidu even self-reflexively comments on

8 | Burrell (2012: 72) argues that Ghanaians perceive such impersonations not as joyful experimentation but as 'flexible self-representation for the sake of persuasion'. In contrast, Cassiman (2016) employs the term 'trickster' to explore the exciting and disrupting nature of impersonating someone else.

9 | Robert Kelly, 'Spirit', Album Happy People/U Saved Me, 2004. The error in the third sentence, 'soul the sky' instead of 'soar the sky', suggests that Seidu picked the text up by listening to the song.

10 | See: http://romancelessons.blogspot.de/2005/07/three-qualities-of-good-relationship_11.html

11 | David C. Cook (ed.), 2000: God's Little Devotional Journal for Women. Colorado Springs: Honor books.

his use of intertextuality: 'My goodness, perhaps I'm making this sound like a romance novel or a self-help book. I really hope not though. Just want to share a little about me and how I feel about u' (Email from Seidu, 2009). Indeed, Seidu does not merely copy and paste but also adapts these texts to the expectation of his readership. In his four years of writing emails, he constantly improves his emails and revises his texts.

His texts also gain credibility because of the photos Seidu provides with his second email. These show a good-looking American man in his fifties, holding a recently caught fish in one photo and posing with his son in the other. These pictures were stolen from private photo albums and allow Seidu to appropriate the visuals of American family life. Such photos are markers of authenticity and give further credibility to his story.

In the various formats of email scams, African cybercriminals defraud their victims by crafting credible and fascinating stories. Appadurai (1996: 31) understands 'imagination as a social practice' and has argued that the fantasies circulating in mass media are at the core of emerging global connections (see Burrell 2008: 4-5). The way in which scammers use such fantasies prove his point. In the case of gold or inheritance scams, they draw on globally circulating narratives about Africa and wealth creation (Beek 2016a: 308).[12] In the case of romance scams, they draw on globally circulating narratives about romantic love. These stories are believable for the victims because they derive from texts written by people with similar understandings of romantic love.

In the context of the anthropology of love, romance scams are just one – and a very peculiar – instance of romantic love as a transnational phenomenon. The mere fact that Seidu started romantic relationships with women in the United States, Europe, but also India and China, is not surprising as such.[13] He and the women responding to him seem to share a basic understanding of the idiom of romantic love. The anthropology of love has long established that romantic love is a social practice that nowadays is common in many, if not all societies, though specific understandings of it do vary (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006; Bochow 2010). Anthropologists have also studied how transnational connections have reshaped romantic love (Padilla et al. 2007). Romance scams show to what an extent people in very different societies communicate through the shared idiom of romantic love.

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12 | Seidu also sometimes describes the dire conditions and his opportunities in Ghana and thereby draws on imaginaries of Africa in the Global North. However, these allusions are not at the core of his format.

13 | Interestingly, romance scams do not really fit the writing-back paradigm or a postcolonial grand narrative because many of the correspondences are South-South interactions. While in each interaction distinct practices and understandings of romantic love come to the fore, the ones from Europe or the U.S. are merely one of them.

Yet writing scam emails consists of more than copying global discourses: it also requires innovation. Merely reproducing romantic texts would probably not be sufficiently interesting. While intertextuality imbues his texts with credibility, Seidu's texts mainly instil fascination by introducing new elements to global narratives of romance. Additionally, only copying material would not provide sufficient text. While Seidu carefully crafts the first letters, and needs to write fresh content to fill hundreds of subsequent emails or messages on instant-messages services, such as the following:

Hello Fengyue, I really enjoyed your reply. Your responses were very eloquent and heart felt. (...) Pillars must be apart to support its structure, not too far apart, yet not to close for each position creates weakness unless these pillars are the perfect distance working in concert to support its portion of the structure.Wanting to find a balance in all relationships in all their various forms. I heard a saying years ago: "You have to become the person you want to attract." I found this very insightful at the time. But through the years this statement has deepened, like it was seed, when I first heard it, planted in my soul. A time later, saying this statement.... it felt like a yearling tree, within me, I feeling a .....wow....or ahhhhhh.... and no
(Email from Seidu, 2009).

This text is not appropriated from American or European blogs or pop culture. Instead, the vocabulary – with its dense and obscure metaphors – is very reminiscent of Pentecostalist preaching, Ghanaian self-help literature about romantic love and flirting practices in Ghana.[14] Seidu probably heard or read these lines in his everyday life and then used them in these emails. He thereby introduces 'original content', meaning content that has not been uploaded to the internet before. He creates new narratives by combining content from various discourses. Indeed, his emails also draw from the genre of love letters in Africa, which has a distinct writing style and a long history (Breckenridge 2000; Fair 2004).[15] In Ghana, valentine's cards with lyrical language have become

14 | The religious dimension is very much part of romantic practices and discourses in Africa. Rijk van Dijk (2015: 10) convincingly argues that 'Christianity in Africa has become an important carrier of romance'. Even Seidu's use of R. Kellys' song 'Spirit' is a form of appropriating religious content into a romantic context, as it is not a love song but about a spiritual quest. Lindholm (2006: 7) sees romantic love as akin to other forms of desire for the sacred: 'Romantic love is one modern form that this yearning takes, offering the experience of salvation in this world, even if only sporadically and in fantasy' (Lindholm 2006: 17).

15 | However, these and other romantic practices are of course not disconnected from the ones in other regions. Thomas and Cole (2009: 5) argues convincingly that local ideals and practices of romantic love in Africa have long been influenced by and entan-

popular (Bochow 2010: 151-2). Parikh (2004: 16) argues one reason Uganda has such a vibrant practice of writing love letters is because other globally recognized romantic practices are not available; she describes these letters as having an elaborate language that is very inventive and borrows heavily from Christian sermons. Hunter's (2009: 151) article on sex and exchange in South Africa includes a love letter between two youths; their style is similar to scamming emails, containing constant repetitions of key phrases like love and highly emotional promises and appeals. This writing style stands in sharp contrast to the way that users from the Global North communicate on dating sites. Both Marx (2012: 100) and Dombrowski (2011: 261) have found that the first messages from Germans on dating sites are very reserved and avoid emotional language.[16] Yet it seems to be exactly the scammers' writing style that some women respond to emotionally. Scammers like Seidu do not only adapt globally circulating narratives of romantic love but also bring West-African ones to new audiences.

The longer the scam goes on, the more improvised, expressive and emotional Seidu's writing becomes. This also comes with a change of communication medium. After first using only emails, Seidu often begins to communicate via instant messaging in parallel; his emails are also increasingly written in the simplified grammar and language used there.[17] In these conversations, Seidu mentions titbits of his fictional life, about his work, family meetings and sickness that befall him. Yet for the most part his messages and emails consist of declarations of love:

> u know i still love u and no matter what i still love u as my wive and i know u gonna be my queen so why worry. am with u and love is in control and nothing more trust am with u deeply. because u are the only one i ever love if am not lieying to you. love is in control trust me i will change your situation and makes u happy. u just give me a chance to prove my self.be with me never ever worry am your husband trust me am with u all the time.i love u so kisses hugs is for u now am Seidu your loving one
> (Email from Seidu, 2008).

gled with similar ones of European colonizers, of Islam or, more recently, of Bollywood films from India.

16 | Marx (2012: 106) also argues that these texts are written to avoid losing face if the respondent ignores it. Scammers have a decisive advantage because they use a fake persona that circumvents such fears. Instead, Seidu reveals everything about his fake online persona and declares his love as early as the second email.

17 | This writing style also masks his problems with grammar and orthography. Moving to dating sites of non-native speakers was probably also an attempt to hide these shortcomings.

Each sentence varies the declaration of love, and highly affectionate words are perpetually repeated.[18]

As I have shown, his emails are an attempt to create credibility and fascination by drawing on certain narratives. Still, to most outside observer it remains incomprehensible that people believe these texts. The main reason for the scammers' success is that the activity that they are engaged in – namely storytelling – grants them certain privileges and dissuades readers from questioning the storyteller's claim to represent reality. While readers may well constantly scrutinize and disbelieve the claims in the scammers' emails, they probably suspend their mistrust with regards to claims I make as an author about doing fieldwork in a Ghanaian police station and meeting all the people involved. Gabriel (2004: 25) describes such relationships as a 'very complex contract between storyteller and audience which entails the granting of the audience of attention, a temporary suspension of disbelief, a temporary curbing of criticism and inquiry, in exchange for delivering a narrative which makes sense (verisimilitude), yields pleasure or consolation (entertainment or catharsis), but sustains numerous hidden assumptions about legitimate and non-legitimate forms of representation'. As soon as readers of these emails accept them as a form of storytelling that represents reality, their suspension of disbelief with regards to the story also becomes a suspension of mistrust towards the storyteller. However, whether the reader sticks to the terms of this narrative contract is constantly under threat. One of the highly emotional words that Seidu repeats three times in the last quoted email is 'trust'. In many of his emails, trust comes up again and again. Trust haunts Seidu's writings because he writes against the suspicions and mistrust of his readers, as will become apparent when we turn to their email responses.

Responses: Maintaining and Suspending Mistrust

Romance scams are not one-directional messages but indeed dynamic interactions, and the responses of the scammers' counterparts are equally important to understand them. While the emails of these women are initially about themselves and their hopes, the emails also hint at doubt, suspicion and underlying feelings of mistrust. Or, employing the terminology of Luhmann (2014: 1), they

18 | Seidu often writes: ‚we need to talk about anything and everything. every detail of the day. I want to hear and learn everything about you'. However, he rarely (or only superficially) responds to questions or details in the women's emails. This suggests that these email conversations are more about imagining and narrating a romantic relationship than actually engaging in one. The highly emotional but generic texts probably allow readers to imagine very personal dreams and hopes.

engage in mistrust as a defensive arrangement (see also Mühlfried's introduction to this volume). Even before Seidu has mentioned money, many readers are highly suspicious. Most of them have heard of romance scams and a few were even victims before. This is most visible in the low response rate that Seidu has, only a fraction of his initial messages even leads to a conversation.

This mistrust also surfaces when Seidu fails to craft a plausible persona of an American construction worker for his romantic narrative. He sometimes uses stolen photos that supposedly depict his house but show pink, antique furniture and a doll collection. One woman replied that 'most men do not have lots of pink in their bedroom' and do not 'collect dolls'. While for Seidu these pictures appeared as plausibly depicting the bedroom of a romantically inclined American, the women he sent them to were irritated by pictures, which probably originated from the house of an older woman; one woman stopped their correspondence at that point. When called out on the photos, Seidu writes: 'everything i [you] saw in the picture is real. pink is my favorite, but blues count alots in my life,remember i belong to myself and nobody else. i was raised by mum and its all good to be romantic, thats me and love.' By claiming that the colour blue is equally important for him he tries to underscore his alignment with conventional masculine role models. This makes apparent the complex gender politics Seidu is engaging in. The romantic self-help literature he uses is mostly written by female writers and therefore provides romantic fantasies of understanding men that resonate with his audience. However, using pictures that show his supposed bedroom with dolls and pink flowers contradict conventional imaginaries of masculinity too openly.[19]

Mistrust also surfaced because of Seidu's emotional language and his pace:

> I asked you if you wrote while drinking... Eric that is a fair question, your emails often start out easy to understand, and then get confusing and hard to understand.... What's up with that? You need to tell me what is going on with you...
> I'm so sorry – I just can't take this seriously Eric. It is not possible to love someone you haven't met or spoken to. It is a delusion, perhaps you are very lonely, for which I am sympathetic. (...)
> You don't really address what I say to you, you seem to think you can just make this happen. (...) I am a serious person and this just makes no sense at all...
> (Email from Maria, 2007).

19 | Yet this is a rare error in an otherwise competent front-stage performance. For the most part, Seidu is an adept transnational mediator of distinct notions of romance and gender, like many romance scammers. They have to recognize, select and adapt elements of romantic practice that are markedly different from their own, both geographically and regarding notions of gender.

Maria's doubts address various elements of Seidu's email. While some women seem to accept his writing style and read it as romantically charged, Maria interprets it as symptoms of intoxication. Moreover, she probably joined the dating site with the expectation of dating someone offline, as a way to facilitate face-to-face interactions. Seidu acts as if online communication allows a romantic relationship and intimacy on its own, he quickly talks about 'love' and cybersex. Many women refuse this, stating that this is either 'too fast' (Email from Shannon, 2008) or, in Maria's case, conflicts with their understanding of online interactions.[20] In other email conversations, doubts and suspicions are never explicitly expressed. However, some women just stop responding. Mistrust is the dominant mode of engagement in these interactions, even if it is never mentioned. This becomes apparent as soon as Seidu asks for money.

After the conversation has been going on for approximately twenty days, Seidu writes that he will travel to Ghana with his son to work in a Gold mine. Whitty (2013: 679) calls this next phase of romance scams the crisis moment. After arriving and initial success, Seidu abruptly claims that he is in urgent need of financial help: he cannot access ATM machines in a 'third world country' or his son John gets sick and needs medical treatment. He closes with a declaration of love and mutual support: 'bear in mind i can do the same thing when you are in trouble,my love is open to you but this is just matter of trust' (Email from Seidu, 2007).[21]

While asking for money is obviously dangerous for the continuation of the relationship, when exploring it within the terminology of a narrative contract this is revealed to be even more crucial. Most women have suspended their disbelief because Seidu engaged with them as a storyteller whose texts they enjoyed. However, by asking them to act he changes this relationship and he attempts to change their role. As soon as they are no longer listeners but actors, their level of scrutiny changes accordingly. Indeed, this moment actually reveals that the women Seidu has conversed with still were actively maintaining mistrust throughout these interactions, even when they seemed totally convinced by his love emails as stories:

> Please do not email me again as I shall not be answering any more of your emails. I told you right from the start I am sick of people asking me for money, it is the height of ignorance to ask someone you don't know to help you, and rest assured I would never ask you for money or help, it is not appropriate to ask such a thing of a stranger. I told

20 | Another woman also states quite explicitly the difficulties of intimacy in transnational interactions: 'eric.... you would die for me???? well, where are you babe???? do you expect me to believe that????' (Email from Galina, 2009).

21 | Parallel to the email, Seidu simultaneously asks for help via instant messaging and on the phone, putting pressure on his target.

you from the beginning I have had so many men with the same tale as you asking me for money and I WILL NOT BE CONNED.
(Email from Samantha, 2008)

The women's responses are remarkably similar by pointing out that they do not 'know' Arthur.[22] They thereby point out the inherent structure of online interactions: that these are front stage performances, in which the backs stage in unknowable due to anonymity. Additionally, they often write that they have experienced or learnt about romance scams. This does not only mean that they were aware to what extent online front stage interaction may deviate from the back stage. It also suggests that during the whole online interaction they maintain a certain level of mistrust towards Seidu, irrespectively of the way they interacted on the front stage.

Few women send money to Seidu, although some sent him about 2,000 USD, and one gave him 40,000 USD in the course of a year. It is not surprising given that some women suspend their mistrust. The suspension of disbelief is an inherent part of storytelling, and online interactions also involve – and require – the ability to suspend mistrust. Yet these women are surprisingly not fully unaware that they are being scammed. In other words, their mistrust never disappears but lingers on, flaring up again and again, and they are simultaneously trusting and mistrusting the scammer.[23]

This comes out most clearly in the case of Mallory. After sending him several hundred USD, Seidu asked her for money again. She responded: 'I am sorry but I must end this relationship between us two. I am really under the impression you are not who you say you are, and for my own sake & safety I do not want this to go on anymore. (...) I am definitely not allowing you to manipulate me with your words.' Nevertheless, she continues to send him more money. Even after many people have told her that she is being scammed, she writes in a later email: 'I cant believe you are stuck in a foreign country with no money, no food, I just cant believe it. (...) NOW YOU TELL ME WHY THE HELL I SHOULD TRUST YOU.' This open question already suggests that she is – in some way – prepared to be convinced again. And she indeed continues to send money. Then, she finds Seidu's profiles on other dating sites and posts on online forums, in which Seidu's previous victims tell of their experiences:

22 | Many even explicitly refute his appeal to trust him: 'your right I do not trust you, I know nothing about you, I do not even know if you are from Alaska, how am i supposed to know.....who you are.....you have given me nothing.' (Email from Kelley, 2009)

23 | Hörlin (2016: 111) also provides a possible reading, when she writes that mistrust has both an affective and cognitive dimension, and that cognitive mistrust often coincides with affective mistrust.

You should check ALL your website you use, It was so easy the name clicked my brain into action, I musty agree i knew all the time you were up to something, but i didnt believe it, or was it i didn't want to believe you could do it.....But you did.
(Email from Mallory, 2009)

These few sentences suggest she was aware that she was being conned, but that she did not 'want to believe it'. In other words, in the course of their online interaction Mallory wilfully suspended her mistrust towards him. Despite her better knowledge, she suppressed her awareness of the back stage. She and other women sending money are not naively trusting the scammers' emails. They are instead oscillating between maintaining mistrust and believing in their tales but then decide on the latter. Remarkably, the interaction between Mallory and Seidu did not even end at this point. However, while she was trying to send him money yet again, an employee of a Ghanaian bank warned her and she finally stopped.

It is difficult to grasp the reasons for this wilful suspension of mistrust and ignorance of better knowledge. It also stands in stark contrast to Gabriel's (2004: 24) notion that a narrative is fundamentally broken as soon as 'the narrative veil has slipped to allow us to catch a glimpse of the storyteller as deceiver'. Both the biographical situation of the reader and the appeal of storytelling itself lead to the continued suspension of mistrust. In Mallory's case, the imagined romance with Seidu probably promises a way out of a life she experiences as desperate. Her marriage failed, she is on government support and suffers social isolation. She acquired the money she sent to him from loans, and her later pleas to him to repay her are distressing to read. Another woman, Verónica, had sent Seidu money once but then refused to send more. In her final email, she voices doubts but also writes: 'i think i may have set myself up for a broken heart....but thats what happens when you take a chance, this will be a lesson well learned. (...) thanks for the past couple of weeks, you really knew all the right things to say.' She herself points to narration or storytelling as the main reason for her behaviour. Despite her mistrust, she is grateful for the romantic fiction that Seidu enabled her to take part in. In the interplay of mistrust and fictional romantic love, she has decided on the former but still yearns for the latter. In a way, this is not too far from the way that we all deal with the realization that a story, in literature or film, deviates from the facts it claims to represent: we also focus on the deeper truth, hopes and anxieties it speaks about.

The Back Stage of Transnational, Online Interactions

Interestingly, Seidu himself never stops telling his story of love and crisis.[24] When his pleas for money have been rebuffed, he always writes long letter declaring his love, in the hope that the respondent will decide to send him money after all. However, even when he seems to accept that he has failed, he performs his online persona:

> u better don't play on mind OK.u kept me insane .all long i believed u and u betrayed me for a penny .and i have learn t lots from u .after all u didn't send me down here and i must fight for my return just have good with ur family and leave me alone ok bye. Seidu (Email from Seidu, 2007).

The last sentence suggest that he has given up, nevertheless he sticks to his story and even bothers to write this email in the first place. While his professed love certainly is not authentic, his feelings of being 'betrayed' perhaps are. This seems plausible because the situation of crisis is not a pure front stage performance but resonates with his everyday life. In Ghana, people routinely rely on friends and family to borrow money in times of need. When Seidu encounters financial difficulties, he asks his friends for money in ways very similar to his scam script, as shown earlier. The narrative of a crisis is probably the least fictional element of the scammer's narrative but corresponds with the stories he tells in non-fraudulent emails. In his scams, he describes crisis moments that are familiar to him, that actually resonate with his own situation.

This hints at the fact that the relationship between front and back stage in romance scams may have more layers then discussed up to this point. As online interactions, scams are about the differences between online performance and offline reality. As romantic interactions, however, scams are about the differences between an emotional and instrumental dimension of relationships. Scammers like Seidu insist that helping a partner by giving money is part of the newly established romantic relationship. Indeed, beyond all fictions, romance scams are also interactions in which very different but genuinely felt understandings of romantic love clash. Cole (2009: 111) argues that in the Global North, romantic love is understood as clearly separated from material interests, while in Africa instrumental and non-instrumental forms of relationships are more intertwined (see also Hunter 2009: 152). This stands in

24 | He only breaks character on one occasion. After Mallory stopped sending him money, he still tries to convince her to send more and writes in one of these exchanges: 'hey u really dont mean anything to me,i mean life must goes on and im in position to hurt u,may god forgive if …' (Email from Seidu, 2009). However, this threat is also a fictional story element, as he has no way of harming her.

stark contrast to attitudes on dating platforms in the global North, on which financial independence is often an explicit condition of continuing with online dating (Dombrowski 2011: 265). In Ghana, receiving gifts or 'chop money' is an expected part of some forms of romantic relationships. Bochow (2010: 175) argues convincingly that gifts in relationships can be 'speaking objects' that affirm affection. However, money send via Western Union cannot carry such symbolic meanings.

By drawing the attention to different understandings and practices of romantic love in Ghana, this contribution does not want to imply that these – or any – are uniformly held nationwide or, even more implausible, apply to the whole of Africa. On the contrary, romance scams also violate expectations concerning romantic relationships that most people in Ghana adhere to, because material gains are the exclusive aim in these interactions. While some people seem to concede more ambivalence to romantic relationships, in cases of fraud this ambivalence ends, as only one side is interested in material gains.[25]

Yet this also suggests that people involved in transnational, online interactions from different locations of the world do have different ways of relating front and back stage in these interactions. Conducting research on young Ghanaian internet users, Fair and others (2009: 36) have observed that they unself-consciously toy with their online self-presentations. Burrell (2008: 19) argues that many Ghanaian youth do not necessarily perceive misrepresentations to request assistance from someone abroad as fraudulent, and that such requests are part of their understanding of wealth distribution. Seidu's court proceedings can be understood similarly. In the end, one of the women he had defrauded managed to get him arrested. The court gave him a very lenient sentence, a fine of 1,050 cedis (approximately 500 USD). As I explored in elsewhere, people in Ghana have very different understandings of romance scams (Beek 2016a: 316-8). This brings to the fore that people connected by online communication have different understandings of the way that love and material interests – but also offline reality and online presentations – ought to relate. Both as romantic and as online interactions, these scams reveal distinct ways of relating front and back stage. In other words, they reveal different expectations to what extent these have to be aligned.

While the Ghanaians I spoke to about scamming never mentioned mistrust, all of them were deeply puzzled that people abroad believe in these stories. Like many others, one police detective explained the scammers' success not by their creative writing, as I do, but by invisible forces: 'When you receive

25 | Cole (2009: 127) also argues that relationships in Africa increasingly are unable to fulfil both affectionate and material desires. Following this argument, romance scams enable relationships in which these desires are very clearly divided, being only about romantic desires on one and only about money on the other side.

this kind of mails in your inboxes, think twice, because of these people, these boys here. I don't know whether the victims do believe or not. Thus, the scammers are using black magic. Whatever story they tell you, you believe.' In the view of many Ghanaians, Europeans are not persuaded by the texts but by the scammers' use of local religious practices to charm readers, practices that are called Juju or Sakawa.[26] Ghanaian perceptions of scamming do not focus on the emails but on 'spiritual' attacks and on the lack of certain – invisible – defences on the part of the Europeans. This explanation, or folk theory, of defences is very similar to the way I use the term mistrust here; this imaginary also suggests that people adhering to it take the necessity of such defences, or shall I say mistrust, for granted when it comes to email interactions with strangers. This does not mean that Ghanaians have a different level of mistrust when it comes to online or romantic interactions. Especially when looking at the level of security in Ghana, I do not agree with the Comaroffs (2006: 5-6) that crime and disorder are, in general, a part of everyday life in the Global South. To the contrary, people in relationships all over the world oscillate between mistrusting and believing. However, as a result of certain historical trajectories and specific social contexts, some people seem to be less scandalized by the distinctions between front and back stage and see mistrust as a more necessary part of everyday life.

Conclusion

Romance scamming is foremost storytelling, and scammers invite readers to partake in this story. They create a romantic relationship based only on writing, between people that live far away. They craft the credibility of their tale by referring to globally shared discourses of romantic love and create fascination by referring to Ghanaian ones. Crucially, by framing their interaction as storytelling, they imply a narrative contract that dissuades readers from scrutinizing their claims.

However, we as bystanders also tell a story about romance scams: The tale that the people responding to scammers naïvely trust them. Yet, when looking at these emails as interactions, it becomes apparent that the respondents to these emails are aware of the peculiar way that front and back stage relate in transnational, online interactions. Despite playing along, they maintain their mistrust throughout the interaction. In a few cases, they decide that they prefer to partake in the story even when this means sending money. Scammers do not exploit people's trust but their ability to suspend disbelief as listeners and to wilfully suspend mistrust as actors. Mühlfried (introduction to this volume)

26 | People also believe that many scammers have stopped using emails and now multiply their money only by such 'spiritual' means.

argues that mistrust is a mode of relating to others that has defensive functions and aims towards the weakening of social ties. Romance scams show the extent to which many people yearn for and dream of meaningful, strong social ties. When they are taken in by a story that provides them with just that, they even dispense with these defences despite their better knowledge.

As transnational interactions, romance scams also suggest that there are distinct understandings of acceptable forms of misrepresentation in stories and of mistrust in social interactions. Both when it comes to romance and the internet, some people seem to be more aware – and subsequently less scandalized by the fact – that the performances on the back stage deviate from – and are messier than – the stories people tell about themselves. They seem to understand the interplay between trusting and mistrusting as a part of everyday life, and the latter is more recognized as a necessary practice in a complex world, both offline and online.

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When Stories Seem Fake

Tacit Mistrust in Domestic Violence Counselling in South Africa

Melanie Brand

While it is commonly agreed that trust plays a major role in counselling and therapeutic interventions, mistrust as a constitutive component has largely been overlooked in the literature.[1] Drawing on ethnographic material obtained in urban South African women's shelters and other institutions offering counselling to victims of domestic violence, this chapter discusses counsellors' generalized mistrust towards women's stories of abuse and the ways in which mistrust materializes in the counselling encounter.

I suggest that in the context of domestic violence counselling, generalized mistrust brings forth a specific mode of interaction characterized by a tacit structure. To use an image from the realm of the magician, I refer to interactions guided by mistrust as inherently *doppelbödig* (engl.: double-layered). Like the magic hat that hides objects in an invisible compartment, mistrusting actors assume another person to purposefully hide "the truth".[2] As will be shown, suspecting a client of lying provoked counsellors to follow a hidden agenda themselves: quietly looking for clues in clients' stories or behaviour, counsellors attempted to find out the truth that they assumed beneath the surface of a made-up story. I suggest that in order for mistrust to remain tacit and not to become explicit – for example, in the form of accusations – mistrusting actors need to be able to walk a thin line, engaging in concealment and information-generating practices simultaneously.

In the course of my research on institutionalized domestic violence counselling in South Africa, many of the counsellors I spoke to reported that they

1 | Many thanks go to my colleagues who significantly helped to strengthen the text's line of argumentation with their valuable feedback and constructive criticism. Special thanks go to Jay Campbell for assisting the copy-editing process.

2 | In this chapter, single quotation marks are used for highlighting quotations and emic terms, while double quotation marks are used in a distancing manner alluding to the term's ambiguity.

were regularly confronted with women who used 'fake stories of abuse' in order to receive accommodation at shelters. Commonly, they cited the high levels of poverty, homelessness and a lack of social services as well as dysfunctional families, or the interplay of these factors, as source of the problem. Therefore, I consider how counsellors' generalized mistrust is connected to socio-political structures and how it inspires specific practices at shelters in turn. Here, in particular, the procedures of 'screening' and 'monitoring' are discussed. It will be shown that these bureaucratically and therapeutically legitimized practices serve a double purpose. Firstly, they serve to determine if women meet the shelter's intake criteria and to outline the further course of counselling. Secondly, and less obviously, these practices give counsellors the opportunity to check the veracity of women's accounts when in doubt. It will be shown that certain characteristics like incoherent stories or (too) common narratives are likely to foster counsellors' suspicion and scepticism.

Counsellors and social workers offering support for victims of domestic violence agreed that the truth would always come out eventually, it would just take time. Mistrust in the area of my research is thus linked to the conviction of an objective truth that is out there and that can be revealed. As will be shown, when counsellors mistrust, they embark on a truth-hunt (see Brand forthcoming).[3]

Focusing on how allegedly fake stories of victimhood cause counsellors to mistrust clients, I neither deny the importance of trust in counselling nor question counsellors' general aim of creating trustful relationships with clients. Rather, attention is brought to the structural conditions that are likely to generate mistrust. In this respect, the overall high levels of mistrust in South African society must be taken into account in order to avoid making mistrust a characteristic unique to shelters. Given South Africa's colonial history, experiences of racial oppression throughout the apartheid era and current political scandals, the prevalent mistrust of citizens toward the government, authorities and politics in general is hardly surprising (see Askvik and Bak 2005). Numerous newspaper articles as well as scholarly publications have discussed the phenomena of absent trust and prevailing mistrust toward the various spheres of South African society. Take, for example, academic work on mistrust in transnational education projects (Le Grange 2003), in the health sector (Froestad 2005, Richter 2015: 118-121), and of course in the context of security (Kirsch 2010, Landman 2004).

3 | Parts of the empirical material and some of the observations that I discuss in the following appear in the German publication: 'Praxeologien der Wahrheit im Kontext häuslicher Gewalt in Südafrika. Von Narrativen Identitäten, Authentizität und Evidenz' (Brand forthcoming).

Given the elusiveness of mistrust as a social phenomenon this contribution begins with methodological notes on how tacit mistrust can be the object of qualitative empirical research. After a brief overview of the current state of the literature discussing trust and mistrust in therapeutic settings, I lay out some conceptual considerations on mistrust. These considerations lay the groundwork for the subsequent analysis of counsellors' generalized mistrust in domestic violence counselling. It will be discussed why mistrust is common amongst domestic violence counsellors and which indicators are likely to provoke suspicion among counsellors towards women's stories. Emphasis is placed on what counsellors do when they mistrust and how they use the practices of screening and monitoring in order to generate information. The text closes with a suggestion to conceptualize mistrust as a trigger for double-layered interactions, thus introducing the German term *doppelbödig* as a heuristic metaphor.

Methodological Notes on Researching Tacit Mistrust

During a total thirteen months of fieldwork in urban South Africa, I spoke to social workers, counsellors and other professionals offering support services in the area of domestic violence, and when possible took part in their daily routines. At times, I was a silent observer, like at the Domestic Violence Court. At other times, I actively participated, for example, by volunteering at women's shelters. As it became clear during fieldwork, service providers regarded establishing a personal and trustful relationship with clients as a prerequisite for successful counselling.[4] However, it also became apparent that mutual mistrust affected counselling, especially during the initial counsellor-client encounter.

In her monograph on figures of mistrust, Sinje Hörlin (2016: 19-20) notes that endeavours to empirically research mistrust were complicated by the topic's implicitness and societal taboo. However, 'truth', 'suspicion' and a general doubtfulness about clients' stories were re-occurring topics in most of my interviews, frequently broached by my interlocutors without a targeted inquiry.

Furthermore, after having spent considerable time among counsellors and social workers, I learned to recognize their suspicion on the basis of specific indicators. Depending on the person and circumstances, these could be detailed inquiries during screening, sometimes the tone of voice, or a questioning smile. In this vein, I conceive of mistrust as an attitude that gains social relevance in observable practices making tacit mistrust a viable topic for participant observation. In quiet moments, counsellors would discuss cases with their colleagues and also with me. In staff meetings, information about clients

4 | Most counsellors followed Carl Rogers' (1951, 1961) humanistic, person-centred approach.

was discussed in more detail. Such conversations presented an opportunity for insight into what would provoke counsellors' suspicion, and, therefore, enabled me to recognize suspicion, scepticism and doubt in specific contexts. Therefore, I suggest that long-term ethnographic research offers the opportunity to observe and to analyse tacit mistrust in everyday interactions on the micro-level. In order to do so, researchers must be able to identify context-specific expressions of mistrust and their normative purport.

The Counsellor-Client Relationship in the Literature

The relationship between therapist/counsellor and client has inspired a wide range of studies in different disciplines. A large corpus from the field of psychology indicates the importance of the 'therapeutic alliance' – the relationship between therapist and client – for a positive therapy or counselling outcome (see Ardito and Rabellino 2011). In this respect, it has been shown that the therapist's ability 'to instill confidence and trust within the therapeutic frame' (Ackerman and Hilsenroth 2003: 4) is crucial for the formation of a bond that in turn influences the therapeutic process positively. Compared to studies focusing on trust within the therapeutic context, less attention has been paid to the role of mistrust (see Cook et al. 2004). Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, mistrust in therapy or counselling was widely discussed in respect of 'cultural mistrust' analysing the relationship between "black clients" and "white therapists" (Terrell and Terrell 1984, Nickerson et al. 1994).

While it is widely acknowledged that clients' mistrust towards therapists or counsellors impacts negatively on therapeutic performance, knowledge about how counsellors' mistrust towards clients affects treatment is scare. From interdisciplinary research conducted in medical settings we know that mistrust between physicians and patients increases reciprocally (see Cook 2004). Furthermore, research from medical anthropology reveals the need to closely examine counsellors' and therapists' mistrust, which would point to a connection between mistrust and treatment insecurities (Merrill et al. 2002).

In this respect, it is important to take a closer look at the role of the counsellor. The everyday work of the domestic violence counsellors I did research with was mainly characterized by two areas of responsibility: the offering of socio-psychological counselling, and the adherence to and practice of bureaucratic rules and procedures. As domestic violence counsellors at the same time offer social services and, rather autonomously, regulate access to these services, they fall under the rubric of street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 2010, see also Kelly 2016 for doctors allocating disability grants). This positioning in a double-role is fraught with conflict. With each role demanding and operating according to specific logics, practices, rhetoric and truth-assumptions, counsellors often

found themselves in dilemmas that called for nuanced decision-making. Given their moral identity as helpers (see Kolb 2014), having to restrict their services to women who met the legal definition of "the domestic violence victim", constituted a challenging aspect of their everyday work for many.

In this sense, the presence of generalized mistrust towards women's stories of abuse allowed counsellors to reduce complexity, at least in the long run. The discussion of the empirical material will show that in developing habitualized practices and simplifications, like the use of stereotypes in decision-making processes, counsellors were able to discriminate between those who deserved assistance and those who did not. However, Niklas Luhmann's (1979, 2014 [1968]) understanding, according to which mistrust is to be seen as a functional equivalent of trust inspiring complexity-reducing strategies, fails to acknowledge the analytical potential of mistrust. It is my aim to go beyond this conceptualization and to show that, at least with regards to action-theory, interactions driven by mistrust are fundamentally different to those based on trust. In the following, I will discuss how I use mistrust on a conceptual level.

Conceptual Considerations

In light of what little attention mistrust has received as a distinct phenomenon in the social sciences, I will spell out some conceptual thoughts before engaging in the analysis of the ethnographic material. In the literature, diverse conceptualizations of mistrust can be found that mostly make sense of the phenomenon in relation to trust, usually describing mistrust as its flipside (Van de Walle and Six 2014, Hörlin 2016). Moreover, it is commonly assumed that while trust is an inherently positive force fostering social integration and sociality, mistrust evokes social fragmentation and is, therefore, potentially dangerous or even contagious (Hosking 2014, Hörlin 2016: 9-14). In most of these studies, trust and mistrust are understood to form an equilibrium: diminishing levels of trust are thought to result in an increase of mistrust and vice versa.

However, to equate the absence of trust with the presence of mistrust would suggest that social actors are always engaged in either trust or mistrust relationships. This paints a rather simplistic picture of the social world. Philosopher Edna Ullmann-Margalit offers a more nuanced perspective. According to her 'if I do not trust you, this could mean either that I distrust you – that is, that I have reasons to positively distrust you – or, more minimally, that I just have no reasons to trust you (nor to distrust you either)' (Ullmann-Margalit 2001: 61). What Ullmann-Margalit describes as the absence of both distrust and trust, corresponds to Alfred Schütz's notion of the 'natural attitude' in which 'every state of affairs' is taken for granted and remains 'unproblematic until further notice' (Schutz & Luckmann 1973: 4). I suggest that it is the 'until further no-

tice' that arouses people's suspicion and introduces the need to switch from a natural attitude to an attitude that allows the conscious problematizing and scrutinizing of one's lifeworld. In this respect, I subscribe to the perspective of historian Geoffrey A. Hosking, who conceptualizes mistrust and trust as attitudes:

> It is a more or less lasting view held about some object, event, or person(s) in the outside world. It is a frame of mind, outlook, or perspective which influences one's behaviour or one's disposition to act or think in certain ways. (...) The attitudes may well be shared by others, and in that way are part of the social fabric. (Hosking 2014: 27)

In line with Hosking's definition, I argue that mistrust is an attitude (German: Haltung) that enables and demands from actors a critical engagement with the world and the people with whom they interact. Furthermore, mistrusting actors are inclined to perceive – or rather, to identify – specific phenomena as suspicious, as indicative of an allegedly purposefully hidden truth. Which phenomena are likely to arouse one's suspicion is highly contextualized and dependent on the situation as much as on one's classification of past experiences.

Being aware of their subtle differences, I treat the terms suspicion, scepticism and doubt as part of the same semantic field and use them interchangeably. All three terms occur in the context of actors' normative evaluations of phenomena or people and point to uncertainty and ambiguity. Hence, I regard suspicion, scepticism and doubt as part of a process in which actors form or lose convictions about reality (see Pelkmans 2013, and this volume). In comparison, I conceive of generalized mistrust as a fundamental attitude that develops and persists over time.

For the analysis of counsellors' mistrust towards clients' stories, I prefer to speak of generalized mistrust in order to distance my observations from psychologizing accounts that focus on actors' individual characteristics. Furthermore, the term points to the socio-political conditions and constellations that may foster counsellors' suspicion of certain narratives or a woman's demeanour. As will be shown, service providers' generalized mistrust is based on knowledge about cases in which women were identified as having accessed shelter services by means of fabricated stories. This knowledge was mostly based on first-hand experiences and was substantiated by experiences that had been made by other counsellors and service providers. Hence, generalized mistrust is an attitude that develops over time and that – as it is shared among counsellors across institutions – has become part of the social fabric.

As Luhmann observes, there are social systems in which participants' mistrust cannot be avoided and may even be needed. He further suggests that these systems necessarily need mechanisms preventing mistrust from prevailing. A strategy for achieving this may be found in rationalizing acts of mistrust as

systemic necessities, professional duties or as factual interventions (Luhmann 2014 [1968]: 100). Mistrust then becomes a feature of the system itself and is not attributed to actors individually. In this vein, at women's shelters, practices of mistrust are framed as institutional requirements and become attributed to external structural causes, so losing their otherwise personal implications. Most importantly, they allow mistrust to remain tacit while enabling counsellors to generate information.

As these conceptual remarks make clear, I regard mistrust as a social phenomenon requiring analysis in its own right, without its being situated in normative orders ex ante. Unlike in most debates, in the case of counsellors' generalized mistrust towards clients, mistrust did not appear as a "bad" inclination that needed to be overcome in favour of fostering trustful relationships. To the contrary: it enabled counsellors to differentiate between those who qualified for support services and those who did not. In this way, mistrust was constitutive and linked to the allocation of meagre resources. However, as will be shown in the following, there was room for manoeuvre, for 'being out of line', and for making exemptions. It is these exemptions that highlight the conflicting positions of the counsellor as street-level bureaucrat.

With these considerations in mind, I will now turn to the analysis and discussion of my empirical material. To begin with, I will introduce the field of domestic violence counselling explaining the legal framework that forms the basis for victims' rights to counselling and assistance.

The Field of Domestic Violence Counselling

In South Africa, violence is a phenomenon that permeates various spheres of people's mundane reality. According to a survey commissioned by the South African Government in 2007, it is a country characterized by a 'culture of violence' and, furthermore, by a pervasive and normative acceptance of violence (CSVR 2010: 4). The survey emphasized that, especially among young men, violence was seen as a legitimate tool whereby to gain respect. Today, these observations still hold true. Among the high levels of interpersonal violence, the prevalence of (reported) cases of violence against women is particularly alarming. Despite progressive legislation and a vast number of initiatives tackling the issue on the national, provincial and local level, governmental attempts to counteract incidences of domestic violence have encountered severe difficulties in practice (Watson 2014, Moeketsi 2013, Bendall 2010).

In comparison to the vague policies regulating the allocation of disability grants (Kelly 2016), the South Africa's Domestic Violence Act (1998) seems to offer a relatively precise and extensive legal framework on first sight. According to the Act, domestic violence is not limited to physical assaults, but also in-

cludes sexual, emotional, verbal, psychological and economic abuse as well as intimidation, stalking, harassment, damage to property and entering the residence of the complainant without consent. However, which actions constitute emotional or verbal abuse is open to interpretation. Moreover, some women's shelters specifically render services to 'women in crisis'. Again, what constitutes a crisis is far from clear and rather elusive.

Reflective of the dominant transnational rights-based approach of measures against domestic violence against women (Merry 2003), in South Africa, awareness raising campaigns like '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence' encourage women who have experienced abuse to exercise their rights. Hence, in identifying oneself and, more importantly for the purposes of this contribution, in being identified as a victim of domestic violence by authorities and service providers, women become part of a collective subject – a status that entails certain rights and entitlements. As stated in the Service Charter for Victims of Crime in South Africa, as a victim 'you have the right to request assistance and, where relevant, have access to available social, health and counselling services, as well as legal assistance.' A victim of domestic violence therefore has the right to receive counselling and, if needed, the right to be accommodated at a women's shelter. In the province of Gauteng where I conducted most of my research, women's shelters received governmental subsidies via the Victim Empowerment Programme that prescribes minimum standards for shelter services. Consequently, shelters are required to offer accommodation, toiletries and food as well as counselling and skills programs. These services are either offered free of charge or for comparatively small financial contributions. Given the high levels of poverty and homelessness in South Africa, for many women in need, staying at a women's shelter offered securities and opportunities to improve their lives – regardless of whether they had experienced abuse or not.

Women who have experienced domestic violence may need a wide range of support including medical treatment, legal assistance, therapeutic services and emergency or long-term housing. These needs reflect in the highly diversified and specialized institutional landscape of domestic violence support services. Consequently, clients pass through different institutional contexts as they are referred for complimentary services from one institution to another.

With regard to the formation of generalized mistrust, the referral system plays an important role. For instance, being referred from the South African police to the Department of Social Development, to NGOs offering counselling, to women's shelters or the Domestic Violence Court, women who have reported domestic violence will be passed along a chain of institutions, each encounter demanding their story of abuse to be told according to a distinct logic. As will be shown in the following, service providers suspected that in the process of

bureaucratic socialization incorporated by the referral system, women learnt how to relate and how to adjust their stories in order to increase credibility.

Looking for an Assumed Hidden Truth. What Counsellors Do When They Mistrust

When counsellors mistrust their clients, their suspicion and disbelief towards women's stories gain social relevance in the form of 'screening' and 'monitoring'. These practices allow counsellors to ask for details and make further inquiries as part of bureaucratic and therapeutic routines employed to determine whether women qualify for shelter services. Thus, in this setting, mistrust is connected to the realm of the formal, to bureaucratic and therapeutic practices largely unquestioned by shelter clients. In the following, it will be discussed how counsellors make use of screening and monitoring as part of shelter procedures. The discussion will show how counsellors' everyday work is structured and influenced by both therapeutic and bureaucratic affordances. Furthermore, it will become clear how screening and monitoring allow mistrust to remain tacit during counselling.

The initial encounters between counsellor and prospective client largely follow a bureaucratic protocol. When women arrive at a shelter, firstly, a counsellor or social worker fills in a drop-in form to gather basic information – a process that can be seen as a short assessment. For example, women will be asked to provide their contact details and identification of which a copy will be made and retained in their file. For each woman who comes to stay at the shelter, a file is compiled in which all information relevant to her case is kept. If after the first assessment there are no apparent reasons not to admit a woman – for example, if it is obvious to the counsellor that the woman is homeless or mentally challenged – a full assessment, called 'screening', will follow.

The screening process is structured by an 'admission form' and serves to establish if women qualify for shelter services. The form covers clients' biography and information regarding the current living and working situation. As part of the process, counsellors ask clients about their experiences and note relevant information in the form's respective columns. Though the exact form will differ from one institution to another, it will usually ask for similar details. In the following, an admission form used by Samaria Women's Shelter[5] is discussed exemplarily.

The first page of the admission form refers to personal, yet basic information regarding children, employment, and former contact to shelters. The next

5 | Names of institutions and individuals have been anonymized.

two pages are focused on retrieving more sensitive information and are prefaced with an explanation:

> The following questions are very personal and are aimed at assessing the most appropriate counselling that you will require and not aimed at judging you in any way. Please be honest and discuss with your interviewer if you have any queries. This information will be kept confidential and only shared with your consent.

The preamble is interesting as it explicates what for many women coming to the shelter is a concern: the fear of being judged or not taken seriously. Addressing the non-judgmental approach in such a bureaucratic way, however, clearly produces an ambiguous quality. On the one hand, it explicates and attempts to negate the client's assumed fear and hesitation towards counsellors. On the other, it introduces the possibility of any judgement at all and may heighten women's wariness by default.

In the subsequent section on abuse and trauma, women have to tell their individual 'history of abuse' covering physical, sexual, and emotional abuse as well as whether or not they have experienced domestic abuse in the past. An open section follows in which 'any other traumatic experiences' may be noted, as well as 'any other comments you feel are important from a counselling point of view'. The questionnaire closes with information regarding if, when and where abuse was reported. The client then needs to sign the form confirming that questions were answered 'honestly and openly'.

Samaria's admission form explicitly refers to the need for truthfulness twice: first in the context of 'assessing the most appropriate counselling' before asking details regarding the 'history of abuse', and secondly at the end of the form where women must sign. This legally binding signature serves as a technique that aims to secure truthfulness via a contractual element. Moreover, women have to give specifics regarding if abuse was reported, adding the case number of the protection order if already applied for. Having opened a case at the South African Police Service was regarded an important indicator of truth: for counsellors, the more institutional involvement, the more likely for the client's story to be true.

As was explained to me by social workers, the aim of screening is to identify whether clients meet the shelter's intake criteria. Shelters receiving government subsidies via the national Victim Empowerment Programme may only offer services to victims of domestic violence or human trafficking as part of the funding scheme. Furthermore, shelters set their own intake criteria. Most commonly, homeless women, substance users, sex workers and women with mental challenges did not qualify for shelter accommodation. Shelter staff explained that women with such difficulties were not fit to participate in shelter programs and counselling due to having issues for which the shelter was

not equipped. Therefore, as opposed to what was stated in the preamble above, counsellors were constantly judging – in the sense of evaluating – clients during screening and the selection process.

The consequences of these intake policies are far-reaching and contribute to the further marginalization of women in precarious living situations. Although a couple of homeless shelters exist in Gauteng, they are usually not regarded as a viable option for women. It is well known that women at homeless shelters are more likely to be exposed to sexual violence and theft. Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that homeless women try to be accommodated at women's shelters by using fabricated stories.

For many counsellors, having to exclude certain women from shelter services because they were homeless did not sit easy. While talking to Lisa, a social auxiliary worker, her moral dilemma became clear. Hinting to the elusiveness of shelter regulations prescribed to limit services to women 'in crisis', Lisa explained: 'We, we are not doing homeless women. [We are doing] women who are in crisis. Domestic violence. Homelessness can be a crisis as well (laughs).' (Interview with author, Sept 2014) She added that domestic violence may lead to homelessness in the first place. Lisa's reflections made it clear that the one-dimensional categorization of beneficiaries did not match the complexity of reality she faced in her everyday-work. But, as shelter funding is dependent on governmental subsidies, shelters have to be careful when making exemptions and taking in women who do not match the criteria.

Aside from external indicators, screening presents an opportunity for counsellors to examine women's 'stories' – as the narration of violent experiences are usually called. In the course of screening, women need to tell their biographies through the lens of violence and trauma and must share very personal and sensitive information with the counsellor in order to demonstrate that they are genuine victims of domestic violence. Inconsistencies and disruptions in clients' narratives are usually regarded as indicators of lying. When I asked one of the social workers at a women's shelter how she knew whether a woman was telling the truth, she stated that clients' 'stories would change and then differ after some time. Because they would not remember what they said last time and you would know they have been lying.' (Interview with author, Jan 2014) In these cases, the admission form serves as evidence as it captures relevant aspects of women's stories. The quotation also alludes to Alois Hahn's (2010: 138) observation that it is usually assumed that liars are not capable of organizing their statements in a coherent manner.

Furthermore, the observation of clients' body language was a common technique amongst counsellors in order to identify if clients were lying. As one para-legal counsellor phrased it: 'facial expressions give people away' (Interview with author, Feb 2014). Another social worker confirmed the need to pay

close attention to body language during screening as in most cases, it was too difficult to only tell from the story if a client had been honest. She explained:

> Yo, it's hard. It's really hard. It's difficult because you have to make thorough investigations to really determine if this person is really a victim or not. But merely telling from the story of what they are saying to you, it's very hard. 'Cause you have to look at the, some do have signs, you know, the signs of abuse, you could tell. Or this person has been abused psychologically or physically if you listen to her, the gestures, the physical gestures or whatever, this person has really been abused. And some, you could even tell already they are just making up stories but it's not a simple thing to do. It's difficult. (Social worker, Pretoria. Interview with author, Nov 2014)

At the heart of these truth-telling techniques lies the assumption of an "authentic victim" showing specific observable behaviour. In this sense, being a victim was seen to be an embodied and hence observable experience.

For social workers and counsellors, telling "real" from "fake victims" apart was a challenging aspect of their everyday work. Most of my interlocutors reported that they also relied on 'gut feeling' and years of experience. Staff meetings as well as regular shelter network meetings, during which staff members from all shelters in the Province convened, would give counsellors the opportunity to exchange experiences and talk about difficult cases. These meetings were also useful in helping to identify 'shelter hoppers' – women, who repeatedly made use of shelters, sometimes even under the use of pseudonyms. In one of the shelters, a 'black list' was hung on the wall next to the telephone. The list featured names of clients who were not to be admitted to the shelter anymore. Next to some of the names, aliases that clients had used in the past were added to ensure none slipped through.

In some cases, however, it was not easy to differentiate between true stories and fiction as there was also an in-between, as a social worker reported:

> The women who just come for accommodation and go from one place to another, they speak the language of the shelters because they know from experience which questions will be asked and which answers they have to give so that the social worker becomes empathetic and wants to help that beautiful woman who has been beaten by her husband. Sometimes victims take advantage of their status. Sometimes their stories are very real and you are empathetic with the women. Mostly, their cases are real but not new. Many women re-use their stories and make them sound recent to get accommodation.
> (Social worker, Pretoria. Interview with author, Jan 2014)

The first part of the quotation shows that how to tell a story is a learnable skill (see Garro and Mattingly 2000: 25) and a skill that women may use. Women ei-

ther learn how to tell their story as part of a bureaucratic socialization prompted by the referral process, making necessary for them to repeatedly narrate their experiences when facing different service providers. Counsellors also suspected women of having learned from each other through circulation of promising narratives. The counsellor's quote above also points to the importance of knowing one's rights and knowing the procedures at women's shelters as this knowledge facilitates placement at a shelter. The last part of the quotation refers to the problem of re-used stories that are told in a way that makes them 'sound recent'. This phenomenon is especially interesting as the violent experience in these cases "really" was part of a woman's biography although it may have occurred long ago. Here, altering the element of temporality introduces the possibility of what might be coined a "white lie".

Another way to gain further information about clients is the procedure of monitoring. Monitoring takes place throughout a woman's stay at the shelter and refers to the gathering and compiling of relevant observations with regards to her demeanour. It includes the counsellor's impressions during one-on-one or group sessions that are noted in the client's file. A client's willingness to take part in counselling sessions could serve as another indicator of being a so-called real victim. As a social auxiliary worker explained, people who were not abused would most likely not want to participate in programs. From their reluctance, one could tell who the real victims were, as 'real ones need healing'. Furthermore, clients' behaviour was discussed at shelter staff meetings. Housemothers who, by turns, were present at the shelter for twenty-four hours and helped organize the routine of everyday life, reported incidences that occurred in the shelters' after-hours or over the weekend. For example, if housemothers suspected that a client was depending on substances, they would share this information with colleagues during staff meetings. Counsellors could then pay special attention to the client concerned and decide whether to confront her with the allegations or to continue observations.

As already mentioned, the special attention paid to clients' truthfulness is mainly grounded in socio-political reasons and related to shelters' funding regulations. Due to State funding policies via the Victim Empowerment Programme, shelters may not take in women who do not match the set criteria. However, counsellors will at times bend the rules to take in women they know do not qualify for their services. These could be women who are homeless or who are suffering from illness with nowhere else to turn to (see Shively 2011 for shelters in Turkey). At other times, counsellors would accept women at the shelter even when they did not believe their stories. One woman, for example, came to the shelter claiming to be a refugee fleeing from the female genital mutilation practiced in her home country. Although the social worker who handled the case told me after the intake session that she did not believe the story, she still decided to take the woman in. In this case, her decision-making was prag-

matic: there was enough room at the shelter and the woman had mentioned that she only needed to stay for a week. The social worker explained there was no need to 'dig deeper' at this point since the woman was only passing by. What makes this situation interesting is that although the counsellor mistrusted the client, pragmatic motives kept her from further inquiries and from the attempt to reveal what was "really" going on. In this case, accepting non-knowledge had a productive function (see Kirsch and Dilley 2015).

Nevertheless, accepting clients who did not match the set criteria remains a risky undertaking as governmental funding comes with the need to account for all clients housed at the shelter. Information about shelter clients is regularly checked by the funding department. If shelters are caught 'being out of line', as one of my interlocutors phrased it, it may result in funding cuts, damaging the shelter's operability.

Aside from occasions in which counsellors decided to bend the rules, service providers sensed an increase in people who fraudulently took advantage of social and welfare services. Emerald, a social worker who offers counselling and support to victims of crime at police stations, had been confronted on a regular basis throughout her career with cases in which she suspected fraud. Her following statement reflects the insecurity faced by many service providers when working with victims of crime:

> That [clients who are lying] is also our challenge here in [this police station], 'cause we find many of the cases where people just come in and say, I don't have money, I am from somewhere far away and people have robbed me. And you never know, is it a true story or is this person just making this thing up. 'Cause, sometimes, when you follow up the story to the end, you find out this person was just lying. And you find, we have assisted that person with money. The next day you meet her in the street just walking carefree, forgetting that she has been there crying, saying I don't have money, I have been robbed. So, the people themselves are also abusing the system.
> (Social worker, Pretoria. Interview with author, November 2014)

Emerald's depiction shows that the experience of being lied to increases counsellors' general mistrust towards the stories they hear, as they can never know if they are being presented with "the truth" or a story that was made up to receive assistance.

Furthermore, in the course of my research at the Domestic Violence Court and at an organization that offers free paralegal advice for applicants of protection orders, the professionals I spoke to expressed a general discontentment with the granting of protection orders. Arguing that they were facing a huge amount of applications, they claimed that, to a large degree, applicants 'abused' protection orders to push through hidden agendas, like taking revenge on ex-partners, ensuring child custody by discrediting the other parent or gaining

financial benefits.[6] Therefore, generalized mistrust is not a unique characteristic of domestic violence support services. Rather, it is a phenomenon linked to the rights-based definition of victimhood, according to which being a victim constitutes legal entitlement and a source of power. In this vein, studying clinical trial settings in Johannesburg, Stadler et al. (2016: 504) view women's lies as a 'source of power and as a performance'.

If, during screening, it was detected that women were lying, counsellors reported they would still try to discuss the situation and find alternative solutions. If possible, counsellors referred clients to more suitable organizations. As one of the counsellors concluded: 'People will not be chased away immediately after lying was discovered but they will have to go soon' (Social Worker, Pretoria. Interview with author, Jan 2014).

In a nutshell, a variety of factors play into the formation of counsellors' generalized mistrust towards clients. These include the unavailability of welfare services when a huge proportion of people are in need of assistance; funding dependencies and policies that bind shelter services to specific criteria of victimhood; the lack of resources to care for clients with special needs; and the widespread discourse of prevalent welfare fraud that is substantialized by counsellors' personal experiences. As has been shown, indicators likely to raise counsellors' suspicion include inconsistent and incoherent narratives, a lack of documentation or evidence, low levels of institutional involvement, "atypical" body language and reluctance to partake in counselling. Over-common narratives that sounded "truer than true" aroused suspicion as well. These characteristics match the truth-criteria Carolina Kobelinsky (2015) and Melanie Griffiths (2012) respectively observe for asylum-seeking processes in France and the UK. This observation again stresses the link between mistrust and the legal notion of victimhood according to which the victim status constitutes an entitlement to benefits.

Furthermore, professionals' use of stereotypes has been noted in other bureaucratic contexts as well, as for example Anna Louban (forthcoming) exemplifies based on her study of humorous encounters between case-workers and migrants at the German foreigners' registration office in Berlin. Moreover, the ways in which counsellors' highly subjective notions of victims' authenticity influences their interactions with clients corresponds with Kelly's (2016) findings stemming from the field of doctors' decision-making about the allocation of disability grants in South Africa. She shows that doctors' decisions were influ-

6 | The magistrates and clerks who made these claims referred to their personal experiences and impressions they had gathered throughout their careers. When asked why they believed somebody was just pushing through their own agendas, mostly, they referred to 'gut feeling' and the overall impression that there was something wrong with the applicant's story, that the story in some sense was suspicious.

enced by a multitude of characteristics, including personal norms and values, notions of justice, views about the welfare system and the institutional environment, to name but a few (see Kelly 2016: 12).

The discussion of ethnographic material highlighted that counsellors' techniques to gather information about clients occur within a bureaucratic and therapeutic context that serves to legitimize inquiries masking them either as institutional requirements or as information needed for effective treatment. Thus, the practices of screening and monitoring allow mistrust to remain tacit. In the following, it will be discussed how this tacit dimension of mistrust can be conceptualized from the perspective of action theory.

The Tacit Dimension of Mistrust, or 'Listening with the Second Ear'

With regards to its implications for action theory, interactions guided by mistrust are inherently different from interactions guided by trust as the latter lacks the double-layer characteristic of the first (see Hörlin 2016). In order to illustrate this argument in more detail, I will borrow a German term from the realm of magic tricks and use it as heuristic metaphor: interactions guided by mistrust are fundamentally *doppelbödig*.[7] Like the magic hat that has been prepared to hide a coin underneath a false bottom – concealing it from the eyes of the audience – mistrusting actors assume the other person purposefully hides relevant information or "the truth". At the same time, actors' mistrust remains tacit, which in turn produces an interaction that is *doppelbödig*.

With regards to the initial counselling encounter during which a counsellor might become suspicious of a client's story, the visible interactional layer would be the counsellor's engagement in the usual shelter routine, including filling in the intake form and informing the client about rules. Purposefully hidden, however, remains the counsellor's interest in digging deeper in order

7 | The literal English translation would be 'double-bottomed' or 'false-bottomed'. However, the English expression lacks the figurative component the German term carries. For example, the German proverb 'ohne Netz und doppelten Boden' roughly translates to 'without safety net and without double bottom' and is used to express that something is done at great risk and without tricks. Looser translations would be 'ambiguous' or 'double-layered'. However, both equally fail to capture the intentional covering or misrepresentation of information which is why the German term doppelbödig is better suited for the present analysis. In her analysis of cinematic representations of mistrust, Sinje Hörlin (2016: 115) also uses the term doppelbödig to characterize interactions in which actors do not wish to lay their cards on the table (to use yet another related metaphor).

to further investigate the client's story. As earlier discussed, the therapeutically and bureaucratically legitimized practices of screening and monitoring enable counsellors to engage in information-generating practices that go beyond what would have been necessary to fill in the intake form. These observations make it clear that once counsellors become suspicious and adopt an attitude of mistrust, the suspected *Doppelbödigkeit* is mirrored in their own behaviour provoking implicit truth-telling practices.

Consider the following explanation from the social worker Emerald during our conversation on welfare fraud:

Melanie: I've come around this quite a lot that social workers grow very suspicious of the stories they hear.
Emerald: That's what I predominantly tell my auxiliary [social worker]. So, you should listen to, you listen to the stories of your clients with the second ear because in most cases, you find that the person is just taking a free ride. So, you'd never know how to distinguish between a real victim and somebody who's just making up the story. Because, we also did a research at a shelter and most of the people who are staying at this shelter, it's supposed to be a homeless shelter for people who are homeless who don't have any home, who don't have any means of living. But the majority of people who are staying there were working. They had their own jobs, they could rent flats but they didn't or they were making use of that homeless shelter to save for accommodation. Every day, they would wake up and go to work and come back and sleep in the shelter, pretending to be homeless. So you could see already.
(Social worker, Pretoria. Interview with author, November 2014)

Emerald's advice to her social auxiliary worker – to listen to stories 'with the second ear' – perfectly illustrates how the quality of mistrust prompts interactions that are *doppelbödig*. Based on her experience of welfare fraud at a homeless shelter, Emerald illustrates the difficulty of telling so-called real victims from fake ones. Along with observing body-language, 'listening with the second ear' refers to looking for an assumed hidden truth. This truth-telling capacity is not part of formal curricula; in fact, younger social workers are trained by more experienced co-workers on the job.

But why were counsellors interested in keeping mistrust tacit in the first place? According to my understanding, the main factors contributing to the tacit nature of mistrust in domestic violence counselling are the following. On the one hand, counsellors are committed to professional ethics and a therapeutic paradigm that follows the ideal of non-judgmental counselling. While counsellors' generalized mistrust towards clients' stories of abuse is tied to intricate institutional and socio-political circumstances, their moral identity as helpers (see Kolb 2014) and the overall importance of trust within counselling does not allow them to openly judge or question credibility.

On the other hand, counsellors in their position as street-level bureaucrats need to adhere to institutional, bureaucratic structures that regulate who is eligible for social services and who is not. Convinced that "the truth" would always come out, counsellors employ screening and monitoring practices in order to establish who qualifies for shelter services and who presents a fake story. Although following different logics, their roles as both therapists and bureaucrats motivate counsellors to keep mistrust tacit and to rather 'listen to stories with a second ear'.

However, if counsellors sensed clients were lying, this did not automatically lead them to believe that those clients were so-called fake victims. In the course of my fieldwork, I came to understand that counsellors differentiated between fake victims who were seen to be 'abusing the system' and women who lied about their situation in view of shelters' strict intake criteria and their own ill-matched current circumstances. Also, clients' lack of trust towards helpers could be a reason for reluctance or dishonesty at the outset of a counselling relationship. A client who was 'not ready', who did not trust the counsellor, was likely to 'use another person's words', as one counsellor reported. In any case, if counsellors caught women lying, this was never reported to authorities nor usually did it incur negative consequences. Depending on their evaluation of the situation, counsellors would rather refer women to other institutions or help them to find alternative solutions. Nonetheless, if counsellors felt women were fake victims who were abusing the system by trying to take advantage, they acted in a less cooperative fashion.

Concluding Remarks

Counsellors' position as street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 2010) oftentimes puts them in a moral dilemma. Many of the counsellors I spoke to referred to their work as a calling grounded in faith. Therefore, the need to identify so-called fake victims was in conflict with their general aim of assisting people and helping them overcome whatever challenges they were facing in life. Still, from both, the therapeutic and bureaucratic perspective, identifying "fake victims" forms an integral part of their everyday work.

Counsellors' generalized mistrust towards clients' stories heightened their sensitivity to specific phenomena that they evaluated as suspicious and indicative of a hidden truth. Through examining stories, body language as well as further contextual information, counsellors tried to draw the line between truth and lie and assessed whether women were eligible for support services. However, this differentiation was based on subjective interpretation, further complicated by counsellors' double-role as therapists and bureaucrats. What constitutes a crisis? Under which circumstances do women deserve assistance?

What counts as emotional abuse? Clearly, the bureaucratic and legal guidelines suggested different evaluations from those of the person-centred humanistic approach at the basis of most counsellors' professional paradigm.

Given the complex and precarious living realities in the post-apartheid State, service providers regarded women's attempts to benefit from shelter accommodation and social support as a coping strategy. As a consequence, this has resulted in a balancing act in which counsellors must decide between lying that is acceptable and lying that is not. In this respect, their decision-making is context-specific and influenced by personal notions of neediness, but also informed by situational circumstances such as how much time they have on their hands or how many other clients are staying at the shelter.

In this chapter, I sought to bring forward three arguments. Firstly, I understand generalized mistrust as an important driving force in the initial counselling encounter. This observation does not negate the importance of trust in counselling. However, as I have shown, the two need to be considered separately as they result in very different actions and social relations. Secondly, I argue that counsellors' mistrust towards clients is structurally generated. Therefore, I speak of generalized mistrust in order to highlight the socio-political dimension of mistrust in this setting. Thirdly, it was demonstrated that mistrust usually remains tacit and is rarely outspoken during counselling. In this respect, the present chapter focused on screening and monitoring practices that, being bureaucratically and therapeutically legitimized, enable counsellors to conceal their suspicion while allowing them to simultaneously engage in information-generating practices. Applying the notion of *Doppelbödigkeit,* this contribution suggested a possibility of conceptualizing mistrust with regards to action theory.

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Intervention

Essay on the Anthropology of the Fiduciary

Leonardo Schiocchet

Mistrust, Distrust & Suspicion

Because the term 'mistrust' itself has been used to mean both the absence of trust and that which hinders trust (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary 1963), even ground-breaking scholarly work, such as Mistrusting Refugees (Daniel and Knudsen 1996), has often conflated 'mistrust' and 'suspicion' under the assumption that they are one and the same. Likewise, the term 'distrust' is also used to express 'lack of confidence', 'suspicion', 'wariness', and 'lack or absence of trust' (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary 1963). Broadly speaking, the prefix 'mis-' can be used to convey the meaning of something 'erroneous' (as in 'mistake') or simply the lack or absence of something (as suggested in 'misconduct'). The prefix 'dis-', in turn, can be used to express reversal (as in disembark), negation/lack (as in 'disgrace'), removal or release (as in 'disembowel') or even intensive force (as in 'dissever')[1] (Dictionary.com n/a). Therefore, both 'distrust' and 'mistrust' have often been used interchangeably albeit to mean different things.

Nonetheless, a lack of trust need not necessarily be understood as leading to the impossibility of entrustment, but rather the opposite. By definition, entrustment, or the process of conferring trust to something or someone, is motivated by a complex agency that entails the subject's only partial consciousness and control, and can only exist in the relative absence of trust. While trust may already have been mobilized in a given entrustment process, entrustments must at least lead to the reinforcement, renegotiation, or restatement of trust. However misrepresented and misunderstood, this relative absence of trust, or what we may call distrust, is not the same as that which actively hinders trust, or what we may call suspicion. Moreover, if there is no necessary intrinsic con-

1 | Dis-; Mis-. n/a. Dictionary.com. See: http://www.dictionary.com/

nection between suspicion and trust in a given context, suspicion, whenever present, greatly affects the dynamics of entrustment.

Therefore, as a heuristic device, instead of grouping diverse phenomena under interchangeable synonyms, I propose using each one of these concepts in reference to a specific social phenomenon. As the prefix 'dis-' seems to evoke absence above all, I propose using distrust to mean simply the absence of trust. As 'mis-' conveys the idea of misplacement, I propose using 'mistrust' to mean misplaced trust. Finally, I prefer to reserve the term suspicion to convey active resistance towards entrustment. As I will argue in what follows, trust is better understood in practice as embedded in complex dynamic processes often but not always entailing suspicion. In such a process, distrust and mistrust are different attitudes toward trust. Suspicion, in turn, besides being more than simply the absence of trust, deeply affects dynamics of trust. In other words, while these concepts are indeed all interlinked as the Webster's dictionary suggest, they also reflect different moods and dispositions that characterize and affect a given social situation differently, and thus social research must acknowledge the nuances between them.

Entrustment and Ritualization

In 'The Nature of Entrustment', Parker Shipton reminds us that 'economic entrustment is not neatly distinguishable from ritual, symbolic, or spiritual entrustment' (2007: 215) and that these are 'dealings and sentiments' to which 'people feel strongly about' (2007: xi). In this essay, I am inspired by Shipton's insight, and critically locate my perspective somewhat within the symbolic exchange tradition inaugurated by Marcel Mauss in The Gift (2000). However, I look at a relatively neglected form of exchange, that which I call 'economies of trust'. In other words, this is the management of trust as a resource and entrustment as boundary-maintenance mechanisms, framed through particular contextual and cultural proclivities, further shaping a given context's unique entrustment practices (Schiocchet 2014a).

In The Gift, Mauss had already hinted that trust is at the base of all forms of exchange, even if this does not appear to be the case overtly. This was actually a common trope of social theory in the period when Mauss worked, especially under the influence of the social contract theory supported by authors such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, and Friedrich Hegel. Supposedly, even the most formal transactions rely on trust. Take the modern world financial system, for example. Most of us have a bank account, that is, most of us deliberately hand part of our money to an institution that promises to store it while allowing us to use it whenever we please. For an external observer not well acquainted with the principles of capitalism, this could sound

like a terrible idea, much worse than hiding money under the mattress. However, while many who willingly engage with the modern world's international financial system do challenge the morality of banks and the goodness of their intentions, most still believe our money, or at least part of it, is safe in their hands. Ironies aside, what is important here is that most of us believe the bank will follow the rules they themselves have stipulated no matter how fair or unfair they may seem to us.

Trust and belief are thus tightly interwoven. Yet, as I suggested before, trust is a dynamic process with many shades of grey, and most exchanges actually take place between ultimate mistrust and ultimate trust. Thus, it is wise to avoid talking simply about the absence or presence of trust, and concentrate, like anthropologists tend to do, on studying trust as a process. This explains my own preference for Shipton's concept of 'entrustment'. The concept of entrustment suggests exchanges beyond ultimate trust, as it evokes the existence of both motivations leading to a given trust exchange and of an action that leads to the actualization of trust itself. In other words, an act of entrustment may happen in the relative absence of trust, and may itself lead to negotiating trust.

Moreover, the need for this processual, nuanced understanding of trust is reinforced by trust's inherently dialogic nature. While trust may also be theorized in terms of one's attitudes toward that which or who must be trusted, a given entrustment process is actually always multifaceted, even when power asymmetries may conceal trust's dialogical nature. Returning to the example of the financial system, while bank customers must trust the bank and follow the terms of a given contract, the bank must also trust that the 'conditions of possibility' for the system, and hence the contract, will be in effect. That is, the bank must trust a given national government not to change the terms of engagement without its consent or prior notice. The bank has to trust that the judicial system of this given state will act as a deterrent to any breach of contract from the side of the customer. After all, there have been numerous occasions in world history when bank assets have been frozen and banks nationalized. So, while banks may consider investing in countries they deem more 'stable', what the extreme case reveals is a principle inherent to the form of exchange itself, as opposed to the content of a given exchange. Finally, the bank has also to trust that its customers themselves will not change the rules of engagement in their favour by changing the government through democratic or forceful means. However, while this is all true, the balance of power is generally tipped so far on the side of the banker that the dialogic nature of entrustment is in this case largely concealed. Yet, scholars should acknowledge the dialogical nature of entrustments and the power asymmetries inherent to particular contexts. As I see it, this understanding of trust dynamics goes hand-in-hand with a Foucauldian approach to power. According to this perspective, power emerges from the relational dynamics between the subjects (being them individual,

collective or institutional), rather than simply being located within the subjects themselves. Furthermore, power is exercised not only through overt expressions of legitimate dominance, but mainly through disciplinary practices mobilized by regimes of knowledge (Foucault 1975).

In light of this, as Edmund Leach put it, we must question the Marxist thesis stating that the values behind the secular market are ruled by 'the strictest cannon of rationality'. Instead, like Mauss, we must acknowledge that, in the words of Edmund Leach, 'exchanges grounded on secular, rational, utilitarian needs turn out to be compulsory of a ritual kind' (cited in Hugh-Jones and Laidlaw 2000: 167-8). While I prefer to use the term 'rationality' to refer to any possible way of understanding and engaging the world – much like Louis Dumont's use of the term 'ideology' (1992) – it must be noted that in Leach's usage he is referring to Cartesian rationality in particular. Thus, what Leach was questioning, backed by Mauss, was the limits of Cartesian logic in separating practical reason from more complex forms of motivation entailed in ritual behaviour.

To better understand this complexity, I suggest merging the Maussian perspective on ritual exchange with Talal Asad's Foucauldian critical insight on the nature of disciplinary practice, well expressed in the work of Charles Hirschkind. As Hirschkind (2006) reminds us, discipline is not mainly the effect of practical reason, but the result of a process of cultivation (for example, of religious values) through practices leading to the embodiment of dispositions, sensibilities and affects. This suggestion is in fact partially corroborated by Mauss and is central to his concept of 'habitus of the body' (Mauss 1973: 82), which in turn was influenced by Aristotle and influenced Pierre Bourdieu's famous usage (2002). It must be noticed, however, that while Bourdieu's concept deals mainly with unconscious and inescapable social pull, Hirschkind's (2006) and Saba Mahmood's (2012) usage of the concept highlights instead its conscious pedagogical dimension, retrieving a feature already present in Mauss' work and later minimized by Bourdieu's mimetic, and deterministic perspective. For the proposes of this discussion, what must be noted then is that entrustments are complex and multifaceted processes often expressed in ritualized disciplinary practices that mobilize a complex blend of practical reason and embodied moods, dispositions, affects, and sensibilities.

Suspicion and Trust among Refugees

My work on Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, Latin America and Europe (2013, 2014b, 2015) reveals that the stigmatization of refugee identity is a paradox according to which the refugee is precisely that which he cannot be. The stigma, being the cause of the flight itself, overwhelms the refugee and

becomes an imperative to be dealt with, one that informs much of the refugee's thoughts, reflections, and actions in the world. Being refugee has important consequences for their sense of belonging, and for the making of social relations both at intra-group and extra-group levels. Among the most important entailments of refugeeness was an almost ever-present sense of suspicion that I call a 'disposition toward suspicion', which can be defined as a collective, generalized suspicion that must be surpassed or put on hold in order for social bonding to occur (Schiocchet 2014a). Therefore, the collective and individual experience of suspicion was of great importance to social organization and identity. In this sense, generalized suspicion was in this case one of the stronger forces heightening the importance of trust and shaping entrustment processes.

Refugeeness created imperatives that the refugees inescapably had to address, not just by reflecting upon them, but also by routinely dealing with them. Continuously dealing with suspicion generated embodied moods and dispositions, coming into being often through disciplinary practices learned by the mind and the body, often through the ritualized context of daily life. Through imitation, iteration, and striving for betterment or simply to belong, refugee camp residents learned scripts contained in daily routines since childhood. That is, they learned proper behaviour, values, and vernacular expressions to deal with the quotidian and the unexpected. This was a learning achieved as much through ritualization as by conscious reflection. While some anthropologists like to call this 'culture', I prefer to understand it as 'knowledge', as Fredrik Barth (2002) and Talal Asad (1993) each in their own way suggested. As a result, a structural disposition toward suspicion and embodied scripts to negotiate trust were thus vital components of the refugees' life contexts.

Given this context, almost no one was totally above suspicion, and trust was not absolute but contextually directed to the same subject or institution concomitantly in a tug of war dynamics. Thus, trust became an element of strategic choice and investment, at the same time that it was expressed through the idiom of sensitivities, feelings and morality. To trust someone or something was also to believe him/her/it. Therefore, every social relationship, even if not primarily concerned with the issue of trust and social bonding, carried along with it an element of trust surreptitiously negotiated. Even being seen in the company of someone was as much a statement of where one stood in the community as it was an investment in that person.

Accordingly, economies of trust tend to be at once political and moral. In the above mentioned cases, they were political because trust was partially exchanged consciously according to strategy, and aimed at individual and group goal maximization. Yet, economies of trust were also moral, because trust was not experienced as something completely open to entrepreneurial transaction, but entrustments also depended on embodied dispositions, sensibilities, and affects translated into affinity, and were commonly expressed through the id-

iom of honour. Honour was at the core of identification and self-identification processes, indexing subjects and entrustment processes to disputed orders of peoples and things. In other words, economies of trust were not completely conscious, strategic and unbound transactions; they were also bound to a subject's character, social standing, and reputation, with honour tending to embody all these features. In spite of the risk, entrustments were often pursued to create or strengthen a bond. However, subjects did not pick freely who would be entrusted, but, first of all, they classified who could be trusted instead. For example, an Israeli soldier would not be as eligible for entrustment as a family member. Likewise, someone in the community who was known to honour her/his word was more likely to be entrusted than someone who was known for not being true to her/his word. In other words, entrustments did not depend exclusively on individual entrepreneurship, but also heavily depended on how the collective measured trust. In this sense, familial, national, religious, ethnic, and political ties were the main repositories of trust among Palestinian refugees in the camps I studied. Elsewhere, however, these preferred institutions and subjects may vary greatly.

The special character of trust as currency for social bonding made economies of trust pervasive in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and was recurrently found underlying interpersonal interactions. It is precisely the embeddedness of these elements in a broader context – as indicated by Tambiah's example of rioting crowds' (1996) – that gives meaning to life, creating a sense of belonging, evoking salient identities and inspiring collective commitment to patterns of social organization.

In the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon I analysed, entrustment processes set the boundaries between, on one side, 'us' – Palestinian, refugees, Muslims, Christians – and on the other side, 'them' – the Lebanese, the Westerners, the non-refugees, the foreigners, and whoever else the 'other' may be. Although I found a strong disposition toward suspicion in all Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, local economies of trust were unique mechanisms of social and individual junction and disjunction. These mechanisms only made sense embedded in their respective contexts, and in varying from group to group and individual to individual. Furthermore, like other communicational elements, they produced meaning, gained strength, and became disciplinary practices acting as partially embodied boundary maintenance dynamics through the ritualization of the quotidian (Schiocchet 2014a). Thus, on the one hand, we cannot lump all the world's refugees in only one legal, social, and political category if we wish to understand who they are. On the other hand, it is vital to note and discuss general processes related to refugeeness. The idea that a disposition toward suspicion might indeed be a very broad tendency among refugees in general is one such discussion. The disposition toward suspicion must then be understood as a social imperative to be dealt with, which in turn

entails a necessity to highlight socio-cultural and context-related rules on entrustment that are integral to unique processes of social belonging.

Dimensions of Trust

To Shipton, entrustments are 'part of 'multiplex' social bonds – they accompany kinship, friendship, church membership, commercial custom, and so on, which may coincide' (2007: 208). Besides, 'fiduciary thought and practice connect time, space, and social distance in cultural ways not yet widely acknowledged' (2007: 39). If by 'fiduciary', we understand not only 'financial', as is mainly the case for Shipton, but also any other sort of symbolic entrustment, then this proposition covers a crucial part of the processes of social belonging: symbolic entrustments shaping all things social, such as friendship, loyalty, group membership, alliances, marriages, and others. The etymology of the term 'fiduciary' supports my usage. Current English usage of the word stems from the Latin *fiducia*, meaning 'trust' + *arius*, meaning '-ary'. The Webster's Dictionary lists fiduciary in English as a) 'holding, held, or founded in trust or confidence'; b) 'of having to do with, or involving a confidence of trust: of the nature of a trust <a ~ capacity> <a ~ relation>'; c) 'resting upon public confidence for value or currency <~ fiat money>' (1986: 845). In other words, even if today the meaning of fiduciary is mainly associated with economy, it is only so because the question of trust is at the base of economy, as it is at the base of virtually all social relations. Furthermore, at the foundation of the word 'fiduciary' is the Latin root *fidēs*, which relates to trust, but also to 'faith, confidence, reliance, credence, belief' (Lewis 1890) – all associations worth exploring in greater depth.

There is something universal about people's trust dynamics that lies at the base of social exchanges and social bonding. At the very least, all social groups have socially accepted or contested ways to go about entrustment. Beyond this universality, others have suggested that trust as a basic element for social bonding tends to be emphasized by the condition of being a refugee (Daniel and Knudsen 1996), as my own work suggests (Schiocchet 2014a). Moreover, beyond socio-historical conditions, there are the contextual proclivities that make one people's suspicion and trust dynamics unique in relation to others, in which individual engagement flourishes.

Since trust dynamics are by definition relational, there cannot be trust prior to a given social relation, and thus there cannot be mistrust (misplaced trust) or suspicion (active resistance to trust), as these are different moods, dispositions and attitudes that can only exist through conceiving particular social relations. As such, absolute distrust, or the plain absence of trust, can only be understood as an ontological condition to social bonding, a logical point of de-

parture. However, the process of knowing something or someone necessarily entails classification, as the classic Durkheimian critique to Kant, at the base of contemporary social sciences, corroborates (1995). Therefore, in practice, there is no absolute presence or absence of trust, but only different levels of trust (and distrust), mistrust, and suspicion, dynamically effaced, put in place, reinforced, and transformed in a given social relation. Furthermore, as Julie Peteet states, trust is 'a fragile and situational concept, easily broken but difficult to restore' (Peteet 1996: 169). This, in turn, reinforces the dynamic character of entrustments, as broken trust frequently needs to be repaired, or it leads to the repositioning of subjects, which entails redirecting trust elsewhere.

Conclusion

One of this book's points of departure is its effort to transpose what Godelier identifies as part of the enigma of the gift to the question of trust (see Mühlfried, introduction to this volume). Mauss, Godelier and Mühlfried highlight the connection between economy (or the circulation of objects, peoples, and values) and trust, and that trust is a matter of 'public confidence and currency' (Webster's Third New International Dictionary 1986: 845). Godelier took a step forward and understood that for a currency to exist there must be a measure, which by definition does not circulate. In this edited volume, Mühlfried develops this further by reinstating the knowledge sealed into the term's Latin origins and overtly re-associating giving/not-giving with entrustment processes.

Godelier's interest on the inalienability of certain things stems as much from his ethnographic material from Melanesia, and particularly from his study of the Baruya, as it stems from his dialogue with Marcel Mauss, Karl Marx, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. In short, Godelier's The Enigma of the Gift (1999) builds on Annette Wiener's Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-while-Giving (1992) in that it reinforces Wiener's claim that, while social scientists have emphasized giving and sharing, not giving and not sharing are at least just as important.

As Paul Roscoe puts it (2001: 151), Godelier substitutes Wiener's formula 'keeping-while-giving' for 'keeping for giving', which expresses the idea that certain things circulate but cannot become anyone else's property. Yet, Godelier's main interest is in objects that cannot be given or sold, which are considered sacred (1999: 08). These inalienable items are thus 'fixed, still points' and realities 'anchored in the nature of things' which 'are what give time its duration' (1999: 200). From these 'realities', the social body creates the realm of the imaginary, which in Lacanian fashion takes primacy over the

symbolic[2]. In other words, society creates a fiction in which to live in order to mask the reality that society itself is the creator of this very world. In line with Marxism, and also developing Durkheim's conception of society, Godelier understands this as a form of fetishism that naturalizes the world, thus giving it existence ex nihilo (beyond the confines of the social imagination), thus protecting the social body from the incertitude of its own subjectivity. At the very base of this relationship between the realms of the imaginary and the real, there is a relationship between things that circulate (in the imaginary) and those that must not circulate (anchored on the real). Paradoxically perhaps, according to Godelier, what cannot circulate is considered *sacra*, serving as a nodal point around which to construct the fetish social beings chose to inhabit. It is only through inalienable *sacra*, standing as a measure for everything else, that exchange itself is possible and society can exist. Or, as Godelier puts it, 'in order for there to be movement, exchange, there had to be things that were kept out the exchange' (1999: 166-167).

In summary, by focusing on what circulates, both Mauss and Lévi-Strauss overlooked a basic component of social life. In Godelier's words this is 'giving to the gods' – a term that stands for that which is inalienable, that which can never be reciprocated, which in modern society is conflated with the rule of law (1999: 207). It is to this we must turn to understand social dynamics. Likewise, Mühlfried suggests looking at what, when or who is not entrusted as a means to engender social relations, as opposed to halt them. To him, this demands an emphasis on mistrust/distrust (as synonyms) as opposed to the overwhelming anthropological emphasis on trust. I present here another perspective in which trust and mistrust are only different polarities of the same social operation, while distrust stands for the complete absence of trust in one's phenomenological realm, and thus does not belong to the realm of empirical realities. Where Mühlfried's perspective is dyadic, mine is triadic. Yet, underlying both perspectives, is the same urge to differentiate between two sorts of phenomena: the absence of trust and the refusal to trust. Moreover, my particular choice of words here (mistrust and distrust to mean one and another different social phenomena) stems only from the meaning they evoke to me, but is almost completely irrelevant to the point I wish to make. The goal of this essay is not to create jargon per se, but to call attention not only to the need to discuss these different social

2 | The primacy of the imaginary over the symbolic is one of Godelier's most serious critiques of Lévi-Straussian structuralism. According to Godelier, in Levi-Strauss the symbolic eliminates the importance of the sacred, while Mauss exacerbated it though the 'hau', or the spirit of the gift, as if the rule of law was not already enough justification. To Godelier, instead, modern society conflates the rule of law with the sacred, and it is through this imbrication that he suggests one must understand its social dynamics.

phenomena anthropologically, but also to start by differentiating between them heuristically and conceptually in order to accomplish this goal.

Thus, to reiterate, entrustment processes are dialogic even when asymmetries conceal its dialogic nature. They are processual, since they cannot be reduced to a single moment in time, and thus are never static. They are manifested through moods, dispositions, and attitudes; and they are subtly present in most social exchanges alongside other moods, dispositions and attitudes, composing subjects' motivations that cannot be defined simply in terms of either practical reasoning or morality. Entrustment processes may be embedded in ritual exchanges but they are never absolutely present or absent. Finally, they frequently serve as currency for social relations, ordering subjects' proximity and distance, and indexing social categories and cleavages.

Relative to themes such as kinship, ethnicity, or even honour, entrustment dynamics (encompassing distrust, mistrust, and suspicion) are understudied in anthropology. This is particularly noticeable when the anthropology on trust is compared to the social theory tradition, from social contract theorists (like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, or David Hume) to Charles Tilly and Niklas Luhmann and the contemporary civil society scholars (like Robert Putman or Peter Evans), as some of the chapters in this edited volume suggest. Yet, due to what I have presented in this chapter, I suggest that entrustment is an essential theme underlying general matters of social organization and identity, and a comprehensive understanding of entrustment processes harbours significant potential not only to more theoretically focused approaches to social life, but especially to more ethnographic ones. In turn, due to the intrinsically relational character of entrustment dynamics, micro-sociological and ethnographic approaches are now necessary to advance or challenge classical approaches on the topic, especially those which still insist on centring on the ontological dimension of trust.

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Mis(sing) Trust for Surviving

Confronting Complexity and the Un/Known in Makeni, Northern Sierra Leone

Michael Bürge

> 'To see a person is not to know him/her'.
> Temne funeral song[1]

You know Michael, everything is about money in these days. Some people have to live on 2000 Leones [around 0.30€] a day. Those who have money, they cannot get enough. People try everything to get money. But it is not that easy. When you have money, it disappears very quickly. (...) You know, how our people are. (...) If you want to make business, you have to protect yourself. They come to your place and ask for money. Others try to destroy you to get money. They have bad hearts (bad at). They use local medicine. You must not have a stiff hand. You need an open heart and to share. But it is not enough. That's why I went to Kabala. The [traditional] doctors there are more powerful. (...) You need to have sense. You have to know how to play (sabi fɔ ple) the game. (...) You know that I lived in Freetown. I went to Conakry. I'm a drɛg man, a real rarray man. I worked in different places. (...) You have to play tricks. Don't show people everything you have. Don't show everybody what you do and what you know. Give them also a wrong impression. (...) But you also need trust (trɔs). You need the right connections, sababu[2]. (...) You have to diversify. The business, the connections. The way you appear. (...) You need to try and to learn. If you only remain in Makeni and do always the same things, you will not move ahead. It's your people, your brothers who want to destroy you. Keep your eyes open. I have sense, you know. I made new experiences. I saw different things and I know much. Gold, timber, diamonds, clothes or shoes. I know the business. (...) It is difficult to have trust these days. (...) Many of our people do not

1 | The original is 'Ke-nenk w-uni ke ye ke tara ko' (see Shaw 2000:42). Ka-Temne is the dominant 'indigenous' language spoken in Makeni.

2 | In its local usage, *sababu* is largely synonymous to trust *(trɔs)* as I develop in this chapter. It denotes the material support, belief and commitment but also the supporting person (Bürge 2009; D'Angelo 2015).

know how to make money. Some have tried many different things. (...) They trusted so many people. They had hope and invested much. (...) But only disappointment.
(Patrick, Makeni, Conversation with Author, 3 April 2013[3])

I knew Patrick from 2007, when he was one of the young men whose lives circled around commercial motorbike *(okada)* riding – the overarching topic of my research back then (Bürge 2011). At that time Patrick was in his early twenties, earning money not only as an *okadaman* (commercial motorbike rider) but also by engaging in petty trade with clothes, food and agricultural products between Makeni, where he was born and resided again in 2007, some surrounding villages and Sierra Leone's and Guinea's respective capitals Freetown and Conakry. After the civil war (1991-2002), he had lived in Freetown for some time, where he had earned a living as a *jew man*, that is, dealing in second hand clothes and other imported, and sometimes stolen, goods (Christensen, Utas, and Vium 2011).

When I returned to Makeni in 2011, it was immediately visible that Patrick had been successful during my absence. He had grown bigger, put on quite some weight. Some people called him 'big man' or '*bɔbɔ bɛlɛ*', literally 'belly boy' (Shepler 2011:48-49; Ferme 2001:159-86; Utas 2012).[4] He had earned money: first in Freetown between 2008 and 2009 and afterwards back in Makeni. He was not riding somebody else's motorbike anymore but owned seven motorbikes that he rented out to some of his 'brothers'. He was not continuously roaming the streets looking for a good deal. As a big man, Patrick 'issue[d] commands, normally from a seated position, while subordinates [did] the running', (Nugent 1995:3; Utas 2012) for benefitting from his socio-economic success.

Patrick repeatedly sustained that he had capitalized on his 'sense' or 'mind', his cleverness and his ability *(sabi fɔ)* to explore unknown places and practices and to knit new relations with people. He had appropriated powers that were unfamiliar and often invisible for most people in Makeni (Shaw 2002; Ferme 2001; Bürge 2017). Whereas his knowledge and experiences had been highly beneficial for his economic progress, Patrick and his activities were also object of rumours in the neighbourhood. He was the target of malicious gossip and even more malevolent 'local practices' that aimed at harming his social position and thereby his existence. People, particularly close ones, members of the family and 'brothers' that felt insufficiently included in his benefits, doubted the morality and sustainability of his practices. Some accused him of working with illegal and antisocial occult powers harming the community (D'Angelo

3 | All names are anonymized.

4 | Having a 'big belly' or being called a *bɔbɔ bɛlɛ* points at an individual's socio-economic success, which might also had come about by illegitimately ('greedily', 'corruptly') appropriating or 'eating' (chop) others' properties.

2014b:278-81). As Patrick states in the quote above, he had little trust for the people around him. Many had no trust for him either.

The quote above came from a conversation I had with Patrick in April 2013 in front of his tiny shop about the various economic activities on which people pinned their hopes when attempting to improve their living condition. People had to experience that many of these efforts revealed to be disappointingly unsuccessful; Patrick's accounts of the challenges and opportunities for improving his life under such conditions were typical of the difficulties many other people faced when trying to find new trajectories and values to elevate their lives beyond mere survival. Opportunities seemed to increase in Makeni, while personal success was limited. People had difficulties establishing the right activities and relationships for generating money and other capital. Many of my interlocutors, particularly young men, were clear that lack of trust *(trɔs)* caused their social immobility: 'If there is no trust, there is no progress *(yu nɔ ebul fɔ go bifɔ)*'.[5] Success in moving forwards and upwards was often very elusive – as generating trust was.

On the following pages, I elaborate how people in Makeni tried to improve their lives and what role trust and its absence played therein. For this purpose and faithful to the title of this book, I approximate mistrust mainly ethnographically. However, I also draw upon some central theoretical elaborations about mis/trust. Most importantly, based on empirical insights I problematize and offer a different view on the relationship between mis/trust and the un/known. Luc Boltanski's (2014) elaborations about mis/trust, making inquiries and the *savoir sur/vivre* (the art of living and surviving) were of particularly importance.

What became particularly clear with Patrick's and other interlocutors' stories, was that Boltanski's – and other authors' – supposition about the relationship of familiarity or social proximity and trust was not valid for the people in northern Sierra Leone. Here, when 'persons and things in close proximity were involved (...) habit and common sense [did not] suffice to engender an acceptable degree of trust' (Boltanski 2014: 208) for making things easy. The 'immediate environment', 'friends, colleagues or family members' (ibid.) were not the refuge of trust. People in Makeni knew too well about the ambivalence and indeterminacy of the intimate and seemingly known. The house, home and

5 | The insights I draw upon stem from fieldwork up to 2013. The lack of *trɔs* in Sierra Leone has become even more crucial with the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in 2014 (see Somparé in this volume). Suffice here to say that people who lacked trust in measures taken by the government and international interventions investigated into their own solutions. In line with the argument I put forward here, missing trust, not only as the 'belief' in the government, but also in its more material form and support, urged people to look for alternatives (Shepler 2014b; Benton 2014; Yamanis, Nolan and Shepler 2016; Richards 2016; Bah 2015).

kin could be 'comforting yet at the same time inherently dangerous' (Geschiere 2013: ix). They were homely (*heimelig* in German) and uncanny *(un/heimlich)*.

Based on their 'sensory data' about their 'disturbed' social environment (Boltanski 2014), people had thus good reasons not to turn a blind eye to their relations with close ones for suspending doubt (Geschiere 2013:32) and pretending 'as if' everything was ok (Möllering 2006). As in the case of Dar Es Salaam's shoe vendors of Alexios Malefakis (2014), people in Makeni had difficulties generating trust with their close ones because they knew them so well. At the same time, there was something uncanny *(un/heimlich)*, not completely known but neither fully hidden, that people could not ignore in their everyday lives, if and when they had to collaborate with the people in their vicinity. Therefore they had to 'undertake inquiries' (Boltanski 2014: 209; also Klaits 2016: 417) and to engage with their doubts when considering various alternatives to improve their lives.

In other words, trust and social proximity were not pre-given by the context or some physical properties. Trust was the imagined but unattainable 'solution' to uncertainty that drove people's lives. Trust is not an embodied or existent function that substitutes incomplete knowledge and suspends uncertainty to keep society together (Simmel 2011:191; Giddens 2008). It had to be wrought from uncertainty and ambivalence. Mistrust was the active and constant engagement – and detachment – with the uncanny, the known and the unknown. Questioning and inquiring into them was elementary for survival. Mistrust could rework and transcend the local to create social intimacy. Aiming at calming and purifying troubled waters, though, people's acting often had contrary outcomes.

Mistrust as to Miss Trust

This chapter elaborates on empirical findings what mistrust means in northern Sierra Leone, and what people do when they mistrust. Fundamentally, I argue that mistrust means to miss trust. This is not just a playful change in spelling. What I want to emphasize is that mistrust is not the opposite or negation of trust. The English prefix mis- does not simply express a negation. It is etymologically directly related to to miss and implies a more complex alterity or divergence. Putting forward a concept of mistrust signifying to miss trust means to take vernacular understandings and conceptualizations seriously. In locally spoken Krio, Sierra Leone's lingua franca, I am not aware of a dichotomous relationship as it is at least assumed to exist in common English usage between trust and mistrust. Whereas there is a formal equivalent to English trust, *trɔs*, Krio does not have a word like *'mistrɔs'* (see Fyle and Jones 1980). In other words, for elaborating on practices of mistrust in Sierra Leone, as 'to miss trust' *(nɔ gɛ trɔs* or *trɔs nɔ dae)*, I must digress and develop this idea in

relation to trust. However, it should become clear that trust does not exist prior to missing trust. Trust is not the productive social normalcy and missing trust its antisocial deviance. Trust emerges from and in the relation to it.

Trɔs is semantically more encompassing than common and conceptual understandings of trust in English. *Trɔs* does not only refer to the general and rather elusive, 'hard to describe' belief in something to happen in a certain way (Simmel 2011:192; Möllering 2006:1; Gambetta 1988). *Trɔs* in Krio literally means credit, an advance of valuables (Fyle and Jones 1980). Hence, the notion bears a decidedly material (ist) meaning that still can be found in more specialized usage of trust (e.g. investment trust) in English (Oxford English Dictionary).[6] During the periods of my fieldwork, money was perhaps the most valuable credit or investment in Makeni. 'Everything is about money'. Yet money was only meaningful and valuable in social relations and practices that were, in turns, indispensable for generating money and wealth (Bledsoe 1990; Shaw 2000; Guyer 1993). One could not substitute for the other.

Trɔs is in other words the multifaceted 'capital' (Bourdieu 2002) generated in and translated and invested into social relations and economic activities. *Trɔs* thereby always refers and relates to something else, spans and limits multivalent networks. It links people, objects and practices and is produced in their relating. It is not stable but always eludes people's grasp. However, these networks cannot expand infinitely and relations are not inherently benign (Strathern 1996, 2014). *Trɔs* is and has to be limited. Information and knowledge are key to generating and stabilising *trɔs* – and not substituted by it. One has to know how to arrange the various potential forms and sources of *trɔs,* how to make valuables meaningful, where to invest what and when properly and for getting what. One has to know what to exclude. People in Makeni could often not generate and maintain enough of this capital. Saying that they did not have *trɔs*, people implied that they did not receive as well as could not give enough *trɔs*. Circulation, reciprocity and stabilization was hampered. *Trɔs* was hard to realize. People did miss *trɔs*.

As stated, in Krio no term such as *'mistrɔs'* exists that might oppose *trɔs*. Ontologically, *trɔs* is not prior to 'something' that might negate it. People felt a lack of and the thirst for *trɔs*. As Patrick commented above, people tried incessantly to produce it. They had ideas of what came along with *trɔs*. They invested in various social relations and economic activities to realize and materialize their aspirations. Often their attempts failed. Actors and practices diverted *trɔs*. It could be withheld and rejected and thus not be realized in a particular activity and relation. Practices of perceiving and pursuing *trɔs* might fumble and

6 | Georg Simmel elaborates his influential thoughts about trust in a passage where he discusses the transition from material money to credit money (Simmel 2011:190-92; also Möllering 2001).

misdirect *trɔs*. People were (increasingly) uncertain about how exactly to locate and grasp *trɔs*. They lacked crucial information. They erred. The result was often again a personal feeling of a void and insufficiency.

On the pages to come, it is important to read mistrust as to miss trust in such multiplicity and polysemy. That is, both to miss and trust have multiple meanings that allude to elusiveness and the desire to stabilize them. Mistrust is not normatively hierarchically related to trust. To miss means to long for, trying to locate and to understand how to reach. To miss trust also means to fail to realize trust, not locating it properly and thus not hitting or grasping, but only brushing it or going in another or the wrong direction altogether. Longing for and failing in producing trust never ceases. It is recurrent. To miss trust produces (unintended) material and immaterial outcomes that are constitutive of emerging socialities. It produces provisional forms of trust. To miss trust is to try to constantly produce and transform trust and by implication, the way one relates to other people and objects.

Suggesting such a concept of mistrust that is not the opposite and negation of trust but the multifaceted and recursive quest for trust, implies that I do not conceptualize it as just another way of reducing complexity, a 'functional equivalent' to trust as Luhmann has it (1979). To put it perhaps better: reducing complexity can be seen as one facet of mistrust but definitely not the essential function of it. People possibly aim at reduced complexity, a distant ideal outcome when everything is clear and without challenges. I argue that mistrust implies distinct positioning and acting in the world (Endreß 2012; Hörlin and Ellrich 2013; Schweer et al. 2009). It is inextricably related to trust – yet not in a dichotomous 'dualism' but rather in a mutually productive or 'recursive duality' (Giddens 1984, 2008: 139). Trust and mistrust coexist, as Mühlfried lines out in the introduction. Their relation is however tense. To miss trust indicates a dissatisfaction with the things as they evolve and the knowledge one has about them. It means to problematize the status quo. To miss trust urges people to inquire (Boltanski 2014; Klaits 2016: 417; Whyte 1997) into things as they are and possible alternatives and, thus, to engage with complexity. It suggests opening up in order to challenge yet unknown and invisible practices, actors and realms involved in improving one's life (Bürge 2017). Vulnerability and precariousness are fought with increased and diversified engagement with more actors (Newell 2012: 68, 88). At the same time, to miss trust also entails being alert and seeking to reduce the dangers emerging from the assumedly known (Endreß 2012:86; Malefakis 2014) and the increased exposure to the (unknown) world (Bürge 2017). Mistrust produces knowledge and connections that change the way one engages in the world (Jackson 2011: 42-44). In the words of Klaits, it is trust's 'uncanny twin' (2016: 416).

The quest for betterment in the future could imply a backward or nostalgic orientation towards the past or 'temporary suspension of temporality' (Herz-

feld 2005:175). The assignment of responsibilities for failures and disappointments might be internalized or externalized (Jackson 2008: 70-71). Importantly, in Makeni they were mostly personalized and seldom ascribed to structural problems.[7] In Sierra Leone we can observe feelings, practices or processes that might resemble what general 'lay' theories call (symptoms of) mistrust or distrust and conceptualize as the (dysfunctional) opposite of trust (Schweer et al. 2009). Continuously missing trust could manifest in what might be qualified as 'psychosomatic stress', 'paranoid cognitions', 'witchcraft', 'anxiety', 'nostalgia', 'drug consumption', 'fear', 'deceit', 'mobbing' or 'violent behaviour' (Giddens 2008; Boltanski 2014; Geschiere 2013; Molé 2012).

However, such corporeal, mental and social positions towards the world are neither the negations of trust or the opposite and functional equivalent of trust in Luhmann's sense (1979, 1988). They do not just 'swallow up' trust. They are the outcome and point of departure in processes of missing trust. They produced and were products of particular forms of and relations to trust. They triggered particular social relations and acting in the world, in which actors oscillated between detachment from and encompassment of actors, distancing from and engaging in the world (see Mühlfried this volume). Local conceptualizations of the mental, bodily, social and spiritual symptoms or manifestations just mentioned, second, reflect this productive potential and the ambivalence of how individuals miss trust. 'Anxiety', 'jealousy' or 'mobbing' do commonly not exist as such in northern Sierra Leone's local languages and cosmology. Missing trust can lead into particular states of mind, soul and body such as what is locally called 'bad hearts', 'warm hearts', 'spoilt hearts'; symptoms that require and yield various bodily and social practices that have their specific socio-economic significance and productivity. Missing trust did not result in uniform activities.

What people do when they miss trust has thus to be investigated ethnographically. This chapter is a first tentative contribution to this effort. It investigates the 'centripetal' and 'centrifugal' social forces at work in the practices triggered by the missing of trust (Malefakis 2014: 56-57, 110). It sheds light on how people sought a better apprehension of trust, how they tried to make experiences and to uncover the secrets of how to be more successful. On the following pages, I account for the ambivalently dis/entangling properties of trust and its missing. People suspended certain practices and social relations they deemed to be obstructive and sought people that could help and involve them in favourable enterprises (Bürge under review). They tried to work on themselves and change personal attitudes and impression. In brief, they tried

7 | To 'personalize' responsibility does not mean to ascribe it to inhering in the individuated person but to the multiple relationships in which persons emerge (Jiménez 2011:180). 'Betterment' thus needs a more 'holistic' apprehension of the multiple – social, economic, moral – forces that make up for persons (Shaw 2000).

new practices, endeavoured into unknown venues with the associated dangers this involved. They wanted to '*go bifɔ*', that is, to progress, without leaving their past and the known behind.

Elusive Trust and the Secret of Progress

My fieldwork took place between 2005 and 2013, a period when most people in Makeni, the capital of Sierra Leone's Northern Province, lived in rather precarious conditions and faced 'chronic crisis' (Vigh 2008). People struggled for their daily survival, producing just enough capital to regularly afford sufficient food (Bolten 2008, 2012a, 2012b). Despite high statistical national economic growth and visible development after the arrival of new multinational companies investing in the exploitation of natural resources in the 2010s,[8] people literally lived 'on 2000 Leones a day', around 0.30€ in 2013, not knowing what the next day would bring.

Precariousness in Makeni was not only about existential goods and the struggle for survival. People had ideas and aspirations about a better and more 'enjoyable' and 'comfortable' life that others lived – often elsewhere, in Freetown, Ghana, Europe and the US – and from which they perceived themselves as being excluded. Such feelings of exclusion from the benefits of economic development, education, and general 'promises of modernity' were not new (Bolten 2008; Bürge 2009). People learned in school that, during colonial times, Makeni and most of the territory that belonged now to Sierra Leone, had been part of the British Protectorate where people were differently treated than the Krios in the Colony around Freetown (Fanthorpe 2001). The civil war (1991-2002) isolated Sierra Leone as a whole from the 'progress' happening elsewhere and brought only destruction. The little 'development' that reached the country during those years and particularly during the reconstruction of the country afterwards was diverted to the south by the 'tribalistic' government of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). Since independence in 1961 changing governments have given emphasis to the development of the south. People narrated that even northern Presidents Siaka Stevens (1967-1985) and Joseph Saidu Momoh (1985-1992), who allegedly worked for the north, benefitted rather restricted circles and different areas around the country. For decades, if not centuries, Makeni people had been united in marginalisation and suffering.

8 | Sierra Leone's annual GDP grew by 15.2% and 20.7% respectively in 2012 and 2013 before declining in 2014 (4.6%) and particularly 2015 (-21.5%) due to the Ebola epidemic and the collapse of the iron ore price. Despite this exponential growth, the GDP per capita was still among the lowest in the world – and the GDP per capita does not consider how capital is distributed among the people.

In late 2007, everything changed in Makeni, or, at least, that is what people thought. They elected Ernest Bai Koroma of the All People's Congress (APC) as their president. Born in Makeni, he was the president of the north. Multinational companies soon came to northern Sierra Leone, pouring investment into infrastructural improvements designed for their purposes, either to further the extraction and export of mineral resources or to transform fields used for subsistence farming into sugar cane plantations for producing bio fuel. All of a sudden, 'development' and the good life were highly present. People could see it as close as they never could before; they could almost touch it. It was just a step from their grasp. And a good number of young men made this step. The multinational companies employed them, mostly for menial labour and on short-term contracts. For the first time in their lives they earned a monthly salary. People from all over the country and from abroad came to Makeni to secure an employment. Nobody in Makeni could remember anything like this having happened before. People had always been forced to move to Freetown, to the 'diaspora'[9] to get ahead in life (Jackson 2008, 2011).

Still, the majority of the residents and the new arrivals were not able to benefit decisively from these economic developments in the long term. Rising prices for food, necessities and rents came to determine their everyday existence, eating into any increased earnings they had enjoyed. Most houses were still without electricity and periods of fuel shortage slowed down the local economy. After the initial period of labour intensive infrastructure work came to a close, the multinational companies increasingly rejected new job applications and did not renew expiring contracts. Many people were left with debt and could not keep up their newly acquired standards in life.

Most people in Makeni could not consolidate a place for themselves in the 'good life' that they had expected. Yet, this 'good life' was still taking place somewhere else; very close to them they could see that others 'enjoyed' themselves, while they still suffered and could not generate any capital. Instead, things increasingly took a turn for the worse. The social relationships and economic practices upon which people had relied and pinned their hopes did not deliver as expected. Feelings of exclusion were even stronger. Thus, things had to change thoroughly. People wanted to bridge the gap between themselves and what they wanted to achieve, the position in which life was more 'comfortable' and 'enjoyable'. They had to put an end to and avoid unproductive activities and relationships and, instead, discover those that would let them progress *(lɛ dɛn go bifɔ)* instead of pulling or tying them down *(pul dɛn doŋ)* (Bolten 2013: 164-65; Bürge 2017: 147, 155). For this purpose, people had to understand

9 | The word 'diaspora' in Makeni did not refer to a group of people but to the places of migration. It was synonymous to 'overseas', the US, UK. Therefore, diaspora is a place one went to rather than something one joined.

why they failed. They had to understand why others succeeded and how to replicate their success. They had to relate to them. It was obvious that success came along with new practices, people and goods from outside. The question was how to access and comprehend them. Apparently, people in the community who were equal or at least similar by birth and upbringing and had engaged in rather similar activities for a long period, all of a sudden started performing much better. If they had been economically successful under the new conditions, by logic, they must have uncovered the secret and hid it from the others (Shaw 1997; Bürge 2011, under review). Those still suffering wanted such secrets to be disclosed.

As said, not every secret to progress and to economic prosperity was invisible or ungraspable simply because it was new for the people in Makeni. Certain practices and relations did not require much investigation; it was clear for the people that they were particularly detrimental to them while making others prosper. These were public secrets (Taussig 1999) and extant routines for the people. They learned from radio, newspapers and public discussions that the government had attracted foreign investors with attractive tax conditions or even complete exemption. Land leasing agreements with multinational companies were signed without parliamentary consultation. The president sent his most powerful 'witch doctors' to catch the *dɛbul den,* the invisible spirits inhabiting the bush that had been uprooted and left haunting the construction area of a railroad for exporting iron ore. Instead of looking for a solution to pacify the spirits or compensating those forcibly displaced from the area, the president prioritized the interests of foreign investors.[10] The Anti-Corruption Commission investigated against the mayor of Freetown. Al-Jazeera aired a documentary in which the vice-president allegedly accepted payments from foreign businessmen who wanted to circumvent the export ban on precious timber (Samura 2011; Akam 2011). People started to talk about the striking coincidence between the mushrooming construction of opulent mansions for high-ranking politicians, the improvement of the roads leading there and the awarding of profitable contracts to the same 'Chinese people' who had built the mansions. People felt betrayed by the multinational companies that failed to provide the expected employment opportunities but, instead, brought in expat workers to exploit the country. And they became increasingly ambiguous and critical toward 'Pa' Koroma's neoliberal politics to which they tried to adapt without receiving much back in turn.

10 | See Lorenzo D'Angelo's fascinating work on various manifestation of the *dɛbul* as a social and political actor in Sierra Leone (D'Angelo 2014a, 2014b).

Intimate Enemies and Miss Trust

Nonetheless, people in Makeni could not do much about these elite actors and the way the latter marginalized or even excluded them from 'development'. For one, people were used to the 'rotten system' of not being included into reciprocal networks of trust with national politicians and foreign business people (Bolten 2012a; Bürge 2009). People never lost hope they might personally benefit from political and socio-economic changes and improve their personal position within these networks (Bolten 2013). Disappointment, though, had become part of their routine or 'constant crisis' (Vigh 2008). In addition, elite actors were seen as too powerful and too distant; people could not grasp their actions. In other words, people could not apprehend their doings fully and they could not make them directly accountable.[11]

Instead, people concentrated on or were absorbed in more 'immediate struggles' with the 'immediate enemies' to their progress (Foucault 1983: 211). Here they sought to bring about change and to generate trust. In people's everyday experiences, fellow citizens denied their job applications to the multinational companies. The peers with whom they had grown up, did not share their benefits with them. Neighbors gossiped about them. Brothers went overseas and lost contact. Others disappeared with motorbikes and other valuables with which they had them entrusted. In short, people identified the causes and remedy for their personal suffering in more intimate relationships (Shaw 1997: 866-68; Geschiere 2013). Their 'brothers' prospered while and because they suffered in this zero-sum universe (Austen 1993:92; Newell 2012). They accused their 'brothers' of having a 'bad heart' *(bad at)*, being stingy and jealous, instead of having an 'open heart' *(opin at)*, being generous and sharing their benefits. People missed trust in these relationships, as they did not receive what they expected or needed.

My very close friend Mamadu often lamented the problem of trust in Makeni, particularly among people one knew or thought to know.

> They are my brothers (...) we grew up together. I perfectly know them. But I cannot trust them. Without trust you cannot advance in life. Some are just childish and cannot think into the future. Others are wicked. (...) They try to destroy you. Because they are jealous. (...) For this reason, I go to other places and meet with more developmental people. There I can make cool heart.
> (Mamadu, Makeni, Conversation with the Author, October 2007)

11 | However, people silently and precariously acted on the more powerful economic and political actors (D'Angelo 2014a: 26). They discussed politics, developed hypotheses and rumours about elite people's occult practices, circulated stories about the invisible presence and the retaliating appearance of *dɛbul den*, and recurred to hidden activities of sabotage.

Mamadu's problem, the trust he missed, was not mainly related to those who did better than him and did not share their profits and knowledge. He did not apply for jobs. He had been relatively successful as a self-entrepreneurial motorbike rider and wanted to progress within the transport business. His problem was that those close to him by birth tied him down and depleted his few savings (Bolten 2008; Bürge 2009, 2011). As others in Makeni, Mamadu increasingly questioned the point of investing time and energy into such relationships in the expectation of reciprocity or, perhaps, if it would not be better to give up.

Giving up on relationships and looking for more promising networks was only one possible solution when engaging with situations and feelings in which people missed trust. Another way was to increase one's efforts and to engage even stronger with those particular individuals with whom one had failed to create the expected levels of trust. Mamadu was a target rather than the actor of such intensified engagement or tying. People in his surroundings acted more intensely on him and tried to enforce links. They aimed to disrupt or break the bonds he entertained with other people, localities, and property that they viewed as not useful to their common relations and shared network. They controlled and levelled him socially (Bolten 2015). In other words, these people primarily sought to change the lives of others to generate trust; they did this not exclusively for themselves but in correspondence with and for the benefits of others – the targets of their engagements. Benign intent, though, often became threatening for the one acted upon. He reacted to or anticipated the encroachment of others by avoidance, exclusion or aggression.

Young men, such as Patrick, Mamadu and many more of my friends, were a common target of such double-edged practices of increased engagement aiming at disentangling them from other practices and actors.[12] In many people's eyes, young men 'wasted' their money for momentary enjoyment, instead of long-term and more inclusive development. It was seen as all the more deplorable that those young men who had been lucky enough to find employment with a company preferred to spend their salaries immediately on clothes, electronics, gambling, drinks and girls. They proved to be *bɔbɔ den*, 'little children' that did not yet have 'mind', enough 'sense', to make proper use of money. They were immature. They had to be taught to be responsible adults and cautiously initiated into society (Hoffman 2003: 299-300; Shepler 2014a; Ferme 2001).

12 | This 'primacy' of young men has various reasons: As I argue here, for some they were the hope of the future, while others saw them as again potentially leading to the ruin of the country (Honwana and De Boeck 2005). This is because young men had played a crucial role in the civil war (Peters 2011; Peters and Richards 1998; Fanthorpe and Maconachie 2010). Another reason is demographical, as the majority of Sierra Leoneans are under 30 years. Finally, young men figure prominently in discourses and practices of missing trust, as they were my primary interlocutors.

Increased engagement with those who erred was in order to discipline them and halt their 'wasteful' spending of money and direct them towards, from the point of view of the interloper, more 'meaningful' practices.

Coming back to my argument about the relationship between mis/trust and the un/known, it is important to highlight that people who criticized the lifestyles of these young men only partly knew and saw where and how the latter 'wasted' and generated their capital (Bürge 2011; Newell 2012). Most of their doings were not public or at least not for everybody. Knowledge about young men's doings was often based on assumptions, generalizations and projections. True, people inquired into the lives of others and questioned their morality; yet their investigations often remained at the surface. As I have argued elsewhere (Bürge 2017), people could find convincing evidence of their fellow citizens' antisocial practices. Yet, I further argue there that people could also yield more positive evidence about their social productivity if they asked different questions about and emphasized other aspects in how, where and when people produced trust. Knowledge and ignorance about the other were selectively, or better conjuncturally produced. Reality was highly complicated and to miss the truth was easy. Patrick and Mamadu were telling examples.

Both of them earned and spent their money beyond their most restricted social environment. They imported and exported goods from and to Guinea, worked for longer periods in Freetown and spent much time roaming around Makeni. They worked in the bush and in the night, themselves realms of highly ambivalent forces (Shaw 2002; Ferme 2001). They visited hidden places where drugs and alcohol was consumed. They not only consumed but produced and invested into social networks with 'more developmental people', locally highly reputable people, who also frequented those places. Both supported members of their family outside Makeni, while neglecting others. They rented out their motorbikes and invested into the lives of their peers. Obviously, they could not meet the demands of every person. Both made 'real friends' beyond Makeni, for whom they felt 'real love' and with whom they wanted to collaborate. Both were *okadamen*, commercial motorbike riders, the contemporary embodiment of the 'rebel' (Bolten 2012b: 505), that ambivalent figure that had haunted Sierra Leone for a decade (Bürge 2017: 160-61). Both had had contact with the 'rebels' when the latter occupied Makeni. Even then, though, in doing this they struggled for their own and other people's survival (Bolten 2012a). Mamadu was forcefully recruited and did menial work for the rebels while also supplying foodstuffs to his mother that they could sell together. With his savings, he first bought bicycles for renting out and later on his first motorbike.

Mamadu owed much of his relative success as an *okadaman* to trust. He was only able to purchase his first commercially used motorbike in the early 2000s due to the trust of Saidu, a local businessman. Saidu advanced him money, believing in his reliability and ability to use it properly. Saidu trusted Mama-

du because the latter had proven before that he knew how to handle money and to make business. Mamadu paid his debts and invested marginal profit in other peeople. When he felt that those he invested into did not reciprocate his efforts, that people asked for more support and muddied his reputation in the community if he refused, Mamadu had to try other venues. He increased his journeys outside Makeni – which obviously fuelled criticism – and one day in 2007 left for good to live in Freetown. There he found a group of likeminded young men with whom he founded Trust for Life, an association organized around the place they met several times a day to maintain their motorbikes and themselves. Life in Freetown was not easy for Mamadu. But he had found trust there. Although the young men had little, they helped each other, raised funds for new bikes and parts and shared their ideas.

Mamadu's story was exemplary in showing how people longing for trust often missed their goals with the measures they took. Instead of convincing others to include them into their networks and to share trust, often forcefully binding them, they drove them further away. Trying to suspend the continuously growing gap, people could also resort to more radical practices for changing what others do, cutting and reworking relations and 'trying to destroy [people] to get their money', as Patrick has it, such as publicly destroying their reputation in order to isolate them socially (Shaw 2002). People could recur to a 'local doctor', use special medicine or witch guns *(fangay)* to harm, (socially) kill and tie other people. The motivations for and forms and extent of aggressive measures differed. The outcomes, although also differing in scale, were more uniform. It perpetuated the conditions for which people did miss trust (Bürge 2017).

People's more or less aggressive attacks on fellow citizens and on the existential foundations of their economic, social and moral personhood, which they launched due to their longing for trust, affected the general atmosphere in Makeni. The individual, as for example Mamadu, targeted by straightforwardly destructive measures but also by more well-intentioned critique had to find an answer to these challenges. Otherwise, relations with other people could disintegrate due to a damaged reputation and other forms of 'social killing'.[13] Trust in its material and immaterial forms would be lost. Those attacked had to protect and defend themselves. They had to calm the agitation. They had to avoid an excess of force as well as to become 'petrified' (Le Courant 2016: 30). As Mamadu explained, they had to 'make cool heart', control their temper and bodies. They had to escape the attempts of others to 'tie' or 'pull them down' (Bolten 2008; Bürge 2009), practices that aimed at destroying their social forces for progressing. They had to defend their personhood and subjectivi-

13 | 'Social killing' refers to the various practices that aim and lead to 'social death' (Vigh 2006).

ties, which was not 'simply aimed at protecting social honour or, in Goffman's terms, "saving face", but involve[d] matters of life and death' (Boltanski 2014: 209). People had to anticipate their own victimization and become active before being approached or attacked.

'Not having a stiff hand' but opening one's heart and appeasing people by sharing would obviously have been a good solution. One could comply with the immediate critique and change patterns of relating. Patrick knew however that 'this was not enough'. Demands and jealousy outweighed by far the possibility for appeasement. There was just not enough socio-economic capital to satisfy everybody's desires (Bolten 2012b: 499). Furthermore, complying with the immediate request and satisfy people's desires was often seen as not beneficial personally on the long run. Beneficiaries would not be able to reciprocate trust but rather continue to ask for 'charity'. People had to find other ways of pre-empting attacks or apprehension by others and of generating trust elsewhere. In the quote at the beginning, Patrick lists some of those that he and Mamadu applied themselves. People hid their wealth and the ways they generated it. They left Makeni, sometimes in order to generate more capital and satisfy those back home. Sometimes they turned their backs on those who tried influence them, cutting them off from their networks (Bürge 2011). People resorted to local doctors for protective but also preventive medicine – or were at least suspected and accused of doing so. People slandered others before and after being muddied themselves. They tried to stay ahead of potential threats to their existence. In brief, people reacted to or rather anticipated attacks from their fellow citizens with practices that confirmed and provoked the critique of the latter. Thus, this became a self-fulfilling prophecy, which ratcheted up people's urge to inquire and intervene in the doings of their fellow citizens. Actions and reactions of mistrust became perpetual and circular (Molé 2012). I would now like to outline this in more detail.

Life is a War

Trust, for Boltanski is the 'more economical' possibility of acting without suspecting or questioning any interaction (2014: 14). 'Endless inquiries', he writes in the chapter with the same title, 'beyond what [is] reasonable in the ordinary circumstances of life', is one symptom of paranoid people (ibid: 170-223). However, excessive inquiry into 'reality'[14] is for Boltanski not exclusively a manifestation of mental disturbance. It is normal and appropriate under 'stressful', that is, heavily disturbed socio-political conditions. In war zones, intense inquiries are part of indispensable survival skills *(compétence du savoir-(sur)vivre)* as Bol-

14 | See Boltanski (2011, 2014) for his distinction between 'reality' and 'world'.

tanski's doctoral student Suarez Bonilla has shown in the case of Colombia (Boltanski 2014: 208-9; Suarez Bonilla 2010).[15]

Even if the civil conflict in Sierra Leone ended in 2002, in the early 2010s life was 'still like a war' in Makeni, *'layf na wa-o'*, a point with which many of my interlocutors agreed. They 'suffered' and 'strained' (Finn and Oldfield 2015) just to get enough food for the day. Witch guns *(fangay)* were substituted for the AK-47. People did not have to fear anymore incursions by fighters or of being delivered to them by a neighbour who wanted to settle scores (Jackson 2004). Now neighbours betrayed them for their jobs and other economic aspirations and hampered their reputation with malicious gossip in public places. The bush encroached increasingly upon the town. Danger to one's existence lured everywhere. Survival skills *(savoir survivre)* had long since become part of the ordinary skills *(savoir vivre)* of daily life (Boltanski 2014: 209; also Vigh 2008).

Not only excessive inquiries – missing trust – have excessive costs as they 'endanger most social relations and gradually consume all the strength one needs in order to act' (Boltanski 2014: 208). Trust also comes at a price, I argue. Boltanski's 'reasonable expectations' are only enabled by the 'leap of trust' (Möllering 2001), the suspension or bracketing of the unknown, uncertainty and doubts (Geschiere 2013: 32). Such trust means to suspend, blind out what and that we do not know. In a 'stressful' environment not to inquire into and pause the course of action but just to pretend as if one knew that everything would be ok, would not simply be inadequate but a dangerous and potentially deadly act of self-deception – an example of totally missed trust.

I argue that the *compétence du savoir-(sur)vivre*, or 'survival skills', is thus most centrally the competence to cut or to avoid properly, that is, to cut the right thing at the right time. People need to develop the competence to cut dangerous relations and processes, which they first have to uncover. At least as much, they need the competence to cut the endless 'extension of an inquiry' and to open up again for interaction. They have to cut loops and routines in order to avoid remaining stuck and isolated (Suarez Bonilla 2014: 143).[16]

In Sierra Leone, people know many nuanced forms or degrees of and terms for their skills to survive – *sabi fɔ* – the contemporary 'war' and to make 'marginal gains' (Guyer 2004) at the increasingly broad margins of society. Most

15 | Boltanski writes that the 'tendency to see, beyond the appearances of phenomena' is not only distinctive of the 'paranoids' and those living in war zones but also of the 'sociologist' (2014:176), the one that penetrates surface for explaining people the truth underneath.

16 | See Strathern (1996) on cutting social networks and networks of inquiries. See Shaw (2000, 2002) and Jackson (2011) on the dialectic and challenge of balancing of opening and closure in social relations in northern Sierra Leone.

generally, people 'managed' *(manej)*. Individual people's everyday lives and well-being differed due to their capacity to manage *(sabi fɔ manej)* their social and economic relations, that is, their competence in relating and detaching adequately and thereby generating – more – trust. Most people in Makeni perceived their lives as mere survival or suffering, devoid of trust, living on 2000 Leones a day and being exposed to the charity and goodwill of others. They were managed instead of managing other actors. They 'struggled', 'suffered' (Bledsoe 1990) and 'strained' (Finn and Oldfield 2015). They aimed at more 'enjoyment', increased 'comforts' and a 'better life' – more *trɔs*.[17] Some made a (slightly) better living on their wits – *sabi fɔ drɛg* – as *jew men* or *rarray men* (Hoffman 2011: 52-53; Abdullah 2002).

Patrick knew how to *drɛg*; he proudly ascribed his success to the fact that he was 'a *drɛg man*, a real *rarray man*'. He had been economically and socially successful because he was street-wise, educated by the war and life in Freetown's 'urban jungle' (Christensen 2007). Patrick claimed to have the *savoir-(sur)vivre*, to be savvy *(sabi fɔ drɛg)*. He was able to decipher intentions of other persons and to anticipate dangers. He got 'sense' and had 'open eyes'. He was attentive and had control over the information others could get about him. He knew when to share money and secrets and when to keep them. He had been able to relate to the right persons and activities, and detach from the unproductive ones. He was sensible to the contemporary context and at the same time to more general idea(l)s about social action and personhood in northern Sierra Leone as Rosalind Shaw has elaborated on (2000: 40-44): He was conscious about the necessity of balancing openness – making inquiries and being attentive, but also sharing with others and nurturing relations – and closure – controlling knowledge and other valuables, but also putting an end to inquiries and to the suspension of trust. Therefore, he was progressing. He was not suffering anymore, running after any opportunity and depending on the (good)will of others. He was a big man now. He had his own dependents and opportunities running after him (Utas 2012; Nugent 1995). He was the manager of his and others' lives. He knew how to live the good life *(sabi fɔ enjɔy)*. Patrick proudly underlined the importance of being 'gallant' and claimed to 'know to live European life'. However he also could emphasize (and embody) his suffering, being still in need and not able to support others, if needed.

Patrick knew too well about the fragility of his success. Although he praised his capacities to read signs, to dissimulate his appearance and to balance between sharing and keeping, he likewise lamented how difficult and endan-

17 | Suarez Bonilla's French term *savoir-(sur)vivre* grasps this tension between mere survival and 'good life' more elegantly than it is possible in English (survival skills vs. art of living). Krio *sabi*, linguistically related to French *savoir*, Spanish and Portuguese *saber*, but also English *savvy*, encompasses this multifaceted skilfulness.

gered success was. In the early 2010s, his situation was more comfortable than of those who had to inquire continuously how to generate just enough trust to buy a plate of rice a day. He still had to defend actively his slightly privileged position at some cost to himself, constantly checking for threats and possibilities. Under current socio-economic conditions, Patrick had to invest much time, energy and money to perpetuate his social and economic capital. Not everything was under his control. He was not enough of a big man but still had to grow more. Other people decided how and if to relate with him. His information was also only partial. He did not know about everybody if they reciprocated or aimed at destroying his trust. Patrick diversified his activities and relations. He tried to access as many sources as possible for generating more trust and for substituting for defaults in reciprocity. At the same time, this also exposed him to threats and he risked failure.

No Conclusion – Miss Trust Continued

On the long run, things did not work as Patrick thought. He did miss trust. He had invested his money and energy in the wrong people and activities. He could never finish his house as the government confiscated the land and offered only minimal compensation. He lost money in an attempt to mine gold. He lost his job with the multinational company as the young man who had 'rented' his contract revealed the fraud. Patrick struggled to keep sources open to access cheap petrol, which he had not only sold on the black market but had also used to fuel important relationships with important people in Makeni. For some time, he could benefit from some of the relationships in which he had invested his money before. Trust was still reciprocated. This was only for a while, however. Trust had to be nurtured. When the sources petered out, one had to discover new ones.

Some people refused to reciprocate and reproduce trust due to the bad reputation Patrick had acquired by some of his dubious activities and by the derogative 'gossip' of those people that he had not included in his networks. They opted for investments that were more promising in the future – the same logic that Patrick also always followed. Others could not reciprocate, or at least not to the extent that Patrick aimed at, as they also struggled to generate trust. Many people lost their jobs with the construction companies and downstream suppliers when the infrastructure construction had been finished and the highly mechanised iron mining started. Patrick did increasingly miss trust. People increasingly avoided him and he avoided them again.

When I saw him last in Makeni in 2013, he still lived a relatively good life. Ebola and the decreasing prices for iron ore, though, were an additional blow to his efforts to generate trust. By the end of 2016, Patrick had to readjust his

survival skills again. He has again cut off many of his links with Makeni and retreated to other less visible places. I do not have contact with Patrick. Some of my friends – most not close friends of Patrick (anymore) – claim that they have him seen roaming the surrounding villages buying and selling sheep. Perhaps this is true. It is also possible that he deals with other things. In the villages, one can still find precious goods. Patrick very likely knows where and how. Perhaps people do not know what he is doing. Perhaps they know.

Mamadu, the other protagonist of this chapter also continued to miss trust. His friends in Trust for Life, the association, could suspend small monetary exigencies, advance money for medical treatment or spare parts of a motorbike. When Mamadu lost money to a so-called money doubler (Bürge under review) and motorbikes in a fire and to a thief and later on could not pay his rent anymore, his friends could not replace the losses. Whereas people in Makeni who learned about his failures felt themselves confirmed in their opinion about Mamadu's antisocial and unsustainable practices whose price he now had to pay, his friends at least offered him a temporary place to stay and rented him a bike. Still, Mamadu was back in the subordinate position he thought he had left behind.

In this chapter, I have given an insight what mistrust means in Makeni and what people do when they mistrust. I have argued that mistrust is not the opposite or negation of trust. Mistrust means to miss trust. I argued that both *to miss* and *trust*, as *trɔs*, have multiple meanings. *Trɔs*, in Krio is not only a 'belief' but has more material(ist) facets, which, however cannot be realized easily. To miss *trɔs* expresses these difficulties, people's longing and failing. It stands for their inquiries for grasping it and for understanding the obstacles to it. To miss *trɔs*, thus, is engagement with and not reduction of complexity and depth. To miss *trɔs* is costly. In (contemporary) Sierra Leone, though, there is no alternative. People could not just pretend as if everything would work fine, if they relied on their routines and did not problematize them – a rather common definition of the function of trust. They could not know. They could not bracket this blind spot. Their conditions triggered them to question and illuminate it. Routines with new developments did not exist beforehand. Extant routines were also full of contradictions. One had to produce routines and understand how to go about it, to become critically knowing or savvy *(sabi fɔ)*.

Trust, thus, itself did not exist. It was not a magical social glue, whereas mistrust does cause disintegration. Trust does not precede mistrust. Trust, the 'bridge' or 'leap' (Giddens 2008; Möllering 2001) in its more or less material form, had to be constantly produced. There was no pre-given or enduring pattern or form of relating, an almost natural 'desire to protect (local) social arrangements' (Boltanski 2011:54). In the words of Candea and co-authors, 'neither relations nor entities come first' (2015: 3). Relations and entities emerge together in the continuous oscillation between cutting and relating (Strathern

1996), the interaction of centrifugal and centripetal social forces (Malefakis 2014; Newell 2012), between new opportunities and extant practices. I have shown how to miss trust is not only about cutting of social relations and interactions, but also about intensifying them.

How exactly this has to be done was the most important and persistent question for people in Makeni. People's relating and cutting, pausing and continuing, their orientation toward the new or the old continuously went on in order to improve their conditions. I have accounted for some of these attempts in this chapter. Some people were more successful than others. Success, though, was precarious, as I have shown. We should not forget, *trɔs* in Makeni is increasingly monetarized – without fully doing away with its less material facets. The uncertainty how to bridge this tension and the constant scarcity and drain of economic capital made people miss trust.

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Mistrust During the Ebola Epidemic in Guinea

Abdoulaye Wotem Somparé, Ester Botta Somparé

After the World Health Organization declared the outbreak of Ebola in Guinea in spring 2014, the subsequent campaign announced to combat the epidemic aroused many cases of resistance and reluctance. This was often expressed, especially at the early stages of the crisis, by acts of violence provoking wounds or death. Later, fearing armed repression, communities opted for more silent forms of resistance, combining an apparent submission to the new measures with passive resistance and sabotage of public health measures. Violent resistance occurred, at first, in the Forest region, before spreading to the Coastal region, following the evolution of the epidemics. Among the four natural regions of Guinea, Ebola especially affected the Forest region, where it started, and the Coastal Region, where it lasted for a very long time, especially in the capital Conakry and in the districts of Dubreka, Forecariah and Coyah. The Region of High Guinea, quickly rid itself of the epidemics, as did the only town of Mid Guinea that was affected by this illness, Telimélé. Such acts of resistance were often directed towards workers of the Coordination of Riposte against Ebola, sponsored by the state with the assistance of NGOs and International Institutions, such as WHO, that played a preeminent role. This Coordination, guided by the Direction of Prevention and Public Health, was headed by Dr. Sakoba Keita, a senior medical doctor who had much experience in directing campaigns against infectious diseases. During the Ebola epidemic, the Coordination enjoyed a high degree of independence from the Ministry of Health and was present, through local branches, in all the regions affected by the epidemics. This Coordination involved many professional groups, such as physicians, specialists in public health, social anthropologists and communicators.

Even though their purpose was to protect people from this mortal disease, representatives from Riposte were met either with open hostility, or with suspicion, even in villages where hospitality is a social value and strangers are welcomed more warmly than in towns. According to our observations, villagers were hardly answering greetings and created a cold, tense atmosphere. For example, a seven-year-old child was violently summoned by his parents to come

back while he was running joyfully towards Riposte workers, in order to welcome them in a village. In another village, people refused to gather and pray, after noting that a young female doctor had entered the mosque; they suspected her to have sprayed something in order to contaminate the congregation. People also expressed their hostility and mistrust by throwing stones at Riposte workers, by abducting them, or by blocking the entrance and the exit from villages, as if they were enemies to trap. The most violent episode took place in Womey, a very isolated village in the Forest region. Here, ten members of a delegation, which had come to inform the local community about Ebola, were killed by furious peasants who were convinced that their aim was to spread the epidemic to their village. Every person working for Riposte was stigmatized within his community and even in his own family, because he was thought to be earning 'Ebola money' resulting from the 'Ebola business', which was earned from the misfortune of others. All the symbols of Riposte were rejected, namely white jeeps with Red Cross logos, the protective uniforms of their health workers, and the hand-washing kits that are, even to this day, seen as tainted by association to the epidemic and, thus, rarely used despite the official recommendations. For instance, in the Coastal region, near the little town of Tanene, an ambulance, transferring Ebola patients to the local hospital, was pursued, blocked and burnt, while the sick people were 'released' and brought back to their home village, thus provoking a widespread infection.

How is it possible to explain, from a sociological and anthropological point of view, the widespread, unprecedented mistrust that aroused the astonishment and the incomprehension of many Riposte workers? The media coverage of the epidemic mainly conveyed the idea that attitudes of resistance and reluctance were the result of illiteracy, isolation, backwardness of Guinean rural populations, unable to understand the necessity of implementing public health measures. However, anthropological analysis based on fieldwork points to more complex reasons for resistance and reluctance. These are rooted in the particular socio-cultural features of Guinean society and in historical, political and economic factors. Our main hypothesis is that the epidemic of Ebola triggered off many latent conflicts where mistrust played an important role. Such tensions oppose individuals against one another according to their political, ethnical, socio/professional affiliations or, more generally, their respective inscriptions in the social world. In this chapter, we would like to analyse such conflicts and to show how they have shaped reactions to the Ebola epidemic.

Even though hostile attitudes have been targeted as 'reluctance' during the epidemics, we think that it would be more useful to introduce a distinction between reluctance and resistance. Actually, we maintain that the generic word of reluctance has led to an understatement of very hostile and violent reactions to Riposte. We propose, in this chapter, to consider reluctance as the hesitation, tinged with mistrust, to adhere to the measures of public health. We use the

concept of resistance to define defensive actions undertaken to counter Riposte activities. Generally, such actions are collective, concerted within a village or an urban area and range from silent forms of refusal to overt, violent conflict. Such actions were motivated by the fear that Riposte workers may introduce the deadly disease into their village or urban areas, or by the terror that a member of the community could fall under suspicion of infection and be sent to the Centre of Treatment of Ebola (CTE), where death would be the certain result. Inhabitants also feared that their site would be stigmatized and avoided as a place affected by Ebola, where nobody comes to visit relatives, or to buy and sell items: during the epidemics, for instance, bread sellers systematically avoided villages where there had been cases of infection.

It is interesting to note that, throughout the epidemics, ways of resisting varied according to gender and generation. Typically, when Riposte workers arrived in a village or in an urban area, women would scream, expressing their anger, indignation and suspicion at the sight of 'Ebola people', who were thought to have come with the intention of introducing the illness into their village or urban area, or to enforce unwelcome measures of public health. The women's screams alerted young men, who would surround the strangers to block their exit, or start throwing stones. Elderly men, on the contrary, preferred silent resistance, as they used rhetoric grounded on Islamic religion or oral tradition to show apparent obedience, behind which was a hidden refusal to comply. A common strategy was to obtain all the advantages of the Riposte interventions (for instance financial assistance and food supplies for affected villages), without actually respecting public health measures.

From a methodological point of view, this reflexion is based on research led by Abdoulaye Wotem Sompare over a year and a half in different areas of Guinea, as a social anthropological consultant of the World Health Organization.

Mistrust in the Magical Interpretation of the Causes of Ebola and Other Diseases

As noted by Andreas Zempleni (1982), in African cultures the aetiology of illness is generally explained by the evil desires and intentions of an 'Other', that can be a human being or a supernatural entity, pushed by resentment and eager to take revenge. The discovery of the identity of this angry, unpleased creature, and the identification of the reason of its dissatisfaction, leads to a ritual treatment performed by an individual, a family or an entire community. In the village of Melandou, where the epidemic started, Ebola was firstly considered as a curse of God, triggered by the ancestors' displeasure and anger with the behaviour of their offspring. During an interview, a young teacher working in the school of Melandou said: 'As we had never seen such an illness, we thought

that we had done something wrong and that our ancestors were angry with us. That's why we made a lot of sacrifices, but the disease didn't stop killing people' (Interview with A.W. Somparé, in Melandou. February 2015)

As explained by Favret-Saada (2000), recent Africanist anthropological literature usually considers witchcraft within the framework of social conflict, following the pattern of accusations, which are of interest because of their capacity to reveal social tensions. Evil intentions, provoking illness or death through witchcraft, are generally ascribed to people whose position in the family structure can easily lead to overt or latent conflicts: consequently, a woman can be accused of having bewitched her co-wife, a paternal uncle or a step-mother may be suspected of having put a spell on a young man, causing the failure of his projects, illness or death. As noted by Alain Marie (1998) such accusations may increase in times of economic and social crisis. Nonconformist, marginal individuals, such as independent women acting in a 'virile' way and lacking their family's protection, are the classic culprits of such accusations, as the scapegoats that can be indicted and punished without disrupting social cohesion. Accusations of witchcraft are intimately related to mistrust inside a family. According to local beliefs, in Guinea a witch or a sorcerer can only kill people in his own family, or exchange his victims for those of other colleagues. Previous conflicts are a breeding ground for mistrust within the joint family, leading to accusations of witchcraft, especially in lineages at the top of the traditional social hierarchy, where successions and power issues arise durable rivalries. Furthermore, such accusations also find a breeding ground in pre-existent latent ethnic conflicts. In May 2011, in the rural district of Galakpaye, for example, two communities that used to coexist peacefully, the indigenous Kpèlé and the Malinké, coming from another region, decided together to consult a traditional healer to discover the cause of a mysterious series of deaths. As a malinké old man was accused to be the sorcerer at the origin of these deaths, which were interpreted as magic murderers, he was immediately killed by relatives of one of the victims, who was a Kpélé. The two communities turned one against the other, starting an extremely violent conflict, in which twenty-five people were killed.

Allegations of sorcery also reflect generational conflicts or social cleavages among family members who have become successful urban dwellers and relatives who have remained at the village. Paradoxically, even though villagers count on the financial assistance of their urban relatives and hope that they will obtain good jobs, enabling them to help the whole village, they are also suspected of being jealous and of trying to bewitch successful members of their family. That is why, in Guinea, many town dwellers are reluctant to get back to their village if they succeed, even if they provide financial assistance. According to Alain Marie (1998:108), the fear of witchcraft is functional to the maintaining of family solidarity, as it prevents successful individuals from detaching from

their lineage and exhorts them to share their resources. Promising young people who have left the village in order to study and work in big towns are thought to be the favourite victims of jealous, unsympathetic old people within their lineage.

A tragic example of this attitude can be found in the spread of Ebola to a small village at the very South of Guinea, in the prefecture of Lola, at the border with Ivory Coast. In January 2015, a young student based in Conakry decided to spend the Christmas holidays in his native village. During his journey from the capital, he stopped at his girlfriend's house, in Guéckedou, a big town of the Forest Region, where he was probably contaminated. He showed the first symptoms of Ebola in his village and, after his sudden, inexplicable death, some old women of his family were accused of witchcraft and summoned to drink the water used to wash the corpse, in compliance with the rituals of enquiry and repression of sorcery. In so doing, they were infected with the virus and died, but their fellow-villagers regarded their death as a proof of their guilt: according to local beliefs, if they had been innocent, they would have survived.

In other villages, namely in the Coastal region, people rejected the idea that this mysterious illness was actually Ebola, as they interpreted it as *fossi*, a soussou[1] word to indicate the supernatural punishment of an evil action. The victim of a wrongdoing may ask someone endowed with magic powers to take revenge, thus causing the death of the guilty individual and his household: a series of deaths within the same family, during the epidemic, would often be interpreted as *fossi*. However, according to popular beliefs, *fossi* is dangerous because, if the accusation is false, it can turn against those who ordered it, exterminating their family. For instance, in Tamaransi, in the prefecture of Boké (Coastal region), some people still deny the existence of Ebola in their village; on the contrary, they explain that people were killed by *fossi*. A family, where a child died in a strange road accident, was suspected to have called curses upon a fellow-villager. However, as these accusations proved to be groundless, the supernatural punishment turned against those who had commanded it. In Tercé, another village of the coastal region, a young health worker said: 'I don't know what my relatives have in mind, they don't understand anything. We are poor, we suffer from this terrible epidemic, but they are convinced that it's *fossi*. While people are dying, they don't stop making sacrifices and killing big cows, in order to fight against witchcraft' (Interview with A.W. Somparé, Tercé, October 2015). This comment shows the existence of concurrent, contemporary logics of public health, as noted by Fassin and Dozon (2001). While complying with health measures grounded on scientific rationality, enforced by the Ri-

1 | Soussou is the main language spoken in the capital, Conakry, and in the entire Coastal region.

poste, people also adopted their own preventive measures, based on traditional representations of illness.

These beliefs are based on a magical and religious interpretation of disease, that is grounded on a persecutory model, strictly related to mistrust, in which latent conflicts within and among lineages appear as the causes of epidemic. Mistrust leads villagers to suspect other people of evil intentions dictating witchcraft attacks: that explains why they use *fossi* to take revenge and to punish the guilty. These convictions represented a serious obstacle to the eradication of Ebola, as they sometimes led people to reject public health measures and to seek traditional treatment through healing rituals. These ceremonies often prove extremely expensive, within a context of generalized poverty, and often get families into debts. Furthermore, the hunt for scapegoats also harmed or killed people in some Guinean villages.

The Greed for Gain and the 'Ebola business'

During the Ebola epidemic, in every coffee bar, market or meeting point, people would invariably talk about the 'Ebola business', branding the workers of the Riposte as opportunists taking advantage of the crisis and wishing that it would last as long as possible, as it coincided with a huge improvement of their economic situation. They were even suspected of inventing false statistical data, in order to present a critical situation, worse than reality. However, even in other contexts and situations, there is a widespread fear that individuals seek enrichment, regardless of any ethical or moral considerations. This is particularly evident in economic transactions and in the relationship between the population and civil servants.

In economic transactions, customers are extremely suspicious towards traders and sellers. Within a context of extreme liberalization, the Guinean markets are inundated by a wide range of products with doubtful origins, whose prices are not fixed, but flexible and subject to negotiation. In a normal transaction, sellers tend to fix a very high price, whereas customers propose a very low one, until they reach an agreement somewhere in the middle. Even though everyone accepts this way of negotiating prices, traders are suspected of trying to sell items of bad quality, or out-of-date food, dangerous for the customer's health. They are also accused of fixing prices according to the customer's appearance, which reveals social status or an ethnic identity. For instance if, during the transaction, the buyer speaks French, this immediately reveals that he is an educated person, likely to afford a higher price. People also condemn the fact that prices increase during the Ramadan period, when customers, particularly careful about having a rich dinner after a whole day of fast, tend to spend more money on food. Even if the rise of prices correspond to the market laws

of offer and demand, this escalation is considered to be an expression of the greed of Guinean traders. That explains why they allegedly take advantage of their customers even in moments when people are supposed to behave in a religious manner, showing charity and altruism. At the end of the day, dealers are accused of seeking gain regardless of any other consideration. The only way to avoid abuse, according to most people, is to get close to them, to establish warm relationships, so that a trader will be reluctant to cheat them. A woman buyer and a woman seller may, for instance, become 'aimées' (loved ones), a term that indicates a special consideration for one another, close to affection. When a person says: '*Je suis ton client',* (I am your customer), he means that he is a regular buyer, whose trust must be preserved: good prices should be fixed and bad-quality items should not be sold to him. As in public services, personalization of the relationship appears to be the best way to diminish mistrust and to avoid cheating.

It is important to note that this negative representation of traders, who 'would even sell their mothers for money' is rooted in the demonization of this professional group enhanced by the first socialist regime, headed by the President Sékou Touré, who governed Guinea from the Independence in 1958 to 1984. During this period of state controlled trade, those undertaking private, clandestine business were branded as enemies of the people who sought individual profit instead of supporting the collective effort towards the development of the economy. In the second, liberal regime, marked by a coalition between big traders, dealing with import-export, and high public officials, traders were considered as members of a corrupt elite that was dipping into the state coffers in order to become rich in a context of general, dramatic impoverishment. The frauds occurring during the earthquake that struck the mountain region of Moyenne Guinée in 1984, or the Kankan inundation in 1990, confirmed such representations, as aid sent to help the victims of these regions was misappropriated and, thanks to the complicity of public officials and traders, goods were put up for sale on local markets. In the same way, during the Ebola epidemic, workers of the Riposte, charged of the distribution of free hand-cleaning chlorinated products, were suspected to have sold them to traders.

Furthermore, as in the capital Conakry most traders belong to the Fulani ethnic group, the largest in the country, prejudice towards traders is also due to an ethnic bias against this group, which is feared for its economic power. During the liberal regime of Lansana Conté, many Fulani cattle-breeders, who had economic capital and a culture of money saving, took advantage of the liberalization of trade to move to the capital, where they became important shop owners and import-export traders. Some of them, who did not possess economic capital, accepted to work as domestic workers, in order to accumulate savings and start small commercial initiatives. Within the framework of the bipolarization of political life, many Fulani support the main Opposition party, UFDG,

headed by a Fulani leader, Cellou Dalein Diallo. Fulani dealers are particularly manifold among his supporters and finance political campaigns and party activities. They usually take part in popular demonstrations of the opposition party against the government, closing their shops in protest and in solidarity with the cause, and also to protect themselves from robbery or vandalism, frequent in such events. However, other inhabitants of Conakry interpret this behaviour as an arrogant exhibition of their economic power. According to some comments, these shop owners show that they have the power to starve the inhabitants of the capital if they want to, so that the closure of a shop is perceived as a veiled threat. Besides, in periods of political tensions, when different ethnic groups compete for power by supporting different political parties, Fulani traders are reproached for fixing high prices for Malinké customers, who generally support the standing president, Alpha Condé. On the contrary, they are said to be more flexible with customers with whom they share the same ethnic identity or, at least, with those who speak their language, *pulaar*.

Popular Mistrust towards Public Officials

Within a context of corruption and clientelism, users show a deep mistrust towards public officials. Here, the state is not to be considered as an abstract moral person that would guarantee everybody's welfare. On the contrary, it appears as a concrete reality, charged with the interests of individuals, families and communities. For many Guineans, the state is endowed with plentiful, almost limitless resources, accessible by obtaining, for oneself, for a family or a community member, a strategic job in the public service. In such a context, public officials, even if their post does not allow them to dip into the state coffers, are suspected of being corrupt, of acting according to clientilist and nepotistic logics. Some teachers, for instance, are alleged of taking advantage of their position to elicit something close to bribes from pupils or families: for instance, when parents are asked to buy school materials, this is interpreted as a kind of extortion.

During the Ebola epidemic, it is particularly important to consider how such representations act on the relationship between population and medical staff, who are generally perceived as a group of acquisitive individuals, more interested in their own gain than in the health of patients. Such behaviour is suspected particularly in interactions between strangers, those who do not benefit from a personalized relationship based on friendship or kinship. (Jaffré and Olivier de Sardan 2003). In private clinics and public hospitals, patients are systematically asked to pay for medical care. For instance, a patient suffering from an asthma attack will not be treated unless he can afford to buy a bottle of oxygen or other products. 'Tips' are often required to ease procedures, for instance

to shorten a waiting queue for a radiography. As Jaffré (2003) observes, such practices are often considered normal by the medical staff. Sometimes, they do not really reflect any intention to earn money through corruption, but are simply part of the habits of a professional group in a given health centre. Furthermore, members of medical staff have a different status: in public hospitals or health centres, besides public servants, there is a profusion of 'trainees', who do not earn a regular salary, but only 'bonuses' or 'transport fees'. Thus, their precarious economic conditions make them particularly prone to corruption.

Cases of death occurring in families who cannot afford treatment receive a lot of media attention, thus encouraging mistrust towards medical doctors and putting a question mark over their morality and deontology. Following the logic of collective action, the errors of some individuals are attributed to a whole professional category. However, the supposed 'greed' doctors have for money is one of the reasons behind mistrust during the Ebola epidemic, a situation that obliged institutions to pay attention to the health conditions of every single person. People were constantly exhorted to go to the surgery, were monitored and submitted to a form of control of their daily life that, as observed by Gasquet-Blanchard (2014), was perceived as domination. The will to control the body of individuals, considered as an object of public health, what Foucault described as 'biopower', appeared almost inexplicable for people who were used to falling sick and dying to the total indifference of the state. The same patients were now obliged to attend the hospitals and clinics that had always rejected them before because they could not afford to pay for treatment. During a campaign of 'active research' of Ebola patients in Forecariah (Coastal Region), where doctors would come to each concession to ask the family head about the presence of sick people in the household, a man commented:

> It is strange. Since the creation of Guinea, when someone is sick, he goes to the hospital. We have never seen doctors coming to our home to check if we feel fine. This is really astonishing, because in the past we were not welcome in hospitals, as we are poor. Now, they insist in taking us, or our relatives, to the hospital. What do they want to do to us? (Interview with A.W. Somparé, Forecariah, August 2015)

As a matter of fact, on these occasions, family heads tended to deny systematically that someone was ill in the household, saying that everybody felt perfectly fine. The camp hospitals that had been quickly implanted in many villages, where doctors were disposed to treat any kind of illness for free, were absolutely deserted.

Furthermore, health measures were perceived as an injunction of the state in compliance with foreign partners, suspected of imposing a form of neo-colonial domination, hidden behind the idea of defending global health. Some of the most terrifying rumours collected during the epidemic conveyed the

idea that physicians, who were supposed to treat patients, were actually killing them, in order to sell their organs and blood to rich citizens of western countries. The fact that, in the first phases, people were not allowed to see the body of their relatives, fed the idea that an international traffic of human organs was taking place. Such reports, especially concerning doctors working for foreign institutions such as the Red Cross, are related to the history of Guinean experiences with western countries. The slave trade, colonization, predation, domination, and the exploitation of human and material resources were some of the main features of these interactions. (Somparé and Botta Somparé 2015) As noted by Michel Agier (2010: 989) 'humanitarian workers have taken over from colonial administrations and workers of international cooperation, to represent the new form of white presence and domination'.

Patients also doubt the competence of medical staff. In the capital Conakry, everyone can tell some story about medical errors, such as doctors nearly killing a child or prescribing medication with glucose to a diabetic patient. The young age of the medical staff is seen to be one of the reasons for these errors, as more experienced and competent practitioners are often busy with University classes and more rewarding jobs in expensive private clinics. Furthermore, the fact that many patients, for economic or cultural reasons, choose to go to the hospital only when their illness becomes very serious, strengthens the idea that Guinean hospitals are a place for people to die, rather than to be treated. (Somparé 2017)

However, if these practices and representations represent a fertile background for mistrust towards health workers, it is also important to note that, during these epidemics, medical doctors, as all the other Riposte workers, were perceived as representatives of the State, or the *menguésanyi* (the legs of the chief) in Soussou language. They were seen to be cogs in a wide organization that, for the first time, tried to impose control on bodies and individual health. For this reason, pre-existent mistrust towards medical staff combined, for the first time, with hostility towards the State and the political and intellectual élites to which they were associated.

Mistrust towards Political and Intellectual Elites

During the Ebola epidemic, the deep mistrust shown by Guineans towards the workers of the Riposte, cannot be understood without reference to widespread negative representations towards political and intellectual élites. First of all, the different professionals involved in Riposte (medical doctors, specialists of public health, communicators, sociologists and anthropologists) were all seen to be members of intellectual élites and marked out as 'Ebola people'. This designation underlines a relationship grounded on otherness; as noted by Ol-

ivier de Sardan (1995) in discussing development projects, there is a wide gap between local and foreign experts, with, on one side, those possessing cultural and economic capital, the bearers of an urban, cosmopolite culture, and, on the other, people who benefit from development projects, who are mainly rural, poor and illiterate. On the other hand, workers of the Riposte tended to define local populations in terms of 'Communities', depicted in terms of homogenous groups, stuck in tradition, unable to accept innovations, composed by backward and stubborn peasants. Ethnic bias may strengthen such representations. Even if there was a general tendency to send the Riposte workers to zones where they shared people's ethnic and linguistic identity, this was not always possible. In the Coastal region, we heard the workers, strangers to this region, express many prejudices about the Soussou people, who asked for more economic aid. They were accused of being lazy, of preferring hand-outs to work, of being unreliable due to their failure to comply with public health measures, despite their apparent agreement to do so. By doing so, the Guinean workers of the Riposte adopted well-known stereotypes that exist about every ethnic group in Guinea and that vary according to the context of enunciation. For instance, the Fulani's alleged capacity to save money, that can be praised in a positive discourse, converts into meanness in a negative one (Somparé 2009).

During the epidemics, the instructed 'Ebola people' were suspected of using their cultural capital to take advantage of the situation, by enforcing measures on illiterate people that were based on scientific knowledge that only they had mastered. In this sense, they awoke a latent mistrust towards educated people that has been present in many African countries since colonization. Since the end of nineteenth century, Guineans attending the first French schools had become employees in the newly established colonial administration. Consequently, the colonial system used the first educated people as intermediaries between local inhabitants and administration, therefore attributing to them some power that could be used to defend the interests of natives, but also at the same time to dominate them. Furthermore, as noted by Claude Rivière (1971), the colonial system systematically recruited civil servants far from their regions, so that they could behave more impartially, without being conditioned by kinship or friendship.

These historical circumstances have led Guinean people, especially in the rural context, to view educated individuals as dangerous and willing to betray their family and community, even though they may also act as counsellors and protectors to some of their fellow-villagers. As Gérard (1997) has noted for the Malian case, educated people are often perceived in an ambivalent way: on one hand, the sacred character of knowledge is transposed over school learning, so that intellectuals are assimilated to wise traditional masters, endowed with esoteric knowledge and even supernatural powers. On the other hand, this very knowledge may be used to dominate other people, as reported by Botta

Somparé (2015: 390), who refers to a mother's comment on her only educated daughter, in a Guinean village inhabited by Fulani: 'She is the smartest of all my girls ... She is so sharp that she could put her sisters and me in a bag and sell us at the market, if we don't pay attention!'

Furthermore, mistrust towards intellectuals has continued on from the colonial period, to become a recurrent theme in accusations asserted by subsequent Guinean presidents towards the intellectual and political élites. Such accusations, first expressed by President Sekou Touré, were resumed and exploited by the two military governments of Lansana Conté and Moussa Dadis Camara. The first Guinean president Sekou Touré, leading the PDG (Parti Démocratique de Guinée), was supported by lower social strata and preferred immediate independence rather than autonomy within the framework of the French Union, which was a sort of French Commonwealth advocated by General de Gaulle in order to keep close ties with the former colonies. Nevertheless, not all Guineans agreed with Sekou Touré's point of view: the main Opposition party, BAG, (Bloc Africain de Guinée) directed by Yaoundo Barry and mainly supported by political elites close to colonial administration, resisted a quick and brutal independence, which would entail rupturing diplomatic relations with France. From this point on, Sekou Touré suspected France of relying on intellectual elites to destabilize his leadership. Another factor in his thinking was that most members of this upper class had chosen to live abroad, in Senegal or Ivory Coast, retaining close relations with France in the process. They wished to escape from a totalitarian socialist regime that would strongly restrain their freedom and even put their lives in danger, as hundreds of political opponents died in the prison of Camp Boiro. Nationalist rhetoric aimed at presenting the members of the elites as traitors, who had fled Guinea in order to lead comfortable lives abroad instead of taking part in the development of the country. A semantic swing slowly took place, as political opponents started to be called anti-Guineans.

Furthermore, Fulani were manifold in the Opposition, as Sekou Touré's egalitarian ideals and his endeavours to disrupt the authority of traditional elites clashed with their political conservatism. Fulani, founders of the theocratic state of Djallon, were used to a very stratified and hierarchical traditional political organization. That is why Sekou Touré introduced an ethnic bias against this group, accused them of plotting against the government and behaving as traitors and 'enemies of the people'. They were presented as anti-Guineans wishing to take power of the country. Subsequent real or supposed thwarted putsches highlighted the role of intellectuals living abroad, who often belonged to the Fulani ethnic group, in the opposition to the regime.

After Sekou Touré's death, in 1984, the new liberal regime headed by the General Lansana Conté tried to improve Guinean diplomatic relations with Western countries and asked intellectual elites of the Guinean diaspora to

come back to their homeland, in order to use their qualifications and experience for the development of the country. This created a sort of competition between the returning elites and the local high public officials who, sensing that their posts were threatened, insisted that they had been the ones who had endured sufferings and privations during Sekou Touré's regime and deserved, now, to be rewarded. However, even president Lansana Conte, at the introduction of a multiparty system, resumed nationalistic rhetoric when he had to face an opposition mostly made of former opponents and members of the diaspora.

In the 1990s, in a period of violent armed conflicts in West Africa, Conté presented himself as the defender of peace and order in Guinea, thus associating any kind of opposition to disorder. Within this context, Guinean intellectuals returning from diaspora were depicted, once again, as enemies willing to stir up political turmoil and plunge the country into the chaos of war. Furthermore, Lansana Conté, who hardly knew to read and write, portrayed himself as a peasant, a soldier, an almost illiterate man who had charged intellectuals and technocrats with leading the country. Consequently, they shouldered the responsibility for any mistake; when criticized the President would claim ignorance, suggesting that it was only his educated entourage that took the key decisions. Finally, in order to preserve the sacred halo of respect due to the chief in many African cultures, the negative assessments of Lansana Conte's regime were blamed on the intellectual elites that had surrounded him and betrayed him, ruining the country he cherished (Somparé 2013).

After his death, his successor, Moussa Dadis Camara, who headed a military regime, completely adhered to this interpretation and decided that many politicians of the Second Republic would be submitted to a kind of 'trial by media'. This was the beginning of Dadis's show that coincided with the climax of popular mistrust towards the elites. Every evening, the President would appear on TV screens and set himself as a master judge while members of the ruling class would file past him. During a detailed interrogation, Guineans would learn how politicians had destroyed their country for their own advantage by engaging in drug traffic or by selling mining firms for low prices. In this show, Dadis appeared as the dispenser of justice, who had come to save the country from its corrupted elites and to restore the vision of Lansana Conte, who was betrayed by his own entourage. Even the actual President, Alpha Condé, a member of the intellectual elite who spent in France most of his life, does not hesitate to demonize the former ruling class in order to criticize his opponents, who had a leading position during the Second Republic. However, he avoids criticizing Lansana Conte, who was a Soussou from the Coastal region, so as not to offend the susceptibilities of Soussous, a group which represents an important part of his electorate.

Ebola in the Guinean Political Context

Besides these historical reasons, some anthropological considerations about power can help to throw light on the political context in which Ebola appeared in Guinea. As noted by Bayart (1989), access to power in Africa is considered in terms of appropriation of the state resources that will be shared within family, ethnic community or entourage, regardless of public welfare and development of the country. Thus, both in rural and urban areas, a lot of Guineans feel abandoned by the authorities, as they face daily problems related to poverty, lack of water, electricity, difficulties in accessing health and education. Many people are convinced that their poverty results from the bad governance of political and intellectual elites who seek their own profit and only favour the members of their own family or village community. Therefore, during the epidemic, episodes of resistance represented, for many unheeded communities, an occasion to obtain the attention of the authorities and to finally express their discontent at these problems. For instance, peripheral urban areas lacking schools and public hospitals, as a result of the quick and uncontrolled expansion of the capital Conakry, showed particularly virulent forms of resistance.

Furthermore, mistrust towards the Government was encouraged by the opposition, in a context of the strong bipolarization of political life reflecting ethnic divisions. Two political parties and their allies struggle for power: the government party, RPG, headed by the President Alpha Condé, and the opposition party, UFDG, led by Cellou Dalein Diallo. These two parties have, more or less, the same numbers of supporters, mostly motivated by ethnic and regional considerations. RPG is originally supported by Malinké and is rooted in High Guinea, whereas UFDG is mainly a Fulani party, whose followers come from Mid-Guinea (Fouta Djallon), and from the capital Conakry. These parties encourage a constant popular mobilization, leading the activists of each field to criticize the others and unconditionally support every action of their leader, for instance in public demonstrations and virulent debates, especially on radios. Within such a context of bipolarization, the opposition supporters suspected the President, Alpha Conde, of inventing or maintaining the epidemic, in order to delay the impending presidential elections. Rumours also suggested that he was taking advantage of Ebola by pocketing international aid. He was also criticized because of the slowness of his first reactions to the epidemic, probably in order to avoid panic among foreign investors, especially interested in the Forest Region, rich in vast, unexploited iron deposits and other resources.

On the other hand, the president tried to convert Ebola into a political resource. After initial hesitation, he wanted to show that he was managing the situation well, allowing Guinea to rid herself of the epidemic. While doing so, he made some misleading announcements, for instance declaring that Ebola would be over in sixty days. Thus, he conveyed the idea that he could control the

development of the epidemic; this only seemed to confirm rumours implicating him in the outbreak and spread of Ebola in Guinea. Rumours about Ebola as a conspiracy of the government and his international partners were supported by oppositional criticism, that only subsided when the dramatic situation finally pushed all political actors to try to cooperate in a struggle for national unity, a process also encouraged by the visit of the French President François Hollande. However, even if misleading announcements surely aggravated reluctance and amplified rumours, they were not the main cause of negative reactions, that started from the very beginning of the campaign against Ebola.

At the local level, the Coordination of Riposte adopted a vertical communication strategy, following the administrative structure. Specialists believed that local political and moral authorities, once informed, could sensitize people and obtain their compliance with public health measures. However, they did not understand that local authorities were often delegitimized, in many cases because they had governed for a long time and, consequently, were perceived as the allies of subsequent corrupt Guinean governments. On the other hand, these attitudes towards local authorities also led those actors traditionally excluded from politics, like women or young people, to contest the gerontocracy. These behaviours arose thanks to the existence of new spaces of communication, which could be real (such as meeting points in villages or urban areas) or virtual (such as social networks). Therefore, the Ebola epidemic highlighted latent conflicts, related to generation and gender.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have tried to show that Guinean society is marked by latent conflicts opposing individuals according to their ethnic, social, professionals and political affiliations. Their position in the family structure also matters, as it may determine peaceful or tense relationships with other family members. Mistrust is an important constituent of such conflicts and a heuristic concept in explaining resistance and reluctance during the Ebola epidemic. Our hypothesis is that these attitudes did not only depend on the sanitary crisis and on the health measures enforced by the Riposte. Without denying the importance of these factors, we have tried to underline how such reactions originate from backgrounds of mistrust existing before the epidemic, rooted in culture, political life, interethnic relations, interactions between different socio-professional categories. Like every crisis, the Ebola epidemic has made latent conflicts become manifest. Even if the media have particularly emphasized the cultural factors behind resistance, we think that political factors related to the mistrust between elites and people, between public officials and users of public services also deserve special attention.

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Mistrusting as a Mode of Engagement in Mediation

Insights from Socio-Legal Practice in Rwanda

Stefanie Bognitz

The institution of mediators *(abunzi)* existed long before colonisation. When something happened, there was the family elder *(umukuru w'umuryango)*, who had the responsibility to solve disputes between family members. He would call upon all family members to share into solving the problem. When someone was found guilty, there were no governmental or judicial entities as in our days, the family elder only charged the responsible with a fine of providing beer that was then prepared for everyone to share. The case ended in that way by reconciliation. In order for people to continue to live in harmony today, the government decided to bring back our culture of solving problems by the people themselves in their communities, because you may find people fighting for a chicken and their case can reach the Supreme Court. The government decided to decentralize justice and provided for it in the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, it was in 2003 in its Article 159, which talks about mediation committees (*komite z'abunzi)*. There are other laws relating to *abunzi* which means that it is an institutionalized organ, so they tried to bring back that traditional culture in order to prevent people to spend their time in courts just to preside over small cases.
(Interview with Dominique Nkurikiyinka, Mediator, Southern Rwanda, November 2012)

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline some of the lived consequences of a society that was reformed after acts of mass violence and genocide. I intend to examine modes of pacifying relationships between actors in mediation of disputes by shedding light on the persistence of mistrust, which can be seen in the practices actors

use to navigate and anticipate their futures.[1] The analysis is confined to the mandatory socio-legal practice of mediation or *kunga abantu*[2] guided by those who 'bring people together' *abunzi* (mediators)[3]. Mediation is situated on the threshold of the legal system of the post-genocide Rwandan state and is firmly under control of local administrative structures. Rwanda has witnessed a shift in procedural responsibilities from a conventional judicial system to one that formally incorporates *abunzi* on its threshold. Mediation is re-introduced as an institutionalized and regulated space of dispute settlement governed by law. However, what is intriguing about this promise of mediation is how it is becoming a space for participatory engagement between citizens and disputing partners who, in terms of strategies and practices, are by no means equal partners in mediation. Very similar to what Lipsky has termed street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980), street-smart or savvy actors in dispute employ wide-ranging, creative and flexible registers when pursuing their claims and articulating their accusations. The unintended aspects of engaging citizens in mediation forums are indicative of life worlds in the aftermath of mass atrocities and genocide. In this vein, mistrust has become a forceful strategy in the everyday life of citizens. Their everyday pursuit to secure modes of existence and forms of subsistence translates into social forms of engagement in mediation. Mistrust, silences, passivity and subversive actions are meaningful strategies. Resistance, doubt and critique are ways of making views public and distinguish the individual who employs these critical creative capacities.

The practice of bringing people together in mediation *(kunga abantu)* is embedded in an outgrowth of the Rwandan legal system. It is an organizational extension (Rottenburg 2009: 105, 140) that, since 2004, has been on the threshold of the legal system, bringing people together in mediation forums and introduces their disputes[4] to a public space (Organic Law N ° 17/2004 of

1 | My use of the term mistrust draws on the Kinyarwanda verb *gukenga* which means to mistrust, the respective noun *amakenga* (suspicion) as well as *urwikekwe* meaning to have suspicion from the verb *kwikeka* which is to suspect something.

2 | The verb *kunga* finds equivalence in (1) medicine where it denotes rejoining of a broken bone. It is employed when describing the (2) handiwork of tying two cords into one long cord. In relation to people (*abantu*) it is now used to denote (3) mediation covering the re-establishment of relationships between people and reconciling them (Organic Law N° 17/2004; N° 31/2006; N° 02/2010; Ministry of Justice 2010: 4).

3 | In the course of the text I make use of the terms mediators *abunzi* and mediation *kunga abantu* interchangeably.

4 | As acceleration of an unanswered claim or an unresolved disagreement between people, a dispute is addressed to some kind of public forum possibly staffed with a third party: 'The duration of disputes depends on the intensity of such bonds that unite victims with those against whom they clamour for justice' (Gulliver 1969/1997: 14).

20/06/2004). This space holds various modes of practices and forms of articulation for actors in dispute. They bring critique to light, employ strategies of mistrust and consciously distance themselves or resist figurations of authority. However, mediation is not an alternative to negotiation of disputes in courts. It rather precedes courts and gives access to disputes easily entering into the judicial system at its lowest level. Thus, mediation is a significant institutional arrangement for coming to terms with disputes considering the number of cases introduced to *abunzi* who set the itinerary for mediation. Mediation aims towards dispute settlement supported by active involvement of *abunzi* as a third party. I thus situate mediation, as organizational extension, within vigorous and fast-paced conditions of citizen surveillance brought about by post-genocide legislative reform in a context of 'autocratic' modes of state-administration and governance as well as their gradual consolidation (see Ingelaere 2009, 2014; Reyntjens 1990, 2010; Schabas & Imbleau 1997; Waldorf 2006).

Mistrust is not only an analytical moment in lack of trust. I would agree that 'distrust ought not to be understood as derivate from an original state of trust' (Pedersen and Meinert 2015: 103). Neither do I expect to find logical consequentialisms in the presence and absence of trust as against mistrust. Mistrusting is a strategy, the cautious practice of actors who find themselves in relationships with others, 'mistrust (…) enables people to engage in strategic action and tactical manoeuvring' (de Certeau 1984: 50-52, 59-60; cited in MacLean 2013: 5). In this contribution, I follow an understanding of mistrusting which is to doubt, critique, provoke or steer questions and point to inequalities and injustices. Mistrust is to maintain a critical and self-determined distance to everyday events, institutions and its actors. Here mistrusting is a mode of engagement that can evaluate and calculate situations to create and maintain a vantage point from which actors can strategize about their practices. In my analysis, I focus on creative action and practices that can be achieved in situations of mistrusting, but that can also go wrong. 'Mistrust (…) *creates* opportunities for people to pursue their own interests, especially where others try to limit their ability to defend and/or advance them' (MacLean 2013: 5, emphasis retained).

Studying dispute management and resolution mechanisms include a perspective on cases or litigations enacted in a socio-legal sphere under consideration of respective assemblages, rules, institutions and stabilizing objects (Boltanksi and Thévenot 1999: 360).

When Mistrust Surfaces

Mistrust is not a set of actions or a range of practices including speech acts that offers itself directly for ethnographic inquiry. Mistrust marks a range of practices asking the participating, observing analyst to come forth attempting to percolate its opaqueness. I did not consider mistrust as a strategic practice of actors when I conceptualized the ethnography. This only surfaced much later in forms of organizing and institutionalizing access to the legal system and justice for 'ordinary Rwandans.'

What if we question the silences that we mistake for quiet endorsement? Speaking with street-savvy Rwandans at the margins of the state in their own language (Kinyarwanda) allowed me to inhabit a fugitive identity that made the familiar unknown and vice versa. I remained at a distance to take people out of their everyday and allow them to see their situation otherwise, while I created proximity to be entrusted with secret stories, insights and concerns. Given that we shared a common language, I could continuously deconstruct the unknown and make it familiar to me. It seems to me that this was the foundation for earning trust and being granted access to restricted realms that many researchers working in post-genocide Rwanda have called a 'withdrawn society' (see Fujii 2009, Thomson 2013).

Starting after the 1994 genocide and lasting until today, villages and communities on Rwanda's hills continue to be remade. Exiled refugees have returned, former FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) members are reintegrated, prisoners are being sent home after serving their sentences, inhabitants from scattered settlements without access to public services and infrastructures have had to relocate to live in newly built villages. Whenever Rwandans interact with public institutions they are asked to identify not only who they are, but also where they come from. In this way, they strictly follow the rules of the administrative units into which the whole country has been reorganized. The loose translation of village that I employ here, is far from an organically grown community, but more of a collection of homes closely built together, usually within reach of a road or path and implemented as the smallest administrative unit, commonly referred to as *umudugudu* (pl. *imidugudu*).

Against this background of inhabitation, the formation of villages framed configurations of peasants, who are expected to acquiesce when they interact with authorities and public institutions. The reconfiguration of rural dwellings and the comprehensive relocation of the local population certainly resonates in disagreements and disputes. 'Distance from their fields also contributed to uncertainty and concern among rural dwellers about losing their rights to land or their harvests' (Newbury 2011: 225). Given the remaking of post-genocide politics and governance, rural Rwandans not only find themselves living in

communities of strangers, but they are no longer in close proximity to where they cultivate crops and till their land to secure subsistence livelihoods. Farmed fields no longer border plots of land, which belonged to organically grown communities of trust who rely on mutual practices of reliance and exchange. In the longue durée historical approach to social organization, genealogies and political economy, among many other aspects of the 'interlacustrine' region, Chrétien evokes a certain dynamic in responsibilities and dependencies between people. 'Indeed, influence resided in *trust* born out of personal relationships, in oaths, and in resource availability, which allowed one to forge relations that went far beyond the hill or banana garden where one lived' (Chrétien 2003: 349). Moments of identification strictly pursuing reconfigured spaces rather speak of significant reorganization and reform of governance of Rwandans, than the forging of identities in terms of origin and place of residence. James Scott has scrutinized high modernist social engineering projects that subject organically grown and culturally embedded patterns of human organization to villagization enforced on ordinary inhabitants. The 'administrative ordering of nature and society' (Scott 1998: 4) stands out as an attempt to create order where, in the eyes of the state, otherwise restless populations roam. In its attempt to make the 'social landscape legible, a bureaucratic state concerns itself with the administrative ordering of state and society' (Newbury 2011: 225). In the state's effort towards efficiency and good governance, citizens become subjects again. This legibility of the social descends into ordinary life worlds and concerns real people inhabiting these worlds. This short introduction to observations on current forms of living in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide demonstrates how detachment and isolation from mutual practices are conscious actions. They persist in spaces of making community or forums within which mediation is underway (see Doughty 2016). It is in these spaces of the everyday life world that I intend to access, to pursue, observe and, thus, analyse the surfacing of mistrust.

Theories of Trust

In the preface to his book on trust, Niklas Luhmann (1967: v) expressed doubt over whether sociology should utilize words of 'everyday language use' that originate in a 'world of imagination' (*Vorstellungswelt)*. His doubt was probably confirmed by the insight that trust had not been systematically conceptualized in sociological analysis and his work should remain the only systematic approach to a sociology of trust for some time to come (Hartmann 2001: 7, Luhmann 2000: 1). Luhmann situates trust in a moral world. Thus, trust runs the risk of being misused as concept for the analysis of the social world. None-

theless, he sets out to introduce trust to the endeavour of building a theory in correspondence to the everyday of the social world (Luhmann 2000: v).

His overall approach to trust makes it a necessity of the everyday to reduce social complexity as a precondition to act. Everyday life, practices and decisions become possible because of trust and trusting, when individuals are in situations and take on certain risks. Following this understanding, individuals who refuse to trust, cannot establish trustworthy relations with others so that mistrusting produces perhaps even too many possibilities for action. This implies that because of mistrusting, the level of complexity of situations encountered by individuals accelerates, so that courses of actions are manifold and actors are overwhelmed by the sheer possibilities in any given situation (Luhmann 2000: 93). Strategies of mistrust accelerate complexity, since more information is required to stabilize one's actions. People tend to scrutinize information to weigh its validity and worth when proceeding with equivalent actions. Given the dynamics of trust and mistrust brought about by thresholds that make actors weigh their risks, Luhmann concludes that 'a social system that requires or cannot avoid attitudes of mistrust (for certain functions) of its members, at the same time requires mechanisms that reduce the possibility of mistrust, outbalances other possibilities or worse runs the risks to reproduce modes of mistrust that slowly result in destruction (of the social system)' (ibid. 100). In this regard institutional arrangements hold actions based on mistrust accountable. In other words, mistrust in each other could provoke actions that are based on faith in institutions, not least so as to mitigate the risks and uncertainties of actors invested in mistrusting practices. Lack of trust would be a result of diverse institutions and unstandardized measures (Porter 1995: 46). Porter further asserts, 'trust can never be separated from hierarchies and institutions' (ibid: 214). Following along these lines, trust in new institutions will decrease, if experience of personal encounters and engagements with such institutions vary and lead to contradicting results.

Tilly broadly defines trust 'as an attitude or a relationship that comes along with a set of practices' (2005: 12). He excludes the 'sorts of attitudes that might motivate, complement or result in relationships of trust' (2004: 4). It seems to me that the practice approach may circumvent the 'elusive notion of trust' (Gambetta 1988: ix). Tilly rather foregrounds the fabrics of relationships between people that emerge with their practices. 'Trust networks, then, consist of ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others' (Tilly 2005: 12). Trust relationships cannot sustain themselves without the premise of people taking risks and investing in unpredictable outcomes (Tilly 2004: 4).

Trust is confidence in the reliability of a person or system (Giddens 1990), it is indispensable for a stable and collectively shared life. In a similar movement,

Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016) expose trust to ethnographic inquiry. These authors acknowledge the elusiveness of trust, in a similar way to Gambetta (1988). According to Broch-Due and Ystanes (2016: 1), trusting is 'a disposition, a powerful affect, a stance towards the world expressed in a confident reaching out to others'. Indeed, this presupposes trust almost as a confidence in and of the experienced world, as a consequence of modernity (Giddens 1990). These authors also emphasize the future-orientation in a trusting disposition accumulated through collections of positive experiences as actors get along with one another (ibid.). When 'trust weaves together intersubjective worlds' (Broch-Due and Ystanes 2016: 1), it is also in danger of being undermined by mistrust, a corrupting force with the power to encroach social worlds and their associated actors.

According to Hardin, we have entered an age of distrust, as we interact more with unrelated people we cannot trust, rather than with those in whom we trust due to memory of previous encounters (Hardin 2006: 13). 'Distrust is sometimes not merely a rational assessment but it is also benign, in that it protects against harms rather that causing them' (Hardin 2006: 89). Showing how distrust can fulfil the incentive of keeping oneself from risks and harmful actions of others, this approach foregrounds questions of how distrust plays out and which motivations it fulfils, rather than falling into the trap of pathologizing communities of mistrust and generalizing what seems impossible to corroborate empirically. The impossibility of reading trust as opposed to and different from mistrust also brings to the fore the question of how trust relates to trustworthiness.

Hardin opens an alternative trajectory when he sets out from trust and rather considers its attached merits when he turns to trustworthiness. 'Your trustworthiness is your commitment to fulfil another's trust in you' (Hardin 2002: 28). In the following pages on the worthiness of *abunzi*, going along with Hardin, I discuss how 'trustworthiness is a motivation or a set of motivations for acting' in the socio-legal world (ibid. 31). But I belief some critical distance to Hardin's assessment of trust needs to be kept when he reasons that 'the meaningful result of trust, when it is justified, is to enable cooperation; the result of distrust is to block even the attempt at cooperation' (ibid. 96). Moreover, he seems short sighted in painting the two worlds of trust and distrust as distinct and taken for granted opposites: 'Trust is functional in a world in which trust pays off; distrust is functional in a world in which trust does not pay off' (ibid. 96). What is more, in practices and situations there is a leverage for actors to engage their competences ranging from mistrusting, testing commitment to being trustworthy as well as establishing trusting relationships; all of whose thresholds can be overcome effortlessly.

Custodians of Trustworthiness

> 'You never know the name of the one who will make the spade that will avenge you.'
> *Agacumu kazaguhorera ntumenya uwagacuze.*
> Rwandan Proverb

The a*bunzi* mediators I worked and conversed with, would refer to having been elected by residents of their village or cell as their representatives in mediation committees as evidence of their public commitment and merit. Referring back to the much formalized procedures of nationwide *abunzi* elections as underlying reason for them becoming *abunzi* was often regarded as ample explanation. But it is worthwhile looking into how people would go about choosing their representatives as everyone could be in need of *abunzi* one day and rely on their good conduct to reconcile with or resolve a disagreement with a party in dispute. Accepting one's own potential need of *abunzi* sometime in the future is an inducement for actors to accept *abunzi* as an institution of worth and significance. Seen from a perspective of the making of institutions as linked to actors' practices and human actions[5], there is a need to rely on *abunzi* and trust their worthiness on behalf of people entering mediation. The trustworthiness of mediators and trust in mediation could therefore be read as a defining moment delineating the practice of mediation *kunga abantu* from mediation in becoming an institution (*komité y'abunzi)*.

I base the term trustworthiness on concepts in *Kinyarwanda* that are among the everyday register of street-savvy and ordinary people. *Kwizera* (verb) and *ikizera* (noun) in a general sense means to hope, believe or have faith in. Icyizere (noun; plural iby-) implies hope, trust, and confidence and is derived from *kwizera*. *Kwiringira* (verb) and *icyiringiro* (noun; plural *iby-*) denotes to trust, rely on, hope, expect. All the connotations that are related to trust inherit the value of a future-oriented perspective.

So why would an ordinary, street-savvy person be elected to become *umwunzi*? Emmanuel, vice-president of a Mediation Committee at the appeal level of the administrative unit of the sector elected for a five-year mandate, explains how he was trusted by people to represent them. A person can only reach trustworthiness – *ubunyangamugayo* (literally the strength to publicly stand against disgrace and shame) – and be a trusted person – *inyangamugayo* (literally someone who refuses blame and is therefore a reliable person) – when his actions and behaviour, especially in his family, are seen as exemplary, good and for that matter trustworthy. Emmanuel captures the formula for qualifying as *inyangamugayo* in the following terms:

5 | Hans Joas calls this aspect of institution-making a creative process (Joas 1989).

You cannot go to help people in certain matters whereas you have not even understood yourself or know what you are going to help them with. So what does it mean to be trustworthy? It is to see, that the person who will represent you, has the value of *ubunyangamugayo*. It is a quality of knowing what is good and what is bad. It is in his behaviours. I give you an example, if in my house I always fight with my children and my wife, do you think that I can be *inyangamugayo*? Can I bring together a husband and a wife in a mediation, while they know that even in my own home there is no peace. First, they have to see my behaviours before they trust me. To stand before them and represent them in mediation, if I do not have *ubunyangamugayo* there is no need to trust me for solving their problems because even in my home I need to earn trust first.
(Interview with Emmanuel Désiré Uwimana, Mediation Committee's vice-president, Southern Rwanda, October 2012)

Knowing about a perceptive person's trustworthiness seems to play out in the everyday and in situations of people going about their daily lives with all its flaws. During an unpremeditated conversation between mediators situated at the level of appeal in Gishamvu Sector, a mediator shared the roles he plays in the vicinity of his hill.

I forgot to tell you that all young men who want to date a woman, come to consult me and ask me what to do. So I teach them loving words to say, good songs to sing or poems to recite and even about a certain flower to give to women. Sometimes I accompany men to meetings with their beloved. It has happened that the women fall in love with me instead, but I am a good person I cannot do this kind of things
(Interview with Pascal, Mediator, Southern Rwanda, February 2013).

His account of everyday practices of earning one's trustworthiness through being good with others goes along with an understanding, that surfaces in mediators' narratives of their motivation. Being less concerned with oneself and one's own issues, or in other words selflessness, is a vital ethical responsibility for savvy community members to fulfil. The value *agaciro* of selflessness, compassion and being kind with others resonates with fellow mediators present in the above conversation, who recall memories of cordiality. 'People trust me and they know that there is no one to help them except the one they can trust. We accept to serve our country in this voluntarism [of mediation committees] because we have to help people, our neighbours and to serve the country we belong to.' This interconnects with the voluntariness of a trustworthy person to take the responsibility of being a mediator *umwunzi* and representing, as Emmanuel as called it above, parties in mediation who invest their trust in the responsible *inyangamugayo*.

In this regard mediators are vanguards of a new spirit of trustworthiness and truthfulness in Rwanda that goes along with building new communities after genocide. This is accompanied by socio-political agendas that can be read

as manuals for a new, united and homogenous Rwanda, such as the *Ndi Umunyarwanda* (lit. 'I am Rwandan') programme. Even though it addresses every ordinary Rwandan, it also sets the stage for *abunzi* to act as moral signposts and mobilize Rwandans to set out and search for values that are hoped to bring reconciliation among a population divided by genocide and its lasting ideology. The programme instructs:

To be a person of integrity is characterized by saying the truth, being humble, listening attentively to others, being in harmony, assist others. All this leads to trust between people. To develop a culture of having conversations and to give strong incentives to resolve problems. Ndi Umunyarwanda prompts us to always seek the truth, live in harmony without any kind of violation, to accept when we fail and to ask pardon to go forward Decisions on the Programme of Ndi Umunyarwanda (lit. 'I am Rwandan').

In her observation, Dasgupta finds that trust is earned and established through practices and their everyday repetitions. '[T]rust is based on reputation and that reputation is ultimately to be required through behaviour over time in well-understood circumstances' (Dasgupta 1988: 53). Again, trusting relationships are located, embedded and rely on contexts delineated by actors embroiled in relationships and collaborations.

Keepers of Truthfulness

> 'Abunzi bring people together in truth'.
> Description of a good mediation often eluded to by mediators.
> Interview with Silas Ndakizi, Mediator, Southern Rwanda, January 2013.

The quest to bring trust to light and establish trusting relationships as foundational principle in mediation is closely linked to trustworthiness that qualifies a person *inyangamugayo* to be elected as mediator *umwunzi*. It seems worthwhile to look closer into how relations evoking trust and truth play out in the everyday. A mediator shares the circumstances surrounding his selection to become *umwunzi* based on his conduct as *inyangamugayo*.

To elect inyangamugayo, people only select those who were not involved in genocide. Those who do not steal, not even touch the cash crops of others. Those who do not have quarrels or cause disturbances in the community where they live. That is how people came to conclude that I am inyangamugayo. They hope that you can do good things for others, because inyangamugayo is someone who cannot discriminate people based

on ethnicity, but will base his decisions on what the law says. That is inyangamugayo, someone who is impartial in all decisions made.
(Interview with Silas Ndakizi, Mediator, Southern Rwanda, November 2012)

I consider this wording of how trustworthiness relates to truthfulness as a profound insight into how cooperation between people can be maintained based on how actions are valued, measured and put in the context of what everyone's expectations of people live up to. It is ordinary but savvy people seeing, estimating and calculating the actions of others. Value is ascribed to good actions and behaviours that become visible in everyday situations and ordinary encounters. Investing one's trust in a person and seeing truthfulness in the doings of *abunzi* is open for everyone to share into – even strangers, as I described above for me approaching interlocutors in their language and gradually earning my trust. The ways of finding out about trust and truth goes along with Hardin's candid street-level epistemology that 'knowledge of another's trustworthiness can come from many sources other than thick relationships' (Hardin 1992: 157-58). Again, it is a practice-level approach that opens the perspective and possibilities of trusting and trustworthiness. In the remainder of this chapter, I shall turn to the socio-legal practice of mediation with the help of an ethnographic situation and will elaborate on how mistrust surfaces as mode of engagement.

'We are Going to Mediate You'

> 'A distant brother is less valuable than a neighbour'.
> *Umuvandimwe wa kure arutwa n'umuturanyi.*
> Rwandan Proverb

Entering into a mediation calls upon the disputing parties into being-with-others. This and the coming together, being in and making of community – even if this coming together is called upon by authority and a dispute settlement institution that summons reluctant and unwilling actors, sets the pace for parties undergoing mediation and remediating their positionalities (Doughty 2015).

What follows is an ethnographic insight into the introduction of a mediation, usually opened by the lead mediator, held in the Sector of Gasaka in the Southern province of Rwanda, one of the major research sites of my fieldwork conducted for 15 months between 2011 and 2014.

Emmanuel: Nyirimbaraga Gregoire, we are going to mediate you and your mother, Mukarubuga Beatrice today and I want everyone who is here to help us in this. Do you want to enter this mediation?
Gregoire: Yes, I want it.

After Gregoire gave his consent, the mediation opened with the creation of a 'summarizing protocol', a written device or practice of documentation of the main strategies in actors' argumentation during the mediation. In many instances, I observed how mediators resort to their written documentation to abstract, simplify and 'boil down' initial claims and accusations, and, thus, sort through the various lines of argumentation. Reading the summarizing protocol to the actors in dispute and others present helps to bring about closure and at the same time reduces the heat of the moment, when actors bring forth their experiences of injustice, unsatisfied demands and claims that have added up over several years of unresolved antagonistic relationships. At the end of mediation, stability is brought back into the relationships between actors, which is sustained by a written device that also functions as a structuring device; mediation may either result in mutual agreement *-kumvikanisha* (literally, crafting a mutual understanding) – or a decision taken by the mediators – *umwanzuro*.

At the beginning of mediation, Gregoire's affirmative statement to seize the possibilities of dispute resolution, despite the filial relationship, reveals that family relationships of proximity have been altered en route to mediation. When the lead mediator proceeds to ask 'who is the plaintiff?' and 'so Mukarubuga Beatrice is the defendant against whom Gregoire lodged a claim?', the actors in dispute are being positioned. That implies several things, such as being differentiated along the lines of who lodged a claim to the mediation committee – the plaintiff, on the one hand, and the defendant, who will take the position of the party that is blamed or accused of wrongdoing, on the other. The initial distribution of who claims what from whom is always undertaken. My understanding of the two opposing positions leads to the assumption that actors are not equal parties in mediation, because of the way they are positioned as claimant and defendant. Thus, the initial positioning of actors in dispute has implications on their truthfulness during mediation. For mediators to find out about the truth of 'how things really are', they need to establish that actors can be trusted. A plaintiff who claims 'too much' or whose claim dates back to a 'long time ago', usually before the 1994 genocide, cannot be considered a 'serious person' in mediation.

This goes along with a broader cultural-political discourse in the country about the 'seriousness of Rwandans'. It is specifically linked to a disorderly state of the nation in the years leading to genocide in 1994, shattered social fabrics and disquieting acts of genocide committed by people living together in close proximity and familiarity. The attempt to reconcile, rebuild and develop a nation insinuates 'bad history', as Rwandans refer to it. Thus, a forward-looking course of achievements and improvement comes into play, 'when you are not serious' and striving to achieve what is good, 'you cannot be correct' (Tito Rutaremara, Ombudsperson, quoted in Kinzer 2008: 233). The seriousness of a person has been and is in the becoming of a value in Rwandan society.

The above mentioned seriousness has also come to be integrated as a premise in the socio-political programme *Ndi Umuyarwanda* – 'I am Rwandan', which seeks to mobilize citizens to achieve a common goal, foster the self-consciousness of Rwandans and value peoples' worth (*indangagaciro z'ubunyarwanda* – literally, 'to give value to Rwandaness').[6] Certainly, there is a significant motive of discipline in this seriousness, something that is always emphasized by authorities, leaders and members of the ruling party Rwanda Patriotic Front, as for instance the Ombudsperson quoted above. It is a considerable transgression to tell people that they are not serious or not correct (see also Kinzer 2008: 233). The *Ndi Umunyarwanda* programme also resonates in the conversation with *umwunzi* Silas on how to invest in trustworthiness and truthfulness. He emphasizes that a truthful *inyangamugayo* cannot see ethnicity as a point of reference for discrimination. The programme mentioned here, reinforces citizens' identification as Rwandans instead of resigning to ethnic categories that led to the nation's descent into genocide. This, I think, is a moment in the everyday practices and roles of savvy citizens like *abunzi,* who inherit their identities from their worth of *inyangamugayo*. Good values and personal integrity that go along with this worth are identified by Rwandans to be rooted in the intricate relationship between having a common culture and shared history, on the one hand, and experiencing the post-genocide predicament, on the other. In this regard, *abunzi* have a significant role to play and are entrusted with ethical leadership on the level of their communities. Not only do they mediate between parties in dispute but, more significantly perhaps, they mediate practices, values and registers of worth between ordinary citizens in local forums on the threshold of the legal system.

Returning to the opening sequences of mediation at Gasaka Sector in February 2013. The lead mediator turns to Gregoire with a provocative assertion:

Emmanuel: You should be ashamed to be in dispute with your mother!

The mediator risks to bring forth probably hasty and premature charges of wrong-doing against one of the parties in dispute. But this is intentional; the mediator wishes to stir a sense of participation among others attending the public mediation forum. Thus, the audience is called upon to get involved, share ideas of justice or relate to the dispute submitted to mediation with their witness accounts or evidentiary practices. The mediator makes a deliberate at-

6 | '*Ndi Umunyarwanda* is a program that aims towards the instruction of Rwandans to feel that they are Rwandans first of all things, to live without distrust – *kubana nta rwikekwe* and to put the common good for the country first, all arising matters concerning society should undergo open discussion and be agreed upon through conversation' (Government of Rwanda 2013: 3, author's emphasis).

tempt to reduce the weight of the disputed entity at risk of being lost for either side and calls upon the relationship of the involved actors. Gregoire, the son, is in dispute with his mother Beatrice. The son takes on the identity of plaintiff against his mother. This, according to the mediators, cannot be accepted without the disputants' family relationship being submitted to the mediators' scrutiny. Their estimation draws on the proximity and trust between a son and his mother. Let us consider how the lead mediator proceeds:

Emmanuel: You know that my name is Uwimana Emmanuel Désiré, I am umwunzi and vice-president of this committee of mediators at Gasaka Sector. I am still waiting for other abunzi to come. But it is good for you, Gregoire and Beatrice, because you have both come here today and we can talk before all others arrive in order to find a solution to your problem.

Gregoire admits that he of course was not in favour of getting involved in disputes in general and that even he cannot recall where this dispute comes from. The lead mediator continues to address Beatrice:

Emmanuel: We want to mediate you and your son and the other people present here today will help in order for your family to leave this dispute behind and return to your previous state of relationship.

Beatrice, however, remains little convinced about the possibility of mediation. Her relationship with her son has long been weakened by interests of individual family members calling for property relationships that trespass family values and emphasize personal gains. She therefore reinstates her critical distance to the course of action laid out by *abunzi*.

Beatrice: How can you mediate us?

The lead mediator explains the form the mediation could take for the disputing parties as he judges their bonds:

Emmanuel: We will show you that your (family) relation is stronger than the dispute (single incidence) you have.[7]

He insists on the significance of relatedness and shared values as one family and therefore sets the conditions for the mediation 'without going into too much

7 | Here the lead mediator relies on the proverb '*Icyo mupfana kiruta icyo mupfa*' which translates into 'our relationship (brotherhood) is more important than our differences (disputes, wealth)'.

detail of the case.' The lead mediator sets the tone for the parties in dispute and already lays out directives on what should be remembered and attained in the process of mediation. The relation between mother and son should outweigh the dispute between plaintiff and defendant. This is also why the mediators depart from the assumption that it will be an easy dispute to resolve.

Emmanuel: All of you who are here today participating, you know that this dispute is easy and it will not be difficult to mediate both, mother and son, am I lying?

Beatrice confirms that the mediator is of course not lying, but she upholds her critical distance and remains distrustful to the impending mediation based on shared family relations. Even though she states that she is fine with acknowledging her son in dispute, she recalls how Gregoire already 'refused to be mediated' before *abunzi* at the level of the cell. In response to her sensible mistrust in the promise of mediation, *abunzi* continue to invest their confidence by reinstating that they 'will see whether Gregoire again refuses mediation.' The mediators seize a certain capacity of enunciation. Actors in dispute may discard rules and forget about procedures initially laid out. This underscores the sense of a moral community in which all actors in mediation participate (Gulliver 1977: 29). However, this initial or pre-mediation encounter between mediators and parties in disputes already suggests that trust is a fragile commodity, requiring especially delicate handling when interconnectedness between people and institutions is a prerequisite for fulfilling an agreement (Dasgupta 1988: 50), such as mother and son agreeing to be mediated by *abunzi* on the premises of recognizing their mutual bond.

'A Small Land and a Forest'

After the conditions for the unfolding mediation have been laid out between all involved parties, a process of negotiation over the actual substance of the dispute unfolds. However, as becomes clear in the following, this process will not result in a clear outline of what the parties are disputing over, since neither of them accepts the mediators' proposition of disputing over 'a small land and a forest'. It will moreover reveal the underlying dynamics of adversary relations between parties in dispute. Thus, the process of negotiating the litigation pushes mediation and its mediators to the limits of their capacity in providing resolutions such as the mutual acknowledgement of kinship or family relations. In other words, what becomes evident is how mediation fails and therefore requires alternative itineraries for parties in dispute to get along with each other, even if they do not 'get over it' and completely repair the relationship. In the specific case laid out here, mediators will rely on external stabilizing

objects which come in the form of written evidence, such as a land title issued by the land titling commission, external to the mediation committee. Due to the inability or unwillingness of the parties to reconcile in a common resolution of their dispute, this evidence will support the final decision rendered by the mediators. They set out to leave the material side of the dispute behind, which they refer to as 'the thing you are quarrelling over', and instead focus on social bonds and the imminent filial relationship. Yet, their anticipated path is interrupted by Gregoire who requests the presence of his brother as he is a third actor involved in the dispute. *Abunzi* admit their surprise as they did not issue any 'summons' to a third party.

Emmanuel: Why didn't you tell us to summon him?
Gregoire: I thought that my mother would tell him and he would come because the case involves many people. He was summoned to come to the mediation in the cell, but he was not there.
Emmanuel: Why didn't he come? Is he above the law?

This is a noteworthy turn, since it depicts what mediators will rely on when faced with an overwhelming complexity of 'facts' and 'actors' in a case. Whereas Gregoire persists in mobilizing others to achieve support, he trusts in the relationships between his mother and brother to inform each other and fairness for his claim, *abunzi* strictly rely on written forms of evidence and facts of a case. *Abunzi* act according to their situated knowledge in the heat of the on-going mediation and rely on written transcripts of the documented history of the case, such as the case registration book shared between local authority and *abunzi* and what has been described above as the 'summarizing protocol'. Using these written devices in the mediation, *abunzi* rule that the dispute will be confined to two parties only. This goes along with their positioning of Beatrice and Gregoire, to show that their relationship is stronger than their dispute. The lead mediator turns to another woman in the audience who turns out to be Gregoire's sister who is brought in to share her perspective on a case entangled in filial relationships.

Emmanuel: What do you want to tell us?
Gregoire's sister: I want to tell you that Gregoire is lying. My brother is not here today because he is not involved in the case, he only used to accompany my mother to the authorities.

Gregoire's attempt to be trusted in his account of the case by mobilising others is countered by the sister's witness statement, judged as truthful by *abunzi*. Gregoire, however, is fiercely rejected by them when being corrected.

Emmanuel: The mistake that you made is that you didn't tell us about a second defendant. We gave you a summon for one defendant only.

Since there is no written evidence, *abunzi* cannot invest their trust in Gregoire even on the procedural aspect of the sheer number of involved actors in dispute. Gregoire steers mistrust of *abunzi* by 'adding up' to the dispute, whereas *abunzi* try to foster their trust in him through simplification of the matter at hand. Still, Gregoire remains at a distance and is reluctant to submit to mediation without the mediators giving in to his demand of involving other family members. He expects a logical sequence of hearing his arguments about how the 'small land and the forest' were given to him by his father. He wants to be heard about how he is fighting violence and 'terrorism' in his family whose members have betrayed him. He wants to see acknowledgement for the forms of evidence, arguments, witnesses and truth claims he attempts to mobilize. Gregoire relies on stabilizing objects for overcoming mistrust and crafting relationships of trust. *Abunzi*, however, rely on a strategy, probably less or not at all anticipated by actors in dispute, to move beyond law. They push for a mutual resolution where they would like to see the authority of actors in dispute taking centre stage – a mutual recognition of the filial relationship and amicable relations in more general terms. But the disputants only see semi-standardized practices in what *abunzi* have put forth. Their less standardized approach reduces actors' trust in mediation.

The mediators ultimately define the dispute as violation of property rights. Gregoire occupied a forest and cut down its trees, wrongly believing that he owned the land when, in fact, he did had not inherited the concerned piece of property from his father. However, Gregoire maintains that he can mobilize witnesses who can testify that his father handed him down the disputed piece of forest during his lifetime, the common practice of 'ascending partition'. That is why, according to him and against the opinion of the mediators, the case is easy but also hard. With these distancing statements, Gregoire is careful to avoid submitting to the arguments and measures of proof common in mediation. His comments are rather situated on a meta-level of critiquing and maintaining a mistrusting ambivalence towards any committing positions as anticipated by the mediators. What is more to Gregoire mistrusting the ongoing mediation process is the opaqueness of opponents, he alleges, to consist of more than one party. Beatrice, he believes, makes common cause with the authorities due to certain promises, 'my mother is supported and pushed to engage in disputes by the authorities'. Gregoire's mistrust evokes something going on behind the scenes, something obscure unfolding silently in the background, whereas the mediators intend to increase the pace of the mediation going on in the foreground.

Mediators and disputing party reside in different regimes of action and practices of truthfulness. To establish some clarity, the mediators start moving towards forms of evidence in support of one or the other party. They ask both parties for their land titles. Gregoire believes his land title in the hands of his brother's wife, who immediately protests: 'he is lying; we don't have his land title.' The mediators turn to Beatrice who acknowledges that she is in possession of the required title. Gregoire shouts out that the title is forged; 'all Rwandans who are here, you have to listen to me, they have a lot of documents evidencing that it is their own land, but these are forged.' Since he claims that all documents brought forth as evidence by his 'mother's side' are forged, he is required to produce his land title as proof of him being the rightful owner of the small land and the forest. The mediators bluntly abject any further inquiry: 'Gregoire, go back and prepare your case. You confuse a lot of things and we waste precious time. We only want the land title and the paper of inheritance. I think you can go so that we can mediate other people.'

Conclusion – Between Trust in Law and Mistrust in Mediation

> 'Tomorrow's things are brought by those who will come tomorrow'.
> Iby 'ejo bibara ab'ejo.
> Rwandan Proverb

This chapter followed practices of mistrust as strategies in mediation. The ethnographic situation reveals how disputes are perpetuated and can have long-lasting impacts on relationships between actors in dispute when mistrust prevails. I consciously did not consider all aspects of the litigation in question for the dispute laid out here. Alluding to some of the fragments of mediation allows, as I believe, for more space in the analysis of practices and strategies in mediation.

The fragments of an attempt towards bringing people together in mediation that I laid out here, show how strategies to navigate between trust in law and mistrust in mediation are intertwined. 'Suspicion (like doubt) occupies the space between the law and its application' (Asad 2004: 285). In this chapter, I went along with mediators working towards putting suspicions to rest. In doing do, parties and mediators draw, though in different modes, on practices of evidence and written forms to establish how things really are. However, relationships of mistrust among actors prevailed throughout and beyond mediation. 'Suspicion opposes and undermines trust' (ibid. 285). Mistrust is a strategy in mediation on the threshold of the legal system.

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Intervention

Doubt, Suspicion, Mistrust … Semantic Approximations

Mathijs Pelkmans

Doubt, suspicion, and mistrust are closely related concepts. Consider the following sentence: In the absence of trust, people approach an object with suspicion, and are likely to cast doubt on any information emanating from it. The ease with which these concepts can be meaningfully placed in a single sentence is suggestive of the overlap between them. But reordering the sentence causes complications. It cannot start with doubt because to be doubtful does not necessarily imply being suspicious or mistrusting. That is, while suspicion and mistrust refer to negatively charged dispositions, this is not always the case with doubt. Moreover, suspicion needs to stay in the middle because its focused directionality makes it a sort of connector between the other two concepts. Suspicion denotes a direct and active engagement with an object, and, although mistrust and doubt also imply engagement, mistrust can equally refer to a latent disposition, while doubt can also be used to refer to largely internal processes of the mind.

Before elaborating on the differences between these concepts, it is important to ask what it is that they hold in common. Doubt, suspicion, and mistrust refer to a tension between a subject and that which is doubted, suspected, mistrusted. I say tension rather than rupture because the mistrustful, suspicious, or doubtful relationship has substance, which can be productive or destructive. Moreover, they are relative in the sense that radical doubt and radical mistrust are untenable. In addition to this, assertions of mistrust and doubt at one level tend to assert trust and certainty at different levels, even if only implicitly. Finally, while each term implies an epistemic crisis, this entails more than the logical operations of falsification, verification, and probability attribution. The crisis extends to the intention and integrity that underpin the epistemic assertions. In other words, mistrust, suspicion, and doubt entail not a detached but an affective position towards knowledge, carrying evaluative (aesthetic, moral, political) dimensions.

The point of highlighting these commonalities is to establish a comparative framework within which to make sense of the differences. Tension, relativity, and affect are manifested differently and with different consequences in the cases of doubt, mistrust and suspicion. This is what the next three sections set out to explore, in reverse order. Let me be clear that the point of these semantic reflections is not so much to gain terminological clarity (although there is nothing wrong with that) but rather to highlight important aspects of human practice that are addressed through these terms. Such attention is warranted because these aspects have received insufficient analytic attention (see Mühlfried, introduction to this volume). It is also of particular relevance given that political mobilization in the contemporary world seems to be based less on hope and idealism than on mistrust and fear. In order to connect the semantic explorations to current political processes I will use vignettes from the 2016 U.S. elections, starting the next two sections with quotes taken from a July 2016 episode of the Daily Show, a popular American political comedy show. Here we follow reporter Jessica Williams who interviews a small group of voters who had initially supported the Democrat Bernie Sanders, but shifted their support to Donald Trump when Hillary Clinton clinched the nomination of the Democratic Party.[1] The Daily Show obviously selected and presented responses of supporters for comic effect, choosing those with particularly stark features. While this comical bias should be kept in mind, the responses do still offer good starting points for an analytic discussion of how doubt, suspicion, and mistrust work in contemporary political processes.

Affective Knowledge

> Hillary Clinton has been a scam artist all her life. She will bring us to war within the first ninety days ... Hillary Clinton is just a stack of garbage ... She disgusts me.
> Sanders-turned-Trump supporter, Daily Show, 30 June 2016.

Mistrust, doubt, and suspicion denote an epistemic crisis of sorts, one in which appearances, assumptions and assertions are being interrogated. With regards to doubt, philosophers have often employed this feature in their metaphysical contemplations. Descartes famously depicted himself as a 'being that doubts' and set himself the task of systematically discarding all opinions and preconceptions, because this would enable him to build from a solid and unquestionable foundation a firm and abiding superstructure in the sciences (1996:

1 | See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwfM5LGMmxg

12-15). While such systematic doubt has obvious value in scholarly work, it is important to point out that 'lived doubt' is usually less deliberate and systematic, and as a result has very different qualities. As some critics have pointed out, the doubt Descartes advocated was 'staged doubt' (Skirry 2005) and, therefore, offers us little insight into the doubting subject and their engagement with the objects of their doubt. Peirce captured the central problem when rebuking this staging of doubt: 'Let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts' (Peirce 1868: 141).

That is to say, in discussions of lived reality the 'epistemic crisis' that is connoted through terms such as doubt, suspicion, and mistrust is not only a logical one, but an affective one as well. The challenge therefore is to examine the various ways in which thought and feeling come together in such epistemic crises. Looking at the everyday use of the terms under review, it is clear that doubt is associated with a wide range of affective states. Doubt can refer to a sense of curious wonder about, say, the existence of an afterlife; it can also refer to the teasing assertion 'I really doubt that,' such as in response to a truth-statement by a know-it-all-friend. It can also refer to the to worrying or even desperate thoughts that emerge in situations of intense uncertainty (such as after a betrayal or conflict) about what to believe, whom to trust, and what to do next. The person who doubts is never indifferent, but actively engages with alternatives: he or she is of 'two minds', as the number two in the German *Zweifel* and the French *douter* already suggest (see Pelkmans 2013: 4).

The affective dimension is even more conspicuously present in the cases of suspicion and mistrust. Here, it is not so much engagement with 'alternatives' that creates the tension, but rather the negative perception of the institution or person that stands behind a statement or publicly available information. In other words, as soon as Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Nigel Farage, or other right-wing populists open their mouths, I personally have an immediate negative gut feeling that their words need to be treated with suspicion. And as the opening quotation from the Daily Show suggests, many American voters experienced similar negative feelings when they heard Hillary Clinton speak. Their mistrust of Hillary Clinton, of the government, or of the Democratic Party, complicated their epistemic engagement with information. Whatever Clinton said was filtered through aesthetic registers (a 'stack of garbage') and through a moral prism (a 'scam artist'). In this highly polarized environment, statements or claims emanating from 'the other side' were immediately treated as a front for some deeper truth.

Tying these reflections together, several overarching questions concerning the relationship between subjects and knowledge can be formulated. Crucially, we need to ask how epistemic dispositions and probes are amplified, modified, and tempered by the affective ties between actors. We also must consider what stands behind the statements and the available information. Moreover, we need

to think about how these affective-epistemic engagements emerge from and have an effect on larger socio-political landscapes.

Relative Positioning

> [Trump] has diarrhoea of the mouth, but he will say what many people think ... He is a bigot and a racist, however ... Hillary Clinton has been a scam artist all her life. Sanders-turned-Trump supporter, Daily Show, 30 June 2016.

The word 'however' in the quotation above forms the crux of what this section tries to convey. The Sanders-turned-Trump supporters were clearly not enthusiastic about Donald Trump's oral diarrhoea and his bigoted and racist persona. But they were ready to suspend their reservations, and view as positive that 'he will say what many people think.' Their willingness to do so is captured by the 'however', which suggests that their greater mistrust and suspicion of Clinton pushed them to be more accepting of the disliked but not mistrusted Trump. To be mistrustful of everything and everyone is untenable, or as Mühlfried (this volume: 18) points out, 'radical forms of mistrust are difficult to live'.

A comparison with the impossibility of radical doubt is valuable here. In his treatise *On Certainty*, Wittgenstein wrote: 'If you are not certain of any fact, you cannot be certain of the meaning of your words either. If you tried to doubt everything you would not get as far as doubting anything. The game of doubting itself presupposes certainty' (1969: 114-115). I support Wittgenstein's point about the impossibility of radical doubt not only because of its logical significance, but also because it illuminates an important aspect of the manifestation of doubt in everyday life. This aspect has been empirically illustrated in several ethnographic explorations. In her work on gold mining in Mongolia, Mette High analysed how informally operating miners dealt with uncertainty and unpredictability. They conceptualized their misfortunes as part of a 'destabilisation of the cosmos' and were preoccupied with the role that spirits played in this disordering. While doubting the intentions and questioning the strength and actions of these spirits, the miners could not help but reaffirm their reality (High 2013). A similar logic emanates from the doubts expressed by Old Believers living in the Danube delta as studied by Vlad Naumescu. These Old Believers despaired that they no longer had the knowledge to properly carry out rituals, but through their worries and doubts they ended up affirming the importance of leading a Christian life (Naumescu 2013). Doubt denotes an active engagement with the world, and it is this engagement that affirms certainty about reality at other levels.

In other words, what starts out as an epistemic crisis ends up as an epistemic affirmation. This dynamic is equally visible in the case of suspicion and mistrust. As Victor Vakhshtayn (2016) argued, there is a negative correlation between institutional and interpersonal mistrust. The point here is that when people are more mistrusting of the institutions of the state they are more likely to invest in interpersonal relations. Every mistrustful assertion needs to be hinged on a solid foundation. Returning briefly to the quotation with which I started the section, mistrust of Hillary Clinton and 'the establishment' often led to a suspension of doubt with regard to the alternative, Donald Trump. Trust and mistrust, doubt and certainty, suspicion and acceptance, feed off of each other. In other words, the interrogatory focus not only leaves unseen and thus unchallenged what lies in the margins, but, moreover, its recoil effect strengthens those elements that are needed for launching the interrogation in the first place.

What are the implications of these observations? Clearly, what we are observing is how people strive to create liveable situations, about how they navigate landscapes that are replete with unknowns and uncertainties, in which they focus their doubts and suspicions on certain objects, leaving issues that are less immediately problematic or threatening for what they are. The following questions are of vital interest: what forms of certainty are produced in the process of doubting? What relations of trust are intensified when people are mistrustful? What does generalized doubt and mistrust look like?

Productive Tensions

In politics and economics, prolonged reflection and contemplation is often seen negatively as a sign of indecisiveness. Contemporary political leaders therefore are unlikely to present themselves as doubters. This tempering or even obstructing effect of doubt is even acknowledged by those who refuse to dismiss its value. In his poem 'In praise of Doubt', Bertold Brecht tellingly writes: 'the thoughtless who never doubt/Meet the thoughtful who never act' (Brecht 1979: 334). On the other hand, doubt is also seen as the driver of quests for knowledge. It is only when things are no longer taken for granted – when doubts are raised – that people reach out for knowledge, and in the process may end up finding new insights.[2] Moreover, commitment and conviction are not uncommonly the product of an active side-lining of doubt. Examples of this are presented by studies of recent converts who fervently proclaim their newfound

2 | In academia this doubting approach is institutionalized as 'organized scepticism', a term used by Merton in his discussion of the four norms of scientific communities (Merton 1973: 267-280).

conviction, in part because of their greater need (and momentary ability) to suspend lingering doubt (Pelkmans 2013). It thus appears that doubt is a constitutive aspect of commitment and conviction. At the same time, its effects depend on how these doubts are acted on: powerful energies are released when doubts are dismissed (or side-lined) during a moment of intense wavering. On the other hand, when doubts are allowed to linger they tend to have a tempering effect or may even prevent any action from materializing.

The emotive energies released by mistrust and suspicion suggest a somewhat different dynamic. Rather than the doubter's 'wavering' that can go in either direction, mistrust and suspicion are already negatively predisposed towards the object of their engagement. It is because of this that suspicion and mistrust are seen as an eroding and disrupting force. Modern institutions cannot operate without some level of trust. It is on the basis of this that Anthony Giddens argues that 'trust relations are basic to the extended time-space distanciation associated with modernity' (1990: 87), and he rightly suggests that without trust, modern societies would grind to a halt. However, we have already concluded that generalized or radical mistrust is untenable, and hence this correct theoretical statement is unhelpful in a practical sense. Another way to put this is to say that in as far as mistrust denotes an active rather than a passive disposition, mistrust bespeaks a positive engagement with the world. As Rosanvallon (2008) has insightfully argued, it is problematic to speak of 'disenchanted citizens' precisely because their rejection of mistrusted politicians and institutions results in the channelling of energies in alternative directions.

A useful example of the alternative ways citizens express their political engagement is conspiracy theorizing, not least because it can serve as the basis for the creation of alternative political communities. We see this logic play out in the current political landscape of North America and Europe, where widespread mistrust of 'the establishment' has translated into an explosion of conspiracy theorizing that has invigorated numerous populist movements. A good example is speculation surrounding the role of the CIA in bringing about (or facilitating) the 9/11 attacks. These conspiracy theorising activities crystallized in the formation of the '9/11 truth movement', which became a platform for voicing concerns about the collusion of power and capital in the higher echelons of American society.[3] Although some conspiracy theories are clearly fantastical, many of the less spectacular but more realistic theories on display, such as those concerning secret deals between corporate business and politics,

3 | Regarding the 9/11 conspiracies, see the various contributions to the website of the 9/11 truth movement (http://www.911truth.org) and the books of David Griffin (2007; 2012) about the possible collusions of power and capital in relation to these acts of terror.

can potentially play a positive role in holding authorities accountable (see also Pelkmans and Machold 2011).

While conspiracy theorizing that is informed by distrust of dominant power can serve as a 'counter democracy' (Rosanvallon 2008: 9), when such mistrust merges with dominant (and racial) prejudices and stereotypes its effects tend to be more nefarious. This kind of conspiracy theorizing has been particularly prolific in right-wing corners, ranging from the insistence that climate change is a hoax to claims that Barack Obama was in cahoots with Jihadists.[4] Irrespective of effect, in all of these instances, mistrust of 'the establishment' was translated into conspiracy theorizing, a channelling of suspicion that has lent a voice to those who found themselves on the margins of political and economic processes.

Final Reflections

The concepts of mistrust and doubt allow us to engage analytically with a fractured and unstable world that is constantly changing. With economic forces becoming increasingly elusive, extensions of the state increasingly invisible, and the sources of news increasingly untraceable, our 'modes of coping with the unfamiliar' (Luhmann 2000: 102) are changing. For the moment this seems to play into the hands of those who are able to mobilize sentiments of mistrust and suspicion while promising a return to authentic power. The 'anti-expert' mood in the UK and the populist movements of the extreme right in Germany, France, and the Netherlands are examples of this trend. The rise of Donald Trump is particularly interesting (and worrying) in this regard. His election victory embodied the elevation of suspicion and mistrust to the highest levels of political power. Even before the 2016 elections Trump had become, as one commentator aptly put it, 'conspiracy-theorist-in-chief.'[5] His theories of voter fraud, his claims about Barrack Obama's alleged foreign birth and his allegations of secret ties between Clinton and global business, much of which was offhandedly tweeted, played a significant role in his ability to mobilize anti-establishment sentiment.

Writing in March 2017, two months after Trump assumed the presidency, it remains unclear what the ultimate outcome will be. Are we witnessing a move-

4 | For a discussion of these conspiracy theories, see the thoughtful article in the Atlantic, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/06/obama-radical-islam/487079/

5 | Tim Murphy, 'How Donald Trump Became Conspiracy Theorist in Chief', Mother Jones, 4 October 2016, see: http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2016/10/trump-infowars-alex-jones-clinton-conspiracy-theories

ment from anti-establishment sentiment to a form of generalized mistrust and doubt, leading to chaos and uncertainty? Or, alternatively, are we seeing a shift from a situation in which suspicion and mistrust was projected onto the political establishment, to a situation in which suspicion and mistrust becomes a tool used by the new establishment to control, subject, and exclude?

A truly disturbing prospect is that in its elevation to the apex of political power, mistrust will be redirected outwards by an increasingly self-confident political establishment. The first months of the Trump presidency provided signs that this might be the case. The travel ban of people from a limited number of Muslim-majority countries, and the tweets accusing foreign governments of hurting American interests suggested that mistrust was increasingly being projected outwards. In other words, suspicion and mistrust were increasingly used as defence mechanisms to shore up the powers of the establishment, in the process intensifying dynamics of gagging, marginalization and exclusion, perhaps with even worse still to come. However, this strategy has so far had limited effect because of considerable pushback from within various corners of American society, resulting for example in the collapse of the travel ban and an increasingly defensive White House.

So what are some of the other possibilities? If Trump continues to spout unfounded conspiracy theories and express suspicion about the establishment that he himself is supposedly leading, then this may well result in the actual realization of a 'post-truth era', that is, a situation in which 'truth' truly becomes irrelevant. And there are serious indications that this is the direction into which events are headed, at least for now. Faced with significant disgruntlement within the electorate and opposition within state institutions, Trump and his associates have increasingly projected their frustrations onto the 'deep state', that is, voicing the (conspiracy) theory that career government employees are colluding to upset and oust the elected government. A government whose leaders are themselves deeply suspicious of the establishment that they represent may well lead to generalized paranoia and as such to the implosion of the system. Generalized mistrust prevents cooperation and radical doubt implies chaos, thereby fostering confusion and apathy.

At this point it remains unclear which of the indicated tendencies will prevail. It is possible that the Trump government will overcome its first disappointments and develop into a regime that self-confidently projects its paranoia outwardly, with exclusionary and marginalizing effects for those groups that do not fit the political, economic, sexual, religious, and racial proclivities of the Trump government. It is against the background of this very real possibility that the prospect of chaos sounds desirable indeed. After all, the possible descent of the Trump government into a destructive chaos may very well create the conditions that allow progressive political movements to capitalize on people's disenchantment. Perhaps they would even be able to focus the disillusion-

ment and the associated suspicions to address the tremendous convergence of political power and capital (such as is evident in the number of billionaires in Trump's cabinet), and thereby to set a first step in the direction of badly needed real change.

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Don't Trust, Don't Fear, Don't Beg

Florian Mühlfried

Mistrust can lead to the desire to turn away from a world one does not trust. Even then, mistrust needs be understood as a mode of interaction with the world, a mode based on detachment. Practices of detachment – not in the sense of the cultivation of distinction for the purpose of gaining social prestige (see Bourdieu 1987) but as forms of self-sought isolation – have only recently been taken seriously in social anthropology (Candea et al. 2015: 2). The heritage of Émile Durkheim, who saw social relations everywhere, was too strong, as was the power of the 'fetish of connectivity' (Pedersen 2013). If everything within the social world is regarded as relational and relations as such are ascribed a positive value (Strathern 2014: 4), the attempt to distance oneself from things, people or places will be assessed as inherently irrational and potentially destructive. This 'dark side' of human behaviour remains understudied to this day.[1]

It is this 'dark side', then, that is at the centre of attention in this chapter. My focus is on a mode of mistrust oriented towards radical detachment, that is, the attempt to distance oneself from the environment as much as possible. Time and again, groups of people attempt to distance themselves from the world. The Jains in India, for example, renounce the world for religious reasons, and the most radical among them seek to detach themselves from the world by means of fasting until death (Laidlaw 2015). Other groups are spiritually or politically motivated and aim at a maximum of economic, social and cultural self-sufficiency in the form of a commune. As experiments with alternative ways of life from the 1968 movement have shown, such life forms in most cases have only limited endurance. This reaffirms the assumption of the anthropologist Victor

1 | Another reason for this gap is the crisis of the concept of culture, which has hit social anthropology in the last decades. Through the deconstruction of culture as a superordinate system of reference, the remaining 'relationships' as the former constituents of the social system have become the primary subject of investigation (see Strathern 2014).

Turner (1998) that human communities can only remain in a state of liminality, that is, in extra-sociality, for a limited period of time.

Attempts to cut ties with the ancestral world usually result in a doubling of the world. The world 'out there' is radically distrusted and demarcated from one's own world, in which trust is placed, for instance in the family or the village. Some cultural anthropologists have argued that this division of the world – one that is familiar, another that is distrustful – is grounded in collective mentalities, for instance, the 'southern mentality' of the inhabitants of southern Europe. Edward Banfield (1958) coined the term 'amoral familiarism' for this alleged mentality, which he attributes to the villages of southern Italy. This essentialist model finds its reverberation in the often-read assertion that people retreat into their families if they no longer trust the state (e.g., Sedlenieks 2013). In addition to social or spatial proximity, such networks of trust (Tilly 2005), characterized by a fundamental mistrust of the environment, can be based on fictive kinship, such as brotherhoods. Examples of this can be found in religious sects like the Waldensians, motor clubs like the Hells Angels, or criminal associations like the mafia.

In the functioning of these networks of trust, another form of mistrust becomes clear, namely, the displacement of trust. But what about the relation between one's own world, characterized by trust (or a desire for it), and the distrusted outside world? Several such networks, like the Waldensians, seek to attract as little attention as possible and to operate in secret. Other groups, like the mafia, regard the outside world as a legitimate victim and go on the prowl for loot. Still other groups, mostly messianically motivated, devote themselves to fight the outer world and are willing to risk or even sacrifice their lives.

These people are the protagonists of the present chapter, which explores the most extreme form of what the sociologist Niklas Luhmann (2014: 1) refers to as 'defensive arrangements' resulting out of mistrust: a complete breach of the existing relations, the absolute displacement of trust and the defence of one's own world by all means. As a case in point, I will look at young men from the Caucasus who have broken with their former lives and joined the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) to fight in Syria or Iraq.[2] Chechen fighters are in especially high demand of the IS because of their combat experience acquired during the second war against the Russian Federation (1999-2009). They form their own

2 | Taking this case as a starting point, I am not interested in speculating on the motives of young men joining jihadist groups, as such speculations are difficult to back empirically and should thus be avoided (Assad 2007). I also do not treat 'the Jihadists' as a homogeneous group containing individuals primarily motivated by Islamic theology.

troop contingents and provide military leaders such as Abu Omar al-Shishani (the 'Chechen', civic name Tarkhan Batirashvili), who died in 2016.[3]

For male jihadists, an essential element in their detachment from the everyday world comprises death, in a double sense. In the first sense, this concerns a fictitious death that takes place when pledging the oath of allegiance to the caliph of the IS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. With this oath, the initiate not only rhetorically ends his former life, but practically transforms into an undead: no longer belonging to the world, but at the same time capable of action. Dogmatically, this is an empowering experience: life can no longer harm him, he no longer has anything to fear from the world (the worst has already happened) and he does not have to ask anymore, but can simply take.

In the second sense, death becomes very real during the suicide attack. Due to the high number of suicide attacks, the troops of the IS gain a military clout that is difficult to anticipate and calculate. According to the billionaire and philanthropist George Soros, jihadist groups such as IS and al-Qaeda have found the Achilles heel of Western societies: the fear of death.[4] In fact, the leadership of jihadist groups seems to be aware of the effects of this form of terror and aims at capitalising on its members' defiance of death. This is what the al-Qaeda spokesman Abu Dujana al-Afghani told the Western public after the bombings of Madrid in the spring of 2004: 'You love life and we love death.'[5] Death becomes something to be proud of; it is not by accident that many suicidal jihadists leave their passports at their crime spot as a kind of business card.[6]

Jihadists are not the first to proclaim a preference of death over life; Spanish fascists fighting the Spanish civil war, for example, were united by the slogan '*viva la muerte*' (long live death). This ideological overlap may not be arbitrary – it could indicate that the founders of IS did some research on totalitarian movements. Apparently, those who have declared their rejection of life are more inclined to commit deeds that seem to be beyond any sense of humanity. Caucasian IS recruits may refer to other, regionally popular role models of death-seekers cum fighters. One is the figure of the Abrek that emerged when

3 | In spite of his *nom de guerre*, Batirashvili did not hail from Chechnya, but from the Pankisi Valley in Georgia, mainly inhabited by descendants of the Chechens, the so-called Kist. They migrated from the Northern Caucasus to northeast Georgia during the nineteenth century. Batirashavili did not fight in the Chechen wars, but was an employee of the Georgian army from 2007 until 2010. Within this function, he was involved in the 2008 war between Georgia and the Russian Federation.

4 | See: http://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article151343328/Nur-eine-offene-Gesellschaft-kann-den-IS-besiegen.html

5 | See: http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/bekenner-video-ihr-liebt-das-leben-wir-lieben-den-tod-a-290529.html

6 | See: http://www.br.de/nachrichten/personaldokumente-is-100.html

the Russian army subdued the Caucasus during the nineteenth century. An Abrek was, in the sense of Eric Hobsbawm (1972), a social bandit who took from the powerful but spared the weak, and who not only had no fear of death but also longed for it. The figure of the death-defying Abrek allowed for a revaluation of values: the military losses suffered in the Northern Caucasus could be transformed into a moral victory if defeat was no longer of concern. This moral superiority explains the popularity of the Abrek in the Caucasus even today (Gould 2016).

Another role model comprises the so-called thieves-in-law, many of whom are from the Caucasus (especially from Georgia). Established in the early Soviet prisons and labour camps, the members of this criminal caste rejected any form of cooperation with state institutions and officials, only considering their own, strictly regulated code of conduct as binding. Amongst them, too, the symbolism of death was widespread, as they took the prison as their home and grave at the same time. It is in the wider context of this group, that the motto cited in the title of this chapter originated: Don't Trust, Don't Fear, Don't Beg.[7] Also in their case, dependence on the outside world was meant to be resolved by means of being detached from it.

Caucasian jihadists must be well aware of these role models. Many Chechen children born in deportation were named after famous Abreks, e.g., the later President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev after the renowned Abrek Zelimkhan. Some later-born 'Zelimkhans' are among the contemporary jihadi fighters (Ratelle and Souleimanov 2017: 585). During the 1990s, the First Chechen War (1994-96) further enhanced the popularity of these iconic figures. The insurgent Chechens, claiming full state sovereignty for their country, regarded their struggle as continuing resistance to Russian colonisation that started during the nineteenth century. This involved occasional reinterpretations of the figure of the Abrek. In this vein, the Chechen Interim President, Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, claimed in an interview that '[e]ven the Abreks (...) fought in the name of God.'[8] The figure of the Abreks is also cherished by Caucasian thieves-in-law; one literary representation of the Georgian Akrek 'Data Tutashkhia' by Chabua Amirejibi (1985), for example, is a much read book in these circles (Kupatadze 2010: 73).

7 | Russian: *Ne ver', ne boysya, ne prosi*. Sometimes this motto is translated as 'no trust, no fear, ask nothing,' for example in the title of the documentary by Peter Rippl (2012) on *Blatnjak* [criminal] songs and their performers. The Russian duo t.A.T.u performed the song '*Ne ver', ne boysya, ne prosi*' at the 2003 Eurovision Song Contest, finishing third. The expression entered Russian culture through Solzhenitsyn's book The Gulag Archipelago (2007 [1973]).

8 | Documentary 'The Smell of Paradise' (Mamon/Pilis 2005, Canada), see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quqF_STyHXc (7:55)

As for the thieves-in-law, they enjoy great popularity among admirers of the jihadist movement in the Caucasus. For example, young Muslims from the Pankisi Valley often post on Facebook contributions from the world of the *blatnoy* (a Russian term that can roughly be translated as 'gangster') alongside posts from the haze of the IS.[9] The charisma of thieves-in-law and Abreks thus enters the imaginary realm of the jihadists. Discursively, the three types form up a fictive genealogy, with the Abrek being the predecessor of the thief-in-law, and the thief-in-law the predecessor of the jihadist. Thus, as unique as the struggle of the Caucasian jihadists is, it is also part of regionally specific semantic field. This field is further explored in the conclusion, with the aim to understand the premises of radical detachment based on profound mistrust towards the outside world in the cases of the jihadists, Abreks, and thieves-in-law.[10]

In order to allow for comparability, the following description of the world of the Abreks and the thieves-in-law will (1) elaborate the context of origin ('Whence does the mistrust derive?'), (2) describe the group ethos inherent to the mode of detachment from the outer world ('Where does the mistrust lead to?'), and (3) outline the kind of relation with the social environment ('How to live with the mistrustful other?').

Abreks

Context of Origin

The term 'Abrek' (Russ. *abrek*) derives from the Persian 'avara' meaning 'vagabond, thief' and has spread across the Caucasus through Turkic languages (Bobrovnikov 2008: 29). Abreks are the Caucasian variant of brigands, i.e., the social bandits in the sense of Eric Hobsbawm (1972): involved in theft, but for apparently righteous reasons. Behind the ideal of the (male-only) Abreks lies the theme of a rebellion against an oppressive order, in this case, against nineteenth-century Russian colonialism. Only for lack of an alternative does this rebellion take on the form of banditry – at least in the view of the Abrek's numerous admirers now and then.

Abreks were regarded as loners, even if they occasionally came together to form groups or joined anticolonial resistance fighters. What connects them

9 | However, this does not seem to be a peculiarity of post-Soviet societies, as many German jihadists have a criminal past, too.

10 | Suggesting that the discursive representations of Abreks, thieves-in-law and Caucasian jihadists overlap and form part of a semantic field in no way means that there is something like a coherent and distinct Caucasian culture of violence.

with the self-image of the later thieves-in-law and the jihadists is the ideal of renunciation, a complete withdrawal from the secular world. An individual was considered an Abrek when he had moved away from existing social relations, was no longer bound by them and did not enter upon new binding relationships. Living outside the existing order, which was considered unjust, he created a gap to the structures that did not deserve trust.

In the pre-colonial Caucasus the Abreks were lawless people, residing far away from their homeland, which they had left due to a crime. The majority of them had committed this crime themselves and had to fear a vendetta or blood feud. Some, however, were family members of a victim, having retreated into the mountains in order to take revenge. In any case, an Abrek was a person without a home. This homelessness was either involuntary (if a criminal was cast out by the village community because it feared revenge) or self-chosen (if someone had fled or was devoted to taking revenge) (Gould 2007a: 278).

The Abreks's fame rose only with their transfiguration into resistance fighters against the Russian colonisation of the Caucasus during the nineteenth century. Any landowner, who did not wish to lose his privileges with regard to status and property, was forced to join the Russian colonial administration. He had to accept co-optation, to apply a present-day term. The underprivileged population was confronted with taxes, forced recruitment of labour and military service as well as with collective, often draconian punishment, whenever a member from their own ranks behaved in an insubordinate fashion.

In line with this attack on the existing social order, procedures such as the blood feud were declared illegal. Together with the Shari'a (and competing with it), the institution of blood feud constituted the most common principle of conflict management during this era. Moreover, village communities in the North Caucasus were no longer permitted to set up armed federations in order to further their interests (Bobrovnikov 2007: 253). These regulations depreciated key legal practices and social hierarchies within the region, affecting both the poor and the rich inhabitants of the Northern Caucasus.

In addition to various forms of voluntary and involuntary co-operation, these conditions of pressure generated passive and open resistance. One form of the latter comprised guerrilla warfare. Led by religious leaders such as Imam Shamil (1797-1871), armed federations successfully attacked the new masters in well-organized ways. In the course of the armed resistance against the Russian military invasion, the image of the Abreks acquired a new profile, as they preferred to target Russian garrisons and Cossack settlements during their raids.

The bandits transmutated into resistance fighters, and their retreat into the wilderness was interpreted as an act of resistance. Abreks where now seen as those who did not want to submit to the new legal status and, therefore, turned their backs on their homes, villages and clans. In the course of this re-evaluation of the Abrek phenomenon, the meaning of the term transformed. By the

middle of the nineteenth century, 'Abrek' had become a term of respect describing avengers of the deprived and fighters against colonial rule: 'The powerful terrorized the peaceful population and the Abreks terrorized the powerful' (Aslanbek Sheripov cited in Gould 2007a: 40).

Ethos

With Imam Shamil's capture by Russian troops in 1859, the period of open military resistance against the Russian colonisation of the Northern Caucasus came to an end. In this context, the on-going resistance of the Abreks towards the Russian invaders was a lost cause. It was precisely the 'lost cause' factor, however, that rendered the Abrek braver and more powerful in the eyes of many Caucasians. In contemporary poems and narratives, the Abrek were seen to yearn for their own death without fear, struggling to the end without any hope of victory (Gould 2007a, 2007b, 2014).

In the final battle, which in local legends almost always follows a betrayal, the Abrek takes on a multitude of opponents and can nevertheless not be defeated. In the narrative 'Abrek Gekha' by Ahmat Avturinskii, recorded by Aslanbek Sheripov in 1916 and translated into English by Rebecca Gould in 2014 (Gould 2014: 216-19), the hero is hit by a large spray of bullets but still keeps on fighting, in classic zombie-like fashion. It is no wonder that, in the many narratives of this era, the Russians approached shot Abreks with extreme caution, always uncertain of whether the deceased was still alive.

The figure of the undead Abrek allowed for a revaluation of values: the military loss in the North Caucasus could become a moral victory if the loss did not matter. The Abrek slid out of the sacrificial role and became a saint because he had overcome his attachment to the world and his fear of death. This differentiated him from ordinary mortals, and especially from the Russian soldiers, who were seen as possessed by the will to control the world and, in the Abrek-stories from this era, were always afraid to loose their lives. The Abrek had left his life behind while still alive; this self-empowerment with a simultaneous loss of the self was considered superior to the power of the Russians.

This elevation of the Abrek was not of his own making. His actions spoke for themselves, his silence made him even more powerful. The ethos attributed to the Abrek by his fellow Caucasians expressed radical mistrust – a mistrust towards any form of mediation, dialogue or contact with the outside world, spilling into aversion and a contempt that was also a disdain for death. Anyone who still relied on making a living under the new conditions might be able to accommodate himself, but could never be a role model. The Abrek, in contrast, stood for a fundamental mistrust of the possibility to lead a right life amidst wrongs, as well as the consequent contempt for the value of life itself. This was clearly an idealisation – the formative stories of the Abrek are not literary works

by chance. However, what we find here is a figure of radical mistrust with deep cultural roots and positive connotations, effective to the present day.

Relations with the Outside World

Although Abreks broke away from their habitual environment and sought the expanse, they could still count on support from local communities. As Russian archives indicate, Abreks would continue to be received as honorary guests *(kunak)* in Caucasian villages, and enjoy the protection of the host who, in the event of betrayal by a neighbour, would retreat into the wilderness together with the Abrek (Bobrovnikov 2007: 256). Thus, the separation was a unilateral act; the solidarity with the retreating person remained intact, maybe only arose (or intensified) through the act of the detachment. An Abrek would never steal from the people with whom he was related, he would never attack the villages located in his habitat, otherwise his reputation would be ruined.

In contrast, the colonialists from the north were attacked and robbed. In addition to civilian travellers, state ambassadors, and mounted military troops, Abreks preferred to raid Russian garrisons and Cossack settlements in order to seize spoils. The Cossacks were targeted, because they were treated as equal to the Russians or regarded as their military spearhead. Ossetian villages were also popular objectives, as Ossetians were viewed as henchmen of the Russian invaders.

The Abrek reputation as a popular hero and social bandit à la Hobsbawm (1972) was not based as much on the fact that he (like Robin Hood) took from the rich and gave to the poor, but that he took from the strong and spared the weak. This indicates a clear division of the world, and the mythical work of the Abrek aimed at keeping both worlds apart. However, there was also a middle world, that of the local population, which had been unable to resist the advance of the Russian colonists but nevertheless maintained its links with the free-riders. This middle-world was evidently respected by the Abreks.

Thieves-in-law

With the end of the Tsarist Empire, Abrek-hood also came to an end. Several Abreks joined the incoming rulers (aka the Soviets), transforming from being undead into supporters of the new order (thus ceasing to be Abreks). Others continued to resist, remained in the other world and fought the newly imposed order. Their struggle did not last long, however, as they were soon defeated. The last surviving Chechen Abrek, Khasukha Magomadov, hid for decades in the impassable border zones between Chechnya and Georgia. As one of the very few, he had been able to escape the deportation of all Chechens to Central Asia

under Stalin in 1944, a deportation ending in the death of tens of thousands. At the invitation of his friends, the 71-year-old Magomadov secretly travelled to the plains in March 1976 in order to receive medical care. Betrayed to the Soviet rulers, he was apprehended and shot dead.

In the early days of the Soviet Union, a new type of honourable bandit emerged, who quickly took the Abrek's place, thus also contributing to the demise of the Abrek. This was the so-called 'thief-in-law' (Russ. *vor v zakone*), a character born in Stalin's forced labour camps.

Context of Origin

To the early Soviet ideologists, crime was justifiable in service of the socialist cause, such as in the struggle against feudal or capitalist exploitation, or the expropriation of the exploiters. The prevailing view was that, once the conditions for exploitation had ended, i.e., at the dawn of communist society, crime would disappear. An Abrek no longer would have any reason to remain an Abrek. Those who persisted would be isolated and re-educated.

Accordingly, the first Soviet prison camps were planned as re-education camps. In 1929, the writer Maxim Gorky hailed the 'accomplishments gained in "forging human material"' (Schlögel 2001). From the beginning, this 'forging' was carried out with utmost brutality. Shortly after the October Revolution, prisoners were detained en masse in labour camps that Lenin referred to as 'concentration camps' (Applebaum 2003: 47).[11] In addition to 'forging' a new human being, another priority was the economic exploitation of forced labour (Khlevniuk 2004: 27).

In the course of the 1920s, the Soviet Union was covered with a network of 'corrective labour camps' in which, in addition to criminals, political prisoners and so-called kulaks (large-scale farmers) were detained. This network stretched from the White Sea-Baltic Canal to the Pacific, from the Arctic Ocean to Central Asia. In the Kolyma region in the Far East alone, hundreds of camps existed in an area of 3.5 million square kilometres, equivalent to one-seventh of the USSR's territory and nine times the current size of Germany (Spray 2014: 83; Panikarov 2007: 267). This pan-Soviet camp system constituted a parallel world, which Solzhenitsyn (2007 [1973]) mapped in detail as the 'Gulag archipelago': an isolated world of penal colonies, in which the life of a human being was worth nothing. Countless prisoners died of hunger, forced labour and the harassment by camp leaders or fellow prisoners, to a large extent unnoticed by the outside world (Naimark 2007: 18-20).[12]

11 | Lenin was the first to use the term 'concentration camp' (Hosking 1992: 71).

12 | GULAG is an abbreviation of *Glavnoye upravleniye ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerey i koloniy*, the 'Main Administration of Corrective Labour Camps and Labour Colonies.'

The number of inmates sharply increased. In 1928, 300,000 prisoners were held captive; during the Great Purge or Great Terror of 1937-38 almost two million people were contained in the Gulags. By 1940, approximately eight million prisoners had passed through the camp system. The historian Ann Applebaum estimates the total number of those imprisoned in the Gulag system between 1929 and 1953 as 18 million. In addition, over ten million other Soviet citizens were employed in forced labour (Applebaum 2003: 615ff).

In the camp hierarchy, inmates condemned for criminal offenses ranked above the political prisoners, whom they could dispose of at will, unhindered by those in charge of the camp. Solzhenitsyn (2007 [1973]) describes in detail how 'criminals' mistreated the 'politicals.' Certain 'criminals' connived with the security guards who used them as an instrument in camp management, such as in providing 'special treatment' for the so-called '58s': political prisoners imprisoned according to paragraph 58 of the Soviet Criminal Code regarding counter-revolutionary activity. Another group of criminal inmates, however, refused to enter into any form of cooperation with state officials. This comprised the so-called 'thieves-in-law,' who lived according to their own rules and only acknowledged their own authorities. With their appearance and tattoos, they openly expressed their anti-establishment attitude and willingly accepted the harsh punishments meted out to those who violated these rules. The thieves-in-law formed their own universe within the world of the Gulags.

The thieves-in-law and their followers declared the Gulag archipelago to be their homeland. Thus the tattoo of a thief-in-law declared: 'Boss of the zone [camp, prison]. Everything for me – nothing from me. Here in the zone I am at home' (Baldaev 2003: 198). Another tattoo reads: 'I was born in prison, I will die in prison' (Plutser-Sarnov 2006: 45). In the realm of the camps, their code of conduct prohibited any cooperation with state organs. Anyone cooperating with camp officials or the police was brandished a bitch (Russ. *suka*). However, not all Gulag prisoners convicted of criminal offenses were prepared to submit to the canon of the thieves. Time and again, attempts were made to break the power of the thieves-in-law. Opposition to the thieves-in-law was supported by the camp officials, who simultaneously attempted to exploit thieves-in-law for the harassment of political prisoners (Shalikashvili 2009: 15ff).

When the Soviet Union was attacked by Germany in 1941, Stalin also recruited prisoners for the Great Patriotic War, which offered the Soviet war machine a considerable reserve comprising of an estimated 2.3 million (ibid. 12). In return for military service, they were promised a reduction of their sentence or even release from prison. For thieves-in-law, this was an unacceptable offer, as all cooperation with the state and participation in life was considered a sin. However, together with other criminals, some rebellious thieves-in-law accepted this offer.

In the course of the war, no small number of the ex-gulag prisoners was detained inside German war prisons. After the defeat of the Third Reich, they returned to the Soviet Union where they were imprisoned again – on the basis of not having resisted the enemy until the bitter end.[13] Thus, after the war, the thieves-in-law and those outside the law met each other in the Soviet camps. The Gulag archipelago became the site of bitter conflicts between both groups, which was fought out with a hitherto unknown brutality. It ended in 1953 with the defeat of the thieves-in-law.

The state organs regarded this confrontation, referred to as the Bitch War, as an opportunity to break the dominance of the thieves-in-law and supported their opponents (the criminals or bitches, *suki*) with arms. The defeat of the thieves-in-law was so thorough that they ceased to exist as a criminal caste (Varese 1998). However, in the post-war Soviet Union, the reputation of the thieves-in-law was revitalized by resourceful brokers in violence and applied in order to sell protection – quite similar to the Italian mafia in its early days. Caucasians, especially from Georgia, were found at the forefront of this process of reinventing the thieves-in-law. Meanwhile, the thieves-in-law (nowadays often referred to as the 'Russian mafia'), are active on a transnational level, even if they no longer have much in common with the thieves-in-law from the Gulag labour camps.

Ethos

'Thieves-in-law' is the literal translation of the Russian *vory v zakone*. The law to whom the thieves confess is not the state law, but a distinct code of the criminals. This law is exclusively handed down verbally and has changed over time. The Georgian criminologist Moris Shalikashvili (2009: 35-43) introduces six versions of this law, forwarded by various authors at different times. However, certain principles appear in all variants and identify norms and taboos.[14]

A taboo rests on each form of cooperation with the state, social commitment, work, family, wealth and sedentary existence. The principle of the prohibition to work with state institutions and state officials begins with the precept of silence, i.e., the principle of refusing to provide any information to outsiders. However, it is likewise forbidden to deny you belong to the world of thieves. In labour camps and prisons, this taboo rests on cooperating with the camp or

13 | This concerned not only the former prisoners captured in Germany, but all Soviet soldiers who had fallen into the hands of the Germans, who were accused of treason.

14 | The following account is based on: Varese (1998), Slade (2013), Shalikashvili (2009), Humphrey (1999), Kupatadze (2010), Oleinik (2003), Lobjanidze and Ghlont'i (2004), Nordin and Glonti (2006) and Stephenson (2015).

prison officials. It is particularly despicable to take up a gun in the name of the state – as a soldier, a militia officer or a policeman.

A thief-in-law does not regard himself as a political dissident, who rejects injustice for the sake of society. Similar to the world of the camp, the world of civilians is seen as foreign and thus as a legitimate target of raids. A thief should not join a federation, party, or organisation except that of his own. In addition, it is forbidden under all circumstances for a thief to do regular work. He has to exclusively earn a livelihood by means of criminal activities. Labour is equated with enslavement, whereas a thief-in-law regards himself as free.[15]

Similarly, a thief-in-law may not be married. If he takes on a sexual relationship with a woman, he has to share her with his thief colleagues. A thief has to dissolve his commitments to his biological family; after entering the world of thieves he no longer holds obligations towards them. Nevertheless, there are indications that the glorification of one's own mother is part of the code of honour, especially for Caucasian thieves-in-law (Nordin and Glonti 2006: 64). It is important to note, however, that the term 'mother' underwent a revaluation: by tattooing her portrait on the body of a thief-in-law, he proved his unconditional fidelity to the family of thieves. 'I will never forget my mother' as a tattoo is supposed to indicate his unbreakable solidarity with the world of thieves (Gurov cited in Varese 1998: 519).

A thief-in-law must reject material wealth; anything beyond the strictly necessary personal needs is to be deposited into the treasury of the thieves (Russ. *obchshak*) and thereby collectivized. Finally, at least during the first decades of the Soviet Union, a thief-in-law was forbidden to officially register himself, that is, to obtain the actually required confirmation of registration (Russ. *propiska*). Just like an Abrek, he should be homeless.

Overall, these taboos present the ideal of renunciation and of detaching oneself from the outside world. This detachment has to be complete and is propagated as a detachment from the world as a whole. By the assumption of the prison or the camp as 'home' and 'grave,' attested by numerous tattoos and sayings handed down (Plutser-Sarnov 2003: 39, 2006: 45), the thief-in-law seeks to turn from a living being to an undead. Through this revaluation of values, the former life suddenly comes to a standstill.[16] Not only that social obligations have lost their validity, it is now also completely irrelevant who you

15 | In this context, it is sometimes pointed out that the Russian verb 'to work' (*rabotat'*) is etymologically related to the noun for slave (*rab*).

16 | Even some prisoners who did not belong to the world of thieves had the experience of complete, boundless freedom in labour camps, such as the author Edward Limonov. His biographer Emmanuel Carrère (2012: 399) stated: 'Possibly the camp is hell, but solely through the power of his mind has he been able to make it a paradise.'

were and what you had done before.[17] Initiation into the world of thieves is powerful enough to completely annihilate one's old life – just as initiations in very different contexts end the days of youth (van Gennep 1986 [1909], Turner 2005 [1969]). Whoever cares for life tries to avoid the world of thieves – also because the weak are tormented relentlessly. 'I wanted to live,' a young criminal in the documentary 'The Marc of Cain' gave as a reason for becoming a 'goat', i.e., to cooperate with the camp officials.[18]

In addition to these taboos on behaviour, there are further ascetic ideals, formulated in the form of behavioural norms, which can be summarized as follows. Self-control is a prerequisite for the control of others. In order to test the self-restraint of a thief, he can be exposed to extreme situations in which it is difficult to maintain one's command – for example, in an alcohol or drug-fuelled frenzy. A very strong concentration of tea (Russ. *chifir*) is used for these kinds of intoxicating rituals in prison. In addition to controlling his body, a thief-in-law should control his language, leaving excessive cursing to his stooges.

In addition, mastery of the thieves' cant is one of the requirements for a thief-in-law. Rudimentary, a special variant of this secret language of criminals *(fenya)* has existed in Russia from the sixteenth century on. It differs so strongly from Russian that it can almost be called a language of its own. Its vocabulary is estimated to comprise between 10,000 and 27,000 words (Shalikashvili 2009: 73). This secret language allows the thieves to conceal the true meaning of their internal communications.

Moreover, a thief-in-law has to master the game of cards. Playing cards is the most popular leisure activity in Soviet prisons. Through high stakes (in the extreme case, one's own body parts), a thief-in-law proves courage and carelessness. He proves that he does not care about anything, not even the integrity of his own body. Game debts must be settled at all costs. Luck in the game is considered a good omen. The colour system of the playing cards also serves to classify the world: black is the colour of the thieves, red is the colour of the others. Accordingly, prisons were divided into red (state-controlled) and black (controlled by the thieves-in-law). A thief-in-law should never wear red clothes (Danzig Baldayev cited in Shalikashvili 2009: 40).

A thief-in-law is obliged to recruit new thieves. Soviet prisons and labour camps provided an especially suitable environment for recruiting young thieves. An established thief-in-law was expected to charm other prisoners

17 | This may also be a motive for some jihadists, whose life before joining the jihad had been stained by crimes, drugs and violence, which completely looses relevancy after their complete surrender to the sacred struggle (according to dogma).

18 | The Marc of Cain', documentary by Alix Lambert (2001); see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJCAPInjEkc (28:30)

and thus to enlist prospective applicants by playing on their mistrust towards 'the authorities' and publicising an alternative law hand tailored to the moral reasoning of criminals, or by emanating a romantic view of the criminal life by spreading stories or songs from the criminal underground.[19] As many prisoners were illiterate, storytelling and singing was a valued commodity in the camps. Once this courtship had been successful, the applicant became a candidate and was ordered to carry out petty crimes or cover up someone else's criminal offense. After a probationary period, the candidate could be raised to the rank of a thief-in-law. This change in status was carried out by means of an initiation, the so-called baptism.

In the world of thieves everybody had to stand by the other at all times. If the outside world could and should be deceived, the commandment of honesty and sincerity applied within the community. A demand for moderation in the exercise of violence was to be observed in contacts with the outside world. Even if violence was part of the daily practice of the thieves-in-law, indeed the basis of their activities, the excessive use of force was considered bad form. For this reason, certain thieves renounced firearms (or at least their utilisation) during raids. Of other thieves it was said they took heart medicines with them in order to be able to provide first aid if the victim suffered a cardiac arrest (Paul Erich Roth cited in Shalikashvili 2009: 29).[20]

Apart from the ideal of asceticism, expressed in the taboos, other religious-sectarian ideals become evident in the behavioural norms: self-control, moderation, and fraternity. In addition, there is the linguistic detachment from the outside world, the imperative of the secrecy of the rites, and the missionary dissemination of belief – traits of religious sects, too. These religious reminiscences are not accidental but fed by the detachment from an outside world regarded and experienced as genuinely unjust. The rejection of the profane world as unjust creates a link to the suffering of the crucified Christ. In this context, it is significant that the thieves-in-law hand down a legend, in which a thief stole a nail falling to the ground during the crucifixion of Jesus, which was thus deprived of its use. Observing this deed, Jesus blessed the thief (after Di Puppo and Dugladze 2004). Here the themes of 'thief' and 'believer' coincide. Viewed from an emic perspective, the code of the thieves-in-law is thus a deeply moral one.

19 | On thieves' songs, see Hufen (2010).

20 | This did not stop thieves-in-law, however, from maltreating women or inferior prisoners.

Relations with the Outside World

Connected by the unconditional submission to their code of conduct, and following the model of a religious sect, the thieves-in-law represent a powerful elite of criminals to the outside world, and an egalitarian community to their inner world. Among the thieves-in-law, decisions are always made in consensus during meetings called *skhodkas*. As in the case of the early Christians, national affiliation does not play a decisive role for the thieves-in-law: their code transcends not only the family but also ethnic origins. All thieves-in-law had to be regarded as equal and must treat each other as equal. This is the difference between the thieves-in-law and the regionally bound Abreks or ethnically defined mafia groups such as the Chechen mafia, the Cosa Nostra in Sicily, or the Yakuza in Japan, where ethno-national affiliation is a major criterion for recruitment. Thieves-in-law are always men. Women can feel committed to the ideals of the world of thieves, but may never be ordained.

If the world of the thieves-in-law is egalitarian in itself, the system into which their world is integrated is hierarchical. In carrying out assignments up to assassinations, the thieves-in-law resort to henchmen, the so-called *shestyorki* (Russ.; Georg. *k'ai bichebi*), as they themselves do not dirty their hands. Wardens (Russ. *smotryashchie*; Georg. *makureblebi*), manage the economic resources and represent the interests and rules of the thieves-in-law.[21] People below these ranks and thus outside the 'law' may be robbed and abused at will. At the lower end of the prison hierarchy are the humiliated (Russ. *petukhi*, chicken), who are subjected to the thieves-in-law and their helpers without no protection at all; *petukhi* are not worthy of being looked at, and are in no case to be touched. Talking to these people could cause a thief-in-law to jeopardize his status. Certain *petukhi* were cut in the face with knives, tattooed with swastikas or words such as 'whore', 'chicken', 'rat', 'gay', 'Balt', 'blabbermouth', 'Little Jew', 'beast of burden', 'animal', 'scum', 'dick', 'demon', 'camel' or 'devil' (Baldaev 2006: 273).

The world of those who live 'in law' is thus clearly separated from the external world, which is considered lawless, even if it has the federal law on its side. In the thieves' philosophy, inhabitants of the outside world not only lack the 'real' law, but are seen a different species, devoid of the right to be considered human in the way only the *vory* are (Stephenson 2015: 183). The community of the thieves-in-law is separate, exclusive, detached. According to the British social anthropologist Caroline Humphrey (1999: 204) it must be regarded as a distinct culture, not as a network.

The thieves' world (Russ. *vorovskoy mir*; Georg. *kurduli samqaro*) is attested with attributes of purity by their members, whereas the outside world is con-

21 | For further information on the hierarchy of thieves in prisons and the outside world, see Shalikashvili 2009: 47-63.

sidered 'dirty.' Accordingly, servants of the outside world, such as policemen or prison guards, are called 'rubbish' (Russ. *musor*). It is significant, however, that Stalin also designated his opponents as dirt, which had to be disposed of (Applebaum 2003: 35). The semantic reference system is identical, only the assignment varies. This also holds true for the oath sworn by the thieves-in-law, which, according to Kupatadze (2010: 58) started with a phrase similar to the oath sworn by a member of the Communist party. As in many other cases, the detachment of one's own collective identity takes place on the basis of concepts with which the other group distinguishes itself, too. Ideas of purity play an important role here: each group considers itself as pure and ascribes impurity to the other group (Douglas 1985). Friend and foe, world and counter-world, have more in common than is dear to them.

Conclusion

What similarities and differences can be traced in the contexts of origin, world views, and relations to the outside world of the Abreks, thieves-in-law, and Caucasian jihadists? What do these similarities and differences tell us about the specific forms of turning away from a world into which one was born but in which one has lost any kind of trust? What are the premises and restraints of radical detachment?

Both Abreks and thieves-in-law as well as jihadists have emerged in the context of radical social and political upheavals. In addition to new winners, these upheavals have produced countless losers. In the case of the Abreks, the Russian colonialism of the nineteenth century destroyed the existing social order, assassinating, expelling or subduing the inhabitants of the Caucasus. The thieves-in-law were products of Stalinism and its brutal camp system. The old oppressive tsarist order disappeared and a new, even more oppressive order prevailed. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the thief-in-law replaced the figure of the Abrek as a model of 'criminal justice.' New eras brought with them new heroes of resistance. The Caucasian jihadists, in turn, emerged from the chaos resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union – a chaos characterized by civil war, mass poverty, political repression and corruption. In any case, the legitimacy of the post-Soviet political order left much to be desired for a large part of the Caucasian population, and anyone who raised a weapon against this order could become a hero.

In this sense, Abreks stood for the individualistic ethos of breaking with the world and retreating into the wilderness. The Abrek was a loner, not a social human being, with his own ideas of right and wrong. His mythical power dwelt on a contempt for death, which led to a moral superiority over the Russian aggressors, who were held to hang on to life. The thieves-in-law, in contrast, fol-

lowed a collectivist ethos. The law of their caste gave meaning to their lives and differentiated them from the outside world. This distinguishes the thieves-in-law (social men) from the Abreks (loners). By accepting the 'grave' of the prison as their home, the thieves-in-law transformed into undead, too; the world could no longer harm them.

With their oath of allegiance, the jihadists also become undead. From then on, dogma prescribes: others love life and we embrace death. This transformation to an undead is undertaken in the service of a doctrine of salvation, however, according to which this transformation contributes to victory. The jihadists thus also differ from the Abreks: if the latter invest in the loss, the failure, the downfall, the former invest in the victory, or at least the rise of Islam. The Abreks are on their own, the iihadists are part of a movement from which they draw their strength. What they both share is a radical break with prevailing norms and a conscious detachment from the outside world.

Breaking with the norms of the 'living', Abreks, thieves-in-law and jihadists enter into a space of liminality, where the old rules do not count and where new alliances are forged (Turner 1998). Experiencing liminality usually evokes feelings of euphoria; it also provokes a mindset that is best used for indoctrination (the ritual making of a new person). States of liminality are very fragile, however, and cannot usually be maintained for long. In the ritual process, they end with the reintegration of the initiate into society. In case reintegration is ruled out (for personal or dogmatic reasons), the unmaintainable state of liminality can only be terminated by death. No surprise, then, that the Abrek claims to seek death, the thief-in-law considers death the restoration of his natural state, and the jihadist loves death more than life. It almost seems as if radical mistrust triggering rigorous detachment fulfils itself in death (see Laidlaw 2015).

The relationship between the Abreks, thieves-in-law, and jihadists and the outside world is antagonistic. They all shift their trust from the outside world to their own world and strive for a hermetic demarcation. As in the case of trust, mistrust here leads to a reduction of complexity (see Luhmann 2014). The outside world is clearly bad, no ifs, no buts, one has no time to waste on details, the main concern is to avoid being dragged into it. The 'defensive measure' resulting out of mistrust (Luhmann 2014: 2) that we are confronted with here leads to a blatant simplification of the world, as well as to a noticeable simplification of the ways one can deal with it.

However, there are specifics. Although the Abrek also turns away from his relatives and neighbours, he remains closely related to them, and can fall back on them in order to hide from his pursuers. Only the external world, not linked to him by means of kinship or spatial proximity, comes with antagonistic connotations and may be raided. The code of the thief-in-law, in contrast, prescribes the termination of all existing social relations. The world 'out there' can – and should – be robbed, but not destroyed. Whoever represents the world

'out there' is referred to as rubbish *(musor)*. A similar dualism was employed by members of the state authorities such as Stalin when referring to thieves. This mutually constitutive process is based on structural similarities and a shared recourse to notions of purity.[22] The (male Caucasian) jihadist not only breaks off contact with his environment and shifts his trust exclusively to his world of salvation. For him, the outside world may not only be robbed, it has to be destroyed. He seeks to bring the world to an end, and himself with it.

In the discursive elevation, not only jihadists, but also Abreks and thieves-in-law are undead. They have left the realm of the living while still alive. They have abandoned their families and households, abjured the laws valid for everybody else. Henceforth they no longer are accountable to the world. Death is always with them, has become a part of them. It is this charisma that makes jihadists, Abreks and thieves-in-law appear so powerful. The accompanying attitude towards the outside-world is well captured by a slogan handed down from the world of the Gulags which became a dogma for prisoners 'in the law' and is cited in the title of this chapter: 'Don't Trust, Don't Fear, Don't Beg.' 'Don't Trust' here means detaching oneself from one's environment, 'Don't Fear' indicates emotional disentanglement, and 'Don't Beg' relates to the re-evaluation of values: a free man rises from the status of a degraded petitioner by turning to the tools of mistrust and fearlessness. Mistrust, here, is seen as an emancipating power.

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22 | This, in turn, raises the question if practices of delineation are always relational, or whether a full separation from the world is at all possible (see Laidlaw 2015).

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Suspicion and Mistrust in Neighbour Relations

A Legacy of the Soviet Mentality?

Ilya Utekhin

In Russia, according to data from 2014,[1] excluding actual police officers, 1.4 million people were employed as security officers, among whom one third were contracted by the state, while the rest were employed privately as guards and watchmen. If we add their managers, accountants and other people who work in private security firms, this number comes to around three million. At the same time, the number of people employed in police is around 1 million, which puts Russia rather high in the rating of countries according to the ratio of policemen to population. As of 2014, there were 634 policemen for each 100,000 of population, more than twice the ratio in Germany. Private guards and watchmen mostly sit all day in shops and offices with little to engage them during this work. In Russia they are omnipresent; they can be found in almost every shop, school, or institution (not only those institutions which are run by the state, but private businesses, too).

The demand for these security services can partly be explained by the serious crime situation in the country and inefficient work of the police. For example, the number of murders in Russia is one of the highest in the world (in 2010, it was 14.9 for 100,000 people in comparison to 0.86 in Germany).[2] Business and the population buy the services of security to protect themselves. However, this is not the whole story. These days, most institutions with free

1 | Olesia Gerasimenko, Vyacheslav Kozlov. 'U okhrannikov sotsial'nyy status chut' nizhe uborshchitsy'. Pochemu v Rossii tak mnogo okhrannikov, kons'yerzhey, storozhey i kontrolerov ['The Status of Security Staff is Lower Than Cleaners': Why are there so many security, concierge, watchmen and check-takers in Russia?] See: http://kommersant.ru/doc/2543130

2 | Data quoted in Report published by EUSP Institute for the Rule of Law, published in September 2010 Reformirovaniye upravleniya vnevedomstvennoy okhrany v kontekste razvitiya rynka okhrannykh uslug [The Restructuring of the Commercial security department of the Russian Interior Ministry in the context of private security market evolution].

public access – such as clinics or big libraries – have a guard at the entrance, just in case. In the USSR, many of state institutions had free entrance and no guards. This is not to say that cities became more dangerous since the Soviet time. Street delinquency rose considerably in the 1990s, but has since then dropped. Neither is it possible to explain this with reference to the danger of terrorist attacks.

When I was a student during Perestroika years, entrance to the university building in Leningrad was not protected. Some years ago, however, the administration of St. Petersburg State University decided to restrict access to university buildings. When the new regime of access was introduced, long waiting lines appeared in the morning as the guards checked the passes produced by the students and professors. The guards (women guards, in this particular case, although this is usually regarded as a male profession in Russia) knew, of course, all the professors as they had been working there for many years. For many of the professors, some of whom were the classic absent-minded type, it was not easy to keep their pass on their person. Moreover, many could not understand why they should have to produce this pass to security staff that knew them personally. Often acquaintance was enough and Gemeinschaft-logic did work, but sometimes for some mysterious reasons the guards referred to formal rules and resorted to law enforcement procedures done in terms typical for Russia's unfriendly service personnel who enjoy exercising authority wherever possible.

I once left my pass in another jacket and at the entrance to Philology Department found that instead of the head security guard that I would usually greet, there was another woman on duty who also knew me well. She greeted me and asked to produce the pass. I told her that to my distress I had forgotten it, and asked her whether she recognized me. Despite this recognition, her reply was: 'Yes, but what if they already have fired you and you have no right to come here anymore?'

This episode might have more to do with the fear of losing one's job for appearing lenient than with the detection of masked enemies. On the level of rhetoric and argumentation, however, the guard's answer is curiously reminiscent of an old movie from the mid-1930s, when Stalin started to actively consolidate his power by means of show trials. Revealing the 'true face' of covert enemies was a point of concern for zealous Soviet activists who traced enemies in the form of spies, 'former people' (those from disenfranchised classes), and all kinds of foreign elements. These alleged 'enemies' were being revealed in real life and judged in show trials, but also abounded on the movie screen in the films of all genres. The movie I am referring to here was specifically promoted by Stalin, who overruled the initial rejection of the film by the censorship committee. This is 'The Party Card' by Ivan Pyr'ev (1936). The protagonist of the film is a treacherous enemy who is married to an honest, Soviet-minded woman. Although Pavel and Anna look like a model Soviet family, Pavel's true

identity is uncertain. At some point he is forced to confess to Anna that he is a son of a 'kulak', former rich peasant and thus a 'class enemy'. Later on in the film, Pavel steals his wife's party card, so that some other woman spy might use it as a pass to gain access to secure Soviet institutions. However, the woman is arrested and Anna, who did not notice that her party card was missing for five days, is expelled from the Party for negligence (for a close reading of the film, see Kaganovsky 2005).

The elderly guard at the entrance of Philology Department used the same logic of mistrust and suspicion exemplified by the plot of 'The Party Card'. While it seemed outlandish for her to suspect me of being a masked enemy, this was a very convenient way for her to account for her actions. Even if this behaviour itself seemed strange to me, it was consistent with the logic of suspicion that has its roots in Soviet mentality. After all, the Party called on citizens not to relax their vigilance, as enemies were always close enough and had to be unveiled and the threat neutralized. Contemporary Russian legislation on so called 'foreign agents'[3] directed against NGOs is within the same line of mobilization of Party line followers against all independent civil initiative.

Over the last twenty years, several studies have appeared dedicated to Soviet subjectivity that also touched upon the forms of systematic mistrust and suspicion that were practiced in the Soviet society, with purges, imposture, denunciations, public self-criticism and confession among them. As Sheila Fitzpatrick says in her study of individual identity practices in successful revolutions, they, first, 'invalidate the conventions of self-presentation and social interaction that obtained in pre-revolutionary society', and force people 'to reinvent themselves, to create or find within themselves personae that fit the new post-revolutionary society' (Fitzpatrick 2005: 3). The title of her book – 'Tear off the Masks!' – quotes a prominent Bolshevist slogan that was frequently heard during some periods of Soviet history, particularly, those when purges took place, when the hunt for double-dealers, spies and other masked enemies of the Soviet system who were trying to hide their true identity, was especially active. At the same time, self-identification and also self-understanding with reference to accepted categories of social being involved concealment and editing, that is, selection and rearrangement of the elements of personal life-story and the stories of the relatives, the origin or class identity, and of a public face. All of this was to be reflected in numerous forms (*anketa*) and narrative curriculum vitae (*avtobiografiya*). To construct a suitable mask became a second nature to Soviet citizens, as did the counter-practices of unmasking and denunciation (ibid: 5).

3 | The bill 'On Amendments to Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation regarding the Regulation of the Activities of Non-profit Organisations Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent' was adopted by Russian legislators and signed by President Vladimir Putin on July 20, 2012.

After the collapse of the USSR, there was no need for citizens to even symbolically adhere to state ideology, but the rise of state-sponsored patriotism and anti-Western rhetoric in Russian propaganda starting from 2010s has exploited discursive constructions that recognizably appeal to the stereotypic image of the masked enemy.

On another occasion, in the largest lecture hall of the Philology Department I saw something that immediately attracted my attention: four small padlocks, attached to both sides of a piano. Obviously, the purpose of those who performed the uneasy task of attaching lugs and padlocks to the piano was to prevent students from playing it except when sanctioned by some authority possessing keys. After my lecture, on my way back, I asked the head security guard about the piano. She told me that if I liked I could play anything I wanted, because the padlocks did not actually work even though they looked impressive. The lock's fixture broke immediately and the padlocks remained in their places even though they could no longer be secured.

I soon recalled the padlocks I often met during my fieldwork in so-called communal apartments (CA) in St. Petersburg during the 1990s and early 2000s. Everyday life in CAs, where dwellers share kitchen, toilet and washroom with a number of other tenants, reveals that the practices of everyday life in CAs are indicative of a variety of behaviours and attitudes typical for Soviet society (Utekhin 2004; Utekhin et al. 2006). Envy, mistrust and suspicion toward neighbours that could be observed in CAs in the USSR – and can still be observed in contemporary Russia. This can be accounted for in terms of their functions, in such a paternalistic Soviet 'culture of poverty', goods and resources (and, particularly, housing) were in shortage, and housing was neither owned by the residents nor chosen by them to rent, but rather distributed by a housing authority. Hence the term communal that has to do with commune as administrative unit, not with commune as a voluntary assembly of like-minded people for working and/or living together. In the Soviet *kommunalka*, all kinds of people belonging to a variety of ages, social, ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds, found themselves forcibly accommodated in cramped and compressed quarters, where living space is allocated according to per capita sanitary norm and a system of privileges.

It is most telling that tenants were always concerned about the fairness of distribution, their mentality being dominated by the logic similar to what George Foster once described as the 'Image of Limited Good' (Foster 1965, 1972), a conceptualization of social relations explaining integration in a community permeated with envy. Studying a Mexican village, Foster was struck by the abundance of fences and by the fact that windows had thick wooden shutters shut close by heavy bolts, so to protect the home interiors from view (Foster

1948).[4] Based on his prolonged fieldwork, he built a theory explaining cultural forms of envy. Within the worldview of those Mexican peasants, when a person or a family appeared to possess greater means of subsistence, prestige, love, beauty, power, or influence than the average, that used to cause all the others to feel that they were suffering from a scarcity of those means. This is as if all the good things in the world were allocated in certain limited amounts for that village community, not being enough to satisfy everyone.

In CAs, in a similar way, not only the allocation of housing, but almost every aspect of neighbours' lives in CAs might provoke envy or hurt the feeling of justice, due to the high sensibility towards a fair sharing of resources and equally dividing the costs invested into the minimally sufficient maintenance and cleaning of the premises. This means that everyone's share is the matter of everyone's concern. In the conditions of transparent environment where one cannot build high walls to protect oneself from view and where the life takes place under the watchful eye of neighbours, who see, hear, and even smell what all the other tenants do or have, the lack of resources for privacy leads to an oversensitivity to violations of privacy and its symbolic substitutes. This situation is eloquently described by Mikhail Zoshchenko in his short story 'A Summer Breather'.[5] In the story, electric power is disconnected in an apartment because everyone refused to pay, as one meter for nine families makes it impossible to accurately determine each family's share of the expenditure, a fact that turns out to be unacceptable because people mistrust their neighbours.

Actually, many tenants easily transcend the border between overhearing and eavesdropping: even though a certain degree of awareness about neighbours' activities and belongings is unavoidable in CAs, it is also a common practice to deliberately monitor neighbours' life. Among the reasons for such monitoring is a continuous concern about one's belongings in the public space. Neighbours keep their salt in the kitchen, soap in the washroom, toilet paper in the rest room, and they are anxious about the possibility that other people can use their unattended resources or belongings. The point of concern, however, is not the material value only, but a symbolic dimension, too: pilferage is also a violation of privacy, which has its rather particular configuration in the partly transparent everyday world of CA.[6]

4 | One might recall the surprising abundance of high non-transparent fences in Moscow downtown areas, to protect mansions and gated communities from the gazes of passersby.

5 | The English translation of the story is available in the section From Books of the Virtual Museum of Soviet Life (Utekhin et al. 2006). Andrei Siniavsky discusses the story in his book on Soviet civilization (Siniavsky 1990, 165-169).

6 | See for details materials published in the virtual museum of communal living (Utekhin et al. 2006).

Padlocks are omnipresent in CA public spaces because tenants suspect their neighbours of stealing and pilferage, and believe that in their absence neighbours are inspecting their property left unattended, including the content of refrigerators in the common kitchen. Why is it so hard for people to agree over sharing resources in this kitchen? One of the possible explanations has to do with so called paranoid disorders whose delirious content is linked to neighbours' relations. This was a most impressive discovery for me, although not for Russian psychiatrists who had studied it extensively before my ethnography of the *kommunalka*. The phenomenon of paranoid disorders concerns a specific bunch of symptoms sometimes observed in elderly people with a long experience of CA life. People accuse neighbours of systematically stealing and damaging their belongings, of persecuting them in order to inflict all kinds of material and moral damage. They denounce their neighbours before authorities and take all sorts of counter-measures. At the same time, intellectual abilities and memory, as well as general competence in everyday affairs remains unaffected – a strange mixture that makes the allegations appear all the more plausible to a stranger who hears them for the first time.

These behaviours are given shape by everyday life in CAs, and they appear perfectly logical and sensible because they reproduce the normal reactions to offences – the only difference being that here the offences are imaginary. They could have been real, however. Misapprehension leads to communicative disorder that disrupts normal communication with neighbours and substitutes it with misplaced patterns based on mistrust and suspicion. It is worth noting that some elderly people who are affected with similar disease but live in private apartments often accuse CIA or KGB or extra-terrestrials of stealing things or controlling their ideas.[7]

Living together in close contact with people whom one mistrusts is tricky: neighbours cannot escape communication even when they are seeking to avoid communication. Involvement in communal neighbours' relations and mutuality of concerns creates a system of relations where victims and perpetrators depend upon each other. People affected with paranoid disorders exchange roles with alleged perpetrators: in this case, subjects start to steal and damage things that belong to their supposed offenders, in order to retaliate and thereby forestall any future offences.

An illustration of how pathological behaviour is similar to what can be observed in normal life is what I refer to as 'virtual thefts', or situations when measures are taken but suspicion turned out to be groundless. Here is an example from my fieldwork. A woman called Olga bought new shoes for her

7 | A detailed description of how this pathology affects the life of elderly people in communal apartments see in Chapter 9 of my book (Utekhin 2004). For a psychiatrist's perspective on this topic, see Medvedev (1990).

teenage daughter. It was an important event, because the shoes were expensive for their family budget. They were carefully selected and then presented to friendly families, which is a common symbolic gesture aimed at preventing the destructive consequences of envy. Some days later, the shoes disappeared from the girl's room; another pair of shoes was left in their place, similar, but used.

Olga was angry and desperate. She accused a young man living far down the corridor from her of the theft. The man did not belong to her friendship circle and had a somewhat marginal status already; he was viewed as a hippie lacking steady employment who received many visitors on an almost daily basis. Nevertheless, the woman understood that it was be highly improbable that this fellow had stolen the shoes for himself. Never before had he been involved any thefts in the apartment, or suspected of theft by means of a substitution, something known as *podmena* in Russian: the kind of accident that sometimes happens when foodstuffs are left lying about openly in the kitchen. Olga's suspicion fell upon one of the girls who had attended a party in this man's room.

The woman explained that 'it could have even been unintentional', as result of mistake: the drunk girl might have entered the room, in complete darkness, and put on the shoes. This version seemed highly unlikely; why would the supposedly drunk girl leave her own used shoes, of a slightly different size, in their place? In spite of this contradiction, Olga told her version of the story to the policeman whom she called to the apartment. The young man denied the accusations as being absurd, but most of the neighbours, however, were inclined to find them to be well grounded. By the evening of the same day, the guilty person was found out. It was a schoolboy, a close friend of the younger son of the woman. The boys played videogames together until late in the evening, and when the angry parents of the visitor demanded that he came home immediately, the absent-minded player put on the first shoes that he found at the door. Thus, the entire story of theft turned out to be a mistake. Although mistaken shoes story could have taken place anywhere where people cohabitate, what is special about Russian communal apartments is the way in which this case makes visible latent attitude of suspicion within the neighbours' group, as well as the fact that no apologies have been offered to the neighbour who finally proved to be innocent. Life went on as if nothing had occurred.

In the public space of CAs, incidents often occur for which no witness can be found. Everyone pleads not guilty, and each neighbour reconstructs the situation according to her own presuppositions. The problem is that the situation, which can be reconstructed in different versions, does not exist apart from some interpretation. Hence, it becomes difficult to find the objective reality that some versions of events distort with groundless suspicions. This is not to say that all the versions are equally plausible, but the logic of suspicion, however groundless, is a systematic transformation of the rationality implied in the practices of everyday life in CAs.

How to link suspicion and paranoid behaviours to micro-mechanics of social interaction, not only to macro-social features of Soviet society? According to the pragmatic approach to language use, human communication is based on hearer's inference of communicative intent of the speaker (Grice 1975). Paul Grice proposed a model of inference of non-literal meanings that relies on the principle of cooperation: cooperative interlocutors trust in the fact that each contribution to the dialogue advances it towards a commonly accepted goal. Basically, this means that in order for utterances to perform their job of conveying messages, hearers should not take the meaning of the words said by speakers literally but rather make conjectures about what the speaker had in mind, or, in more technical jargon, examine how the most plausible speech act and its meaning fits best into currently unfolding situation. All of these are ascribed to speaker as part of her communicative intent. This operation involves routinely performed mindreading. Without that we would be unable to understand metaphors, irony and all kind of tropes based on counter-factual statements that are, however, perfectly meaningful for interlocutors.

Like any communicative signal, speech utterances have an indexical aspect, reminding of what we do when we interpret the sound of a car horn. When you hear it behind you, you first understand that the signal is addressed to you, and then try to guess why in the world it can be directed to you at this particular moment. A certain degree of mindreading is thus required for what Levinson refers to as the 'human interaction engine' (Levinson 2006). Mindreading is constrained by the understanding of situation that involves its interpretation in terms of this or that rule-governed activity, or language game, as proposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein 1953). To continue the horn example, this means that if I hear the beep of my friend's car and decide that this is not a serious message but just a rhythmic pattern in the way of a greeting, I might wish to join this musical exercise with my horn. This is acceptable if we both agree that we are 'playing the same game'.[8]

The sociological concept of face as it was introduced by Ervin Goffman (Goffman 1955) emphasizes the dramaturgical nature of social interaction and reveals the aspect of cooperation that consists in participants maintaining not only their own, but also each other's faces. More recent theory makes use of the category of face in order to analyse performances of politeness, such as strategies to treat face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson 1987). The communicative environment of CAs, which may involve or even foster systematic

8 | It is not by chance that Harold Garfinkel in his treatment of the topic of trust (Garfinkel 1963) departs from experimentation with a game. The game has its constitutive rules that determine the range of participants' expectations and that are supposed to be shared by the participants.

suspicion, presents opportunities to study how interpersonal relations shape politeness patterns.

Concepts of trust in partner cooperation and the care about face characterize human social interaction universally. However, in some pathological conditions, like autistic spectrum disorders, or paranoia and paranoid disorders, these devices seem to stop working properly, leading to difficulties in communication. Autism and paranoia have something in common: for a variety of reasons, affected subjects fail to grasp what the other person has in her mind correctly enough for communication to proceed normally. They either present no interest (or ability) in taking the partner's mind in account, or arbitrarily ascribe the partner feelings, intentions and attitudes. As soon as we turn to culturally specific genres and situations, we can see how suspicion and mistrust can bring about communicative environments for which paranoia can be a good metaphor.

Denunciation is a good example of how a culture favouring alert and suspicion was embodied in a social practice. Letters, complaints and petitions from citizens to newspapers and voluntary reporting of wrongdoings to the authorities was an important channel of feedback from the population. Encouraging the flow of denunciations, the authorities faced the problem of dealing with that ever-growing amount of questionable information, much of which was driven by clearly non-altruistic motives.

A large share of complaints sent to the authorities, more than a half in some periods, had to do with housing conditions. Although in Stalin's era the denunciations reporting political non-loyalty or a way of life that was not in line with communist moral could be motivated by a genuine belief in the struggle against 'alien elements' and the necessity of unmasking them, people clearly understood the utility of denunciations as a weapon in intra-apartment tensions with neighbours, and a tool that could be used to get the room of a neighbour that was sent to prison. This remained a live practice up to end of the Soviet period.

The documents of the Azadovsky affair recently published by Petr Druzhinin in his topical study (Druzhinin 2016) are very illustrative of the way in which *obshchestvennost'* was involved in the fight against 'foreign elements'. The word *obshchestvennost'* in Soviet language was used, especially since Khrushchev's times, to denote active citizens who were engaged, supposedly by their own will but actually as part of advancement of their career in Komsomol, trade-unions and the Party, in civic initiatives, or *obshchestvennaia rabota*, what roughly translated means 'work in society', or work to the benefit of society. This usually involved activities related with leisure, sports, and ideological indoctrination, but the authorities also relied on the people's assistance in maintaining public order (see details in Matsui 2015). Hence, vigilance and readiness to reporting to authorities were appreciated. Konstantin Azadovsky was

professor of philology who, together with his wife Svetlana, in December 1980 was falsely accused by the KGB of possessing narcotic substances, all these being an organized fabrication that involved police, civilian militia *(druzhinniki)*, and also the participation of a *kommunalka* neighbour who had denounced Svetlana and took an active part in her prosecution, with the obvious interest of occupying her rooms in the apartment. The neighbour succeeded in her plans to better her housing conditions.

Among the exhibits of the Virtual Museum is an item of denunciation showing something of a Dostoyevskian twist: in order to protect a person from eventual slanderous accusations, tenants recur to denunciation. The petition is written by some apartment residents and is addressed to the boss of one of the women with whom they live.[9] Its function is proactive: the residents expect that the boss will get a denunciation against this woman from another neighbour, who is depicted in the letter as a pathological complainer, a type of person well-known to Soviet (and post-Soviet) officials. This letter is their attempt to warn the boss by means of their own denunciation. For some reason (perhaps a cross-out that resulted from attempts to find the right word), this particular document was not sent, and remained as a draft. There were citizens who specialized in sending off complaints about everything and everybody, so that the situation described in this collective letter is completely plausible.

A translation of the document (with additional information provided by me in square brackets) reads as follows:

To the directors and local committee of the department store Gostiny Dvor.
From the tenants of 3 Petrov Street, apartment 20.
Declaration
Bella Markovna Beilin, who works in your department store, has lived in our apartment together with us for more than 15 years. In the apt. Bella Markovna behaves modestly, normally, politely, and all of us tenants respect her a lot. We are sending you this declaration in case you receive a slanderous declaration from Mrs. Romanova B.A., who has done more than once in all these years in attempt to slander and smear respectable people. The truth is that the Romanov family [mother 60, daughter 40 and two children] is the scourge of our apartment—they terrorize all the tenants. They do mean things to all the tenants, they are the ones who make scenes and start fights and they are the ones who write slander-denunciations to different organizations against all of the tenants including children.
Mrs. Romanova even went to school to lodge a complaint against first-graders Sveta and Tanya.

9 | The document is published in a slightly modified form in Communal Living in Russia: A Virtual Museum of Soviet Everyday Life, see http://kommunalka.colgate.edu

Most of the tenants in our apartment are older people, we are sick and we cannot cope with this [unclear; crossed out in the text of the letter].
No matter what Mrs. Romanova writes, it is a total lie.
[signatures] Samsonova, Salova, Kuzmin, Stein
5/10/64

This letter dated from more than half a century ago is clearly an example of the denunciation culture that flourished in the Soviet society, but some survivals of this culture are also present in post-Soviet Russia where the denunciations do not work anymore as they did in the USSR. However, the Russian authorities appear to have returned to the old Soviet practice of instigating active citizens to send letters of denunciation in cases when the authorities need to have a formal pretext to neutralize some independent civil initiative.

The communicative environment of CAs is characterized by omnipresent mistrust that is embedded in a distorted geometry of social space. On the one hand, mistrust and the search for masked alien elements were in tone with general ideological orientations of Soviet culture (and are progressively becoming so in contemporary Russia, as of 2017 when I am writing these lines). But on the other hand, mistrust towards neighbours is deeply ingrained in the social interactions between co-residents of shared apartments, and is emblematic for the Soviet way of everyday life.[10] This might be a factor contributing to people's susceptibility to the ideology that pays much attention to the search of all kinds of enemies.

One of the things that attracted my attention when I was collecting ethnographic materials about Soviet everyday life was the fact that the most eloquent of my pieces of data appeared very similar to texts and objects that some conceptualist artists used in their creations from 1980s on. Moscow conceptualist art has brought to an extreme the discovery of the art of mid-twentieth century: any object could become a work of art if put into an artistic frame that emphasizes the object's aesthetic or ideological properties. The poetry of Lev Rubinshtein and the installations of Ilya Kabakov use this discovery as a point of departure. Some of their creations turn out to be ethnographic in a sense that is constitutive for the artistic text: the artists do not invent anything, they just pick up elements of a social milieu, separate them from the context and embed them into a different, artistic frame. However, the elements which are usually singled out in the everyday life of a Soviet citizen and that are able to survive and remain recognizable in a different frame, becoming a piece of art, are those artefacts, or visually expressive pieces of Soviet propaganda or vernacular artistry, or even speech clichés or just utterances overheard that bear the

10 | This does not exclude friendship, mutual help and forms of quasi-familial relations that might sometimes be intertwined with suspicion.

mark of their initial context. All of them are small atoms of the everyday world of a Soviet citizen, and each of them is illustrative of a typical communicative situation and a social practice.

Actually, this is what an ethnographer usually does in a strange environment; looking for data, that is, for fragments of reality that can be extracted from it in form of descriptions, photographs, narratives by the natives and by the researcher herself. And only those fragments are valid that are able to refer both to a bigger story, that is, to a meta-narrative constructed by the researcher, and at the same time to their context as it was observed by the ethnographer and was being re-constructed in the ethnographic text. Reality is always richer than its verbal description, and non-verbal means are more broadband and more immediate, so to say, allowing one to convey aspects that are difficult to verbalize. That is why contemporary ethnography is so inclined to overcome the limitations that are imposed by the textual form and is often trying to include audio and video recording, visual materials and artefacts as part of data gathering and also as part of presentation of the results to the audience.

Ilya Kabakov explained that in early 1980s he felt 'the attraction of the topic of trash, trash as one of the main metaphors of our life' (Kabakov 2011: 5). At that time, he was collecting an 'Archive of useless things' that consisted of folders and carton boxes where he kept all the daily papers like bills, receipts, written notes, certificates etc. This is an essentially ethnographic approach, if one selects the materials so that to build out of them a picture or a story reflecting the life whose part these objects used to be. Artistic works can explore (and exploit) the materials like these in different ways, and, of course, comparing my collection of ethnographic materials to Ilya Kabakov's installations, I could clearly see where the artist was transforming – 'distorting' is not a proper word here – reality for the sake of artistic effect.

In any case, the published collection 'Voices behind the door' (Kabakov 2011b) consists of real documents that underwent no modification from the part of the artist who just included them into his work, carefully selecting the most impressive. These include real minutes of a Comrades' Court session, letters of complaint, etc. The other collection published in (Kabakov 1993) and reproduced in Kabakov 2011b, 'In the communal kitchen', is a sort of ethnographic-fiction: it reproduces traces of typical situations well-known from life experience and also from the collection of real documents – in a focused form. Within an aesthetic frame, any detail might turn out to be meaningful. A significant share of the exhibits reveal something that has to do with the strange mixture of suspicion and trust that is inherent to communal everyday life, that is why I dwell here on these ethnographic art objects.

It is the more so as letters of complaint and denunciations by Soviet citizens often include some sort of inherent naïve poetic aspect. As Sheila Fitzpatrick put it, they reflect '[a] delight in the power to use language' felt by authors who

had only recently acquired literacy and for whom writing letters to authority could be 'as much a form of popular culture and an expression of popular creativity as the amateur theatricals and balalaika playing' (Fitzpatrick 2005: 167-8). Such an 'artistic' component is also present in the notes to neighbours and announcements on the walls found in communal apartments. Along with the verbal artistry, there is another and subtler layer of meaning in the texts and stories from communal everyday life. Not only the notes that appear in public space uncover something that is made public, often denouncing or trying to prevent some misdeed. What makes some acts and deeds remarkable, worth of memorizing and telling as a story, is their rhetoric value, or theatricality: they are not just acts but gestures performed on the stage of the communal kitchen. As such they allude to and can be read against the background of the typical attitudes and practices of Soviet life. To put padlocks on a piano or chains on an oven in a public space, or to remove the bulb after using the toilet so that neighbours could not waste electricity[11] – all these are both puzzling and suggestive indicators of the same mentality.

Some convincing instances of it can also be found in an exhibition called the 'Kitchen Chronicle, by V. D. Baranov'. Mr. Baranov was invented by Ilya Kabakov as a protagonist of the exhibition. According to the framing narrative, a certain Mr. Baranov kept a diary of his life in a communal apartment, and also was collecting small pieces of trash as mementos and providing annotations for each object in order to not forget the circumstances to which the object is linked. As Ilya Kabakov describes the exhibits, the collection 'consists of a significant number (approximately 200) of different objects with small scraps of paper the size of a quarter of a page of a notebook glued to them' with a handwritten text of 'notes (...) about what circumstances or events are connected to the inclusion of this or that object in the collection (...). Behind these tiny crumbs of everyday life, in essence ordinary litter, arise, as though alive, all the events which took place in the communal kitchen and around it: fights, arguments, mutual treating, kindness and cruelty, patience and unthinkable anger, generosity and stinginess' (Kabakov 1993; 98-99).

The handwritten comments to the artefacts, ascribed to Mr. Baranov, reflect a tightly-knit mess of human relations with a specific distortion that tells us a story not only about particular persons, but also about the environment where such relations had grown and where they are regarded as normal, and about human nature as a whole. Each item of the collection is a seed of a full-blown story, like stories written Mikhail Zoshchenko or Mikhail Bulgakov. Interestingly, the stories and the situations from 1960s by Ilya Kabakov are ethnographically

11 | A detail from 'The Guests' (1927), a short story by Mikhail Zoshchenko, available in English in the section 'From Books of the Virtual Museum of Soviet Life' (Utekhin et al. 2006).

representative of the 1990s as well and belong to the same cultural pool as the stories by Zoshchenko from 1920s: all of them they illustrate the same Soviet civilization.

The plausibility of these stories is beyond doubt for people with a Soviet experience. For instance, this one:

> An old wrist-watch with a broken face [tsiferblat]. There is really funny story connected with this wrist-watch. I found it in the bathroom on the shelf – someone was washing and forgot it. And I wrote an announcement in the kitchen. And no one could name exactly that watch which I described. And I kept it. 14.2.64 (Kabakov 1993; 99)

We can guess that the watch had most probably been left by some guest not intending to return and retrieve it. We also can try to imagine the proceeding of presenting evidence to prove the right of property. Several neighbours claimed the watch belonged to them, while the author examined these claims. Claiming property when it does not really belong to you was a commonplace event among people living together in the apartment, and people whose claims had 'proved' to be false felt nothing special about this. This makes us think about the performative properties of the interaction between neighbours. Although played as if it was serious, the act of claiming for the watch is perceived like a funny game, or lottery. And the failure is not taken seriously either. The contrast between claimers' hopes of obtaining a watch and the fact the watch had a broken face adds symbolic value to this story. As we can suppose, the fact that the watch had been broken was certainly not announced by the protagonist. One more example of a revealing mini-drama from the same collection is 'A piece of paper, stained with something black. Again this morning Alevtina found this scrap of dirty paper in the kasha. But there was nobody in the kitchen this morning. Maybe, she's doing this on purpose? 19.VI.64' (Kabakov 1993: 101).

Suspecting that a neighbour has planned a provocation is a communal routine. Actually, to spoil a neighbour's meal in the kitchen, adding salt in her absence from the kitchen, was quite possible for CA residents, not only in folklore, as was also to put in there some inedible objects, like scraps of dirty paper. Soviet communal dwellers were prepared for such provocations either because they were inclined to doing this themselves, or because they simply regarded this as a normal part of neighbour relations. This made it possible to perceive of many things in life that occurred without any communicative intent as an action purposely directed, that is, performed 'on purpose'. There is a whole series of cases in Kabakov's materials where someone suspects that something has been done 'on purpose', like the car horn signal that I believe is addressed to me.

Paradoxically, Alevtina's provocation in claiming that someone had put dirty paper in her porridge is an attempt to establish a sort of communication with neighbours, however distorted, it is an invitation to scandal. The scandal

might be purely instrumental in some cases, but here it is not, or at least Mr. Baranov believes so, also demonstrating his awareness about his neighbours' lives: he knows that no one appeared in the kitchen that morning. Any scandal has an expressive dimension, an aspect that eventually makes out of it a ritualized form of joint performative activity taking place at the stage of the communal kitchen. This ceremonial confrontation and high spirited competition in offensive rhetoric distracts people from their everyday chores and is appreciated – and even sought for – by some of communal residents, because it also brings a sort of enjoyment. False accusations of the kind Alevtina is addressing to her neighbours are not taken seriously, because in CA, to accuse a neighbour of such actions is commonplace. Not everyone scoffs and teases their neighbours, only some people provoke scandals with false accusations, but we are bound to coexist even with those people who do.

In our 'Virtual Museum of Soviet Everyday Life', we have a section dedicated to messages sent to neighbours, placed in a public space. Unlike in private apartments where residents prefer to communicate in person and do not face situations when they need to inform strangers about the ways of using the place, neighbours in CAs often place notes, announcements, instructions, notices aimed at preventing wrongdoing, and even personal messages. Since such messages usually involve the author's effort at attracting attention, as well as some sort of argumentation, with the vernacular creativity behind it contributing to their use for contemporary art, particularly as in the case of Ilya Kabakov. I have discussed the handwritten rules in some detail elsewhere (Utekhin 2004).

Interestingly, Gert Hofstede considers Russian culture to be high on the Uncertainty Avoidance scale and links the proliferation of rules and instructions to this feature: 'Uncertainty avoidance can (...) be defined as the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other manifestations, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules' (Hofstede et al. 2010, 191). In the Soviet period, people felt that the official rules to which they might in principle recur to resolve disputes, were not sufficiently elaborated to embrace all the potentially conflicting situations, and so they formulated their own rules stating how to use the washroom, how to wash the bathtub, etc. These rules attempted to reduce the amount of ambiguity, precisely because the authors mistrusted other people, that is, neighbours and their guests, who were suspected of being able to disturb the everyday life in the apartment, for instance, by breaking faucets, shower, toilet pan, electric switches, or using other people's belongings. People of trust were supposed to know how to act properly, but some neighbours and all strangers were to be given a warning. In eventual disputes, the rules and notices were used as a resource for argumentation.

This brief consideration of mistrust-related phenomena in Soviet and contemporary Russian everyday life inclines us to suggest that the communist ideology which implied, among other things, mistrust to strangers, the search for enemies, and the idea that one's face presented to public could actually be false, was something that communal neighbours kept in mind and could address to when writing a denunciation or complaint. However, routine suspicion towards neighbours was not imposed from above, but rather deeply ingrained in everyday relations in the apartment and in wider social interactions, even though the other side of these relations could be a quasi-familial lack of distance. This also is at least partly relevant for post-Soviet situation: although contemporary Russia differs much from the USSR in many respects, and dwellers of *kommunalkas* are these days either owners of their rooms or rent the rooms from the owners, still the ways of compulsory cohabitation of a heterogeneous group reproduce attitudes and practices typical to Soviet communal mentality (Utekhin 2015).

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Afterword

Mistrust after Truth?

Thomas Yarrow

Strangely overlooked as an object of ethnographic enquiry, mistrust comes into rich empirical focus through this timely and compelling collection. It does so through the move to bracket the analytic questions: of what it is and whether this is good. Mühlfried is surely right to insist, as he does in his incisive introductory essay, that the lacunae is in part an artefact of the functionalist logic of mainstream social theory, specifically a persistent interest in trust as an element of social cohesion. Once these commitments are suspended we see that, as in the cases of 'ignorance' (Mair et al. 2012) and 'detachment' (Candea et al. 2015), the existence of mistrust is not just an incidental absence or negation but a specific kind of thing – a practice, an orientation, a form of personhood – that has qualities and substance of its own. A central insight from these essays is that this may be productive, literally in the sense it constitutes social practices and relationships, and more profoundly in the various ways that people may actively value and cultivate mistrust as a positive virtue. Mistrust is not anti-social in any straightforward sense. Its absence may be incidental (dis-trust in Schiocchet's terms) but is often a more active kind of presence. Beyond the vivid details of the cases the collection of these makes clear how mistrust is shot through with the multiplicity of its locations and so de-stabilizes what we might think we know about it. Mistrust develops through multiple contexts and concerns as ethical and ideological sensitivities, orientations performed through people, material contexts, domestic spaces and institutional cultures of various kinds. Like the phenomenon of mistrust itself, the book achieves its overall effect through holding these phenomena together, while remaining sceptical of the possibility of aggregation. I want to tease out two strands from this complexity, before trying to articulate how these might help us to think about the current moment in which the book takes shape – where discourses about 'post truth', have been contexts for novel forms of mis-trust.

Demarcation

According to Mühlfried, mistrust is a way of relating to the world in a distanced manner. It is not, he suggests, that interactions are avoided but, in his striking phrase, 'never entered at full stake' (Introduction: 8). To mistrust is to demarcate what can be trusted from what cannot. The contributors here have demonstrated that there is no straightforward or singular way in which this happens. As an orientation that may be primarily epistemic, social, or indissolubly both, efforts to distinguish trust from mistrust act to define communities in a range of ways.

In Mühlfried's comparative discussion, profound mistrust of mainstream social norms becomes a foundational act of community-making. Through renunciation of the social structures into which they were born, members of Russian gangs create a radical and profound break between the society they reject and the community of 'thieves in law' into which they enter. Notwithstanding some profoundly different orientations, Jihadists likewise strive for hermetic demarcation that emerges on the basis of an absolute rejection of prevailing social norms. In both cases mistrust directed beyond a community has its counterpart in strong trust amongst a community of believers. By contrast the forms of social demarcation at stake for inhabitants of Russian apartment blocks described by Utekhin are far less absolute. Ongoing suspicion and mistrust emerge here as more or less pronounced elements of most if not all interactions, directed towards a set of relationships in which people are intimately enmeshed. In close proximity to familiar and familial relations, suspicion is deeply engrained. People withhold aspects of themselves as 'the other side' to relations of intimate domesticity and a 'quasi-familial lack of distance'. Likewise, in the otherwise distinctive context of Sierra Leone, Bürge discusses how trust and mistrust articulate in a never fully resolved form. In a situation where trust is understood to be missing, people are concerned to fabricate it: trust (locally rendered *'tros'*) links people, objects and practices, in networks that are constantly made and un-made, through the situated demarcation of mistrust. In both these cases a sharp but un-resolved relation between trust and mistrust has its counterpart in suspicions directed towards communities in which people continue to engage, and in social boundaries that are situationally specified, unresolved and always in question.

These acts of demarcation involve complex configurations of engagement and detachment. Mistrust involves a scepticism that can be a way of holding elements of the world – people or things – at a distance. This distancing, as Brand observes of domestic abuse counsellors in South Africa, can itself be a form of engagement – a way of understanding and interacting with the subjects or objects thereby distanced. Mistrust can be foundational to productive relationships of distance, including through critique, objectification and epis-

temic scepticism. From another perspective, mistrust enacts a distance from some things that is the very condition through which proximity to others is established. Close communities are imagined and made through the distancing mistrust from other social worlds.

Truth

Mistrust entails a sceptical orientation to truth, associated with more and less profound questioning. Proximate uncertainties and challenges to authoritative knowledge are not new and may ultimately assume and re-inscribe a faith in 'the truth' to which these refer. In the context of South Africa, Brand shows how counsellors' generalized mistrust of clients is ultimately founded on the epistemic practices of counselling. Conviction (trust) in their own ability to ascertain an objective truth orients mistrust externally – to the subjects whose circumstances they seek to understand. In the socio-legal practices explored by Bognitz in Rwanda, mistrust is central to the negotiations that surround the settlement of disputes. Mediators fabricate trust against this background of suspicion, drawing on evidence to establish how things 'really are'. Objective truth is grounded in the subjectivity of the 'true' self of the mediator: qualities performed in practice through being humble, having humility and listening attentively.

Novel contexts may pose challenges to the truths of experts without necessarily undermining these. Indeed for the crypto-advocates studied by Ruh, 'generalized' and fundamental mistrust in the security of Internet transactions not only directs attention to the truths of mathematics but also ultimately amplifies trust in their professional-cum-epistemic practices. Moreover, even as the internet is associated with a novel explicitness and awareness about the fallibility of human interactions, crypto-advocates' doubts have their counterpart in a continued faith in the possibility and desirability of a return to what, as they see it, has been lost: an ultimate trust in notions of 'authenticity' and 'integrity' of interaction. For those involved in online dating scams, Beek highlights how online environments are associated with a similar mistrust but involve a fundamentally different epistemic orientation. Here the truths in question are not those of experts but of the romantic appeal of 'genuine love' and the ideas of 'credibility' that support these. These older romantic tropes remain central, even as the medium leads to profound mistrust of the message. In both cases, truth and trust become newly explicit concerns in digital environments associated with anxieties about the threat to these valued ideals. Mistrust is novel, insofar as a truth that was given is now in doubt.

By contrast, the examples of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Russia, remind us that in many parts of the world, there is nothing new about the kinds of

mistrust that relate to profoundly doubtful orientations to truth, and so to circumstances in which trust was never a given. In Russian apartment blocks a post-socialist 'logic of suspicion' has its roots, according to Utekhin, in a Soviet mentality where mistrust was systematic and practices of un-masking were second-nature. In Guinea, Somparé and Botta Somparé trace how the Ebola epidemic re-animates an already systemic mistrust in foreign organisations and elites and so in the medical knowledge that was central to their response. The chapter thus makes evident how social and epistemic trusts are intimately related in this post-colonial context.

After Trust?

We are living through a time that many would characterize as a crisis of trust. The trust in question is that once reserved for 'experts', and the questioning involves a form of mistrust that comes in many forms. Over the last three decades, political movements, social activists, media commentators and politicians on both the left and right have sought to undermine the veracity of expert authority, alleging a series of vested interests. Accusations of expert fallibility emerge through a range of left-wing discourses, including the anti-globalisation movement's challenge to the economic orthodoxy of 'development' (Williams 2008) and participatory challenges to the elitist knowledge of experts (Cooke and Kothari 2001). Right-wing discourses more commonly attack experts as representing of the bureaucratic antithesis of 'the market', where the latter is positioned as the ultimate arbiter of value (DuGay 2000). Allegations of expert elitism gain particular traction in contexts where class divides and inequalities have been sharpened through post-industrial decline and decades of neoliberal reform (Green 2016). Commentators have connected the post-modern relativization of 'truth' to digital media technologies, through which perspective proliferates and knowledge is reduced to information (Agar 2003; Tsoukas 1997). 'Post truth' is also 'post-trust', at least in the kinds of knowledge and institutions that were once considered the bedrock of liberal democracy.

Anthropologically speaking, 'post-truth' is a significant phenomenon, if not one that has yet received much ethnographic attention. It is a set of discourses that constitute a newfound explicitness about the limits of experts, and a broad mistrust in the truths for which they were once, at least in much of Europe and America, un-questioned arbiters. Whereas experts were always subject to contingent mistrust, this was rarely systemic in Euro-American contexts. What is new is that they are increasingly in the position of having to fabricate knowledge, authority and trust in contexts where it cannot be assumed. At this juncture many of the things that anchored trust, including ideas about scientific truth, authenticity and integrity remain relevant even as they are newly in

question, mistrusted and challenged from various sides, including through the auto-critiques of experts themselves. Public doubt and scepticism is connected to the explication of what could once be implicit: in multiple ways including academic and other forms of audit (Furedi 2004; Strathern 2000), science that is oriented to social utility (Nowotny 2003), the authority of expert knowledge is reconfigured and re-distributed if not necessarily undermined through entanglements with a range of 'social' and 'public' external audiences.

While few of the contributors to this volume are explicitly concerned with the challenges of 'post truth' sociality, they help to locate these recent discourses, and to question some of the more general assumptions that inform these. They do this by bringing into focus the myriad ways in which truth, trust and mistrust are entangled, by pointing to the multiple forms these take, and the specific historical and cultural trajectories through which these arise. We may still want to insist that things have changed, that mistrust is being re-animated in ways that are far reaching and profound, but the careful foregoing descriptions help explain the terrain on which these myriad configurations are now taking shape. At this juncture the collection reminds us to remain mis-trustful of grand-narratives and singular diagnoses of social change, including of the reduction of these changes to a meta-phenomena for which one may be 'for' or against.

And so I want to return to where the introduction to this volume ended, via a plea for ethnography as a method of being ambivalent in relation to the question of who and what is trusted. When anthropologists 'come home', particularly to focus on experts and expertise, the prevailing mode of engagement has been via a hermeneutics of suspicion that echoes and amplifies some of the populist tendencies (from right and left), particularly in the claim or assumption that trust in these people and their knowledge is misplaced. Foucauldian inspired deconstructions have sought to make apparent a misplaced trust in experts. That served as an important corrective, but has tended to result in 'thin' ethnography that does little to illuminate the ethnographic substance of what is involved – ideologically, ethically, epistemologically, personally and so on (Boyer 2008; Brown et al. 2017). Methodologically speaking, it might be useful to suspend mistrust for longer, in order to produce a more ethnographically nuanced understanding of these practices.

If we want to better understand the current, or indeed any, moment it seems important to approach the mistrustful sentiments of 'angry citizens', along with the scientific and expert purveyors of 'objective evidence' in the same way: through understanding and critique, derived from empirical enquiry into the specific conditions in which others live their lives, through relationships founded on a dialectic of trust and mistrust that is never fully resolved.

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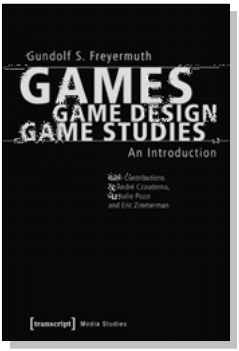

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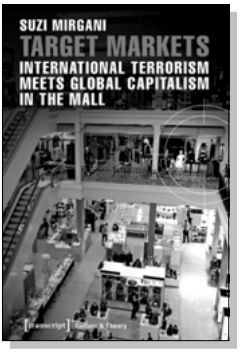

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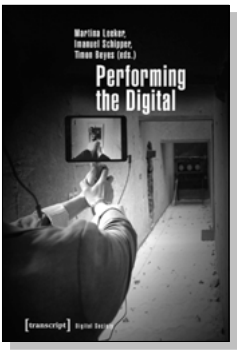

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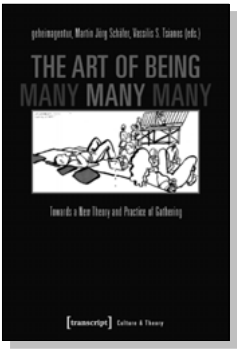

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