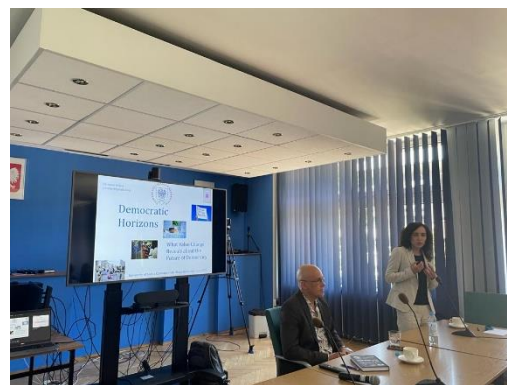


TRUEDEM: Trust in European Democracies (2023-2025)

Quarterly Project Newsletter - Issue 2 (June 2023)

Democratic Horizons: What Value Change Reveals About the Future of Democracy

Prof. Christian Welzel (Leuphana University Luneburg, Germany & WP4 leader in TRUEDEM) presented a seminar for Master's student on "Democratic Horizons: What Value Change Reveals About the Future of Democracy". Recent accounts of democratic backsliding are negligent about the cultural foundations of autocracy-vs-democracy. To bring culture back in, Welzel demonstrates that (1) the countries' membership in culture zones explains some 70% of the global variation in autocracy-vs-democracy and (2) that this culture-bound variation has remained astoundingly constant over time - in spite of all the trending patterns in the global distribution of regime types over the last 120 years. Furthermore, the explanatory power of culture zones over autocracy-vs-democracy roots in the cultures' differentiation on "authoritarian-vs-emancipative values." Against this backdrop, lasting regime turnovers happen as a corrective response to glacially accruing regime-culture misfits - driven by generational value shifts into a pre-dominantly emancipatory direction. Consequently, the backsliding of democracies into authoritarianism is limited to societies in which emancipative values remain under-developed. Contrary to the widely cited deconsolidation-thesis, the prevalent generational profile in people's moral orientations exhibits an almost ubiquitous ascension of emancipative values that will lend more, not less, legitimacy to democracy in the future. [Slides from the presentation can be accessed here.](#)



Measuring Public Trust and Trustworthiness in Public Opinion Research

Political trust has long been regarded as an important element of regime support and factor of regime stability. On the other hand, while democracies essentially rely on the consent and support of those governed, a critically engaged citizenship that is able to hold the government accountable on key issues is the prerequisite to the efficiency and durability of the democratic regime. This suggests that political trust is, in fact, a multi-facet concept: depending on if driven by rationality, blind compliance or unjustified, cynical criticism, political trust can have both positive and negative implications for the development of the political system. The multidimensionality of political trust poses a challenge to its measurement, amid the growing importance of informed, evidence-based policymaking.

While nowadays Social Sciences employ various methods of trust measurement (including game simulations, field observations, laboratory and field experiments, case studies, formal modelling, expert surveys and performance indices etc.), longitudinal macro and micro national panel surveys and cross-sectional comparative surveys remain among the main approaches to the data collection on trust. The Edelman Trust Barometer, Pew Research Center, the World Values Survey, the European Social Survey, Eurobarometer, Gallup World Poll are only a few examples of the prominent research centres and survey programs that conduct regular measurement of political trust. Yet, each study employs its own set of indicators and scales, captures levels of trust, mistrust, or distrust; these measures vary in the validity and reliability of findings, sometimes showing contradicting patterns and trends.

The aim of this [TRUEDEM webinar that took place on June 21, 2023](#), was to examine in comparative perspective the methodological approaches to the trust measurement employed by OECD, Edelman Trust Institute, and Pew Global Attitudes Survey. The webinar debated on the advantages and limitations of the existing measures of perceptions of trust and whether and how they allow to establish correlations between the perceptions of trust as expressed by citizens on one side, and the trustworthiness of institutions (whether measured by citizens' perceptions or objective performance indicators) on the other, and how establishing such correlation facilitates interpretation of the survey findings.

#TRUEDEM webinar series

Measuring Public Trust and Trustworthi...
**Measuring Public Trust and Trustworthiness
in Public Opinion Research**

Watch later Share

Monica Brezzi
OECD Directorate for Public Governance

Cary Funk
Pew Research Center

David Bersoff
Edelman Trust Institute

Pippa Norris
Harvard University
Moderator

Watch on YouTube

Funded by the European Union

**Join us on Wednesday, June 21, 2023
09:00–10:30 EST / 15:00–16:30 CET**



CALL FOR PAPERS

Workshop “(Mis)trust and democracy: political polarization in contemporary politics and society”

8 September 2023

Metropolitan University Prague, Department of Political Science and Anglophone Studies

Organizers: Ladislav Cabada and Jakub Charvát



Funded by
the European Union

We invite paper proposals for a one-day workshop “(Mis)trust and democracy: political polarization in contemporary politics and society”, to be held at the Metropolitan University Prague (Czech Republic) on Friday, 8 September 2023.

Contents

Political trust has long been regarded as an important element of regime support and a factor of regime stability. It is widely associated with a number of positive outcomes in representative democracies. Trust drives citizens’ interest and engagement in politics, increases voting turnout and makes law-abiding behaviour more common. Thus, trust is frequently equated to diffuse regime support and linked to the effective functioning and stability of the political system. Saying that, political mistrust presents the reversal phenomenon, discouraging various societal groups from active political participation, giving rise to the anti-systemic solutions, and thus negatively influencing the stability of democratic regimes.

One of the key elements influencing political (mis)trust comprise the new forms of political polarization. In the last two decades we can observe visible rise of impulses negatively influencing the political trust; this trend is often labelled as polycrisis. Nevertheless, many indicators and signs of growing mistrust might be reflected already in 1960s-1980s, as for example the growth of new social movements and the related phenomenon of *Partaienverdrossenheit* and party dealignment manifest. The continual erosion of traditional “Rokkanian” cleavages, destabilisation of post-WW II party systems, dramatic decline of party membership, the revolution in mass communication related with the social media, as well as the onset of media parties, business-firm parties, and entrepreneurial parties present challenge for both the political practice as well as the expert reflection.

The aim of our workshop, which is organized within the framework of the Horizon Europe project **TRUEDEM - Trust in European Democracies** (www.truedem.eu), is to address the substantial and even fundamental changes regarding the socio-political and socioeconomic cleavages in European societies that have implications for political trust, including such trends as: erosion of old and emergence of new political cleavages; shift towards the axiological cleavage/s and/or cultural backlash; radicalization of political attitudes and increased polarization; strengthening of ‘bad civil society’; erosion of old identities and party alignments; emergence of new social movements and political parties; decline in party membership, individualization of citizens attitudes. The workshop and individual papers will contribute to identifying and reflecting on the most important emerging cleavages and polarizing trends across the European societies related to the general trends of (de)globalization and (counter)cosmopolitanism (new and/or transformed socio-economic divisions, intergeneration conflicts, gender, new forms of nativism and nationalism etc.), as well as their influence on the state and trends of political trust across the European societies.

The goal of the workshop is to systematize and deepen our understanding of the intersection of political polarization and trust. Specifically, our workshop aims to stress and reflect two issues:

1) the polarization-trust nexus, i.e. how the interconnection between the polarization and trust might be reflected in partial cases and how it might be generalised in new or transformed theories and concepts. Also the papers discussing and presenting different methodological issues such as indicators and measure that might be used for the research of trust and polarization are welcomed.

2) Legacy of (mis)trust). In Eastern and Central Europe, the legacy of (mis)trust presents one of important long-term trends in the societies. Such phenomenon was related with the creation of nationally oriented civil societies within the Habsburg Empire, as well as with the existence of different types of opposition against the Communist regimes. In both, as well as other cases (mis)trust presented the creative impulse for political participation and representative democracy. We assume that similar development - and legacy - might be found also within the hybrid regimes and soft authoritarian regimes in the region.

In addition to the two above-mentioned “flagship” themes, we invite proposals discussing other topics that address the interplay of political polarization and political trust. We welcome both papers discussing single-country case studies and papers employing comparative cross-country perspective. Researchers and scholars at any stage of academic career, from various domains of Social Sciences are encouraged to apply.

Applications and decisions

Please submit your application to ladislav.cabada@mup.cz and office@truedem.eu by **August 04, 2023** including:

- Title
- Abstract (max. 300 words), specifying theoretical argument, data, methods, and geographical scope
- Author(s)
- Name and affiliation of the presenter(s)

Notifications of acceptance or rejection will be sent out by August 14.

Costs and logistics

The workshop will be hosted at the Department of Political Science and Anglophone Studies, Metropolitan University Prague. Light refreshments will be offered onsite in the lunch break. Participation is free of charge; no registration fees apply.

The host institution does not cover the accommodation and travel costs. Nevertheless, we hope that many scholars might use the tailor-made chosen term of the workshop that correlates with the ECPR General conference in Prague at the beginning of September 2023.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have, and feel free to share this call widely.

We look forward to your contributions and to seeing you at the Metropolitan University Prague!

Best wishes,

Ladislav Cabada and Jakub Charvát

The event is organized with the support of the TRUEDEM "Trust in European Democracies" research project funded under the European Union's Horizon research and innovation program (grant agreement No 101095237).

Social networks and political communication

On June 21st, 2023 a workshop entitled Social networks and political communication was held at the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava. Tamara Stohlová (social media officer from the political party Progresívne Slovensko) and Gabriel Tóth (analyst from New School Communications) were the main guests in the debate with TRUEDEM project researcher Pavol Baboš. The aim of the workshop was to explore if and how social networks could contribute to political trust. The debate was focused on digital platforms and media as new possibilities for political engagement and participation. Our guests and participants discussed whether social networks can potentially contribute to the improvement of political communication between political representatives on the one hand and citizens on the other and also whether political actors use social networks as a tool to improve transparency and inclusiveness on the political scene.



TRUEDEM Welcomes New Members to our Advisory Boards



Monica Brezzi is Head of the Governance Indicators and Performance Division in the OECD Directorate for Public Governance. She works on issues related to public governance and trust in institutions, and the use of performance information in policymaking and service delivery. She spearheaded the 2021 OECD Trust Survey, a nationally-representative survey on public trust and its drivers implemented in 22 OECD countries. In 2017-19 she was the Director of Technical Assessment and Monitoring at the Council of Europe Development Bank.



[Will Jennings](#) is Professor of Political Science at Public Policy at the University of Southampton and Co-Founder of the recently launched think tank The Centre for Towns. His research explores questions relating to public policy and political behaviour, specifically in relation to agenda-setting, public opinion, elections, democratic innovations, political geography, policy disasters, and anti-politics. He was a member of the independent inquiry instigated by the British Polling Council and Market Research Society

to investigate the performance of the pre-election polls at the 2015 general election. He is co-author of *Policy Agendas in British Politics* (Palgrave, 2013), *The Politics of Competence: Parties, Public Opinion and Voters* (Cambridge University Press, 2017) and *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction and the Rise of Anti-Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

TRUEDEM Trust in European Democracies

Cross-country comparative comprehensive investigation of public perceptions of trust and trustworthiness (2023-2025)

Web: www.truedem.eu

Email: office@truedem.eu

Facebook: [@TRUEDEMEU](https://www.facebook.com/TRUEDEMEU)

Twitter: [@TRUEDEM_EU](https://twitter.com/TRUEDEM_EU)

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon research and innovation program under the Grant Agreement No 101095237 (TRUEDEM). The information and opinions in this report (and other project deliverables and communications materials) are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Commission.