# T18P03 / Trust, Transparency and Public Policy

**Topic :** T18 / Others
**Chair :** Alistair Cole (Sciences Po, Lyon)

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Trust lies at the heart of contemporary debates regarding governance and democracy (Rothstein, 2005; van Deth et al., 2007; Cook, 2001). Key debates focus on whether the level of trust in democracy is rising or falling over time, the extent to which citizen trust is a prerequisite for good democratic government and more fundamentally how trust can be conceptualised (Fisher et al., 2010; van Deth et al., 1991). Problems of democratic deficit, of the misfit between politics and policy, of political corruption apparently undermine trust in politicians and underpin the emergence in most EU polities of forms of national Populist Party responses (Schmidt, 2006). A recent study by the Herbert Quandt Stiftung foundation (2013) indicates that, while the public has confidence in democracy as a concept, many do not trust government and the way democracy is currently being implemented. Transparency, defined by Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch in terms of 'the availability of information about an organisation or actor that allows external actors to monitor the internal workings of performance of that organisation', is sometimes offered as a remedy to tackle the problems that ostensibly produce such distrust, but understandings of transparency are deeply ambivalent (Cole, 1999).

The panel is intended both to further reflection on a major new project funded by the UK (ESRC) and French (ANR) funding agencies, and to invite general communications on theoretical, empirical and methodological dimensions of trust, transparency, trust profiles and trust-transparency matrices. The trust profile is conceptualised as a mainly heuristic tool to capture macro- and meso level receptions of trust and mistrust, mainly via quantitative survey evidence at the national and European levels (ESS, EVA, Eurobarometer, Transparency international). The trust-transparency matrix is intended to capture the trade-off within policy communities between trusting relationships and formal mechanisms of transparency. Is trust a prerequisite for enhanced transparency? Does transparency produce (mis) trust? Is transparency simply a policy instrument designed to disrupt the operation of the 'private governments' that, following regime theory, govern cities and regions? As a starting point, our case selection rests in part upon a most different logic, based on distinctive positions on the trust-transparency matrix. The UK is presented as being high on transparency, low on trust; France is traditionally lower on transparency, but higher on trust (within policy communities, if not public opinipon); Germany occupies a median position in relation to territory, transparency and trust.

Beyond the specific project, the panel is designed to explore more generic questions germane to the functioning of multi-layered democracies. Are certain types of democratic polity/national systems of multi-level governance better equipped to retain trust than others? Are trusting relationships related to national systems of multi-level governance, and the emphasis they place on the scale of governance or the proximity of decision-making? Does Europeanisation engender more distant relationships across the policy spectrum? Or are these sentiments played out differentially according to the field of policy intervention. Thus framed, the panel engages with broad questions of public policy, democracy and post-sovereignty.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

A recent study by the Herbert Quandt Stiftung foundation (2013) indicates that, while the public has confidence in democracy as a concept, many do not trust government and the way democracy is currently being implemented. There is a strong and growing demand for more diverse and effective forms of citizen engagement to increase levels of trust and engage an increasingly diverse, busy and complex urban population. Transparency, defined by Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch in terms of 'the availability of information about an organisation or actor that allows external actors to monitor the internal workings of performance of that organisation', is sometimes offered as a remedy to tackle the problems that ostensibly produce such distrust, but understandings of transparency are deeply ambivalent. Trust & transparency lie at heart of contemporary debates on governance and democracy.

The key questions addressed by the papers in this panel include whether levels of trust in democracy are rising or falling, whether citizen trust is a prerequisite for good democratic government, whether transparency is required to build trust, whether trust is the basis for transparency, how might trust-transparency matrices best be conceptualised and operationalised and how trust and transparency are incorporated in research design. The panel invites proposals that capture these processes of trust and transparency in (multi-level) policy contexts. These might include the following – non-exhaustive – areas:

· Indicators and definitions of trust (honesty, benevolence, competence, strategic trust, instrumental trust, symbolic trust).

· Indicators and definitions of transparency (decision-making processes, policy content and policy outcomes)

· Trust and transparency in (European) public opinion.

· Trust, transparency and co-production

· Trust, transparency and networks

· Trust, transparency and democracy

· Uses of transparency as a policy instrument

· Trust-transparency and multi-level governance

· New methodological approaches towards trust and transparency

· Trust, Transparency and research design

# T18P03 / Trust, Transparency and Public Policy

**Chair :** Alistair Cole (Sciences Po, Lyon)

## Session 1 Trust and transparency

Thursday, June 29th 08:15 to 10:15 (Block B 5 - 5)

**Discussants**

Alistair Cole (Sciences Po, Lyon)

**Beyond openness and financial integrity: the need for a democratic assessment of local government**

Christine Cheyne (Massey University)

**Fairness or Political Trust: Public Acceptance towards Congestion Charge Policy in China**

Lingyi Zhou (School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University)

**Trust, Transparency & Multi-level Governance in the UK, Germany & France: Exploring a mixed methods approach**

Alistair Cole (Sciences Po, Lyon)

# T18P03 / Trust, Transparency and Public Policy

**Chair :** Alistair Cole (Sciences Po, Lyon)

## Session 2

**Investigation of informal accountability mechanisms within the institutional landscape of collaborative governance on a case study of Greater Manchester Local Enterprise Partnership.**

Ania (Anna) Ankowska (Leeds Beckett University)

**Does Good Governance Matter for Institutional Trust? Case From Nepal**

Narenda Raj Paudel (Central Department of Public Administration, Public Administration Campus, Tribhuvan University)