

WORKING THE BOARDWALK: TRUST IN A PUBLIC MARKETPLACE

SPQ SNAPS

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the benefit in an ethnographic approach to trust? What are the downsides to this approach?
2. Trust is often discussed as an ingredient—i.e., when there is trust, a relationship will flourish—or an outcome—i.e., trust is what results from ongoing exchange and interaction. What is meant by discussing trust as a process? And what, if anything, does this approach reveal that may be overlooked by other approaches?
3. The author argues that the interactions presented in the article reveal a process of building, maintaining, and protecting trust. Yet, are these interactions also evidence of building confidence or providing an assurance? Why or why not? Think critically about the differences between these constructs.
4. The author argues that trust moves from a level of one-on-one interaction to the level of a community. Would it be possible to study this type of movement between different levels of interaction in an experimental setting? If so, how? Think of an experimental design. If not, why not?
5. What additional data might add to this research? What are you left wondering about trust in this setting?
6. In 2015 the L.A. City Councilmember that represents Venice proposed a “strict permit program” for the Boardwalk’s free speech and expression zone. Given the data and analysis provided, how would you expect trust—and the short and long-term results it brings—to change?
7. Think about your own daily activities. How many take place under “conditions of uncertainty?”—conditions where you cannot possibly ascertain all of the information you need about how other people will act. (For example, when you are working alone at a coffee shop, how do you manage leaving your belongings to use the restroom?) List some of the uncertainties you confront and the way you go about managing them? What would you be unable to accomplish in your day if you did not manage them?