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Book review

Six, F., & Verhoest, K. (2017). *Trust in regulatory regimes*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar

'Trust in regulatory regimes' is an excellent book on the role of trust in relations among regulators, regulated organizations, and citizens. Coedited by two professors of public governance and administration with complementary expertise about trust and about regulation, the book starts from the assumption that citizens do not have the necessary resources to control the social, economic, or health risks that providers of goods and services may create for people and their environment. Rather, their trust in such providers can only result from their trust in the regulators of those providers. Trust between regulators and regulated organisations, in turn, may also be rather high or rather low. This 'regulatory regime' between citizens, regulated organisations and regulators is even more complex than a triangle when one acknowledges, as *Six and Verhoest* do, that regulators as well as regulated organisations may come from the public sector or from the private sector. For example, citizens' trust toward a public regulatory agency of railways can be very different from their trust toward a private certifying body of food products. At the end of the day, 'polycentric regulatory regimes' exhibit nine different relations between, citizens, public- or private-sector regulators, and public- or private-sector regulated organizations.

Compared to many other edited books, *'Trust in regulatory regimes'* offers a solid introductory chapter which sets a strong conceptual and theoretical basis for the empirical chapters that follow, and clearly identifies the academic challenges that those chapters aim at addressing. In this introductory chapter, after a discussion of regulation, trust, and related concepts, *Six and Verhoest* introduce the notion of polycentric regulatory regimes. Then, they present the results of a semi-systematic literature review of 33 empirical studies looking at the different trust relations of such regimes. Based on a transparent methodology, this review concludes that, beyond outstanding conceptual and methodological issues, some relations of regulatory regimes remain underexplored or not explored at all. For example, *Six and Verhoest* did not find any reference looking at the relation between public-sector regulators and public-sector regulated organisations. Furthermore, only a few studies are based on data collected among different actors of a regulatory regime. Finally, studies considering the synchronic dynamic of trust – trust among certain actors influencing trust among other actors – or its diachronic dynamic – trust at time-1 depending on actors' attitudes and behaviours since time-0 – are very rare.

These issues are addressed by the contributors of *'Trust in regulatory regimes'*. Based on interviews, documents, and observational data, *Mills and Reiss* look at trust between the public-sector U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and private-sector air carriers in the context of two voluntary disclosure programs. *Six and Van Ees* present an interview-based study on trust between a public-sector water board in charge of licensing and enforcement for water management and a local public authority developing new housing distribution in the Netherlands: they focus on the dynamic of trust building and repair. *Oomsels and Bouckaert* also look at public-sector organizations in their research on horizontal departments of the Flemish administration of Belgium, but rely on a mix of qualitative and quantitative data to focus on the theoretical variety of trust conditions playing a role at different levels of analysis. Based on interviews, *Carter* demonstrates the interactional effect of trust relations between citizens, private-sector producers of wine, and public-sector agencies responsible for wine certificates: these effects explain why the French regulatory regime of wine is characterized by higher trust than the Italian one. Similarly, *Näslund and Hallström* rely on interviews and documents from three Swedish cases to analyse whether eco-labelling organizations contribute to trust creation: they demonstrate that processes of trust creation may interact with each other or unfold independently. *Van der Voort* use interviews to look at two Dutch cases of co-regulation by private-sector and public-sector regulators: they identify several institutional and process-related conditions that do or do not allow trust and cooperation to foster each other over time. Finally, based on participant observations as well as interviews, *Baekkeskov* explores dynamic attempts of a European public health agency to gain and maintain trust from policy stakeholders. In the concluding chapter, *Six and Verhoest* summarize the lessons learnt from these empirical chapters with regard to the issues they identified in the introductory chapter.

Beyond those lessons, this book suggests several avenues for future research. First, theoretically speaking, contemporary public administration practice and research reveal the importance of citizen participation, for example through public consultation or co-production of public services. More specifically, officials' trust toward citizens is a key determinant of citizens' trust toward public services (Moyson et al., 2016). In that regard, *'Trust in regulatory regimes'* does not look at trust toward citizens. Generally speaking, Six, Verhoest and their colleagues are quite pessimistic about the 'vulnerability' of citizens with respect to regulation. This is largely true. Nevertheless, my own research suggests that citizens can also be trusted as source of relevant information for regulators and for regulated companies themselves. For example, regulators can trust citizens to learn about the most relevant information with which people should be provided in order to trust food corporations. Similarly, train companies and their regulators may rely on citizens to collect information about the quality of train services as well as suggestions to improve those services. Future research on trust in regulatory regimes should look at the role of regulators' and organisations' trust toward citizens.

Second, there remain several methodological questions in investigating the role of trust in polycentric regulatory regimes. For example, with the exception of *Oomsels and Boeckaert*, most contributors of *'Trust in regulatory regimes'* rely on qualitative methods of data collection and analysis whereas many quantitative approaches do also exist (Lyon et al., 2015). More specifically, most studies presented in *'Trust in regulatory regimes'* make a step further regarding methods of data collection by implementing a systematic strategy of collecting data from the multiples sides of trust relations. The same should apply to the methods of data analysis: future studies on trust in regulatory regimes should implement a systematic strategy of mixing different methods (Lyon et al., 2015). Mixing methods allows, for example, to answer a greater diversity of research questions, to offer stronger inferences, to triangulate findings, to explain them with background information, or to improve measurement tools (Doyle et al., 2009, pp. 178-179).

Third, empirically speaking, existing public administration research on trust has focused on Western liberal democracies. This is suggested by *Six and Verhoest*'s literature review on trust in regulatory regimes: only four of the 33 reviewed studies have been conducted in Asia and only one study has been conducted in Africa and in South-America. Consistent with this trend, all chapters of *'Trust in regulatory regimes'* are related to European cases. Considering empirical indications that trust, in general, and citizens' trust in government, in particular, vary across cultures (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2013; Yuki et al. 2005), future public administration research on trust in regulatory regimes should be conducted in a greater variety of cultural contexts.

'Trust in regulatory regimes' should definitely appear in the bookcase of all researchers and students of public administration and governance: this book convincingly addresses a number of clearly identified academic challenges while making readers want to explore the new avenues of research opened by its contributors.

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