TRUST: THEORETICAL FUNDAMENTALS AND ROLE IN DESIGNING SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract. Theoretical and empirical research on trust has profound practical significance, as it allows us to understand the essence of institutional processes occurring in society. A high level of trust in political and administrative institutions can contribute to an increase in civic engagement, which, in turn, can constructively impact community development and promote its sustainable growth. The article investigates trust as a social phenomenon that has a significant influence on the sustainable development of communities. **The purpose** of the study is to explore the concept of «trust» through the lens of analyzing theoretical concepts of trust and examining its role in constructing and designing sustainable community development; analyzing the impact of trust on the implementation of sustainable development initiatives in communities. **The methodology** of the research includes the analysis of scientific sources, conducting empirical studies, as well as using qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the level of trust in communities. The study found that trust is an important factor that either facilitates or hinders the successful implementation of sustainable development projects. **The results** indicate that a high level of trust in society positively impacts citizen engagement in decision-making processes and the implementation of initiatives related to environmental, social, and economic aspects of development. **Practical implications** include a series of recommendations for local government bodies aimed at enhancing the transparency and openness of their actions, which, in turn, will contribute to strengthening trust within communities. The path of scientific inquiry into trust moves from understanding it as an element of interpersonal interaction in everyday life to grasping trust

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as a social phenomenon, a significant social resource for society, which potentially has the capacity to substantially influence various areas of public life and positively impact community development. **The value/originality** lies in the fact that the topic of trust is extremely relevant, especially in the context of developing sustainable development strategies for local communities in Ukraine. The article examines the theoretical foundations of trust as an important social phenomenon that plays a key role in the processes of sustainable community development. It has been studied that trust is the foundation of social cohesion, which, in turn, contributes to the effective functioning of social institutions and encourages citizens to actively participate in community life. The author explores various dimensions of trust and analyzes the factors that influence its formation. It has been found that the level of trust in communities directly correlates with the success of implementing initiatives in the field of sustainable development, particularly social programs. The article also includes an analysis of existing approaches to studying trust in sociology, which allows for the identification of the most relevant aspects for practical application. Communication strategies play an important role in building trust, fostering openness and transparency in the actions of government bodies and local self-governments. Conclusions have been drawn that to achieve sustainable community development, it is necessary to actively work on increasing the level of trust in society, which includes educational programs, the implementation of mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making, and the development of partnerships among various stakeholders.

1. Introduction

The concept of «trust» is a key element of sociological analysis that has a direct impact on institutional processes in society. The relevance of this study is determined by the need for a deeper understanding of trust as a social phenomenon that influences political participation, social interaction, and economic cooperation. In the current context, when Ukraine faces numerous challenges such as globalization, political instability, and economic crises, studying trust becomes extremely important for developing effective management strategies that will promote sustainable community development.

The novelty of the research lies in the integration of theoretical concepts of trust with the analysis of the objective reality of Ukrainian communities, which allows for the uncovering of the mechanisms of trust formation in Ukrainian realities. The article emphasizes that trust is not only a result of social interaction but also an important resource that can stimulate civic engagement and social cohesion.

The aim of the research is to explore the concept of «trust» through the lens of analyzing theoretical concepts and assessing its role in constructing sustainable community development. The research tasks include: analyzing the theoretical foundations of trust; studying the impact of trust on citizens' social activity; and assessing the role of trust in the implementation of sustainable development initiatives in communities.

The methodology of the research involves analyzing scientific sources and conducting secondary empirical analysis to assess the level of trust in communities. The logic of presenting the researched material is organized in such a way that the article combines the theoretical foundations of trust with an analysis of its practical aspects influencing community development.

Thus, the study of trust as a social phenomenon is significant for understanding the mechanisms that contribute to the sustainable development of communities.

2. Theoretical interpretation of the concept of «trust»

The concept of «trust» is a key element of sociological analysis, and its diverse interpretations are presented in the works of many prominent sociologists. Research on trust encompasses not only theoretical aspects but also practical issues related to social interaction, political participation, and economic cooperation. Among the foundational scholars who have studied this phenomenon are E. Durkheim, M. Weber, T. Parsons, R. Merton, R. Putnam, R. Bart, J. Coleman, F. Fukuyama, D. Gambetta, P. Sztompka, and S. Eisenstadt (Kuzmuk, 2015).

E. Durkheim emphasizes in his works that trust is a necessary condition for social solidarity. He argues that without trust, society cannot function effectively, as this leads to social disintegration. M. Weber highlights the role of trust in legitimizing power, believing that trust in political institutions is fundamental for their stable functioning. T. Parsons introduces the concept of the «social system» where trust is a critically important

element that ensures integration and stability. R. Merton examines trust in the context of social norms and values, indicating that trust arises only in conditions where there is alignment between individual expectations and social realities.

R. Putnam, in his work «Making Democracy Work» (1993), explores the connection between trust and social capital, arguing that a high level of trust in society promotes active citizen participation in public life, which enhances the quality of governance. J. Coleman believes that trust is an important resource for developing social interaction, as it reduces information costs and facilitates effective cooperation.

F. Fukuyama, in his well-known work «Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity» (1995), argues that trust is fundamental for economic development and political stability. He emphasizes that countries with a high level of trust in institutions provide better conditions for investment and economic growth.

Fukuyama, F. (1995, p. 46) considers trust to be a defining factor for progress; it operates at the micro, meso, and macro levels of social life. In studying the phenomenon of trust, P. Sztompka concluded that all post-communist countries experience a state of «distrust syndrome», the effects of which diminish as social relations gradually stabilize, starting from the mid-1990s (Sztompka, 1999).

D. Gambetta studies trust in the context of risks and uncertainties, asserting that trust is a mechanism that helps to reduce risks in social relationships. P. Sztompka emphasizes the social changes occurring in transitional societies, where trust can be subjected to serious challenges.

For N. Luhmann, trust serves as a mechanism that ensures the stability of the system, while for E. Giddens, trust acts as a mechanism that supports the stability of an individual's life space (Luhmann, 1979, pp. 145-153). Trust is a kind of form of «ontological security» that creates comfortable living conditions for the individual amid constant changes and global challenges.

E. Giddens identifies three forms of trust that exist in the modern world: personal trust, which is based on kinship and friendship ties; impersonal trust in abstract systems and institutions; and generalized trust as a fundamental disposition toward interaction in society. These forms of trust permeate the entire spectrum of social relationships (Giddens, 1990).

According to F. Fukuyama, trust can be likened to the lubricant that makes the activities of any group more efficient. In this context, it is advisable to study this phenomenon within social networks, where a «radius of trust» is formed – shared norms that are characteristic of specific groups of people and are not shared by other groups within the same society (Fukuyama, 1995).

According to P. Sztompka, trust serves as a disposition toward interaction even in conditions of uncertainty and risk, and it is analyzed in the context of three dimensions: trust as a characteristic of relationships (relational level); trust as a personal characteristic (psychological level); and trust as a cultural component of a particular society (cultural level). P. Sztompka examines trust at the ontological level as a complex phenomenon that can function within social interactions both in small groups and extend its influence to society as a whole (Sztompka, 1999).

According to E. Giddens' concept, trust is an integral position of practical consciousness that organizes and directs people's actions in a "risk society." It helps individuals construct their social space, enables them to navigate an unstructured world, and manifests at a personalized level (trust in people, cooperation, mutual responsibility, confidence in the honesty of others) as well as at the level of trust in abstract systems (trust in organizations, institutions, and subsystems of society) (Giddens, 1990).

According to F. Fukuyama, trust, originating in personal relationships, can accumulate at the intermediate level of social interaction – specifically, the level of civil society – and lead to the creation of an atmosphere of trust in society. This is a key characteristic of a developed society, manifesting at both the individual and social levels. It is trust, rather than market relations or national traditions, that defines the progress and success of the «self-realization» of a particular society (Fukuyama, 1995, pp. 17-18).

P. Sztompka defines trust as a bet regarding the unpredictable future actions of others, distinguishing three types of individual orientations toward the actions of others:

1) hope-disappointment;

2) faith-doubt, which are characterized by passivity, observance, distance, and an attempt to avoid any commitments;

3) trust, which manifests in situations where, despite uncertainty and risk, an individual still takes action (Sztompka, 1999).

Among Ukrainian sociologists studying the issues of trust and distrust in the Ukrainian context, it is worth noting I. Bekeshkina, Y. Golovakha, N. Panina, S. Makeev, A. Ruchka, and M. Parashchievin. Their work focuses on analyzing trends in citizens' attitudes toward socio-political institutions, as well as examining the factors that influence the level of trust in society. For example, I. Bekeshkina emphasizes the impact of historical events on the formation of trust in state institutions in her research. Y. Golovakha studies the social factors that determine trust in the context of political transformations. N. Panina analyzes the gender aspects of trust, indicating how different social groups perceive the state and its institutions (Kuzmuk, 2015).

Thus, the diverse interpretations of trust in sociology emphasize its multifaceted nature and importance for social integration and development. In the face of contemporary challenges such as globalization, political instability, and economic crises, understanding the mechanisms of trust becomes particularly relevant for developing effective management strategies that will promote sustainable community development.

3. Levels of analysis of trust as a social phenomenon. Types of trust

In the study of trust as a social phenomenon, it is important to consider different levels of analysis, specifically the micro level and the macro level. At the micro level, the primary focus is on the individual, their socialization, attitudes, and evaluations. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how individual factors shape trust in political institutions. The fundamental thesis of micro-level theories of trust is that trust varies among members of a particular society due to different conditions of socialization, norms, and values, which can significantly influence personal beliefs and expectations.

Socialization is a key process that determines how individuals form their beliefs about trust. It includes the influence of family, peers, educational institutions, and media, which shape a person's perceptions of the world around them. For example, an individual raised in a family where values of openness and support prevail typically has a higher level of trust in other people and institutions. Such individual attitudes can be skewed by negative experiences or social isolation, which may lower the level of trust in political structures.

It is important to consider that different social groups may have varying experiences of socialization, leading to diversity in trust evaluations. For example, young people who grew up in conditions of political instability may have a more pessimistic view of state institutions than a generation that experienced a stable period. This emphasizes that trust is formed not only based on individual attitudes but also within a social context.

Analysis of trust factors at the macro level involves examining the cultural characteristics and prior experiences of the country's residents as a whole. At this level, research focuses on how historical context, cultural traditions, and social changes shape the overall level of trust in society. For instance, in countries where traditions of cooperation and solidarity have historically developed, trust in political institutions is typically higher. This may be the result of a collective experience that has strengthened social ties and fostered a positive attitude toward institutions.

Additionally, macro-level analysis also considers the influence of social institutions, such as government, the education system, and media, on the formation of trust. Institutions that provide transparency in their operations and accountability can significantly enhance the level of trust among the population. Conversely, if institutions operate ineffectively or opaquely, this can lead to a decrease in trust, which will affect social stability as a whole.

For a comprehensive understanding of trust as a social phenomenon, it is important to consider not only individual characteristics and attitudes but also broader social and cultural contexts. This allows for the development of effective strategies to strengthen trust in society, which is particularly relevant in today's world, where social connections are becoming increasingly complex. Strengthening trust between individuals and institutions plays a key role in ensuring social stability and development, as trust is the foundation for healthy relationships in any society.

Interpersonal trust is considered the foundation for the formation of political trust. According to R. Putnam, interpersonal trust leads people to be more inclined to create both formal and informal institutions. Interpersonal trust «spills over» into society and creates a «national network of institutions necessary for governance» (Putnam, 2000, p. 74).

In the context of studying trust as a social phenomenon, it is important to distinguish between two main types of trust: horizontal trust, which arises

among members of society, and vertical trust, which connects citizens with governmental structures. This differentiation allows for a deeper understanding of how trust functions in different social contexts and what factors influence its formation.

Vertical trust is an important element of social dynamics, as it encompasses the relationships between ordinary citizens and political institutions. This type of trust reflects citizens' hope that government bodies will provide them with protection, assistance, and support in difficult life situations. It also relates to the ability or inability of the authorities, specifically their representatives, to meet these expectations. In societies with a high level of trust in institutions, citizens believe that their interests will be protected and their voices heard. This, in turn, enhances social stability and fosters an active civic engagement.

However, if vertical trust is low, it can lead to social disappointment, dissatisfaction, and even political instability. Citizens who feel that the authorities do not listen to them or respond to their needs may experience alienation and insecurity. This, in turn, can lead to protests, social unrest, or, in extreme cases, crises of trust that can have serious consequences for society.

Horizontal trust, in contrast to vertical trust, arises among members of society at a certain stage of its development. It is formed from within the society and results from the collective efforts of the majority of its members. This type of trust is often based on shared values, cultural traditions, and experiences of interaction. For example, in communities where values of cooperation and solidarity prevail, trust among people can be significantly higher. This creates a favorable environment for the development of social connections, which, in turn, positively influences the overall social climate.

It is important to note that horizontal trust cannot be imposed or technologized through social technologies, political campaigns, or administrative decisions. It is formed organically through prolonged interactions, shared achievements, and overcoming challenges. Successful communities often find ways to strengthen horizontal trust through dialogue, collaboration, and the development of social initiatives.

Thus, trust in society is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that includes both vertical and horizontal components. Strengthening both types of trust is critically important for ensuring social stability, fostering civic

engagement, and building a healthy society. Citizens who believe in their fellow citizens and the state are more likely to be active participants in public life, which, in turn, contributes to the overall prosperity of society. Understanding the mechanisms of trust formation will help develop effective strategies for strengthening social connections and enhancing civic participation.

Thus, it can be argued that trust in government is an important aspect of social relations in any society. It has a bidirectional nature, making it particularly complex and multifaceted. On one hand, trust in government is a result of the government's actions, reflecting the population's attitude toward the work done. On the other hand, it serves as a foundation for cooperation between the state and its citizens, as well as a guarantee of civic engagement.

At the first level, trust in political institutions is formed based on their actions and decisions. If the government successfully fulfills its responsibilities by ensuring economic development, social protection, and the protection of human rights, citizens tend to feel greater trust in it. For example, an effective government response to social issues such as unemployment, education, or healthcare can significantly enhance the level of public trust. In countries where institutions demonstrate transparency and accountability, public trust in the government is generally higher.

However, if the government fails to meet citizens' expectations, this leads to a decline in trust. Situations where political promises are unfulfilled or where corruption scandals occur can create deep disappointment among the population. Such circumstances foster negative attitudes toward state institutions, which can have serious consequences for social stability and political legitimacy.

On the other hand, trust in government is a necessary condition for productive cooperation between the state and its citizens. When citizens believe that the government acts in their interests, they are more likely to engage in public affairs, such as voting, volunteering, and participating in local initiatives. This creates a positive cycle in which high trust fosters active participation, and active participation, in turn, enhances trust. For example, in countries with high levels of civic engagement, there is often a corresponding high level of trust in state institutions.

Civic engagement is an important element of the democratic process, as it ensures feedback between the population and the government. When citizens are actively involved in the decision-making process, it promotes greater transparency and accountability from the government. Thus, trust in government can become a catalyst for social change, leading to an improved quality of life.

Trust in government is a complex social phenomenon with a bidirectional nature. It is not only a consequence of government actions but also a foundation for cooperation between the state and its citizens. It is important to understand that strengthening trust requires efforts from both sides: the government must be open and accountable, while citizens must be active and engaged in public life. In successful democracies, where there is a balance between these two aspects, trust becomes a guarantee of stability, development, and prosperity for society. Understanding this connection allows for the development of effective strategies to enhance trust levels, ultimately contributing to an improved social climate and the development of democratic institutions.

4. Directions for the study of trust

Trust is an important social phenomenon that is actively studied across various scientific disciplines. In the context of the discussion on trust, four main directions of research can be conditionally distinguished, which help to better understand its role in social life.

1. Trust as a Key Characteristic of Interpersonal Interaction

In this direction, trust is studied as a fundamental element of interaction among social actors. Notable researchers such as J. Mead, E. Erikson, E. Giddens, and N. Luhmann emphasize that trust is a necessary condition for the formation of social relationships. J. Mead, for example, focuses on the symbolic understanding that arises during communication. E. Erikson highlights the importance of the emotional component of trust, which is based on mutual respect and understanding. E. Giddens, in turn, examines how trust influences social structures and personal identity.

2. Trust as a Factor in the Functioning of Social Institutions

Research in this direction focuses on the role of trust in the functioning of social institutions. Scholars such as B. Barber, N. Luhmann, E. Giddens, and others examine how trust affects the effectiveness of institutions,

particularly political, economic, and cultural ones. N. Luhmann emphasizes that trust is an important factor for the stability of social structures, as it provides social legitimacy and supports cooperation among various actors. E. Giddens also highlights that trust forms the foundation for modern democratic institutions, facilitating their development.

3. Trust as a Social Foundation of Culture and the Process of Globalization

In this direction, the influence of trust on cultural processes and globalization is studied. F. Fukuyama and E. Giddens emphasize that the level of trust in society determines the quality of social connections and cultural interactions. F. Fukuyama argues that a high level of social trust promotes economic development by reducing transaction costs and increasing market efficiency. E. Giddens, in turn, examines how globalization creates new conditions for trust, which can both strengthen and weaken social ties at the local level.

4. Trust as a Component of Social Capital

This area of research encompasses trust as an important element of social capital. P. Bourdieu, R. Putnam, D. Coleman, and F. Fukuyama point out that trust is critically important for the formation of social capital, which, in turn, influences the development of cooperation and social integration. R. Putnam, in particular, in his work «Bowling Alone», emphasizes that a decline in the level of trust in society leads to a weakening of social ties and institutions, which can result in social isolation.

In the first direction, trust is viewed as the foundation of interpersonal interaction and communication; the second explores its impact on the functioning of society; the third describes trust as a cultural element that shapes the interaction between society and the state; and the fourth approach reveals trust as a social resource that allows for the accumulation of social capital.

Thus, trust is a multifaceted social phenomenon that encompasses various aspects of societal life. Its study in the context of interpersonal interaction, the functioning of social institutions, cultural processes, and social capital allows for a deeper understanding of its role in the development of modern society. Strengthening trust in all these areas may serve as a foundation for building more cohesive and resilient communities capable of effectively responding to contemporary challenges.

5. Trust and social capital

The thematic branching within the study of the phenomenon of trust is quite diverse, and it is rather challenging to bring it into any general form, as often mentioned by representatives of the sociological scientific community: «Different conceptual approaches to trust rely on various research methods, including game theory, rational choice models, interviews and surveys, and other research methodologies. A particular focus is the study of «social capital» in research on group 'civic behavior» (Stetsenko, 2012).

According to P. Bourdieu, «Social capital is the sum of the actual or potential resources linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – in other words, to membership in a group» (Bourdieu, 1986).

In accordance with F. Fukuyama's definition: «Social capital is the defined potential of a society or part of it, emerging as a result of the existence of trust among its members. It can be embodied in the smallest basic social unit – a family – and in the largest possible collective – a nation, as well as in all the collectives that exist in between» (Fukuyama, 1995). Social capital differs from other forms of human capital in that it is typically created and transmitted through cultural mechanisms – such as religion, tradition, and custom (Coleman, 1990).

In contemporary sociology, social capital should be understood as «an intangible resource that is a product of the relationships between an individual and the contacts within their ego network, characterized by trust, solidarity, tolerance, and reciprocity, regulated by norms, values, obligations, and expectations, and determined by risk, control, and distrust. These elements function in forms of mutual aid, social support, civic and social activity, and initiative, converting it into other forms of capital according to the goals and needs of the social actor» (Stetsenko, 2012).

Social capital enhances the resource of trust. Along with the increase in the volume, level, and quality of knowledge about the phenomenon of trust, there has been a growing awareness of the powerful potential of trust to lead to significant social changes in society or its specific sectors, which encourages representatives of various social and humanitarian sciences to actively study this phenomenon (Pretty & Ward, 2001).

6. Trust in community governance: trust and distrust

Trust is one of the key social phenomena that defines the nature of interactions between individuals, social groups, and institutions. The theoretical understanding of trust has laid the groundwork for numerous empirical studies aimed at its sociological measurement. In the modern world, trust gains particular significance as it affects the stability of social structures, shapes public life, and determines the effectiveness of governmental institutions.

Research interest in the phenomenon of trust is evident not only in academic circles. The scientific community, represented by individual scholars and organizations, actively engages in the study of social phenomena related to trust. At the same time, social institutions, organizations, and authorities also express a growing demand for knowledge about trust. This demand is practical in nature and manifests in the desire to understand the quantitative characteristics of trust, its indicators, and their interrelationship with other social phenomena.

Today, trust in social institutions and authorities has become an important indicator of their legitimacy and effectiveness. The level of trust can serve as an indicator of social stability, as well as a prerequisite for the development of civil society. A high level of trust can contribute to reducing conflicts, improving cooperation among different social groups, and enhancing the effectiveness of public administration.

Research on trust also focuses on identifying the reasons for trust or distrust toward specific social institutions. Examining these reasons helps to uncover the socio-economic, political, and cultural factors that may influence the formation of trust. Such studies are of great significance for policymakers and social analysts, as the data obtained can be used in professional activities to improve the mechanisms of interaction between the state and citizens, as well as among various social groups.

In particular, targeted empirical studies conducted to assess the level of trust in social institutions not only allow for an evaluation of the current state of trust within society but also help identify potential risks associated with its lack. They enable an analysis that can highlight weaknesses in the interaction system between society and the state, as well as the need to reform certain institutions to improve their reputation.

Furthermore, identifying trust indicators is crucial as it allows for a more accurate assessment of trust levels in various social contexts. For example, indicators such as the openness of information, transparency of decisions, and the level of citizen participation in decision-making can significantly influence the formation of trust in governmental authorities. Research shows that distrust often arises in conditions of insufficient information or a lack of transparency, underscoring the importance of communication strategies in the activities of social institutions.

Thus, trust, as a social phenomenon, is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that requires detailed study. Its sociological measurement and analysis of its interconnections with other social phenomena can serve as a foundation for developing effective strategies aimed at increasing trust within society. This, in turn, will contribute to creating a more stable and cohesive social environment, which is vital for the development of democratic processes and ensuring social well-being.

In contemporary society, the crystallization of community is an important process that determines its capacity for self-development and effective interaction among its members. This process involves community members recognizing their belonging to the community and actively advocating for its interests. An important aspect of this phenomenon is trust, which, when high, becomes the foundation for the successful functioning of the community and ultimately leads to the creation of a sustainable development community.

The crystallization of community begins with the formation of a collective identity. When community members start to recognize their belonging to it, a sense of togetherness emerges, fostering the establishment of strong social bonds. This awareness can be reinforced by shared traditions, cultural values, as well as common interests and goals. In such conditions, citizens become more willing to collaborate, exchange information, and share resources, which is critically important for the development of the community.

When community members recognize their role within the community, they become active participants in processes that affect their lives. They begin to advocate for the community's interests at various levels – from engaging in local initiatives to interacting with governmental authorities. This active involvement not only contributes to the development of the

community but also enhances its influence on decision-making processes that directly impact the lives of its members. A community characterized by activity and initiative has a greater chance of success in addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.

However, awareness of belonging and active advocacy for interests are not always sufficient for success. Trust between community members and governmental authorities plays a crucial role in this process. A high level of trust can significantly enhance the effectiveness of community efforts. When citizens trust their leaders and state institutions, they are more inclined to cooperate, exchange ideas, and share resources. This trust creates an atmosphere of openness, where citizens feel that their voices are heard and their needs are taken into account.

As a result of community crystallization, the awareness of belonging among its members, and active advocacy for interests, supported by a high level of trust, we can speak of the creation of a sustainable development community. Such a community is capable of effectively responding to challenges, adapting to changes, and ensuring the well-being of its members. It fosters social cohesion, economic growth, and ecological sustainability.

Community crystallization is an important process that requires the active engagement of its members and a high level of trust. Only through awareness of belonging and active advocacy for community interests can sustainable development be achieved. Successful communities that are capable of cooperation and interaction can serve as examples for others, demonstrating how trust and collective efforts can lead to positive changes in society and improved quality of life.

7. Trust in interpersonal and social interaction

Trust is an important social phenomenon that determines the quality of interactions between individuals and social groups. As individuals interact, stable relationships are formed, serving as the foundation for building trust-based relationships within social groups or communities. These relationships, in turn, create a structure within which a shared set of norms, values, and expectations is established for the specific group of trust subjects.

In the process of forming trust, social, cultural, and economic factors play a crucial role. For example, in societies with a high level of social

cohesion and shared values, trust is formed more quickly and is more resilient. When individuals have common interests and values, they are more inclined to establish trust-based relationships, which ensures the stability and development of the social structure.

However, if the level of trust in society is low, it can lead to social tension and conflict. Low trust often breeds distrust between different social groups, which can escalate conflicts at various levels – from interpersonal to intergroup. The emergence of social conflicts can be explained by the fact that each individual has their own threshold of trust – a critical point at which trust turns into distrust.

This threshold depends on individual characteristics, personal experiences, and interactions with other subjects of societal and political life. For example, a person who has had negative experiences in relationships with others may have a significantly lower threshold of trust than someone who has had positive experiences. This individual experience can be shaped within the context of family values, educational environments, cultural traditions, and socio-economic conditions.

A low level of trust can also lead to negative consequences for social stability and economic development. In societies where trust is limited, there is a decrease in cooperation among individuals, making it difficult to implement joint projects and initiatives. This, in turn, can result in economic difficulties, as distrust reduces the investment attractiveness of the region and limits opportunities for entrepreneurship development.

Thus, trust is not only an individual phenomenon but also a collective one that has a profound impact on social structure. Understanding the mechanisms of trust formation and the factors influencing it is crucial for developing effective strategies in social policy. This will not only strengthen trust-based relationships in society but also help prevent the emergence of social conflicts, thereby promoting stability and community development.

In the context of citizens' interactions with government authorities, trust is an important, but not the only, factor that determines people's willingness to actively engage in governance processes and collaboration. It is essential to recognize that trust and readiness for interaction do not always coincide and, in some cases, may even be in contradiction.

The relationship between trust and readiness for interaction is significant. Trust in government authorities undoubtedly creates favorable conditions

for engagement. Citizens who believe in the integrity and effectiveness of state structures are more likely to participate in activities that support these structures. However, an individual's willingness to interact with authorities can be influenced by various factors, such as personal experience, social context, and the assessment of potential benefits and risks.

For example, a person may have a high level of trust in the government but may still be unwilling to take active steps due to concerns about the time, resources, or potential negative consequences involved. This can pertain to participation in public hearings, elections, or other forms of activity, where the individual evaluates their chances of success and outcomes in the context of personal interests.

Each individual, when deciding whether to engage with government authorities, consciously evaluates the situation by weighing the potential time and effort required for participation against the importance of the expected outcome. This awareness allows people to make decisions that best align with their interests. For example, a citizen may choose not to participate in activities if they believe the result will not justify the effort expended or if there is a risk that their voice will not be heard (Peters, 2010).

The interaction between government authorities and citizens requires a shared and meaningful goal for both parties. In this case, the common goal is to ensure a safe living environment, which is important for every member of society. This goal can encompass not only maintaining law and order and security but also ensuring social welfare, access to services and resources, and improving the quality of life.

However, even with a shared goal, achieving a high level of cooperation is not always possible. Citizens may feel that their needs and interests are not being considered, leading to alienation and a decrease in trust. This underscores the necessity for active dialogue between the state and society, where the opinions and suggestions of citizens are taken into account.

Trust in government authorities is an important, but not the only, factor influencing citizens' willingness to engage with them. Other factors, such as the assessment of costs and benefits, personal experience, and social context, also play a significant role in shaping this willingness. Understanding these complexities is critically important for building effective mechanisms of interaction between the state and citizens. Only through active dialogue and consideration of the needs and interests of each member

of society can the level of trust be increased and greater civic engagement fostered. Strengthening such connections will serve as a guarantee of stability and the development of a democratic society, where every citizen feels their significance in governance processes.

Thus, trust, as a social phenomenon, is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that plays a critical role in shaping social relationships. The discussion above allows us to conclude that trust has a dual nature. On one hand, it is based on the moral principles of cooperation, which involve an advance expectation that interaction partners will behave according to certain norms and expectations. This means that individuals entering into relationships rely on a shared sense of values and ethical principles that underpin their interaction.

On the other hand, the emergence of trust is often influenced by knowledge about the partner, their reputation, and previous experiences of interaction. People tend to trust those who have already established themselves as reliable partners with a positive reputation within a certain social group. This knowledge can be gained through personal experience, social networks, or information from public sources. Thus, trust is not a blind act of faith; it is the result of analysis and evaluation.

These two aspects of trust – moral principles of cooperation and knowledge about the partner – do not contradict each other; rather, they complement one another, forming a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon being studied. Moral principles create the foundation for the development of trust, while knowledge and experience provide specificity to that trust. When both aspects are present, trust becomes more resilient and reliable.

8. Trust as a resource

In developed societies, there is a high level of interpersonal trust and trust in social institutions. This trust not only contributes to the stability of social relationships but also serves as an important factor in social prosperity. Trust is both a condition and a result of societal functioning, prompting the search for effective mechanisms to increase this resource. In the context of globalization and social change, the issue of trust becomes particularly relevant, as uncertainty can lead to social tension and conflicts (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

Researchers studying trust emphasize its multifaceted nature. They examine trust from various perspectives, including psychological, social, economic, and cultural. Regardless of the chosen approach, all these inquiries converge on one key question: «Can trust be managed as a specific resource, directing it in a defined manner to activate social change within society?».

Managing trust involves an active role for the state, institutions, and civil organizations in shaping trust-based relationships. This can include the development of policies that promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in decision-making processes. For example, open government initiatives that engage citizens in discussions about important social issues can significantly enhance trust in the state. Such practices not only strengthen trust relationships but also stimulate social interaction, which in turn contributes to community development.

Moreover, trust can be invested in social institutions such as education or healthcare. For example, trust in the education system can lead to more active involvement of parents and students in the learning process, positively impacting educational outcomes. Similarly, trust in medical institutions can ensure better collaboration between patients and healthcare providers, contributing to the overall improvement of public health.

It is also important to note that managing trust is not a one-sided process. It involves interaction between institutions and citizens, where each party has its own expectations and obligations. Therefore, for successful trust management, it is crucial to consider the specific cultural, social, and economic contexts in which this process occurs. Strategies that work in one country may be ineffective in another due to differences in social attitudes and historical experiences.

Thus, managing trust as a specific resource is a complex yet necessary task for modern societies. This issue requires a comprehensive approach that involves the active participation of all social actors. Strengthening trust can serve as a foundation for social change, ensuring stability and prosperity within society. In the face of rapid changes and challenges, the demand for trust as a resource becomes increasingly relevant, necessitating new solutions and strategies for its activation and maintenance.

In the context of studying trust as a social phenomenon, it is important to identify the key elements that influence its level. One such element is

uncertainty; however, there are other criteria that allow for the assessment of trust in various social relationships. Among these criteria, we can highlight predictability, available resources, voluntariness, effectiveness and consequences, dependency, and benefit. Let us examine these criteria in more detail to understand how they influence the formation of trust-based relationships.

Predictability is one of the most important factors influencing trust. It primarily exists in trust-based relationships where participants already have some experience of interaction. When individuals or groups have a history of cooperation, they can anticipate each other's actions, which reduces the level of uncertainty. This, in turn, decreases the need for constant vigilance and control. For example, in work teams where employees already share common experiences, trust can be higher because team members know what to expect from one another.

Available resources also play a significant role in forming trust. These can include both material resources and intangible ones, such as time, knowledge, or emotional support. When parties have shared resources or mutual benefits, it can strengthen trust-based relationships. For instance, companies that share common interests and resources are more likely to form partnerships based on trust, as they understand that their collaboration will benefit both parties.

Voluntariness in establishing trust-based relationships is another important criterion. When participants in an interaction voluntarily choose to trust one another, it enhances the level of trust. Interactions based on voluntary choice are generally more resilient, as each party feels responsible for their actions. This is especially important in the context of social movements or volunteer initiatives, where participants choose to trust each other in pursuit of common goals (Schmid, 2012).

Effectiveness and outcomes also influence trust. If trust-based relationships lead to positive results, participants are more likely to continue trusting one another. For example, in the healthcare sector, if patients receive quality care from doctors, their trust in medical institutions increases. Conversely, negative experiences can lead to a decrease in trust.

Dependency and benefit are criteria that determine how important trust-based relationships are for the participants. If one party depends on

another, it can influence the level of trust. For example, in the relationship between an employee and management, the employee may trust the management if they feel that their professional development and well-being depend on the decisions made by that party.

Trust is a multifaceted social phenomenon that relies on various criteria, such as predictability, available resources, voluntariness, effectiveness, outcomes, dependency, and benefit. Understanding these elements allows for a better evaluation of trust-based relationships in different social contexts and the development of effective strategies for strengthening them. In today's world, where trust is becoming an increasingly important resource, knowledge of these criteria can contribute to the development of healthy social connections and stability within society.

There is a direct proportional relationship between trust and predictability: the level of trust increases as predictability in relationships grows. This means that when participants in an interaction feel stability, reliability, and safety in their contacts, their ability to trust one another significantly increases. In this context, trust becomes not only a social phenomenon but also an important mechanism that ensures the effectiveness and quality of interaction between people or organizations (Uslaner, 2002).

Establishing trust-based relationships usually occurs with the aim of achieving specific goals. This can involve ensuring reliability in the use of certain resources, whether they are material (finances, property) or intangible (knowledge, information, emotional support). For example, in business, companies enter into contracts with suppliers, hoping that the fulfillment of obligations will be predictable and secure. In such cases, the presence of trust between the parties becomes critically important for the stability of business processes.

When the resources involved in trust-based relationships are at risk of damage or loss, the overall risk increases. In such conditions, participants in the interaction have heightened demands for trust. For example, in financial relationships where large sums of money are involved, the risk of loss can be significant. In these cases, investors and entrepreneurs seek to enter into agreements only with partners who have already proven themselves to be reliable and predictable.

Furthermore, the predictability of interactions reduces the need for control and monitoring. If participants know what to expect from one another, they can spend fewer resources on risk management and more on achieving common goals. This is especially important in the context of teamwork, where trust among team members can lead to greater productivity and creativity. The more participants interact under stable conditions, the higher the likelihood that they will be able to tackle more complex tasks.

However, it is also important to consider that not all trust-based relationships are the same. They can vary depending on the context, cultural characteristics, and the history of interaction between the parties. In cultures that emphasize individualism, trust may be built on different principles than in cultures where collectivism prevails. This opens up new opportunities for research in social psychology and cultural studies.

Based on the above, it should be noted that trust is a complex social phenomenon that is directly linked to predictability. The level of trust increases under conditions of stability and reliability, which, in turn, allows for the achievement of set goals. In today's world, where risks and uncertainty have become commonplace, understanding this connection is critically important for developing effective interaction strategies in various areas of life. Strengthening trust among participants in social, economic, and political processes can serve as the foundation for building a more stable and prosperous society.

9. Trust and risk

The concept of «trust» is closely related to another concept – «risk». P. Sztompka has devoted much attention to studying the essence of trust from this perspective, noting that to «trust» means to act as if there is no risk involved. At the same time, the manifestation of trust is associated with risk and a number of unfavorable circumstances. Specifically, this can include: the risk of unjustified expectations regarding the actions of others; the risk of experiencing moral harm as a result of misplaced trust; and so on. The issue of trust arises in situations of uncertainty and uncontrollability of the future, meaning it is necessary when there is no confidence in the complete control over future events that depend on human actions (Sztompka, 1999).

The sociologist views trust as a bet regarding the unpredictable actions of others. From this standpoint, trust involves two main components: specific expectations (how the other person will behave in a certain future situation) and confidence in action (the bet). Therefore, risks can be either justified or unjustified –depending on the level of risk (the probability of winning or losing) and the stake (the value of what may be lost or gained) (Seligman, 1997).

P. Sztompka emphasizes that trust generally serves a positive function for those who trust, for those who are trusted, for their relationships, for groups, organizations, and broader communities (Sztompka, 1999). It liberates and mobilizes human action, encourages increased creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial activism towards others; reduces uncertainty and risk associated with human actions, and, as noted in his work by N. Luhmann, «the possibilities for action increase in proportion to the increase in trust» (Luhmann, 1979, p. 132).

An analysis of the most developed themes and the most sought-after research objects in domestic contexts shows that one of the most relevant today is the socio-political phenomenon of trust in power – understood as «a complex, multifaceted phenomenon that reflects the attitude of a social group or individual towards the actions of representatives of power, formed on the basis of conviction in the correctness and appropriateness of their ethical, socio-psychological, emotional, and rational actions, and constitutes a voluntary, consciously positive attitude, moral or active support, conditioned by the degree of compliance of the policies carried out by their representatives with the trends of socio-political development in the country» (Kuzmuk, 2015).

If society faces problems of distrust towards the political regime, economic, and social systems, an alternative for individuals may be a high level of trust within existing social groups – such as family, religious organizations, and circles of friends. This pattern was identified by the renowned Polish researcher of the phenomenon of trust, P. Sztompka. His conclusions are supported by the results of twenty years of research by Ukrainian sociologists: «against the backdrop of the low level of trust among Ukrainian citizens in institutions of power, relationships of trust are mostly limited to the immediate life and family circle» (Sztompka, 1999, p. 14).

10. Conclusions

In contemporary discussions regarding the phenomenon of trust, increasing attention is focused on finding mechanisms for the practical management of the social resource of trust to achieve specific goals. Indeed, in developed societies, a high level of interpersonal trust and trust in social institutions is observed.

Trust is both a condition for the prosperity of society and its outcome, which encourages the search for mechanisms to increase the resource of trust in society. Ultimately, this will activate positive social changes within society and contribute to the sustainable development of communities.

The theoretical interpretation of the concept of «level of trust» within various sociological approaches also deserves more detailed attention, as it creates opportunities for a nuanced study of the features of constructing and functioning trust relations in contemporary society.

The connection between trust and the sustainable development of communities is a key aspect that affects the quality of life for residents. Trust fosters social cohesion, enabling people to collaborate more effectively within local initiatives. When citizens trust each other and their leaders, they are more actively involved in decision-making, leading to more transparent and accountable governance.

A high level of trust in local authorities ensures the effectiveness of management processes, as people are willing to support decisions they perceive as fair and justified. This, in turn, stimulates economic development, as entrepreneurs and businesses, trusting one another, create favorable conditions for investment and collaboration.

Trust also helps reduce conflicts in communities, as people who have trust are more inclined towards compromise and constructive problem-solving. In times of crisis, communities with a high level of trust demonstrate greater resilience, quickly mobilizing resources and supporting one another. Therefore, trust is the foundation for the sustainable development of a community, as it fosters social cohesion, economic prosperity, and stability, ultimately improving the quality of life for residents.

Another important aspect of trust is its perception as a moral choice. In many situations, a person can consciously decide to trust another individual or institution based on ethical principles or social norms.

This can be particularly relevant in cases where trust becomes the foundation for collaboration, partnership, or coexistence.

Furthermore, trust can be viewed as a heuristic step that allows a person to act in complex situations. In a world where information is often incomplete or contradictory, trust can serve as a tool for making rational decisions. For example, in crisis situations where quick responses are needed, trust in leaders or experts can help reduce uncertainty and facilitate effective decision-making.

Thus, trust is a complex mental state that cannot be directly measured but can be assessed through behavior and self-evaluation. It can act as a moral choice and a heuristic step that allows individuals to act in conditions of uncertainty. Understanding these aspects of trust is essential for building healthy social relationships and fostering interaction within society. In a world where trust is becoming an increasingly important resource, recognizing its complexity and multifaceted nature can contribute to improving the social climate and strengthening ties between people and institutions.

Trust is formed based on personal experiences and background. It is an internal feeling that depends on many factors, such as previous interaction experiences, social norms, cultural contexts, and individual attitudes. For example, a person who has had a positive experience collaborating with a particular organization is more likely to trust it in the future. However, if that experience was negative, trust can be undermined, leading to caution in future relationships.

Since trust as a mental state cannot be directly measured, it can be assessed through behavior. This may include observing how an individual interacts with others, how they respond to different situations, or what decisions they make in conditions of uncertainty. For example, people who have high trust in their colleagues at work are more likely to take risks in team projects and openly share their ideas. In this context, trust becomes an indicator of readiness for collaboration and interaction.

Furthermore, trust can be evaluated through an individual's self-assessment. This is a process in which a person analyzes their feelings and attitudes towards others, as well as towards themselves, in the context of trusting relationships. Self-assessment can be a determining factor in the formation of trust, as a person who considers themselves reliable and

open is more likely to trust others. This aspect is particularly important in social relationships, where self-assessment can influence the level of communication and openness.

In the modern world, where social connections are becoming increasingly complex due to globalization, technological changes, and social transformations, the study of trust is extremely relevant and takes on new dimensions. Social networks, business structures, and political institutions require trust for effective functioning. The absence of trust can lead to social tensions, conflicts, and even economic crises. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms of forming and sustaining trust is critically important for ensuring social stability and development.

In the context of globalization and the social changes we are witnessing today, trust becomes not only a personal but also a collective resource that is vital for developing stable and prosperous societies.

The prospects for further research may encompass the impact of new technologies on the mechanisms of trust formation in business and society. It is important to examine how digital platforms can both foster and undermine trust. Additionally, analyzing the role of social media in shaping public trust in information, political institutions, and business structures is essential, as well as exploring misinformation and its impact on trust. Researching collective trust as a resource that influences the integration of societies is significant, as trust between different groups can promote social cohesion and stability.

Furthermore, it is crucial to study the relationship between the level of trust in society and perceptions of social justice, as well as how trust can affect citizens' satisfaction and their engagement in social initiatives. Cross-cultural studies comparing the mechanisms and levels of trust in different cultures will be beneficial in identifying specific factors that shape trust in the context of globalization. It is also important to investigate how trust between businesses, consumers, and governments affects economic stability and development, and what mechanisms can strengthen these ties. Analyzing the factors influencing trust in political institutions, including governance effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, is also necessary. These research directions can help understand the mechanisms of trust formation and maintenance, which are critically important for ensuring social stability and development in the face of contemporary challenges.

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