

# Trusting (and) the Law

**16 – 20 January 2017 Lorentz Center @Oort**

Organizing this Workshop, it was our intention to bridge the gaps between (among others) law, political science, psychology and neuroscience with regards to trust research. The interdisciplinary, international workshop week was firstly aimed at better understanding the origins of trust in the human brain and in our societies, where it has been (and continues to be) transferred into law, and where it constitutes legal systems and institutions. Legal scholars tend to take trust for granted, while social and neuro scientists tend to have a blind eye for the pivotal role of trust in legal matters. The organizers and participants feel that the workshop week was a great success, thanks to the extraordinary facilities and assistance of the Lorentz Center, which offered the perfect environment to bridge the aforementioned gap and to build on a new, cross-disciplinary and international network for future research.

The first day of the workshop was designed to further mutual understanding among the different disciplines participating. A session on the biological origins of trust in social psychology, by professors Paul van Lange (VU University) and Carsten de Dreu (Leiden University) showed how individual and social trust can be measured. Professors Jan de Keijser and Willem van Boom (both Leiden Law School) then informed the participants about legal research and the (rather superficial) way legal scholars usually perceive and use trust. A final plenary session then made the participants think about the benefits and risks of interdisciplinary research and cross-disciplinary collaboration.

The second, third, and fourth days of the workshop all started with presentations by participants, followed by a discussion, after which the participants were invited to collaborate on case studies. These case studies, performed in small groups of 4 to 6 participants each, were designed by the organizers on topics related to respectively private law and economic relationships, criminal law and the judiciary, and constitutional law and political institutions. These three fields all evoke different "trust questions", but in the process, these questions appeared to be more similar than expected. The selected cases were not to be "solved", but rather to be treated as instrumental in order to come up with new research questions and methods to further investigate these types of issues. Each day was concluded by a reporting back session, of which the results were registered by junior participants who volunteered to note the questions and findings. The participants experienced the case studies and the cross-disciplinary collaboration as highly refreshing and stimulating.

The final day offered an intense and inspiring closing session, in which the reports and experiences of the whole week were summarized and discussed. The most interesting insights and research questions were registered by the organizers for future use. This document will serve as the blueprint for a future research agenda, which will be used to apply for funding to further investigate the interconnection of trust and the law in an international network, in which almost all participants are willing to participate. Both the research agenda and the network are satisfactory outcomes of our workshop, which was set up not as an end in itself, but rather as the beginning of a new approach.

The first concrete outcome of the workshop, and also a step in the valorization of our work, was the public event "Trust in Government and in the Law", which we organized on the third workshop day (18 January), in collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and the Council for Public Administration. Two of our participants gave a presentation, along with some external speakers, and a survey was published showing the workings of the "procedural justice" approach by local governments in the Netherlands. The event was visited by dozens of representatives from local councils and governments, as well as by fellow researchers from Leiden.

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