Endogenous Institutional Trustworthiness

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Institutional trustworthiness

What is institutional trustworthiness and how can it sustain the working of public institutions?

a. Two views of public institutions

b. Two approaches to institutional trustworthiness

Two views of public institutions

1) rule-based: structure of procedures

2) role-based: structure of relations

1) works for any institution (private, public, political, commercial, …)

2) is critical for understanding the specificity of *public* institutions, whose constitutive roles have the distinguishing feature of being embodied, that is occupied by human persons (the officeholders).

[Notice: 1 and 2 are not an "either or", it's more a matter of emphasis]

While institutional rules and procedures can be accessed and assessable from the *outside* a public institution (and so is the institution's capacity to enact them), the practices of officeholders' power exercise may primarily be accessed and assessed from an *internal* perspective.

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To analyze and assess how a public institution works in practice, one needs to analyze and assess the conduct of the officeholders in their institutional capacity (Ceva & Ferretti 2021)

Two approaches to institutional trustworthiness

1)   external perspective: *exogenous* trustworthiness

2)   internal perspective: *endogenous* trustworthiness

1) focuses on attributions of the property of trustworthiness that come from the outside a public institution, e.g. as a consequence of people's trust towards their governing institutions

2) focuses on the internal architecture of a public institution; property of the structure of interactions between institutional role occupants

Endogenous institutional trustworthiness

indicates the capacity of the officeholders' interrelated action to contribute to the working of their institution
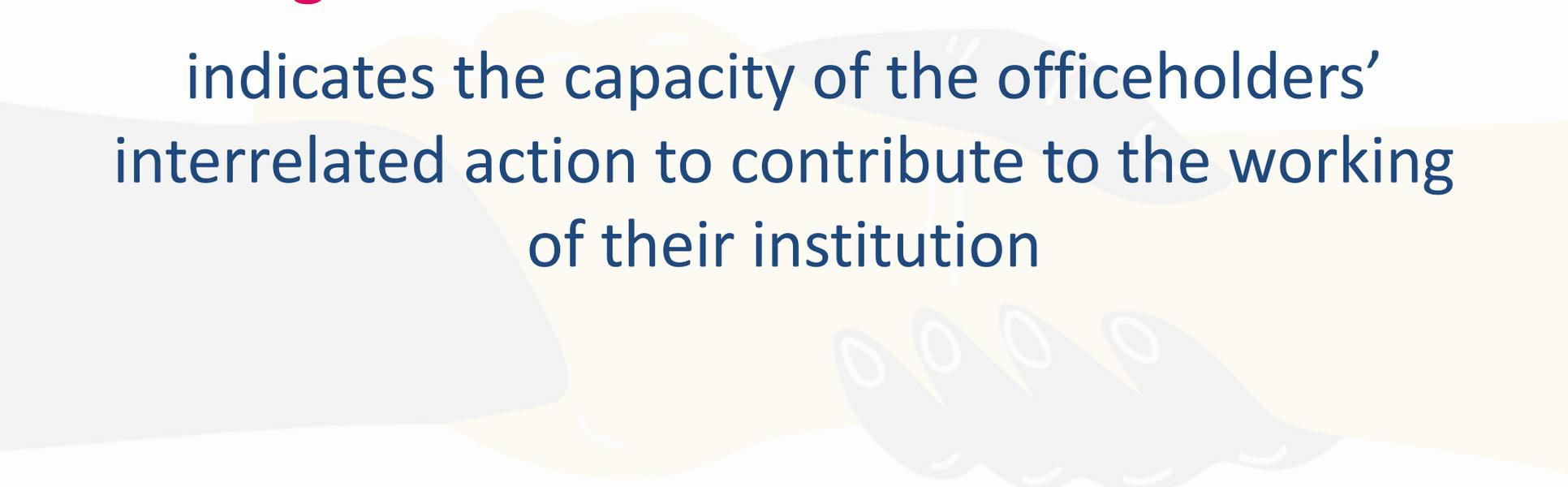
The working of an institution

Institutional roles are interrelated: linked in such a way that any officeholder's action in her institutional capacity structurally depends on the actions of the other officeholders

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To see how public institutions operate, one must look at how the interrelated actions of officeholders may form a coherent whole (the institutional action) capable of upholding the working of the institution in view of the normative ideals that justify its existence (e.g. justice)

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Endogenous constitutive relation between institutional action (the object of trust) and the dynamics of interaction between officeholders (the subject of trust)

Office accountability

Officeholders should be in the position to justify (i.e., to give an account of) the rationale of their exercise of a power of office by showing its coherence with the terms of their power mandate (Ceva 2019, Ceva & Ferretti 2021).

Notice: office accountability ≠ legal accountability ≠ democratic accountability

EnTrust's core conjecture

Public institutions realizing office accountability are endogenously trustworthy because their internal architecture grounds officeholders' mutual trust that their interrelated action sustains the working of the institution.

To assess this core conjecture, EnTrust will study

i)   the constitutive relation between office accountability and endogenous institutional trustworthiness

ii)   the contributive relation between these properties and the working of a public institution

The relation between office accountability and endogenous institutional trustworthiness

Study *a negativo* of officeholders' reactions to institutional failures (e.g. corruption as contestatory action) as they offer a special insight about the relation between (deficits of) office accountability and (the lack of) endogenous institutional trustworthiness

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Analysis of the various kinds of the mixed moral feelings (e.g., self-righteousness, anger, guilt or shame), more or less fittingly, associated with officeholders' contestatory reactions to institutional failures

The relation between office accountability and endogenous institutional trustworthiness as contributions to the working of public institutions

What kind of deontic emotions have the potential not just to sanction transgressions, but to sustain the working of public institutions by responding to threats against cooperative interactions

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Activation of an institution's internal resources of self-correction through the mobilization of its internal emotional capital

Cited works

Ceva, Emanuela. (2019). "Political Corruption as a Relational Injustice". *Social Philosophy & Policy* 35(2): 118-137.

Ceva, Emanuela & Ferretti, Maria Paola. (2021). *Political Corruption: The Internal Enemy of Public Institutions*, New York: Oxford University Press