Enlightened trust in governance

EnTrust

Responsible Research Guidelines

Deliverable 1.1

EnTrust: Enlightened Trust: An Examination of Trust and Distrust in Governance – Conditions, Effects and Remedies

WP1: The theoretical and normative underpinnings of trust/distrust
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www.entrust-project.eu

Responsible Research Guidelines

EnTrust is committed to doing justice to the principles of responsible research and innovation for the duration of the project. Taking a responsible research and innovation approach will mean ensuring compliance with the highest ethical and scientific standards. The overarching aim of our approach is not only to generate sound and reliable evidence and knowledge beyond the state-of-the art, but also to engage in research that involves research subjects (namely, individual citizens, public authorities or civil society representatives) in a meaningful and respectful way, communicates research findings transparently and seeks to commit to critical and open debates. As a research project focusing on trust in governance, our aim is also to ensure that our own research work contributes to building trust in science and research.

EnTrust involves systematic collection of empirical data on the individual level of citizens, the level of organisations and intermediary actors, as well as data from the mass media and the public sphere(s) across various European countries. We have planned the project with the aim of securing compliance with the ethical principles as laid down in Article 19 of the H2020 regulations (No 1291/2013), the ethical guidelines and regulations of the member states where the research takes place, and in accordance with the ethical principles laid down by the university and disciplinary standards for research ethics. *Before commencement of data collection, we will secure all needed permission from the responsible data protection* authorities in each country involved in our consortium.

Following the principles of Responsible Research and Innovation of Horizon 2020, we have developed consortium guidelines on responsible research. These guidelines specify rules in regard to our engagement with research participants, the handling of data, a transparent and accountable research process, sensitivity towards gender issues and compliance with the highest standards of quality of scientific outputs. The overall aim of these guidelines is to guarantee that the project meets the highest ethical standards.

Our Engagement with Research Participants

Human Rights and Dignity

In *EnTrust,* we will respect the European Commission’s “Ethics in Social Science and Humanities” Guidelines (October 2018 version), the European Convention on Human Rights (in particular Article 8) and any national constitutional or other laws protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of individual participants. It is a central commitment of our project that research with human participants, the handling of personal data and our dissemination, exploitation and communication activities may be conducted only if they can be performed with respect for human dignity, and that human rights and basic freedoms are to be considered at all times. *EnTrust* is thus committed to ensuring that the research process, research results and their dissemination will not stigmatise or discriminate against particular social groups (in particular, according to economic status, age, gender, religion or political opinion), and takes measures to avoid any harm to research participants. Moreover, in our research, we recognise vulnerable groups and strive to give them a voice. In particular, we include inductive research methods to open up to their lived experiences and take account of their own language to reflect on these experiences.

Participation and Inclusiveness

Secondly, our project takes a participatory, inclusive approach. The work plan involves various measures providing occasions for an early and continuous integration of our research subjects, representatives of the researched societal groups and other stakeholders. All research instruments (such as interview guidelines, questionnaires) will be pre-tested with a selected pilot sample of research participants. The results of these pre-tests will feed back into the research process and help to adjust and refine our research instruments. Moreover, participatory tools, such as the involvement of non-scientists in our advisory board and roundtables, debates with practitioners and workshops at various stages of the work plan, will create further opportunities to engage directly with research subjects and/or their representatives, interested policymakers, public authorities, civil society representatives, citizens and external experts. On these occasions, we will deliberate about and reflect upon research methods, the interpretation of research findings, their societal implications and practical and policy recommendations. This will help us bring in new and diverse perspectives, take account of needs and expectations of various groups in society, contribute to co-creating research processes, empower the target groups of our research, and implement trust-enhancing participatory and corrective elements. Comments and suggestions from various participants from roundtables, debates and workshops will also be gathered by means of a feedback survey. Overall, the input provided by the various groups of participants and stakeholders will be used to strengthen the quality of our research, the innovatory capacity of the project, the applicability of our findings, and the societal impact of our output.

Participation Based on Informed Consent

Research with potential participants will only be conducted after gaining informed consent. During the recruitment process, potential participants (and their legal representatives where children are involved) will be presented with written information outlining the purposes of the research, the use of the data for those purposes, the storage of the data, the period of time that the research information and identifying information will be kept, the process of anonymising the data (specifically, removing personal data and eliminating the possibility of linking the data to specific individuals), full voluntariness of participation and the right to withdraw from the research participation at any time without any consequences and without providing any reason or justification, and any rights of the participant (and his/her legal representatives) to gain access to the data and the reports. In *EnTrust*, there will be no deception of research participants. Moreover, potential research participants will be informed about the identity and contact details of the researchers conducting the research, and the data protection officer responsible for the researchers conducting the research. Unless participants sign the consent form, agreeing to all terms and conditions, participants will not be included in the research.

Handling of Data

All data collected in the *EnTrust* project for research and communication, dissemination and exploitation purposes will be handled according to The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679, in addition to any additional regulations in the countries represented in the consortium. All data subjects will receive written information about their rights in accordance with *Article 9(1)(a) of the General Data Protection Regulation.* All research data generated by *EnTrust* will be stored and handled in such a way as to prevent unauthorised access to data.

In terms of the collection of personal data, *EnTrust's* research involves three kinds of data. Firstly, we will collect and process personal data for communication, dissemination and exploitation issues. Secondly, we will gather research data that may comprise personal data. Thirdly, we will generate datasets that are fully anonymous from the outset.

Handling of Personal Data for Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation Activities

In order to implement our communication, dissemination and exploitation activities, we will collect contact details of public stakeholders who have been or who are currently engaged in programmes and initiatives concerned with trust and distrust in governance, civil society and the future of democracy in Europe, and who thus may have an interest in our findings and activities. The collection of contact details, such as names, professional or organisational positions/responsibilities and e-mail addresses, will be limited to the published information provided by public institutions, academic and educational institutions, media companies, political organisations, civil society groups and organisations in our field of interest on their official websites, or which we may receive from those institutions or organisations directly. Stakeholders from whom we have collected contact details will receive invitations to subscribe to our mailing list(s). These invitations will comprise information about the specific purpose of the respective mailing list and the kind of output we will circulate through them. When subscribing, stakeholders will actively opt-in and provide their informed consent to be included in our mailing list(s). They will receive output from our research, such as policy briefs or guidelines, only after having actively subscribed to the respective mailing list. Unsubscribing from our mailing list(s) is possible at any time.

Research Data that May Comprise Personal Data

The collection of personal data may occur in interviews and focus groups. Interviews and focus groups will be audio and/or video recorded and subsequently transcribed. Here, *EnTrust* is committed to a strict anonymisation policy. All personal data obtained from interviews and focus groups will be anonymised in the transcripts to be used for further analysis. At the very beginning, all participant identifiers, including individual and organisational names and other information that might enable the identity of participants to be traced, as well as the names of other individuals mentioned during the interview, will be removed from the transcripts, thus breaking the possibility of reattributing the data to specific individuals. We will keep the audio and video files strictly and physically separate from the text files with the anonymised transcripts. For the analysis, researchers of the consortium will only use the anonymised transcripts. Participant identifiers and raw data obtained from interviews and focus groups will be stored in secure, locked or encoded areas or computers, and physical and electronic access will be strictly limited to the authorised personnel. In case audio or video files need to be sent electronically among the authorised personnel, the files will be encrypted. Participant identifiers and raw data from interviews and focus groups will not be distributed outside national teams responsible for them without explicit consent of the research participants. All participant identifiers and raw data obtained from interviews and focus groups, including audio and video recordings, will be completely erased after five or max. ten years, depending on the national scientific codes of conduct for safeguarding good scientific practice. No raw data will be published.

Anonymous Research Data

Finally, we will generate research datasets that are anonymous from the very outset. This involves two different approaches, which will be implemented according to the requirements of data quality assurance and the necessary procedures of data collection. With the first approach, anonymity will be ensured because the collection of data itself will be fully anonymous and confidential since no personal data will have been gathered. Participants' responses will be stored using numeric codes, which cannot be linked to particular individuals. The second approach entails that we produce datasets that only contain anonymised data. Here, researchers will work with data without any personal identifiers relating to the participants, which means that data will be fully anonymous. While the datasets available to researchers will be completely anonymous, some personal data may, nevertheless, be collected by a specialised company to which data collection will be subcontracted. During the stage of data collection, it may be necessary, for purposes of data quality assurance and initial tracking of the data, that the subcontracted company generates a list with individual identifiers of research participants, based on their informed voluntary and active opting-in to the research. Following established standards and routines, the company will keep the dataset with the respondents' answers strictly and physically separate from the files with the codes identifying individuals 'under lock and key', or in similarly secure, encoded computer facilities. The file with the identifiers will be erased after submission of the dataset to the researchers of the project and the final quality checks. The project members will at no point have access to the file with the identifiers. The subcontracted company will need to guarantee full compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

Transparency and Open-access

The *EnTrust* project follows a strict transparency and open-access policy. One the one hand, we will inform potential research participants in detail about the content, procedures, responsibilities and usage of the studies to which they will be invited. On the other hand, we will openly communicate our research methods, findings and conclusions, and discuss their implications for the various stakeholders and society as such. We are committed to the goals of the "Open Research Data Pilot", and will make generated data available for validation, replication and re-use as much as possible where appropriate. For this purpose, we will archive manuscripts of project articles on the project's website and in open-access, free-of-charge online repositories, such as Research Gate, before, after or alongside their publication, depending on the rules defined by the publishers (green open access). Furthermore, we will produce codebooks and guidelines for the different datasets and make them available on the project's website. Moreover, we will curate the quantitative datasets produced in WP4 (media analysis) and WP6 (population survey) and ask open data repositories, such as the FoDaKo NRW or the GESIS Institute in Germany, to deposit them in their archives after the end of the research project. Likewise, the project adheres to a strict open-access policy to its publications (green and gold standard). Key research findings will be presented in the national languages of the countries involved and in a style that is easily comprehensible to non-experts. This open-access policy will help to increase the visibility of our research, improve the traceability and understanding of results, encourage dialogue with other experts, stakeholders and interested citizens, and contribute to the enhancement of trust in science within the various target groups and among the general public.

Accountability

In *EnTrust*, we also take proactive measures to ensure the accountability of our research. On the one hand, we will be fully transparent and accountable in terms of financing and the usage of funding. For each scientific and non-scientific publication and event, we will state by whom the project is funded (namely, the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme). At the same time, we are committed to making the *EnTrust* project accountable to the funding agency and the general public, and will thus ensure that all funds are being used correctly and in accordance with the funding agreement. Regular financial reports of all consortium members will allow the funding agency to control the appropriate use of funds. Moreover, the project will be available for any further checks, investigations and audits by the funding agency and other associated institutions. In addition, those consortium members that receive funding over a certain threshold will proactively organise an audit of their own use of budget by an independent professional auditor.

On the other hand, all consortium members will be sensitive towards and avoid any conflicts of interest. In this spirit, our project follows three basic principles. Firstly, it is strictly oriented towards the public good and as such, is committed to the scientific guidelines of objectivity, validity and relevance. Secondly, the project is guided by the principle of reflexivity. This means that we will not only critically reflect upon our own positions, but also proactivelymake them accessible to academic and public discussions, thus creating regular occasions for justifications and explanations. Thirdly, the project works according to the principle of transparency. Thus, we will openly communicate any potential conflicts of interest and refrain from any action where they might impede the quality of our research according to the guidelines set out in this document.

Gender Issues

Gender is an important aspect when studying trust and distrust in governance, even though existing research has its limitations in this regard. Thus, we will seek to ascertain with more clarity whether gender-related divisions apply to trust and distrust in governance, and here in particular to the various sub-dimensions (expressly, instrument and normative criteria of (un-)trustworthiness, trust in politicians, institutions and governance systems, in economic governance, and in experts and science). To this purpose, *EnTrust* will focus on gender aspects throughout the work plan. It will not only ascertain gender specific levels of trust and distrust in governance; it will also look at intersections of gender and social inequalities by asking whether trust and distrust diverge between gender groups when social-structure position is taken into consideration.

At the same time, *EnTrust* strictly follows and implements gender balance principles. For the composition of the consortium, we have established a gender balance among the

WP leaders and among the other team members, while we have also aimed to reach a gender balance among the members of our Board of Advisors. In the research work of the various WPs, we will implement an equal gender balance among research participants as much as possible. This principle will also be strictly followed when inviting stakeholders to our events, and for all other dissemination, exploitation and communication activities where this specification of target audiences is possible.

Quality of Research

We will guarantee the highest possible scientific quality as a basic means to improve trust in science. First of all, the *EnTrust* project is based on methods of data collection and analysis that conform to the highest scientific standards, are scientifically tested and proven, and will be continuously reflected on and refined. Moreover, our research will systematically investigate and take into account previous research evidence in order to ensure that our own research findings keep pace with the most recent scientific debates and knowledge, and generate added value that contributes to considerable progress beyond existing research and available knowledge.

Furthermore, *EnTrust* will implement a strict quality management policy that consists of internal procedures of peer review, the presentation of project findings to external experts in the field at high-ranking scientific conferences, the submission of scientific papers to leading peer-reviewed journals. Moreover, we have established a Board of Advisors consisting of scientific experts and stakeholders from various areas of civil society, who will ensure the continuous exchange of ideas, the critical review of research outputs, and the dissemination of findings. Scientific advisors will help us to guarantee high scientific quality and visibility of our research, while civil society advisors will strengthen the integration of feedback from the perspective of researched groups and practitioners, and they will help to ensure the dissemination and exploitation of our outputs beyond academia.