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On the Use of Multiplexity To Assess the Meaning of Trust Relations

The sociological literature contains many competing and conflicting definitions of “trust” (Robbins 2016). Despite this conceptual disarray, there is an abundance of evidence that trust, whatever it may be, is a phenomenon that is profoundly important for social and economic processes. We propose moving beyond these theoretical impasses by exploiting the multiplex nature of relational data. Specifically, we propose that the *meaning* of trust in any social context is what trusting implies about other relations in that setting. We apply this insight to multiplex relations in 75 Indian villages, where we assess the meaning of a reported trust relation (whether respondents would trust another villager with 50 rupees) by examining its correlation with other reported relations. We follow Gondal (2022) in using log-linear models to examine the correlation between trust and other kinds of ties. We also test whether intra-village correlations between trusting an alter with money and reporting other kinds of ties to an alter are explained by inter-village variation in economic organization.

Keywords/Topics

multiplexity, log-linear models, trust, rural, India, economic sociology

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