Calibrated trust as a means of societal resilience building

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- TNO – Defence, Safety and Security Unit

- Trust exploratory research programme

- Trust in context of cognitive warfare

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Trust and cognitive warfare

- Cognitive warfare targets the human mind and human vulnerabilities

"trust… is essentially the glue that makes dependencies and connections strong and healthy in democracies as well as supports the foundations of democratic system" (Hybrid CoE, 2023)

- Dependency on trust is a vulnerability, targeted by cognitive warfare

- Trusting societies are more resilient against cognitive warfare

- Fractured and polarised societies are susceptible to manipulation and influence

Our aim:

→ A clearer, more nuanced understanding of what trust is and how it works

→ Guidance on how to bolster trust as a means of societal resilience

Types of trust

- Various actors in our world are subject to trust appraisals (i.e. trustees)

- Three main types of trust:

    1. **Societal trust**: trust in one another

    2. **Political trust:** trust in the government and democratic process

    3. **Institutional trust:** such as media, legal system, science, tax authorities

Although distinct constructs, these type of trust are <u>interconnected</u>

→ if one type of trust is comprised, it can influence the others

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Trust family

1. Old thinking: single spectrum

2. New thinking: orthogonal dimensions

3. A family of trust: Trust, Mistrust, Distrust
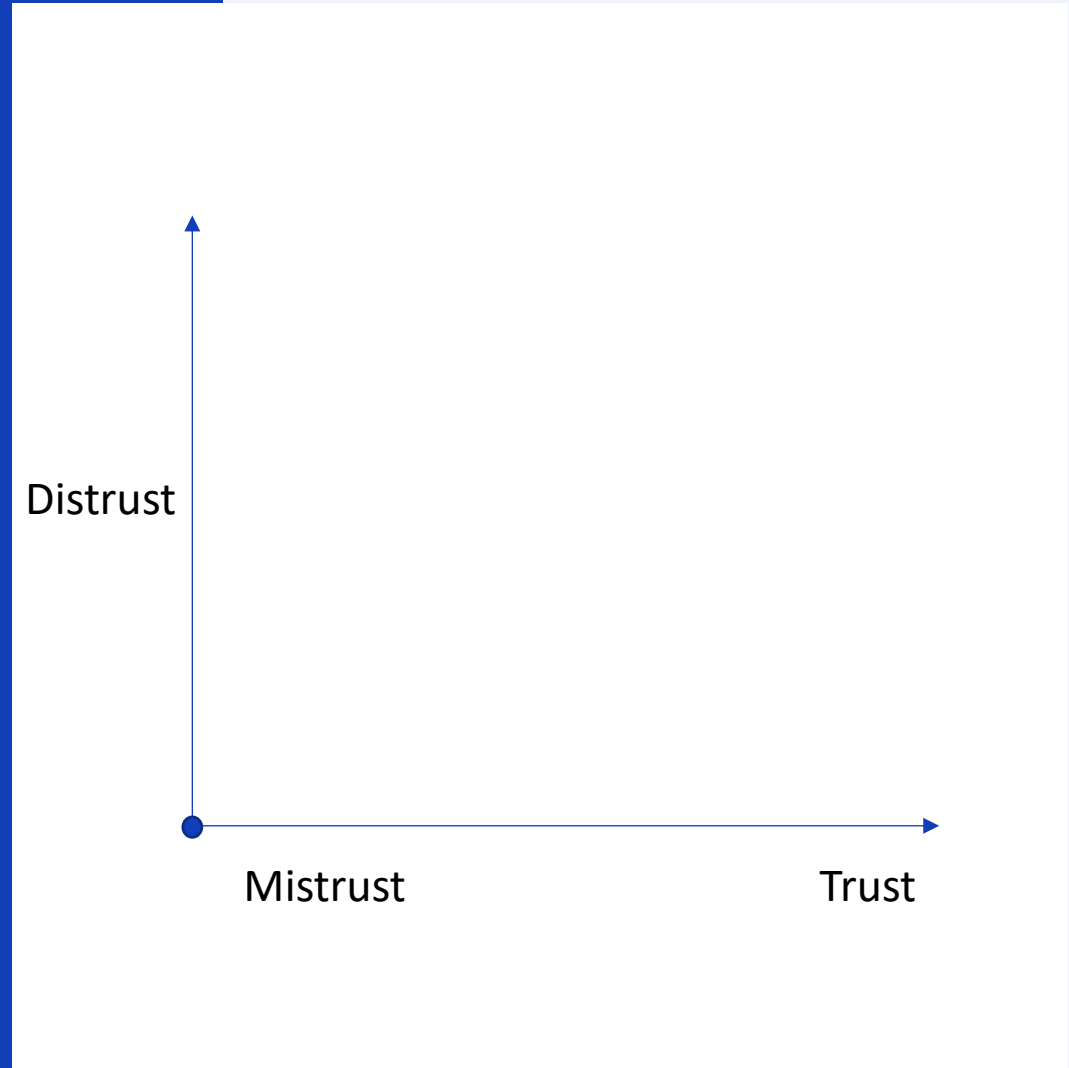
Absence of trust ≠ presence of distrust

Trust = positive expectation

Mistrust = lack of positive expectation

Distrust = active negative expectation

→Distrust is undesirable

→Healthy mistrust is necessary

Distrust

Mistrust   Trust

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Calibrated trust

Objective:
- achieve healthy balance of trust and mistrust
- prevent distrust

From the autonomous tech domain:

"Calibrated Trust" = an appropriate level of trust (neither over nor under)

1. Trust must reflect the true trustworthiness of the trustee (which varies)
2. Finding this balance demands ongoing recalibration

Now, "calibrated trust" in the **interpersonal realm**:

→ Strive for *calibrated,* not maximized, (mis)trust in society

→ Recognise that trust is continuously being recalibrated

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Trust Calibration Cycle

From autonomous tech domain, 3 stages: formation, violation, repair

We present: categorisation of calibrated trust in the interpersonal realm

| **Building** | **Managing** | **Repairing** |

- Can occur in any order

- Can be repeated

- Purpose: → Identify status of trust, understand context and outlook

    → Select effective **interventions**

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1. Building

Trust = willingness to be <u>vulnerable</u> to another's actions based on the <u>expectation</u> they will act in a certain way

1) Past behaviour shapes expectations of future behaviour

   → demonstrate trustworthiness

2) Trusting is riskier when you are vulnerable

   → reduce insecurity

Interventions

1. Reciprocity: social welfare policy

2. Political participation: mini-publics

3. Social inclusion: community actors

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2. Managing

Aim: maintain existing level of trust level

- Everyday: through reliable action

- After violation: through damage control

What happens after a violation?

- Sensemaking

  - Assesment of responsibility

  - Assessment of intentionality

- Recalibration

(Adams, 2005)

Interventions

1. Communication: open, transparent, and competent

2. Debunking

3. Prebunking

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3. Repairing

Aim:

- Restore damaged trust

- Reduce distrust or excessive mistrust

→ Building vs. Rebuilding

→ Appreciation of history/context is key

→ Patience is key

Interventions

1. Reconciliation

2. Procedural Justice Approach

Trust Cycle Summary

	Building	Managing	Repairing
Timeline	Long-term	Short-term	Long-term
Intervention	Proactive	Reactive	Reactive
Goal	Change	Maintenance	Change
Urgency	Medium-low	High	High
Trust Family	Trust, Mistrust	Trust, Mistrust	Trust, Mistrust, Distrust

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Key takeaways

Trust calibration is a continuous process

Achieving optimal balance between trust and mistrust requires persistent critical reflection

Trust requires psycho-social interventions

Interventions to counter cognitive warfare threats should also come from social sciences

Resilience through trust needs 'whole-of-society'

No single intervention can achieve optimised calibrated trust.

Consider **'whole-of-trust'**

Conclusion

Trust must be **"the key bulwark"** in deterring and resisting cognitive warfare (Bilal, 2021)

Without calibrated trust, attempts to fight cognitive warfare will fall short