

## **Mediated Trust in the Innovation Ecosystem**

the Ontology of

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***THE ONTOLOGY OF:***  
**MEDIATED TRUST IN THE**  
**INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM**

Paper presented to:  
Second Seminar of the Nordic Research Network on  
Trust within and between Organizations  
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# Abstract

This paper introduces a framework for further studies in the role of mediated trust in the innovation ecosystems. Combining insight from scholars like Etzkowitz, Russel and Nordfors, the concept of *innovation ecosystem* is described as an *extended Triple Helix* where media is seen as a fourth strand besides industry, state and academia. In this paper, the concept *mediated trust* refers to the *process* in which an independent institution produces a form of mass medium. As is the case with any message, the content of the mass media is coded so that it *signals* to what degree information and/or opinions should be considered trustworthy. When receiving the message, the audience will *decode* the signals. *Trust* is considered fundamental for mass media if these are to fulfill their normative functions in the innovation ecosystem. However, the concept of trust is not clearly defined in the literature and we lack empirically grounded studies of the role of trust in extended Triple Helix. The paper is based on cross disciplinary literature review and it is a work in progress.

**Key words:** Trust, Innovation Ecosystem, Extended Triple Helix, Journalism, Mediated Trust

## 1 Introduction

Silicon Valley in California is home to some of the world's most valuable companies including Cisco, Facebook, Google, Apple, eBay and Intel. These companies are located around Stanford University with its well-known engineering department and prestigious design-lab. Among the companies that were more or less created at the university, in cooperation between professors and students, are Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, Yahoo!, Google and Sun Microsystems. A large amount of venture capital is administrated here, many of the venture capital firms located on Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park – a road connecting the main highways in the valley creating easy access from business world to the University (Wikipedia 2011).

Considering the amount of money earned in the Valley and the concentration of brainpower on cafes in Palo Alto it is no wonder that the valley has attracted the attention of innovation researchers from around the world, all asking essentially the same question: What do they do that we can copy elsewhere in the world?

One such researcher is Henry Etzkowitz who state that “A Triple Helix of university-industry-government interactions is the key to innovation in increasingly knowledge-based societies” (2008). Porter and Kramer in Harvard Business Review (2011) refer to Silicon Valley as an example of a “geographic concentration of firms, related businesses, supplier, service providers, and logistical infra structure in a particular field.” They add that such local clusters not only include businesses but also institutions such as academic programs and that they draw on “broader public assets in the surrounding community, such as schools and universities, clean water, fair-competition laws, quality standards, and market transparency” (Porter & Kramer 2011: 12).

The underlining idea behind theories such as the Triple Helix and clusters is that “no company is self-contained” (Porter & Kramer 2011: 12). At Stanford University some scholars talk about “Innovation Ecosystems Network” (Russell et al. 2011). This group of scholars uses data technology to create maps of innovation clusters and they define the term “innovation ecosystem”:

Innovation Ecosystems refer to the inter-organizational, political, economic, environmental, and technological systems through which a milieu conducive to business growth is catalyzed, sustained, and supported (Innovation Ecosystems Network 2011)

The ecosystem requires communication in order to function. When Porter and Kramer describe how clusters are depending on “schools and universities, clean water, fair-competition laws, quality standards, and market transparency” it is implied that the knowledge from the schools and universities are communicated to the business and that there are some communication means that create transparency. This communication can basically be divided into at least two major groups that are traditionally separated in academic research: Interpersonal communication and communication through mass media. According to Nordfors, the role of the mass media in the innovation economy is to bring attention to issues, new discoveries e.g. While all forms of communication has a role to play in the innovation communication system, Nordfors et al. describe the role of one form of communication, that is innovation journalism:

...journalism covering innovation processes and ecosystems is a crucial pivot between innovation economy and the public sphere...To the degree that Innovation Journalism can build an infrastructure for public debate on how we innovate, it will enable open discussion on how we transform ideas into new value. ...In an innovation ecosystem, journalism can be seen as a fourth strand of the ‘triple helix’ of industry, universities and government... This means writing stories that combine elements of technology, business and politics, as well any other elements that influence innovation, and covering the interaction between them (Nordfors et al. 2009: 5)

If we combine the ideas of Nordfors and Etzkowitz with a normative professional self-understanding among journalists (e.g. SPJ Code of Ethics 2011), journalism could be seen as a form of communication that is transcending all the strands in the Triple Helix and the innovation ecosystem, creating an infrastructure for sharing of ideas and information about important aspects of the innovation ecosystem, and also creating the transparency that Porter and Kramer write about.

If we include media as an extra strand in the Triple Helix, we have an *extended Triple Helix* with four strands and a civic base as shown in the figure.

However, for the communication to be useful for the stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem it not only have to be reliable, people in the ecosystem also have to trust it. Trust then is an essential aspect of communication in the innovation ecosystem as it is elsewhere. Vanacker & Belmas write:

Trust can boost economic performance because it is a prerequisite for fluid market exchange; it can reduce transaction costs, and it can facilitate coordination between stakeholders (2009: 113, reference to Wicks & Berman 2004: p. 142).

Misusing trust may have long-term costs, because the benefits of trust are lost.

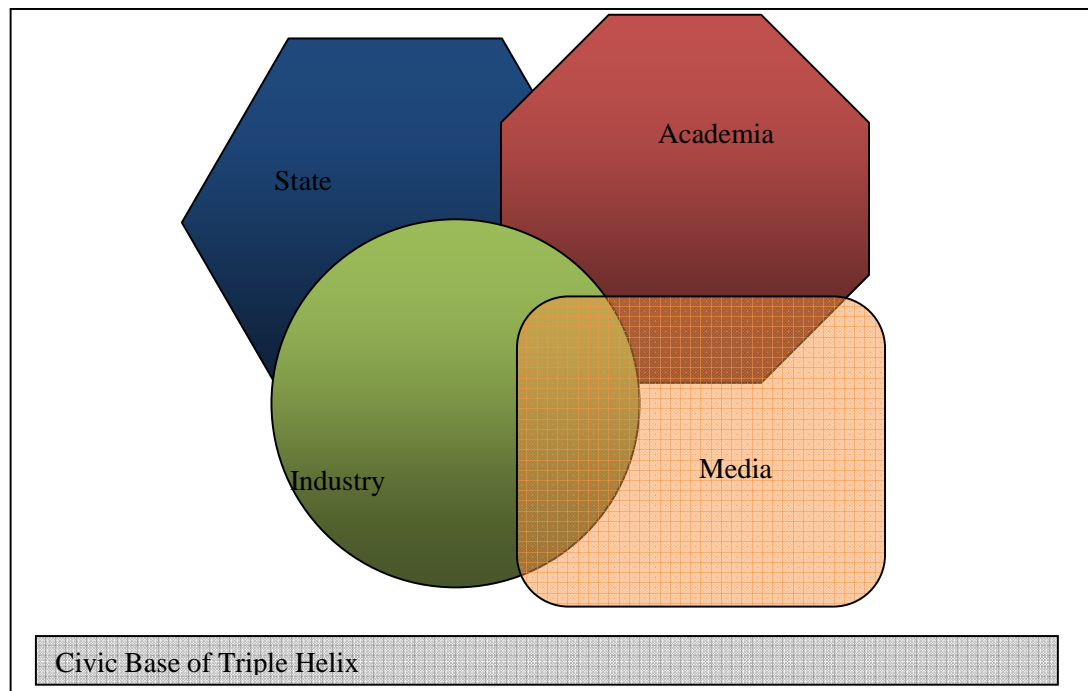


Figure 1 Extended Triple Helix: Media as the fourth strand in the Triple Helix, inspired by Etzkowitz (2011) and Nordfors (2009). (The size of each strand in the figure is in no way an implied indication of its importance).

## 2 Types of trust in the innovation ecosystem

We will now narrow our focus and - as an example - look at some of the trust based relationships that one of the professionals working in one of the strands in the extended Triple Helix is involved in. Considering the topic of this paper we choose to focus on a journalist working in Mass Media (Figure 2).

A journalist use sources for his stories. These might be representatives of state, industry or academia. For the communication between a journalist and a source to be meaningful, the journalist must demonstrate at least some degree of trust in a source and vice versa. The source may evaluate the trustworthiness of the specific journalist as well as the trustworthiness of the media. The same will be the case for the journalist; that is, the journalist evaluates the trustworthiness of the source as being a person which he may or may not have a well established working relationship with; and the journalist also evaluates the trustworthiness of the company, university or state agency that the source represents.

The journalist writes his story in a mass medium such as a newspaper. When he quotes a source, the journalist in reality publish the outcome of his evaluation of the source in the paper. The way the journalist writes the story and the context it is placed in will tell the experienced news papers reader to what degree the journalist find the source trustworthy. If the journalist knows his craft and the reader know the codes, the printed newspaper mediates the journalist's trust-evaluation of the source to the reader.

The reader will make his own evaluation of the trustworthiness of the news paper and of the specific journalist who wrote the article. If the reader trusts what the newspaper writes then it will impact his own evaluation of the trustworthiness of the source and the organization that the source represents.

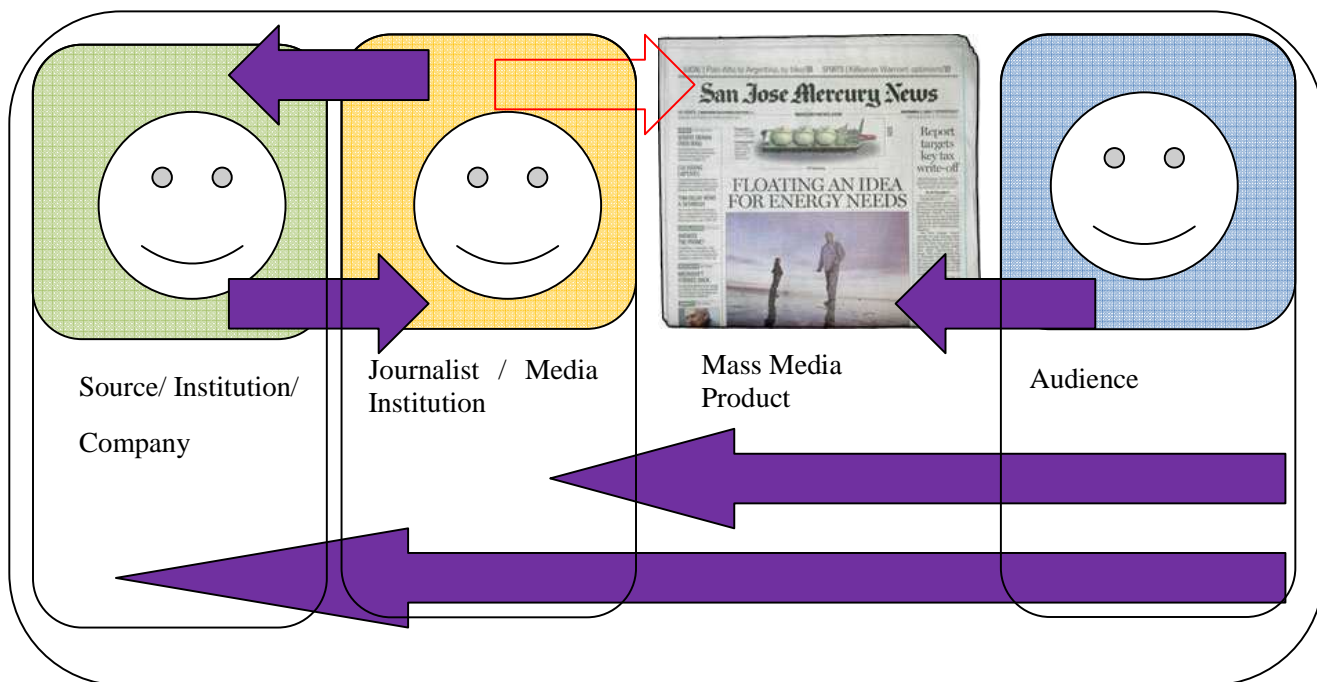


Figure 2: Some trust based relationships that professional Mass Media employees are involved in. The purple arrows indicate the trust. The red indicate the process of entering the trust based information into a medium like a newspaper.

I will term the central process “mediated trust.” The concept *mediated trust* then refers to the *process* in which an independent institution produces a form of mass medium. As is the case with any message, the content of the mass media is coded so that it *signals* to what degree information and/or opinions should be considered trustworthy. When receiving the message, the audience will *decode* the signals (see e.g. Long & Wall 2009: 18-125 for an unfolded explanation of how texts create meaning).

It is generally accepted that citizens in a modern society depend on credible information about all aspects of public life in order for them not only to participate in the democracy but also to function in their daily life, including in the role of investors, consumers and participants in the innovation processes in the society (e.g. Moody 2011; Jakob 2010: 589; SPJ Code of Ethics).

In our society, journalistic mass media such as newspapers, broadcast and web news claim to provide this essential information. Since the first newspapers appeared in the late 1600s there has been an ongoing discussion about the trustworthiness of the information that mass media provide, and these discussions are reflected in ethical standards for professional journalists (e.g. Mogensen 2000; Mogensen 2002). Such professional norms are considered very important not only for the society that depends on reliable information, but also for the journalistic media as businesses because in the long run the sale of news media probably depends on peoples’ trust in them. Vanacker & Belmas:

There is a significant amount of business and marketing literature that suggests that that trust has economic benefits (2009: 111).

However, there is also research that questions the importance of trust in connection with media consumption, such as a recently published study from Australia, where the author Kim E. Moody concludes:

The findings of the present study call into question the previously assumed centrality of trust to information choice. People regularly use media they do not trust to find out about politics (2011: 43).

“Trust” then is a word used often in connection with mass media, but the word is used in many different meanings and is seldom defined (Jacob 2010; Vanacker & Belmas 2009). What it means is mostly taken for granted. However, a number of academic papers do reflect on the ontology of media trust, the process of gaining or losing it, and the benefit of being trusted.

So what is trust essentially? That is the research question behind this paper. Based on a literature review, this paper explores the concept of trust when described in connection with mass media. It is a work in progress.

### 3 The ontology of media trust

Among media scholars, the concept of trust has not been clearly defined. In the reviewed publications authors have slightly different perspective on what constitute the experience of trust, and as Vanacker & Belmas writes (2009:111), an “implied common understanding of the term” is often assumed by researchers in the field. However, there is also a broad understanding of trust as a “complex and multidimensional concept (Meredith et al. 2010: 227; Bianco, 1998; Hardin, 2001; Rose et al. 2004). Communication scholars are generally faced with “various methodological problems associated with trust” (Jackob 2010: 595).

Vanacker & Belmas mention some of the ways “trust” is understood in media ethics literature, and I have added examples from the reviewed literature. Trust sometimes is seen as:

1. A sacred duty, at public trust (Patterson & Urbanski, 2006)
2. The public belief in the editorial process and professional norms of journalists ( Liebes, 2000; Jackob 2010)
3. Tied to credibility (Elliott & Culver, 1992; Jackob 2010; Clayman et.al 2010;)
4. Related to public trust or distrust in government and political systems (Meredith et al. 2007; Jones, 2004; Stroud 2008; Romer 2009; Bouman & Brown 2010).

Vanacker & Belmas in their paper “Trust and the Economics of News” (2009) describe different dimensions of trust. According to them trust can be described as:

- A. A future-oriented judgment
- B. A judgment in which the judge has a stake
- C. A value or a calculation
- D. Constitutive or instrumental

According to them, trust is expressed towards another moral agent as an intended action and it is based on a future-oriented judgment. Trust then can be studied as phenomena using the thoughts and methodology developed within the philosophical movement phenomenology. From a phenomenological point of view, there are at least two moral agents involved, that is the *truster* and the *trustee*. The truster is the one that is



faced with the problem whether or not to trust. The trustee is the person being evaluated. Vanacker & Belmas:

Trust is always put in another moral agent, a person or institution that can validate or invalidate that trust (2009: 117).

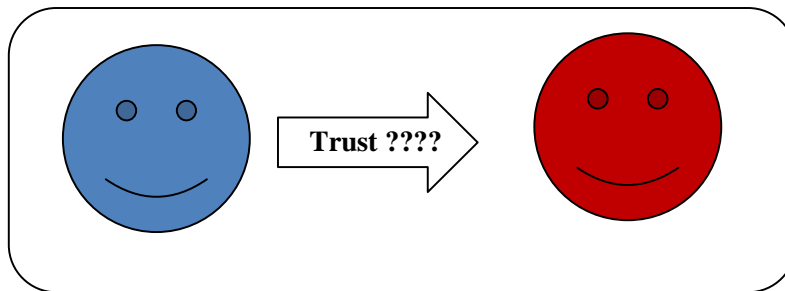


Figure 3. The blue face is a symbol of the truster. He evaluates the red face and decides whether or not to trust him. The red face is termed trustee.

Trust then is the truster's judgment of whether or not to trust that the trustee will "fulfill certain expectations *in the future*" Vanacker & Belmas (2009:112). Truster can never be certain, because if he knew for sure, there would be no need for trust. For that same reason, trust "cannot be said to be true or false" Vanacker & Belmas (2009:111). The messenger is important for the evaluation process. Meredith et al. (2007: 221) writes:

The literature on trust and credibility suggests that effective communication depends on whether the message recipient perceives the message source as trustworthy and believable (Covello, 1992).

Considering that the truster is a human being making a judgment it should be of no surprise that that judgment is influenced by the trusters psychological characteristics. As example pessimistic life outlook is considered inversely related to interpersonal trust (Romer et al. 2009: 66). Jakob:

It is likely, for instance, that political interest or political participation as well as trust in political or societal institutions is associated with trust in the media and/or with the use of alternative information sources. Individuals with high levels of political efficacy or engagement may be somewhat skeptical and thus seek more alternative media and/or non-media information (Stroud, 2008, pp. 344–345). (...) Furthermore, trust in the media, media dependency, and the use of non-media sources may differ according to psychological characteristics, such as individual persuasiveness, need for cognition, and the willingness to trust: Confiding individuals, those with a little need for cognition, or people who are susceptible to persuasive stimuli may have more trust in the media and thus refrain from seeking alternative information (see Hovland & Janis, 1959; Oskamp & Schultz, 2005; Oliver, 2008, p. 3580) (2010: 601)

According to Vanacker & Belmas (2009:113), one cannot be trusting, if one is not a stakeholder. In other words, we cannot use the term "trust" to describe impartial evaluations. "There must be intentional action in a trust relationship" (Kohring & Matthes 2007; quoted in Vanacker & Belmas 2009:113). The intent may be demonstrated by for example buying a newspaper or watching the evening news. Trust cannot be

accidental. “Intent in the sense of purposefully engaging in a relationship is crucial to a conception of trust between media and audience.” Vanacker & Belmas:

Media professionals often argue that without audience’s trust they have no reason for being. If this is the case, trust for news media is not merely a lubricant to make its interactions with audience’s go smoother, but it is also constitutive to the relationship with readers (2009: 115).

Other scholars agree that “A defining feature of trust is that it is relational” (Clayman 2010: 255; Gilson, 2003).

Jackob writes that in n typical studies of media trust “it is assumed that audience trust because they regard the medium as credible” and he add that credibility is in fact an important component of trust:

In the case of the media-user relationship, the user attributes credibility to the information source (Tsfati & Cappella, 2003, p. 505)... To remain capable of making informed decisions, individuals usually search for cues indicating that the information they receive is reliable. Credibility is such a cue. The perception that a certain source is trustworthy is the result of an attribution process and serves as a rationale for having trust in uncertain situations. Trust, however, is a more comprehensive concept. It can be defined as an “expectancy held by an individual or group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual can be relied upon” (Rotter, 1967, p. 651). (Jackob 2010: 593)

The two terms “credibility” and “trust” are however not interchangeable:

Credibility refers to one of the expectations we have of news media, to be accurate in their reporting; or, if one wishes to broaden the scope of the concept, to report truthfully (Vanacker & Belmas 2009:116).

Furthermore, information may be credible, but “trust cannot apply to information” (Vanacker & Belmas 2009: 117). As stated before, trust can only apply to another moral agent.

Using methodology known from grounded theory, Meredith et al. (2007: 221) indentified six components of trust:

1. fiduciary responsibility, defined as a relationship in which someone (the fiduciary) acts in the capacity of another’s rights, assets, or well-being;
2. honesty, defined as perceived truthfulness and sincerity;
3. competency, defined as being perceived as well-qualified to perform an act;
4. consistency, defined as uniformity and agreement among messages;
5. faith, defined as any mention of faith or similar words; and
6. other: for trust-related passages that did not fit into the other categories.

With the exception of the faith and other categories, our thematic components of trust correspond well to those mentioned in the literature (Rose, Peters, Shea, & Armstrong, 2004)

Vanacker & Belmas (2009:114) distinguish between four different types of paradigms with different sources of trust:

1. Caring relationships (norms and values)
2. Solidarity (norms and values)
3. Economic calculation (self interest)

4. Repeated exposure (tested)

In *caring relationships*, we regard trust as a value and will feel betrayed if we cannot trust for example a family member:

We believe that people we trust will not put their narrow self-interests before our well being, and that is the basis on which the relationship is built. We trust them to have our best at hearth (Vanacker & Belmas 2009:114).

Similarly, communities, such as an innovation ecosystem, can have a sense of *solidarity*, where shared norms and values are the source of trust. Vanacker & Belmas refers to the American sociologist Talcott Parsons, who considered the suspension of self interest as the basis for trust:

Trust, then, is no longer the co-existing of interests, but refers to the state of having one's own interest vested in someone else's interest. It assumes that the trusted, especially when this trusted is in a position of power, will meet his obligation and exercise responsibility (Vanacker & Belmas 2009: 116)

We see this exercised in many situations in real-life such as when emergency workers enter a burning tower knowing that they may be in personal danger and when journalists around the world cover corruption and misuse of power in countries where they may easily be killed (Mogensen 2010 A plus C; UNESCO 2011). For an introduction to the concept of social norms, see for example Alf Ross (1968). For a description of Ross' concept of norms applied to journalism see Mogensen (2010 D).

According to the *economic paradigm*, trust usually only emerge when the relationship or exchange is of mutual benefit. Trust may be based on a calculation of own interest – it is simply easier to go on with our lives if we can trust business partners, public institutions e.g. The source of that trust is self interest. In the literature, there is some discussion as to whether or not it is correct to talk about “trust” when a calculative, rationale element is involved.

Repeated interaction with another individual or institution make it easier to make a judgment and may instill trust (Adler 2001, Vanacker & Belmas 2009: 116), however experience might as well create distrust that can be difficult to overcome (Meredith et al. 2007: 218 and 224).

The factors involved in Vanacker & Belmas concept of trust are summarized in the following table:

<b>Suggested Model for News Media Trust</b>			
<i>Shallow Trust</i>			<i>Deep Trust</i>
Instrumental			Constitutive
Calculative	Repeated interaction		Shared norms
Low stakes	Moderate stakes		High stakes
Narrow scope			Broad scope
Low expectation of performance			High expectation of performance
Individual journalist (e.g., a blogger)	Media organization (e.g., Fox News)	Specific medium (e.g., network news)	Media as institution

Figure 4: Vanackers & Belmas suggested model for News Media Trust (2009: 122)

Trust may be "narrow-scope", as when audience build a trusting relationship with an individual blogger but don't trust bloggers in general; or it may be broad-scope in the sense that audience trust the news media as institutions in general (Grayson et al 2008: 242-43; Vanacker & Belmas 2009: 120). "System trust" is an economic good because it saves energy. If as an example, a source is asked to provide information to a journalist from Denmark's Radio, the source may choose to trust the journalist not because he knows him as an individual but because he trusts the institution. A form of deep trust is "social trust" (how a person trusts other people in general)" (Vanacker & Belmas 2009). Beaudoin et al writes:

Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 248). This conceptualization emphasizes the importance of resources, rights, and opportunities that can rise from collective social ties. Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1995b, 2000) argued that such social ties are not possible without social trust. Putnam (2000) saw social trust as "the lubricant of the inevitable frictions of social life" (p. 135), as that which eases or allows for relationships between people. Subsequent research has indicated that these two main indicators of social capital—social ties and social trust—can bring about positive public health outcomes (Kawachi, 1997; Kawachi & Berkman, 2000; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Kawachi et al., 1997; Kennedy et al., 1998; Sampson et al. 1997; Wallack, 2000) (2006: 176).

Just as the trustee can be an individual or an institution, the truster can be an individual or a group of people, e.g. Meyer (2004) writes about "societal trust" characterized by what Vanacker & Belmas call deep-trust; and "business trust" often characterized by what Vanacker & Belmas shallow-trust. Vanacker & Belmas (2009: 123) find "that media should strive to maintain a relationship of deep trust with the audience".

## 4 The epistemology of media trust

Even if trust is difficult to define, researchers are keen to explore and measure it, and based on the literature review it seems like the most common way to gain insight into the phenomenon is by asking the truster to describe his trust, either in the form of answers to questions in surveys (Clayman et al 2010; Romer et al. 2009: 73), or in focus group discussions (Meredith et al. 2007) and personal interview. Most researchers test hypothesis based on previous research in the field and they use deductive methodologies; however a few researchers use inductive analyses strategies and develop a (grounded) theory from analyses of statements (e.g. Meredith et al. 2007: 219).

In surveys, trust can be measured asking questions like:

"How much would you trust information about health or medical topics from. . . (newspapers and magazines)" and "In general, how much would you trust information from. . . (radio, television, Internet, family or friends, and doctor or other healthcare professional)?" (Clayman et al 2010: 256)

Or media trust can be measured asking questions about trust using its adverse form of distrust. As an example, Moody and others define "media skepticism" as distrust:

Media scepticism is defined as 'a subjective feeling of alienation and mistrust toward the mainstream news media' (Tsfati, 2002: 35). It relates to the subjective opinion the audience member holds with regard to the mainstream media as a whole, rather than to any particular media source (Tsfati, 2003; Tsfati and Cappella, 2003). Media skepticism is relevant to information choice research because trustworthiness is believed to be an important factor when selecting an information source (Chen and Herson, 1982; Hertzum et al., 2002) (Moody 2011)

Surveys of "media skepticism" is "concerned explicitly with information accuracy, reliability and credibility" (Moody 2011: 41; Tsfati, 2002) and measured using questions like: 'Thinking about the traditional media (newspapers, television and radio) in general, please tick whether you believe ...' 'the media can be trusted'; 'the media are accurate' (Moody 2011:40). "Social distrust" in general is measured using questions like: "People will take advantage of me" or "People are selfish" (Romer et al. 2009: 73).

Some studies try to measure trust indirectly. Assuming a link between other factors such as civic perception, civic participation and social capital (Beaudoin et al 2006) allow researchers to test trust while asking questions about these other factors such as media use and recall, civic perception and civic participation:

The study addressed the influence on social capital of news use and recall of ads from a public health media campaign that aims to enhance social ties and social trust as a means to improving youth health (Beaudoin et al 2006: 180)

As a research team, Beaudoin et al. were involved in designing and evaluating a TV and newspaper health campaign (called "Take a second. Make a difference" ) and later tested how it was received (2006: 178) which place the study in the category of experimental research even though they write the "the analyses undertaken do not conclusively get at causation, as a laboratory experiment could do" (Beaudoin et al 2006: 181).

A number of studies explore the connection between race and trust, such as to what degree African Americans or Hispanic living in the USA trust authorities, including media, compared to citizens with a European background. In order to capture such differences they may cross analyze huge datasets about the population or they may use qualitative methods such as scenarios. As an example, Meredith et al. used a bioterrorist scenario in their research and writes in their article: "The seven stages in the scenario also were designed to raise the issue of perceived discrimination" (2007: 219).

It follows from the relational character of trust that the sources of information are essential for the evaluation of the message and a number of studies explore how different groups of people (e.g. young, old, white, black, Hispanic, rich, poor) perceive different types of messengers, some of them personal such as social workers, public health authorities and doctors and some of them mediated, e.g. information on the internet or in broadcast news.

## 5 The process of gaining or losing trust

Many media scholars discuss the process of building or losing trust. According to Vanacker & Belmas (2009:111) "evaluation is what creates trust, even if that evaluation is flawed." Judging is a faculty of reason and in judging we at best uses the evidence at hand, including but not limited to past performance.

It is the responsibility of the trustee to display the characteristics of a trustworthy actor and it is the responsibility of the truster to use the evidence at hand in his evaluation. However, in everyday life we make many judgments blindly, where we naively trust or cyclically distrust without taking the time to

assess the information. An agent is taking a risk, when he choose to trust, and he will be more willing to trust, if the risk is low or if his expectations are low.

In a “solidarity community” based on shared norms and values, a news medium may be more trusted if it shares the norms and values of the community, however the community norms may conflict with professional norms. Vanacker & Belmas:

It is therefore not surprising that local news generally is considered to be more trustworthy than national news, or that partisan news outlets such as Fox would be trusted to report the news accurately, since they attempt to conform to the values and norms of a specific audience segment. However, as we shall see, for journalism, this might not always be easy to do, as journalism sometimes has the task of breaking stories that upset or do not conform to the norms and values of a community. If building trust implies conforming to the norms of a community at the expense of independence, quality journalism might not be served by increased trust (2009: 116)

One way to solve this apparent problem is to discuss the professional norms and values with the audience and explain why they serve the society. As shown in figure 4, the degree of trust is related to expectations, so if the audience expects news media to meet the standards in the professional codes (e.g. SPJ Code of Ethics) and they don't, they lose trust unless the acknowledge mistakes, so that people perceive that the media have their best interest in mind. Vanacker & Belmas:

In true relationships of trust, those that go beyond the calculational level of trust and are rooted in common norms and values; there is room for mistakes without the relationship being harmed, as long as the partner whose trust was violated keeps believing that the other partner has his best interests at heart (2009: 118).

In the literature there are discussions about the effect of control mechanism for ethical behavior such as Codes of Ethics, Ombudsman and News Councils. Some such as Luhmann, find that “trust is reached when one no longer needs controls and safeguards but is confident that the system functions” (Vanacker & Belmas 2009: 118), while others emphasizes the need to be in dialog with the audience about what the responsibility of the news media are and the criteria by which the audience can decide whether or not to trust. Vanacker & Belmas:

Trust, then, cannot be increased by merely changing newsroom procedures if this is not the result of a dialogue. If audiences do not trust a news outlet to report in an unbiased manner, merely changing procedures to guarantee objectivity in the newsroom will not increase trust unless the audiences are made aware of this change. (2009: 119)

Again we are made aware, that trust is not inherent in the product or in the process of producing the product, but it is a human judgment of another moral agent with all the limits that we as humans have. To gain trust, we need to express ourselves and be willing to discuss the norms by which we are judged. Studies related to health communication also help us understand how news media can increase audience trust. As an example, Meredith et al. found in their scenario based study of a bioterrorist event that a lot had to do to do with the perceived honesty:

The most prevalent theme concerned the honesty of public health officials, government representatives, and media outlets.... Participants had concerns about both the completeness and accuracy of information. In general, they felt that information was held back and that it was provided on a “need-to-know” basis to prevent the spread of panic, or, in a few cases, for less altruistic reasons, such as to maintain power. Participants rarely discussed actual lying by government and public health officials, though they did talk about not receiving the truth (2007: 222)

So one way of gaining trust is also to provide full information quickly which is in accordance with professional journalism norms for coverage of national crisis (Mogensen 2010A, 2008). It seems important not to keep information away from the public even if such information might scare them. Meredith et al. (2007: 228):

Lessons from Vanderford and Smith's 1996 study of the credibility of surgeons involved in the silicone breast implant controversy of the 1990s can be applied to our study (Vanderford & Smith, 1996). We found that African Americans' perceptions of public health officials were similar to the public mistrust of surgeons, who withheld side-effect information from patients undergoing silicone breast implantation. Vanderford and Smith explained that surgeons did not discuss unlikely side effects to avoid unnecessarily frightening patients but that patients wanted to know even remote possibilities as it increased their sense of control. Similarly, in a bioterrorist event, errors of omission, such as when messengers fail to provide the whole truth, can create an atmosphere of mistrust and can damage credibility of officials, even when officials have the best of intentions. Public health messages that err toward more information combined with community interaction will build more successful partnerships, minimize blame, and strengthen trust (Tennen & Affleck, 1990).

Based on their findings, Meredith et al. (2007: 230) suggest the following for building trust in risk communication:

1. use "credible" sources in written materials and oral communications, e.g., trusted sources were independent medical professionals (personal doctors, CDC officials) and national media outlets (CNN, NPR, talk shows), and citizens from that community;
2. provide full and accurate information in those materials;
3. have local officials demonstrate sincerity either through eye contact, providing evidence that they may be putting themselves at risk to help the public, and fully disclosing all information that would enable the public to make informed decisions; and
4. consistent with the findings of Covello and Allen (1988), it is important to involve the public early on in the communication process as a legitimate partner using active forms of communication.

According to some scholars, there is a link between media content and social trust, and it is not only that we chose media that fit our degree of social trust or skepticism. Scholars have explained how they perceive that some forms of media content such as news and public service information can help build social trust. The following is from Beaudoin et al:

Research has examined the relation between the mass media and social capital. Putnam (1995a, 1995b) contended that ongoing declines in social capital can be attributed, in part, to the mass media. He explained that the more time people spend watching television, the more lethargic they become and the less they will trust their neighbors and participate in society, both indications of a decline in social capital. Further research, however, has demonstrated the importance of distinguishing mass media use according to content (Moy, Scheufele, & Holbert, 1999). The accepted relation is that whereas general or entertainment TV viewing is negatively associated with social capital, news use is positively associated with social capital (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Norris, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001). The role of the mass media in terms of social capital can be examined via an informational-symbolic dichotomy (Shah, McLeod, & Yoon, 2001). In terms of information, news provides people with opportunities to interact socially and participate civically, as well as with facts and opinions that can lead to deliberation, discussion, and subsequent civic participation. In a symbolic sense, the news media can help foster a community's sense of identity, tying people more closely together and giving them greater senses of confidence and self-efficacy. Because news is a shared experience, it can create

a sense of “we” by reflecting characteristics and normative standards of the collective. Therefore, the news media can improve public health by providing the public with opportunities, information and a sense of identity as it confronts health concerns. The result is a public that is more confident, conscientious and empowered (2006: 176-177).

As a result of their own research Beaudoin et al concluded:

We demonstrated that social capital is positively associated with [recall of a campaign].... Newspaper and TV news also played positive roles. The news use measures were positively associated with civic participation and civic perceptions at Year 1 and Year 2. This suggests that the media campaign and news coverage can provide people with information and a sense of confidence and self-efficacy that can lead them to interact with and trust one another more. The news-related findings buttress previous research (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Norris, 2000; Putnam, 2000; Shah, Kwak, & Holbert, 2001)..... In this light, we document support for the positive roles that news and socially directed public health media measures play in the development of social capital (2006: 180-181)

Also Bouman & Brown talks about the importance of openness and consistency in trust-building:

The establishment of trust between sources of health communication and the public requires meaningful, open, and consistent dialogue between government and health authorities and community leaders that encourages multiple public discourses (2010: 41)

## 6 The benefits of being trusted

For years the business departments in news organizations have studied surveys of public trust in the media. Unfortunately the trust in the news media in general seem to have decreased for decades, and some media scholars have suggested, that better and more trustworthy journalism may in fact be good business (e.g. Mogensen 2002; Vanacker & Belmas 2009), because people usually prefer to use media they trust (Jackob 2010; Wanta & Hu 1994; Johnson & Kaye 1998, 2000; Tsfati & Cappella, 2003; Tsfati & Peri, 2006). Vanacker & Belmas (2009: 113) writes:

Trust can boost economic performance because it is a prerequisite for fluid market exchange, it can reduce transaction costs, and it can facilitate coordination between stakeholders (referring to Wicks & Berman 2004: p. 142).

Misusing trust may have long-term costs, because the benefits of trust are lost, so respecting a commitment is a rational choice; it is often in accordance with an actor's own interests. However, some scholars find trust less important for the use of main news media. Moody:

It appears then that non-news media information sources are sought out deliberately by people who are keenly concerned about the quality of their political information. When it comes to media sources, however, quality concerns are less of a driver for use... media sources are used. The data show that non-news media information sources are chosen by people who are seeking accurate information with which to orient themselves to the world (surveillance gratifications), who enjoy thinking and prefer deep as opposed to shallow content (NFC), and who find the mainstream media to be lacking in credibility (media scepticism). Further, people who simply wish to be distracted from the real world (escape gratifications) use fewer non-news media sources. (2011:42)

Scholars also investigate the role of trust in persuasion, e.g. Clayman et al writes:



Trust is an important component of the relationship between someone hearing a health-related message and acting upon it. A defining feature of trust is that it is relational (Gilson, 2003). In this context, the same health information would be perceived differently, depending on the source. Gilson states that as trust “is unequally distributed within societies, its benefits are likely also to be unequally distributed” (Gilson, 2003). This implies that trust in health information sources may vary, either at an individual or, potentially, at a population level. This variance may also influence health communication outcomes. (2010: 255).

If people do not trust the source of information, they will not follow even the most well-intended advice. Bouman & Brown (2010: 41):

Rakow’s (1989) observation of the role of power in health communication shows that public distrust of the providers of health knowledge can derail even the most well-intended health interventions. Public distrust of government leaders and insurance companies, for example, is having a profound effect on the national public debate on health care in the United States. Trust is more than a cognitive construct; it is deeply embedded in how the public feels about risk, especially when the risk involves potential death (Glik, 2007; Tulsy, 2005).

## 7 Conclusion

Based on the literature review we can conclude that “trust” is considered fundamental for mass media if these are to fulfill their normative functions in the innovation ecosystem. However, the concept of trust is not clearly defined in the literature and we lack empirically grounded studies of the role of trust in extended Triple Helix.

**Kirsten Mogensen** (f.1954) er lektor i journalistik på Institut for Kommunikation, Virksomhed og Informationsteknologier, Roskilde Universitet. Kirsten Mogensens forskningsfelt er journalistikkens normer, traditioner og etik set fra et professionsperspektiv. På baggrund af interview og journalistiske tekster analyserer hun de moralfilosofiske problemstillinger, som professionen oplever. Hun har bl.a. arbejdet med professionelle problemstillinger knyttet til dækningen af begivenhederne 11. september 2001 (med Louisiana State University) og til dækningen af innovation (med Stanford University), og hun har skrevet bogen ”Arven: Journalistikkens traditioner, normer og begreber”. Mogensen er selv uddannet journalist fra DJH i 1976, og hun har arbejdet som journalist på bl.a. Ekstra Bladet, Jyllands-Posten og TV 2/Fyn samt en række regionale dagblade. Hun har undervist i journalistik siden 1989 – først som lektor på DJH og siden 1999 på RUC. Hjemmeside: [www.kirstenmogensen.org](http://www.kirstenmogensen.org). Mogensen er især interesseret i projekter, som tager journalistikkens rolle i demokratiet alvorligt – herunder dækning af innovation.

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