TRUEDEM
Trust in European Democracies

TRUEDEM: Trust in European Democracies
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STUDYING TRUST AND TRUSTWORTHINESS WITH SPLIT-SAMPLE EXPERIMENTS - METHODOLOGICAL PAPER

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Introduction

Project summary

TRUEDEM is a 3-year multinational research project funded by the Horizon program of the European Commission with several core objectives. TRUEDEM aims to design and implement a complex research effort to collect comprehensive evidence on the perceptions of trust and judgments of trustworthiness in a range of European states. The project will create a robust and comprehensive knowledge base on long-term dynamics and predictors of trust in political institutions of representative democracy (parties, executives, parliaments, judiciary etc.) in the EU. TRUEDEM will examine the role of new patterns of electoral behaviour, impact of socioeconomic transformations, the erosion of old and emergence of new political cleavages for the inclusiveness, representativity and legitimacy in European democracies, and political trust. TRUEDEM will identify strategies to address the demands and needs of citizens expressed via both electoral and non-electoral forms of political participation as means to enhance active engagement and inclusion and thus booster inclusive and responsive decision-making and governance in Europe. TRUEDEM will distinguish clusters of values that can hinder or foster pro-democratic values and attitudes and thus contribute to the barriers and opportunities to re-invigorating and enhancing representative democratic systems. Finally, TRUEDEM will develop a comprehensive and transparent toolbox of policy interventions including recommendations, toolkits and methodologies for enhancing trust in political institutions, boosting transparency inclusiveness of representative systems. TRUEDEM is coordinated in Austria with partners in Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and Ukraine. The three-year program runs from January 2023 to December 2025.

Summary of the Report (D7.2)

Report D7.2 is a methodological paper that discusses how TRUEDEM project measures political trust and perceived trustworthiness in survey-embedded experiments across 24 European countries. The paper motivates the rational of experimental measurement by diagnosing the limits of single close-ended trust items, including problems such as construct validity, aggregation, and comparability. When citizens report to “trust” or “distrust”, they are rarely responding to a single uniform idea. People judge whether politicians can do the job, whether they are following the rules, whether they act in the interest of citizens and treat them equally, among the many other criteria. Conventional survey items often compress these perceptions into one single response. Survey experiments allow to analyse the nuances of political trust and perceptions of trustworthiness. Analysis of two TRUEDEM split-sample experiments comprises the empirical core of the paper. The list item count experiment on trust in national leaders is employed to assess the response bias – whether citizens, under the influence of norms of public expression or other factors, have a tendency to over-state or under-report trust in the national Head of Government. The findings show that direct trust question in many national contexts across Europe can be inflated by prevailing civic norms and social desirability. Over-reporting of political trust is more common among those with higher education and middle-aged respondents. The second experiment is a single-step vignette that tests the marginal contribution of competence, integrity, impartiality, or authenticity cues to the perceptions of trustworthiness. The findings suggest that citizens primarily reward signals of capacity; impartiality proves greater significance in Central and Eastern Europe, and integrity – in Nordic and Baltic states. The results also reveal heterogeneity by age and education. On average, all vignettes have a greater effect on trustworthiness assessment among the senior respondents, and the smallest – among the youngest. Similar is the association between predicted trustworthiness and education levels, with the effect being particularly pronounced for Competence and Integrity, which have the greatest effect among those with tertiary education.

Introduction

Citizens' confidence in the political system and governing bodies and institutions comprises an important and valuable resource. Albeit many scholars argue that high levels of public trust are by far not always congruent with a democratic regime, and a certain degree of scepticism becomes essential to ensure responsive and accountable governance (Norris, 2022), trust serves as a cornerstone of legitimacy, stability, and compliance (Easton, 1975; Hetherington, 1998; Levi & Stoker, 2000). When citizens believe that political actors will perform fairly, competently, and with integrity, they are more likely to respond in a cooperative manner – to comply with laws, accept outcomes of elections, and participate in public life. For instance, studies analysing COVID-19 pandemic revealed that greater credit of trust in political institutions was associated with sustained voluntary compliance with restrictions on mobility and lockdowns (Sarracino et al., 2024). Conversely, public distrust in political institutions can undermine such cooperation, foster anti-system mobilization and intensify societal polarization. For example, low institutional trust was found to be positively associated with weaker tax morale and larger shadow economies (Torgler & Schneider, 2007). Low institutional trust has also proven to foster higher "legal permissiveness" – acceptance of law-breaking behaviour at everyday level – and be negatively associated with routine compliance with laws in general (Marien & Hooghe, 2011).

Given the important role attributed to public trust in sustaining legitimate and effective governance, analysis of levels (and types) as well as predictors of political trust has been evolving rapidly since the last three decades (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Zmerli & van der Meer, 2017). Studies find that one cluster of predictors of political trust concerns evaluations of procedural performance, especially perceptions of integrity and corruption. Across multiple national contexts, including in Europe, lower corruption was found to be consistently associated with higher trust in political institutions (Kołczyńska, 2020). The second cluster of predictors emphasizes the role of policy and economic outputs. Lower unemployment, higher GDP per capita, and other economic development indicators were found to correlate positively with political trust both in cross-country and over-time perspective (van Erkel & van der Meer, 2016; Kołczyńska, 2020). Another group of explanans of political trust comprises political alignment and electoral dynamics. Irrespective of other characteristics, electoral "winners" exhibit higher political trust than "losers", with the gap being conditioned by the assessment of fairness and credibility of the electoral process itself (Mauk, 2022). The fourth cluster points to social capital and civil society. Higher interpersonal trust and greater civic embeddedness are consistently associated with higher political trust, suggesting that trust also draws on social orientations beyond immediate evaluation of institutional performance (Hooghe & Marien, 2013). Finally, fifth cluster of studies stresses the importance of information environment and elite cues. In particular, an exposure to scandals and conflict-laden political communication tend to erode trust in political actors, with the effect being amplified by both traditional and digital media (Echeverría & Mani, 2020).

Taken together, the examples above imply multi-dimensional ontology of trust assessments. Best presented as a judgement based on the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the institution or political actor, political trust can be granted (or withdrawn) amid the different criteria. Citizens may trust the government because they perceive it as effective, because they see it following the democratic norms and procedures, because the government is formed by the representatives of their preferred political party, because it delivers certain social or economic outcomes, or because the state propaganda and censored media portray the president as a "good leader" (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Uslaner, 2002). Methodologically, this multidimensionality creates measurement challenges. Many political trust studies rely on population surveys and large quantitative datasets to examine patterns and trends across groups, countries, and over time. Surveys become instrumental since political

trust is an attitudinal evaluation that cannot be observed directly. Standardized survey batteries allow comparable measurements across broad numbers of units and enable multilevel tests of clusters of predictors combining individual and national (sometimes sub-national) levels. Yet, surveys inevitably carry measurement limitations.

The first group of limitations is associated with the measurement accuracy – whether standard closed-ended trust items validly and equivalently capture the same latent construct across respondents, institutions and contexts. Interpretation of numeric scales employed in closed survey items is highly subjective and not always straightforward. For example, comparison of responses to the standard closed item "trust in the government" with responses to an open-ended trust question in a probability sample in Austria shows that the two are only partly aligned, and the single closed item captures inflated, yet thinned and de-contextualized summary, rather than full actor- and issue-specific trust judgement (Bernhard-Harrer & Pfaff, 2025). This finding aligns with broader evidence indicating that closed-ended political trust items can function differently across political settings, and identical survey questions are not automatically comparable unless explicit tests of measurement equivalence were carried out (Schneider, 2017). The second cluster of limitations is associated with the aggregated nature of the closed trust measure itself. Standard survey items inquiring whether one "trusts the parliament" or "trusts the courts" conflate individual's baseline disposition towards the political system as a whole, their satisfaction with the performance of the institution in question evaluated against a broad range of explicit or implicit criteria, recent cues from media (or absence of information), as well as the momentary interpretative frame induced by the question wording and context. As such, closed survey items result in a single aggregated score which makes it impossible to disentangle what guided positive or negative decision about trust. For instance, analysis of responses to the six closed trust items about political institutions in Sweden has found, for example, that perceived institutional competence (rather than integrity or benevolence) was primary informing responses to the trust questions (Rydén et al., 2024). Contrary to this, cross-national analysis of the perceptions of trustworthiness in Britain, Croatia, Spain, Argentina, and France found that when respondents were asked how trustworthy they find the government, benevolence (acting in citizens' interests) emerged as the strongest driver of the trust response, while competence and integrity have shown smaller though statistically significant effects (Devine et al., 2024). These findings suggest that citizens rely on different standards when judging about trust and trustworthiness of political actors and institutions, with the single closed survey item hardly being able to capture these dynamics.

One way to address these limitations, without discarding the survey as a method per se that allows collection of large-scale quantitative evidence across multiple national contexts, is by introducing survey experiments. Survey experiments address the closed trust item limitations by turning context sensitivity into a measurement instrument. By holding the object constant, while manipulating information cues, the experiment can isolate the marginal effect of context, assess the stability of trust measures, and infer which trustworthiness dimensions drive the trust judgments among the different social groups. The core logic of a survey experiment is that – if trust judgements are based on the retrieval of accessible considerations such as recent experiences, media cues etc. – then by systematically varying which considerations are made accessible, experimental design can enable the mapping between specific cues on one hand and trust responses on the other. This report examines the opportunities and challenges associated with the use of survey experiments to study political trust and trustworthiness in the TRUEDEM project. The paper is structured as follows. Part 1 discusses the conceptual foundations of trust and trustworthiness as political attitudes, and their implications for the measurement. Part 2 examines the logic, strengths and weaknesses of list count experiment conducted in TRUEDEM. Part 3 presents the design, findings and limitations of the vignette survey experiment conducted in TRUEDEM. The conclusions section summarizes the findings.

1 Conceptual Foundations: Trust and Trustworthiness as Political Attitudes

1.1 Trust as a multidimensional relational political attitude

Across Social Sciences, trust can be generally defined as a belief or an expectation of one actor concerning another actor that they will act in a way that is favourable (or at least not harmful) in a situation of uncertainty (Barber, 1983; Gambetta, 1988; Rousseau et al., 1998). This relation contains several constitutive elements that comprise the core building blocks of the "trust relationship formula": (1) *a trustor* (a citizen, in case of public trust to authorities); (2) *a trustee or a target* (political actor or institution); (3) *specific domain or area of action* – within which scope the trustee is entrusted to act (e.g., public administration, policy design, governance); (4) *an accepted risk or uncertainty* associated with the asymmetric information and lack of complete control over the trustee; and (5) *an expectation* about the future conduct that makes such a reliance on trustor rational, in spite of uncertainty (Luhmann, 1979; Mayer et al., 1995; Hardin, 2002). These elements, intrinsic to a trust relationship, imply jointly that trust judgement is not simply a belief that trustee is good or bad. Instead, it is a psychological predisposition that combines: (1) expectations about the trustee's intentions and/or performance, and (2) readiness to rely on these expectations in a situation when the trustor cannot fully control the trustee (Hardin, 2002; Rousseau et al., 1998). Aspect salient from the perspective of measurement and analysis is that the "expectations" and "readiness" are not floating in vacuum: they are anchored in judgements about the trustee's trustworthiness, which become activated in situations and contexts when the trustor anticipates dependence.

Political trust inherits these general properties of trust, but it is distinctive on several points that create pressure points for its measurement. First, political trust is anchored in a relationship of *delegation*. Trustors (citizens) authorize various trustees (political bodies and institutions) to act in their interests and make collectively binding decisions on their behalf. Such delegation occurs under conditions of uncertainty when full control or continuous oversight as to how exactly those decisions are taken and whose interests they serve are absent. The nature of political trust judgements therefore is such that they comprise future-oriented expectations – probabilistic judgements – about whether political actors and institutions will act competently and in the interests of citizens, under the conditions of uncertainty (Easton, 1975; Barber, 1983; Levi & Stoker, 2000; Hardin, 2002).

Another feature concerns *asymmetry and distance*. Unlike attitudes anchored in direct, first-hand experience (e.g., self-reported policy preferences, assessment of voting experience), political trust is rarely based on face-to-face interaction. Typically, it is shaped by indirect signals (media reports, elite rhetoric, symbolic performances, personal networks), and is thus mediated by institutions themselves, information environments, and collective experiences (Putnam et al., 1993; Norris, 1999; van der Meer & Dekker, 2011; Levi & Stoker, 2000). As such, political trust operates as a cognitive shortcut that reduces the complexity of political life allowing decision and action without full information (Luhmann, 1979). At the same time, political trust judgements are *evidence-contingent*: they depend on both what trustors (citizens) know or believe about the trustee's (political actor's) capacities and motivations, and which evidence becomes salient at a time when the trust judgement is formed.

Another distinct characteristic of political trust is represented by *normative loading*. Unlike interpersonal or social trust, political trust is embedded in normative standards about what elites and those in power ought to do. Contemporary scholarship considers political trust as an evaluation

of whether institutions and political actors meet citizens' normative benchmarks, which can vary across groups and contexts (van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017; Zmerli & van der Meer, 2017). If political trust is both mediated and benchmarked, then the empirical measures are likely to capture a combination of (or a gap between) the perceived performance evaluations, perceived standards, and procedural propriety (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015; Rydén et al., 2024).

Finally, political trust is *multi-dimensional*. Trust toward different institutions within the same political system can differ substantially, and most importantly: trust judgements towards different political institutions might be supported by different evaluative logic (Citrin, 1974; Easton, 1975; Miller, 1974). Citizens might trust courts for impartiality, but distrust political parties for insufficiently caring about the interests of their supporters. This multidimensionality creates another measurement predicament. Because citizens can arrive at the same type of trust judgement (or level of trust) through different standards, a comparison of average trust values may conflate divergent evaluative logics (Newton, 2001; Uslaner, 2002). Citizens differentiative between representative institutions, administrative agencies, supranational bodies, and they do so by using partly different evaluative standards (Norris, 2011; van der Meer & Dekker, 2011). This is particularly relevant for cross-national studies as meanings assigned to political trust judgements have proven to be culturally and institutionally embedded. Essentially this means that the same items "government", "political parties", "courts" invoke somewhat different experiential baselines across countries. The discussed above distinctive features and nuances of political trust judgements suggest that special care must be taken to design the measurement tools that would capture the complex, multi-dimensional nature of this phenomenon. The latter is deemed particularly important for an adequate reflection on the evaluative trust mechanisms widespread in the society and the conditions that enable or restrict them.

1.2 Trustworthiness as a perceived attribute

If trust represents the trustor's stance – willingness to rely on a trustee, then trustworthiness refers to the perceived quality of the trustee that makes such reliance both reasonable and likely. The notion of trustworthiness originates in moral philosophy and normative political theory, where it is linked to the obligations and moral requirements of responsiveness, accountability and dedication to the public service (Barber, 1983; O'Neill, 2002; Warren, 1999). From this perspective, trustworthiness concerns not only individual character traits, but is foremost an institutional property that is produced and sustained through the existing structure, rules, and procedures (Hardin, 1999, 2002; Mansbridge, 1999). In this sense, trustworthiness denotes a cluster of evaluative properties such as competence, honesty, procedural fairness, and responsiveness (Citrin & Stoker, 2018; Hetherington, 2005; Norris, 2011, 2022).

The notion of trustworthiness became central to political trust research as citizens' trust is typically treated as *responsive* to the perceived normative and performative characteristics of political actors and institutions. When citizens delegate decision-making to political actors and authorize those to act on their behalf and in their best interests, trustworthiness becomes the key attribute that renders political actors as reliable trustees (Levi & Stoker, 2000; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Hardin, 2002; Norris, 2022). Yet, trustworthiness is not a unified trait. The multi-dimensional understanding of trustworthiness originates from organizational and management research, which distinguished between three partially independent dimensions: ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). These dimensions are interrelated in their effects on political trust judgements, but not necessarily correlated. Trustees might perceive the trustor as highly capable, but corrupt, or

benevolent, yet lacking the necessary skills. Different configurations on these three dimensions of trustworthiness yield different propensities to trust judgement.

The political trust research field has both adopted and adapted this approach to the analysis of trustworthiness as a foundation of political trust. Trustworthiness of political actors and institutions is commonly theorized through five partially independent dimensions, that take into account the specifics of citizen-state relationship, including such features as delegation, limited oversight, and mediated visibility (Grimmelikhuijsen & Knies, 2017; Hamm et al., 2019). The five core dimension include: competence (ability, capacity, effectiveness), integrity (honesty, rules adherence), benevolence (orientation to trustor's interest), impartiality (non-discriminatory conduct), and authenticity (appearing genuine) (McAllister, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998; Devine et al., 2024; Jennings et al., 2021; Norris, 2022; Ouattara et al., 2023; Valgarðsson et al., 2021). The multi-dimension ontology of trustworthiness implies that each single trust survey measure is an aggregated assessment of multiple latent dimensions, with each dimension having unequal weight. Judgement about the trust to the government can shift if citizens change their beliefs about the competence of ministers, revise their assessments of the integrity of the cabinet, or because the relative weight they assign to these dimensions changes, for instance, amid the media cues who highlight a political scandal. Observational survey data has limited capacity to disentangle these dynamics, which poses challenges when using closed trust survey items to analyse the dimensions of trustworthiness most relevant for the respondents.

Competence, within the context of public trust in institutions and political actors, refers to the perceived capacity of authorities to perform their functions and tasks effectively. Competence is both future-oriented and conditional. Competence should not be conflated with the general positive sentiment towards the officeholders, or the performance satisfaction, which is a more short-term attitude. Instead, competence concerns a specific belief that political actors possess the necessary professional skills, knowledge, and organizational capacity to govern predictably and to solve societal problems (Grimmelikhuijsen & Knies, 2017; Hamm et al., 2019; Norris, 2022; Rydén et al., 2024). Competence, however, is not evaluated as a stand-alone characteristic. Recent experimental studies point that competence cues do systematically improve assessments of trustworthiness, however, the effect is stronger when competence is combined with other dimensions – namely, benevolence and norm-conforming conduct (Ouattara et al., 2023; Devine et al., 2024; Winsvold et al., 2024).

Integrity on the other hand captures public expectation that political actors would adhere to the accepted rules and principles, avoiding opportunism or abuse of power for private gains. In political trust research, this dimension is closely related to honesty, keeping the promises, and resistance to corruption. These and related traits refer to whether citizens can believe what the authorities say and expect consistency between declared commitments and the actual conduct (Easton, 1965; Citrin, 1974; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015; Halmburger et al., 2019; Norris, 2022). Existing studies suggest that integrity is particularly important in the cluster of trustworthiness dimensions and serves as a benchmark for the assessment of other traits. This association is operationalized by two distinct mechanisms that underline the asymmetrical effect of integrity. On one hand, for political actors and institutions meeting the basic requirements for integrity has proven to only modestly increases the propensity of a positive trust judgement (Jennings et al., 2021; Devine et al., 2024). On the other hand, not meeting the criteria for integrity, operationalized as perceived ethical failure, including corruption, abuse of office, or self-serving behaviour, substantially undermines trust and serves as one of the key predictors of mistrustful attitudes (Bertsou, 2019; Winsvold et al., 2024). These findings suggest an interaction effect between the dimensions of

trustworthiness: unless the baseline requirement for integrity is met, authenticity or competence are unlikely to have significant positive implications for political trust judgement.

Impartiality refers to the belief that political authority is exercised in a non-discriminatory manner, meaning that rules are applied consistently, and that access to public services is not contingent on party belonging, socioeconomic status, ethnic or sexual identity, or else. Impartiality becomes an important trait among the dimensions of trustworthiness as it helps ensure that the behaviour of political actors is predictable from citizens' perspective (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008; Rothstein, 2011; Teorell, 2009). Studies highlight the primarily role of impartiality evaluation as the foundation of institutional trustworthiness in environment where corruption, clientelism and partisan capture are salient (Norris, 2022). In the same vein, empirical analysis finds that perceptions of impartiality are consistently positively associated with institutional trust. On the other hand, even when performance is strong, but the requirements for impartiality are not met, citizens tend to withdraw their trust (Kulin & Johansson Sevä, 2021; van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). These findings suggest that impartiality might serve as a procedural safeguard for citizens to develop their trust judgements.

Benevolence is another criterion of trustworthiness evaluation that refers to the perceived motivation to act in the public interest. This dimension concerns whether political actors are perceived as responsive, caring, and oriented toward citizens' and their well-being. Benevolence should not be conflated with competence or efficiency: it is possible that the authorities are lacking expertise or do not succeed in their performance but are still seen as "trying to do the right thing" for the public (Ardanaz et al., 2023; Devine et al., 2024; Grimmelikhuijsen & Knies, 2017; Hardin, 2002). Existing studies point that perceptions of benevolence are often the strongest driver of trust judgement, as compared to competence and integrity which exhibit secondary effects (Devine et al., 2024). In the same vein, another experimental study finds that benevolence produces the highest marginal mean trust level to a hypothetical political, with the effect slightly exceeding such dimensions as integrity and ability. At the same time, negative descriptions of benevolence contribute disproportionally to the decline of trust (Ouattara et al., 2023).

Authenticity refers to the perceived appearance as genuine, being yourself or also being consistent in various contexts. Unlike the previous four dimensions, authenticity was not a part of the foundational organizational management approach. It was adopted from research on political representation which fostered different concepts and ideas of a "good politician". Here, trustworthiness is associated with the perceived ordinariness, genuineness, and consistency of a political actor. Politicians are judged more trustworthy when they appear most "authentic". Existing studies of citizens' normative expectations of politicians and their trait-based vote choice point that qualities related to the notion of authenticity – being down to earth, straightforward – are often prioritized by the respondents in surveys (Valgarðsson et al., 2021). Multi-national experimental study on evaluation of political elites shows, for example, that authenticity demonstrates an independent positive effect on perceived trustworthiness and was third (after competence and integrity) trait to have most significant positive effect on trust judgement (Valgarðsson et al., 2025).

1.3 Measuring Trust and Trustworthiness with Survey Experiments

Survey experiments are survey-based studies where the participations of a survey – the respondents – are randomly assigned to different versions of information treatments, vignettes, or questions. Control over manipulation allows the researchers to estimate causal effects of different cues on the outcome (measured phenomena). The element of randomization ensures that any systematic differences in the outcome with high probability can be attributed to the manipulation (Gaines et al., 2007). And since the experiments are embedded directly into standard opinion surveys based on random probability population samples, the results are characterized by high external validity (Mutz, 2011; Thomas, 2024). In the context of political trust and trustworthiness research, survey experiments make it possible to manipulate information cues or attributes of the trustee (e.g., competence, benevolence, integrity, impartiality, authenticity) and examine how this changes citizens' perceptions and their trust judgements.

Several types of experimental design have become common in Political Science research and are particularly relevant for measuring political trust. This includes a) framing and priming experiments; b) vignette or factorial experiments; c) conjoint experiments. All types of experiments follow a common logic but feature somewhat different designs and inferential targets (Mutz, 2011). Framing and priming experiments are based on randomized exposure to specific pieces of information (e.g., concerning performance, policy, corruption, or transparency) or different framing of the same issue, policy, debate (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010; Chong & Druckman, 2007). Such designs typically feature single treatment-control set up where the respondents are divided randomly and equally between the group exposed to the stimuli and the group who did not receive it. The studied phenomena (e.g., trust in the government or a political leader) would then be measured after the treatment – or both a priori and a posteriori. Comparison between the control and treatment group allows to conclude the effect the specific piece of information or framing has had on political trust judgement (Gaines et al., 2007; Mutz, 2011). Somewhat similarly to this, the vignette or factorial survey experiments present the respondents with short descriptions of hypothetical situations or political actors, that vary along specific dimensions (e.g., competence, integrity cues). Analysis involves modelling respondents' choices, ratings or trust judgements as a function of the vignette attributes. Since the attribute levels are systematically varies through manipulation, the estimated regression coefficients can be interpreted as the size of causal effect of changing a particular attribute level on the measured phenomena (i.e., trust judgement) (Auspurg & Hinz, 2015; Treischl & Wolbring, 2022). Finally, conjoint experiments are built on the logic of factorial experiment by randomly varying multiple features of actors (or situations) in multi-attribute profiles. The respondents are asked to choose between the two or rate them. The exercise is repeated multiple times for each respondent allowing to test various options of trade-offs between the elements (Hainmueller et al., 2014).

In the field of political trust research, information and vignette experiments have been widely adopted to study how institutional performance, transparency and participatory procedures influence trust. For instance, experiments on decision transparency conducted in the Netherlands show that providing citizens with reasons for regulatory decisions does increase their trust in institutions, but only in selected policy domains and only when the rationale is clearly stated (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2021). In Ireland, experimental study about donations transparency and declaration of assets by politicians and members of parliament has proven to lower perceptions of corruption among the public (Crepaz & Arikan, 2024). Another experimental study conducted in the Netherlands finds that increased financial transparency has positive effect for the public perceptions of openness, but at the same time can lower political trust if the information cue

highlights poor performance that led to financial losses (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2021). Another study employing vignette experiment indicates that engaging a deliberative mini-public boosts the perception of fairness and legitimacy among the respondents, with the effect being especially strong among the less trusting (Germann et al., 2024).

Survey experiments have also been used to investigate the dimensions of trustworthiness. The findings reveal the varying priorities citizens across different countries have when evaluating the trustworthiness of political actors and institutions on one hand – as well as the diversity of approached to operationalization of the same dimensions of trustworthiness, thus further reinforcing the complexity and multidimensionality of political trust and trustworthiness. A comparative five-country study including Britain, Croatia, Spain, France, and Argentina employed conjoint survey experiment to evaluate hypothetical governments described by systematically varied profiles highlighting various dimensions of trustworthiness. Acting in the interest of citizens as opposed to acting in its own interest (i.e., benevolence) has proven to have largest marginal effect, followed by competence and integrity (operationalized as openness and transparency) (Devine et al., 2024). Another experimental study compared seven countries where trustworthiness was operationalized through competence and several aspects of integrity and authenticity. While both competency ("handling their duties well") and integrity (presented as consistency between words and deeds) have positive effects for trust (12 and 9 percentage points respectively), authenticity ("seems in touch with everyday life and ordinary people") has proven to be more important among low-trust respondents (Valgarðsson et al., 2025). What factors or event cause positive evaluation of various trustworthiness characterises? Scandals have generally proven to have negative effect on integrity-based trustworthiness of political actors, though the effect is less pronounced for populist parties and leaders whose supporters adjust their normative expectations downwards when the scandal aims to discredit mainstream politicians (Karv & Strandberg, 2021). Legal violations also contribute to the decline in perceived integrity as well as benevolence and competence, however, the effect tends to be primary applicable to the specific political actor in questions with the generalization to "politicians as a whole" or "political system as a whole" being much weaker and context-dependent (Halmburger et al., 2019).

Albeit survey experiments have proven invaluable for investigating the nuanced picture behind political trust and trustworthiness as complex, multidimensional phenomena, there is a number of methodological limitations associated with that approach. First, ethical concerns arise when researchers expose respondents to fictional, manipulating or polarizing information, and use different forms of concealment or partial disclosure. Good practice established in the field requires that such harm from deception be minimized, especially in case of sensitive political domains and vulnerable groups (Morton & Williams, 2010; Mutz, 2011; Phillips, 2021). These somewhat constraints the nature, scope and intensity of stimuli researchers can employ in priming or vignette scenarios. At the same time, realism of the treatment, that is the extent to which experimental stimuli resemble real-world information, actors, and situations that the respondents can plausibly face in real world, remains one of the pre-conditions of a good experiment and a meaningful inference (Gaines et al., 2007; Druckman & Kam, 2011; Mutz, 2011). Beyond this tension between treatment realism and ethical constraints, another set of challenges is associated with the type of the survey sample. Although existing studies suggest that effect sizes obtained from convenience (commercial panels, quota samples etc.) and probability samples are often highly correlated, they are not identical, and hence extending these findings to the general population is possible only to a limited extent (Barabas & Jerit, 2010; Druckman & Kam, 2011; Mullinix et al., 2015; Coppock, 2018). Similarly, findings from the studies that employ online panels only, even in societies with higher Internet penetration, must be interpreted carefully. Issues such as coverage error, self-

selection bias, and panel conditioning can result in limited external validity of the experiment. While online samples might as well provide researchers with valid estimates of the average treatment effect, they might misrepresent the prevalence of attitudes and heterogeneity of treatment responses among different sociodemographic groups (Ansolabehere & Schaffner, 2014; Callegaro & DiSogra, 2008; Kennedy et al., 2016; Mutz, 2011).

The challenge of measurement equivalence becomes particularly relevant in cross-national studies, including experiments on political trust and trustworthiness evaluations. Once dimensions such as integrity, impartiality, authenticity and others, are operationalized through sets of vignette scenarios, there is a risk that respondents in different countries or social groups will map those on different latent constructs. Wording differences amid translation, highlighting specific details or references to particular policy domains might result in different associations depending on recent political events and debates, scandals, media framing etc. Addressing these challenges requires extensive pre-testing, including cognitive interviews, and formal tests of invariance before drawing conclusions (Davidov et al., 2014; Dafoe et al., 2018). Related to this is the problem of pre-treatment exposure. Experimental studies are based on the assumption that all respondents encounter the treatment information for the first time. However, in case of studies on political trust and trustworthiness, this is far from reality: political situations and profiles employed in scenarios in one or another way refer to institutions, policies, and problems that have likely been subject of extensive debates and media scrutiny. Prior exposure to campaigns, media frames in real world can alter, condition or event reverse the effects of treatment (Druckman & Leeper, 2012). These findings underscore the importance of strong design, pilot, and careful interpretation of the findings, including acknowledging the potential limitations of both the sample and the experimental set up itself.

1.4 TRUEDEM survey

TRUEDEM survey was conducted in May-July 2025 in 24 European countries. Within each country, a representative sample of permanent residents of 18 years and above was surveyed using an online questionnaire self-completion mode. The sample size in each country was approximately 1200 respondents, with the exception of France and Germany, where 1500 persons were surveyed amid greater population size and diversity. For each country, most up-to-date Eurostat official population figures were used to determine the stratification target sociodemographic characteristics (age, gender, education, region). In all countries, respondents were recruited from access panels, mostly using opt-in technics. The surveys received its ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, confirming compliance with GDPR. Quality control included soft-launch checks, verification of script, speed and straightlining monitoring, geolocation, consistency checks among the others.

Conceptually, the survey replicates the thematic structure of the project, covering a broad spectrum of domains that influence the process of trust-building. The questionnaire therefore features modules on social and political trust attitudes, including national and European bodies; perceived trustworthiness (integrity, competence, accountability) of the national institution; information sources, frequency and patterns of media use; evaluations of institutional performance; democratic norms and support for authoritarian or populist leadership; political culture and participation; socioeconomic cleavages, as well as civic knowledge. The questionnaire completes with three

experimental designs: a) item list count experiment; b) vignette experiment; c) conjoint experiment. The first two are discussed in this paper; for the third one, please, see Babos & Vilagi, 2025[1].

Figure 1. TRUEDEM Online Survey: Country Coverage (2025)

As an online panel survey, TRUEDEM survey faces the challenges of coverage and self-selection, briefly listed in the previous section. In every surveyed country, the unweighted sample distribution approximates closely the national benchmark on gender and region, amid the strict quotas. However, distributions by age and education reveal a slight bias common across all online panels: those with higher education and younger and middle-aged respondents tend to be somewhat over-represented (see Haerpfer et al., 2025[2]). While post-stratification and design weights based on Eurostat data provide the necessary correction at the level of these core sociodemographic characteristics, they cannot fully eliminate the selection effects related to unobserved features such as political interest, baselines trust level, or evaluations of trustworthiness criteria. Consecutively, the weighted data can be treated as generally representative to the adult population at the national level, but descriptives for specific sociodemographic groups, hard to reach populations, and inferences about absolute levels of trust should be interpreted with caution. The estimates of causal effects from embedded experimented, on the other hand, are likely to be less sensitive to these sources of bias (Barabas & Jerit, 2010; Mullinix et al., 2015; Kennedy et al., 2016; Mutz, 2011).

[1] Baboš, P., Világi, A. (2025). Social Media and Trustworthiness. *Working paper no D6.4*. TRUEDEM: Trust in European Democracies Project (www.truedem.eu).
[2] Haerpfer, C., Norris, P., Kizilova, K., Palt, C., Diez-Medrano, J. (2025). *Online Survey Codebook and Technical Report. Working paper no. 8.1.* TRUEDEM: Trust in European Democracies Project (www.truedem.eu).

2 List Item Count Experiment

2.1 Background

The list item count (or simply "list") experiment is an indirect questioning technique designed with the purpose to measure the distribution of a sensitive attitude, while at the same time ensuring the privacy of the respondent. As opposed to direct measures which ask to evaluate the sensitive object itself, in list experiments the response are shown short lists of statements or objects, including the sensitive item. The respondents are typically assigned randomly between the control and treatment groups. The first group receives a list of non-sensitive items, while the treatment group receives the same list of items plus the additional sensitive item in question. The respondents are then asked how many items in this list apply to them, they agree with or approve of. The difference in mean counts between the treatment and control groups yields an estimate of the share of the sample for whom this sensitive item applies. Because the respondent's own statement on sensitive issue is not revealed directly, the design allows to reduce social desirability bias and preference falsification on topics where the individuals might otherwise censor themselves amid the fear political sanctions or social condemnation (Blair & Imai, 2012; Kuklinski et al., 1997). The technique therefore allows to monitor the response bias and detect more truthful expression of attitudes.

List experiments have been applied widely in Political Science research for the measurement of sensitive political attitudes, including support for violence, racial prejudice, regime support, and political trust. Indirect measurement becomes particularly relevant in authoritarian or highly polarized contexts, where citizens might be reluctant to express their dissatisfaction with the authorities or, at the opposite, to express their support for the controversial political leader. In Russia, list experiments were used to test whether support expressed for Vladimir Putin in 2015 was genuine or rather caused by fear of repression. The findings show that indirect measures of support result in a value only within ten percent points lower as compared to the direct measure, implying that the popularity is largely genuine with only moderate social desirability bias effect (Frye et al., 2017).

List experiments were also employed in China to examine the support for the central government and the Communist Party. The findings suggest that direct questions substantially overstate regime support by up to twenty percent points; urban, educated and political interested respondents were among those most frequently overstating their political trust in direct survey questions (Robinson & Tannenberg, 2019). Other studies in China included measures of trust in the central and local government, as well as support for abolishing presidential term limit. The findings reveal that indirect measures result in thirteen points lower trust and over forty points discrepancy on the matter of presidential term limit, which implies a substantial hidden opposition in the society (Nicholson & Huang, 2023).

Norris (2022) analysed list experiment conducted as a part of the World Values Survey in 2017-2022 in ten countries in Asia, Africa, Middle East, and Latin America to measure public trust to the head of state. Findings suggest that on average across all studied countries the trust overstatement comprised thirteen percent points, with the substantial variation across the countries from just a few percent to thirty and forty percent points in Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Libya, and the Philippines.

While concerns about the political sensitivity of various issues and self-censorship among citizens (and respondents in public opinion surveys) are more widespread in authoritarian regimes and environments with limited pluralism and low tolerance of dissent, the phenomenon of social

desirability bias is not unique to autocratic countries. In democratic societies, while less prevalent, the propensity of citizens to mispresent their political views to avoid social or moral sanctions might be driven by factors other than fear of repression. Theories of public opinion emphasize that people would adjust their views for them to meet the prevalent normative climate. Noelle-Neumann's theory of the "spiral of silence" suggests that, in an attempt to avoid social isolation, individuals are reluctant to voice opinions if they believe that only a minority in the society holds to this view (Noelle-Neumann, 1993). In the same vein, the concept of "preference falsification" concerns strategic misrepresentation of own attitudes and opinion under social pressure (Kuran, 1995).

Several mechanisms can foster "politically correct" responses also in free democratic environments. A strong sense of patriotism or national attachment might discourage respondents from openly criticising their country and its leaders. The same effect would have the values of traditionalism, deference to authority, which generally have little support in emancipated European societies, but are still embraced by certain social groups. High levels of diffuse support for the political system and strong generalized trust in some societies, while do not automatically translate into trust in political institutions and actors, might encourage respondents' conformity to the "optimistic" baseline. Finally, limited political interest and lack of political knowledge might result in respondents either not having their own crystallized political view, or being not sure about the accuracy of their own judgement. This group can instead choose to give what they believe is a mainstream perspective and a socially approved answer.

List experiments have also been used in European context, though primarily to test political attitudes other than trust to leaders. A comparative study involving respondents from Britain, France, Germany, and Italy employed list experiment to study social desirability in declared support for democracy. The control groups received a list of non-political items only, while the treatment groups received the same list plus an anti-democratic statement. Findings suggest that prevalence of anti-democratic views in studied four countries is very low, with the direct and indirect measures yielding very close results, thus showing no strong evidence to confirm social desirability bias (Kaftan, 2024).

Similar findings were obtained in another experimental study in Portugal, where non-democratic regime preferred expressed through "having a strong leader above the law" was used as a sensitive item (Magalhães & Aarslew, 2025). Social desirability around expression of populist attitudes was studied in Germany in several waves of Populism Barometer. The sensitive item, including on the list for the treatment groups, contained statements such as "ordinary people are all on the same side", "the people should be consulted in all important decisions", or "whether a person is good or bad can be judged by their politics." Results show that respondents with higher levels of education tend to over-report populist attitudes in direct measures as compared to an indirect list question, which the authors interpret as evidence of normalization of populism, with populist sentiments becoming both more popular and socially desirable (Vehrkamp & Merkel, 2020).

List experiments were also used to test xenophobia and negative attitudes to migrants. In Norway, the respondents were offered to name the number of list items that they find "upsetting"; for the treatment group, beyond other grievances, the list included also "immigrants benefiting from the Norwegian welfare state". Findings show that there is a significant latent resentment against immigration and prevalent welfare-chauvinism (Cappelen & Midtbø, 2016).

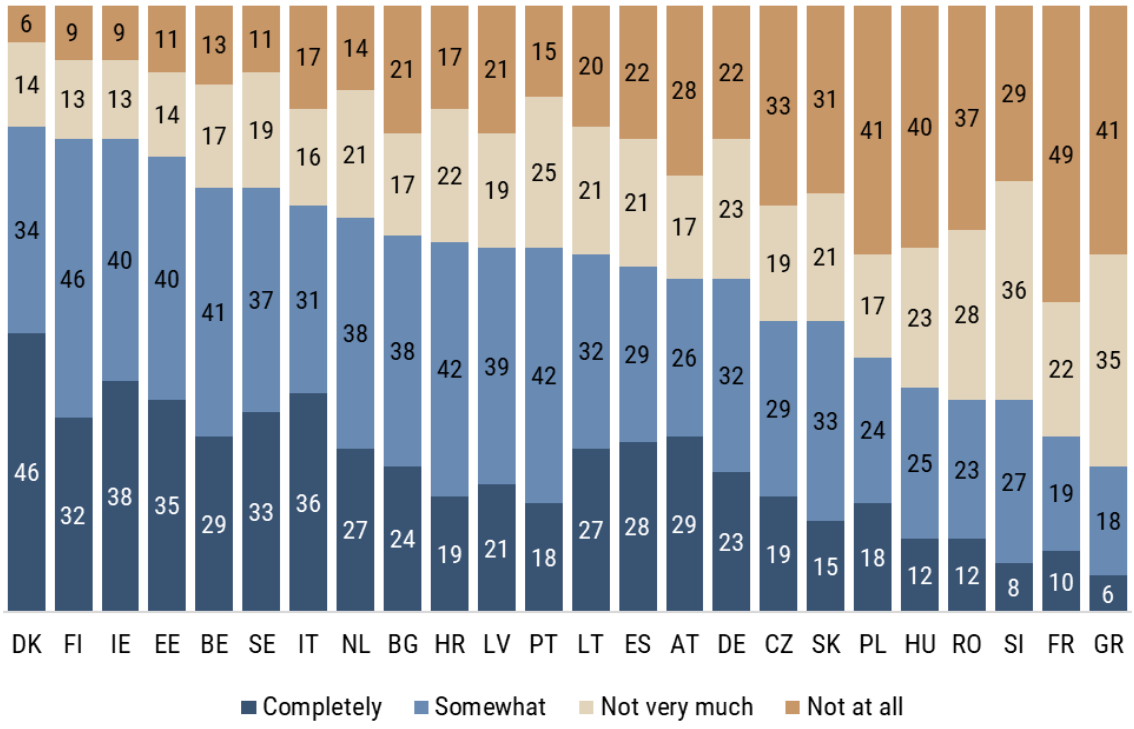
2.2 Design

Building on this experience, TRUEDEM embedded a list item count experiment on trust in political leaders in the population survey carried out within the framework of the project. As the first step, all respondents were invited to express their trust in a direct question asking, *"How much you personally trust each of the following in your country?"* The randomized list of items included national political bodies, including the Head of State and Head of Government of the respondent's country of residence (country of survey). Responses were coded on a 4-point scale varying from 1 ("not at all") to 4 ("completely"). Answers distribution is presented on Figures 2 and 3 below.

Respondents also had a possibility to choose "don't know" or "refuse to answer" options, which were treated as nonresponse. The share of non-responses was generally quite low and varied from 0.4-0.5% in Slovenia (lowest) to 3.5% and 4.1% in Sweden and the Netherlands (highest). Cases where no response was provided by the respondent are excluded from subsequent analysis.

Answers distribution to the question about trust to the Head of State shows substantial variance across the 24 surveyed European countries. The discrepancy is introduced by two semi-independent factors: 1) the attitude to the personality and performance of the political leader themselves, and 2) the projection of the general satisfaction with the political situation and efficiency of governance which is mediated by the particular role the Head of State plays in the political systems. Constitutional monarchies where the Head of State is a monarch with predominantly ceremonial no engagement into politics tend to demonstrate higher levels of trust to the Head of State. This includes Belgium (70%), Denmark (80%), the Netherlands (65%), Spain (57%), and Sweden (70%). Lowest levels of trust in the Head of State using the direct measurement have been recorded in Hungary (37%), Romania (35%), Slovenia (35%), France (29%), and Greece (24%). Trust in these examples is measured as a sum of shares responding, "trust completely" and "trust somewhat".

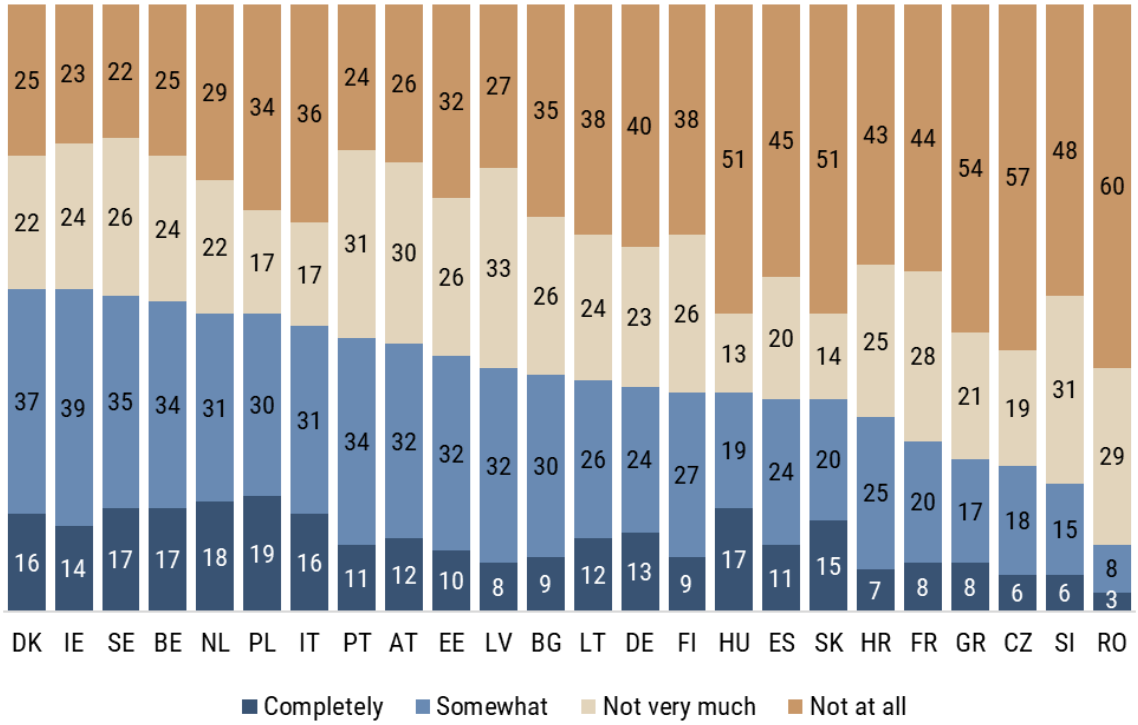
Figure 2. How much you personally trust the <Head of State> in your country? (%)



Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=29161

Confidence in the Head of State is generally higher (56% on average across all 24 countries) than trust to the Head of Government (38%), who often is seen by the public accountable for performance of the economic, social, and political systems. Conference in the Head of Government varies from just 11% in Romania, 21% in Slovenia, 24-25% in Czechia and Greece, to 53% in Denmark and Ireland, 51-52% in Belgium and the Netherlands. It is also notable that the "degree" or level of trust in the Head of the Government features a smaller share of full (completely) trust acknowledgements: on average, across 24 studied countries, only 12% expressed full trust to the Head of their Government (for a comparison, for the Head of State full trust was expressed by an average of 23% respondent).

Figure 3. How much you personally trust the <Head of Government> in your country? (%)



Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=29184

The direct measure of trust in the political leader in the localized questionnaire versions included actual name and position of the person. This was necessary to ensure that trust judgements are formed towards one and the same person by all respondents within one country, which is an essential precondition for comparative analysis. This provision became particularly relevant for individuals with low political interest and engagement who are not following politics in their countries closely – and in contexts where the Head of State or the Head of Government changed shortly before the survey started. The list of political leaders included in the direct trust measure is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Names and Positions of Political Leaders included into the Direct Trust Measure

	Head of State	Head of Government
Austria	Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen	Federal Chancellor Karl Nehammer
Belgium	King Philippe	Prime Minister Alexander De Croo
Bulgaria	President Rumen Radev	Prime Minister Rosen Zhelyazko
Croatia	President Zoran Milanovic	Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic
Czechia	President Petr Pavel	Prime Minister Petr Fiala
Denmark	King Frederik X	Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen
Estonia	President Alar Karis	Prime Minister Kristen Michal
Finland	President Alexander Stubb	Prime Minister Petteri Orpo
France	The President Emmanuel Macron	The Prime Minister Michel Barnie
Germany	Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier	Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz
Greece	President Katerina Sakellaropoulou	Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Hungary	President Tamas Sulyok	Prime Minister Viktor Orban
Ireland	President Michael D. Higgins	Taoiseach Micheal Martin
Italy	President Sergio Mattarella	President of the Council of Ministers Giorgia Meloni
Latvia	President Edgars Rinkevics	Prime Minister Evika Silina
Lithuania	President Gitan Nauseda	Prime Minister Gintautas Paluckas
Netherlands	King Willem Alexander	Prime Minister Mark Rutte
Poland	President Andrzej Duda	Prime Minister Donald Tusk
Portugal	President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa	Prime Minister Luis Montenegro
Romania	President Klaus Iohannis	Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu
Slovakia	President Peter Pellegrini	Prime Minister Robert Fico
Slovenia	President Natasa Pirc Musar	Prime Minister Robert Golob
Spain	King Felipe VI	Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez
Sweden	King Carl XVI Gustaf	Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson

In the second step, the design of the experiment featured split-sample setting with the random assignment of respondents to groups A (control) and B (treatment) in the approximately 50/50 ratio. Each of the two groups were presented with a list of political leaders. The control group was presented with a list of non-sensitive items: four names of political leaders, including their positions and countries. The treatment group was presented with an identical list, with an addition of the sensitive item – the Head of State or the Head of Government of their own country. Respondents in both groups were then asked to name how many political leaders on the list they generally trust, without naming whom exactly this trust is applicable to.

Table 2. TRUEDEM Online Survey: Countries and Samples

Country	Control Group	Treatment Group	Total Sample	Fieldwork
Austria	607	595	1222	May 19 2025–July 06, 2025
Belgium	586	601	1217	May 19 2025–July 13, 2025
Bulgaria	552	600	1200	May 19 2025–July 10, 2025
Croatia	587	589	1207	May 19 2025–July 19, 2025
Czechia	591	584	1217	May 19 2025–July 16, 2025
Denmark	578	594	1200	May 19 2025–July 26, 2025
Estonia	578	601	1202	May 19 2025–July 18, 2025
Finland	585	594	1202	May 19 2025–June 28, 2025
France	709	735	1502	May 19 2025–July 19, 2025
Germany	776	691	1501	May 19 2025–July 18, 2025
Greece	602	567	1201	May 19 2025–July 11, 2025
Hungary	628	550	1208	May 19 2025–July 21, 2025
Ireland	576	576	1204	May 19 2025–July 18, 2025
Italy	533	550	1127	May 19 2025–July 19, 2025
Latvia	570	597	1223	May 19 2025–July 14, 2025
Lithuania	680	648	1375	May 19 2025–June 07, 2025
Netherlands	548	608	1200	May 19 2025–July 15, 2025
Poland	557	590	1203	May 19 2025–July 12, 2025
Portugal	620	569	1208	May 19 2025–July 13, 2025
Romania	579	601	1201	May 19 2025–July 23, 2025
Slovakia	589	576	1202	May 19 2025–July 16, 2025
Slovenia	623	579	1219	May 19 2025–July 10, 2025
Spain	613	563	1215	May 19 2025–July 14, 2025
Sweden	561	621	1212	May 19 2025–June 09, 2025
Total	14426	14377	29668	May 19 2025–July 26, 2025

The choice of non-sensitive items (political leaders of other countries) aimed to satisfy several design requirements. First, to ensure measurement equivalence, the project team looked for political leaders relatively well known in Europe to ensure that the respondents will be able to recognize and meaningfully evaluate them. Second, the selected leaders represent different ideological profiles and regime types, which helps to avoid a uniformly low or uniformly high trust in the control group. Preference was also given to leaders from countries where change of political leadership in the middle of fieldwork is not scheduled to take place. While the experimental design does not prohibit using former presidents, this misperceptions and questions from the side of the respondents, including greater share of non-responses, which can have negative implications for the results. Finally, because analysis is based on within-country differences between the treatment and control groups, the differences in trust to foreign leaders across different European countries does not disrupt the design and does not pose challenges for the meaningful interpretation of findings.

The sensitive item on Card B was proposed in consultation with the national experts. The selection was guided by the logic of division of political power and responsibilities between the Head of State and the Head of Government. The holder of the position who, per the Constitution, has more

say in the political affairs of the state was included as sensitive item on Card B. In 23 countries it was the Prime Minister, and only in France the name of the President was included as the sensitive item.

Table 3. List Count Experiment – Trust in Political Leader

Here is a list of world leaders. Can you tell me how many from this list you generally trust? Please, do not say the names – just tell me whether you trust nobody, one leader, two leaders, three or all four leaders in the list.

GROUP A [control]

- Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the UK
- Donald Trump, President of the USA
- Vladimir Putin, President of Russia
- Xi Jinping, President of China

Response options:

0. None
1. One leader
2. Two leaders
3. Three leaders
4. All four leaders
-1. I don't know

GROUP B [treatment]

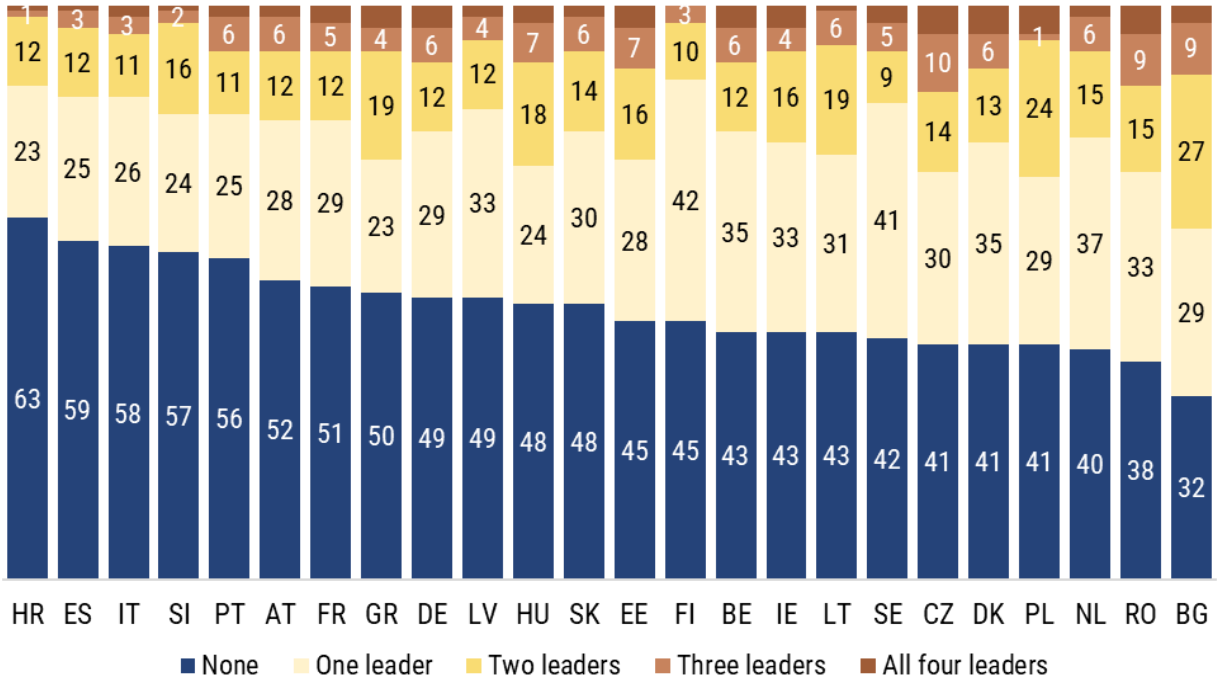
- Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the UK
- Donald Trump, President of the USA
- Head of State or Government in your country [replace with the name and position]
- Vladimir Putin, President of Russia
- Xi Jinping, President of China

Response options:

0. None
1. One leader
2. Two leaders
3. Three leaders
4. Four leaders
5. All five leader
-1. I don't know

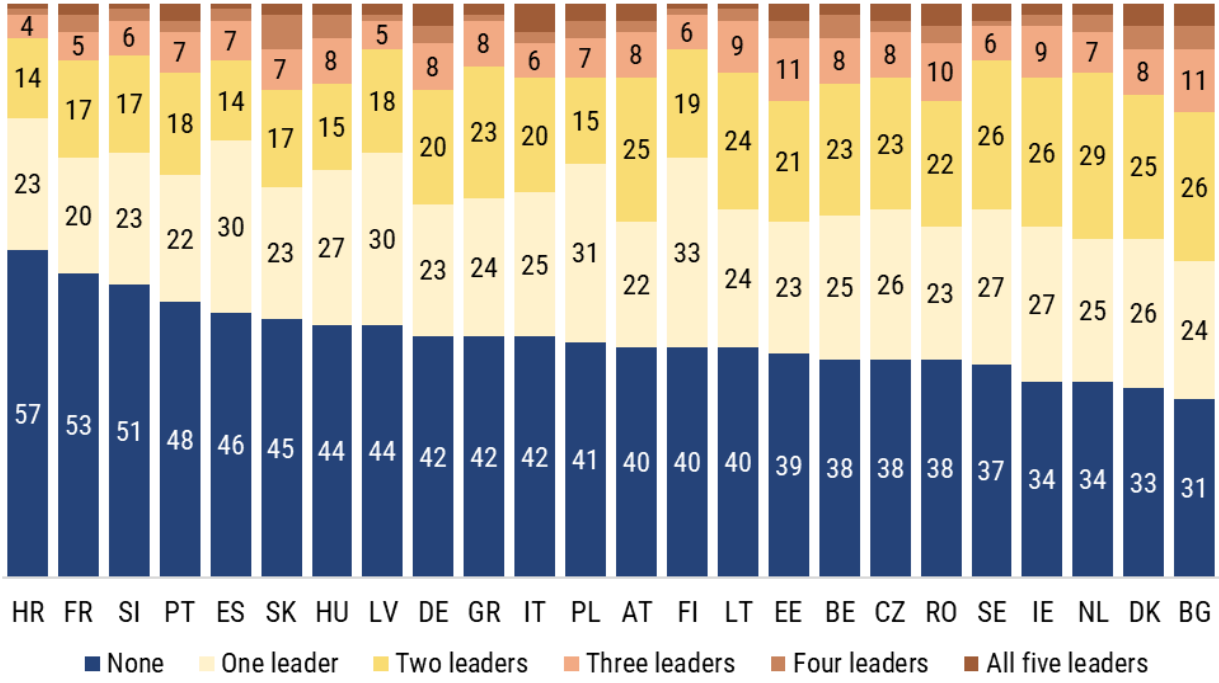
Distribution of answers received from the control group (Figure 4) and the treatment group (Figure 5) suggests that the pattern of distrust has been prevailing in many countries. In particular, between 32% and 63% of respondents reported that they do not trust any of the list politicians in the Control Group, and from 31% to 57% reported not trust any politician, including their country's own Head of Government, in the Treatment Group. Shares of those who reporting trusting one leader vary from, on average, 25% to 35%. Shares of those trusting two leaders vary within 12-18% on average in the control group, and 18-25% in the treatment group.

Figure 4. Can you tell me how many political leaders from this list you generally trust? – Group A (Control Group) (%)



Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=14426

Figure 5. Can you tell me how many political leaders from this list you generally trust? – Group B (Treatment Group) (%)



Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=14377

2.3 Results

The primary aim of the list item count experiment is to assess the potential social desirability bias in the response. The response bias and its size can be calculated as follows. The first core part of the formula is the mean number of trusted leaders as reported by the control group (control mean in table 4). Similarly, the second element is the mean number of trusted leaders as reported by the treatment group (treatment mean). Under random assignment of respondents between the two groups and under standard assumptions about no design effects on non-sensitive items, the difference between two means shall provide an "unbiased" estimate of the respondents share – within the particular studied country – who trust their own national leader (Head of Government in TRUEDEM). The difference between this estimate, obtained through the indirect item count, provides a baseline to compare the answers reported in the direct trust question (direct measure). The difference between the two, according to the experiment's design, shall comprise the response bias. Positive values of the response bias stand for over-reported trust: respondents tend to give greater credit of trust when asked about it directly, as compared to indirect measurement. Respectively, negative values of the response bias refer to cases of under-reporting, when the respondents (Table 4).

Comparison of direct vs indirect item count measures of trust in the Head of Government across the 24 studied European countries suggests a prevailing pattern of over-reporting political trust. According to the direct measure, trust to the national government leader varies from 51-53% in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, and Sweden to just 11% in Romania, comprising on average of 38%. The indirect item count estimates suggest that the average trust in the Head of Government is 26%, varying from 43% in Italy to 12% in Czech Republic and France. The mean response bias, calculated as the difference between the direct and indirect estimates, comprises 13%. The first core finding is therefore that the tendency to overstate trust in national leaders is not limited to authoritarian environments, and is also present, though to a lesser extent, among the European public.

Comparative analysis of the bias figures points to a substantial cross-national variation. Excluding Poland and the Netherlands, where a technical error made the comparison between the direct and indirect measures substantively not possible, 19 out of 22 surveyed countries show a positive response bias. In these cases, the respondents reported higher trust to the national Head of Government when asked about it directly as compared to when the same attitude was measured indirectly. Depending on the size and direction of the bias, countries can be divided into 3 groups. The first group features small positive bias. The size of the bias in this group varies from relatively modest values of 5-7% in Austria, Germany, Italy, and Spain to larger gaps of 10-15% in Czechia, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Slovakia, Portugal. The second group features a relatively large positive bias of 15-20% (Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland) or 22-25% (Belgium, Lithuania, Sweden). Finally, the third and the smallest group includes countries with a negative response bias, where the indirect estimate of trust results in a value higher than the direct one. The bias value varies within -1% to -7% in Greece, Romania, Slovenia.

Table 4. Estimates of the Response Bias

Country	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Mean Diff.	Indirect item count estimate of trust in Head of Government (%)	Direct measure of trust in the Head of Government (%)	Response Bias (%)
Austria	0.79	1.16	0.37***	37.0	44.1	7.1
Belgium	0.94	1.22	0.28***	27.7	51.3	23.6
Bulgaria	1.21	1.42	0.21**	21.6	38.9	17.3
Croatia	0.53	0.72	0.19***	18.5	31.9	13.4
Czechia	1.07	1.19	0.12n.s.	11.7	24.4	12.7
Denmark	1.01	1.37	0.36***	36.8	52.3	15.5
Estonia	0.96	1.18	0.22**	22.0	42.0	20.0
Finland	0.74	0.99	0.25***	25.0	36.2	11.2
France	0.78	0.91	0.13*	12.4	28.8	16.4
Germany	0.87	1.17	0.30***	29.7	36.4	6.7
Greece	0.86	1.12	0.26***	26.0	25.5	-0.5
Hungary	0.92	1.09	0.17*	17.2	36.0	18.8
Ireland	0.88	1.25	0.37***	36.4	53.0	16.6
Italy	0.66	1.09	0.43***	42.7	47.1	4.4
Latvia	0.89	1.13	0.24***	23.2	37.9	14.7
Lithuania	0.77	0.94	0.17**	16.7	40.0	23.3
Netherlands	0.91	1.27	0.36***	36.7	49.0	12.3
Poland	1.01	1.10	0.09n.s.	8.7	49.1	40.4
Portugal	0.75	1.06	0.31***	30.6	44.5	13.9
Romania	1.09	1.23	0.14n.s.	13.5	11.5	-2.0
Slovakia	0.84	1.07	0.23***	22.9	35.0	12.1
Slovenia	0.64	0.91	0.27***	27.5	21.0	-6.5
Spain	0.62	0.92	0.30***	30.0	35.8	5.8
Sweden	0.83	1.12	0.29***	29.6	52.5	22.9
Mean	0.86	1.12	0.26***	26.0	38.5	12.9

Notes: Significance based on two-sample t-tests of means ($p < .001$ ***, $p < .01$ **, $p < .05$ *, n.s. not significant). Only for France, both the direct and indirect measures of trust in the political leader refer to the Head of State. Due to a technical issue with the survey software, the respondents in Poland and the Netherlands were presented with different names of political leaders under direct and indirect (experimental) measures of political trust. As such, while the response bias can be calculated mathematically, in the context of these two countries, it is conflated with the actual, substantive difference in trust towards different political leaders. Therefore, the results of the experiment are not valid in Poland and the Netherlands.

Disaggregating these results by education reveals a patterned, though not uniform, relationship between schooling and response bias (Table 1A in Appendix). In the pooled sample across the 22 countries, the indirect list count estimate of trust in the Head of Government is 31% among respondents with primary education (ISCED 0–2), 21% among those with secondary education (ISCED 3–4), and 29% among those with tertiary education (ISCED 5–8). In contract, the share of those trusting their country's Head of Government (Head of State in France) comprises 37%, 35%, and 44% across the three groups accordingly. Consequently, the average response bias, defined as the difference between the direct and indirect estimates, is smallest among those least educated (6.4%) and substantially larger among respondents with secondary (13.8%) and tertiary (14.7%). The pattern of over-reported trust in the Head of Government in the first question is therefore present in all three groups, but its size increases together with the education level.

At the country level, the patterns vary a lot, though the same broad tendency can be observed in many cases. In Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Spain the largest positive biases are found among respondents with medium or high education, whereas group with primary education show smaller bias. In selected cases, this dynamic is not liner: in Denmark and in Greece, the response bias is highest among those with secondary education; in Germany secondary education group exhibits negative response bias; in Slovenia, both low and high education groups show negative bias, while medium group has bias value close to zero. Contrary to this, a smaller group of countries exhibits an opposite trend, when respondents with lower education levels show greater trust bias than those with tertiary education. This group includes Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, and Sweden. Finally, in some cases, the sign of the bias changes across groups: in Austria, high educated show negative bias, while other groups – positive; in Czechia, Estonia, Italy, and Romania those with low education show negative bias, while other groups – positive. Romania, Italy, and Czechia also exhibit the largest differences between the bias values for different education groups. Contrary to this, countries where the education level has smallest effect (within 10% differences) on the response bias are Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Lativa, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain. It is essential that at the level of sub-groups, the smaller sample size requires for these findings to be treated and interpreted carefully. Rather than being studied precisely as exact values, the bias values by education groups should instead be treated as approximate indicators of trends.

Age differences in response bias are also present, though less pronounced compared to those by education (Table 1B in Appendix). Age differences also have more volatile dynamics and do not follow a linear pattern. The indirect list count estimate of trust in the Head of Government is 29.1% among youngest age group (respondents aged 18–35). The average bias declines to 21.3% among middle-aged (36–60 years) and increases 30.8% in the oldest age group (over 60 year). The direct measure yields a similar U-shape patters with the trust averages of 41.7%, 35.8%, and 39.8% respectively. Consecutively, the average trust response bias, obtained as the difference between the direct and indirect estimates, is positive for all three age groups. The bias is the largest among the middle-aged (14.5%), somewhat smaller among the youngest (12.5%), and the smallest among the senior group (9.0%).

Country-level patterns are heterogeneous. The U-shaped pattern detected at the supranational level in the pooled dataset, at the national level is found only in Croatia, Czechia, Italy, Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. A number of countries exhibit an opposite pattern – an inverted U-shape where youngsters and seniors have the smaller bias in their response, while the middle-aged demonstrate a higher response bias value, including in Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Hungary, Lithuania, and Spain. Finally, a minority of countries exhibit also linear pattern. In particular, the bias is the

smallest among the youngest and increases with age in Austria, Ireland, and Romania. Contrary to this, bias value is the highest among the youngest and declines with age in Denmark, Finland, Greece, and Sweden. Same as with education groups, the direction of the bias also changes across the age groups in selected countries. In Greece, the youngest age group shows a significant negative response bias (trust under-reported in the direct measure), while middle-ages and seniors show a smaller positive bias (trust over-reported in the direct measure). The pattern is reversed in Italy, where youngsters show a positive bias, while other age groups – negative response bias. Finally, Sweden, Ireland, Hungary, Greece, Estonia, Denmark show the largest differences among the age groups on their trust response bias.

The TRUEDEM findings highlight the importance of treating standard trust items as potentially biased indicators, where using indirect techniques, such as list experiments, can be helpful to diagnose the direction and size of the bias. What mechanisms can generate the positive bias in direct trust measures in many European countries? And respectively what factors can lead to a negative bias? One potential explanation is associated with the different normative climates around trust and mistrust, which influence the cross-national variation in both the bias size and sign. Social desirability, understood as conformity to perceived norms of "appropriate" opinion and behaviour, would drive the declared trust levels as expressed in the direct measure up or down, depending on the prevailing normative climate. In many national contexts across the European continent, expressing some basic level of trust in "own national leader" might be seen as normatively desirable – rather than explicitly voicing mistrust. This interpretation is consistent with research on citizenship norms in European democracies, which identifies "good citizens" as those who obey the law, trust political institutions and display loyalty to the political community (Denters et al., 2007; Coffé & van der Lippe, 2010; Deželan, 2023; Schulz, 2024).

Trust can serve as a signal of the sense of loyalty, patriotism, civic responsibility, whereas explicit mistrust can be associated with cynicism, and most recently – with populist sentiments (the dichotomy between "corrupt elites" and "pure people"). Under such conditions, respondents who feel ambivalent about the national leader or are only weakly trusting may adjust their trust judgement in the direct measure, thus boosting the average trust level. This same group of respondents is likely to feel more freedom to withdraw that trust when answering the list experiment where explicit trust declaration is masked. This logic is very close to the concepts of the "spiral of silence" and preference falsification which we discussed above (Kuran, 1995; Noelle-Neumann, 1993). On the other hand, in countries where anti-elite sentiment and scepticism (or even cynicism) towards political institutions and actors have become mainstream, expressing distrust in politicians may itself be a socially acceptable stance. In these contexts, the direct trust measure is likely to yield lower trust level as compared to indirect assessments.

The pattern described above is broadly comparable to the "critical citizens" theory which posits that publics in established democracies often combines dissatisfaction with the performance of particular government with the overall diffuse support for the regime (Newton, 1999; Norris, 1999; Norris, 2011). As other experimental evidence suggests (e.g., Kaftan, 2024), the European public exhibits little bias in responses concerning their support for democracy, which is often treated as an indicator of diffuse regime support (Easton, 1975). TRUEDEM findings suggest that specific support is the type more susceptible to normative baseline expectations and respectively social desirability pressure.

The education pattern in TRUEDEM can be understood as an outcome of two education-related processes. First, higher levels of education are associated with more intense internalisation of pro-democratic civic norms, including basic level of support for the national leader(s). Past research on

political trust attitudes suggests that in many European democracies, the more educated groups tend to articulate more coherent attitudes toward democratic principles and are more attentive to how their answers in surveys can be interpreted (Hooghe, 2015; Ziemes, 2020; Noordzij et al., 2024). In contexts where baseline political trust is a normative expectation, this reflexivity can translate into an upward adjustment of responses to the direct trust measure among those with higher education levels. On the other hand, past research also points that education can foster more critical stance towards political actors and policy outputs. Highly education citizens are often "critical democrats" who endorse democratic norms while being sceptical about the performance of actors and institutions (Norris, 1999; 2011). This mechanism explains why the size and direction of the response bias vary across the European countries studied in TRUEDEM.

The dynamics of response bias across age groups can partly be explained by life-cycle position and the different political climates that the age cohorts have experienced during their formative years. In particular, from the perspective of life cycle position, the middle-aged respondents are typically those most embedded in various social roles (workplace, civic networks etc.) where "political correctness" as the public opinion norm is salient and where statements about trusting or not trusting the national leaders are more visible. This group is also more likely to have internalised conventional civic norms that link democracy to the basic institutional support. Similar group of factors might explain the generally lower response bias among the senior age group. Existing studies point that older citizens tend to have more crystalized, moderately positive trust baselines on one hand and strong duty-based norms of citizenship on the other (Goerres, 2007, 2009).

Another potential explanation is associated with the cohort-specific norms internalized during formative years. Existing research points that cohorts socialized during the period of major crises (e.g., the post 2008 recession) in most crises affected countries display somewhat lower levels of political trust as compared to both older and younger age groups (Valgarðsson et al., 2025). Other studies on today's European youngsters provide similar evidence: young people remain attached to democratic principles but report high dissatisfaction with how democracy works in their country and low trust in national political actors and institutions (YouGov/TUI Foundation, "Young Europe" 2023–2025). This can explain that in the TRUEDEM survey responses to direct trust question, dominated by dissatisfaction and scepticism, would capture much of this criticism leaving less room for adjustment in the indirect experimental measure. The diverse patterns exhibited by the 22 countries who participated in the TRUEDEM survey emerge as a result of an overlap of the specific normative climate around trust and mistrust on one hand and the country-specific trajectories of political and economic development that create unique set of conditions under which each age cohort is socialized during formative years.

Finally, the methodological aspects and limitations of the experimental design might act as another factor. Indirect list count estimate can be relatively noisy, given the modest number of non-sensitive items and the sampling variability of list experiments. Additionally, the content of the non-sensitive items may influence the experiment's outcomes. While a standard list item-count experiment is based on a *no design-effects* assumption, under certain circumstances, such an effect might be present. This might have a priming effect on the respondent. Being presented together with highly polarising figures (Trump, Putin, Xi) may colour how respondents process the whole list.

3 Vignette experiment

3.1 Background

A *vignette experiment* is a survey-embedded technique which aims to test the causal effect of a systematically manipulated feature(s) of the studied phenomenon on respondents' evaluation of a specific outcome, using random assignment of these manipulations and controlled variation of the features. The respondents are typically invited to evaluate short, standardized descriptions of hypothetical political actors, institutions, situations, or decisions. Each of these descriptions follow the same structure, with only particular section(s) of the content being systematically varied to represent a specific feature of characteristic. All survey participants are randomly assigned to receive a specific vignette as a part of the survey process. Because all non-manipulated aspects of the vignette are held constant and the manipulated elements are assigned randomly, the observed systematic differences between respondents' evaluations can be causally attributed to the experimentally varied attributes. Unlikely observational survey design, vignette experiment allows to disentangle respondents' pre-existing characteristics as well as contextual confounders form the actual causal association. Advantages of vignette experiments have been widely recognized. The element of randomization of attributes contributes to the strong internal validity of the method, while implementation in population-based samples significantly improves the external validity as compared to small-scale experiments in laboratory settings (Mutz, 2011; Auspurg & Hinz, 2015). A central concern and the foundational feature of the method is realism of the hypothetical scenarios offered to the respondents. Scenarios that closely resemble situations, behaviours and judgments in real-world context, are likely to yield more reliable results. For example, a study on voting preferences revealed that experimental attributes that are more carefully aligned with the dimensions of actual referendum choices, tend to structure both hypothetical evaluations in the experiment – and observed voting in real world setting (Hainmueller et al., 2014).

Vignette experiments have been frequently used to study evaluations of political institutions and elites. For instance, a study of determinants of citizens' trust in the European Commission examined used vignettes to illustrate such dimensions as such as political participation, performance outcomes, value congruence, and the clarity with which responsibility for outcomes can be attributed. The results have shown that perceived performance and value congruence have exerted the strongest causal effects on the reported trust in the Commission (Schafheitle et al., 2020). Another analysis employed vignette survey experiment to investigate legitimacy judgements of EU policy decisions. The respondents were invited to evaluate hypothetical EU decisions that varied whose preferences were represented in that decision (e.g., EU-wide majority or the respondent's country majority) and which procedures are used. The findings showed that both majority representation and procedural features have had positive effect on legitimacy (Wratil & Wäckerle, 2023). Vignette experiments are also applied to evaluations of political actors. Analysis conducted in the Netherlands used vignettes differentiating between nine trustworthiness traits and characteristics such as gender and party belonging of a hypothetical politician to examine the effects for political trust judgements (Ouattara et al., 2023). Another study used short video recordings to replace the written descriptions with the aim to address the effect of communication aspects, status signals and symbolic cues of imaginary political actors on political trust judgements. The study finds that both visual and stylistic cues embedded in the vignettes affect trust evaluations especially among respondents with lower education levels (Noordzij et al., 2024).

In addition to population samples, elites are also sometimes included into survey experiments. Weinberg (2023) employed vignette experiment to investigate how the feeling of being trusted or mistrusted by the national politicians affected their risk-taking in office. Politicians were presented with scenarios describing situations under varying levels of perceived trust or mistrust and asked to select from policy options with different risk levels. A study in Belgium employed vignettes among local executive politicians to analyse how they evaluate the legitimacy of different decision-making processes. The results how that the respondents differentiate between participatory format, giving preferences to formas that preserve decision-making while still involving citizens (Goutry et al., 2025).

3.2 Design

As a part of its core objective to collect new data on the perceptions of political trust and trustworthiness, the TRUEDEM online survey included a vignette experiment to test how features such as competence, integrity, impartiality, and authenticity influence perceived trustworthiness of political actors. The experimental design consists of two parts, including manipulation and measurement. First, within each national sample, respondents who reached the experimental module, were randomly assigned to one of the four groups. Each group viewed a single version of a scenario that highlighted one characteristic. All four vignettes opened with the same sentence: "*The EU's proposed ban on internal combustion engines is not acceptable.*" The opening statement in every scenario was followed by an acknowledgement of the need to achieve environmental objectives: "*Although we need to achieve our environmental objectives…*". This ends the constant part, and the experimental manipulation follows to justify this position. Hashtags were also varied across the vignettes and are therefore part of the manipulation. The following four dimensions are addressed in the experiment:

Group A: Competence dimension. This vignette aims to present the politician as capable of understanding the policy problem and providing a feasible solution. The scenario states that the proposed ban is "*too challenging for our industry*" and claims that "*we offer a competent alternative that will ensure a smooth transition, protecting both our economy and the strategic goals of the EU.*" Hashtags such as *#EUUnity* and *#Sustainability* accompany the text.

Group B: Integrity dimension. This scenario emphasises adherence to previously stated goals, reliability, and consistency between the new problem and prior commitments as a manifestation of politician's integrity. The scenario states that the ban "*goes against most of what we promised to people*" and insists that "*the Green Deal must be consistent with our goals and promises.*" The post uses hashtags such as *#KeepPromises* and *#OurFuture*.

Group C: Impartiality dimension. In this scenario, the focus rests on opposition to particularistic lobby and defence of the interests of the wider public, thereby showcasing impartiality and fairness. The vignette states that "*this measure serves only the interests of green lobby*" and that instead "*we need to find a solution that will work for all citizens*." Hashtags include *#Equality* and *#OurFuture*.

Group 4: Authenticity dimension. In the fourth scenario, the emphasis is made on politician's closeness to ordinary people, emphasis on national community, and opposition of political elites who are portrayed as "*being detached from reality*". The message presents the author as "*someone who genuinely understands our people*" and raises both material and immaterial aspects of the issue: "*threat to our jobs and our freedom of choice.*" Hashtags include *#[Country]First* and *#Freedom* hashtags, with the country label adapted to the national context.

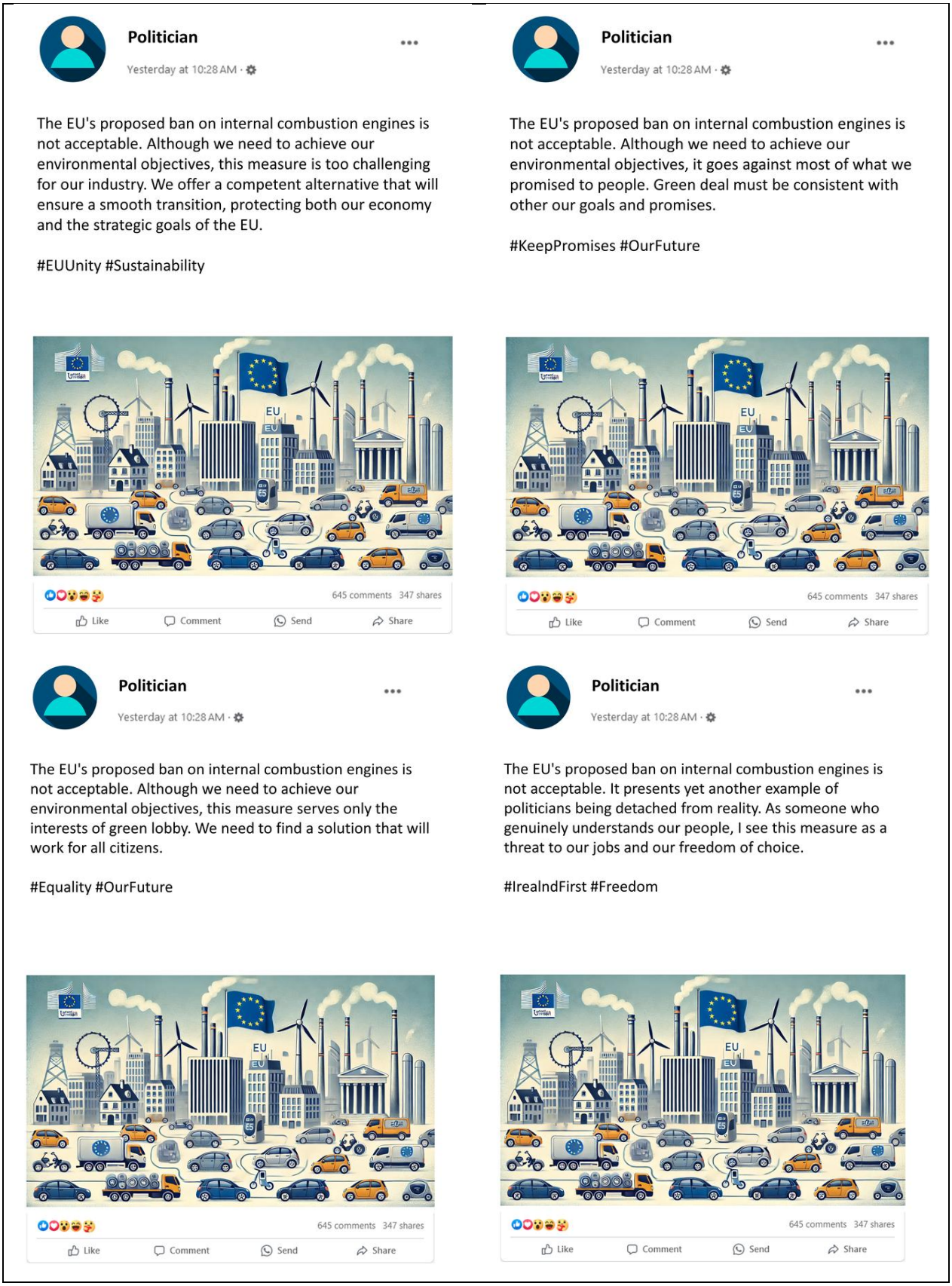
In all vignettes, the length of the text and the visual layout are held constant. The only systematic differences lie in the core argument and associated hashtags that cue one trustworthiness dimension at a time. To reduce inattentive responding, a timer was implemented: after the vignette appears on the screen, the "Next" button allowing to proceed to the next page remained inactive for 15 seconds. Respondents could proceed to the second part (trustworthiness assessment) only after this period of time has elapsed. This measure was added to increase the likelihood that respondents read the scenario, without altering the content of the treatment. Full vignette scenarios are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Vignetter Survey Experiment: Trustworthiness Dimensions

Q165. Below you can see the status of a politician. Please, read it carefully.
Group A. The EU's proposed ban on internal combustion engines is not acceptable. Although we need to achieve our environmental objectives, this measure is too challenging for our industry. We offer a competent alternative that will ensure a smooth transition, protecting both our economy and the strategic goals of the EU.
#EUUnity #Sustainability
Group B. The EU's proposed ban on internal combustion engines is not acceptable. Although we need to achieve our environmental objectives, it goes against most of what we promised to people. Green deal must be consistent with other our goals and promises.
#KeepPromises #OurFuture
Group C. The EU's proposed ban on internal combustion engines is not acceptable. Although we need to achieve our environmental objectives, this measure serves only the interests of green lobby. We need to find a solution that will work for all citizens.
#Equality #OurFuture
Group D. The EU's proposed ban on internal combustion engines is not acceptable. It presents yet another example of politicians being detached from reality. As someone who genuinely understands our people, I see this measure as a threat to our jobs and our freedom of choice.
#CountryFirst #Freedom
Q166. Based upon the descriptions, do you consider this politician … 1. Very untrustworthy 2. Fairly untrustworthy 3. Neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy 4. Fairly trustworthy 5. Very trustworthy

The scenarios were stylized as simulated Facebook post by a hypothetical political (Figure 6). The necessary graphical elements such as social media post frame, publication date and time, hashtags, reactions (likes, comments) have been included to resemble genuine political communication. The visual representation, including the politician's profile picture, layout, typographical style and engagement metrics (number of likes, comments and other reactions) were identical across all four vignettes. After viewing the vignette, as the second step, the respondents were asked to evaluate the hypothetical politician's trustworthiness on a 5-point scale, varying from "very untrustworthy" to "very trustworthy". Other modules in the TRUEDEM survey contain additional individual-level information, including sociodemographic characterises (gender, age, education, income) and other attitudinal and behavioural variables that can be used to text associate with dimensions of trustworthiness.

Figure 6. Vignetter Survey Experiment: Trustworthiness Dimensions



Vignettes were randomly assigned across respondents in all 22 surveys, which resulted in a relatively balanced allocation, with each group containing approximately 7,000 respondents. At the country level, group sizes vary from roughly 250 to 350 cases per scenario, with minor variation due to both sampling and randomization procedure as well as share of nonresponses. While the total sample provides sufficient statistical power for pooled analysis, at the country level the sample size per vignette is relatively modest. As a result, country-specific analysis of subgroup comparisons should be interpreted with caution. The limited within-country cell sizes do not undermine the internal validity of the experiment but might somewhat reduce the precision of estimated in stratified models or when interaction terms are introduced.

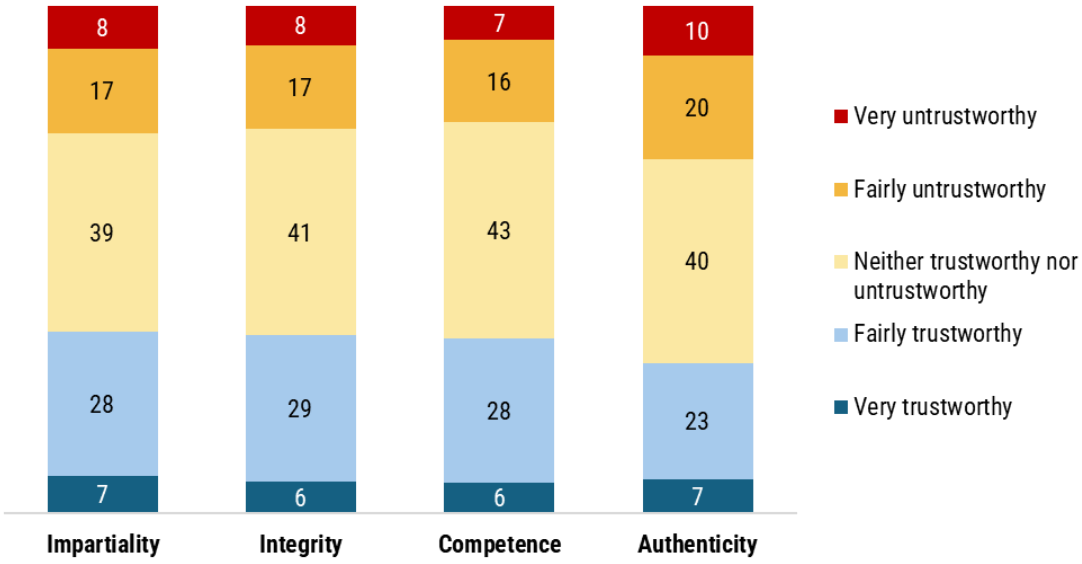
Table 6. Distribution of Vignette Scenarios Across Group: Samples Sizes

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Total
Austria	297	302	294	304	1197
Belgium	279	271	295	327	1172
Bulgaria	272	287	270	322	1151
Croatia	249	289	315	313	1166
Czechia	313	280	281	303	1177
Denmark	272	275	304	278	1129
Estonia	274	283	286	293	1136
Finland	288	257	302	299	1146
France	333	352	351	367	1403
Germany	407	358	333	333	1431
Greece	285	307	260	300	1152
Hungary	261	295	297	275	1128
Ireland	304	253	272	292	1121
Italy	286	302	252	212	1052
Latvia	285	308	268	294	1155
Lithuania	353	327	299	299	1278
Netherlands	276	273	279	286	1114
Poland	294	292	300	267	1153
Portugal	324	281	300	275	1180
Romania	287	307	280	264	1138
Slovakia	306	288	295	271	1160
Slovenia	268	318	292	300	1178
Spain	307	289	292	289	1177
Sweden	285	282	299	294	1160
Total	**7105**	**7076**	**7016**	**7057**	**28254**

3.3 Results

From the four scenarios, the impartiality vignette appears to generate the most favorable assessments of the trustworthiness of the politician: a total of 36% of respondents evaluated the politician as either fairly trustworthy (29%) or very trustworthy (7%). Impartiality dimension of trustworthiness was closely followed by both the integrity (29% fairly trustworthy, 6% very trustworthy) and the competence conditions (34% gave favourable assessments in total). The authenticity vignette, however, yielded the most sceptical reactions as only 30% of respondents gave positive evaluations (23% fairly trustworthy; 7% very trustworthy). Across all scenarios, the most widespread response was “neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy”, accounting for 39-43% of evaluations (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Trustworthiness Evaluation by Dimensions

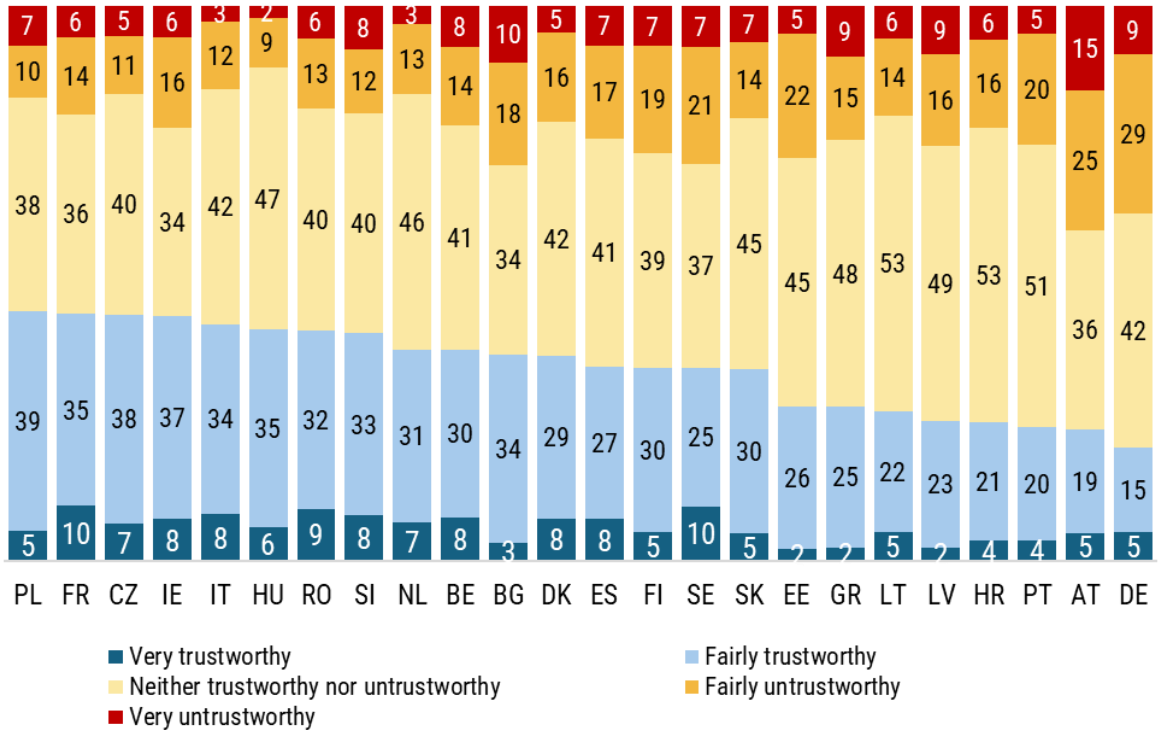


Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=28251

Across the four vignettes, there is substantial cross-country variation in how the trustworthiness of the hypothetical politician has been assessed. The competence scenario has yielded relatively favourable evaluations of trustworthiness in quite a number of Western and Central European countries. In particular, in Poland, France, Czechia, Ireland, and Italy 42-45% of respondents rated this politician as either fairly or very trustworthy. In Italy, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia competence also yielded a quite high level of trustworthiness (41–42%) among the respondents. In contrast, assessment of trustworthiness resulted in significantly less favourable responses in Germany, Austria, Portugal, and Croatia. These countries represent most sceptical public, with the combined share of positive evaluations being under 25% and negative assessments reaching 38-40%. The integrity vignette resulted in a somewhat altered ranking of countries. Close to a half (40-47%) of the respondents in Poland, Spain, Belgium, Romania, the Netherlands, and Sweden who were offered this scenario have decided positively about the trustworthiness of the politician. High levels of perceived trustworthiness were also expressed by the respondents in Czechia, France and Italy (39-40%). Contrary to this, on the other side of the spectrum, Austria, Germany, and Lithuania express significant mistrust.

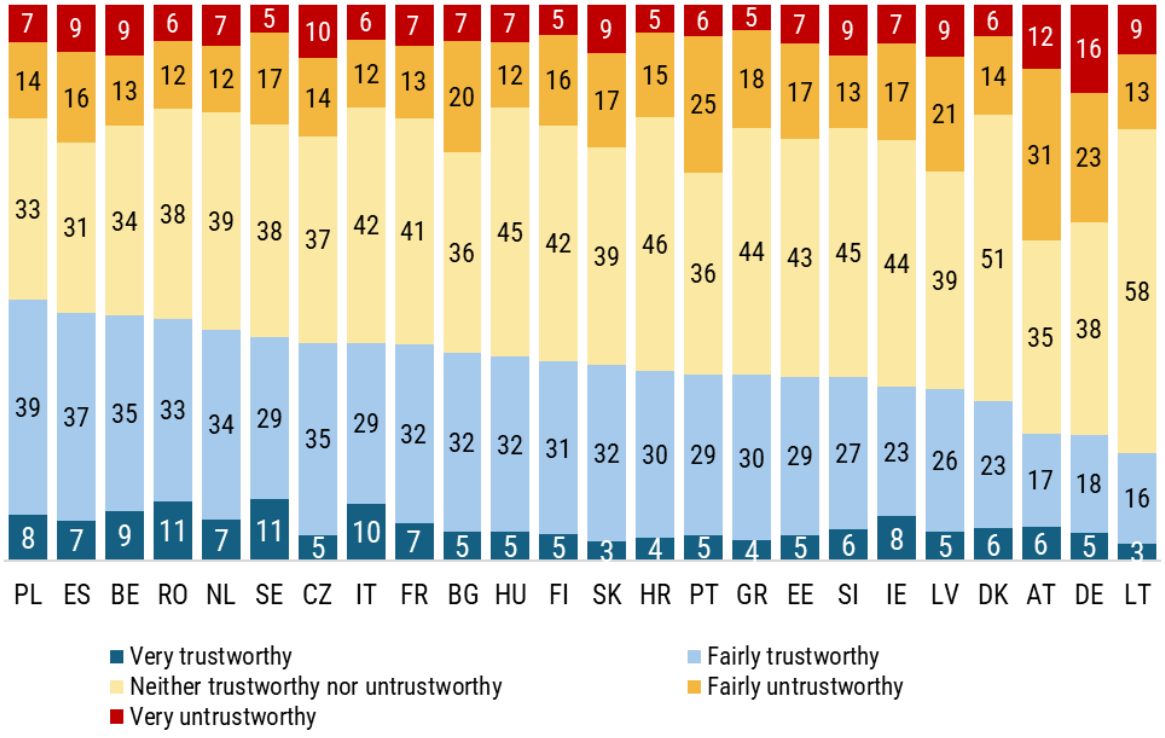
The impartiality vignette has yielded positive evaluations of trustworthiness largely among the respondents in Central and Eastern Europe: 37-44% of the respondents who were offered this scenario in Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, and Bulgaria identify the politician as trustworthy. High levels of trustworthiness assessment were also expressed by the public in response to the impartiality vignette in France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium. The lowest scores of trustworthiness this scenario yielded in Austria, Germany, and Portugal. Finally, the authenticity vignette systematically produces lower levels of trustworthiness and higher levels of mistrust across almost all cases. In Czechia, France, Belgium, Romania, and Poland between 36-42% of respondents who viewed this scenario have identifies the politician as trustworthy. Most sceptical respondents have been in Greece, Austria, Germany, and Lithuania. The authenticity vignette has produced the highest share of negative responses: across many countries, over a third of the respondents have identified the politician as untrustworthy.

Figure 8. Trustworthiness Evaluation: Vignette A – COMPETENCE



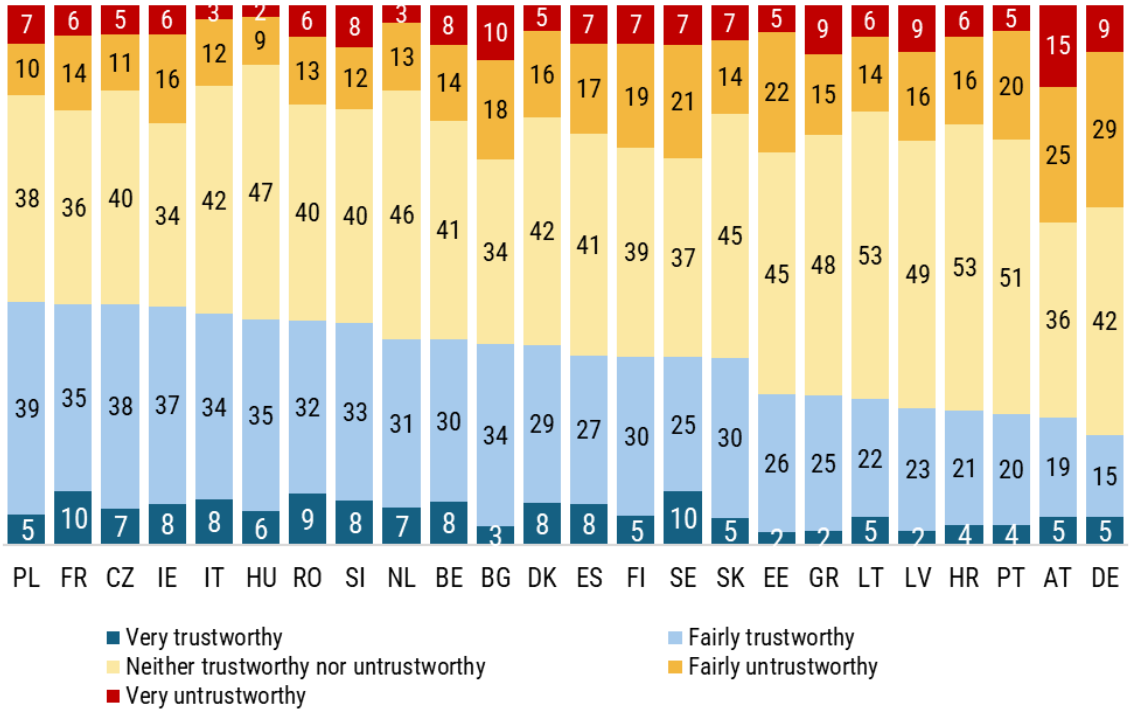
Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=7106

Figure 9. Trustworthiness Evaluation: Vignette B – INTEGRITY



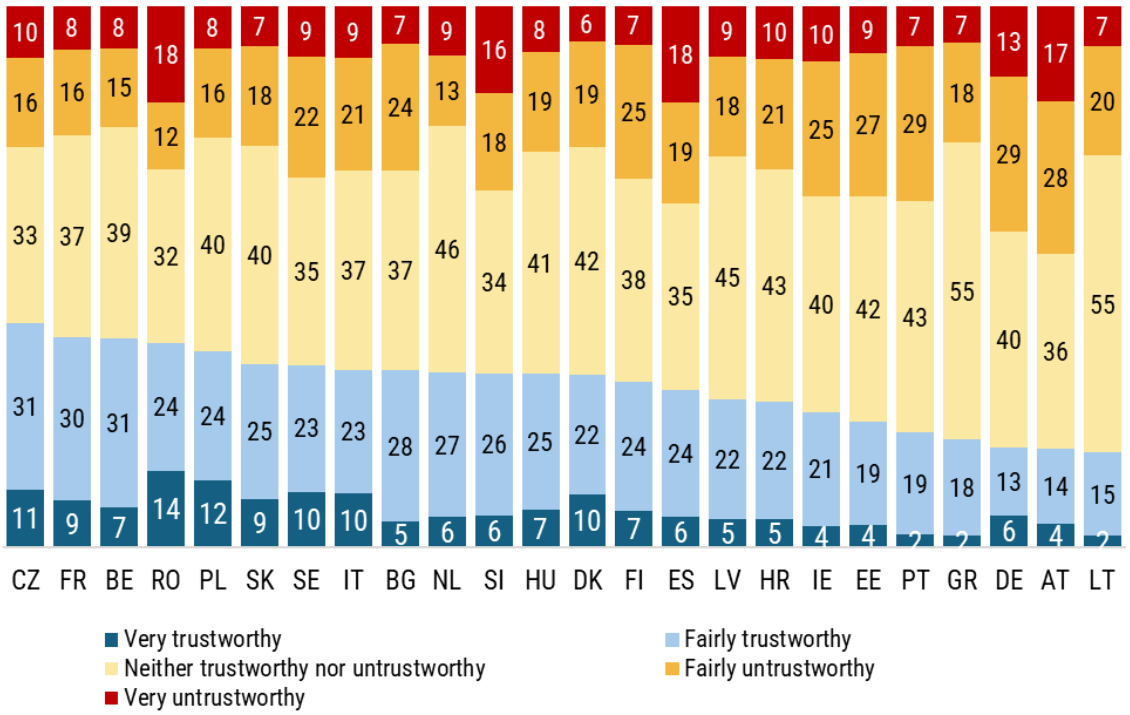
Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=7081

Figure 10. Trustworthiness Evaluation: Vignette C – IMPARTIALITY



Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=7021

Figure 11. Trustworthiness Evaluation: Vignette D – AUTHENTICITY



Source: TRUEDEM survey July 2025; N=7056

Across the TRUEDEM vignette experiment, the country-level patterns reinforce the broader trend that performance-related cues (competence, impartiality, and integrity) are systematically more effective in strengthening perceptions of trustworthiness than appeals to authenticity. In the pooled 24-countries dataset, the predicted trustworthiness assessment means are the highest for competence vignette (M ≈ 3.12), followed very closely by impartiality (M ≈ 3.10) and integrity (M ≈ 3.09), while authenticity is the lowest (M ≈ 2.96). Authenticity vignette has the smallest effect for trustworthiness evaluation in all 24 national samples, especially in Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Italy and Slovenia), where it lags behind performance-based vignettes by around 0.2–0.4 scale points. At the same time, the results are not uniform. Competence vignette has particularly strong effect on trustworthiness evaluation in Hungary (3.36), Italy (3.35), Romania (3.32), Czechia (3.31), France (3.29), and Poland (3.29). Impartiality vignette emerges as having the strongest positive effect for trustworthiness evaluation in a subset of Central and Eastern European countries including Czechia (3.45), Romania (3.27), Hungary (3.24), Slovakia (3.23) and Slovenia (3.20). It also has substantive positive effect on trustworthiness in Denmark (3.27) and France (3.23). Integrity scenario results in highest predicted value of trustworthiness judgement in Poland (3.30), Romania (3.29), and the Netherlands (3.25).

Table 7. Predicted Trustworthiness of the Politician by Vignette Type and Country (5-Point Scale, Margins with Standard Errors)

Country	Competence	SE	Integrity	SE	Impartiality	SE	Authenticity	SE
Austria	2.76	0.06	2.76	0.06	2.72	0.07	2.63	0.06
Belgium	3.19	0.06	3.23	0.06	3.18	0.06	3.17	0.06
Bulgaria	3.06	0.06	3.10	0.06	3.02	0.07	3.00	0.05
Croatia	2.99	0.06	3.13	0.05	3.01	0.05	2.93	0.06
Czechia	3.31	0.05	3.11	0.06	3.45	0.06	3.17	0.06
Denmark	3.20	0.06	3.12	0.06	3.27	0.06	3.12	0.06
Estonia	2.97	0.05	3.07	0.06	3.07	0.06	2.82	0.06
Finland	3.07	0.06	3.14	0.06	3.09	0.06	2.99	0.06
France	3.29	0.06	3.18	0.05	3.23	0.06	3.16	0.05
Germany	2.80	0.05	2.72	0.06	2.79	0.06	2.69	0.06
Greece	2.99	0.06	3.10	0.05	2.96	0.06	2.88	0.05
Hungary	3.36	0.05	3.14	0.05	3.24	0.06	3.03	0.06
Ireland	3.23	0.06	3.07	0.06	2.98	0.06	2.83	0.06
Italy	3.35	0.05	3.22	0.06	3.17	0.06	3.02	0.07
Latvia	2.94	0.05	2.95	0.06	3.04	0.06	2.94	0.06
Lithuania	3.06	0.05	2.91	0.05	2.91	0.05	2.84	0.05
Netherlands	3.23	0.05	3.25	0.06	3.13	0.06	3.07	0.06
Poland	3.29	0.06	3.30	0.06	3.29	0.06	3.17	0.07
Portugal	2.98	0.05	2.99	0.06	3.04	0.06	2.80	0.05
Romania	3.32	0.06	3.29	0.06	3.27	0.07	3.04	0.07
Slovakia	3.12	0.05	3.02	0.06	3.23	0.06	3.09	0.06
Slovenia	3.22	0.06	3.07	0.06	3.20	0.06	2.90	0.07
Spain	3.17	0.06	3.17	0.06	3.04	0.06	2.78	0.07
Sweden	3.08	0.06	3.23	0.06	3.10	0.06	3.03	0.07

Notes: Entries are adjusted predictions (marginal means) of perceived trust (Q166; 1–5) from country-specific OLS models that include only indicators for the four vignette dimensions (competence, integrity, impartiality, authenticity). Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are shown in parentheses; tests are two-sided.

The obtained findings generally align with the performance-evaluative perspective on political trust, which posits that citizens foremost assess whether political actors are capable, honest and procedurally fair (van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017; Bertsou, 2019). The TRUEDEM vignette experiment shows that when a politician explicitly stresses competence in handling the Green Deal, consistency with prior promises, or impartial concern for all citizens, this systematically increases the perceived trustworthiness, and to a greater extent as compared to showcasing authenticity as being "in touch" with ordinary people. TRUEDEM results seem to be consistent with the findings from past experimental studies. For instance, support for a government reform programme was found the strongest when the vignette highlighted fairness and effectiveness (Ouattara et al., 2023). Benevolence, that is governing in the interest of citizens, quite close to a solution that "works for all citizens" as highlighted in TRUEDEM impartiality vignette, was found to be the most powerful predictor of perceived government trustworthiness (Devine et al., 2024). The authenticity vignette, on the other hand, has to smallest effect on trustworthiness assessment in TRUEDEM. These findings are partly supported by previous scholarly work stating that authenticity-related traits can have greater significance among low-trust respondents, with competence and integrity maintaining the primary importance in the "ranking" of trustworthiness dimensions (Valgarðsson et al., 2025). Likewise, in an experimental study where justification of a controversial political decision was at heart of the scenario, procedural fairness and responsiveness towards citizens have proven to have stronger effects on trust in politicians than emphasis on "being like ordinary people" (Noordzij et al., 2024)

When grouped into four macro-regions, Eastern Europe countries show the strongest overall responsiveness to the vignettes. In this group, mean predicted effects are 3.21 for impartiality, 3.21 for competence, 3.15 for integrity, compared to 3.04 for authenticity. Compared to other regions, the impartiality vignette emerged as having a particularly strong effects on trustworthiness judgement in many Central and Eastern European countries. In this region, where many societies have past experience of Communist rule, citizens have long lived through politicised bureaucracies and widespread particularism. The perceptions of corruption and unfair allocation of state resources are therefore frequently linked to low political trust (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2015; Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2017). Against that backdrop, a scenario highlighting that a policy "works for all citizens" becomes especially powerful signals that political actors can be trusted to govern "for everyone" (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008; Zmerli & Newton, 2017). In the Nordic and Baltic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the mean predicted trustworthiness assessments are somewhat lower, with the three "quality of government" traits being equally important: impartiality 3.08, integrity 3.07, competence 3.05. In most countries in the region, integrity or impartiality, rather than competence vignette, have the strongest effect. This ranking is consistent with the common in the region portrait of the state as a high-capacity, rule-bound universalistic welfare producer (Rothstein, 2011). In such settings, basic competence is taken for granted, while commitment to moral standards of fairness and probity become important.

In Southern Europe (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain), on the other hand, the mean predicted values for competence and integrity are identical (3.12), while impartiality is slightly lower (3.05). This ranking might again be associated with the specific hybrid image of the state widespread in the region that features a combination of both universalistic elements and persistent clientelism, including political discretion in the distribution of benefits (Ferrera, 1996; Rhodes, 1996). As such, citizens might be placing more weight on whether the politician can actually "deliver" (competence) and is honest (integrity), while claims of impartiality might be viewed as less credible. Finally, in Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands), regional averages are slightly lower than elsewhere: competence 3.08, integrity 3.04, impartiality

3.01, authenticity 2.93. This group of countries is mainly represented by long-standing democracies and party-centred competition. The impartiality of decision-making and the formal equality of citizens before the law are more deeply institutionalised and politically less contested as compared to some other parts of the continents. Due to this, the public might be relying more on performance cues to differentiate whether a politician is worthy of trust. Among the participating 24 countries, Austria and Germany form a distinctive cluster of cases which score the lowest in all vignette scenarios. One possible explanation might be associated with the context introduced by the vignettes – namely, the Green Deal. Issues of climate and energy have been highly salient in both countries for quite some time and, according to the available polling data, accompanied by the public scepticism about the distributive fairness and state capacity around this transition (Special Eurobarometer 538; Standard Eurobarometer 101). As such, the topic per se might be priming scepticism towards the elite promises.

Across all four vignettes, the predicted trustworthiness evaluation increases alongside with educational attainment. Among low-educated respondents (corresponding to ISCED 0–2 – primary and lower secondary levels), the predicted trustworthiness assessment comprises a value close to 3.00 on the five-point scale for all dimensions (Table 8). In the group with medium education (ISCED 3–4 corresponding to complete secondary), all vignettes prompted a somewhat higher mean value of around 3.1. Finally, among the respondents with tertiary education (ISCED levels 5, 6, 7, 8), trustworthiness assessment score increases further to about 3.2 for competence and integrity scenarios. Impartiality and authenticity dimensions are both evaluated very similarly by medium- and highly educated respondents. The ranking of dimensions inside groups is also somewhat different. Among those with primary education, integrity yields the highest trustworthiness assessment; among those with secondary education – impartiality and competence emerged as stronger predictors of trustworthiness. Finally, among those with tertiary education, competence dimension becomes the most important.

Table 8. Predicted Trustworthiness Assessment of the Hypothetical Politician by Education Level and Vignette (5-Point Scale, Margins with Standard Errors)

Group	Competence Mean (SE)	Integrity Mean (SE)	Impartiality Mean (SE)	Authenticity Mean (SE)
Low (ISCED 0–2)	2.98 (0.03)	3.03 (0.03)	3.00 (0.03)	2.92 (0.03)
Medium (ISCED 3–4)	3.11 (0.02)	3.06 (0.02)	3.12 (0.02)	2.98 (0.02)
High (ISCED 5–8)	3.20 (0.02)	3.16 (0.02)	3.12 (0.02)	2.96 (0.02)

Source: TRUEDEM dataset N=28289.
Note: Entries are adjusted predictions (marginal means) from OLS models of perceived trust (Q166, 1–5) with factor indicators for education and country fixed effects. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses; tests are two-sided.

Age group membership is also associated with a less pronounced, but systematic change in trustworthiness perceptions. Youngest respondents (18–35 years) are most sceptical in their assessments of the hypothetical politician. Here, the three performance-associated dimensions of trustworthiness – competence, integrity, impartiality – produce similar effects for trustworthiness evaluation (3.08–3.09). Among middle-aged respondents (36–60 years), the higher predicted trustworthiness level is produced by the competence vignette (3.11), followed by integrity and impartiality (3.07-3.08). Similarly, among senior respondent (over 60 years), competence scenario has shown the greatest positive effect for trustworthiness evaluation (3.19), followed by integrity and impartiality (3.07-3.08). All trustworthiness dimensions addressed in the scenarios receive

greater positive response among the senior respondents. With the exception of integrity and impartiality, which yielded similar results among the young and middle-aged, for all dimensions, their positive effect on trustworthiness assessment increases with age, while scepticism declines. As with education groups, the standard errors are around 0.02-0.03, indicating that these differences are substantively small.

Table 9. Predicted Trust in the Hypothetical Politician by Age Group and Vignette (5-Point Scale, Margins with Standard Errors)

Group	Competence Mean (SE)	Integrity Mean (SE)	Impartiality Mean (SE)	Authenticity Mean (SE)
18–35 years	3.08 (0.02)	3.09 (0.02)	3.09 (0.02)	2.91 (0.02)
36–60 years	3.11 (0.02)	3.07 (0.02)	3.08 (0.02)	2.97 (0.02)
Over 60 years	3.19 (0.02)	3.14 (0.02)	3.13 (0.02)	2.99 (0.02)

Source: TRUEDEM dataset N=28289.
Note: Entries are adjusted predictions (marginal means) from OLS models of perceived trust (Q166, 1–5) with factor indicators for education and country fixed effects. Heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors are reported in parentheses; tests are two-sided.

To assess whether the respondents interpreted the experimental manipulation in line with the original conceptualization, we conduct an internal validity test. For this, we examine the association between the vignette dimensions and respondents' answer to another question where they were invited to name 3 most important criteria when evaluating political trustworthiness. The response scale offered a choice between performance-related dimensions, partisanship, individual characteristics, engagement in certain activities (e.g., local service) among the other (Table 10). The question was asked to all participants respondents, and the sequence of answer options was randomized.

Table 10. Direct Measure of Criteria of Political Trustworthiness

Q35. Which of the following factors are most crucial to you in assessing the trustworthiness of a politician? Please, select no more than 3.
1. Adherence to campaign promises
2. Consistency in public statements
3. Transparency in sharing information
4. Competence in fulfilling responsibilities
5. Dedication to local constituency service
6. Alignment of views with my own preferences
7. Following democratic values and norms
8. Party affiliation
9. Absence of financial corruption
10. Absence of sexual scandals
11. Engagement with citizens
12. Fairness and honesty
13. Personal characteristics such as their age, gender, class, race, or ethnicity

First, we focus on the vignette that highlighted competence (group A). For this, we use category "4" from the direct trustworthiness measure (Q35) which emphasized "competence in fulfilling responsibilities." We recode the measure into a binary variable, with values equal to "1" for

respondents who selected competence, and "0" otherwise (competence indicator). We estimate an OLS model of perceived trustworthiness from the experimental design. The model includes three predictors: 1) an indicator whether the respondent receive the competence vignette, in a similar way coded as binary variable (1/0); 2) competence indicator; 3) and their interaction, using robust standard errors. Table 10 reports the predicted values from this model.

Among the respondents who do not mention "competence in fulfilling responsibilities" as a crucial trait for a politician to be trustworthy, moving from any of the other vignettes to the competence vignette increases predicted trustworthiness evaluation only modestly: from 3.05 to 3.10 on the five-point scale. Among the respondents who do list "competence in fulfilling responsibilities" as important trait, predicted trustworthiness of the politician is 3.05 when the respondent receives a non-competence vignette, but it rises to 3.16 when the respondent is exposed to the competence vignette. This pattern is consistent with the assumption that competence framing employed in the experimental design does resonate most strongly with citizens for whom competence is normatively important. This test provides evidence of construct validity for the competence dimension in the vignette design.

Table 10. Predicted Trustworthiness of the Politician by Competence Vignette and Importance of Competence

	Does not select "competence" in direct measure	Selected "competence" in direct measure
Vignettes B, C, D	3.05 (0.009)	3.05 (0.012)
Vignette A (competence)	3.10 (0.015)	3.16 (0.018)

Notes: entries are model-based predicted values of trust in the politician (Q166) from an OLS regression with an indicator for the competence vignette, an indicator for selecting "competence in fulfilling responsibilities" in Q35, and their interaction. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Sample size: N = 28,374.

To validate the integrity vignette, we select categories "consistency in public statements" and "absence of financial corruption" as proxies for "integrity" from the direct question that asked about the important aspects of politician's trustworthiness. Similar to the exercise above, we estimate an OLS model. Predicted trustworthiness evaluation among the respondents who selected "integrity items" as important in the direct questions exhibits only modest increase from 3.07 to 3.09 when the respondents are exposed to other vignettes vs the integrity vignette. Contrary to this, among those who did not select "integrity items" as important, trustworthiness assessment increases from 3.05 to 3.08 if the respondents were exposed to the integrity vignette. This suggests that integrity is a multidimensional concept by itself, and different groups of respondents and across national context might have varying specific associations with it.

Table 11. Predicted Trustworthiness of the Politician by Integrity Vignette and Importance of Integrity

	Does not select "integrity" items in direct measure	Selected "integrity" items in direct measure
Vignettes A, C, D	3.05 (0.009)	3.07 (0.011)
Vignette B (integrity)	3.08 (0.016)	3.09 (0.018)

Notes: entries are model-based predicted values of trust in the politician (Q166) from an OLS regression with an indicator for the integrity vignette, an indicator for selecting "consistency in public statements" or "absence of financial corruption" in Q35, and their interaction. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Sample size: N = 28,374.

Conclusions

The findings from the two TRUEDEM experiments point to a nuanced picture of political trust in Europe and warn against direct reading of public opinion polls. First, the directly reported levels of trust in national leaders appear to be more fragile, with the estimated value of social desirability bias in responses well exceeding the margin of error commonly reported in polls. When approached through an indirect measure that does not require explicit acknowledgement of trust or mistrust to the national leader, response bias, foremost primarily over-stated public trust, becomes evident. This suggests that political trust in leadership in many settings is a public-facing stance rather than a firm private conviction. This would also mean that this type of political attitude is quite sensitive to factors such as performance shocks, scandals, as well as changes in the political, but also normative climate in society. While institutional trust is perceived more stable as compared to trust to individual political leaders, it is theoretically possible that social desirability bias, sense of patriotism, solidarity, and the prevailing civic norms culture can also contribute to over-reporting of trust in key national agencies such as the government or the army. The observed social desirability bias in self-reported political trust across many European countries also suggests that over-time fluctuations in this indicator should be interpreted carefully, as they at minimum conflate two components – the actual shifts in trust and shift in normative climate in the society. Events such as polarizing campaigns, political crises, or a scandal can further tighten or relax the prevailing norms of political backing vs skepticism, thus resulting in a change in the survey response patterns. Finally, the detected bias appears to be socially structured: characteristics such as education and age groups influence the prevailing sub-type of civic norms and political culture, thus shaping the direction of and size of the response bias.

The vignette experiment examines what characteristics citizens actually respond to when deciding whether a politician is trustworthy. Findings confirm that trust is not a single disposition, but an evaluation filtered through the existing public demands and concerns as well as the prevailing civic culture. The weight attributed to these demands is often context-dependent and mirrors the institutional legacies. In Central and Eastern European cases, impartiality carries a particular weight against a background of concerns about unequal treatment. In Nordic countries, integrity is at the core of evolution. In Southern Europe, competence and integrity tend to have the greatest effect. Finally, in Western Europe, the confidence vignette has the strongest effect. Within-country differences contribute a similar structure. Responsiveness to the three performance cue vignettes increases with age and the education level. While there was no evidence found that respondents in different countries refer to fundamentally different concepts of political trust, the overall conclusion is that the observed cross-national and across-group variation in reported trust and perceptions of trustworthiness is best understood as a variation in weighting of common evaluative standards, shaped by the political context, historical legacies, and social structure of the society.

Appendix

Table 1A. Estimates of the Response Bias by Education Level

Country	Education Level	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Indirect item count estimate of trust in the Head of State/ Head of Government (%)	Direct measure of trust in the Head of Government (%)	Response Bias (%)
Austria	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.1	31.5	41.7	10.2
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.7	1.0	34.8	40.9	6.2
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.9	1.5	54.8	50.2	-4.6
	Total	0.8	1.2	40.3	44.1	3.8
Belgium	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.9	0.9	-1.3	39.9	41.2
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.8	1.2	33.9	50.5	16.6
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.0	1.4	35.0	59.3	24.3
	Total	0.9	1.2	26.1	51.4	25.2
Bulgaria	Low: ISCED 0-2	1.2	1.5	29.5	39.7	10.2
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	1.3	1.4	17.9	37.6	19.6
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.2	1.4	23.3	41.1	17.8
	Total	1.2	1.4	21.4	38.9	17.5
Croatia	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.7	0.9	26.2	31.6	5.4
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.5	0.7	19.7	33.3	13.6
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.5	0.7	14.2	30.3	16.1
	Total	0.5	0.7	19.2	32.0	12.8
Czechia	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.9	1.3	33.4	18.4	-14.9
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	1.0	1.2	12.7	22.8	10.1
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.3	1.3	-5.0	36.5	41.6
	Total	1.1	1.2	12.8	24.3	11.5
Denmark	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.3	45.9	47.7	1.8
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.9	1.1	14.6	48.7	34.2
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.2	1.7	51.3	59.7	8.5
	Total	1.0	1.3	38.1	52.3	14.2
Estonia	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.3	45.9	43.1	-2.8
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	1.0	1.1	16.3	37.6	21.3
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.0	1.3	26.1	46.2	20.1
	Total	1.0	1.2	26.0	41.9	15.9
Finland	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.6	0.8	24.9	30.9	6.0
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.7	1.0	31.5	33.6	2.1
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.9	1.0	19.2	42.8	23.7
	Total	0.7	1.0	25.3	36.2	10.9
France	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.0	26.5	54.5	1.6
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.8	0.8	-1.4	53.2	25.5
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.8	1.0	15.6	61.2	16.9
	Total	0.8	0.9	11.3	28.0	16.7
Germany	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.7	0.9	22.1	32.8	10.7
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.7	1.0	35.3	32.9	-2.4
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.2	1.5	27.5	45.1	17.6
	Total	0.9	1.2	30.3	36.4	6.1
Greece	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.1	25.8	23.8	-2.0
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	1.0	1.1	14.1	26.2	12.1
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.8	1.1	34.4	25.6	-8.9
	Total	0.9	1.1	23.3	25.4	2.1
Hungary	Low: ISCED 0-2	1.0	1.4	40.2	41.1	0.9

Country	Education Level	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Indirect item count estimate of trust in the Head of State/ Head of Government (%)	Direct measure of trust in the Head of Government (%)	Response Bias (%)
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.9	1.0	15.5	35.7	20.2
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.0	1.0	7.9	32.8	24.9
	Total	0.9	1.1	18.1	36.0	17.9
Ireland	Low: ISCED 0-2	1.1	1.1	7.0	38.0	31.0
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.8	1.2	35.9	51.6	15.7
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.9	1.4	44.1	59.6	15.6
	Total	0.9	1.3	34.9	53.0	18.2
Italy	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.6	1.3	75.4	48.4	-27.0
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.7	1.1	41.6	45.7	4.1
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.7	1.0	28.6	47.5	18.9
	Total	0.6	1.2	51.0	47.0	-3.9
Latvia	Low: ISCED 0-2	1.2	1.5	30.9	42.0	11.0
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.9	1.0	14.0	35.2	21.2
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.9	1.1	27.5	39.7	12.1
	Total	0.9	1.1	20.7	37.8	17.1
Lithuania	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.9	1.0	6.9	40.7	33.7
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.7	0.9	18.7	40.6	21.9
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.8	1.0	21.3	39.4	18.1
	Total	0.8	0.9	17.8	40.1	22.2
Portugal	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.7	1.0	31.3	43.1	11.8
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.7	0.9	14.4	41.4	27.0
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.8	1.2	41.6	50.5	9.0
	Total	0.7	1.0	29.2	44.5	15.3
Romania	Low: ISCED 0-2	1.0	1.6	62.7	14.0	-48.7
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	1.1	1.3	16.5	10.7	-5.8
	High: ISCED 5-8	1.1	1.1	0.6	12.2	11.6
	Total	1.1	1.3	19.3	11.4	-7.9
Slovakia	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.9	1.1	27.3	35.1	7.8
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.8	1.1	28.4	35.2	6.8
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.9	1.1	18.7	34.3	15.7
	Total	0.9	1.1	25.9	35.0	9.1
Slovenia	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.0	22.1	12.1	-9.9
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.6	0.8	20.0	20.9	0.9
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.6	0.9	36.6	26.8	-9.8
	Total	0.7	0.9	25.1	21.0	-4.1
Spain	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.6	0.9	31.1	35.9	4.8
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.6	0.9	34.2	37.0	2.8
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.6	0.9	28.4	34.9	6.5
	Total	0.6	0.9	30.8	35.8	5.0
Sweden	Low: ISCED 0-2	1.1	1.2	8.5	51.7	43.2
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.8	1.1	30.2	47.7	17.5
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.8	1.2	34.5	57.5	23.0
	Total	0.9	1.1	27.4	52.5	25.1
Total	Low: ISCED 0-2	0.8	1.1	31.2	37.6	6.4
	Medium: ISCED 3-4	0.8	1.1	21.2	35.0	13.8
	High: ISCED 5-8	0.9	1.2	28.9	43.5	14.7
	Total	0.9	1.1	25.8	38.3	12.5

Table 1B. Estimates of the Response Bias by Age Group

Country	Age Group	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Indirect item count estimate of trust in the Head of State/ Head of Government (%)	Direct measure of trust in the Head of Government (%)	Response Bias (%)
Austria	18-35	1.0	1.5	48.5	45.7	-2.7
	36-60	0.7	1.1	36.8	37.8	1.0
	Over 60	0.7	1.0	36.4	53.0	16.6
	Total	0.8	1.2	40.3	44.1	3.8
Belgium	18-35	1.2	1.6	38.6	55.9	17.3
	36-60	0.9	1.0	15.8	44.5	28.7
	Over 60	0.7	1.0	31.8	55.7	23.9
	Total	0.9	1.2	26.1	51.3	25.1
Bulgaria	18-35	1.1	1.4	28.1	43.1	15.0
	36-60	1.2	1.4	14.8	35.3	20.5
	Over 60	1.4	1.7	31.3	44.0	12.7
	Total	1.2	1.4	21.4	38.9	17.5
Croatia	18-35	0.7	0.8	11.9	33.3	21.4
	36-60	0.5	0.7	19.8	28.8	9.0
	Over 60	0.4	0.7	25.4	35.9	10.6
	Total	0.5	0.7	18.7	31.9	13.2
Czechia	18-35	1.0	1.1	10.9	28.0	17.1
	36-60	0.9	1.2	24.0	26.9	2.9
	Over 60	1.3	1.3	-2.7	17.2	19.9
	Total	1.1	1.2	12.8	24.3	11.5
Denmark	18-35	1.2	1.3	12.8	51.2	38.4
	36-60	0.9	1.3	41.9	48.0	6.1
	Over 60	0.8	1.4	56.6	59.8	3.2
	Total	1.0	1.3	38.0	52.3	14.2
Estonia	18-35	1.1	1.5	43.8	48.6	4.8
	36-60	1.0	1.2	16.4	42.6	26.3
	Over 60	0.9	1.2	32.6	37.4	4.8
	Total	1.0	1.2	25.9	42.0	16.1
Finland	18-35	0.9	1.1	22.9	41.8	18.8
	36-60	0.7	0.9	22.1	31.9	9.7
	Over 60	0.6	1.0	36.1	38.0	1.9
	Total	0.7	1.0	25.1	36.2	11.0
France	18-35	1.1	1.3	20.9	39.9	19.0
	36-60	0.8	0.8	1.1	26.0	24.9
	Over 60	0.6	0.8	15.0	24.5	9.5
	Total	0.8	0.9	10.9	28.7	17.8
Germany	18-35	1.3	1.8	51.3	51.7	0.4
	36-60	0.7	0.9	15.0	29.7	14.7
	Over 60	0.6	1.0	38.9	31.5	-7.4
	Total	0.9	1.2	30.1	36.5	6.3
Greece	18-35	0.7	1.3	58.7	20.9	-37.9
	36-60	0.9	1.0	8.6	23.4	14.8
	Over 60	0.9	1.1	23.4	32.5	9.0
	Total	0.9	1.1	23.3	25.4	2.1
Hungary	18-35	0.8	1.1	29.3	32.1	2.8
	36-60	0.9	1.0	9.1	39.5	30.4
	Over 60	1.0	1.2	22.0	34.1	12.1
	Total	0.9	1.1	18.1	36.1	17.9
Ireland	18-35	1.2	1.7	52.4	54.5	2.1
	36-60	0.8	1.1	27.6	48.3	20.7

Country	Age Group	Control Mean	Treatment Mean	Indirect item count estimate of trust in the Head of State/ Head of Government (%)	Direct measure of trust in the Head of Government (%)	Response Bias (%)
	Over 60	0.8	1.1	34.6	61.6	27.0
	Total	0.9	1.3	34.9	53.0	18.1
Italy	18-35	0.8	1.1	26.5	38.3	11.8
	36-60	0.7	1.2	51.3	48.3	-3.0
	Over 60	0.5	1.2	65.7	51.4	-14.3
	Total	0.6	1.2	50.7	47.1	-3.6
Latvia	18-35	1.1	1.3	19.9	46.1	26.2
	36-60	0.8	1.1	23.5	36.7	13.2
	Over 60	1.0	1.1	8.2	32.8	24.6
	Total	0.9	1.1	20.9	37.9	17.0
Lithuania	18-35	0.7	1.1	34.1	48.9	14.8
	36-60	0.7	0.8	9.7	37.8	28.1
	Over 60	0.8	1.0	20.7	36.1	15.3
	Total	0.8	0.9	17.8	40.0	22.2
Portugal	18-35	0.9	1.2	32.3	45.2	12.8
	36-60	0.7	1.0	25.2	44.8	19.6
	Over 60	0.6	1.0	35.1	43.5	8.4
	Total	0.7	1.0	29.2	44.5	15.3
Romania	18-35	1.2	1.4	18.8	16.5	-2.3
	36-60	1.0	1.2	16.8	9.1	-7.7
	Over 60	1.1	1.4	27.2	11.7	-15.5
	Total	1.1	1.3	19.4	11.5	-7.9
Slovakia	18-35	0.9	1.0	9.8	29.4	19.6
	36-60	0.7	1.0	28.5	32.1	3.6
	Over 60	1.0	1.4	35.2	46.7	11.6
	Total	0.9	1.1	25.9	35.0	9.1
Slovenia	18-35	0.7	1.1	46.0	20.8	-25.2
	36-60	0.6	0.8	18.5	15.6	-2.9
	Over 60	0.7	0.9	23.1	30.3	7.2
	Total	0.7	0.9	25.1	21.0	-4.1
Spain	18-35	0.6	0.9	34.4	35.6	1.2
	36-60	0.6	0.9	26.5	36.0	9.5
	Over 60	0.6	1.0	36.8	35.5	-1.2
	Total	0.6	0.9	30.7	35.8	5.1
Sweden	18-35	1.2	1.4	18.0	59.9	41.9
	36-60	0.8	1.1	30.7	50.4	19.7
	Over 60	0.7	1.0	34.8	48.6	13.7
	Total	0.9	1.1	27.4	52.5	25.1
Total	18-35	1.0	1.3	29.1	41.7	12.5
	36-60	0.8	1.0	21.3	35.8	14.5
	Over 60	0.8	1.1	30.8	39.8	9.0
	Total	0.9	1.1	25.8	38.3	12.5

Table 2A. Predicted Trustworthiness of the Politician by Vignette Type, Country, and Education Level (5-Point Scale, Margins with Standard Errors)

Country	Education	Mean Authenticity	SE Authenticity	Mean Competence	SE Competence	Mean Impartiality	SE Impartiality	Mean Integrity	SE Integrity
Austria	ISCED 0-2	2.62	0.13	2.80	0.13	2.73	0.16	2.64	0.14
Austria	ISCED 3-4	2.66	0.07	2.77	0.07	2.71	0.08	2.72	0.08
Austria	ISCED 5-8	2.54	0.12	2.70	0.12	2.74	0.11	2.94	0.11
Belgium	ISCED 0-2	2.97	0.12	2.81	0.14	2.98	0.13	3.06	0.14
Belgium	ISCED 3-4	3.17	0.09	3.17	0.10	3.20	0.09	3.09	0.09
Belgium	ISCED 5-8	3.28	0.09	3.38	0.09	3.26	0.09	3.46	0.10
Bulgaria	ISCED 0-2	3.09	0.15	2.94	0.17	2.74	0.17	2.84	0.15
Bulgaria	ISCED 3-4	2.96	0.08	2.95	0.09	3.04	0.08	3.08	0.08
Bulgaria	ISCED 5-8	3.03	0.09	3.21	0.09	3.09	0.10	3.26	0.10
Croatia	ISCED 0-2	2.98	0.14	3.03	0.19	3.06	0.14	3.22	0.16
Croatia	ISCED 3-4	2.91	0.08	3.02	0.09	3.05	0.08	3.09	0.08
Croatia	ISCED 5-8	2.94	0.10	2.94	0.11	2.94	0.09	3.14	0.10
Czechia	ISCED 0-2	3.11	0.17	3.08	0.16	3.37	0.16	2.97	0.17
Czechia	ISCED 3-4	3.17	0.07	3.30	0.07	3.47	0.07	3.15	0.07
Czechia	ISCED 5-8	3.17	0.13	3.49	0.14	3.41	0.13	3.06	0.12
Denmark	ISCED 0-2	2.92	0.12	3.16	0.11	3.20	0.11	3.00	0.11
Denmark	ISCED 3-4	3.18	0.10	3.24	0.12	3.33	0.10	3.06	0.12
Denmark	ISCED 5-8	3.18	0.09	3.20	0.09	3.30	0.09	3.23	0.09
Estonia	ISCED 0-2	2.86	0.14	2.70	0.13	3.04	0.13	3.10	0.13
Estonia	ISCED 3-4	2.84	0.09	3.04	0.10	3.07	0.09	2.95	0.09
Estonia	ISCED 5-8	2.77	0.10	3.04	0.09	3.09	0.10	3.20	0.10
Finland	ISCED 0-2	2.80	0.14	3.27	0.14	3.09	0.15	2.90	0.14
Finland	ISCED 3-4	3.09	0.09	3.00	0.09	3.08	0.08	3.19	0.09
Finland	ISCED 5-8	2.94	0.09	3.07	0.10	3.12	0.09	3.22	0.10
France	ISCED 0-2	3.19	0.11	3.21	0.12	2.96	0.12	3.13	0.11
France	ISCED 3-4	3.15	0.08	3.37	0.08	3.44	0.08	3.08	0.08
France	ISCED 5-8	3.16	0.08	3.23	0.09	3.13	0.08	3.34	0.09
Germany	ISCED 0-2	2.62	0.11	2.65	0.11	2.74	0.12	2.73	0.11
Germany	ISCED 3-4	2.75	0.08	2.71	0.07	2.63	0.08	2.63	0.08
Germany	ISCED 5-8	2.67	0.11	3.00	0.09	3.08	0.10	2.84	0.09
Greece	ISCED 0-2	2.97	0.12	2.70	0.12	2.79	0.16	3.00	0.13
Greece	ISCED 3-4	2.89	0.09	3.12	0.10	2.94	0.10	3.12	0.09
Greece	ISCED 5-8	2.82	0.10	3.06	0.09	3.02	0.09	3.14	0.09
Hungary	ISCED 0-2	3.05	0.15	3.27	0.16	3.06	0.15	3.11	0.15
Hungary	ISCED 3-4	3.05	0.08	3.32	0.08	3.31	0.08	3.20	0.08
Hungary	ISCED 5-8	3.00	0.11	3.48	0.11	3.21	0.11	3.05	0.10
Ireland	ISCED 0-2	2.77	0.16	2.80	0.16	2.62	0.16	2.72	0.16
Ireland	ISCED 3-4	2.79	0.10	3.15	0.10	3.01	0.10	3.07	0.10
Ireland	ISCED 5-8	2.87	0.08	3.39	0.08	3.05	0.08	3.19	0.10
Italy	ISCED 0-2	3.00	0.19	3.29	0.17	3.14	0.17	3.27	0.15
Italy	ISCED 3-4	3.08	0.09	3.41	0.08	3.28	0.08	3.17	0.08
Italy	ISCED 5-8	2.92	0.11	3.27	0.10	3.03	0.10	3.25	0.10
Latvia	ISCED 0-2	2.76	0.15	2.88	0.14	2.86	0.15	2.71	0.14
Latvia	ISCED 3-4	2.96	0.08	2.84	0.09	3.05	0.09	3.01	0.08
Latvia	ISCED 5-8	2.97	0.10	3.08	0.10	3.09	0.10	2.98	0.09
Lithuania	ISCED 0-2	2.87	0.12	2.97	0.12	2.67	0.12	2.81	0.12
Lithuania	ISCED 3-4	2.84	0.09	3.01	0.09	2.94	0.10	2.85	0.10
Lithuania	ISCED 5-8	2.82	0.09	3.13	0.08	3.02	0.09	3.00	0.08
Netherlands	ISCED 0-2	3.04	0.10	2.99	0.11	3.09	0.11	3.14	0.11
Netherlands	ISCED 3-4	3.06	0.11	3.35	0.11	3.03	0.12	3.28	0.11

Country	Education	Mean Authenticity	SE Authenticity	Mean Competence	SE Competence	Mean Impartiality	SE Impartiality	Mean Integrity	SE Integrity
Netherlands	ISCED 5-8	3.12	0.10	3.32	0.09	3.20	0.09	3.29	0.10
Poland	ISCED 0-2	2.94	0.18	2.94	0.17	3.06	0.18	3.10	0.16
Poland	ISCED 3-4	3.26	0.09	3.30	0.09	3.33	0.08	3.23	0.08
Poland	ISCED 5-8	3.12	0.10	3.37	0.09	3.30	0.09	3.50	0.10
Portugal	ISCED 0-2	2.78	0.10	2.93	0.10	3.00	0.10	3.10	0.10
Portugal	ISCED 3-4	2.82	0.11	3.00	0.10	2.96	0.12	3.03	0.11
Portugal	ISCED 5-8	2.80	0.10	3.02	0.09	3.11	0.09	2.87	0.09
Romania	ISCED 0-2	2.71	0.27	3.38	0.20	2.77	0.28	3.24	0.22
Romania	ISCED 3-4	2.99	0.09	3.29	0.09	3.09	0.09	3.27	0.09
Romania	ISCED 5-8	3.10	0.08	3.32	0.08	3.49	0.09	3.32	0.08
Slovakia	ISCED 0-2	2.81	0.19	3.03	0.17	3.25	0.17	3.05	0.16
Slovakia	ISCED 3-4	3.10	0.08	3.11	0.08	3.27	0.07	3.01	0.08
Slovakia	ISCED 5-8	3.15	0.10	3.16	0.10	3.13	0.11	3.03	0.12
Slovenia	ISCED 0-2	2.74	0.16	3.16	0.16	3.43	0.18	3.07	0.16
Slovenia	ISCED 3-4	2.92	0.09	3.24	0.10	3.25	0.09	3.08	0.08
Slovenia	ISCED 5-8	2.93	0.09	3.23	0.09	3.11	0.08	3.06	0.09
Spain	ISCED 0-2	2.92	0.11	2.91	0.11	3.06	0.12	3.21	0.12
Spain	ISCED 3-4	2.59	0.11	3.19	0.11	3.01	0.11	3.22	0.12
Spain	ISCED 5-8	2.81	0.09	3.31	0.09	3.04	0.08	3.12	0.08
Sweden	ISCED 0-2	3.10	0.14	2.87	0.15	3.20	0.16	3.32	0.14
Sweden	ISCED 3-4	3.05	0.09	3.03	0.09	3.09	0.08	3.18	0.09
Sweden	ISCED 5-8	2.96	0.09	3.21	0.09	3.08	0.09	3.24	0.10

Table 2B. Predicted Trustworthiness of the Politician by Vignette Type, Country, and Age Groups (5-Point Scale, Margins with Standard Errors)

Country	Age Group	Mean Authenticity	SE Authenticity	Mean Competence	SE Competence	Mean Impartiality	SE Impartiality	Mean Integrity	SE Integrity
Austria	18-35	2.57	0.04	2.73	0.04	2.74	0.04	2.74	0.04
Austria	36-60	2.63	0.03	2.76	0.03	2.74	0.04	2.72	0.04
Austria	61+	2.64	0.04	2.84	0.04	2.79	0.04	2.79	0.04
Belgium	18-35	3.04	0.04	3.21	0.04	3.22	0.04	3.21	0.04
Belgium	36-60	3.10	0.03	3.24	0.03	3.22	0.03	3.20	0.03
Belgium	61+	3.12	0.04	3.32	0.04	3.26	0.04	3.27	0.04
Bulgaria	18-35	2.89	0.04	3.06	0.04	3.07	0.04	3.06	0.04
Bulgaria	36-60	2.95	0.03	3.09	0.03	3.07	0.03	3.05	0.03
Bulgaria	61+	2.97	0.04	3.17	0.04	3.11	0.04	3.12	0.04
Croatia	18-35	2.86	0.04	3.03	0.04	3.04	0.04	3.03	0.04
Croatia	36-60	2.92	0.03	3.06	0.03	3.04	0.03	3.02	0.03
Croatia	61+	2.94	0.04	3.14	0.03	3.08	0.04	3.09	0.04
Czechia	18-35	3.10	0.04	3.26	0.04	3.27	0.04	3.27	0.04
Czechia	36-60	3.16	0.03	3.30	0.03	3.27	0.03	3.26	0.03
Czechia	61+	3.17	0.04	3.37	0.04	3.32	0.04	3.33	0.04
Denmark	18-35	3.02	0.04	3.19	0.04	3.20	0.04	3.19	0.04
Denmark	36-60	3.08	0.03	3.22	0.03	3.20	0.03	3.18	0.03
Denmark	61+	3.10	0.04	3.30	0.04	3.24	0.04	3.25	0.04
Estonia	18-35	2.82	0.04	2.99	0.04	3.00	0.04	2.99	0.04
Estonia	36-60	2.88	0.03	3.02	0.03	3.00	0.03	2.98	0.03
Estonia	61+	2.90	0.04	3.10	0.04	3.05	0.04	3.05	0.04
Finland	18-35	2.92	0.04	3.08	0.04	3.09	0.04	3.09	0.04
Finland	36-60	2.98	0.03	3.11	0.03	3.09	0.03	3.08	0.03
Finland	61+	2.99	0.04	3.19	0.04	3.14	0.04	3.14	0.04
France	18-35	3.06	0.04	3.22	0.04	3.23	0.04	3.23	0.04
France	36-60	3.12	0.03	3.25	0.03	3.23	0.03	3.22	0.03
France	61+	3.13	0.04	3.33	0.03	3.28	0.04	3.28	0.04
Germany	18-35	2.59	0.04	2.75	0.04	2.76	0.04	2.76	0.04
Germany	36-60	2.65	0.03	2.79	0.03	2.76	0.03	2.75	0.03
Germany	61+	2.66	0.04	2.86	0.03	2.81	0.04	2.82	0.04
Greece	18-35	2.83	0.04	2.99	0.04	3.00	0.04	3.00	0.04
Greece	36-60	2.89	0.03	3.03	0.03	3.00	0.03	2.99	0.03
Greece	61+	2.90	0.04	3.10	0.03	3.05	0.04	3.06	0.03
Hungary	18-35	3.04	0.04	3.20	0.04	3.21	0.04	3.21	0.04
Hungary	36-60	3.09	0.03	3.23	0.03	3.21	0.03	3.19	0.03
Hungary	61+	3.11	0.04	3.31	0.03	3.26	0.04	3.26	0.04
Ireland	18-35	2.88	0.04	3.04	0.04	3.05	0.04	3.05	0.04
Ireland	36-60	2.93	0.03	3.07	0.03	3.05	0.03	3.03	0.03
Ireland	61+	2.95	0.04	3.15	0.04	3.10	0.04	3.10	0.04
Italy	18-35	3.03	0.04	3.20	0.04	3.21	0.04	3.20	0.04
Italy	36-60	3.09	0.03	3.23	0.03	3.21	0.03	3.19	0.03
Italy	61+	3.11	0.04	3.31	0.04	3.25	0.04	3.26	0.04
Latvia	18-35	2.82	0.04	2.98	0.04	2.99	0.04	2.99	0.04
Latvia	36-60	2.87	0.03	3.01	0.03	2.99	0.03	2.97	0.03
Latvia	61+	2.89	0.04	3.09	0.04	3.04	0.04	3.04	0.04
Lithuania	18-35	2.78	0.03	2.94	0.03	2.95	0.03	2.95	0.03
Lithuania	36-60	2.84	0.03	2.97	0.03	2.95	0.03	2.94	0.03
Lithuania	61+	2.85	0.03	3.05	0.03	3.00	0.03	3.00	0.03
Netherlands	18-35	3.01	0.04	3.17	0.04	3.18	0.04	3.18	0.04
Netherlands	36-60	3.07	0.03	3.20	0.03	3.18	0.03	3.16	0.03

Country	Age Group	Mean Authenticity	SE Authenticity	Mean Competence	SE Competence	Mean Impartiality	SE Impartiality	Mean Integrity	SE Integrity
Netherlands	61+	3.08	0.04	3.28	0.04	3.23	0.04	3.23	0.04
Poland	18-35	3.10	0.04	3.27	0.04	3.28	0.04	3.27	0.04
Poland	36-60	3.16	0.03	3.30	0.03	3.28	0.03	3.26	0.03
Poland	61+	3.18	0.04	3.38	0.04	3.32	0.04	3.33	0.04
Portugal	18-35	2.80	0.04	2.96	0.04	2.97	0.04	2.97	0.04
Portugal	36-60	2.86	0.03	2.99	0.03	2.97	0.03	2.96	0.03
Portugal	61+	2.87	0.04	3.07	0.03	3.02	0.04	3.02	0.04
Romania	18-35	3.08	0.04	3.24	0.04	3.25	0.04	3.25	0.04
Romania	36-60	3.14	0.04	3.27	0.04	3.25	0.04	3.24	0.04
Romania	61+	3.15	0.04	3.35	0.04	3.30	0.04	3.30	0.04
Slovakia	18-35	2.96	0.04	3.13	0.04	3.14	0.04	3.13	0.04
Slovakia	36-60	3.02	0.03	3.16	0.03	3.14	0.03	3.12	0.03
Slovakia	61+	3.04	0.04	3.24	0.04	3.18	0.04	3.19	0.04
Slovenia	18-35	2.94	0.04	3.10	0.04	3.11	0.04	3.11	0.04
Slovenia	36-60	3.00	0.03	3.14	0.03	3.11	0.03	3.10	0.03
Slovenia	61+	3.01	0.04	3.21	0.04	3.16	0.04	3.17	0.04
Spain	18-35	2.88	0.04	3.05	0.04	3.06	0.04	3.05	0.04
Spain	36-60	2.94	0.04	3.08	0.04	3.06	0.04	3.04	0.04
Spain	61+	2.96	0.04	3.16	0.04	3.10	0.04	3.11	0.04
Sweden	18-35	2.95	0.04	3.12	0.04	3.13	0.04	3.12	0.04
Sweden	36-60	3.01	0.04	3.15	0.03	3.13	0.03	3.11	0.03
Sweden	61+	3.03	0.04	3.23	0.04	3.17	0.04	3.18	0.04

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