FACEWORK: creating trust in systems, institutions, and organisations

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CREATING TRUST IN SYSTEMS, INSTITUTIONS, AND ORGANISATIONS

Abstract

There is a dearth of concepts able to explain the genesis of trust in institutional systems such as organisations and wider expert systems, and its link to interpersonal trust. To this end, the present paper reconsiders and reinvigorates Giddens's (1990) concept of "facework". It reviews the use of the concept in the literature, finding considerable conceptual confusion, particularly in distinguishing between Giddens's and Goffman's (2003 [1955]) earlier conceptualisation. This is addressed through a formal definition of facework. The paper then develops the concept further, based on Giddens's own structuration theory. It focuses particularly on two aspects, *viz.*, the different dimensions and elements of facework, and the balance between institutionalised and agentic elements inherent in it. The paper concludes by summarising the implications this analysis has for broader conceptions of individuals "representing" organisations and expert systems.

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen a surge in interest in impersonal forms of trust – that is, trust which has as its object not an individual human being, but an institutional system of one kind or another (including organisations and wider expert systems). But while these forms have been recognised as highly significant, very little is still known about their genesis.

Regarding trust in specific institutional arrangements such as organisations, research has repeatedly demonstrated that its effects differ systematically from mere interpersonal trust. This has been verified both within (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Kramer, 2010) and between organisations (Fang et al., 2008) as well as for institutional arrangements on the organisational field level (Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011); for the inter-organisational context, Zaheer et al.'s (1998) classic overview even concludes that it is organisational rather than interpersonal trust which has the greater effects on joint performance. Nonetheless, the formation of such trust has remained strongly underresearched. The study of inter-organisational trust even remains conceptually incomplete without a consideration of both interpersonal and organisational objects (Gulati and Sytch, 2008). And yet even this field of inquiry is "quite short" of studies able to do so (Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006, p. 264).

Trust in wider institutional arrangements such as expert systems has been recognised as more problematic than ever before. Not only economic observers have recently witnessed its fundamental significance, but also its destructive potential in the outbreak of the financial crisis (Gillespie et al., 2012). Similarly, ever-new findings of all-time low levels of trust in government, business, finance, health systems and regulatory regimes (Stevenson and Wolfers, 2011; Armstrong, 2012;

Edelman Trust Barometer, 2013) underscore the now-problematic nature of trust in expert systems (Author A, forthcoming). Yet solutions to these problems seem inconceivable as long as we know virtually nothing about the genesis of this form of trust: our conceptual understanding of this process has hardly advanced since Luhmann's brief, 35 year-old comment that system trust is anchored in repeated confirmatory experiences of the system, such as the successful handling of money (1979; on Giddens, see below).

The existence of a link between these impersonal forms and interpersonal trust has often been taken for granted, but its nature has remained largely unclear (see the overview in Zaheer and Harris, 2006). Instead, especially trust in organisations has often been implicitly equated with trust in individual representatives or senior management (Currall and Inkpen, 2002), or it has been described metaphorically in the terms of interpersonal trust (Bigley and Pearce, 1998), often unduly anthropomorphising the organisation (Sydow, 2006). It is also widely accepted that trust in relevant systems is intertwined with interpersonal trust within their sphere of influence (see, e.g., couples and marriage law; Rowthorn, 1999). But establishing the link especially for the genesis of trust in expert systems has remained a desideratum (Della Giusta, 2006; also see Uslaner, 2008 and Beugelsdijk, 2008).

It is thus unsurprising that the call for studying the genesis of these forms of trust and their links to interpersonal trust has become widespread (e.g., Currall and Inkpen, 2002; Bennett and Robson, 2004; Möllering, 2006), but research in this area is nascent at best (Gulati and Sytch, 2008).

The present contribution addresses this crucial gap by exploring the concept of "facework" (Giddens, 1990; Goffman, 2003 [1955]). Facework is one of the rare analytical tools capable of addressing the pressing questions discussed above. But as

we will see, the concept has in essence lain dormant since Giddens's reformulation a quarter of a century ago. This paper intends to reconsider, and to reinvigorate, the facework concept, making it truly fruitful for the study of trust in expert systems, but also organisations and other institutional arrangements.

The first part of the paper briefly outlines Giddens's seminal contribution to the theory of facework and traces differences, but also continuities from Goffman's earlier formulation. It then reviews the adoption of the concept in the literature, focusing especially on recurring problems.

The second part of the paper endeavours to give clearer conceptual contours to facework. It provides the first formal definition of the term and discusses its central implications. Then it draws on Giddens's own structuration theory to elucidate, first, important dimensions and elements of facework, and second, the balance between routinisation and improvisation, i.e., between institutionalised and agentic behaviours inherent in facework.

The paper concludes by summarising central findings, particularly in relation to predominant conceptions of "representation" found in the broader literature, and outlining practical consequences as well as limitations of and avenues for further research openend up by this analysis.

FACEWORK:

SEMINAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND ADOPTION IN THE LITERATURE

While our central interest here is Giddens's understanding of facework, he draws extensively on Goffman's previous formulation of the concept. Accordingly, the following section will provide a condensed outline of both, using a direct reference to relevant original passages, and briefly outline the relationship between the two versions of the concept, before moving on to a review of the adoption of Giddens's facework concept in the literature.

Seminal contributions

Goffman's original formulation: working on individual faces

Goffman, generally credited with originating the concept, considers facework as a collection of strategies of maintaining and restoring "face". For a selection of central statements from his seminal paper (2003 [1955]), see table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Goffman describes *face* as a construct which connects the individual to desired and socially sanctioned identities, while at the same time lending greater coherence to individual self-identity (cf. table 1, quote 1). At the heart of it, then, lie concerns of conformity and consistency. *Facework* appears principally as a means (a range of behaviours) to maintain face. It deals with face threats, both in a preventative and a restorative manner (quote 2).

Note, however, that facework is always oriented at both participants to an encounter. According to Goffman its function focuses less on individual needs than on the stabilisation of the "encounter" or the situation itself (and thus, in a wider sense, of the "interaction order"; Goffman, 1983) (quotes 3 and 4). He assumes that "tacit cooperation will naturally arise" for this superordinate purpose (Goffman, 2003, p. 9). Facework behaviours are often habitual in nature and at least partially defined by cultural repertoires (quote 5).

Goffman's concept has been developed particularly in two streams of literature. The first of these is politeness theory, which has focused especially on the identity needs of individuals who want to feel they are (a) free from imposition by others ("negative face") and (b) appreciated and approved of by selected others ("positive face"; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Tracy, 1990). The second is comprised by the broad umbrella of social-psychological theories which are interested in issues of indvidual self-presentation, often for strategic purposes, including situations of bargaining or negotiation (e.g., Baumeister, 1982; Tracy, 1990).

Giddens's reformulation: individuals working **as** *faces*

Giddens's development of facework is embedded in the context of his theory of ("late") modernity (1990; 1994). In brief, his argument postulates that:

(1) modernity crucially differs from pre-modern societies through time-space distanciation; i.e., social relations are *disembedded* from their local contexts, but there are ways in which they are regularly re-integrated or *reembedded* into localised relations;

(2) the functioning of such late modern societies depends centrally on *trust in abstract systems* (i.e., trust in *expert systems* such as, e.g., medicine, and *symbolic*

tokens like money) because societal members interact with these systems but do not generally possess the expertise to monitor and evaluate their correct functioning;

(3) trust in these *faceless commitments* can only be built up through the reembedding mechanism of *facework*, which is accomplished by experts and other representatives at the *access points* of these abstract systems.

(For definitions of each of the terms in italics, see table 2.) [1]

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

From Goffman to Giddens

Even from this very brief outline, continuities and differences become apparent between the two versions of the concept. The most important differences are twofold:

Giddens's concept is more restricted than Goffman's. Where Goffman's encompasses all potential concerns and behaviours which may impinge on an individual's sense of self, Giddens's is focused specifically on trust and trustworthiness.

Furthermore, Giddens conceives of facework as a concept which links individuals to wider social systems, and which can transform trust in an individual into trust in the system. In his writing, facework becomes primarily a *translation mechanism* for trust.

Thus, Goffman's and Giddens's concepts describe different types of behaviours (defence of identity vs. translation of trust) with different types of functions (presentation of self vs. representation of another entity). In Goffman individuals *have* faces; in Giddens they *are* the faces of wider social entities.

At the same time, there are clear continuities. Giddens's choice of the term is not coincidental; he adopts Goffman's concept for his own, more specific purposes and interests. This explains, on the one hand, his focus on issues of trust and trustworthiness only. On the other, Giddens merely makes the link between individual and social system, which was still largely implicit in Goffman's formulation of the concept, more explicit and inverts the perspective taken on this link. That is, where Goffman has individuals drawing on social systems in order to create and maintain their individual face, Giddens identifies the ways in which individuals can refer to this link to create and maintain a systemic "face".

Furthermore, that Giddens should take up this idea of Goffman's is consistent with the wider way in which he draws on Goffman's work across his own social theory. This is true of his acknowledgement of the central role of trust in social life and individual psychology, as it is for Giddens's rather unorthodox view of agency (particularly an explanation of social order as a skilful accomplishment, the idea that agents chronically monitor their own and other's conduct, and a focus on tacit and practical knowledge; for all these see the section on agency below). (See Baert [2010, pp. 101-8], and Giddens's own reflections on Goffman as a systematic social theorist [1987].)

Adoption in the literature

The detailed literature review presented here is based on a body of 24 texts (see table 3). However, a much wider review of works referring to the facework concept was undertaken. The term facework (face-work, face work) is used highly frequently. For instance, Google Scholar lists more than 2,000 individual works citing it in

combination with Giddens's name; without the restriction to an explicit mention of Giddens this number rises into the five figures. While not all of the respective literature conforms to stringent academic and theoretical standards, it clearly demonstrates a high level of interest in the concept.

The principles of this review and of the selection of texts for the more detailed analysis undertaken can be found in appendix I. For present purposes, it may suffice to say that its focus is on contributions employing the concept in Giddens's sense. That is, the texts surveyed use the facework concept in order to explore trust in expert systems, organisations, and similar institutional phenomena across a wide variety of contexts, addressing issues such as trust in (specific aspects of) the medical system, authorities of housing and social work, impersonal accounting practices, and many more (see again table 3), thus indicating the relevance and perceived usefulness of the concept across disciplines.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

At the same time, the texts demonstrate a range of shortcomings which have limited the understanding and productive use of the facework concept. The three most significant of these are: superficial use; lack of distinction between Goffman's and Giddens's versions of the concept; and a neglect of its potential for linking interpersonal to systemic forms of trust. (More detail on each of these, in relation to the body of literature surveyed, can be found in appendix II.)

Limitation 1: Superficial use. First, facework is nearly always discussed in a very superficial manner. Texts typically cite small elements extracted from the same

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narrow segment of Giddens's seminal comments (1990, esp. pp. 80, 85, 88), often mentioning facework and its related concepts (see table 2) more or less in passing, with little or no further elucidation. Giddens's concepts, including that of facework, often appear to be considered self-explanatory (which is effectively refuted by the problematic uses discussed below, and in appendix II). Accordingly, interest in conceptual development has remained minimal.[2]

Limitation 2: Lack of distinction Goffman vs. Giddens. Second, despite the clear differences between Giddens's and Goffman's versions of the concept (see above), their use in the literature reveals significant confusion. Most commonly, texts cite Giddens, but explain facework in terms of (loose and partial interpretations of) Goffman's work. Thus, a number of authors treat facework simply as a synonym for self-presentation, implying that showing your "face", or true character, is how interpersonal trust is built. However, little analytical value is added by this argument (which also lacks a systematic theoretical basis and instead again follows a rather commonsensical understanding). It also contributes to obscuring the fact that "faces" can not only be those of individuals, but also those of expert systems.

Limitation 3: Neglect of link between individual and system. Despite using Giddensian ideas such as "faceless commitments" or "access points", few contributions devote any serious attention to the link between trust in individuals and trust in systems. Some texts, rather confusingly, even employ these concepts but simultaneously deny that any such link can exist. More commonly a link is implied, but remains extremely vague.[3] Only a very small number of contributions even go so

far as to note that facework links interpersonal interaction with trust in expert systems.

Limitations: a common root? Why, though, these pervasive and comparatively uniform shortcomings in the literature? At least part of the explanation lies in the fact that all three problems are already present in Giddens's (1990) own account (and have not been addressed since).

Thus, (1) Giddens himself does not provide a detailed account of the mechanisms underlying facework, but instead tends to rely more on intuitively accessible examples from everyday life. (2) Partially due to Goffman's extensive influence on Giddens's thinking (see above), Giddens does not draw a clear and consistent distinction between Goffman's original and his own reformulation. Instead, the two versions of the concept are at times running alongside each other without a clear distinction made. (Compare, e.g., the Goffmanian discussion of civil inattention as a type of facework [Giddens, 1990, pp.81-82], vs. instances of facework as trust translation where "everybody is aware that the real repository of trust is in the abstract system" [1990, p. 85].) The combined result of these two omissions being that (3) the processes and mechanisms which link trust in individuals to trust in expert systems are not discussed at any length.

Of course, these omissions are primarily because Giddens's interests here, in the context of presenting his much wider-ranging theory of modernity, lie elsewhere; in addition, Giddens is generally often content to provide a thought-provoking impulse only (Tucker, 1998). The uneven adoption of the concept and its meanings in the literature shows that any steps towards following up this impulse further and providing greater conceptual clarity could prove immensely productive.

Representatives and representation in the wider literature. It should be noted that facework is frequently described as an individual agent "representing" the institutional system (Moilanen, 2006; Schlichter, 2010; Vuorenmaa, 2005). This warrants at least brief consideration of the idea and its relation to facework, since not much energy has been devoted to clarifying what it means to "represent" an institutional system.

The original and conceptually oriented writings on boundary spanners from the 1970s and 1980s tended to include representation as one of the chief functions of a boundary role person (e.g., Adams, 1980; Organ, 1971). But this stream of literature has come to be increasingly replaced by an interest in the performance of specific types of representatives such as sales people (e.g., Hawes et al., 1989; Nonis et al., 2004). When investigating the meaning of representation in this context, many of the latter contributions, at a closer look, are describing less the question of a (more or less authentic) *re*presentation, and more that of how boundary spanners can employ techniques to *present* the organisation in a positive light (i.e., "being vocal advocates" and creating rather than communicating an image; Bettencourt and Brown, 2003, p. 395).

Where representation is examined further, it tends to be described in one or both of two ways.

The first of these has focused particularly on the *normative* dimension, i.e., the representative as embodying or "living" the organisation's norms and values (Richter et al., 2006), and in terms of the representatives normative commitment to it (Morgan and Hunt, 2004; Newell and Swan, 2000), while questions regarding, e.g., the

significatory dimension of representative communication have remained rare (Organ, 1971; Williams, 2002).

Beyond this, the mechanisms through which a perceived connection between individual and organisation or institutional system is established (making them "representative") have not been queried to any serious degree. Generally, the connection is presented as an automatic generalisation ("Buying firms assume that the salesperson's behavior reflects the supplier's values and attitudes"; Doney and Cannon, 1997, p. 41) or inference "on the basis of the aggregated behavior of individuals" (Williams, 2002, p. 116). If a condition for this inference is cited at all, it is commonly that the representative needs to appear "typical" of the organisation (Sydow, 2006, p. 382). Thus, the second way of describing representation (if at all) relies particularly on the assumption of a *typicality* of the representative for the wider system.

While all of these studies clearly have merit, they also illustrate that it might be highly instructive to query the nature of representation inherent in the facework carried out by a representative.

(RE-)FRAMING FACEWORK: A STRUCTURATIONIST APPROACH

This section will take several important steps in this direction. First, it will suggest a number of definitional choices which are suited to resolving much of the confusion encountered in the literature, as outlined in the previous section. After that, it will develop our understanding of facework based on Giddens's own structuration theory, with particular attention to the dimensions and interfaces involved in facework, and to the aspects of routinisation and improvisation inherent in its practice.

These sections will incorporate a discussion of relevant aspects of Giddens's theory of structuration. This theoretical framework, developed in the mid-1970s to -80s and outlined systematically in *The Constitution of Society* (1984; also see Giddens, 1979), presents a new approach to the analysis of social order, with the aim of bridging the shortcomings of both overly structurally oriented accounts (principally structuralism and functionalism) and overly individually focused theories (particularly what he calls "interpretative sociologies") (Giddens, 1984, pp. 1-4). Giddens's emphasis on the reflexive and knowledgeable way in which human agents engage with, and reproduce, their social context, combined with a reevaluation of many of the core concepts of traditional social theory, has valuable contributions to make to the present inquiry, and the respective terms and concepts will be discussed in the appropriate sections.

This represents a new approach to the theory of facework[4] because Giddens himself did not apply his structuration framework in any systematic way to his writings on the nature of (late) modernity, in the context of which he introduces the concept of facework. (Also see Baert [2010: 156-158], who outlines the distinct

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phases of Giddens's work and reflects on possible reasons for the theoretical

disconnect between them.)

Giddens's structuration approach, beyond its wide adoption (typically more as a

rough guide than a strict analytical framework), has attracted criticism. While some of

the most widely discussed of these (most prominently, Archer, 1995) focus on the

ontological and epistemological foundations of structuration theory and are thus

beyond the scope of this paper, Thompson's (1984, 1989) well-known criticism, that

structuration theory lacks consistency or connectivity with traditional theories of

structure, is pertinent here. My intention here is not a Giddens exegesis *per se*, but

instead to offer useful analytical impulses to research interested in facework, and the

literature review has shown that this concerns the institutionally and organisationally

oriented literature in particular. Accordingly, while drawing on the rich fund of

insights that structuration theory has to offer, this analysis will strive to indicate

connections to established terms and concepts so as to facilitate their uptake.

Where appropriate, the present approach will be rounded off by reference to

Goffman's original theoretical observations. Due to their influence on Giddens's

thinking, they provide a logical lead to addressing some of the questions left open by

Giddens himself (see above).

Defining facework

No formal definition of facework in Giddens's sense has been provided to date. Here,

facework is defined as *the translation of interpersonal trust into trust which pertains*

to an institutional system, based on the conduct of system representatives who, using

their agency, are seen to draw on the system's rules and resources in devising

behaviours able to signal trustworthiness.

(For some purposes, a less precise but more concise phrasing may suffice, such as: Facework translates interpersonal into institutional and system trust through the conduct of representatives who are seen to draw on institutionalised rules and resources.)

This description reflects a number of conscious definitional choices which warrant further comment.

Restriction of definitional scope: distinguishing Giddens from Goffman

Note that the definition given above restricts its definitional scope in several ways. In particular, it is concerned only with individuals *as* the faces of institutional systems (not, e.g., with the faces *of* individuals and their situated identity needs); this specifically in regard to matters of trust and trustworthiness (rather than the much wider scope of Goffman's original concept); and regarding their translation from individual to system. With this, it addresses the three major limitations/confusions encountered in the literature review: (1) it gives the concept definite contours and outlines a clear remit of applicability, making it easier to avoid superficial and mistaken uses; (2) it clearly distinguishes Giddens's from Goffman's version of the concept; and (3) it emphasizes that at the centre of both this remit and this distinction is the translation of interpersonal trust into trust in institutional systems.

Note that this last point entails a focus on facework purely as a mechanism of trust *translation*. That is, facework is a mode of creating trust in institutional systems – *not* of building interpersonal trust (for which numerous fruitful theoretical explanations exist already; see e.g., Mayer et al., 1995; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996).

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Because all trust building necessarily takes place between human agents in the first instance (Currall and Inkpen, 2002), facework is here considered a translation mechanism which can convert "existing" interpersonal trust into trust in institutional systems. While this definitional restriction may seem counterintuitive at first glance, it is of course an analytical sequence only. In practice, the two processes of building interpersonal trust and translating it into trust in the institutional system will often run alongside each other. However, separating them analytically can resolve much of the confusion encountered in the literature (where facework is frequently considered a none-to-well defined way of building trust in an individual's character on the basis of their behaviour; see e.g., Hedgecoe, 2012). Instead, it sensitizes us to the fact that building trust in an individual and building trust in the institutional system they represent may require different sets of interactions and interpretations.

Extension of definitional scope: structure, system, and organisations

At the same time, this definition is wider in that it refers to trust invested in "institutional systems". This term is selected to denote both expert systems and individual organisations, i.e., it is held that facework can be employed to establish trust not only in, e.g., the medical system, but also in an individual hospital.

The motivation for this choice has already been alluded to. Although many authors refer to the principles behind structuration theory, comparatively few adopt structuration terminology (also see Thompson, 1984). Instead, most contemporary trust literature adopts a broadly organisational or institutional outlook (also see the overviews by Arnott, 2007 and Li, 2007; even though this perspective has not typically been used to clarify the genesis of systemic forms of trust – see again the introduction to this paper). More specifically, this is true of those contributions,

reviewed above, which have shown the greatest interest in facework. Accordingly, it makes eminent sense, while developing the concept on the basis of structuration theory, to establish clear points of connection to this literature.

The extension of facework to "institutional systems" is clearly justifiable from a substantive point of view – representatives of organisations, too, act as the "faces" of larger collectivities, embodying the more abstract principles anchored in them (Author A, 2013). But from a (meta-)theoretical point of view, too, the inclusion of the term "institutional" is justifiable when we consider Giddens's use of the term "system", particularly in relation to his rather unusual understanding of "structure".

Giddens defines "structure" in conscious contradistinction to widespread uses derived from functionalist conceptions.[5] With the term, Giddens denotes not "some kind of 'patterning' of social relations or social phenomena", nor the "skeleton" underlying them, but instead he defines "structure" as

> "the structuring properties allowing the 'binding' of time-space in social systems, the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them 'systemic' form."

As such, structure "exists ... only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of knowledgeable human agents".

That is, structure consists in the principles – more specifically: the rules and resources (see below) – which govern the binding of time-space in social systems. Social systems, then, are the "actual" instantiations of structure in time-space. Accordingly, because "structure is a 'virtual order' of transformative relations [this] means that social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have 'structures' but rather exhibit 'structural properties' ". Because structural properties are the expression

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of structure in the time-space situated social system, "underlying codes have to be inferred from surface manifestations". (Giddens, 1984, pp. 16-7; also see 1984, ch. 4.)

On the basis of these definitions, organisations and expert systems can be subsumed under a common denominator (for which I haven chosen "institutional systems"). Both of them correspond to Giddens's definition of "social systems" as regularised social practices situated in time-space, reproduced by agents who in the process use their agency to draw on those rules and resources ("structure") leading to the reproduction of patterned "structural properties" of social systems. Giddens himself points out repeatedly that these properties are the result of institutionalisation (e.g., 1984, pp. 24, 184-5). Furthermore, the moniker of "institutional" systems, chosen in order to establish a clear connection to the wider literature, is supported by parallels between structurationist and institutionalist terminology which, much like Giddens's social systems, views institutional systems as persisting centrally in habitualised and typified social practices which both shape and are shaped by cognitive, normative and regulative patterns over time (Scott, 2008).

What is more, this framework can help shed more light on the question *what* exactly it is that agents trust when they put their trust in institutional systems. This has, to date, been answered only in an incomplete and fragmentary manner, and has instead been addressed mostly metaphorically, unduly anthropomorphising especially organisations (Sydow, 2006; Janowicz and Noorderhaven, 2006), without clearly specifying differences between interpersonal and systemic forms of trust.

While from the point of view of the existing trust literature, organisational equivalents to human trustworthiness can be identified (Lepsius, 1997; Author A, 2012), Giddens's fine-grained terminology for aspects of structure and system provides a more sophisticated tool for addressing this important question: trust in an

institutional system is based on the observation of a social system's structural properties, which form the basis of an inference regarding structure. That is, trust in the future conduct of the members of an institutional system ultimately refers to the system's structure, *viz.*, the rules and resources that govern its working and its continuous reproduction in the form of regular social practices. The trust is created, however, in view of a combination of these rules and resources with the agency of individual representatives who instantiate them actively and creatively in time-space.

Both structural and agentic influences, then, deserve greater attention; the following sections will consider each in turn.

Elements and dimensions of facework

Dimensions of structure and their influence on facework

Giddens conceives of structure (and accordingly, structural properties) as composed of the dimensions of signification, legitimation, and domination. That is, structure consists of *rules of signification*, typically expressed as *interpretative schemes* which form part of the stock of tacit knowledge held by agents; of *rules of legitimation*, expressed as *norms* which agents subscribe to; and of resources which underwrite relationships of *domination*. These resources are of two kinds: *allocative resources* give agents control over material objects, and *authoritative resources* give them control over the actions of other agents (e.g., by virtue of their position within an institutional system) (see Giddens, 1984: 16-25).

In order to understand how these structures relate to the conduct of system representatives, we need to consider one of the central tenets of Giddens's structuration theory, *viz.*, the *duality of structure*: "According to the notion of the

duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize" (Giddens, 1984, p. 25; also see Giddens, 1979, p. 69). The representative draws on each of the structural properties found in the institutional system and, actively and reflexively, reproduces them over time. That is, facework needs to visibly draw on, and reproduce, dimensions of structure which determine the trustworthiness of the institutional system.[6]

The first dimension concerns rules of *legitimation* and the *norms* they are expressed in. While, as mentioned, the normative dimension is not the only one that matters, value congruence has been cited numerous times as an important antecedent to trust (Lane, 1998). This desire for congruence on the part of the external observer will extend to norms perceived as anchored in the institutional system and credibly enacted by the representative – particularly such of honesty, cooperation and reciprocity (Jones and George, 1998; Lyon and Porter, 2009; Berg et al., 1995). Indicators of procedural justice, which have been proven an important predictor of trust in an institutional system (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002), can help signal the "systemness" of these normative orientations. As part of this, the norms of an institutional system can be inferred from the way it deals with the shortcomings of its own members, including representatives: does the system, embodied by senior executives, sanction and correct the "moral" failures of its members (Hurley et al., 2013; Author A, 2014)? Thus, inferred values and norms are important cues to the institutional system's normative *integrity*.

The issue of procedural justice overlaps with the second dimension, *viz.*, structures of *domination*. A central role in this regard is played by the degree of *empowerment* inherent in the structuring of the institutional system. Generally, the readiness to trust a system will be higher where power is perceived to reside

principally in the system itself (rather than with powerful individual executives) and is therefore subject to checks and balances (Lane and Bachmann, 1997; Van Ees and Bachmann, 2006). At the same time, it is crucial for the rules of the system to visibly empower the representative. Empirical studies have shown that where boundary spanners keep having to report back to their superiors about details at each stage along the way, trust is unlikely to arise in either the representative or their system (Williams, 2002, p. 120). Only a representative who is seen to be sufficiently empowered is perceived as able to make firm promises and create predictability regarding both individual conduct and systemic principles. (Note that these structures of domination are thus key to the external observer's impression of effectiveness rather than normative concerns, which are subsumed under rules of legitimation above.) By the same token, an institutional system which does not give its representatives sufficient discretion is likely to be perceived as inefficiently organised and insufficiently prepared to deal with external partners to their satisfaction (also see Perrone et al., 2003), in effect questioning systemic *competence* or *ability*.

Lastly, rules of *signification* express themselves in *interpretative schemes* held by representatives. Signalling perspectives on trust and trustworthiness (Six, 2007; Author A, 2013) have shown that for effective trust building to occur, symbolic actions must be interpreted similarly by the participants to the relationship; particularly because for matters of trust and trustworthiness, deeds tend to speak much louder than words (Haas and Deseran, 1981). Beyond that, interpretative schemes related to trust and trustworthiness are strongly influenced by an institutional system's world view (Möllering, 2006), particularly in regard to its institutionalised conception of human agents and their motivations. Thus, for instance, where assumptions of purely self-interested, calculating actors prevail, trust becomes a mere probabilistic

"bet" on the future (Coleman, 1990) and signals of altruism are likely to be discarded as faked or manipulative; whereas in other institutional systems, signals of other-orientation within the relationship (Six, 2007) will be valued highly. (Put simply, a bank will likely stimulate its representatives to approach trust building in a different way from an environmental NGO; also see Hurley et al., 2013.)

Thus, in facework the representative will need to strive to visibly draw on empowering power structures, externally compatible norms, and externally comprehensible symbolic repertoires provided by the institutional system, while ideal-typically simultaneously reproducing these structural dimensions. In doing so, facework is able to answer important questions for the external observer. Does the organisation or system "speak my language"? Does it appear to have acceptable values? Is it capable of effectively putting them into practice?

Connections are visible here to newer approaches in trust research which have identified institutional equivalents to the dimensions of individual trustworthiness identified by Mayer et al. (1995): ability, benevolence, integrity (ABI). Thus, relationships of domination were related particularly to ability, both on the individual and systemic side; structures of legitimation exhibited a clear connection to the integrity underlying the institutional system; while rules of signification, although related particularly to benevolence, which is context-bound and needs to be signalled accordingly, also apply to a wider range of issues related to systemic trustworthiness.

Table 4 illustrates some of these positive facework behaviours, but also their inverse – in order to remind the reader that effective facework cannot be taken for granted – alluding to concrete examples of representative conduct from the existing literature.

However, in contrast to traditional structuralist and functionalist assumptions, I want to posit that the representative should not strive to display full and simple conformity with these systemic structures. Instead, they should demonstrate coherence in regard to multiple interfaces.

Coherence across multiple interfaces

Why the choice of the term coherence? This is to emphasise that it is not "typicality", and particularly not mere normative conformity, which we are talking about. Instead, the term coherence is chosen to denote both the looser and the broader nature of the links implicated in processes of facework. Looser, on the one hand, as there is likely to be, and indeed needs to be, significant variation as the result of the chronic exercise of agency on the part of the representative. (The role of agency and its consequences for the idea of "typicality" will be discussed in the following section.) Broader, on the other hand, because there are multiple elements and interfaces across which evident coherence is relevant to facework.

It is assumed here that three principal elements constitutively influence facework and its effectiveness. The first two of these, taken from structuration theory, have been mentioned, *viz.*, (a) the *structure* and *structural properties* of the institutional system (in the form of rules and resources), and (b) the *agency* which the individual agent brings to bear on them (as creative and transformative capacity). I add one of Goffman's original ideas which influenced it, *viz.*, (c) the significance of the *situation* or, in Goffman's terms, the *encounter* (as a stabilising frame, and as providing "sign vehicles" used in interaction).

Based on these elements, three types of coherence become particularly significant, which could be termed "structural coherence", "situational coherence" and "representational coherence", respectively.[7]

"Structural coherence", i.e., internal coherence between the different dimensions of structure governing the social system, reflected and perceived as coherent structural properties, is again closely related to the (individual or institutional) quality of integrity, as discussed in the trust literature (Mayer et al., 1995). (Structural) dimensions of trustworthiness are interconnected, often building on one another, so that contradictions between them can be highly consequential for the overall impression of trustworthiness created. Thus, the overall appearance of trustworthiness is called into question if the system appears trustworthy in terms of its structures of signification and domination, but the underlying systemic values seem unjust to the external observer; if rules of signification and legitimation appear sound, but no sufficient access to resources seems to be provided to the representative; or if legitimation and domination appear trustworthy, but in presenting these, the system's rules of signification lead to symbolic actions of ambiguous or unclear meaning.

"Situational coherence", or coherence of the face-to-face situation or encounter created and shared by the participants, is the aspect in which Goffman's and Giddens's conceptions of facework display the greatest overlap; consider especially that Goffman identifies as a central function of facework the stabilisation of the encounter (see again table 1). (In the literature on boundary-spannning, this has been reflected in the notion of creating a "transitory boundary system"; Adams, 1980.) Accordingly, tact and strategies of impression management (Goffman, 1959) which are suited to preserving both the representative's and the external partner's "face" are important ingredients in stabilising the situation. This stability or "situational normality" has

been shown to be an important antecedent to trust (Misztal, 2001). If participants keep having to expend most of their energy on defining the situation, symbolic acts able to signal trustworthiness become difficult and increasingly unlikely.

The situation fulfils a second important function in providing interactants with the "sign vehicles" embedded in the context of their encounter (Goffman, 1983, p. 11). Goffman even insists that these context-bound sign vehicles "the participant cannot help but structure in a characterising way, so that conclusions can be drawn about him, correct or incorrect, whether he wants it or not" (1961, p. 102). While this means that facework becomes particularly revealing through the influence of the situation, in this context situational coherence is key as, for these inferences to have a higher chance of being "correct", both parties to the relationship need to be sufficiently familiar with the "sign vehicles" provided to establish a facework relation which is meaningful to both. That is, even though the expert system is relatively opaque to the external observer – this is why trust becomes necessary – the access point need not be. It is not only important what kind of "backstage" information the representative brings to the "frontstage" (Giddens, 1990, drawing on Goffman, 1959), but also that backstage codes are translated into frontstage ones in order to maintain sufficient familiarity and mutual comprehensibility of symbolic action.

Lastly, "representational coherence", i.e., coherence between what the representative's actions tell the external partner in regard to the trustworthiness of the representative as an individual and the institutional system in the background, revolves around the active and knowledgeable reference to different rules and resources embedded in the institutional system. The following section will discuss how it can increase if facework strikes an appropriate balance between role fulfilment and role distance and is enacted in a taken-for-granted fashion, but also how it can

decrease, for instance as the result of self-interested agendas on the part of the representative.

Before doing so we may briefly refer back, for ease of reference, to the examples of (negative) facework behaviours in table 4. Consider that (under "signification") disparaging jokes are likely to make the external observer uncertain of the safe and stable nature of the situation (Goffman, 2003); whereas the negative example for "legitimation" is a display of lacking structural coherence; and in the negative example for "domination" the representative disassociates themselves from the institutional system, indicating a lack of representational coherence. While of course in practice aspects of these examples may be combined, they can help give us a better idea of behavioural instantiations of our theoretical categories.

Facework: routinisation and improvisation

As previously mentioned, Giddens's understanding of agency is exceptionally fruitful for the analysis of trust, particularly because unlike most other social theory, the structuration approach systematically acknowledges the fundamental significance of sub- and semi-conscious processes.

Thus, the *stratification model of agency* (see fig. 1; also see Giddens, 1984, esp. pp. 3-14) starts from the assumption of frequently subconscious motivation. (The subconscious desire for trust, for instance, Giddens attributes primarily to the need for a sense of "ontological security" [1991].) Beyond this, he concedes that the majority of human activities are strongly routinised in nature. However, the actor's agency, understood as a continuous flow rather than discrete intentional events, is nonetheless chronically involved on the level of "practical consciousness", particularly in two

ways. On the one hand, they engage in "reflexive monitoring " of their own and others' actions, as well as of the context these actions are situated in. On the other, they "rationalize" action. "Whereas reflexive monitoring of action concerns the intentional part of the action processes, rationalisation of action primarily concerns the ability and the competence to evaluate the relationship between the action and its reason. In this way the agent also evaluates his own and others' competence" (Kaspersen and Reitzels, 2000, p. 38).

Both of these are continuous processes through which the agent chronically applies their agency even to routinised behaviours, and through which they bring to bear their extensive tacit knowledge about the workings of social life. That is, on the level of non-discursive, practical consciousness, agents are highly *knowledgeable* about the social practices in which they take part and which they help reproduce (Giddens, 1984, esp. pp. 22-8).

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Facework as a tacit process

Ideally, throughout the entire process of facework the degree of reflexivity on the part of the representative remains low, and the issues related to it do not make it to the level of discursive consciousness. That is, the representative is un- or subconsciously motivated to support the perception of systemic trustworthiness (e.g., because their own self-worth is to a degree bound up with the qualities of, and their role within, the system; Richter et al., 2006); they implicitly presuppose systemic trustworthiness as an unacknowledged precondition, and also contribute to its reproduction as an

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unintended consequence, of their own actions; while they are continuously and tacitly rationalising their facework activities, they do not need to explicitly formulate the reasons for their conduct, so that facework remains continuously on the level of practical, not discursive consciousness.

Why is this the ideal case? First, as already mentioned, implicit rather than explicit communication reduces the risk of endangering (interpersonal) trust itself, which relies on tacit collaboration. Second, if all of the above conditions are met, not just the signals of interpersonal, but also of systemic trustworthiness are likely to be more authentic since they are unintentionally "given off" rather than intentionally "given" (Goffman, 1959). They are thus likely to achieve a degree of authenticity which it would be difficult and/or costly to fake (Bacharach and Gambetta, 2001) and in its turn likely to be identified comparatively reliably on the level of practical consciousness by the external observer. Third, the scenarios under which trust and its application or translation to the institutional system are likely to reach the level of discursive consciousness are mostly ones where the explicit formulation for self or other becomes necessary as a result of problems in the facework process.

Thus, the process may be interrupted if the representative lacks motivation on behalf of the system (e.g., due to lacking identification; Richter et al., 2006); has doubts regarding the trustworthiness of the system (Kim et al., 2006) or regarding their own efficacy as a part of it; or has an opportunistic agenda which leads them to reflexively devise self-interested representation strategies (Hanlon, 2004, pp. 203-4). Accordingly, while the above represents an analytical ideal type, and the tacitness of facework activities is a matter of degree, relatively greater tacitness across these aspects is desirable.

Besides reinforcing the point that implicit and unreflexive identification with their institutional system is likely to support successful positive representation (e.g., Richter et al., 2006), these observations point to direct links between trust-related relationships which the representative has externally through facework and internally within their institutional system (also see Dei Ottati, 1994). Lacking internal trust of the representative in the system will damage both their ability and their motivation to engage in effective facework. Vice versa, a lack of trust on the part of (senior members of) the institutional system in the representative is likely to curtail the representative's ability to show that they are sufficiently empowered to deliver on their promises (Perrone et al., 2003; also see above). In addition, it is likely to result in a greater degree of formal control imposed on the representative (Ferrin et al., 2007), forcing their facework strategies onto a discursive level and making it more difficult for them to display the authenticity which "giving off" genuine signals of systemic trustworthiness can bestow on their behaviour.

Facework as an institutionalised process

We have already encountered the largely unquestioned description of representation as "typicality". Two issues make this idea problematic.

First, the idea of recognising a representative as typical of an institutional system and inferring the qualities of the system from their behaviour often has a tautological element to it. How can the external observer know whether the representative is indeed "typical", if they rely on the representative's behaviour as cues, in the absence of further information about the system through other channels? This issue can only become fully non-tautological if manifest cues can be identified *within* representative conduct *without* previous knowledge of the institutional system.

(Of course, in practice there will always be cues on multiple channels supplementing facework. Nonetheless, if typicality is inferred on the basis of known qualities of the institutional system and subsequently used to infer systemic qualities, then observing the behaviour of representatives is reduced to, at best, a reinforcement mechanism and becomes largely redundant.)

Second, typicality essentially implies that the representative is seen to follow fully and only the rules of the institutional system. That is, the underlying view of the nature of actors is essentially that of "institutional dopes" (Hirsch, 1997) who act like automatons programmed by the institutional system; but they apply their, potentially transformative, agency to everything they do (Giddens, 1984, p. 14). Of course it is correct that in practice, it is often difficult for a trustor to decide whether their trust pertains more to the individual or to the system that is seen to control their behaviour (Bachmann, 1998, p. 308), i.e., that the "source" of observable trustworthy behaviour may be difficult to identify, particularly if, as mentioned above, more information about the system would be necessary for this. Again, what are clues *within* representative conduct which external observers may draw upon?

Both of these issues can be resolved if for the question of "typicality", we substitute the criterion of *institutionalisation*. Its manifestations are internal to the representative's behaviour, and are detectable by normally competent agents (also see below). The perceived degree of institutionalisation can give the external observer vital clues as to the "systemness" of observed trustworthy behaviours. The external observer can infer that ostensibly institutionalised behaviours concerning the field of activities in question (e.g., medicine) are likely to be at least in part derived from the institutional system which is being represented. (In addition, agents tend to be practically aware that such systems are, at their heart, human creations and that as

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such, the representative has some role in their production and reproduction; also see Giddens, 1984, pp. 90-2.)

Drawing on relevant institutionalist writings (esp. Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2008; Colyvas and Powell, 2006), a catalogue of relevant indicators can be distilled which may be present to a varying extent in representative conduct, signalling different degrees of institutionalisation. They are:

(a) *routinisation* – are practices scripted and well-rehearsed rather than being invented in the process?

(b) *categories* – are the categories which underlie communication about the institutional system and associated activities settled and sufficiently refined?

(c) *roles* – do the roles of the participants to the encounter seem clearly defined, especially regarding the responsibilities and expectations of the system representative?

(d) *value-infused* nature – does the representative appear attached to the above practices, categories, and roles (e.g., do they appear disappointed or confused when these are not followed)?

(e) finally, as Colyvas and Powell (2006) point out, all of the above combine to form an image of *taken-for-grantedness*, the hallmark of successful institutionalisation.

While at first sight the above indicators may seem theoretical and discursive, indeed any normally versed observer will likely be able to detect and evaluate them as part of their extensive stocks of tacit knowledge relating to the workings of social life (i.e., as anchored in their "practical consciousness" and their "knowledgeability"; see Giddens, 1984, pp. 90-2). This is what Giddens means by his dictum that "[a]ll competent members of society ... are expert 'sociologists' " (1984, p. 26). The

knowledge they possess is "integral" both to "the persistent patterning of social life" and to their ongoing understanding of this process (ibid.).

Indications of institutionalisation thus form valuable cues as to the systemic (as opposed to purely interpersonal) character of observed trustworthy conduct.

Facework as an agentic process

At the same time, it is crucial for the representative not to appear to be *purely* following the procedures of their institutional system (also see Burchell and Wilkinson, 1997). It has already been noted that trust in an institutional system built up through facework refers to a combination of the underlying structure (as generative principles) and its implementation situated in time-space. While the individuals who put the principles into practice draw on systemic rules and resources, they relate to these through their own agency, as the ability "to act otherwise, ... to intervene in the world" (Giddens, 1984, p. 14; also see Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The notion of agents as "institutional dopes" (see above) who are forced into conformist and uncreative patterns of conduct by institutional isomorphism would not only represent a reductionist approach to agency. Giddens also notes that onlooking agents are typically, for the purposes of their own practice, fully aware that others are not robots of the institutional system they are part of, but that they, too, "chronically display agency" (1987, p. 122; also see below).

This is true *a fortiori* of the display of systemic trustworthiness in facework. Mere role fulfilment is not a very potent signal of trustworthiness (Luhmann, 1979, p. 42). The symbolic actions which agents engage in need not only appear institutionalised, but also be individually credible (Cohen, 1985). For this, their own

individual commitment needs to be visible; in Goffman's words, they must display the right "involvement contour" (Goffman, 1953).

Even diligent role fulfilment and a display of total typicality and conformity with the demands that the institutional system makes of its members would thus be unlikely to be sufficient to translate trust in the representative into trust in the institutional system. It is important for the representative to carry out their routinised facework in a manner that is active, creative, and thus displays commitment to the activity. Several elements of interaction facilitate this.

First, while the situation is required to be stable and "safe" in nature, it will provide the aforementioned "sign vehicles" which differ between contexts, combinations of individuals in the encounter, and – due to the dynamic nature of context – the time at which the encounter takes place. Effective signals of trustworthiness, whether of the individual or the system, typically combine a commonly "legible" symbolic core with personalised and individualised symbolic elements attached to this core (Author A, 2013).

Second, as Goffman (1961) reminds us, each role given to an agent by what Giddens would call the rules and resources of an institutional system, has the potential, sometimes even the demand, for *role distance* built into the role itself (1961, p. 115). His analysis of the role allowing its incumbent to demonstrate that "whatever I am, I'm not someone who merely and barely [fulfils their role]" (Goffman, 1961, p. 107) applies particularly to trust, which requires more than mere role fulfilment (see above).

Lastly, even where conduct is highly routinised, this is not to the exclusion of agentic behaviour. Routines are not performed in simple and mindless conformity (Feldman and Pentland, 2003). Instead, Giddens shows that even the most everyday

routine conduct chronically encompasses the exercise of agency on the part of the actor. He can do so on the basis of decoupling agency from intention, explaining that equating the two "confuses the designation of agency with the giving of act-descriptions ... Agency refers not to the intention people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place" (Giddens, 1984, p. 9). Instead, the execution of even the most routinised activity involves non-discursive agency on the level of practical consciousness.

Thus, on the level of situational coherence (through sign vehicles), structural coherence (expressed in roles), and representational coherence (in the execution of those roles by the individual), the exercise of agency is incorporated into routine and institutionalised facework behaviours.

CONCLUSION

Synopsis

This paper reviewed the relevant literature (in the form of seminal contributions and their adoption) and developed a formal definition of facework from this basis. It went on to employ Giddens's own structuration theory to develop the concept further.

As a result, it described facework as representative behaviour which translates interpersonal trust into trust in an institutional system, across multiple interfaces (structural, situational, representational), based on different structural dimensions (signification, legitimation, domination), on which the represenative draws in a routinised manner which results from institutionalised facework routines but simultaneously chronically incorporates individual agency in their instantiation.

Since facework has been identified as a form of "representing" institutional systems, the findings of this analysis may be recapitulated also insofar as they have made our understanding of the process of representation significantly more complex, particularly in three respects:

First, an undue focus on normative commitment would miss important dimensions of representation. In order to engage successfully in facework, the representative should be seen to draw on all dimensions of "structure", *viz.*, rules and resources which relate not only to legitimation (i.e., systemic norms), but also to domination (particularly a sufficient degree of empowerment within the institutional system) and signification (particularly the system's "world view", which needs to be expressed in suitable symbolic action).

Second, the representation inherent in facework is not only about the interface between representative and system (particularly not in the simple sense of conformity

or typicality). The representative will also need to strive to emphasise a logical coherence between the different structural properties of the system, and to create the impression of a "safe" and stable situation in which the facework encounter is taking place.

Third, the idea of representation through typicality also raises the problem of the necessity/availability of other sources of information about the institutional system, and the question of regarding representatives as mere "institutional dopes". I addressed these problems by suggesting that external observers look for indicators of *institutionalisation* which they can identify *within* representative conduct; and that facework requires more than mere role fulfilment. In accordance with Giddens's notions of knowledgeability and practical consciousness, representatives are thus seen to exercise agency even within the most established facework routines.

Practical implications

While this paper was oriented primarily at conceptual clarification and a more in-depth theoretical understanding of facework, several practical implications suggested themselves.

On the one hand, representatives need to pay attention to the multiple and complex dimensions in facework. In particular, they need to be aware that it is not just the normative, but also the cognitive outlook of their institutional system which needs to be communicated, i.e., the system's "world view". Equally, their position in, and the nature of, the distribution of power within the institutional system may be an important datum for the external observer. Beyond that, the representative needs to strive to establish a context for the encounter which appears both "safe" and easily interpretable to the target audience.

On the other hand, the above consideration of routinisation and agency has important implications not only for the representative – largely in the form of an awareness that their conduct needs to be seen to be routinised, but nonetheless display the right commitment or "involvement contour" (Goffman, 1953) – but also for their constituents and superiors within the institutional system. Since facework is likely to be the most effective when it is carried out in an implicitly taken-for-granted fashion, superiors are unlikely to support effective facework through a high degree of control. The monitoring and explicit discursiveness of expectations of the representative which tend to accompany formal control are likely to undermine just those taken-for-granted elements of facework which are likely to make it the most effective (also see Perrone et al., 2003).

Limitations and future avenues for research

At the same time, this analysis represents a mere beginning, and the theoretical outline given can be no more than a first step. As such, it has a number of basic limitations, all of which highlight areas for possible future research fit to advance the study of facework, and of trust in institutional systems more generally.

The theoretical points presented here have only skirted some of the most complex dynamics inherent in facework at system boundaries. The preceding section pointed to the fact that facework is also a matter of trust *within* the institutional system (especially the trust that superiors and other constitutents have in the representative). While there is a general, and plausible, assumption that there is a connection between internal and external trust, the study of the nature of this connection has only just begun (Authors A and B, 2013).

Above all, empirical work is necessary for a deeper understanding of facework. My aim here has been to develop the first theoretical framework of its workings; as a next step, research interested in facework will need to ask *how*, expressed in which contextualised, real-life interactions (of the sort alluded to in table 4), the representatives of specific institutional systems translate interpersonal trust into trust which pertains to the system itself.

As part of that, this general outline will benefit from differentiation in a number of important respects. Some of the most salient are: different phases of the trust relationship (e.g., is facework more important in the early phases of engagement with an institutional system? does it change in nature if and as the relationship matures?); different stakeholders (e.g., do different external observers require facework which focuses on different dimensions of trustworthiness? [Pirson and Malhotra, 2011]); and different types of institutional systems and interfaces.

Including the horizon of structuration in our perspective opens up a whole range of instructive questions about the regularities of creating trust in institutional systems. How are facework strategies embedded in the structural properties of different systems? To what degree are they different between, but consistent within specific institutional systems? How are they linked to the central tenets and functions of types of institutional systems?

Obviously, much remains to be done in the study of facework. But if the present contribution can do so much as serve as a conversation starter that redirects much-needed attention towards this promising concept, it will have exceeded its goals.

ENDNOTES

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[1] Note that the following observations will be restricted to expert rather than abstract systems, i.e., I will not discuss trust in symbolic tokens such as money, which exhibit some qualitatively different characteristics which warrant consideration in their own right (see Ingham, 2004). The inclusion, instead, of trust in the institutional/organisational domain is discussed separately in the next section of this paper.

[2] The only two attempts at conceptual development found in the literature surveyed are, on the one hand, an attempt at refining subcategories of facework (Allen, 2003) – ultimately unsuccessful since based on an interpretation of Goffman's facework as cynical and purely manipulative acting (see, e.g., Giddens's own discussion of this widespread misunderstanding; Giddens, 1987); and on the other, a formulation of "meaning work" (Lee-Treweek, 2002), which, albeit interesting and productive, is intended as a complement to rather than a development of facework.

[3] As just one indicative example, see Olsen: " 'Facework' *is concerned with* the 'access points' at which the delivery of the system is presented. *The concepts involved here* are the experience, attitude and expertise of the provider" (2010, pp. 6-7, emphasis added). Thus, typically it remains unclear *in which way* interpersonal interaction "may impact upon" (Smith, 2001) trust in expert systems.

[4] I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this recommendation.

[5] Because Giddens's use of the term is so different and, indeed, often counter to common usage, his account of "structure" will be presented largely in his own words. All of the following quotes are taken from Giddens (1984: 16-7).

[6] Also see the application of this analytical framework to trust in an organisational context by Sydow (1998; 2006).

[7] There is a fourth type of coherence which may play a role here, *viz.*, that which lends consistency to the agentic expressions of trustworthiness in the representative's behaviour (typically identified as their "integrity" in the trust literature, following Mayer et al. [1995]). While this is relevant, it falls under the remit of (interpersonal) trust building (see again Mayer et al., 1995; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). For present purposes, it may suffice to point out that the expressions of the representative's individual trustworthiness need to be sufficiently consistent, not least in order to be able to convey an image of their systemic counterparts in a coherent manner.

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APPENDIX I: Selection principles for literature review

Step 1: initial broad literature search

initial search as comprehensive as possible for purposes of overview; search terms "facework", "face-work", "face work"; superficial reading of 300+ articles and abstracts for roughly same number; some related reading excluding explicit search terms

Step 2: choice of substream

facework based on Giddens's theory, regarding trust and trustworthiness (i.e., exclusion of primarily Goffman-based literature such as politeness theory or presentation of self [see overviews in Tracy, 1990; MacMartin et al., 2001]; exclusion of looser interpretations of Giddens's concept as generic re-embedding mechanism [e.g., Welsh, 2000; Carroll, 2010])

Step 3: limited search parameters

peer reviewed journal articles listed in relevant databases – particularly ABI/Inform Complete; Business Source Complete (due to identified relevance of topic to organisational and trust literatures); Sociological Abstracts (due to link to Giddens's theory);
facework central enough to be included in title and/or abstract; additionally, both trust and Giddens mentioned anywhere in text body or references

Step 4: close reading and exclusion of texts which only apparently meet above criteria (e.g., Tomlinson, 1994; Kawamura, 2006: "trust" only incidentally included in references)

Resulting body of 24 texts: see table 3.

APPENDIX 2: indicators of limitations encountered in literature review

Limitation 1 (superficial use) – indicators:

brief mention – see, e.g., treatment of facework and all concomitant concepts (table 2)
in 100 words max. (e.g., Proctor, 2006; Walls et al., 2004; Weber and Jia, 2007)

lack of definitions/explanations and assumption of self-explanatory concepts – of 24
texts, 22 mention one or more of conceptual groups listed in table 2; 52 resulting
occurrences overall; only 13 (i.e., 25%) followed by any further explanation,
however short

misunderstandings and mistaken uses – e.g., equation of facework simply with face-
to-face interaction (Crozier, 2003; Ross and Squires, 2011; Carmona et al., 2011;
Chesters and Welsh, 2005); understanding of individuals *as* access points
(Moilanen, 2006; Schlichter, 2010); facework as automatically
deceptive/manipulative (Allen, 2003; Casey and Allen, 2004)

Limitation 2 (lack of distinction Giddens/Goffman):

referencing Giddens and Goffman together without distinction (e.g., Walls et al.,
2004; Olsen, 2010)

referencing Giddens, but explanation according to Goffman (e.g., Timmons et al.,
2008; Hedgecoe, 2012)

referencing Giddens, but facework simply as vaguely defined mechanism of
interpersonal trust building due to "face" roughly equivalent to Goffman (e.g.,
Fine and Holyfield, 1996; Hedgecoe, 2012; Ross and Squires, 2011)

Limitation 3 (neglect of link individual/system):

explicit denial of link (despite referencing Giddens) (Allen, 2003; Casey and Allen, 2004; Smith, 2001)

link ignored as forms of trust kept entirely separate (Crozier, 2003; Timmons et al., 2008), or focus on systemic form only (Carmona et al., 2011; Jeacle and Carter, 2011)

acknowledgement of link but no or vague description (Olsen, 2010; Schlichter, 2010; Smith, 2001; also see examples in footnote in the appropriate section above)

TABLES AND FIGURES

Element	Definition / description
face	"The term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes—albeit an image that others may share ... Once he takes on a self-image expressed through face he will be expected to live up to it." (p. 7)
facework	"By *face-work* I mean to designate the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face. Face-work serves to counteract 'incidents' – that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face." (p. 8)
defensive vs. protective facework	"[T]he person will have two points of view – a defensive orientation toward saving his own face and a protective orientation toward saving the others' face. Some practices will be primarily defensive and others primarily protective, although in general one may expect these two perspectives to be taken at the same time." (p. 9)
main function of facework	"[T]he person tends to conduct himself during an encounter so as to maintain both his own face and the face of the other participants. This means that the line taken by each participant is usually allowed to prevail, and each participant is allowed to carry off the role he appears to have chosen for himself. ... The mutual acceptance of lines has an important conservative effect upon encounters. ... A person's performance of face-work, extended by his tacit agreement to help others perform theirs, represents his willingness to abide by the ground rules of social interaction." (pp. 7-10)
repertoires of facework	"Whether or not the full consequences of face-saving actions are known to the person who employs them, they often become habitual and standardised practices ... Each person, subculture, and society seems to have its own characteristic repertoire of face-saving practices. It is to this repertoire that people partly refer when they ask what a person or culture is 'really' like." (p. 8)

Table 1: Definitions and descriptions of facework and related elements in Goffman (2003 [1955])

Element	Definition / description
abstract systems	"symbolic tokens [and] expert systems, which, taken together, I shall term *abstract systems*" (p. 80) "By symbolic tokens I mean media of interchange which can be 'passed around' without regard to the specific characteristics of individuals or groups that handle them at any particular juncture" (p. 22) "By expert systems I mean systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise that organise large areas of the material and social environments in which we live today" (p. 27)
disembedding and reembedding	"Expert systems are disembedding mechanisms because, in common with symbolic tokens, they remove social relations from the immediacies of context ... by providing 'guarantees' of expectations across distanciated time-space. This 'stretching' of social systems is achieved via the impersonal nature of tests applied to evaluate technical knowledge and by public critique" (p. 28) "*reembedding*. By this I mean the reappropriation or recasting of disembedded social relations so as to pin them down (however partially or transitorily) to local conditions of time and place." (pp. 79-80)
trust in abstract systems	"All disembedding mechanisms, both symbolic tokens and expert systems, depend upon *trust*. ... Trust here is vested not in individuals, but in abstract capacities. ... [E.g.] it is money as such which is trusted, not only, or even primarily, the persons with whom particular transactions are carried out. ... [T]rust in symbolic tokens or expert systems ... rests upon faith in the correctness of principles of which one is ignorant, not upon faith in the 'moral uprightness' (good intentions) of others." (pp. 26, 33-4)
access points	"In some circumstances, trust in abstract systems does not presuppose any encounters at all with the individuals or groups who are in some way 'responsible' for them. But in the large majority of instances such individuals or groups are involved, and I shall refer to encounters with them on the part of lay actors as the *access points* of abstract systems. The access points of abstract systems are the meeting ground of facework and faceless commitments." (p. 83)
facework and faceless commitments	"... *facework commitments* and *faceless commitments*. The former refers to trust relations which are sustained by or expressed in social connections established in circumstances of copresence. The second concerns the development of faith in ... abstract systems. My overall theses will be that all disembedding mechanisms interact with reembedded contexts of action, which may act either to support or to undermine them; and that faceless commitments are similarly linked in an ambiguous way with those demanding facework." (p. 80)

Table 2: Definitions and descriptions of facework and related elements in Giddens (1990)

Text	Central research interest
Allen (2003)	individualised trust relationships in housing and social work
Birungi (1998)	trust in self-injection practices in Ugandan health care
Carmona et al. (2011)	effects of deadline pressures on trust and accountability
Casey and Allen (2004)	effects of the "performance culture" on housing managers
Chesters and Welsh (2005)	nature of "alternative globalisation" movements
Crozier (2003)	trust and risk in researching black parents
Gans et al. (2003)	trust and distrust in inter-organisational information systems
Hedgecoe (2012)	local knowledge, trust and facework in research ethics reviews
Jeacle and Carter (2011)	calculative practices and the generation of trust in a website
Kelly and Noonan (2008)	anxiety, trust and commitment in offshoring relationships
Lee-Treweek (2002)	facework for trust in complementary medicine
Moilanen (2006)	re-embedding of accounting control systems in subsidiaries
Olsen (2010)	public trust in health care provision in a developing country
Proctor (2006)	religion as trust in epistemic and moral authority
Ross and Squires (2011)	trust and deception in subprime lending
Schlichter (2010)	creation of trust in large information systems in healthcare
Smith (2001)	role of trust and confidence in social work
Timmons et al. (2008)	trust in the automatic external defibrillator
Troman (2000)	stress of teachers in low-trust environments
Vuorenmaa (2005)	trust and control in corporate integration
Walls et al. (2004)	public trust of risk regulators in the UK
Ward and Meyer (2009)	role of trust for "social quality" and wellbeing
Weber and Jia (2007)	role of trust in self-regulation of Chinese internet sector
Westergren and Holmström (2008)	role of trust in the adoption of "open innovation" approach

Table 3: Text basis of the literature review

Dimension	Positive signal	Negative signal
signification (understanding and world-view)	clarification of institutional system's understanding of and commitment to the project at hand (Doney and Cannon, 1997)	disparaging jokes about system members based on their race or nationality (Mizrachi et al., 2007)
legitimation (norms and values)	reference to systemic values and standards; reference to integrity of senior members (Hallen et al., 1991)	allusions to lacking consistency in ethical standards (Kim et al., 2006)
domination (empowerment within system)	reference to empowering qualities of systemic principles (Currall and Epstein, 2003)	claim that representative is obstructed by systemic procedures (Flood, 1999)

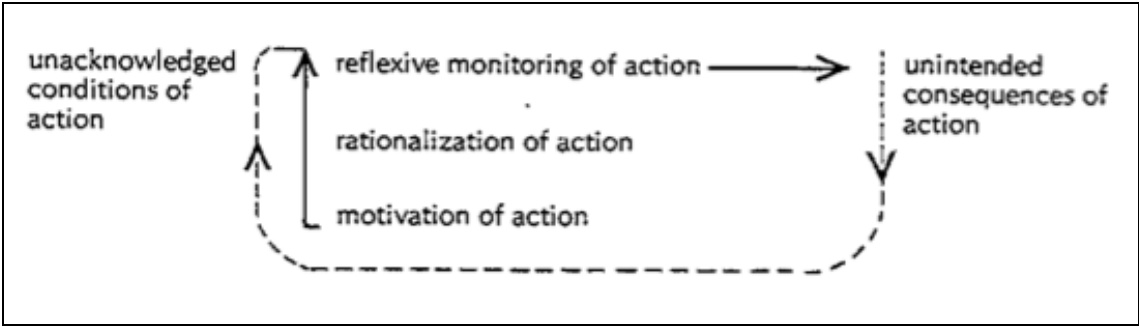**Table 4: Examples of facework behaviours drawing on different structural dimensions**

Figure 1: The stratification model of agency (source: Giddens, 1984, p. 5)