



# Measuring trust

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# COVID-19: Rallying around the flag?



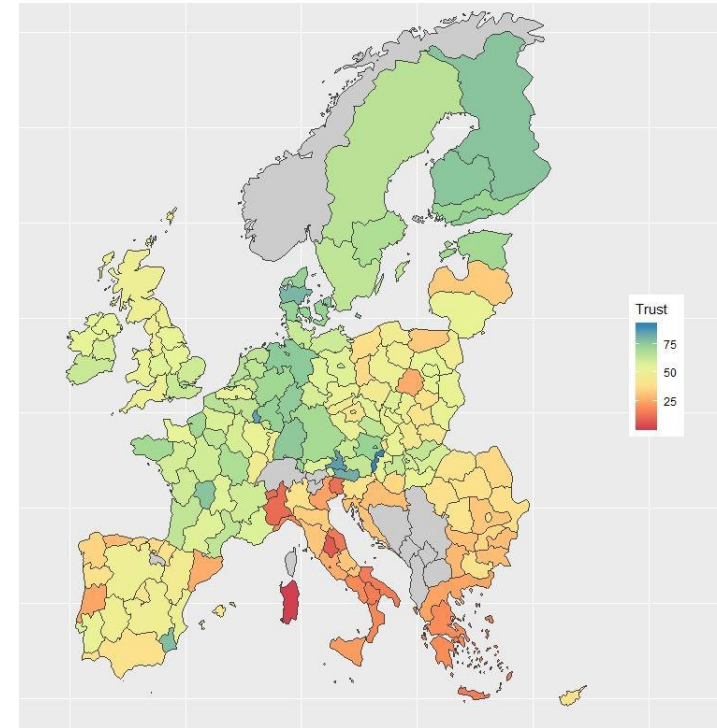
- Direct effect: patriotism & rallying around the flag
- Indirect effect: reduced salience for competing policy issues
- Current evidence
  - 15-country study (Bol et al. 2020) finds effect of lockdowns on voting intentions for incumbents, on trust in government and on satisfaction with democracy in 15 countries (Bol et al. 2020)
  - Increased support for technocratic governance (Amat et al., 2020)

But!

- COVID-19 not a typical specific, dramatic and highly focused event + no clear foreign element
- Don't put up your hopes too high...

# Drilling down in trust data

- Regional disaggregation
  - Find regional differences
  - Increase power of explanatory models
- Findings:
  - Outcomes matter for trust in public administration
  - Process even more (impartiality and absence of corruption)



# Do we measure low trust?

- Low trust in government = low trust in surveys?
- Do we find deep distrust in the data?
- It is not size that matters
  - Problems of high non-response
  - Many quota samples, convenience samples and self-selected panels



The COVID-19 pandemic is a fertile breeding ground for conspiracy theories. When people suffer a loss of control or feel threatened, they become more vulnerable to believing conspiracies. For example, the Black Death in the 14th century inspired anti-Semitic hysteria and when cholera broke out in Russia in 1892, blame fell on doctors and crowds hunted down anybody in a white coat.

How do we avoid being misled by baseless conspiracy theories? Conspiracy theories are identified by telltale thought patterns. Learning these patterns is key to inoculating ourselves and society against the corrosive influence of conspiracy theories. The seven traits of conspiratorial thinking are:



# Does distrust matter if you don't act on it?

- COVID 19: despite low trust, remarkably high compliance with government rules
- Need for measuring behaviour that signals trust/distrust rather than attitudes
  - Citizen voice and exit behaviour
  - Trust indicators that are actionable?



# References

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