The Impact of the European Debt Crisis on Trust in Journalism

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Agenda

1) Problems
2) Theoretical background
3) Research questions
4) Methodolgy
5) Findings
Problems:
A decline of trust

Data: Eurobarometer 2001-2015
Problems:
Differences between countries

Tend to trust in press 2015, percent in countries
Problems:
Different ranges in countries

Tend to trust in press 2001-2015, percent in countries, ranges
Problems:
Trust in media varies with the economy?
Theoretical background

• In recent years, communication research has paid increasing attention to the role of macro-level factors in explaining media phenomena and audience attitudes (e.g., Goldman & Mutz, 2011, Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Iyengar et al., 2010; Moehler & Singh, 2011; Norris & Inglehart, 2009).

• institutional theories view political trust as resulting from the satisfactory performance of political institutions (Mishler & Rose, 2001): When they fail to perform, citizens distrust them.
Theoretical background

- Several studies supporting institutional explanations of political trust have focused on economic variables. Such studies found that economic performance indicators such as economic growth, low unemployment, and low inflation rates are related to political trust (e.g., Alesina & Wacziarg, 2000).
- In addition, in more prosperous societies interpersonal trust is also higher (Inglehart, 1999, p. 94).
- We know that trust in media is linked with the trust in the political system and democracy (Tsfati/Ariely 2013).
Theoretical background

External factors

Economic Situation

Others ...

Individual evaluation

Trust in democracy

PARTIES

GOVERNMENT

MEDIA

PRESS

TV

RADIO

Others ...

External factors
Theoretical background

External factors

Individual evaluation

Economic Situation

Trust in democracy

PARTIES

GOVERNMENT

MEDIA

PRESS

TV

RADIO

Others …

Others …
Theoretical background

• 2014 Eurobarometer data indicate that people in a bad financial situation don’t tend to trust in the media as much as people in a good financial situation.

• The economic situation influences the trust in political institutions and in their problem-solving competence. (Zmerli/Newton/Montero 2006)

• So we ask: Are the citizens’ disappointments with political decisions which cause an economic crises projected on the mediator – the journalists?

• However, the institutional approach to political trust implies that media trust will vary not only with the economic and political context, but also with the structure and content of media systems (Norris, 2000, 2011).
Research questions

**RQ1:** What connection is there between the economic situation, the trust in political institutions and the tendency to trust in media?

**RQ2:** Is there an impact of the European debt crisis on the tendency to trust in media in the affected countries?

**RQ3:** Are there differences between different media channels, like press, TV and radio?

**RQ4:** How will media trust develop? Is a prognosis possible?
Methodology

• Secondary data analysis: Survey data and economic indicators

• The study analyses the Eurobarometer empirical survey primary data on microdata level. This survey was carried out in November 2015 in the 28 member states of the European Union and several candidate states.

• Time serial analysis can be executed beginning in 2001. For the Eurobarometer survey around 1.000 people were interviewed in each state (EU 15).

• Data on economic situation (GDP growth rates), indicating the extend of the European debt crisis, are added from OECD.
Results: RQ1

• *RQ1*: What connection is there between the economic situation, the trust in political institutions and the tendency to trust in media?
Results: RQ1

External factors

Individual evaluation

Economic Situation

GDP GROWTH

Trust in democracy

GOVERNMENT

MEDIA

PRESS

TV

RADIO

PARTIES

EU:

Others …
Results: RQ1

• There’s no overall connection in the EU-15 between the economic situation and the trust in political institutions or the tendency to trust in media

• But: This doesn’t hold everywhere
Results: RQ1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Trust in press</th>
<th>Trust in radio</th>
<th>Trust in TV</th>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Trust in press</th>
<th>Trust in radio</th>
<th>Trust in TV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>0.362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson correlations
Results: RQ1

• In some countries, strong connections exist between the economic situation and the trust in political institutions or the tendency to trust in media
Results: RQ1

SPAIN:

- Economic Situation
  - GDP GROWTH
  - Others …

- Trust in democracy
  - GOVERNMENT
- PARTIES

- MEDIA
  - PRESS
  - TV
  - RADIO

External factors

Individual evaluation
Results: RQ1

GREECE:

Economic Situation

GDP GROWTH

.776**

.746**

.809**

.809**

.776**

Trust in democracy

GOVERNMENT

.877**

.934**

.875**

MEDI

PRESS

TV

RADIO

.904**

.917**

.905**

.917**

Others ...

External factors

Individual evaluation
Results: RQ2

*RQ2:* Is there an impact of the European debt crisis on the tendency to trust in media in the affected countries?
Results: RQ2

Differences trust before and since crisis 2009

High significant differences (t-test, significances):

Spain: trust in press, 0.22
Spain: trust in radio, 0.20
Spain: trust in TV, 0.18
Greece: trust in press, 0.13
Greece: trust in radio, 0.15
Greece: trust in TV, 0.19
Results: RQ2

The 2009 crisis effected the strong relation between economy and trust in media in Greece and Spain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross domestic product (GDP), volume, annual growth rates, percentage</th>
<th>Greece: TRUST IN PRESS</th>
<th>Greece: TRUST IN RADIO</th>
<th>Greece: TRUST IN TV</th>
<th>Spain: TRUST IN PRESS</th>
<th>Spain: TRUST IN RADIO</th>
<th>Spain: TRUST IN TV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excluding crisis years (2001-2008)</td>
<td>,647</td>
<td>,663</td>
<td>,626</td>
<td>-,266</td>
<td>-,189</td>
<td>-,484</td>
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<tr>
<td>Including crisis years (2001-2015)</td>
<td>,809**</td>
<td>,776**</td>
<td>,809**</td>
<td>,752**</td>
<td>,762**</td>
<td>,651*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson correlations
Results: RQ2

• There exists an impact of the European debt crisis on the tendency to trust in media in the affected countries.
Results: RQ3

**RQ2**: Are there differences between different media channels, like press, TV, and radio?
Results: RQ3

- No differences in the effect of the 2009 crisis in the affected countries
- Trust in radio is higher than trust in press and TV
Results: RQ3

- In several countries there are high differences between trust in press, TV and radio:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean TRUST IN PRESS</th>
<th>Mean TRUST IN RADIO</th>
<th>Mean TRUST IN TV</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Mean TRUST IN PRESS</th>
<th>Mean TRUST IN RADIO</th>
<th>Mean TRUST IN TV</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5.210253</td>
<td>6.143233</td>
<td>4.140047</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>1.951040</td>
<td>6.174500</td>
<td>5.319307</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>5.750260</td>
<td>6.999107</td>
<td>4.565520</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>3.544467</td>
<td>4.531833</td>
<td>3.062960</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>6.273007</td>
<td>7.667727</td>
<td>6.686773</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>5.011220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4.723880</td>
<td>6.585033</td>
<td>5.956540</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>4.237193</td>
<td>5.324087</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>5.859933</td>
<td>8.078373</td>
<td>7.453533</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>6.013487</td>
<td>6.625960</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>4.237060</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>5.242900</td>
<td>7.671980</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>5.792793</td>
<td>7.110747</td>
<td>6.974267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results: RQ4

**RQ4:** How will media trust develop? Is a prognosis possible?
Results: RQ4

**Conditions:**

- There is a strong connection between economic development and trust in media
- Economic development is projected. (e.g. OECD Economic Outlook)

This allows a prognosis of trust in media

- Procedure: ARIMA-modelling
Results: RQ4

**Greece:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Number of Predictors</th>
<th>Model Fit statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN PRESS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN RADIO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN TV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.611</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modell</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN PRESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forecast</td>
<td>0.35138</td>
<td>0.38188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>0.46579</td>
<td>0.49807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
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<td>0.26569</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUST IN RADIO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Forecast</td>
<td>0.45010</td>
<td>0.48078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>0.58907</td>
<td>0.61975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>0.31113</td>
<td>0.34180</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUST IN TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forecast</td>
<td>0.30240</td>
<td>0.34112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>0.46161</td>
<td>0.50033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>0.14319</td>
<td>0.18191</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results: RQ4

Spain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Number of Predictors</th>
<th>Model Fit statistics</th>
<th>Stationary R-squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN PRESS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN RADIO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN TV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN PRESS</td>
<td>.54188</td>
<td>.52543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>.74694</td>
<td>.73049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>.33682</td>
<td>.32037</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUST IN RADIO</td>
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<td>.63012</td>
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<td>UCL</td>
<td>.83971</td>
<td>.82373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>.45249</td>
<td>.43651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRUST IN TV</td>
<td>.48097</td>
<td>.46926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>.68414</td>
<td>.67242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCL</td>
<td>.27781</td>
<td>.26609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphs showing observed and forecast data for TRUST IN PRESS, TRUST IN RADIO, and TRUST IN TV.
Findings

- Trust in media is connected with the trust in democratic institutions.
- A connection between trust in media and the economic development exists only in a few countries.
- These are the states effected by the European debt crisis: In these countries, there exist strong connections between the economic situation and the trust in political institutions or the tendency to trust in media.
- In these countries we found significant differences between trust in media before and trust in media after the beginning of the European debt crisis 2009.
Findings

• Trust in media declined significantly since the beginning of the European debt crisis 2009
• If there is a strong connection between economic development and trust in media, forecasting is possible: A growing of the economy will effect an increase of trust in media
Literature


Literature


• Tsfati, Y./Ariely, G. (2013). Individual and Contextual Correlates of Trust in Media Across 44 Countries, Communication Research 20(10) 1–23