

TRUEDEM: Trust in European Democracies (2023-2025)

Quarterly Project Newsletter - Issues 4 (December 2023)

Webinar - Cultural Background of European Democracies: Examining the Role of Values and Social Inequalities

In this webinar, WP4 leader Prof. Christian Welzel (Leuphana University, Germany) presented the key findings of the working paper "[Cultural background of European democracies: examining the role of values and social inequalities](#)" prepared within WP4. In this report, the authors examine the role of social values and inequalities for the development of institutional trust. Focusing on the four largest national populations from the EU's Western core, Nordic region, Mediterranean South, and post-communist East as exemplifications, the authors examine whether these national publics' middle class spectrum experienced polarizing ideological shifts on four key value dimensions (right-vs-left on economic issues, nativism-vs-cosmopolitanism on immigration issues, patriarchy-vs-emancipation on sexuality issues, economy-vs-environment on the sustainability issue). Preliminary results provide no consistent confirmation that polarizing ideological shifts among European electorates' middle-class segments account for growing institutional distrust or anti-liberal shifts in voters' democratic preferences. Instead, the nature of their distinction is primarily socio-psychological, manifest in a deep-seated opposition against the non-RWP parties' liberal consent on immigration policy and the resulting institutional distrust for not having a voice among the parties of the pre-RWP era. The paper is co-authored with Agnieszka Turska-Kawa (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland), Lennart Brunkert (Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany), and Bi Puranen (Bikupan Research Institute, Sweden).



Cultural Background of European Democracies: Examining the Role of Values and Social Inequalities

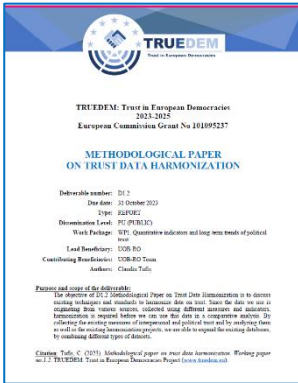
Christian Welzel, member of the German Academy of Sciences (Leopoldina), is the Political Culture Research Professor at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, Germany. He is also President (emer.) and Vice-President of the World Values Survey Association and Chief Foreign Director of the Ronald Inglehart Laboratory for Comparative Social Research (ICPSR) at the National Research University-Higher School of Economics (HSE) in Moscow, Russia. Welzel's research focuses on human empowerment, emancipation, and cultural change and democratization.

In this webinar, Prof. Welzel will present the key findings of the working paper prepared within the TRUEDEM "Trust in European Democracies" (2023-2025) research project (EC grant No 101095237). The paper is co-authored with **Agnieszka Turska-Kawa** (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland), **Lennart Brunkert** (Leuphana University Lüneburg, Germany), and **Bi Puranen** (Bikupan Research Institute, Sweden). Project director, **Prof. Christian Haerpfer** (University of Vienna, Austria) will moderate the discussion.

Join us on December 06, 2023
16:00-17:00 CET

Watch on  YouTube

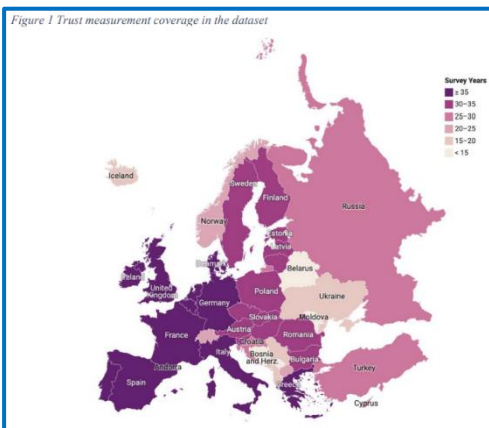
New Project Reports Available



D1.2. Methodological paper on trust data harmonization (2023Oct31) by Tufis C. Methodological paper on trust data harmonization offers a detailed analysis of the existing measures of trust. After a brief review of the most important debatable issues in the measurement of trust, we present the quantitative review of the trust literature published between 1980 and 2023. Using AI, abstracts of 19265 unique academic publications listed in Scopus and Web of Sciences from a period of 1965 to 2023 were analysed with the help of Chat GPT. The paper provides overview of identified 6 topic clusters (institutional trust in political science; consumer trust in marketing; social capital and trust in sociology; trust in IT and technical fields; trust in medical and health sciences; intra-organizational trust in management), journals, datasets used in analyses.

The paper further proceeds to develop an exhaustive catalogue of trust measures used in survey research, structured in 5 sections: measures of interpersonal trust; measures of trust in other groups / countries; measures of trust in specific contexts; measures of trust with a gender perspective; and measures of institutional trust. The final section of the report focuses on the issue of harmonizing the trust data and developed a harmonization scheme to be employed in the TRUEDEM project (in particular, electronic database D1.3. Long-term trends of political trust dynamics).

D1.3. Electronic database “Long-term trends of political trust dynamics” (1980-2022) (2023Dec31) by Tufis C. The database comprises secondary survey data for 44 European countries for a period of 1980-2023. Data sources include Eurobarometer (EB), European Social Survey (ESS), European Values Study (EVS), World Values Survey (WVS), International Social Survey Program (ISSP), New Democracies Barometer (NDB) / New Europe Barometer (NEB), Central and Eastern European Barometer (CEEB), Applicant and Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CCEB). The database includes 91 indicators are grouped into 9 clusters, including interpersonal trust (10); institutional trust to non-political institutions (8); institutional trust to political institutions (8); trust to media (5); trust to civil society (6); trust to economic institutions (3); trust to international organizations (7); trust to EU institutions (12); trust to nationalities (32). Data is provided at the country level. Both original data by scale type and harmonized 2- and 3-points trust scales are included. Data can be downloaded in SPSS, Stata, SAS, csv. Codebook and frequency tables available.



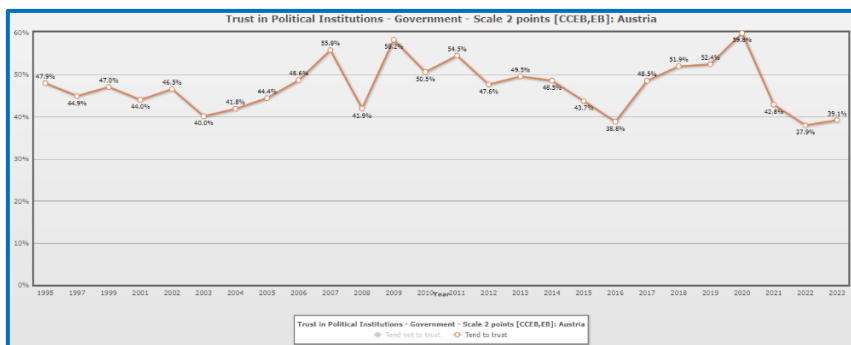
Trust Data
Trust in Non - Political Institutions - Churches - Scale 2 points [CCEB,EB]

Indicator 41/352

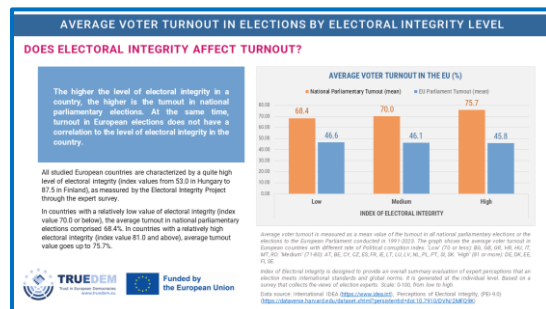
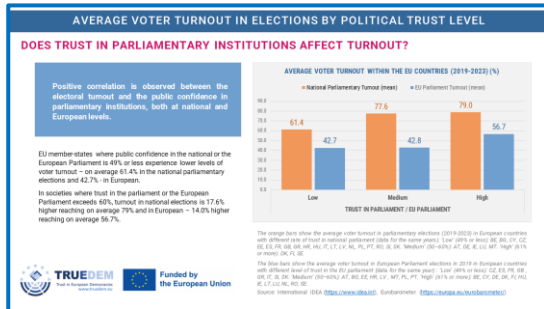
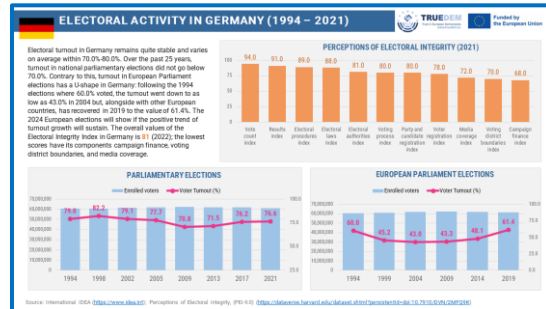
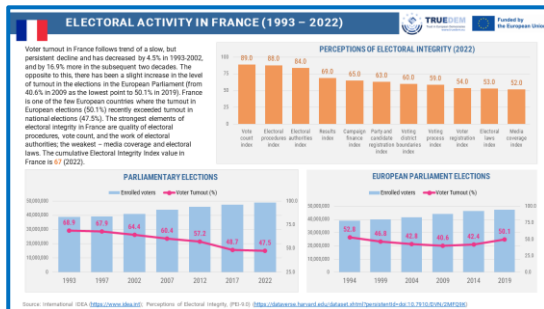
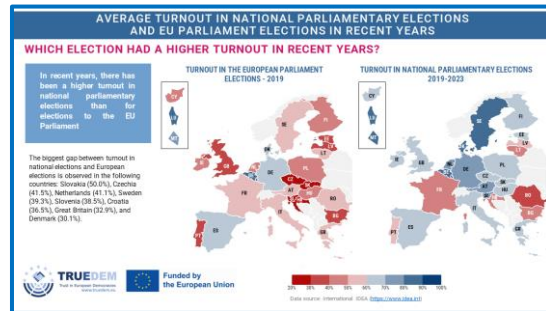
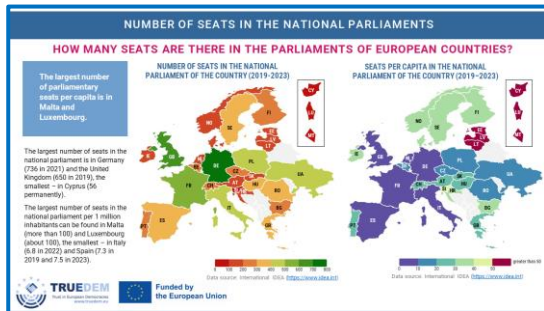
[EB]: I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. The Church [CCEB]: I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it. The Church

Country	Year	1997	1999	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2010
France	Tend not to trust	53.0%	50.2%	53.6%	57.1%	52.4%	52.1%	50.7%	50.8%	42.1%	51.7%
	Tend to trust	34.5%	35.9%	36.0%	33.4%	35.2%	34.9%	36.7%	36.1%	42.8%	32.2%
Great Britain	Tend not to trust	27.9%	26.2%	33.4%	39.9%	43.9%	42.5%	43.8%	43.2%	43.0%	51.6%
	Tend to trust	57.4%	60.5%	53.3%	45.8%	40.1%	44.0%	42.8%	41.3%	43.9%	37.4%
Germany	Tend not to trust	38.5%	46.5%	48.7%	51.9%	49.6%	46.3%	40.7%	42.1%	42.7%	50.7%
	Tend to trust	44.0%	36.9%	35.8%	32.7%	31.9%	40.6%	54.0%	48.8%	47.6%	38.5%
Greece	Tend not to trust	21.3%	16.1%	27.4%	34.5%	35.3%	37.6%	47.5%	41.7%	41.2%	58.5%
	Tend to trust	76.6%	81.2%	70.2%	62.1%	61.5%	59.1%	51.9%	57.9%	58.4%	39.0%
Hungary											

Trust Data All samples



D2.2. Infographics on European and National elections (2023Dec31) by Kuzina I., Kizilov O., Danilenko I., Pedchenko, O. Infographics and data visualization provide a descriptive overview of cross-country and over-time turnout trends and examine correlations with indicators such as the state of democracy, the state of political corruption, and political trust. Elections considered: national parliamentary elections (Lower chamber) and EU Parliament elections. Countries included: EU-27 member-states and Great Britain, Norway, Switzerland, and Ukraine are included.



D3.2. Literature Review on Migration and Political Trust (2023Dec31) by Sotiropoulos, D. A., Kanellopoulos, K. & Yfanti, A. The aim of this report is to examine the past literature and public opinion research data addressing the causal relations between political trust on one hand and the phenomenon of immigration on the other. The report shall contribute to the TRUEDEM project's overall agenda on examining the trends, patterns and predictors of political trust in European democracies and shall inform the eventual policy recommendations of the relevant tools to mediate the potential negative implications of immigration for political trust and public support in Europe. The report is structured as follows. First, we describe firefly the recent immigration trends in European countries, including the number of migrants and the countries of the origin as well as the share of migrant population in every country. We then proceed to develop the theoretical framework of the study outlining the specific mechanisms through which the phenomenon immigration might affect political trust in the country. The then examine the available literature to explore the state of the art of the studied issue. We turn to the findings of the latest ESS round on immigration and political trust to explore the correlations. Section four in the report discusses the EU policies aimed to tackle immigration. Finally, the last chapter of the report is dedicated to the national case-studies produced with the contribution of the TRUEDEM national teams. The overall goal of this report is to set up the theoretical and methodological framework for the consolidating reports in WP3 - D3.4. Democratic narrative around the socio-economic transformations and D3.5 Consolidated report on the implications of socioeconomic transformations for democratic attitudes, political participation and trust

D4.1. Cultural background of European democracies: examining the role of values and social inequalities (2023Oct31) by Brunkert, L., Puranen, B., Turska-Kawa, A., Welzel, C. Much of the democratic backsliding literature sees reactionary ideological shifts in large population segments as a key reason for the rise of Right-Wing Populism (RWP)—shifts that supposedly fuel citizens' distrust in democratic institutions and accordingly increase readiness to support RWP in its efforts to cut back on democracy's liberal principles. The assumptions underlying this "standard narrative" of RWP's rise are, however, more often stated than tested. Filling this void, we analyze data from the European Values Study/World Values Survey, tracing the development of institutional trust among the EU's populations over a twenty-five years' time span. Focusing on the four largest national populations from the EU's Western core, Nordic region, Mediterranean South, and post-communist East as exemplifications, we examine whether these national publics' middle class spectrum experienced polarizing ideological shifts on four key value dimensions: right-vs-left on economic issues, nativism-vs-cosmopolitanism on immigration issues, patriarchy-vs-emancipation on sexuality issues, economy-vs-environment on the sustainability issue. Specifically, we identify to what extent voter segments especially at the lower end of the middle class spectrum drifted ideologically away from the majority's emancipatory progression on immigration, sexuality and sustainability issues, thus increasing value polarization in ways that erode institutional trust and diminish support for liberal democracy, again especially in the lower middle class spectrum, with the consequence of increased readiness to support RWP in its efforts to weaken democracy's liberal constitutional elements. Contradicting this "democracy eroding" narrative, our preliminary results provide no consistent confirmation that polarizing ideological shifts among European electorates' middle-class segments account for growing institutional distrust or anti-liberal shifts in voters' democratic preferences. Moreover, RWP-supporters are social class-wise only weakly differentiated and do not show a particularly high concentration in the lower middle class. Instead, the nature of their distinction is primarily socio-psychological, manifest in a deep-seated opposition against the non-RWP parties' liberal consent on immigration policy and the resulting institutional distrust for not having a voice among the parties of the pre-RWP era. These two distinctions -immigration opposition and its associated institutional distrust-reach into all middle-class segments and exist in spite of the fact that, overall, European electorates and especially their middle-class spectrum have actually become more (instead of less) tolerant of cultural diversity and immigration. We conclude that the problems accounting for RWP's success do not originate in the electorates and the supposedly reactionary public opinion shifts in parts of them. Instead, the problems reside in accrued representation deficits with respect to grown non-voter camps whose immigration skepticism found no credible voice in the party systems of the pre-RWP era.

Trust in political institutions, challenges of democracies, and democratic innovations



Panel on "Trust in political institutions, challenges of democracies, and democratic innovations" was organized by the Slovenian Political Science Association within the [Slovenian Political Science Day 2023](#). The presentations discussed the decline in trust in many political institutions and in voter turnout, reflecting an increasing dissatisfaction with democratic processes, although belief in democracy itself is fundamental. The discussion touched on the concepts of deliberative and participatory democracy as well as new institutional forms of civic engagement and participation - democratic innovations (participatory budgeting, citizens' juries and assemblies). Several issues were analyzed for their potential to deepen public participation in policymaking, improve the effectiveness of governance and increase of trust in political institutions.

Podcast: How we relate to state institutions. Democracy - a matter of trust

According to an INSCOP survey, the Army is the institution in which Romanians have the highest level of trust: 70.4% of the respondents declared that they have high or very high trust in this institution. 62.5% of Romanians say they trust the Church. Next in this ranking of trust are two international institutions: NATO (with 55.4% trust) and the European Union (with 50.3%). The Police, the National Bank of Romania, the City Hall, the Presidency, the Government and - in the last place - the Parliament (with a confidence rate of 17.4%) are on the following places. What does this survey say about our relationship with state institutions? These and other issues of political trust were discussed in a [podcast by Claudiu Tufiș](#), lecturer at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Bucharest. Prof. Tufis also presented the "TRUEDEM - Trust in European Democracies" project, a large comparative study that analyzes the level of trust in European democracies.

Non-participation in elections: Why are fewer and fewer people voting in Slovenia?

Podcast with Dr. Alenka Krašovec from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana. In the first episode, we focus mainly on socio-economic factors and contextual factors that influence voter turnout. One of the lowest turnouts in the last presidential, parliamentary and European elections was recorded by the electoral districts in Maribor and the surrounding area. When we look at Podravje from a socio-economic point of view, it has the second lowest monthly income per inhabitant. In terms of salaries, the residents of the region are about the same as all the residents of Slovenia. Compared to the national average, Podravje has a higher aging index and a higher unemployment rate. [Learn more here](#).

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.