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Trust and Journalism in a Digital Environment

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Paper

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The Reuters Institute is an exceptional place to study with special people who explore the different forms of journalism and its changes with great passion. You can trust them.

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"Their trust in each other has vanished and their marriage is in crisis." (Ian McEwan: Sweet Tooth, p. 178)

"The purpose of whistleblowing is to expose secret and wrongful acts by those in power in order to enable reform. A key purpose of journalism is to provide an adversarial check on those who wield the greatest power by shining a light on what they do in the dark, and informing the public about those acts." (Glenn Greenwald, Guardian journalist who covered the NSA scandal and first to speak to the respective whistleblower, Edward Snowden. Guardian 15th June 2013, p. 51)

Introduction

"Trust is good, control is better." This statement attributed to Soviet leader Lenin is quoted frequently. Today we are well informed about the ridiculous and absurd way control has been and still is performed in authoritarian regimes. Trust research tells us that this comment is wrong in many ways. As most of our action and communication is far away from complete control trust has to be regarded as a fundamental principle that ensures the functioning of both interpersonal relationships and modern society. In this sense, control may sometimes be good, yet trust is always better.

This paper examines the role of trust in journalism. Journalism is understood as an integral part of modern society, having its share in both creating and performing our contemporary world. In science and in every-day life, the term "journalism" is not very common. Usually scientists, even in communication and media studies, prefer the notion of "media". Here, journalism is in favour because it refers more precisely to the most important aspect of media: providing relevant information for a public. Not everything published in media deserves the expression journalism and not everything journalists do can be named journalism. For the purpose of this paper I will focus on one specific part of journalism: News journalism, usually performed by news media with an editorial department where information from different corners of the world is collected and selected before being presented to a public in a particular way.

Such an abstract perspective on journalism has the advantage of looking at the role of journalism in society in a rather general way while at the same time investigating the internal structure of a journalistic system. On the contrary, this perspective implies several disadvantages. Concentrating on news journalism only, rules out many forms of media content and media functions, such as entertainment and education. Furthermore, the following chapters focus on journalism in a Western tradition. Although the benefits of journalism may be universal in very general terms emphasising that journalism worldwide is rooted in several traditions is necessary; and certainly, closer looks at specific countries, media systems, regions and cultural traditions clearly mark differences in the worlds of journalisms. While the notion of different forms, attitudes and even functions of journalism has gained some attention from journalism scholars during the last one or two decades, the same cannot be said for trust.

Trust as a social phenomenon or a category in society does not have the same consistency as journalism. Whereas news media as organisations, journalist as actors and various forms of content are empirically accessible features, this does not apply likewise to trust. Hence, before exploring trust and journalism it seems necessary to shed light on the concept of trust. What is trust? What is its function in society? And how can trust be developed and maintained?

This paper tries to systematise the relationship between trust and journalism. Unlike some previous research, not only does it look at trust in journalism (often referred to as trust in media), but tries to draw attention to other aspects as well: Journalism's contribution to the creation of trust for other social systems, organisations and for individuals. After outlining some thoughts on *trust through*

journalism the paper takes a look at *trust in journalism*. Public trust in journalism is described as both a product of a historical process and of socialisation. Trust in journalism comprises three elements: trust in the journalistic system as a whole, trust in journalists as actors and trust in what journalism usually does, i.e. researching, selecting and presenting relevant information. Journalistic professionalism is regarded as the most important basis for trust. Another area of research represents the field of *trust within journalism* itself. Trust relations within journalism have to consider relationships between journalists and their sources. Additionally, trust between different sections of a media outlet and between journalists in a particular newsroom belong to this field of research. However, this paper does not focus on these aspects and leaves it for forthcoming contributions.

Building trust is essential for the future performance of journalism. Without doubt digitalisation can be regarded as a major challenge not only for media business models but also for trust in journalism. Some thoughts on trust building in a digital environment are elaborated upon in the last chapter. Although digitalisation can be seen as a threat to journalism this paper takes a more optimistic view and stresses journalism's capacity to develop new features, helping to obtain and maintain its role as a trustworthy institution. Not surprisingly, the ideas presented below are based on the condition that trust is essentially necessary for both journalism and society. This notion remains unquestioned.

The paper is mainly built upon a review of literature considered relevant for the topic. By no means does it claim to be definitive or complete, yet proposing crucial ideas for further research. My thoughts are mostly hypothetical in nature, requiring intensive empirical research. Whereas selected empirical evidence- based on data derived from a literature review – is provided, the main purpose of this research is to draw a framework for further systematic studies in the field of trust and journalism.

1. Journalism

There are many ways to characterise journalism. Some look at it as a profession, for some it is an equivalent to media, others see journalism as the sum of journalists. Journalism can – like other social phenomena – be examined from different perspectives. The Worlds of Journalism Study (Hanitzsch et al., 2011) elaborates on five basic principles in order to describe journalism: “Journalism is primarily orientated toward the factual, provides timely and relevant information, and requires intellectual autonomy and independence. Furthermore, it is a professional service to the public that is usually carried out in organized context.” (Hanitzsch, 2013, p. 201) This definition does not refer to journalism as an ontological entity, but rather stresses the function of journalism within society and refers to some structural components.

In their book “Blur”, Kovach and Rosenstiel distinguish (at least for the US) several kinds of journalisms in the digital age: Journalism of verification with high standards of accuracy and context; journalism of assertion based on immediate dissemination of news without much editorial touch (news channels); journalism of affirmation with emphasis on supporting certain political views; and interest group journalism paid for by groups which often does not become transparent. (Sambrook, 2012, p. 15; Kovach/Rosenstiel, 2010) Sambrook notes: “In recent years, the journalism of verification has been in retreat as business models have broken down, traditional media have closed, and those that survived fought harder for a share of public attention. These conditions have encouraged the journalism of affirmation and assertion to maximize impact, leading to increased partisanship.” (2012, p. 15)

In order to get an overall picture of journalism it seems helpful to look at two things in particular: its function in our modern society and its inner structure. Why is journalism necessary in society, what function does it fulfil and what role does it play in our life? Journalism research has provided a vast variety of answers to these questions: Journalism is seen as a watchdog, as a disseminator of useful information, etc. McQuail defines journalism as the “construction and publication of accounts of contemporary events, persons or circumstances of public significance or interest, based on information acquired from reliable sources.” (2013, p. 14) He also notes that journalism “is typically undertaken within a larger news organization, by skilled or trained persons, following established and transparent rules and procedures.” (2013, p. 15)

Journalism is a product of historical development. In the process of differentiation of modern society, described extensively by many scholars (Alexander/Colomy, 1990; Luhmann, 1982) with social alienation, fostered through processes of secularisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, etc., the need to retain an idea of the common, to keep up with what is going on occurred. Journalism is a means to help document various (not all) parts of society, delivering a picture of the contemporary and helping to understand the world. In light of this development, the function of journalism can be described as follows: to investigate, select and present information designed for public communication with the objective of minimising complexity. (Blöbaum, 1994, 2005)

Although this description is very general it addresses the fundamental elements of journalism. The time frame characteristic of journalism is defined by the drive for the latest news and event. By addressing and publishing current issues and events, journalism simultaneously provides a notion of the moment. In order to fulfil its function journalism takes three steps: (1) researching and acquiring, (2) selecting and (3) presenting information. These processes are aimed at maintaining the journalistic purpose: they are preconditions for the possibility of public communication. Therefore, journalistic content is always directed at a general public or sections of the public. Journalism makes different parts of society visible to a broader public. The reception of media products supplies the public with information for discussions, actions and decisions. The recipients are addressed in various

roles as citizens, consumers, family members, etc. For the public and within society in general journalism reduces complexity by selecting and presenting information. Journalism provides people with knowledge and experience that individuals usually cannot obtain. This is where trust comes into play: Because the audience cannot check the content journalism provides it has to trust journalism. Trust is a basis for journalistic operations.

Journalism is not only a pure disseminator of current and relevant affairs; by processing information journalism simultaneously creates relevance and newsworthiness for a public and society. Just like other social institutions such as the health sector, politics, science, economy, military or sport, journalism has built up an internal complexity in order to fulfil its social function. Similar to the institutions mentioned above, the journalistic system consists of three structural elements: organisations, roles and programs (manuals). (Blöbaum, 2004) Organisations are stable frameworks that enable a certain part of society to operate on a permanent basis. Organisations are a kind of hardware, they support and limit ongoing processes. Hospitals in the health sector, parties in politics, companies in economics, clubs in sport, churches in religion, universities and institutes in science are examples of organisations that provide a profound structure to maintain the performances of the respective system. Although it might sound strange at first sight, the second component – roles – are hardware and software at the same time. On the one hand, roles are taken on by individuals. On the other hand, the role itself consists of a core of expectations that are to be met by those performing a particular role. In all sectors of society, roles have differentiated internally. Usually, role holders work in places and in positions that have emerged along tasks and hierarchies. Doctors with different specialisations (general physicians, nephrologists, urologists, dermatologists ...), and head physicians, assistant physicians and medical students are examples of vertical and horizontal differentiation of roles in medicine. Habitually, role owners located at the center of a system are trained through academic education. Thirdly programs (or manuals) function as software for a social system. Included in these are individual steps of a working process, containing further the fundamental norms and values of a system. In medicine, programs show how to treat diseases. Doctors have to follow certain rules and have – in the course of their vocational training – to internalise certain values inherent to the health system.

The term “journalistic program”, that is not very common in Anglo-American media research, has two meanings: Journalistic program as an analytical concept stands for the dynamic part of journalism as a social system where by the means of action input is transformed into output. “A program is a complex of conditions for the correctness (and thus the social acceptability) of behavior. The level of programs becomes independent of the level of roles.” (Luhmann, 1995, p. 317) On the contrary, the empirical notion of program refers to journalistic practices, work routines and professional norms. As this paper argues on both levels, analytical and empirical, the two terms “journalistic program” and “journalistic practices” are used in the text.

Social systems constitute their identity by delineating themselves from their environments. (Kneer/Nassehi, 1993, p. 38; Kohring, 2004, p. 190) In order to differentiate which elements belong to a system and which ones to its environment, social systems have developed system-specific binary codes. For journalism, the code is information/non-information. (Blöbaum, 2004, p. 206) Every system has created a specific “expert role” which is complementary to the role of a layman. In journalism, the profession of the journalist has developed vis-à-vis the recipients. Besides its function, code and role, each system bears a specific form of organisation. In journalism, we can identify two types of organisation: firstly, mass media like newspapers or television and secondly, the editorial office. (Blöbaum, 1994, pp. 285-288)

The journalism system comprises three structural elements:

Journalistic organisations: Mass media as well as editorial offices form the structure of journalism at an organisational level. Journalistic organisations allow the journalistic system to perform its tasks permanently. (Blöbaum, 1994, pp. 285-288; 2004, pp. 207-209)

Journalistic roles: Journalists work in professional roles for which they are prepared during vocational education and which are continuously practiced and reinforced in vocational socialisation. Throughout the historical development of journalism, this professional role has been characterised by processes of differentiation and consolidation. Unlike in British and American journalism, in which division of labour has evolved along the lines of activities (in the US and UK, one finds the role of editor, reporter, copy tester, etc.), in Germany journalistic roles have differentiated with regard to topics such as politics, economics, culture, sports and local issues (Esser, 1998).

Journalistic programs/journalistic practices: Besides organisations and roles, journalistic programs are designed specifically for the production and processing of information. (Blöbaum, 1994, pp. 277-284) Herein lays their main function, notwithstanding the fact that programs can also pursue goals such as education and entertainment. Different forms of practices can be distinguished; in journalism, we can differentiate between four types of programs:

Firstly, the information-collecting program: Journalism's central function is to disseminate information, investigation being an active form of compiling information. On the contrary, a lot of information reaches editorial offices without being requested, in the form of press releases and other public relations material. The second program is selection: There are more topics and events than journalism is able to convey so that selection is crucial. These choices are directed by journalistic selection programs. Following news value research, new events are preferred over those already known, local events are more important than distant events, and celebrities are considered more important than ordinary people. The third program can be called the program of coordination. This program assigns an event or a topic to a certain part of a newspaper, program, etc. Coordination through different forms of conferences and meetings enables journalism to handle the huge amount of information. Coordination is also responsible for decisions concerning the form of publication: where (newspaper, radio, TV, online?), when (online first?), and how (special report, feature?) shall a piece of information be published? The fourth program is one of the favourite themes of journalism research: programs of presentation. These are forms of conveying and presenting information created and fixed by journalism (such as news, correspondent reports, comments, interviews, features).

Table 1: Structural elements of journalism

Organisations	Roles	Programs/Practices
editorial offices	journalists	research
newsrooms	recipients	selection
mass media (publishing houses, broadcasting stations...)	relation between journalists & recipients	coordination
		presentation

Journalism cannot be equated with the media in general. Media organisations make up the shell of journalism. They are necessary for funding and disseminating journalistic texts. (Altmeppen, 2006) But journalism and media are not the same. Historically, media have proven to be efficient for the

development of journalism. Journalism is also more than the sum of individual journalists. There is no doubt about their being important actors. Without journalists there is no journalism as there is no medicine without doctors. But in addition to journalists with their attitudes and skills, their organisational environment, the editorial department and the newsroom are in the same way elements of journalism in general as are journalists’ actions (i.e. researching, selecting, presenting).

In this chapter, journalism is understood as news journalism. Providing current and relevant information is considered the core service of journalism. Media content can fulfil various functions from entertaining to educating. In the view taken in this paper, such media services are not central to journalism, although journalism might also entertain and educate while offering its audience crucial information. One conclusion is that not everything that is in a newspaper or on a TV program deserves the label journalism. (Hanitzsch, 2013, p. 208)

The notion to understand journalism as a provider of relevant news gets support from audience research. Data from the Digital News Report 2013 indicates that national, international and local/regional news is of particular importance for recipients. Other areas of coverage like culture and entertainment are less relevant for news consumers.

Table 2: Five most important types of news in selected countries

UK	US	Germany	Spain
News about country (71%)	Local news about town/city (59%)	News about country (70%)	News about country (64%)
International news (53%)	News about country (57%)	International news (67%)	International news (44%)
Local news about town/city (49%)	International news (56%)	News about region (53%)	News about region (43%)
News about region (44%)	News about countries politics (54%)	News about countries politics (50%)	News about countries politics (43%)
News about economy (44%)	News about economy (52%)	Local news about town/city (47%)	Local news about town/city (42%)

Question: Which of the following types of news is most important to you? Please choose up to five. Source: Reuters Institute Digital News Report, 2013, p. 31

The table shows a strong interest in political news and news about local, regional, national and international affairs. These fields of society are of particular interest to readers, listeners, viewers and users across different countries. And the news media are expected to predominantly cover these beats. Demand for international, regional, local and national news increases with growing age. But almost two thirds of the youngest group (18-24y) state an interest in news about their country. Legacy media (including their online outlets) are by far the most important source in Germany and the UK to keep up with political and government issues. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 33)

Nielsen concludes that “free and vigorous news media are today routinely listed along with trustworthy electoral systems, capable parliaments, effective executives, and independent judiciaries as amongst the key institutions of contemporary democracy because they are the main purveyors of timely, general accessible, and accurate information about public affairs.” (Nielsen, 2012, p. 7)

As mentioned above, through its history journalism has achieved a reputation as a trustworthy institution for the dissemination of current and factual news. To fulfil its tasks, journalism has to earn trust over and over again. Future and success of journalism rely heavily on its ability to develop and maintain public trust. Besides, trust plays an important role within journalism itself and in various relationships between journalism and specific individual and collective actors outside journalism.

2. Trust

Trust is a social category difficult to characterise and to explain. Scientific analysis of trust is certainly an emerging field. The importance of trust research can be seen from the launch of a scientific journal devoted to trust (Journal of Trust Research). And a few years ago scientists of various disciplines created the First International Network on Trust Research (FINT) (www.fintweb.org) in order to exchange findings on trust across different academic areas. What is more, a Handbook on Measurement of Trust was published just recently. (Lyon/Möllering/Saunders, 2012) The growing body of literature on trust has generated numerous findings, both on the level of interpersonal trust and societal trust. There is no doubt about the relevance of trust on all levels: from trust in personal relationships and trust in and among organisations to trust as a social glue in contemporary society. Although several meta studies on trust have been published, a common understanding about the essence of trust has not emerged in science so far nor are its components, foundations and social relevance fully understood.

To understand the role of trust in journalism it appears to be useful to take into consideration not only the function of trust in a specific social environment but also the traits of trust in personal relations among individuals.

From the literature on trust one can derive four characteristics or references concerning trust:

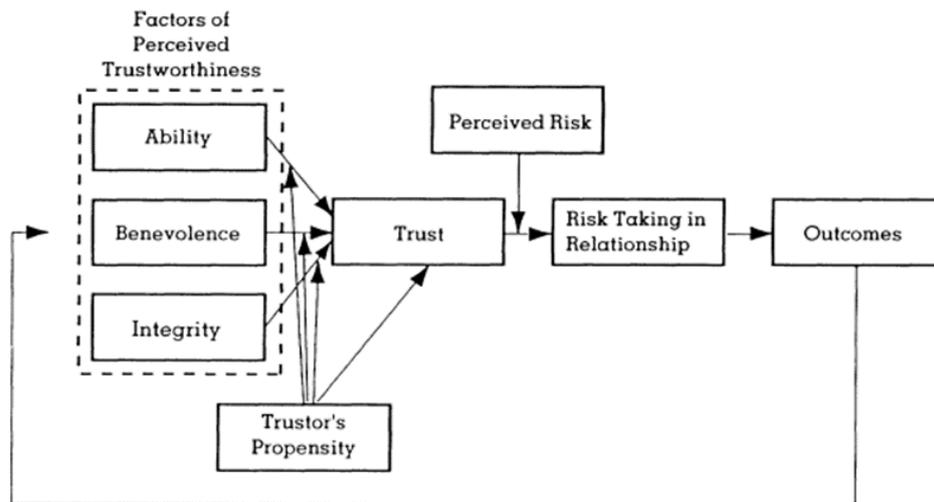
- Trust refers to a relationship
- Trust is an action (in a process)
- Trust needs preconditions
- Trust is limited (to a subject, specific matter)

While these features refer to traits of trust and the process of trust building and mainly come from studies in psychology and management, sociology and politics look more at the function of trust in society. Although the perspectives and underlying questions might be different some common features are obvious.

Widely used in the literature is a definition of trust by Mayer, Davis and Schoorman. According to their work, trust is “the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party.” (Mayer/Davis/Schoorman, 1995, p. 712) Trust is necessary for a specific action or communication and this action might lead to more trust.

Mayer et al. take a closer look at the traits within the process of trust building. Not only does trust depend on the trustworthiness of the trustee (who is trusted) but also on specific features of the trustor (who trusts). The “propensity to trust is proposed to be a stable within-party factor that will affect the likelihood the party will trust” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 715). According to the authors, the general willingness to trust other people depends on three factors: ability, benevolence and integrity. “Benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive.” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 718) Integrity includes “such issues as the consistency of the party’s past actions, credible communications about the trustee from other parties, belief that the trustee has a strong sense of justice, and the extent to which the party’s actions are congruent with his or her words.” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 719) “Ability is that group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within some specific domain.” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 717) The named factors influencing trust themselves have numerous preconditions.

Figure 1: Trust model (Mayer/Davis/Schoorman)



Source: Mayer/Davis/Schoorman, 1995

Trust is closely connected to risk. However, there is no common understanding concerning the role of risk in the process of trust. Some argue that trust is only necessary in risky situations. (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 711; McKnight/Chervany, 2001, p. 35; Giddens, 1990). With complete control or information on a certain topic, there is no risk in a specific action, there is no need for a willingness to be vulnerable: no risk – no trust. Whenever there exists a potential lack of information in a certain situation someone has to take a risk. As no one has total information and everything could be contingent there is frequently a need for trust. In this respect, the importance of trust in journalism becomes obvious. Because journalism conveys information recipients usually do not know, it basically depends on trust. Consequently, trust becomes more important in societies and circumstances that are perceived as risky. In a risk society (Beck, 1992) with an increasing contingency of experiences trust helps to cope with risks and contingencies.

Besides the fundamental importance of trust in a risky environment, perceived risk plays an important role in a process of trust. The willingness to take a risk in a certain situation depends heavily on the perception of the amount of risk in this particular action. Some scholars (Mayer et al. 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998) consider trust as a willingness to act. Whether an action is actually performed depends on the particular risk tolerance. “When a trustor takes a risk in a trustee that leads to a positive outcome, the trustor’s perceptions of the trustee are enhanced. Likewise, perceptions of the trustee will decline when trust leads to unfavorable conclusions.” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 728) Trust as an action is always the result of a specific calculation: Someone trusts when his or her trust is higher than the amount of risk he or she has to take in a certain situation. (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 726) Trust is therefore always a risky concession made in advance. The willingness to take risks on the part of a trustor depends on “weighing the likelihoods of both positive and negative outcomes” (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 725; Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). A generally high willingness to trust may therefore be associated with a high level of perceived risk. A willingness to risk is a prerequisite of trust and stands at the beginning of a trust action. Someone might have the will to trust, but if he calculates the risk, he may consider the perceived risk as too high and step down from a particular action. This distinction between a general willingness to trust and the actual trust action is important if it comes to trust in journalism.

To conclude, trust refers to a relationship which both parties are interested in. And both take a certain risk, i.e. trustor and trustee risk ending their relationship. In this sense, everyone involved makes himself vulnerable.

Trust as a reflexive process refers to a present action and is orientated towards the future. Müller notes: "Forming expectations of the other's future behaviour requires cognitive resources and information. (...) An effective key to the reduction of the complexity are symbols of trustworthiness." (Müller, 2013, pp. 51-52) Against this backdrop it seems worthwhile to look at signals and indicators of trustworthiness. According to Sztompka (1999, p. 70), the "most important and most common ground for trust is the estimate of the trustworthiness of the target on which we are considering whether to confer trust." He identifies three bases of primary trustworthiness: reputation, performance and appearance. (Sztompka, 1999, p. 71) A lot of literature deals with factors influencing trustworthiness and in which way they are connected. The attribution of high ability, benevolence and integrity to a trustee support his or her trustworthiness. (Mayer et al., 1995; Gill et al., 2005) A trustee's capability of acting or communicating as expected and his willingness to take the trustor's interests into account are basic conditions for a trust relationship. (Müller, 2013, p. 52)

As mentioned above, trust as an action is necessary only when further actions – whatever they might be – are intended. Hardin refers to this with the term of "trust as encapsulated interest." (Hardin, 2004a, p. 3). "I trust you because I think it is in your interest to take my interests in the relevant matter seriously in the following sense: You value the continuation of our relationship, and you therefore have your own interests in taking my interests into account." (Hardin, 2004a, p. 1) Thus, trust is based fundamentally on mutual interest. Trustor and trustee are both interested in a win-win-situation. For a trustor it must become obvious it was worth it to trust. (Which also means that the trustee was worth to be trusted.) And because of the trustee's interest in maintaining an existing relationship he is interested in showing it was worthwhile to trust him.

Hardin also underlines the significance of another important aspect in the trust relationship. Trust is related to a specific matter. According to Hardin, trust is a relationship with three parts: A trusts B to do X; but A may not trust B to do Y. (Hardin, 2004a, p. 9). One problem of trust research lies in precisely identifying such particularities. For example, data about social trust in the US are based on a question that in fact does not link trust to a certain matter, subject or action. The trust question from the US National Opinion Research Center (a similar question is in the World Values Survey) asks: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" (General Social Survey, 2012) There have been surprising jumps in the data during the last two decades: In 1972, 46,3% of the interviewees reported that most people can be trusted, followed by a sharp decline to 34,8% in 1983, only to climb to 49,5% in the Orwell year of 1984, dropping again to a poor third (32,2%) in 2012. Although there might be a general trend showing towards a decline of trust it is hard to believe that the figures vary to such an extent within a short period of time. It is difficult to explain these findings based on such a general question because you do not know what respondents refer to when asked whether most people can be trusted. Do they reflect trust in their family, their neighbours, do they relate their answer to the residents of their community, the inhabitants of their state or the whole nation or do they reflect media coverage about murder and crime that make them fearful?

Data from the World Values Survey show large differences of social trust among various countries. While in India (23,3%), South Korea (28,2%) and the UK (30,5%) less than one third answer that most people can be trusted, shares in Australia (46,1%), China (52,3%) and Finland (58,9%) are much higher. The findings suggest that social trust has various implications, from culture and economy to

politics and certainly also tradition. Again it is difficult to provide adequate explanation. (www.worldvaluesurvey.org)

Table 3: Social trust in different countries

	Total	Great Britain	United States	Australia	Finland
most people can be trusted	39.1 %	30.5 %	39.3 %	46.1 %	58.9 %
can't be too careful	60.9 %	69.5 %	60.7 %	53.9 %	41.1 %

	South Korea	India	China	Germany
most people can be trusted	28.2 %	23.3 %	52.3 %	36.8 %
can't be too careful	71.8 %	76.7 %	47.7 %	63.2 %

Total n = 11,402; Source: World Values Surveys Databank

As regards the concept of trust the following elements have been outlined so far:

- Trust is necessary to continue a relationship both partners are interested in, in terms that they can expect further advantages.
- Trust in a relationship is linked to a specific matter.
- On the one hand, trust is a prerequisite for an action and as such dependent on three factors: the trustor's traits, the trustor's willingness to take a risk and the impression a trustor has of the trustee. Hence, the trustee also has some influence over the amount of trust he receives: the more signals of trustworthiness he can send the more likely he is to gain trust.
- On the other hand, trust is an action itself that is performed under certain constraints and is driven by the willingness to maintain and develop trust.

How is trust performed? In rational choice theory "the decision to trust is the result of a rational evaluation of benefits that arise from keeping or breaking trust. This calculation anticipates the reaction of the other actor and the costs or benefits that result from this reaction." (Müller, 2013, p. 45)

Factors influencing trustors in a process of trust:

- Reputation of trustee
- Experience with trustee
- Appearance of trustee
- Accountability of trustee
- Competence of trustee
- Benevolence (belief to do good)
- Consistency of past actions
- Credible communication
- Sense of trustee's justice

In trust research, whether trust refers merely to a relationship between individuals or whether it is extendable to relations between individuals and institutions and among institutions is in dispute. Levi and Stoker (2000) note that individuals can make themselves vulnerable to institutions, too. Giddens takes a step further when defining trust as “confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles (technical knowledge).” (Giddens, 1990, p. 34) And Müller (2013, p. 40) refers to trust in institutions “as the belief that the perceived institutional performance conforms to the expectations of the individual.”

Can institutions be an object of trust? “According to Hardin, trust in institutions is implausible because the cognitive resources and the knowledge to access the interests, motivations, actions, and resources of the institution are not available to an individual. (...) Instead, individuals may trust institutions on the basis of past experience that is interpolated into the future. Such a mode of trust requires far less cognitive resources.” (Müller, 2013, p. 47) Nevertheless, it would still be trust. Referring to Warren (1999) Müller stresses, “that the concept of encapsulated trust is, in fact, well-situated to capture relationships of trust between individuals and institutions because of the de-personalized nature of these relationships, which rules out affective relations of trust.” (Müller, 2013, pp. 47-48) And referring to Levi/Stoker (2000) the same author (2013, p. 39) concludes: “Trust is a multi-level phenomenon, with the capacity to bridge the gap between individual action and institutions.”

Trust in an institution or organisation (e.g. a university, a church, a newspaper, a company, a political party) and in a social system (e.g. science, economy, politics, journalism) is encapsulated in personal trust in individuals of this respective entity. In general trust is aimed at the proper functioning of a system or organisation. Certainly, through their behaviour individuals can influence trust in the institution they are part of – but one scientist who has committed data fraud will not suddenly destroy trust in science as a whole. To a certain extent, trust in a system or an organisation is less complex than trust in a personal relationship. As pointed out above, trust on the personal level can be related to very different subjects. Trust in a system has just one reference. Systems are trusted with respect to their specific function: The judiciary is supposed to differentiate between what is right or wrong according to laws, economy should deal with business – and journalism should provide relevant information to a general public. Trusting the functioning of a social system (or an organisation) is a rather abstract imagination; further below this paper elaborates what this entails for journalism in a more concrete way.

Why is trust necessary, what are the advantages of trust? The answer provided in this chapter is: Trust is a social mechanism that helps to deal with social complexity and reduces it in a suitable way.

Without trust we would be limited to our first-hand experiences. With the experience of increasing differentiation and complexity in modern society, the evolution of trust as a social mechanism can be seen as a reaction towards a lack of clarity. Trust allows us to get in touch with information, thoughts, knowledge, action, events and topics outside our own area of experience. If one did not trust a news organization, one would hardly know about a conflict in Afghanistan or who suggested a tax raise and for what reason. German sociologist Luhmann points out the advantages of trust: "Where there is trust there are increased possibilities for experience and action, there is an increase in the complexity of the social system and also in the number of possibilities which can be reconciled with its structure. (... Trust is an) effective form of complexity reduction." (Luhmann, 1979, p. 8) Trust on a social level is a means of coordination modern societies need in order to rule their complexity, enabling the construction of stable structural elements. "Trust reduces social complexity by going beyond available information and generalizing expectations of behaviour in that it replaces missing information with an internally guaranteed security." (Luhmann, 1979, p. 93) Giddens also elaborates on the central role of trust both on a systemic and individual level: "In conditions of modernity, attitudes of trust towards abstract systems are usually routinely incorporated into the continuity of day-to-day activities and are to a large extent enforced by the intrinsic circumstances of daily life. Trust is (...) a tacit acceptance of circumstances in which other alternatives are largely foreclosed." (Giddens, 1990, p. 90) And "trust in the framework of Habermas' theory, can be interpreted as the belief that an actor sticks to the validity claims that are the precondition for communicative action: subjective/expressive truthfulness, normative rightness, and theoretical truth." (Müller, 2013, p. 81)

The sociologists stress the importance of trust in contemporary society. A social mechanism itself, trust is connected to relations among individuals as well as relations to, among and within organisations and to and within social systems of society. In this respect, trust becomes impersonal, the object of trust being not only a particular person but a social entity like an institution or an entire sector of society.

What does it mean to trust a system? According to Kohring (2004), trust in a system predominantly means to trust its programs, the manner in which it operates, the way it comes to and makes decisions or simply: the way it works. Because of the complexity of society people have to rely on the information-processing of others. Not only is an individual unable to make all the experiences necessary to cope with modern life, it would also be too costly and time-consuming to check all information. Relevant decisions are made in systems and institutions based on a specific competence and on certain rules and values. It is much easier and effective to trust a system to perform in a trustworthy manner than trying to do on one's own.

In summary, it seems useful to distinguish between two areas in trust research: trust in a system as a specific societal sector and trust as a precondition in relationships on the individual level that leads to an action of trust (which is a prerequisite of further trust). One crucial point in trust research is to take into account three perspectives of trust at the same time: trust as a *state* (dependent of various traits) that enables trust as a *process* on the level of personal relations and trust as a *social mechanism* in society, capable of reducing complexity, based on the operations of a particular system or institution.

Even were we to know definitely about the role of trust in social contexts and the process of trust building, the problem of measurement remains. Public trust is mainly investigated in polls. The latter allow us to learn about trust in institutions like media, government, the European Union, etc. Factors that influence the propensity to trust are mainly researched using experimental designs. In the case of public trust, its specific reference often remains unclear. Studies on the individual level repeatedly refer to trust only in one specific matter or context, and the question remains whether their findings

can be generalised or not. A recently published handbook about methods of trust research sheds light on various problems of measurement. (Lyon/Möllering/Saunders, 2012)

Despite controversial discussions within academia it seems reasonable not to understand trust as a binary category, i.e. trust/no trust. As Hardin (2004a) points out trust can be examined on a scale (as most surveys do). A lack of consensus regarding the endpoints of the trust scale notwithstanding (full trust vs. low trust, high degree of trust vs. no trust), scaling trust offers the advantage of analysing different degrees of trust in different situations, with regard to different matters and different trustors and trustees. Hardin notes that trust and distrust should not be seen on the same scale (reaching from trust to distrust). Rather, he suggests looking at distrust as a phenomenon bearing certain variance (reaching for example from a lot of distrust to no or low distrust).

In national polls like the General Social Survey in the US and the World Value Survey trust is measured in a very general way. Looking at the respective data reveals certain general problems trust research faces. Data from the US Social Survey may at first sight indicate a sharp decline of social trust from 46,3% in 1972 to 32,2% in 2012. In contrast, however, the diminution between 1983 and 2012 seems far less impressive.

Table 4: General social trust

	1972	1983	1984	2004	2012
can be trusted	46,3 %	34,8 %	49,5 %	35,5 %	32,2 %
can't be too careful	50,0 %	61,2 %	48,2 %	58,9 %	64,2 %

Question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" Source: General Social Survey

Compared to the year before, the Orwell year 1984 experiences a boom of social trust rising from below 35% to almost 50% in 1984. The ups and downs in the data are difficult to explain, shedding light on the problem of measuring trust.

In a representative telephone survey in Germany, Jakob found a positive correlation between interpersonal trust, trust in media and in other institutions (Jakob, 2012). He notes that individual dispositions to trust differ among people due to different forms of socialisation and experiences.

Interim conclusion:

When analyzing trust and journalism it seems useful not only to differentiate between system level, organisational level, and personal level. In order to get a proper picture it is also meaningful to separate three areas relevant to trust within the world of journalism. Firstly we can look at the contribution of journalism to social trust. How does journalism contribute to the creation of trust in societal systems, in organisations and individuals? This is about journalism as a trust generator, i.e. trust *through* journalism. Secondly, from the perspective of the public, we can analyse trust *in* journalism. What does it really mean when we refer to public trust in journalism? In this context we have to specify the different aspects of trust in the system and programming of journalism. And thirdly, we can point to the aspect of *trust building* in journalism. Which efforts are made to develop and maintain trust in journalism? Again, here we can distinguish between trust building processes and actions on the level of journalism as a whole and its specific roles and programs.

3. Trust through Journalism

Like other institutions of society journalism depends very much on trust. At the same time, journalism belongs to the few societal institutions that play an important role in the process of developing trust not only for itself but also for other parts of society. But how and in which ways is trust built? Basically, each system is responsible for developing and maintaining trust itself. Essentially, this is realised by making processes and operations in one particular area visible. Science, politics, economy and sport, for example, have to create forms and norms that allow them to be identified as trustworthy.

However, journalism is capable of creating trust in organisations and in individuals. Organisations are well aware of the advantages of being pictured as trustworthy. Not only do the institutions which are entrusted with money need confidence. Carmakers, tobacco companies, nutrition, football clubs, universities, etc. all require a certain amount of public trust in order to perform, to become and to remain competitive, to sell products and services or to attract spectators to a football stadium. Although most people will form their attitudes and decisions based on direct experience or word-of-mouth stories, a part of trust remains which is influenced by media coverage. This is one of the reasons for the ongoing activities of PR and organisational communication, whose objective is to influence journalism. As described above an outstanding advantage of trust is its capacity to relieve people from primary experience.

It is important to note that it is by no means the predominant task of journalism to act as a trust creator for institutions, organisations or individuals. Nor is its mission to destroy trust. The main purpose of journalism is selection and presentation of information to a public. This public responsibility does not primarily include the power to develop or reduce trust. Yet, by pointing at malfunctions and violations of general or system-specific norms, journalism is capable of revealing the impression of an organisation, a person or a whole area of society as trustworthy or not. The question is not whether someone or something is trustworthy for journalists or journalism. Rather, at the core is the question of public trust (or parts of the public) in someone or something. Although it is often misjudged as the same: Journalism is not identical with the general public; it may create a public for something or someone, but first of all journalism provides information for the public. In this respect, it is irrelevant whether *individual journalists* trust or distrust certain persons or institutions; it is more relevant whether *people* trust or distrust them. With its (self)image as watchdog, journalism may be regarded as a representative of the public or its equivalent. (From this journalism derives most of its influence and power.) As a matter of fact, however, journalistic influence is based on its capability to find and present information about deviance or inadequate behavior of institutions and role holders.

Journalism research has produced numerous findings about the principles guiding the process of journalistic selection. Studies on news values and news factors clearly show that journalism prefers what is called – mostly from outside of journalism – bad news. Personalisation and dramatisation drive the process of selection and presentation as well as negativism, a preference for local, regional and national topics. Not everything that happens has the same chance to make it in the news, and what is selected to be newsworthy may not always be unbiased. (Eilders, 2006)

With respect to trust, the guidelines preferred in news selection like other principles that offer orientation along the journalistic work process are not designed to create trust towards the objects of news coverage. The coverage of undesirable developments and violations of norms, the tendency to focus on conflicts and contradictions, harsh criticism in cases of moral failure – all these preferences common in journalism contribute to the probability of decreasing rather than enhancing

trust. Some argue that this is precisely journalism's main function, i.e. to control through criticism. (Kovach/Rosenstiel, 2007)

In terms of trust and distrust, journalism plays a dialectical role. At the same time, it has the capacity to both develop and destroy trust in systems, organisations and individuals. Trust creation and trust destruction are two sides of the same coin. As I will argue further below in this chapter, public trust in journalism itself is based to a great deal on its capability to distrust. To gain trust in spite of manifold possibilities to lose trust is a great challenge for all parts of society.

3.1 Trust in Systems

The importance of journalism as a creator of trust becomes obvious by looking at scandals and crises. Bank and economic crises, doping and betting scandals in sport, disillusionment about politics and declining voter turnout, cases of abuse in churches and fraud and plagiarism in science are defects in certain areas of society, rooted within their particular system. Reporting on these cases and developments opens up to the possibility of to sow distrust towards the respective area. Media coverage draws attention to certain dysfunctions. And it is not only the general public that lays its attention on such malfunctions but also, which is sometime even worse, members of the respective institution: , e.g. fellow politicians, other athletes, fellow scientists.

Most of the areas of society rely more or less on social trust. It is difficult to imagine that politics, economics, education, science (and journalism) are able to fulfil their tasks without at least a certain amount of social trust. There has to be a general attitude that these parts operate according to their responsibilities. The need for trust emerged as a result of the differentiation process during in which a complexity evolved that can no longer be overlooked from one single point or by a single person. All social systems depend on social trust – a majority of which is created in the form of public trust through journalism.

The need for social trust and the role of public trust can be laid out by the example of the political system. The main task of politics is to make decisions that are collectively binding. These decisions are made on the basis and in the context of certain values and ideas, such as equal opportunities, social justice, equal participation, etc. Usually those who are in charge of making these decisions have been elected into office, offering them the legitimation to perform in the public interest. Media (this term is mostly used in political communication research and preferred by scholars of social sciences) or journalism contribute to the political process in many ways. On the one hand, journalism forms a public arena for debates in the process of political decision-making. By publishing different views on certain topics, journalism offers insight into current issues, giving the general public the potential to influence the political process. On the other hand, journalism acts as a distant observer with the power and legitimacy to control and criticise politics. Through reporting political action, e.g. a new legislation on social welfare, journalism demonstrates politicians' capability to come to a decision of public significance. Although there might be an ongoing debate whether a particular political action was right or wrong and although voices of deeply concerned people will not fall silent, journalism has made publicly visible that politics does what it is expected to do: namely, to perform politics. Keeping the citizens informed about political debate and political decisions every day is – in a very broad sense – a contribution to maintain trust in the ability of politics to continuously perform its task. In a differentiated society, however, politics does not have much choice at all to gain public trust without the help of news media.

The rapid expansion of strategic communication departments within organisations (companies, universities, governmental departments, hospitals, etc.) is an indicator of institutional awareness as regards their public image and reputation. This process is discussed as medalisation/meditisation of politics, science, sport, etc. (Lundby, 2009; Hepp et al., 2010)

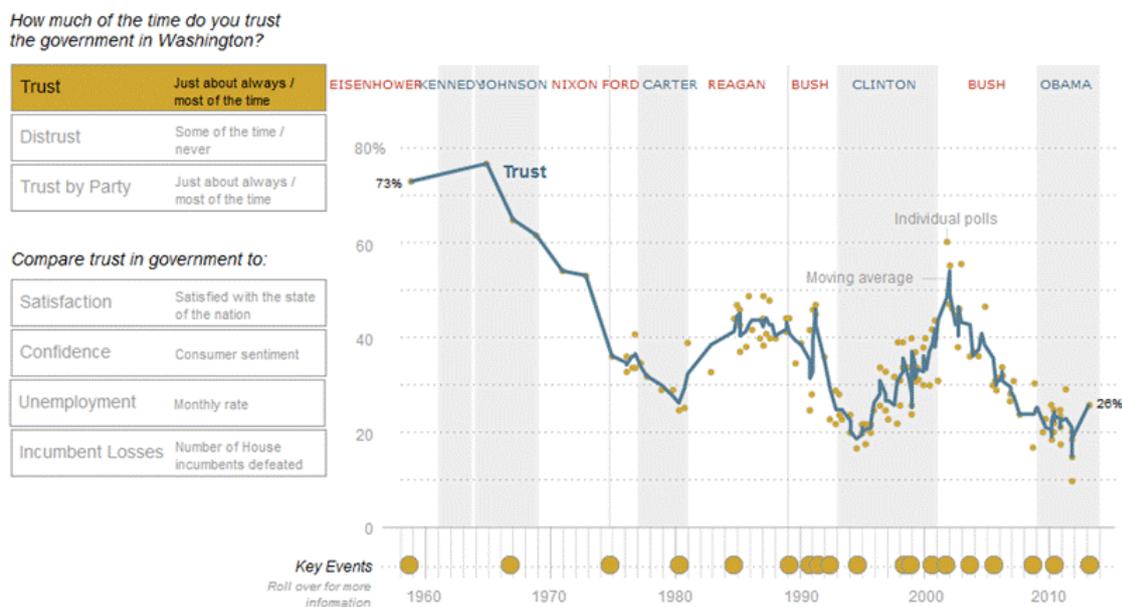
Journalism is not a pure disseminator of news from the political system, it is far away from acting as PR agency of politics. In the course of its history journalism has achieved the role of a critical institution in society. In most countries its legitimate role includes speaking up as a critical voice. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press, which are often anchored in the respective constitution, guarantee the status of a critical observer. In journalism, the potential to criticise is realised by collecting, selecting and presenting information and topics as well as through specific formats like editorials and comments. Certain privileges that journalists are granted, such as the obligation of public institutions to address journalistic requests (freedom of information acts), the protection of whistleblowers (which is mostly very weak) and the rights of journalists to protect their sources, support and legitimise journalists' role as critics of society. The journalistic potential to scandalize is not only a central foundation of the audiences trust in journalism. Journalism's role as a critical watchdog is also important for the creation of trust in the political system. In a certain way, allowing publically forwarded criticism contributes to maintaining public trust in politics because it shows and ensures people that political action is limited and that it can be influenced through a public which articulates its interests with the help of journalism. Journalism's legitimised power to create distrust in politics through critical reporting and scandalising simultaneously encapsulates the potential for creating trust for the political system.

From a political point of view, journalism represents the general public as a trustor. Politics depends on public support for the political system in general as well as its organisations and decision-makers. (Levy/Nielsen, 2010) Once again, the dialectical role of journalism becomes obvious: On the one hand, news media act as trustors by representing the public. On the other hand, journalism acts as trustee. Both politics and the public take over the role of trustors expecting a professional performance on behalf of the news media.

The arguments brought forward with regard to the political system also apply when changing focus from the political system as a whole to its particular institutions and organisations like political parties, government, national and supranational entities like the European Union, United Nations, and NGOs, etc. They all depend on public trust created at least to some extent through journalism. Furthermore, the interconnection between building trust based on the ability to develop distrust in the public sphere also holds true for politicians. They require public trust while at the same time being aware that they might face harsh criticism leading to individual distrust. The potential to come under public fire (often combined with friendly fire from the field of politics itself) may be frustrating for individual politicians, but it is the price they have to pay for trust. Trust and distrust are two sides of the same token, and you can never be sure of always standing on the sunny side.

Data from surveys show a decline of trust in major societal institutions. In some countries (especially in the Western world), the political system is facing a constant decrease of trust. This is the case for the US where trust in government has decreased. Again the graph indicates that trust is far away from being a stable phenomenon: From the beginning of the Clinton administration to the first year of the second Bush administration trust in US government jumps by more than 20 percentage points to almost 50%. Taking a look at the previous two decades shows that low figures of political trust were common in the US in the mid-1990s. However, the largest decrease of political trust according to the data published by the Pew Research Center took place between 1965 and 1980 (and therefore cannot be explained by the advent of the Internet).

Figure 2: Trust in US government



Source: www.people-press.org/2013/01/31/trust-in-government-interactive

Decreasing trust or increasing distrust is interpreted by scholars in different ways. Müller (2013, p. 13, referring to Capella, 2002) notes: “On the individual level, the trust in the news media and in political institutions correlates positively.” Distrust in politics may be interpreted as a thread in a sense of an eroding political system or as a perfectly normal process in a democracy with a critical attitude towards those in power. Scholars have found evidence that factors such as “well-being, perceived performance of the government, interpersonal trust, political interest, and democratic attitudes” support political trust. (Müller, 2013, pp. 16-17, referring to Catterberg/Moreno, 2006) There seems to be no correlation between social trust and political trust. “Democracies cultivate a distrust of power via an institutional setup that guarantees a separation of power (checks and balances). (...) In this sense, a low level of political trust is not necessarily bad.” (Müller, 2013, p. 18) But Müller also argues that “a societal system that relies on trust can act more effectively than a system that is forced to fall back on more expansive and less effective means of coordination like coercion.” (Müller, 2013, p. 19) Trust is simply cutting transaction costs.

Although the overall decline of public trust in politics and political institutions is an alarming signal we might also take an optimistic position. As a matter of fact, we do not really know why people lose their trust in government. Is it because of a particular scandal, is it because of a certain legislation, are they frustrated by individual members of the government or are they simply reacting to the media coverage of politics? When the public’s trust in politics decreases because of political reporting this may not be a major issue. Even showing the dark side of politics provides the certitude that politics performs (even if the performance is miserable); and more importantly it shows that politics is being observed and has to take into account the publically visible reaction. It is through this way that both trust and distrust contribute to ongoing process of politics at the same time.

The field of politics certainly plays a special role in journalism. Based on the demand for public legitimacy, politics, political institutions and politicians need journalism in order to reach their respective public. In news journalism, the traditional importance of politics is reflected in internal rankings of topics in news media. Usually, political news is featured in the cover story, newscasts

mostly start with political topics and front pages primarily contain political issues. Content analyses show that over the last decades topics and events from other parts of society such as economy, culture, science and even sport more often than before get the chance to make it on the front page or to the headlines in broadcast news programs. (Blöbaum et al., 2010; 2011) Assuming that media coverage reflects what is newsworthy in society, changes of journalistic judgement, and of criteria for selection and presentation, the slight loss as to the significance of politics and – at the same time – the increasing importance of other societal systems mirror two developments: The on-going differentiation of society which leads to the conclusion that all parts are of equal importance for its continuation; and the changing view of journalism with respect to its public that is no longer considered only as a group of citizens in a political environment but that is increasingly seen in its different roles, ranging from consumer to family members, from the individual interested in sport, science and cultural performances to shareholder, etc.

What has been described in some detail with regard to the relationship between politics, journalism and trust also applies to the triangle of trust, journalism and systems like economy, culture, sport, science and other parts of modern society. Journalism contributes to the process of developing and maintaining public trust towards them, in fact also through its potential to sow *distrust*. Once again, this does not only refer to the social entity as a whole but also to the various institutions, organisations and role holding individuals. However, some areas like science and sport are less often subject of editorial attentiveness and comment (which led to the accusation that science and sport journalists may not have enough experience with critical attitudes to cover scandals like doping or corruption in the international football organization FIFA).

Journalistic attention, whether it derives from the growing importance of the recipients in news media or from alterations in social systems, usually changes the rules of the game. This process is analysed as mediatisation and refers to the various alterations taking part in social systems in order to catch media attention. (Lundby, 2009) The creation of new sport events, the change of rules in sport, media training for scientists, CEOs and politicians and the rapidly growing importance of PR to mention only a few developments, are visible expressions of mutual observations and adjustments between journalism and those parts of society that happen to be subject of media attention. In recent years, religion (not belief!) has developed into a field with the capability to attract public attention. Special correspondents and a growing share in the news coverage are visible features of this process. And again: Journalistic attention can create trust in religion, yet it may also undermine trust e.g. by reporting abuses in various churches.

Data collected throughout the first wave of the Worlds of Journalism Study 2007-2011 show the amount of trust journalists associate with different systems of modern society. The figures presented here are based on interviews with 100 journalists in each of the participating countries. Among the countries selected we find variance in the degree of trust.

Table 5: Journalists' trust in social systems

	Australia	China	Germany	Pakistan	Uganda	USA
Government	3.02	3.69	3.35	2.64	2.53	2.46
The Judiciary	3.55	2.82	3.86	3.54	3.44	3.57
Political Parties	2.36	3.38	2.18	2.35	2.32	2.28
The Military	3.11	3.72	3.17	3.60	2.71	3.14
The News Media	3.09	3.28	3.53	3.84	3.83	3.36

Question: "Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 5 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions. 5 means you have complete trust, and 1 means you do not trust an institution at all." Source: Data compiled from the Words of Journalism Study 2007-2011 (www.worldsofjournalism.org)

Pakistani journalists show low trust in their government (which has seen a series of military and democratic regimes during the last decades). In contrast, trust in the legal system in this country is quiet strong. In China, the situation is reverse. Journalists' trust in government is significantly higher than in the judiciary. Australian journalists have comparatively little trust in political parties (which is not the same as the political system but can be regarded as a proxy for politics in general). Trust in political parties is even lower in Germany, a country where journalists trust news media far more than parties. Journalists in Pakistan and Uganda show remarkable high trust in their own institution. On the whole, the figures show a large variance of journalists' trust towards social systems around the world.

Journalism plays a dialectical role in the process of building and destroying trust in social systems. For most people media form the most important link between sport, science, politics, economy, etc. and themselves. Reporting ongoing affairs contributes to public trust in various social fields; but trust is a fragile state, and the ability to build trust is accompanied by the potential to destroy trust in the respective area of society. The potential to create trust encapsulates the opportunity to reduce trust. With regards to trust, media coverage can be both, a virtuous and a vicious circle.

3.2 Trust in Organisations

Systems are abstract entities. From the people's point of view, functional areas of society are represented by organisations and role holders of the respective system. Collective and corporative actors rely on public trust. For some organisations this form of trust is essential to survive, whereas others are more dependent on trust from other organisations. A manufacturer of special adhesives, used for the attachment of rear-view mirrors in cars, does not require public trust. Car companies, on the contrary, need to be able to trust the quality of that product and its efficient delivery. For other companies the public judgment of their services and products is essential to remain viable.

In terms of trust, there is no fundamental difference between the levels of systems and organisations. Public trust in journalism is based on its potential skills to cover moral failures, fraud, maladministration and malpractices in organisations. The journalistic competence and capacity to report not only in the interest of organizations but rather against it is one source of trust in journalism. According to Müller (2013, p. 32), "trust in institutions is defined as the belief that the perceived institutional performance conforms to the individual's expectations." Taking this into account, it becomes very clear that institutional performance is not only evaluated against the backdrop of organisational norms but also in terms of norms and moral values in a particular society. The public debate in Western countries about excessive bonuses for bankers and CEOs is not fueled

by professional failures but by a feeling of violating moral values in societies concerned about growing inequality.

3.3 Trust in Individuals

Although journalism has a tendency to cover persons it is important to note that individuals usually become a topic when performing a particular role. Journalism might pretend to be interested in an individual person but the attention is typically limited to a role or at least a part of it. In most cases, media coverage is devoted to professional roles when politicians, board members of companies, various experts from the world of science, managers and athletes receive attention in the news. But there are also other roles not connected with a certain expertise, occupation or profession: offenders and victims, bystanders, witnesses, family members, consumers, citizens, etc. Often the role holders represent a certain social system or a particular organisation (often lobbying groups), sometimes they are quoted as representatives of the public and in other non-official roles. Even when politicians invite journalists to do a home story they act primarily as representatives of the political system and try to capitalise on their family role for the sake of politics.

The journalistic interpretation of a range of political roles differs from country to country. While in Germany, for instance, the health status of a politician, his or her sexual orientation and his children are usually no subject of reporting (as long as societal norms (one has to pay taxes in a proper way) and values (he should not have sexual relations with a teenager) are not violated), while in the US family affairs and the state of health find their way into the news more easily. Despite differences in reporting between countries there are basically two standards of assessment that drive the journalistic coverage of persons (unless they are in the news because they represent an organisation): Journalism judges whether a person acts according to the professional rules in a particular area. And someone is judged with respect to the socially consented notions of morality. Because the reputation of an organisation and a person depends very much on the public impression, an entire industry of image and reputation managers works on the public images of organisations and individuals in senior positions.

The same holds true for individuals as for organisations: By exposing themselves to media coverage they have the opportunity to win over public trust. And becoming a public figure through media coverage and having built up a certain level of public trust, also with the help of journalism, further involves the risk of losing trust in the eyes of the public. At least initially, intuitively it seems obvious that some politicians are more trustworthy than others. What are the consequences of different degrees of trust? Can someone's level of trust fall from high to low or from trust to distrust? These questions remain to be solved by further research.

3.4 Journalism as a Trust Provider

Public trust is a relationship between two entities. The public (including segments of the public, organisations and individuals in various roles) takes the role of trustor. As for the trustee, we have societal systems with their institutions and organisations, and as individual actors we can identify persons in their professional roles (within their organisations and systems). In order to continue the relationship between "the general public" as the trustor and the trustee the trustor offers public trust. This form of trust is vital for the continuation of the relation, at the same time being essential for forthcoming actions, decisions and communications of the trustee on all levels (system, organisation and individual). A precondition for trust, both parts have an interest in continuing with

the relationship. What part does journalism play in this relation? Journalism provides the public with information generated in a specific system so that the audience knows what is going on as regards the trustee. Part of the media coverage (from news pieces to comment) carries components that support the process of trust building towards the trustee on behalf of the trusting public – or the decline of trust and maybe even mistrust. The continuous coverage of current affairs ensures that trust never remains in a static state. With journalism public trust becomes a process. Trust as a process is influenced by several variables. Although the antecedents of public trust have not been analysed in detail so far, we can assume that those preconditions that have been identified for personal trust also help understand the composition of public trust.

Figure 3: Trustor, journalism, trustee



The antecedents worked out by Mayer et al. (1995) – i.e. ability, benevolence and integrity – make up the propensity to trust a system (politics etc.), its organisation (political party etc.) and its role holders (politicians, leaders, secretaries, etc.). The characteristics of these features are – at least to a certain extent – influenced by journalistic coverage of the trustee’s actions, decisions and communication of the trustee. Public trust is the result of a complex interplay between public as a trustor, a system with its institutions and roles as trustees and journalism as an intermediary system that connects trustor and trustee. A system with its own structural components, journalism acts according to the programs it has developed during the time with a certain role set and within a certain organisational structure indispensable for news organisations. From the point of view of the trustee journalism has the potential to create public trust for the trustee. However, in this process journalism acts according to its own logic (which is always different from the trustee’s logic). Journalism turns a political action into a piece of journalism, transformed in line with journalistic formats such as a report, feature, etc. and highlighting aspects that are newsworthy from a journalistic point of view (drama, negativity, conflicts, etc.). Therefore, public trust is always threatened, it always remains momentary and vulnerable.

Although far more research is necessary for the purpose of a model we can assume that those factors influencing a trustor’s willingness and capability to trust a trustee at a systemic and organisational level are more or less the same as identified (see above) for individual trust:

Factors influencing trustors in a process of trust:

- Reputation of trustee
- Experience with trustee
- Appearance of trustee
- Accountability of trustee
- Competence of trustee
- Benevolence (belief to do good)
- Consistency of past actions
- Credible communication
- Sense of trustees justice

Journalism acts as an agent or broker in the relation between the general public and a specific social area. One component of this relationship is trust. And within journalism it is its general ability to create distrust that at the same time enhances its capacity to build trust. Similar to face-to-face communication, the roles of trustor and trustee are interchangeable. If the general public and particular parts of society are considered as trustees in relation to specific systems, organisations and individuals in their roles, the process of trust development, based on the capability to distrust, remains the same. Similarly, the role of journalism does not change, either.

In order to provide politics and other parts of society with trust journalism itself needs public trust (see chapter 4). The process of trust building between the public and the social world which journalism is part of can be modelled as a spiral. The metaphor of the spiral indicates that trust can oscillate between high and low trust. At any given point of the spiral there are three options: trust can remain stable, trust can decrease and trust can increase. Which option is realised depends on actions and communications of the trustee (politics, sport, science ...), on the way these actions are reported and it is dependent on various factors inherent to the individual trustor: his or her propensity to trust (which is based on experience with the trustee, on socialisation, competence ...). Media coverage influences the trustor's perception of the trustee through the creation of certain impressions which may develop or destroy trust. Journalism not only acts as an intermediate between trustor and trustee. It also keeps the spiral of trust visible. And journalism itself is an active element in moving trustees up or down.

4. Trust in Journalism

After outlining an overall understanding of journalism, trust and the process of trust creation through journalism it is necessary to put those factors in the limelight that help develop trust in journalism. Generally speaking, we have to consider two trust relations: 1) systemic, organisational and individual trust in journalism and 2) recipients' trust in journalism. Although there are certainly differences as regards these relations the underlying principles in terms of trust are similar. In a very general way both components, system and public, have to trust journalism's ability to perform professionally. This chapter focuses mainly on the trust relationship between audiences and journalism and discusses the recipients' trust in the journalistic system and its particular components.

Although some research has been carried out in his dissertation published in 2013 Müller states that "comparatively little attention" is dedicated to studying trust in news media. He stresses the importance of trust in media: "While a certain level of distrust towards democratic institutions (including the news media) is a healthy characteristic of a democratic system, a very low level of trust could endanger the proper functioning of the news media system. A very low believability is not helpful when it comes to informing the public." (Müller, 2013, p. 21)

Journalists have a responsibility to behave in such a way that public trust in journalism is not compromised. The principles of the American Society of Newspaper Editors formulate: "Newspapermen and women who abuse the power of their professional role for selfish motives or unworthy purposes are faithless to that public trust." (www.asne.org)

According to Habermas (1989) and others, the public sphere can be modelled as an arena in which a mutual understanding of common norms and values is reached through processes of communication. Although strong forces with political and economic power constantly try to obtain influence in the public sphere it remains the field of society where citizens can reach understanding. Journalism's function is to permanently create the public sphere and to deliver input in form of news and opinions. With the help of reporting ongoing routines of the political system are contested. This helps politics to readjust its actions and decisions. Journalists' habit of trying to report in a neutral way and provide balanced information contributes highly to their reputation as trusted provider of information for a public.

The public sphere does not provide equal opportunities for all participants. Elite groups and powerful organisations can disseminate their concerns and interests via public relations easier than others. Another problem is private ownership of media. Private ownership opens an opportunity to promote one's own interests. It remains open whether such corporate interests drive media coverage. They certainly constitute a threat for independent journalism. Hence, examining whether private ownership as a potential harm to professional journalism has a significant effect on trust in news media is worthwhile.

Flagship newspapers are often owned by families (over a long period of time) and by trusts. The proportion of revenues at German newspapers has shifted significantly since the advertising crisis at the turn of the century: Whereas two thirds of the turnover used to come from advertising and one third from readers through subscription and copy sales, today two thirds of sales are based on readership payments. According to a deliberative model of the public sphere, this can be interpreted as a shift from economic influence to public influence. In a certain way, the general public gets more power at the expense of economic power.

For analytical reason it seems meaningful to divide the general field of trust in journalism into sub-categories: trust in the system of journalism, which overlaps with trust in news media, trust in journalistic organisations and trust in journalistic roles and programs/practices.

4.1 Trust in the System of Journalism

Empirical research usually does not refer to trust in journalism as a social institution but rather to media, mainly to news media in one country in particular. However, we can assume that when questioned respondents associate trust with content rather than for example the quality of distribution or printing when asked about trust in media. Before presenting some data on public trust in journalism it seems worthwhile to distinguish between different actors that perform the role of trustor in relation to journalism as trustee. Usually we talk of the “general public”. This general concept has to be differentiated in order to understand the nature of trust relations. From the perspective of the journalistic system, journalism is observed and used by the following entities:

- other social systems like politics, science, economy, sport in general; this observation is composed of many particular observations through
- organisations such as parties, government and their departments, universities, companies, clubs, etc. They follow journalistic reporting in order to get information about themselves, other systems and organisations. Besides, journalism is also observed by
- individuals, who usually act in a specific role such as politician, professor, CEO, athlete, etc.

For analytical purposes we shall describe different systems, organisations and individuals in their roles as the environment of journalism. In terms of trust, it is fruitful to distinguish two general forms of relations between journalism and its environment: On the one hand, individual and collective actors generate topics, events, themes journalism may consider to report on. In this respect, the journalistic environment is a field of events, actions, communication observed by journalism. On the other hand – yet at the same time – the realm outside of journalism is the objective of reporting. In order to serve its environment by providing information journalism covers exactly this particular environment. With the differentiation of sections within news organizations such as politics, economy, sport, and science, journalism has not only raised its ability to cover events of these areas more thoroughly, it also offers persons from these fields or with a specific interest in these sections an opportunity to quickly reach what they want. Certainly, sport journalism is not only performed for athletes but rather offers facts and figures for all people including those with a fondness for sport. In summary, the journalistic environment is both a constant *source* for news reporting and a constant *customer* of journalistic content at the same time.

The constellation outlined has profound consequences for trust relations: As a never dwindling source of information the systems, organisations and roles outside of journalism perform as trustees. Journalism as a trustor has to balance the risk of reporting selected parts of the constant flow of information. Conceptualising the environment of journalism as the general public turns the roles around: The public and its elements become trustors who trust journalism as a trustee. One consequence of this differentiation is: With regard to its sources journalism has to successfully build trust in its information gathering program. And it has to signal trustworthiness towards a general public in when it comes to presenting.

So at the end of the day, journalism finds itself in a double-bind position: as trustor and trustee at the same time. The two forms of journalistic trust liaison contain all relevant aspects of a relationship built on trust. Journalism as trustor is very much interested in developing and maintaining trust with

its sources, i.e. those people and organisations beyond journalism that produce events and information worthwhile to report. And the various sources are also interested in keeping up the relation to the trustor because they rate the benefits provided by this relationship higher than potential risks. Journalism as a trustee is – as mentioned above – highly dependent on the trust of the public, which itself is willing to maintain this relationship because it benefits from the constant supply of information.

What is true in general for relationships of trust holds true also in this constellation: Trust is – above all – linked to a specific matter. This matter is the particular content of communication, a fact, a description, a judgment. Furthermore, trust is, on the one hand, a prerequisite for the process of gathering information (journalism as a trustor has to trust its sources); on the other hand, it is a precondition for the reception of journalistic content. The analytical distinction between the two roles of journalism in the process of trust is necessary in order to provide starting points for empirical analysis.

What is the basis of recipients' trust in journalism? Müller refers to four mechanisms that "guide the audience when assessing the trustworthiness of the news media; instrumental mastery, familiarity, trust, and distrust. Instrumental mastery is based on a rational assessment of the situation. Familiarity fosters trust because few other options to trust are available to the audience. Trust is based on the belief in trustworthiness. Distrust is the opposite of trust." (Müller, 2013, p. 33) While Müller creates trust and distrust as an antithesis of trust, this paper argues that trust and distrust perform a dialectical relationship.

According to Müller, news media are an example for an expert system. "Journalists are experts on picking up what is relevant in the world. The audience trusts the media expert system to convey relevant and true information. The nature of trust is anonymous. There is usually no direct contact between the reader or the viewer and the journalist, writer, reporter or anchor. (...) On the front stage, journalists transport assurance of truth and relevance. On the back stage, journalists are confronted with the complexity of the world and the need to make choices, which are at times arbitrary or even run counter to the norms of relevance and truth that are conveyed on the front stage (e.g. choices that are dictated by economic or political influence.)" (Müller, 2013, p. 54)

In his comparative analysis Müller (2013) examines a paradoxical situation. Empirical research shows a higher degree of trust in news media in countries with authoritarian regimes and a decline of trust in journalism in Western countries, which enjoy a high level of press freedom. With high levels of trust being "conducive to the sustainment of authoritarian regimes", Müller (2013, p. 153) indicates that "falling levels of trust, instead, are undermining the legitimation of non-democratic news media and contribute to a process of democratization. In this sense, low levels of trust are rather an expression of a critical distance from the news media, which is part of an effective democracy." News media in authoritarian regimes are used for the legitimation of the regime in power, whereas media in democracies are expected to criticise political power. Müller suggests that "a certain level of emancipative values and distrust must be reached before a process of democratization in the institutional level kicks off." (Müller, 2013, p. 159) He found "hardly any impact of emancipative value change on the levels of trust in the individual level." (Müller, 2013, p. 147)

The author provides some references as to which factors influence recipients' trust building in journalism. Referring to the need-of-cognition concept (also known as the elaboration likelihood model) and the cognition-mediation-model in social psychology, in a survey among German students he finds that trust in news media is mediated by interest in politics. "Emancipative values affect interest in politics positively, which, in turn, has a strong positive impact on trust in the news media." (Müller, 2013, p. 173) And: "Need-for-cognition is positively associated with trust." (Müller, 2013, p.

175) Emancipative values are a result of socio-economic, cultural and institutional development. Emancipation from traditional role models, from religion and authority in Western countries leads to a more open society, entailing respective effects on trust.

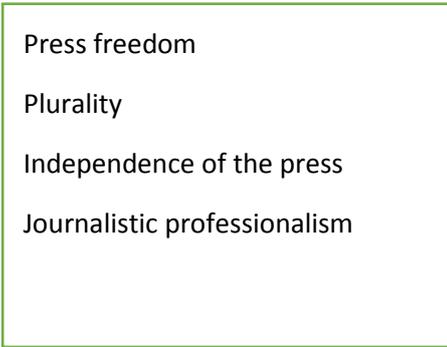
A global poll by BBC, Reuters and the Media Center about trust in media published in 2006 and based on a sample of 10,230 adults questioned in the USA, UK, Germany, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Russia and South Korea shows that more people trust the media than their government. "Media is trusted by an average of 61 percent compared to 52 percent for governments across the countries polled. But the US bucked the trend – with government ahead of media on trust (67% - 59%) along with Britain (51% - 47%)." (BBC/Reuters/Media Center Poll, 2006).

In Müller's sample students had more trust in those news media they use than in news media in general. (2013, p. 174) Hence, one could assume a decrease of trust in media in general or in specific formats like press, TV, Radio, Internet, while at the same time trust in a particular media outlet (New York Times, Guardian, Süddeutsche Zeitung, BBC, etc.) might increase. (Another paradox in the relation of trust and journalism.) Jakob distinguishes between latent and manifest causes of trust in media, forming together the general trust in media. Individual predispositions, socialisation and media-access restrictions are listed as latent causes while patterns of media use, media image and experience with media stand for manifest causes. (Jakob 2012, 102)

Trust in journalism does not appear out of the blue. It emerges from a process of socialisation which is rooted in an overall social experience of the role and capability of news media.

4.1.1 Trust in Journalism as a Historical Achievement

Trust in media/journalism is a historical achievement. In the Western world, journalism has worked for more than a century on developing and maintaining trust. Especially during severe fights for press freedom and in constant struggles to defend this accomplishment, journalism has proven its willingness to remain independent of political influence. Although there is a great variety of journalisms around the world some key elements can be identified that enhance the capability to constitute journalism as a trustworthy social institution. From a normative point of view, preconditions for public trust in media and journalism are:



- Press freedom
- Plurality
- Independence of the press
- Journalistic professionalism

Although there are certainly more common prerequisites for trust these aspects are fundamental in the world of media; yet it is heavily disputed whether these conditions can be claimed as universal or whether they are limited to a Western understanding of media and society. Press freedom, plurality of media and independence of media are linked to the media system. They refer to the role of mass media in general and they are interlinked. Freedom of the press includes its independence. Data from the PEW Research Center show a dramatic increase in the portion of people in the US assuming

that the press is “often influenced by powerful people and organizations.” In 1985, 53% of the respondents agreed to this statement, in 2011 the share was 80%. (www.pewresearch.org)

Plurality has two dimensions. On the one hand, it refers to the media system in general which has to provide the conditions for plurality of media types (TV, radio, online, print) and of media organisations (various newspapers, broadcast programs, etc.) Society, especially politics, economics and the legal system, has to provide a framework that ensures media plurality. On the other hand, this form of variety refers to the journalistic system in particular. Plurality in journalism is reflected in the coexistence of sections in news organisations (politics, business, sport, culture ...) and in the juxtaposition of different views in journalistic content. In this regard, it is also an element of the professionalism of journalism.

“It can be shown that a differentiated media system that responds to the preferences of the audience is conducive to trust in the news media. People select those news media that fit their need best and put more trust in these media.” (Müller, 2013, p. 199) Contemporary journalism benefits from the history of media and the evolution of journalism. In most countries, press freedom is guaranteed through the constitution. Although in some areas of the world it may exist as a constitutional yet not de facto right press freedom is always considered as an antecedent of journalism.

A closer look into empirical data on trust in media quickly reveals a paradox: “Levels of trust in the news media are often higher in authoritarian countries.” (Müller, 2013, p. 9) Do we have to worry about decreasing trust in journalism? In his survey Müller found “the strongest loss of trust” in countries with free news media (and a market-oriented public sphere). “It can be confirmed that state interventions in the public sphere to ensure quality and plurality have a positive effect.” (Müller, 2013, p. 132) He also found that diversity of media strengthens trust in news media. (Müller, 2013, p. 159)

The ideas outlined in this chapter are based on a deliberative model of the public sphere. This model denies a pure market model the ability to create a journalistic system that constantly provides relevant and credible information because of the influence of political and economic power. From this point of view, media market regulations are necessary, and institutional forms like public service media have to be supported in order to maintain a news media environment that is not influenced by strong political and economic actors. Diverse and pluralistic media contribute to maintaining the functions of journalism. Müller (2013, p. 176) notes: “a differentiated media system is able to reduce the complexity of modern societies.”

Furthermore, recipients trust journalism because of its professionalism. Professionalism creates and maintains trust. Professionalism does not only refer to the individual journalist’s performance but also to the news organisation in general. Professionalism stands for journalism performing responsibly according to its values and norms. Trust in journalism is based on the journalistic capability to research, select, coordinate and present information in a professional way. (Professionalism in journalism is outlined in detail further below.)

The trust relationship between journalism and the general public is characterised by a paradoxical situation: Journalism’s function in society is based on its ability to draw attention to malfunctions and the violation of norms and values in parts of society. Recipients trust journalism because of its capacity to distrust politics, economy, etc. Journalism proves its trustworthiness through the competence to distrust.

4.1.2 Trust in Journalism as a Product of Socialisation

Public trust in journalism is based on a general understanding that media report reliably. It is part of the individual as well as part of the collective socialisation of individuals in society that they can trust media content journalists have put together. Generally speaking people learn at school and often at home or through other institutions of socialisation that they can rely on news content. In general, people have no bad experience with news. People grow up with news media and rely on information from TV, radio, in the press and online, and they learn that similar topics are covered in different media. Although there are complaints in many countries about young people losing their interest in news media, this does not affect the quality of journalism as a trustworthy institution in general.

Socialisation is understood as an on-going process starting in early childhood. With regard to journalism, two kinds of socialisation can be distinguished: socialisation with journalism/media and socialisation through journalism/media. The first aspect refers to the fact that each individual is in one way or another in touch with journalism. From childhood to adult life mass media and journalistic content accompany people. Journalistic products are part of teaching material at school, families may subscribe to newspapers or consume news content more or less frequently in one way or another. People get used to media not only as a form of entertainment but also as a source of information for current affairs. The knowledge about the result of the latest football match, the discussion about a financial crisis, the increase of tuition fees may spread out through word of mouth. In most cases, information about societal issues is not based on personal experience but on journalistic content. The consumption of news media itself is an ongoing process of socialisation. (Grusec et al., 2008)

Through this individuals get used to news media as a constant source of reliable information about different aspects of society. And usually there is no need to question the credibility of media content. Therefore, trust in journalism is the result of a permanent process of socialisation through educational institutions, families and peers. At the same time it is an on-going event accompanied by media consumption. People adapt to the fact that journalism provides more or less useful information – and through their own experience they learn of the advantages and disadvantages of particular media.

Socialisation provides individuals with a sound appreciation of the reputation of news media in general and of certain media they use in particular. Moreover, people develop a sense of journalism's accountability and competence based on experience. Journalism is experienced as a constant supplier of reliable information with a high credibility. Everyone may tell stories of bad coverage, faults and misleading journalistic performance – in the same way everybody has a say on doctors with a wrong diagnosis and teachers with poor teaching. But in general the health and education systems are trusted – so is the journalistic system.

Interestingly enough, an on-going experience with news media does not strengthen trust in journalism. On the contrary, the longer people read papers, watch and listen to news, the more likely they are to lose trust in media. Scholars observe various reasons for a change of trust in news media. On the one hand it is argued that journalism itself is responsible for a decrease of credibility. Negative reporting and infotainment are in this view responsible for less trust in media. (Patterson 1993) On the other hand, arguments mention fundamental changes in society as reasons for lower levels of trust. As a matter of fact, there is empirical evidence for a decrease of trust in societal institutions. In his literature review, Müller links the distance vis-à-vis institutions to basic processes of individualisation and emancipation from authority. "The quality of the news media did not change. Instead, the audience has become increasingly critical and applied to more rigid standards." (Müller,

2013, p. 30) Differentiation and specialisation of social systems increase complexity and challenge trust.

On the individual level, “news media use and an elaborative processing of the news media have a positive impact on trust.” (Müller, 2013, p. 36) “Individuals who score high on self-expression values and secular-rational values tend to be better educated, have a higher income, and score higher on interpersonal trust. (...) It can be reasoned that this group applies stricter standards when it comes to the evaluation of the performance of democratic institutions. However, there is probably no simple linear relationship between education, income, the emergence of emancipative values and a loss of trust in the news media.” (Müller, 2013, p. 32)

Effects of socialisation on trust building are multifaceted: In general, experience with media creates and develops trust in journalism to a certain level; constantly being affected by news media may then increase critical views of social institutions including journalism. This supports the notion of a dialectical process of trust. Trust in journalism encapsulates the idea of distrust – it may even be a precondition for that – and extends the ability to question trust.

4.2 Trust in Journalistic Organisations

Mass media and editorial departments are two relevant journalistic organisations. The foundations of trust in media have been achieved in the history of journalism and are continuously renewed through media performance. But how can specific news organisations such as newspapers, magazines, broadcast programs or online outlets gain trust? On the timeline, a medium needs time to perform. Certain newspapers and magazines have had more than two centuries to build their reputation as trustworthy medium. Others like broadcast programs have had decades to achieve this and today online news organisations might need some time to gain a level of trustworthiness. By far the strongest feature of a journalistic organisation in terms of trust is its reputation. The public recognition of a news organisation as an entity that can be trusted is based on its former and on-going performance.

The constraints of investment certainly represent a high obstacle for newcomers in the media market. So is the fact that each new organisation intending to deliver journalistic content needs time to develop trust in its performance. Therefore, it is no coincidence that legacy media usually expand their activities by sticking to their established brand name. Associated with this is confidence that the core brand’s reputation might be transferred to new offshoots. BBC 1, BBC 2, BBC 3, nyt.com, guardian.com, Zeit Campus, Spiegel Geschichte are examples marking the process of brand transformation. (See also chapter 6.)

Unfortunately data on trust and media are most frequently related to (news) media in general. Less often different types of media like print, TV, radio or online become subject of surveys. And only in a few cases does trust research focus on a specific medium (as the Guardian, Washington Post, BBC, Fox, Der Spiegel, ...).

Surveys show different amounts of trust with respect to media. Data made available by the PEW Research Center in the US indicate a higher level of recipients’ trust in local news media than in national news organisations. Trust in political actors and institutions is significantly lower than trust in news media.

Table 6: Trust in media and government in the US

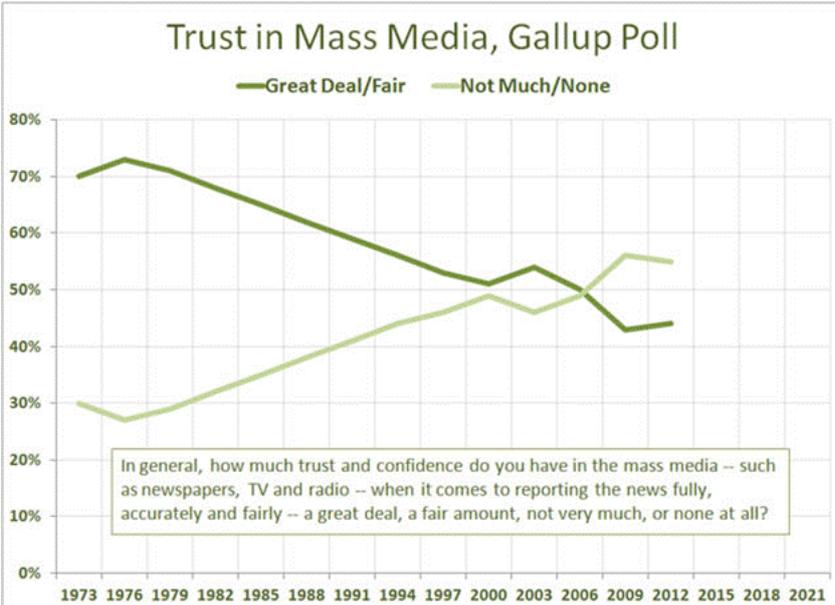
	Not much/none	A lot/some
Local news organisations	28 %	69 %
National news organisations	39 %	59 %
Your state government	47 %	51 %
The Obama Administration	48 %	50 %
Federal govt agencies	54 %	44 %
Business corporations	56 %	41 %
Congress	59 %	37 %
Candidates running for office	68 %	29 %

Source: PEW Research Center

It should be noted that the survey refers to the supply of information which is regarded as the central function of journalism.

Nevertheless, in the case of the US longitudinal research indicated a decline of trust in the last three decades. Data based on Gallup Polls and presented by Rosen (www.pressthink.org/2012/04/rosens-trust-puzzler-what-explains-falling-confidence-in-the-press/) form a picture that recalls an image of pincers. During the last decade the number of respondents stating that they have “not much/none” trust in mass media for the first time exceeded those who assessed their level of trust at “a great deal” or “fair”.

Figure 4: Decline of trust in media in the US



Source: Rosen, J. (2012). www.pressthink.org/2012/04/rosens-trust-puzzler-what-explains-falling-confidence-in-the-press/

Data from the US Gallup Poll also show a decline of trust in specific media formats over the past years. At first sight, figures seem to be alarming. However, a decline of trust in news media corresponds with a decrease of trust in other institutions in the US (except the military).

Table 7: Trust in media formats in the US

	1973	1983	1993	2003	2013
Newspaper	39 %	38 %	31 %	33 %	23 %
Television News	-	-	46 %	35 %	23 %

“Great deal/quite a lot of trust”. Source: www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx#2

Trust research in general indicates a decline of trust in Western countries. However, rearranging and redefining certain questions just slightly can lead to different results. A poll on behalf of BBC, Reuters and the Media Center in 2006 considers “most important news sources” as most trusted ones (an interpretation that can be questioned). Although findings show a wide range of different sources news media are by far the most important supplier of information. Differences among countries stress the importance of cultural effects. Unlike other surveys, a report by GlobalScan identifies an increase of trust in news media in the UK and US.

Table 8: Trust in news sources in different countries

Country	Source 1	Source 2	Source 3	Source 4	Source 5
US	Local newspaper 81 %	Friends and family 76 %	National television 75 %	National/regional newspaper 74 %	Public broadcast radio 73 %
UK	National television 86 %	Friends and family 78%	National/regional newspaper 75 %	Local newspaper 75 %	Public broadcast radio 67 %
Brazil	National/regional newspapers 68 %	National television 66 %	Local newspapers 64 %	Friends and family 57 %	International TV stations 45 %
Germany	Public broadcast radio 83 %	National TV 81 %	National/regional newspapers 80 %	Local newspapers 74 %	-
India	National/regional newspapers 85 %	National television 85 %	Local newspapers 76 %	Friends and family 70 %	Public broadcast radio 69 %

“A lot” and “some trust”. Question: Please tell me which of the following is your **most important news source** in an average week. Would it be a) A newspaper, b) A newsmagazine, c) Television, d) Radio; - International, - National, - Regional (within country), - Local; e) The Internet, - News/current affairs web site, - An internet ‘blog’ / weblog, - Other on-line source; f) Friends, family and colleagues, - In-person, - Telephone, - E-mail.

Source: www.globescan.com/news_archives/bbcreut.html

Blogs and websites score very low in the survey. Other findings reported from this poll based on 10,230 interviews in ten countries include: “Two in three people believe news is reported accurately (65%), but more than half (57%) believe governments interfere too much with the media and only 42 percent think journalists can report freely. People are divided on whether the media covers all sides of a story, with 41 percent disagreeing. (...)Three of four (77%) prefer to check several news sources instead of relying on just one, especially Internet users. (...)Trust in media has increased overall over the last four years — in Britain up from 29 percent to 47 percent and in the US from 52 percent to 59 percent.” (www.globescan.com/news_archives/images/bbcreut_1t.jpg)

The ten country poll from 2006 emphasises the prominent role of legacy media in terms of trust. Newspapers, TV and radio are at the top of the list of trusted news channels.

Findings from a survey studying the readership of a German national daily newspaper (die tageszeitung) support the outstanding significance of traditional media with regard to trust. (Table 9)

Table 9: Credibility of news media

Medium	Mean Value
Newspaper	2,61
Weekly newsmagazine	2,39
Radio	2,24
TV	1,77
Internet	1,43

Mean value (0= not a feature at all, 3= very strong feature). Source: Blöbaum, 2012, p. 77

Looking at different surveys, it remains difficult to get a consistent view of recipients' trust in journalistic organisations. Different questions and divergent ways of interpretation generate an unclear picture. However, it appears appropriate to conclude that the Internet is far from being trusted as much as legacy media. Traditional media are still seen as reliable providers of journalistic information. Despite the fact that news media – like other institutions – suffer from a general decline of trust in the Western world it cannot be overlooked that they are regarded as disseminator of relevant information. Trust in user-generated content is lower than in content from news media. "These findings suggest that it is not so much the channel of communication that matters for the evaluation of trust. Instead, it is the form of organisation that matters." (Müller, 2013, p. 111)

4.3 Trust in Journalistic Roles

Why should a journalist be trusted? Recipients trust in journalists is rooted in their professionalism. The general public typically perceives an individual journalist in his or her professional role. Journalists appear on screen, we hear them on the radio and may read their names in a byline in a print product. In general, no personal relationship between audience and journalists exists. The recipients' trust relationship is not linked to an individual journalist (though there may be exceptions) but to the professional role of the journalist. Like in medicine, in education, in science and other systems, clients have to rely on experts without being capable of controlling their expertise. Trust in journalists has its roots in the overall trust in journalism in general and in the more specific trust in the particular news organisation journalists work for.

Although individual features like appearance, voice, intonation, writing style might – to a little extent – contribute to the development of trust in a journalist the readership mainly expects a professional performance. There may be several reasons for different levels of trust towards different journalists, but this trust is usually rooted in the professional behavior of the individual. To act professionally means to stick to the norms and values of journalism and to carry out the journalistic programs of research, selection, coordination and presentation in a professional way. Readers, viewers, listeners and users cannot evaluate whether a journalist carries out his work professionally or not. This lack of control leads to the necessity of trust in journalism.

Public trust in journalistic roles is not easy to investigate. Most surveys on trust deal with media in general. Whereas some studies do indeed differentiate between journalists, these surveys usually link a journalist in general to a media format. Besides this, there are findings about trust in various professions where journalists are compared with other occupations.

A study in Germany discovers a lack of trust in journalists. In a telephone survey less than half of the respondents expressed trust in journalists. (Donsbach et al., 2009) Data from the UK supports these findings.

Table 10: Trust in journalists and other professions/occupations in GB

Profession	Great deal/ fair amount of trust
Family doctors	82 %
School teachers	74 %
Judges	66 %
Local police officers	68 %
BBC News journalists	57 %
ITV News journalists	51 %
Journalists up-marked papers (e.g. Guardian, Telegraph)	43 %
Journalists mid-market papers (e.g. Mail, Express)	19 %
Journalists on red-top tabloid papers (e.g. Sun, Mirror)	10 %

Question: How much do you trust the following to tell the truth? Source: www.yougov.com (2012)

Data from a poll among 1,583 adults in Great Britain carried out in November 2012 shows that trust in journalists is highly dependent on the specific news organisation they work for. This result supports the assumption that the reputation and journalistic profile of a specific media organisation are in fact the object of trust. Trust in the journalistic role is closely linked to particular news organisations. Those media with a distinguished journalistic profile in the understanding of this paper enjoy far more trust than tabloids which will not be regarded as a source of information about relevant societal topics in general. Even estate agents (14%) are more trustworthy than tabloid journalists in GB.

In terms of experience with journalism the survey delivers a remarkable result. For all media outlets, the portion of people with a great deal and a fair amount of trust in journalists is for all media outlets larger in the younger age group (y18-24) than in the oldest group (y60+). This might indicate that a growing experience with news media does not result in an increase of trust. Older recipients seem more critical about media which may lead to less trust. Alternatively, their media expertise might teach them to become more suspicious. School teachers and family doctors are far more trusted among the oldest age group than by the 18 to 24 year olds. A similar Gallup survey finds the same effect for newspaper readership in the US (18 to 29 year olds: 30% trust a great deal/quite a lot; 64+: 22%) Life experience probably entails a growing critical distance towards societal institutions which leads to a decline of trust – including trust in journalism, the institution that provides insights which in turn lead to a decline of trust.

Data from the UK reveal a decline of trust over the last decade for nearly all occupations, with the exception of “people who run large companies” (trust 2003: 20%, 2012: 23%). Journalism finds itself in good company in terms of decreasing portions of trust. But according to the YouGov poll they have

lost far more trustworthiness as to telling the truth than all other professions. Particularly striking is a comparison of trust rates for BBC and ITV news journalists from October 2012 and November 2012. The portion of people believing that BBC and ITV journalist can be trusted to a great deal or a fair amount to tell the truth drops sharply from 57% to 44% for the BBC and from 51% to 41% for ITV. At the end of November 2012, shortly after the survey was conducted, the Leveson Report was published in the UK. Following in-depth and long enquires the report uncovers bad practices common among the British press, including the phone hacking scandal, data theft and various other abuses. The statement also includes recommendations for regulations to prevent future malpractice.

The significant decline of trust in the BBC within a period of only four weeks follows the rows concerning the resignation of the company's Director-General, who was said to be responsible for preventing that reports on child abuse crimes by former BBC star Jimmy Savile be aired. The analysis emphasizes the volatility of trust in journalism and its dependency even on single events. Media scandals produce negative effects not only for the respective news media organisation; rather the effect accumulates in a decline of trust in general. Peter Kellner, a journalist and President of YouGov, writes: "It is as if scandals surrounding a handful of journalists and their managers in one organization have damaged the reputation of other journalists operating in the same medium, irrespective of their organization." (www.yougov.co.uk/news/2012/11/13/problem-trust/) According to the data from YouGov, the phone hacking scandal connected to the News of the World did not only affect the trust level of tabloids but also of mid- and up-market newspapers. Malpractice of a particular journalist does not only affect him or her but also damages the trustworthiness of the news organisation and journalism in general.

4.4 Trust in Journalistic Programs/Practices

As pointed out above, trust in journalism is first and foremost trust in the system's ability to perform professionally. What is the case in other social systems like medicine, science, economy, politics or sport also applies to journalism. Laypersons lack insight into the proceedings inside of news organisations. Processes of news gathering as well as how news is handled and content tailored remain unknown to most of the people. Films, novels and other fictional representations of journalism may create an impression of journalistic work, yet they remain fictional and are not judged as documentaries.

As trustors recipients trust journalism as a trustee. The audience's perception of journalism usually concentrates merely on journalistic content. Journalism appears as media content. What are the benefits of news media for recipients? By consuming news, an individual obtains information about a topic or an event beyond his or her own range of experience. News journalism provides facts and contexts about current affairs. Journalism extends the knowledge of a person and provides information for further actions and communication. In order to profit from these benefits the trustor takes the risk of making himself vulnerable. Unable to control what is offered in journalism a trustor always gives in to uncertainties, irrespective of whether news is relevant for immediate action, for further communication or just stored in the knowledge base of an individual. In the worst case information provided by a journalistic organisation is false. Other risks include incomplete news, false contextualisations or a minor risk could be that news is not up to date. Everyone relying on a piece of journalism makes himself vulnerable by trusting media content.

"The news media can be trusted by the audience if it selects relevant facts and positions from public discourses and presents them without bias and distortion. (...) The audience trusts the news media to the extent that it shares the belief that the decisions the journalists make can be justified according

to subjective and expressive truthfulness, normative rightness, and theoretical truth.” (Müller, 2013, p. 81) In this light it becomes clear that trust in journalism is first of all trust in its capability to gather information properly, to select relevant and current news and to present it in a clear and comprehensible manner. Above all, trust in journalism means to trust the journalistic programs and practices of research, selection and presentation. The amount of risk and the level of vulnerability vary, depending on the consequences following a recipient’s further action (or his decision to refrain from a potential action). In most cases content provided by journalists will just enhance the knowledge base. But in certain cases reporting might change attitudes and behavior. Such effects of journalism may not necessarily be intended by news media. As research on media effects shows simple stimulus and response models cannot provide sufficient explanations: Reports about tax havens may undermine the general willingness to pay taxes, covering fraud in sport, politics and science has the potential to reduce the general trust in these areas of society. In this context it becomes obvious that trust in journalism is a precondition for trust through journalism (Kohring, 2002, p. 104). The amount of public trust in systems, organisations and role holders is highly dependent on news coverage – and so is the amount of distrust. Trust in journalism can create mistrust in specific parts of society. According to Kohring (2002, p. 102), it is almost impossible to develop trust in societal institutions without journalism. (See also chapter 3.)

Recipients trust in the journalistic ability to research, select, coordinate and present news is the nucleus of trust in journalism. Readers, users, listeners and viewers trust those manuals guiding the work process in newsrooms. The importance of journalistic performance can be derived from the fact that violation of norms is itself an object of concern within journalism. “Part of the journalistic code is the exposure of violations of professional norms in the news media. Journalistic practices that violate norms of journalistic independence and appropriateness are scandalized in the news media. Journalistic practices are thereby measured against professional norms and possibly modified in light of these norms.” (Müller, 2013, p. 55)

Information oriented journalism has not changed gravely during the last decades, though some significant changes are obvious. The programs and practices (as well as the overall organisational structure of journalism and its roles) are more or less the same as a century ago. Major changes have rather occurred on the level of media organisations. Technical forms of news dissemination have altered over time (from print only to a coexistence of print, TV, radio and Internet as platforms for journalism). This development has enhanced the public’s opportunity to inform itself – and to use different sources. The amount of information identified and prescribed as current and relevant has increased through the extension of particular media outlets; e.g. newspapers have more volume than a century ago. Simultaneously, more topics and events in society are covered – for example the emerging field of science. However, the audience’s attention towards news – as against entertaining content – has not increased significantly (whereas it has increased with content devoted to entertainment).

Compared to innovations within the realm of technology that are constantly altering the business model of media and the way news is gathered and provided, the professional behavior and norms of journalistic work have remained very stable throughout the past decades. From this point of view, there is no reason for recipients to divert their trust away from journalism.

When it comes to journalistic practices, which features are essential to building and maintaining trust?

Trust in journalistic research

The most important trust feature in this context is the accuracy of information. However, first of all journalists have to obtain information. Privileged access to sources as well as the right to protect informants support journalists in their research. The capacity and independence of gathering information according to journalistic criteria is a strong factor for developing and maintaining public trust. For sport, politics, economics and all other fields under the horizon of journalistic observation, the potential of becoming subject to journalistic investigation constitutes a permanent threat. The role of watchdog and the capacity to disclose information not intended for the public realm are fueled by journalists' ability to research. With regard to journalistic research, what comprises trust? As for the trustor, we can identify a general confidence in media content achieved through socialisation. News is considered as reliable. In most cases, it has enhanced our knowledge and has proven to be helpful for further communication and action. These benefits increase the trustor's propensity to trust journalism. As regards the trustee, i.e. journalism, several preconditions that facilitate and improve journalistic research enable the audience to develop and maintain trust. The list of prerequisites includes the following (however, their existence needs to be tested empirically): independence of journalistic research from private or corporate interest; legal protection of investigation; the right to not disclose sources; the willingness and openness of individual and collective actors to provide information to journalists; overall journalistic competence to research.

Another aspect of research is worthwhile mentioning, namely checking information. Albeit unrequested, editorial offices receive a vast amount of information. Journalistic research comprises the process of fact checking in order to verify the material. The habit of characterising news stories as "exclusive" points to journalism's capacity to research actively.

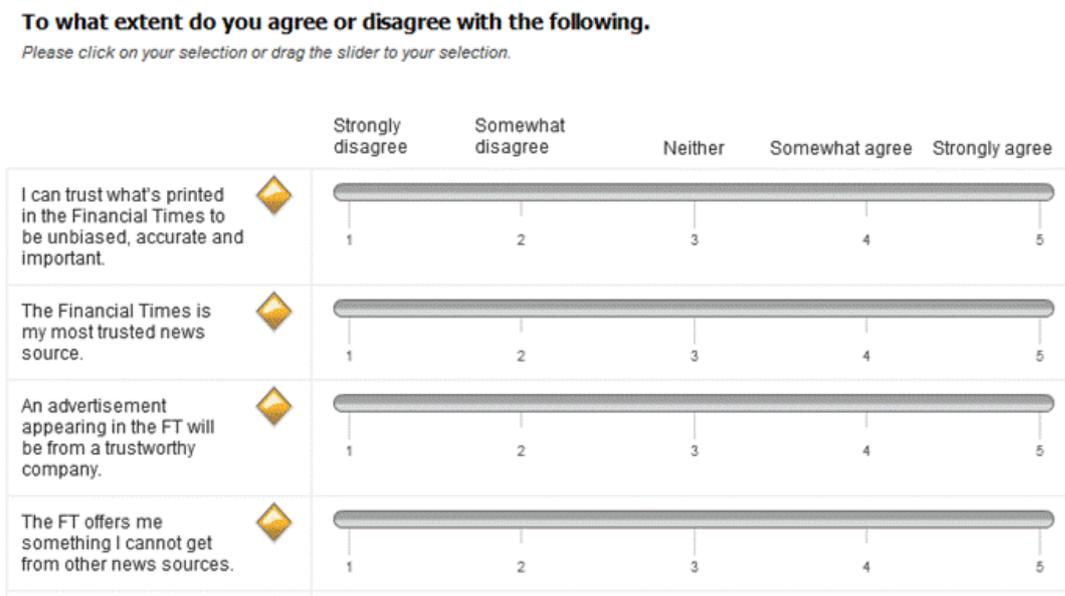
Trust in journalistic selection

Selection describes the first step of news processing. In the course of the selection process, different pieces of information are bundled (while at the same time rejecting certain information) and molded into a subject or topic. Selection does not only mean to choose from the material researched by journalists of a particular news organisation. Journalists also have to pick material coming from sources like news agencies (provided by reliable and professional sources, these texts do not require further fact checking) and various organisations with private, corporate and – apparently – common interest. Following news production routines, journalists select and cover topics and events from among the entire material available, whereby the majority of raw material remains unpublished.

The trustor's demand for useful information with the potential to enhance his knowledge can be broken down to just a few claims towards news. The most important factor is the accuracy of information. Other factors are of similar importance. What is covered in journalism has to be new in the sense that it provides new aspects, facts and/or contexts to something that is already known. Novelty is a relative term, understood as new for a particular news media audience. So even if a fact or an event has been covered in a TV program, a newspaper may decide to print the story because it comes to the conclusion that the specific topic is relevant, yet not common to all readers. Thus, the trustor trusts the journalistic capability to select relevant news that is both new and current. The trustee's working routines have to be organised in order to meet these expectations. Principles guiding the process of selection in newsrooms are regarded as important for the readership. In a survey in 2013 conducted by the Financial Times, the paper linked trust to the principles of reporting: unbiased, accurate and important. (Figure 5) The same fundamentals can be found in the principles of the American Society of Newspaper Editors: "Every effort must be made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly."

(www.asne.org)

Figure 5: Trust in a FT survey



Source: www.ft.com/globalsurvey

Trust in journalistic coordination

News gathering and news processing in newsrooms need a lot of coordination. Whereas various steps of decision-making in conferences and other types of communication and interaction are not visible for people from outside journalism, it does not seem to make them transparent. The internal routines of news organisations are not easy to investigate. From the trustor's perspective it is important that the news machinery fulfils its function in the various steps of gathering, selecting and presenting news. With respect to trust, an audience can expect that news organisations respect general norms and values, both societal and journalistic. The process of coordination involves checking and cross-checking according to these values.

Trust in journalistic presentation

News and information deriving from journalistic research and selection are presented in different forms like news stories, features, report, interview, comment. In a very general sense, these formats – which differ from print to online, TV and radio – vary in the way they provide context and in the amount of classification and evaluation. Again, in their role as trustors recipients may have individual preferences in regard to the journalistic formats of expression. However, they trust journalists' competence to choose the appropriate format, to connect news to a proper context and to come to a judgment or conclusion in an accountable manner.

Studies indicate the importance of journalistic programs for recipients. In a survey with students of an international university in Germany, Müller found that "the respondents indeed apply classic norms of good journalism. News organizations should be independent, news should be fair, accurate, unbiased, and complete." (Müller, 2013, p. 108)

From the perspective of the trustee, the audience's propensity to trust can be supported in several ways. Naming sources explicitly in an article underlines journalistic research and increases transparency, whereas the coherence and comprehensibility of a news piece help to understand it in a proper way. In short: trustors demand journalistic professionalism when presenting news.

Looking at trust-related features on the level of journalistic practices, there are three underlying aspects that steer the development and maintenance of trust. Firstly, public trust in journalism is based on its independence to perform according to journalistic beliefs/norms, i.e. independent of any particular interest and guided only by principles of journalism. Secondly, and closely connected with independence, trust in media is based on its impartiality. Apart from the interest of a general public, journalism is not obliged to fulfil the goals of a specific group or party. In a lot of countries, independence from partisan influence is a result of historical developments. It often took decades for newspapers to evolve from mouthpiece of political parties to independent organisations. Thirdly, the objectivity norm in journalism can be seen as a strong means of trust maintenance. The objectivity norm “became the leading ideology of journalism in the Western part of the world during the twentieth century (Broersma, 2013, p. 32). According to Broersma, “norms like impartiality and non-bias, balance and fairness, factuality and detachment are operationalized in routines like separating facts from opinions, only considering something a fact when it is confirmed by various independent sources, attributing quotes and information, hearing both sides in conflicts, and so forth.” (2013, p. 32)

The objectivity norm was developed to obtain autonomy from political and economic influence. Sambrook notes: “However, the ideas of impartiality and objectivity – at the heart of serious news journalism for most of the last century – are now under pressure and even attack in the digital age. They emerged as journalistic norms to describe a professional editorial discipline that sought to avoid personal and political biases and to encourage trust in newspaper journalism. They were then adopted by regulators in the early years of broadcasting when limited spectrum conferred significant influence on those with access to the airwaves. Although often used interchangeably, they mean different things. Impartiality relates to absence of bias and objectivity to identifying facts and evidence. In essence, impartiality and objectivity have been what separate journalism from propaganda, entertainment, or fiction.” (2012, p. 3) Objectivity is encapsulated in many ways. Media law refers to objectivity, journalists internalise this norm during their vocational training and fact checking. Further, the “when, where, who, what and why” structure of news stories can be regarded as journalistic arrangements in order report objectively.

According to Sambrook, the term “impartiality” is more frequently used in the UK while scholars and practitioners in the USA prefer “objectivity”. While impartiality refers to “the removal of bias”, objectivity points out/at the isolation of evidence and facts. (2012, p. 5) The author summarises debates about the development of journalistic norms since the early decades of the last century: “Impartiality, and objectivity became accepted journalistic practice, designed to deliver trusted information and debate. The American Society of Newspaper Editors formed in 1923 adopted a code of ethics at their first conventions which included Sincerity, Truthfulness, Accuracy, and Impartiality.” (Sambrook, 2012, p. 8) The principles “became translated into granular practice: get both sides of the story, the right to reply, check the facts, accuracy and fairness, and news pages distinct from editorial or opinion pages.” (Sambrook, 2012, p. 9)

It is argued that under conditions of the Internet with no effective regulation and no national boundaries for the flow of news objectivity has to be replaced by transparency. “Objectivity was once designed to engender trust in news, now transparency is the means to achieve that – openness about sources, means, and interests.” (Sambrook, 2012, p. 11)

Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2013 also indicates the importance of traditional journalistic norms. In all participating countries with the exception of Brazil a large majority of people have a preference for impartial news. Most people favour news with “no particular point of view”: 70% of

the respondents in the UK agree to this statement, 79% in Germany, 65% in Italy, 68% in the US. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 38) These findings support the notion that impartiality and – closely connected with it – objectivity are journalistic disciplines also expected by the audience.

Müller notes, “that the preference structure of the German audience indeed comes close to the style of reporting that is required by professional norms of journalism.” (Müller, 2013, p. 50) Data from the US indicate an increasing dissatisfaction with journalistic principles. In 2011, 66% of respondents agreed to the statement “stories are often inaccurate” (1985: 34%) and 77% stated that news media “tend to favor one side” (1985: 53%). (www.pewresearch.org/)

Such findings should not be overemphasized. They support the assumption that the US is a particular case in terms of news media (a similar notion is made by Nielsen (2012) in his study about the changing business of journalism.) The numbers also shed light on the problem of measuring trust. For example, “inaccurate” can stand for the perception of wrong information delivered by news media or simply refer to wrong spelling.

4.5 Trust in Journalism – a Conceptual Model

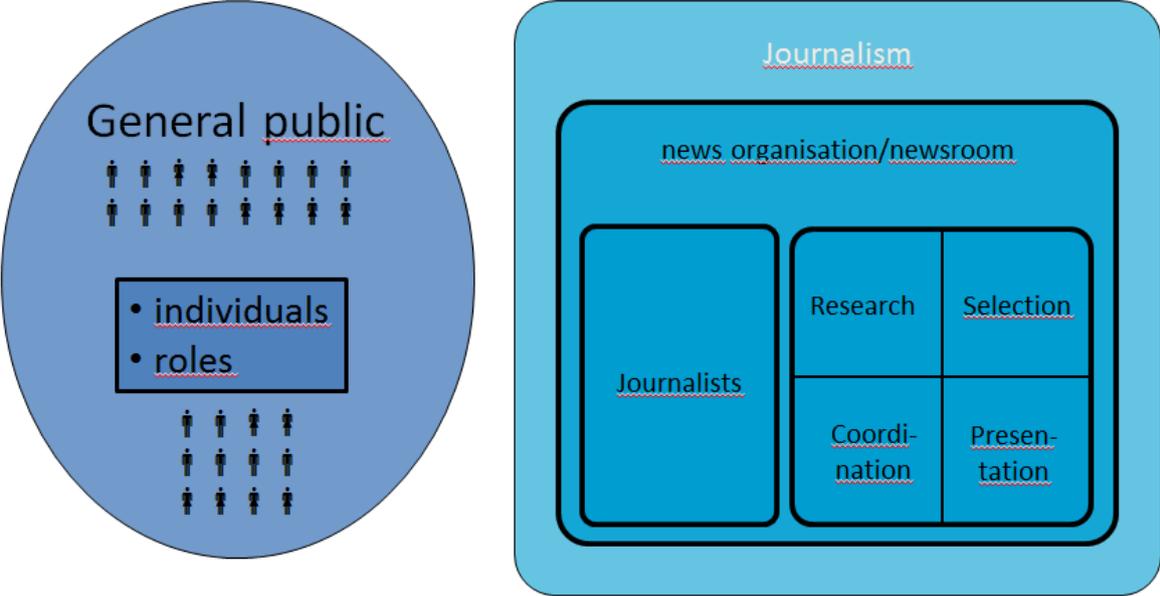
Trust in journalism has to consider three parts: an audience or public as trustor, journalism as trustee and the trust relationship between the two. Trust is understood as a process between two parties, in our case between audience and journalism. Based on the underlying precondition that recipients and journalism are willing to sustain their relationship, special preconditions on both sides are necessary to support the process of trust. In addition, both sides expect advantages for the future.

Trust relations do not start from zero. For centuries and decades, journalism has managed to prove it can be trusted as disseminator of factual, current and relevant information about relevant topics and events in society. Throughout various stages of individual socialisation individuals have learned that they can rely on media content composed by journalists. Nevertheless, trust is a fragile good dependent on certain antecedents on both sides. Changes of such preconditions have the potential to increase or decrease trust. Hence, trust in journalism can be constructed as both a virtuous and a vicious circle. Trust can increase and decrease. So can distrust. Trust and distrust do not form opposite sides of a scale. As part of a dialectical relationship they are interconnected like two sides of a coin.

Public trust – conceptualised as the generalisation of individual recipients’ trust – is directed at journalistic content and at a particular news organisation. The overall assumption that journalism can be trusted to deliver reliable information about relevant subjects and events is supplemented by trust in a specific paper, TV program considered trustworthy and it is complemented by trust in the respective news content. Therefore, trust has to be studied on at least three levels: trust in journalism as a system, trust in journalistic organisations like newspapers, or editorial offices and trust in journalistic content as the product of journalistic research, selection, coordination and presentation. Trust in journalism comprises trust in the professionalism of journalistic working routines, the professional performance of the news organisation and of the system of journalism. Trust in journalism is the result of an on-going process. Through its operations news organisations have to maintain and develop further trust in order to keep up the relationship with their audiences.

Research devoted to trust in journalism has to consider the various elements involved in the process. A conceptual model of research has to take into account the internal structure of journalism and the numerous preconditions on the trustors and the trustees side.

Figure 6: Public and journalism – trustor and trustee



Trust in journalism is a very general and unspecific concept. In order to analyse trust it is helpful to keep in mind the different elements that make up trust in journalism. Recipients take notice of journalism primarily through media content. But reports, interviews and new pieces are only a visible result of a complex process that involves several steps of decisions, coordination, cooperation and competent professionals working in and for news organisations.

A research program on trust in journalism has to take into consideration not only the news content but also those structural elements making media content possible. General trust in journalism derives from many components. The following table gives an overview of the factors that have to be taken into account.

Table 11: Components of trust in journalism

Trust in news organisations	Trust in journalists	Trust in journalistic programs/practices
Trustworthiness of media formats (TV, radio, newspaper, magazine, online outlet ...)	Trustworthiness of journalists in general (compared to other professions)	Trustworthiness of journalistic investigation
Trustworthiness of specific medium (Telegraph, New York Times, BBC, Süddeutsche Zeitung ...)	Trustworthiness of a particular journalist	Trustworthiness of journalistic selection
Trustworthiness of specific editorial department (politics, sport, economy, science ...)		Trustworthiness of journalistic coordination
		Trustworthiness of journalistic presentation

Research on trust in journalism should acknowledge different elements influencing the process of trust building on the part of recipients as trustors and journalism as the trustee.

Table 12: Factors influencing trust

Recipients/trustor	Journalism/trustee
Socialisation	Reputation of news media, department, format, etc.
Experience	Appearance
General interest in subject (politics, sport ...)	Consistency of reporting
Specific interest in subject (EU, Manchester United, immigration ...)	Journalistic professionalism
Image of journalists in general	Accountability
Appearance of particular journalist	Competence
Performance of particular journalist	...
Perceived competence of news media, journalist, etc.	
Reputation of trustee	
Perceived competence of trustee	
Perceived accountability of trustee	
...	

5. Building Trust in Journalism in a Digital World

Trust is essential for journalism, it is substantial to the relationship between a general public and journalism, it is fundamental within the system itself. And journalism plays a major role in the process of trust building for various parts of society. This chapter examines features supporting the creation of trust in different parts of journalism. It further emphasises the challenges brought to trust building through digitalisation. In a digital world, journalism needs to adapt in order to maintain its role as trustworthy institution in society. The Internet is certainly a challenge to news media. Despite various projections “the internet has not killed the newspaper.” (Nielsen, 2012, p. 27)

The digital phase notwithstanding, journalism remains first and foremost journalism. With regard to trust, digitalisation challenges journalism without creating a completely new form of journalism. Throughout history journalism has proven its capability to adopt to new technologies. It can handle variations and heterogeneity among its audiences. In terms of trust, we shall take a closer look at features that are characteristic of online media. The focus lays on journalistic trust building with regard to the public. Certainly, journalism’s role in developing and maintaining trust for other societal systems, for organisations and individuals is influenced by digitalisation. Internet and social media offer persons and institutions opportunities to reach specific and larger audiences without journalism. Being bypassed as for building a public agenda and creating trust for all sorts of individual and collective actors, news organisations may dwindle in importance. However, so far there is no sign that politics, economy, sport, culture, science, etc. can maintain their public significance without news media coverage.

In a digital world news remains important. In all participating countries of the Digital News Report 2013 with the exception of the US (76%) more than 80% of the respondents consume news daily. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 21) Figures indicating interest in news are similar. The digital news report calculates the number of “news lovers” among UK online users with more than 10 million. Another 23,2 million in the UK are qualified as “daily briefers” and nearly 13 million are “casual users”, leaving only 4,5 million Britons uninterested in news. The same picture occurs in other countries. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 23)

Developing trust in journalism refers to the audiences’ willingness to acknowledge the central role of news media to provide relevant information. Journalism as trustee and the public as trustor are interested in continuing their relationship. This general pattern is not questioned by digitalisation at all. Whereas Internet journalism requires the same level of trust as journalism in the pre-Internet era, it has to face challenges and opportunities posed by the digital environment in order to demonstrate its trustworthiness.

This paper suggests that journalism as trustee develops new features to prove its credibility and trustworthiness in the digital environment. In its history, journalism grew accustomed to the necessity of creating new forms of work routines when radio and TV emerged as new distribution channels. Now, journalism has to cope with demands of the Internet.

As described above, the public’s perception of journalism in terms of trust depends on several factors: reputation of journalism and particular news media, experience of recipients with news outlets, appearance and accountability of journalism and its competence – in short: journalistic professionalism.

The following chapters focus on steps taken by journalism to prove its trustworthiness.

5.1 Trust Building on the Level of Journalistic Organisations

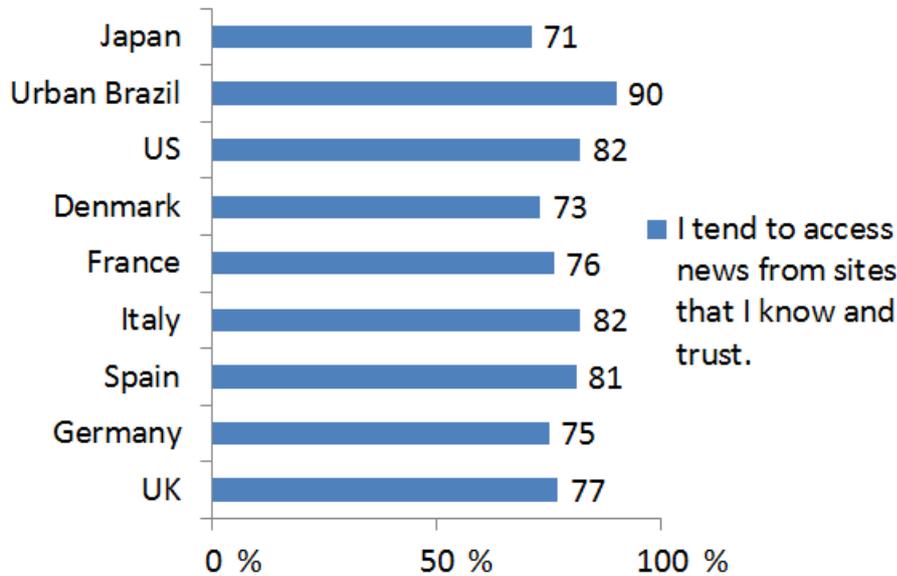
Mass media in general, specific news organisations and newsrooms as journalistic institutions benefit from various societal activities supporting the maintenance of trust. In a very general sense, society as a whole, but especially judiciary and politics, provide profound support in order to keep up the preconditions for trust in journalism. Press (media) freedom, plurality of media and independence of journalism have been described as prerequisites of trust in journalism. (Chapter 4) Those measures which guarantee this basis at the same time contribute to maintaining trust in journalism. Since there is a whole body of literature dealing with the foundations of trust (and the multiple threats to them) only a few are mentioned here.

As with other parts of society, digitalisation challenges journalism. Although some scholars point out a severe threat of journalism through the Internet it seems that journalism has survived in the area of digitalisation for at least two decades. The business model of journalism is obviously under pressure (Picard, 2010). But there are signs of hope. The Digital News Report launched by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 2013 indicates a growing share of people paying for digital news compared to 2012. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 11) Further, it is often underestimated that the journalistic system is changing and is able to adapt to new challenges. In the history of journalism, there are many examples of how flexibly the system can react to new developments. Radio and TV have challenged the press with new demands – and in the end these new distribution channels have extended the overall capability of journalism to inform the general public. Furthermore, new techniques have enhanced the repertoire of journalistic expression and professional practices. Against this backdrop, there remains confidence that journalism will use digitalisation to modify its forms and content. With respect to a further development and maintenance of trust, a few features are worthwhile describing.

A very strong foundation of news organisations comprises the result of a process that has usually gone on for decades, even centuries: the accumulation of journalistic reputation and media credibility. This reputation is anchored in the brand name. With one's brand name as signifier for a news media's core value, traditional media offer their online services under the umbrella of their brand. There are almost no examples of successful journalistic content providers who developed outside of a core brand. Hence, reputation transfer is a very strong means to remaining trustworthy for a public. The transfer of reputation to the digital world is almost automatically accompanied by trust transfer from traditional media to its digital outlets.

These assumptions are supported by the 2013 Digital News Report. "Trust in news brands increases significantly with the amount of usage, so it is not surprising that smartphone and tablet news users also show more trust in traditional brands." (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 14) Users of new devices like smartphones and tablets very often navigate directly to their preferred brand. Although almost unlimited news sources are available online people still stick to just a few. In each of the nine participating countries, more than 70% access news on sites they know and trust. Media use is very much habitual, this habit influenced by the reputation of the specific medium which is knotted with the brand name. Media reputation among the readership is built up through experience.

Table 13: Access to news via trusted sites



Question: Thinking about the different kind of news available to you online, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Source: Digital News Report, 2013, p. 59

Remarkably, two thirds of “casual users” of news (and 89% of “news lovers”) access news via websites they know and trust. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 60) These figures underline the importance of traditional brands in a digital environment. Despite the availability of news from sources worldwide national news providers are still the most trusted ones. Traditional and cultural links and shared values –developed during socialisation – seem to hold strong over the years when it comes to trust in online news. 79% in the UK find websites, mobile sites and apps from UK broadcasters very or quite trustworthy (another 12% evaluate them neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy). 70% judge sites from UK newspapers very or quite trustworthy when accessing online news (with 22% answering neither nor). Non-UK news providers score much lower (21% very and quite trustworthy) while Twitter, Facebook and news-related blogs are hardly seen as trustworthy. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 60) Providers of news with an experienced and tested value as reliable source export this reputation from the offline to the online realm. Standards of journalism are also transferred. Thus, readers who have never held a copy of the Guardian in their hands can evaluate its journalistic value based on the Guardian’s website. Reputation is anchored in the journalistic performance.

In terms of attitudes toward digital news a survey found similar results as for offline journalism. The proportion of people in the UK that find sites from UK broadcasters and newspapers very/quite trustworthy is smaller in the age group 55+ than among 18 to 24 year olds. (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 61) Trust in brand media seems to be inversely proportional to the familiarity with the particular media, both in the offline and the online world. A critical attitude towards institutions including media evolves over life time and seems to be independent from news channels. Digital media have become a common form to access journalism. However, legacy media are still an important source of news.

Table 14: Platforms to access news in the last week

Medium	UK	US	Germany	Spain
Print	59%	47%	63%	61%
TV	79%	72%	82%	72%
Radio	37%	28%	51%	39%
Online	74%	75%	66%	79%

Source: Digital News Report, 2013, p. 25

Online journalism has not outplayed other channels of news dissemination but supplements them. The differentiation of channels does not per se threaten journalism. On the contrary more channels make journalistic content more accessible. And still by far the most important location of news users is at home.

How do people find news? Access to journalistic content has altered significantly during the last years.

Table 15: Access to news

	UK	US	Germany	France	Denmark
Directly via branded website	34%	20%	32%	16%	55%
Search engine like google	24%	33%	40%	45%	30%

Question: Thinking about how you FIND news online, which are the main ways that you come across news stories?; Source: Digital News Report, 2013, p. 61

The table illustrates large differences among countries that cannot be attributed to media systems or penetration with mobile devices. In Spain, 45% of the respondents mention Facebook as a gateway to news. The figures indicate a trend: Younger people get in touch with news through social media by chance, whereas elder persons navigate directly to news. In the UK, 39% of the under 45 year olds (but only 31% of the over 45 year olds) find news online through a brand website, 24% (in both age groups) reach news via search engines and 27% of the younger group (9% of the over 45 year olds) find their news via social media. While brands play a similar role in Germany as in the UK, they are less important in the US. (Digital News Report, 2013, pp. 62-63) Access to news is more disperse in the digital age, yet brand names still remain an important indicator of trustworthiness no matter how news is accessed. "Our data suggest that those who use smartphones and tablets are more likely to go straight to a news brand. (...) The data also indicates that certain mechanisms – like social newsreading apps and 'push' news alerts – are disproportionately used on these devices to discover news content." (Digital News Report, 2013, p. 63) Legacy media expanding their journalistic activities to social media strengthen their image as trustworthy. Social media are becoming a common channel to access journalistic content. And content from established trademarks is still a main target of news consumers in the digital world. On tablets and smartphones with easy access to various news sites through apps and browsers people use brands they are used to. Online news consumption seems to develop habitual behavior.

For media reputation transfer from offline to online is an ideal route to maintain trust in journalism. Several features of trust are knotted together: a recipient's experience with a particular news

medium, its appearance and accountability, its competence and credibility. Creation of reputation is not only an achievement of former media performance. Building reputation is an ongoing process of everyday journalism. It is the permanent validation of reputation through journalistic professionalism that provides the chance of attracting further recipients.

5.2 Trust Building on the Level of Journalistic Roles

The main road for journalists to gain trust from their trustors is to behave professionally. Journalists have to adopt their skills to the idiosyncrasies of online journalism, they have to enhance their competences concerning the presentation of news and they have to enlarge their technical abilities. An online news environment requires knowledge of digital features in all steps of journalistic work. Researching, selecting and presenting news certainly needs specific skills. In many countries journalism has become, at least in an informal sense, an academic profession. Journalism education and training has improved considerably over the last decades. Professionalisation of journalism includes systematic training of journalistic skills and academic education with an emphasis on reflection and contextualising. Numerous programs of further education for journalists, fellowships and continuous in-house training are other features with the potential to ensure journalistic competency. Knowledge enhancement in general and training of administrative and reporting skills in particular are means for improving the performance of individual journalists. Although such activities are not restricted to online journalism some programs are designed to develop trust in online journalism. These features are discussed in chapter 5.3.

Recipients typically take notice of journalistic content rather than linking it to a specific journalist. News media, online and offline, have undertaken several measures during the last years to personalise journalism and to highlight individual journalists. Bylines became more frequent and some papers publish photographs of journalists next to their contributions. Presenting not only name and photo but also to supplement this with a short CV is one feature with the potential to create trust in individual journalists in a digital environment. Information about a particular journalist at the end of articles on webpages is only a click away and often includes education, career steps, fields of competence and awards. The short CV and the visualisation are means of personalisation that can develop trust. Personalisation carries the possibility of enhancing trust because it delivers information about the experience of the journalist, his or her competences and editorial experience. The anonymous relationship becomes a little more personal and thereby more trustworthy than an ordinary byline.

Figure 7: Personalisation on websites: Telegraph

The Telegraph

HOME NEWS WORLD SPORT FINANCE COMMENT BLOGS CULTURE TRAVEL L

Politics | Obits | Education | Earth | Science | Defence | Health | Scotland | Royal | Celebrities

BLOGS HOME » NEWS » POLITICS » TOM CHIVERS

Tom Chivers

Tom Chivers is the Telegraph's assistant comment editor. He writes mainly on science. Not a poet - that's the other Tom Chivers. Read older posts by Tom here.

 Follow 12.9K followers



Depressing: just nine per cent of Britons trust stats over our own experience (though most of us won't believe that)

By **Tom Chivers** **Science** Last updated: May 15th, 2013

 269 Comments [Comment on this article](#)

 Print this article

 Share 155

Source: www.telegraph.co.uk

In this context, it is worthwhile mentioning that professional background and profound education not automatically lead to a good reputation. Data presented above indicate low rates of reputation for journalists in those countries where journalists enjoy academic training and autonomy.

Figure 8: Personalisation on websites: Süddeutsche Zeitung



Thomas Fromm

Seit 2007 im Wirtschaftsressort der *Süddeutschen Zeitung*. Am Anfang noch zuständig für Münchner Bankhäuser und ihre Krisen (Hypo Real Estate, BayernLB), dann irgendwann zu den Autos gewechselt. Vor der SZ standen sieben Jahre bei der *Financial Times Deutschland*. Zuerst fünf Jahre Korrespondent in Mailand (dort zuständig für alles: Norden, Süden, Mitte; von Berlusconi über Fiat, Parmalat und Armani bis zur Scala und AC und Inter im San-Siro-Stadion . . .), danach FTD-Korrespondent in München (Schwerpunkt: Siemens). Studierte Politikwissenschaften, Geschichte und Journalistik in Eichstätt und Bellingham/Seattle.

 Mail schreiben

Source: www.sueddeutsche.de

Expanding journalistic activities to social networks also has a potential to create trust in journalism. Differentiation on the role level leads to blogging and tweeting especially at larger news media. Some journalists use social media as a distribution channel for opinions and information. According to the editor-in-chief of the Daily Telegraph (London), their sports editor has more followers on Facebook than the combined circulation of the Guardian and the Times. Postings and tweets are used for sending facts and comments, but they are also in use for reflecting on the on-going work process. Specialised blogs and selected articles describe processes and difficulties of news gathering. Therefore, they are a feature to make journalists' work more transparent. Making obstacles to journalistic work public shows the vulnerability of journalism. The disclosure of obstacles and ways of dealing with them has the potential to create trust through transparency. According to Sambrook (2012), transparency is an equivalent to objectivity in the world of journalism. This might enhance journalists' credibility. Interactivity also has the potential to add some value to the role holder. Journalists may extend their reputation through social media by offering followers transparency and examples of their competency to be up-to-date. Such activities contain at least the possibility of building trust with recipients.

Figure 9: Sharing and tweeting

Dire day for UK high street as retailers reveal poor Christmas trading

Morrisons issues surprise profit warning in tough market while Tesco and Marks & Spencer post worse-than-expected sales

Sean Farrell and Sarah Butler

theguardian.com, Thursday 9 January 2014 09:12 GMT

 [Jump to comments \(890\)](#)

 Share 124

 Tweet 125

 +1 8

 Pin it

 Share 15

 Email

[Article history](#)

Source: www.theguardian.com

5.3 Trust Building on the Level of Journalistic Programs/Practices

Efforts to build trust in news media become visible mainly on the level of journalistic programs and practices. This is no big surprise. As argued above, trust in journalism essentially means trust in the programs of the system. Though some of the features stressed in this chapter can also be seen as parts of the role and organisational level of journalism they are mainly rooted in the manuals. The following chapter concentrates on selected means for trust building and tries to connect them with one of the four principle elements of the journalistic program. This is for analytical purposes only; in the working process of a news organisation the respective elements go hand in hand. Some features of trust building in journalism are usually not visible for the recipients while others are directed to public attention.

In general, the creation of trust in online journalism is not different from the offline world. Protection of sources, an obligation of authorities to provide information to journalists as well as scrutinizing and double checking of facts prove the veracity of content before published regardless whether it is online or offline. Also, impartiality and the objectivity norm are not suspended in digital journalism. Although there is some indication of poorer standards of journalistic quality in online publishing journalistic principles are not dismissed in a digital world.

Sambrook (2012, p. 4) proposes three principles on the level of journalistic programs/practices to secure trust in a digital environment: evidence-led newsgathering, diversity of opinion, transparency about methods and values. However, these suggestions for best practice are not linked exclusively to digital journalism but rather focus on challenges of modern journalism in general. Sambrook observes a differentiation process within contemporary journalism which affects the expectations of the public in general. "As journalism and media fragment, and different kinds of public information are available, with different purposes and variable standards, there is public appetite for greater scrutiny and testing of public information." (Sambrook, 2012, p. 18)

Features with the capacity to build trust that have emerged independent of digitalisation over the last years demonstrate journalism's concern to remain a trustworthy and accountable institution. Everyday coverage of relevant and current information is by far the strongest means to maintain trust in journalism. As long as the coverage of events and topics is correct and encompasses public interest recipients will not have a reason to become sceptical about media content. Dealing with complaints of the audience and with one's own mistakes fall into this category. Research reveals a growing importance of the audience for journalism. Strengthening public orientation with the help of audience research, reader councils and editorial marketing express this orientation.

Installation of ombudsmen in news media is a strong signal towards a respective public of taking their views, ideas and complaints seriously. Ombudspersons not only document the willingness of a news organisation to respect their readership. They also show the public as trustor the trustee's general vulnerability. Ombudsmen and -women signal journalism's willingness to take audience interests into account. The work of the public's representatives in news media concentrates on mistakes and failures in news coverage. Thus, their work is directly connected to the reliability of journalism.

Correction sections have a similar function in journalism. They document mistakes in reporting in order to suffocate distrust. Usually such columns correct names, figures and quotes of sources, those elements of journalism which readers expect to be right. Fact correction comes along in form of an apology. For editorial texts and comments a similar form of rethinking is not common. Media are more concerned about their trustworthiness on facts than on opinion. Publishing mistakes – as a matter of fact most of them are certainly not noticed by most of the readers – and correcting them stresses the professionalism of journalism to a certain extent. It documents journalism's on-going efforts to report accurate information. Recipients get the impression that quality of reporting is of major concern to a news organisation. Similar to car companies where frequent recall campaigns may damage reputation in the long run, frequent corrections also bear the possibility of losing trust.

Other features regarded as tools of editorial marketing such as invitation of readers and viewers to guided tours or public debates organised by news media also make a media organisation more visible and comprehensible. Such interaction platforms between journalists and news media on the one hand and a public on the other hand create personal experiences with people working in journalism. First-hand experience and face-to-face contact have a huge potential to create trust. In a way, these activities document the trustee's desire to continue the relationship to the public as trustor. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that in politics personal contact to politicians has a positive effect on their trustworthiness. (Müller, 2013, p. 17 referring to Parker/Parker, 1993)

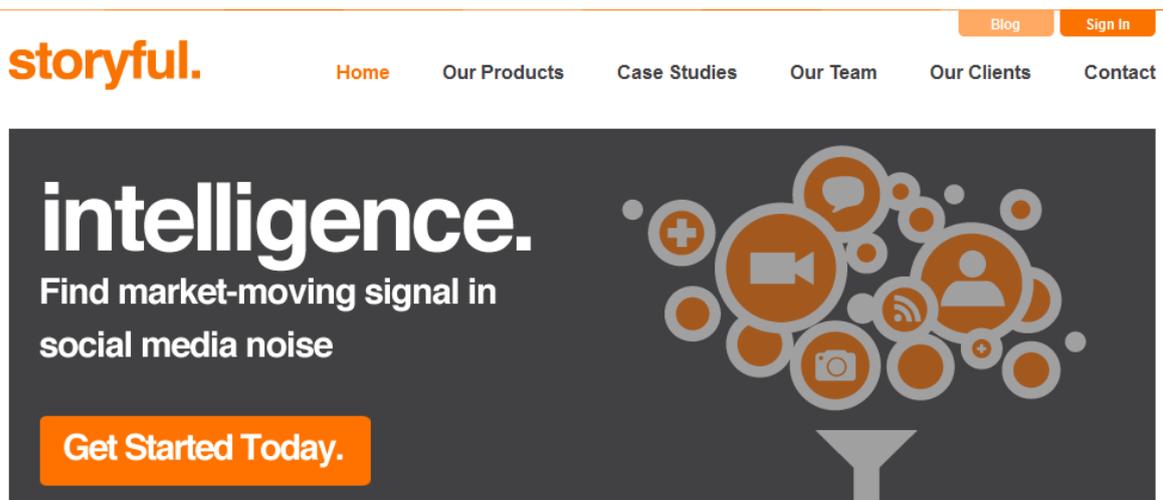
The following paragraphs highlight some means for building trust in digital journalism. They can be allocated at the program level because they are mostly connected to journalistic research, selection and presentation. Again, we can distinguish between actions related to internal work routines and features devoted directly to the audience.

Social media like Twitter and Facebook represent both challenges and opportunities in journalism. On the one hand, the use of social media by journalists and their organisation increases the possibility to reach recipients that are used to inform themselves via Facebook, Twitter, etc. On the other hand, journalists and journalism prove their ability not only to disseminate but also to gather information with the help of social media. A growing number of journalistic projects uses Facebook and its companions to become alert of relevant events and actions. Social media are not only an indicator for public attention. More and more information travels into the newsroom via digital channels. To access sources on digital paths becomes easier, whereas sources find an easier way into a news organisation. Digitalisation amplifies the problem of selection – and demands new methods to evaluate the credibility of digital material.

The increasing importance of user-generated content is also a development closely related to digitalisation. The contribution of users who deliver footage, pictures and texts enlarges the journalistic horizon. The British BBC, for example, receives parts of its material for its Persian service from free-lancers and users in Iran, while not being allowed by the government to have a correspondent on the spot. User-generated content enhances journalism's ability to include different perspectives in news coverage. However, it also demands new forms of checking and scrutinising material that is produced externally. During the past few years, journalism has established new ways of verifying such material in order to maintain professional standards. At the BBC, a whole section of 20 people is specialised in verifying user-generated content. And newly founded companies like the Dublin-based Storyful ("Storyful helps your editorial team separate news from social media noise" (Storyful, 2013)) provide services for checking user-generated content. Meanwhile, a software has been released that checks the authenticity of photos. Sambrook mentions other developments in this context: "There are a number of technology-led initiatives designed to deal with the issue of trust, accuracy, and reliability in the media. Websites are growing which seek to check assertions and facts." (Sambrook, 2012, p. 34) He points on PolitiFact.com looking at the truth in politics. Others include Factcheck.org and Aim.org (Accuracy in Media) in the US and Journalisted.com and Churnalism.com in the UK, supporting journalists with checking facts and quotes. These examples shed light on journalism's ability to solve the problem of veracity in the digital world. The journalistic system has developed appropriate means to maintain its quality of research and fact checking competency under digital conditions in order to remain trustworthy.

The implementation of new sections devoted to fact checking accompanied by a development of related software marks a step of differentiation on the level of journalistic organisations. At the same time this is a process of specialisation on the level of journalistic roles. Software developers employed to scrutinise digital material are incorporated in newsrooms. As this new form of information checking of prospective journalistic content demands a cooperation between journalists, computer engineers, designers and specialists for languages and other cultural features, it is not a surprise that this mixture of competences cannot be found at every news organisation. Similar to news agencies where expensive newsgathering both at national and international level is shared and financed by all media, startups like storyful grow outside of established news organisations and provide their service to subscribers. These examples clearly show journalism's capacity to meet digital challenges at a crucial point of trust building.

Figure 10: New ways of verification



Source: www.storyful.com

While new features of checking information are often not visible to recipients, other measures are. Like buttons and hints of shared articles in online journalism are prominently posted on websites. These digital features, often accompanied by rating cues, indicate how often articles have been recommended. Journalistic webpages create a kind of ranking with the help of digital features. On the one hand, such offers are intended to promote content. But on the other hand, they contain the capacity to create credibility. A large number of positive ratings, of sharings and tweets may be looked at as trust signals by indicating the importance of a journalistic piece to other people.

Figure 11: Readers recommend (Leser empfehlen)



Source: www.sueddeutsche.de

Online journalism enhances the potential to stress actuality. While actuality in traditional journalism is connected to how frequently a print medium is published or a program broadcasted, the news cycle turns into a constant flow of digital formats. Live tickers and hints that highlight the most

recent update are digital features used to visualise actuality in online journalism. Such features stress one of the most important qualities of journalism: namely, to deliver current information. In digital journalism referring to actuality is a means with the potential to maintain trust in journalism’s ability to offer current information on a constant basis.

Further, online journalism offers a range of opportunities to portray the transparency of news selection. The process of creating journalistic content does not only become more visible to recipients through blogs and tweets informing about the progress of journalistic work. Transparency becomes easier in a digital environment because journalists can not only name their sources but also offer links to sources and material they used for their texts. Journalism enables recipients to check its trustworthiness – a process labeled as “disclosure transparency” by Karlsson (2010).

These forms of trust creation use advantages of digitalisation. Social media are implemented in trust building. With respect to the relationship between journalism as trustee and audience as trustor it has to be stressed that recipients become actively involved in the process of developing trust. Publishing recommendations of an article to others is an indicator of trust – irrespective of the motives for recommending a specific piece.

Figure 12: Telegraph: most viewed, most shared, most commented



Source: www.telegraph.co.uk

The following table shows features that have to be taken into account when analysing trust building in online journalism. How and if these features contribute to a decline or an increase of trust has to be examined in research programs in the future.

Table 16: Factors influencing trust in online journalism

Journalistic Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reputation transfer from offline to online• Expanding journalism to social media
Journalistic Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expanding journalistic education to online journalism• Personalisation of role holders• Expert roles for verifying digital material
Journalistic Programs/Practices	
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integration of content from non-professional sources• New methods to verify digital material
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like buttons and rating cues• Comments• Visibility of actuality through live tickers and other hints
Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transparency of process of journalistic production

Conclusion

Journalism plays an important role in the process of trust building in our modern society. It contributes to the development of trust in several societal parts, for example through journalism's capacity to distrust other social systems. But journalism is not only a trust provider – the media system itself relies on public trust. Changes in the environment of journalism challenge its ability to remain a trustworthy institution in contemporary society. Since the very first years journalism has proved its capability to adapt in order to meet new developments in technology, politics, economy and other areas. The differentiation of the internal structure of the journalistic system has been an effective way to meet new demands without losing its function to select and distribute relevant content in order to keep a general public informed.

Digitalisation is a recent development which once again requires the activation of journalism. The digital world changes both, the environment of journalism and its internal structure. Digitalisation puts trust building in journalism under pressure. News media have to find new ways to present themselves as trustworthy institutions to their audience. Legacy media and online journalism have to develop forms of trust building in a digital environment.

With regards to trust, journalism has to adjust all structural elements to remain trustworthy. So far, only little research is devoted to these new challenges. The paper offers some hypotheses on the relationship between trust and journalism. They remain to be tested. Rather, the purpose was to outline a concept for journalism research devoted to trust by pointing out those elements that need to be considered. Starting point is both an understanding of journalism (including its function in society and the elements of the journalistic system) and an idea of trust (including its function in society and those elements that are necessary to develop and maintain trust). Trust as an ongoing social process refers to a relationship between a public as a trustor and journalism as a trustee. Trust between recipients and news media relies on several features on each side. It is grounded in the willingness to continue the relationship. Journalism needs the recipients' trust as do recipients need journalism as a trustworthy institution. Although the digital world certainly challenges the trust relationship there seems to be no indication that trust between recipients and journalism is severely threatened.

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