

Time To Care About Reputation: Re-viewing the Resonances and Regulation of Reputation

Description

Title: Time To Care About Reputation: Re-viewing the Resonances and Regulation of Reputation

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Abstract: This dissertation examines reputation as a regulating force in online and offline relationships and transactions, arguing that reputation requires protection through the promulgation of new laws. Using John Locke's "under-labourer" approach as its central method, this dissertation ultimately sets out a series of conclusions, which form a preliminary framework upon which appropriate reputation regulation might be built. Part I of this dissertation studies offers an interdisciplinary study of reputation. Chapter 1 examines the ways that reputation is created and maintained, the purposes for which it is used, and its role in risk management and trust. These understandings are then applied to reputation in process. Chapter 2 explores formal reputation systems and the ways in which user investments and desires become written into reputation such that multiple levels of "dominant" norms may be simultaneously operant. Chapter 3 shows this normative force also operating on social network sites, shaping identity performances. Finally, having established these intersections and the regulating power of norms upon reputation, the effect of such performances is examined in chapter 4, which identifies reputation's gatekeeper role in offline and online spaces

and the risks this can create when information is accessed or employed without an understanding of the norms which have shaped that information. Thus reputation is shown as a socially negotiated and co-created process which exerts an unseen hegemonic force, with dominant political, economic and ideological interests embedded in seemingly social norms. These norms are enforced via reputation, which takes on a gatekeeper role, regulating access to a variety of spaces, information, and economic opportunities. Part II begins with an examination of the current forms of legal and quasi-legal regulation of reputation that exist, ultimately finding that none of them is fully applicable to the complexity of reputation. Having established this complexity and shown that current approaches are inadequate, chapter 6 moves on to examine and then reject the neoliberal approach currently applied to these issues, finding its focus on individual responsibility to be inadequate and inappropriate, calling instead for a mode of regulation that understands reputation within its social context.

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in which government or public affairs may impair economic values is unique. 7 See Rindova, Violina P. et al., "Being Good or Being Known: An Empirical Examination of the Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Organizational Reputation," *Academy of Management Journal* 48, no. 6 (2005): 1033–49.

8 Merton, Robert K., "Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 1 (1972): 9–47.