



Trustworthy Government

Competency, Integrity, Impartiality

Pippa Norris

Harvard University TrustGov.org @PippaN15y

Structure

- I. Theoretical framework
- II. Research design and data
- III. Results and analysis
- IV. Conclusions



Key claims

1. We should challenge normative assumptions about trust's beneficial consequences and focus on government trustworthiness
2. Trust is always valuable for governments by inducing compliance – but not always for citizens.
3. Erroneous beliefs involve both cynical mistrust *and* credulous trust
4. Due to individual-level cognitive skills *and* societal-level information environments
5. Need to build government trustworthiness: competency, integrity, impartiality- and institutional guardrails





In Praise of Skepticism: Trust but Verify

Pippa Norris

New York: Oxford University Press.

Publication Fall 2022

I: Introduction

1. Two faces of trust
2. The general theory of skeptical trust
3. Evidence

II: What causes skeptical trust?

4. Comparing trust
5. Competency
6. Integrity and impartiality

III: Conclusions

7. In praise of skepticism

Technical Appendix





Trust is multidimensional and multi-disciplinary

Trust in global governance and other nations

(International Relations, Cultural Sociology, Comparative Politics)

Trust in agencies of national governance & civil society

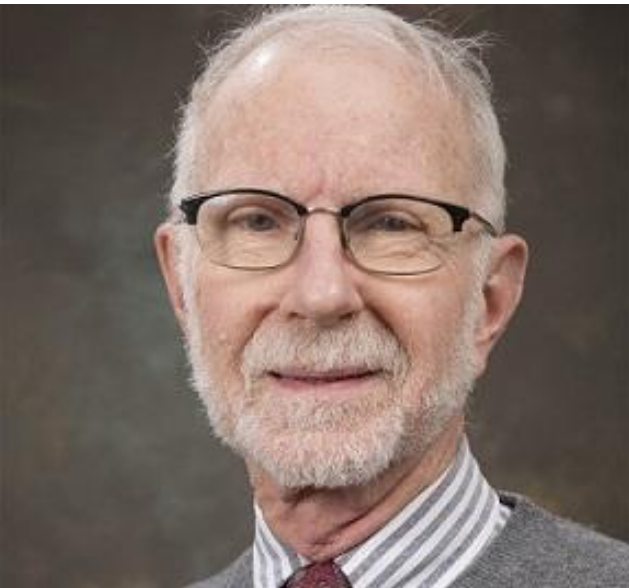
(Political behavior, comparative politics)

Social (interpersonal) trust

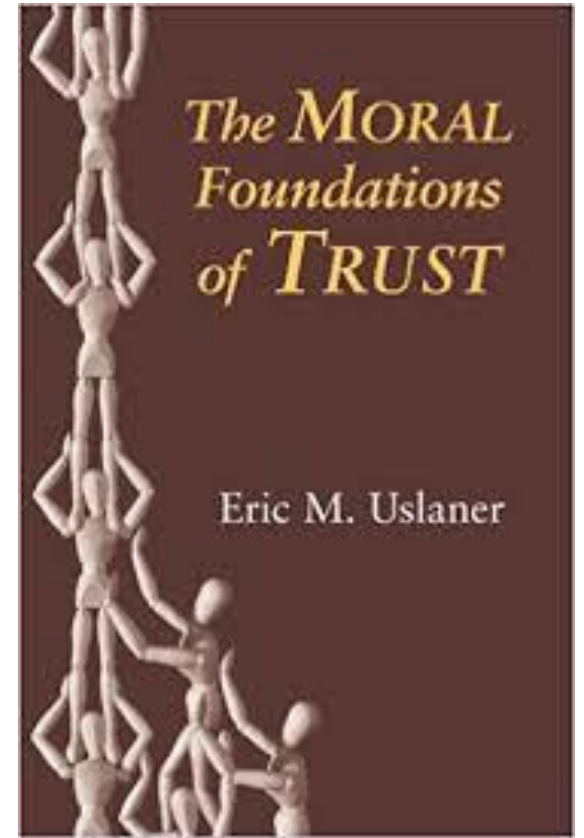
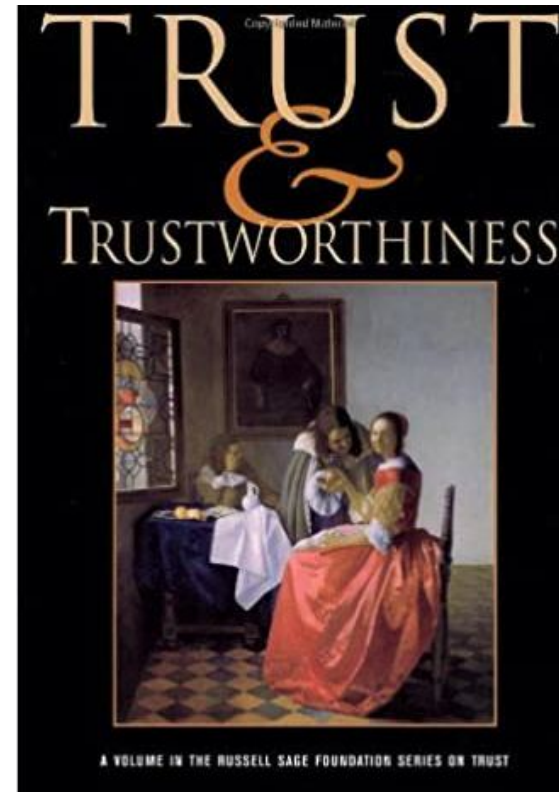
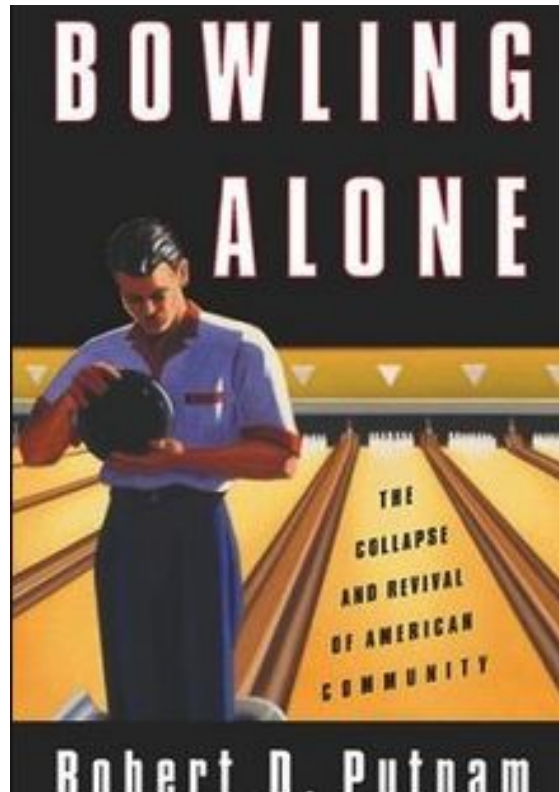
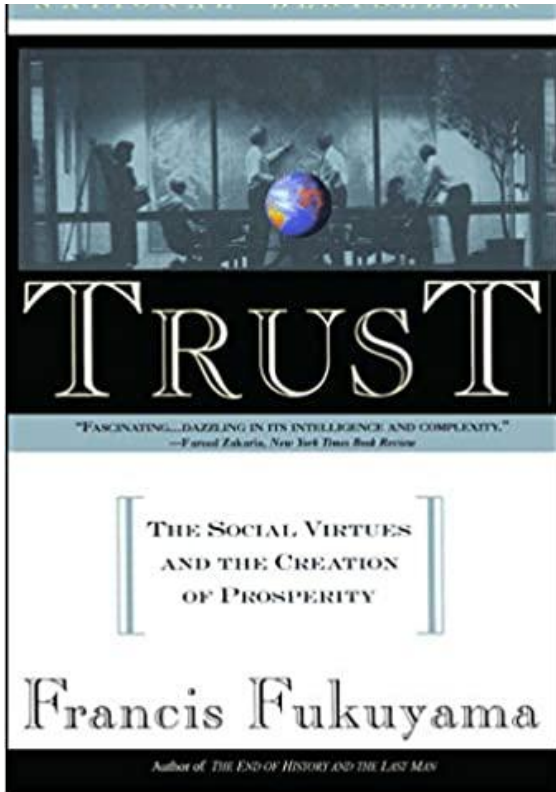
(Sociology & social psychology, behavioral economics, organizational studies)



Conventional view of trust as a public good

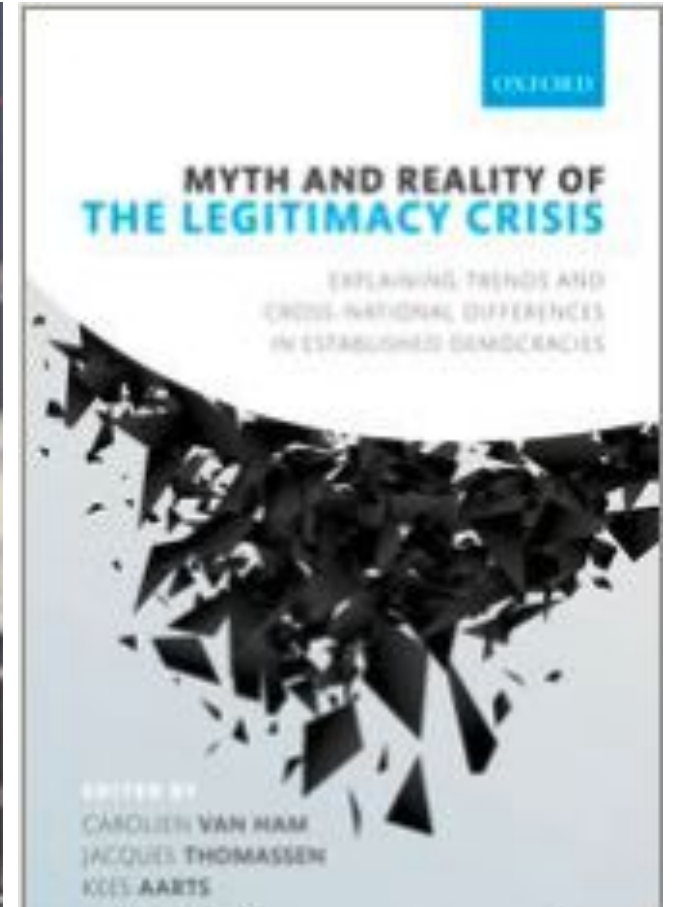
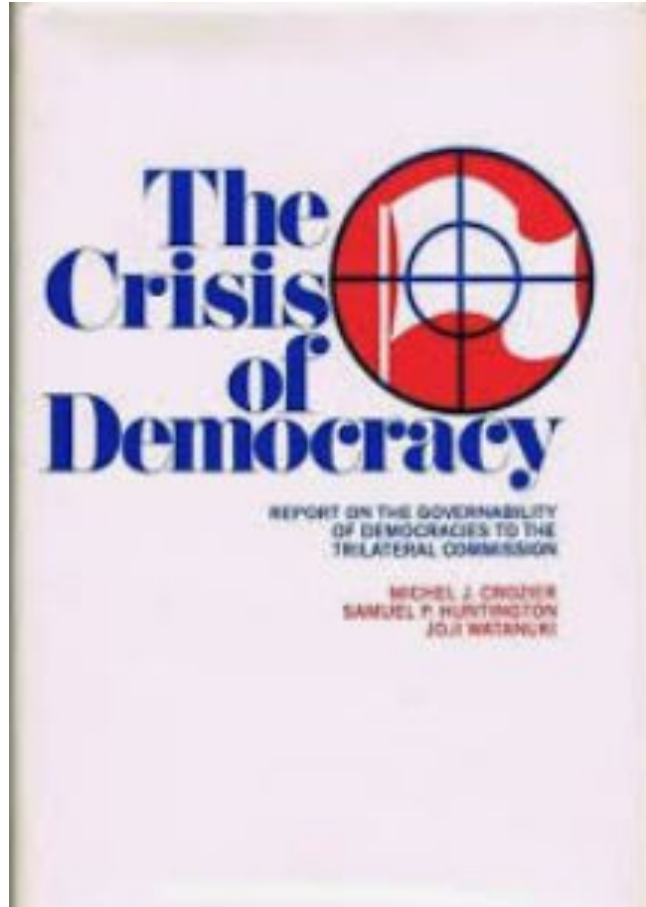
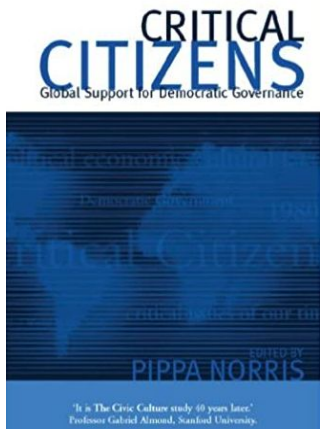
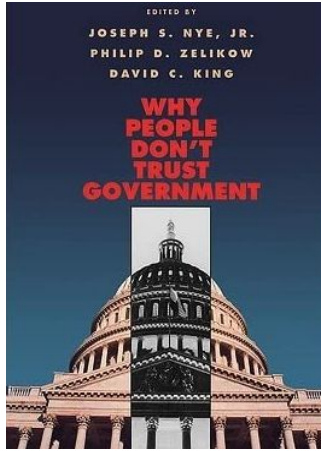


- Trust is claimed to...
 - Facilitate societal cooperation (Putnam),
 - Sustain love (Lazeler),
 - Lubricate markets (Fukuyama),
 - Manage organizations (Mayer)
 - Strengthen political legitimacy (Almond),
 - Underpin rule of law (Tyler),
 - Overcome gridlock (Hetherington & Rudolph), and
 - Facilitate international peace (Russett)
 - Facilitate solidarity & cooperation within & across societies
- If so, either low or declining trust should be a matter of public concern



Extensive literature on social trust in America and Europe

Extensive literature on political trust in America and Europe



Public Trust in Government: 1958-2021

Public trust in government [remains low](#). Only about one-quarter of Americans say they can trust the government in Washington to do what is right “just about always” (2%) or “most of the time” (22%).

Public trust in government near historic lows

[Chart](#) [Data](#) [Share](#)

CLICK AND DRAG IN THE PLOT AREA TO ZOOM IN

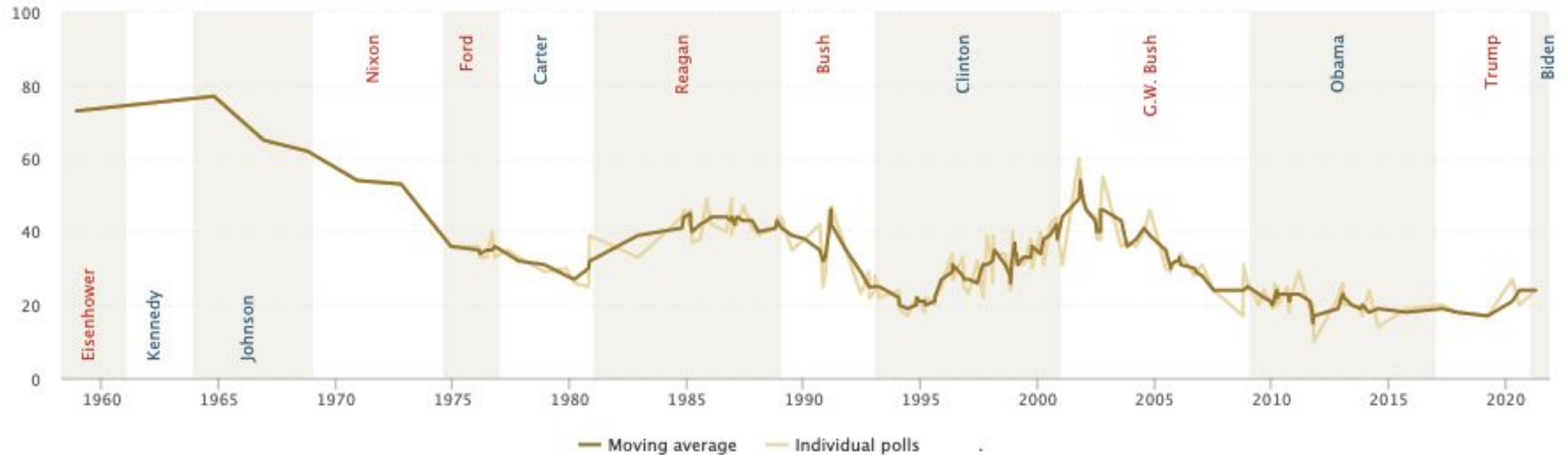
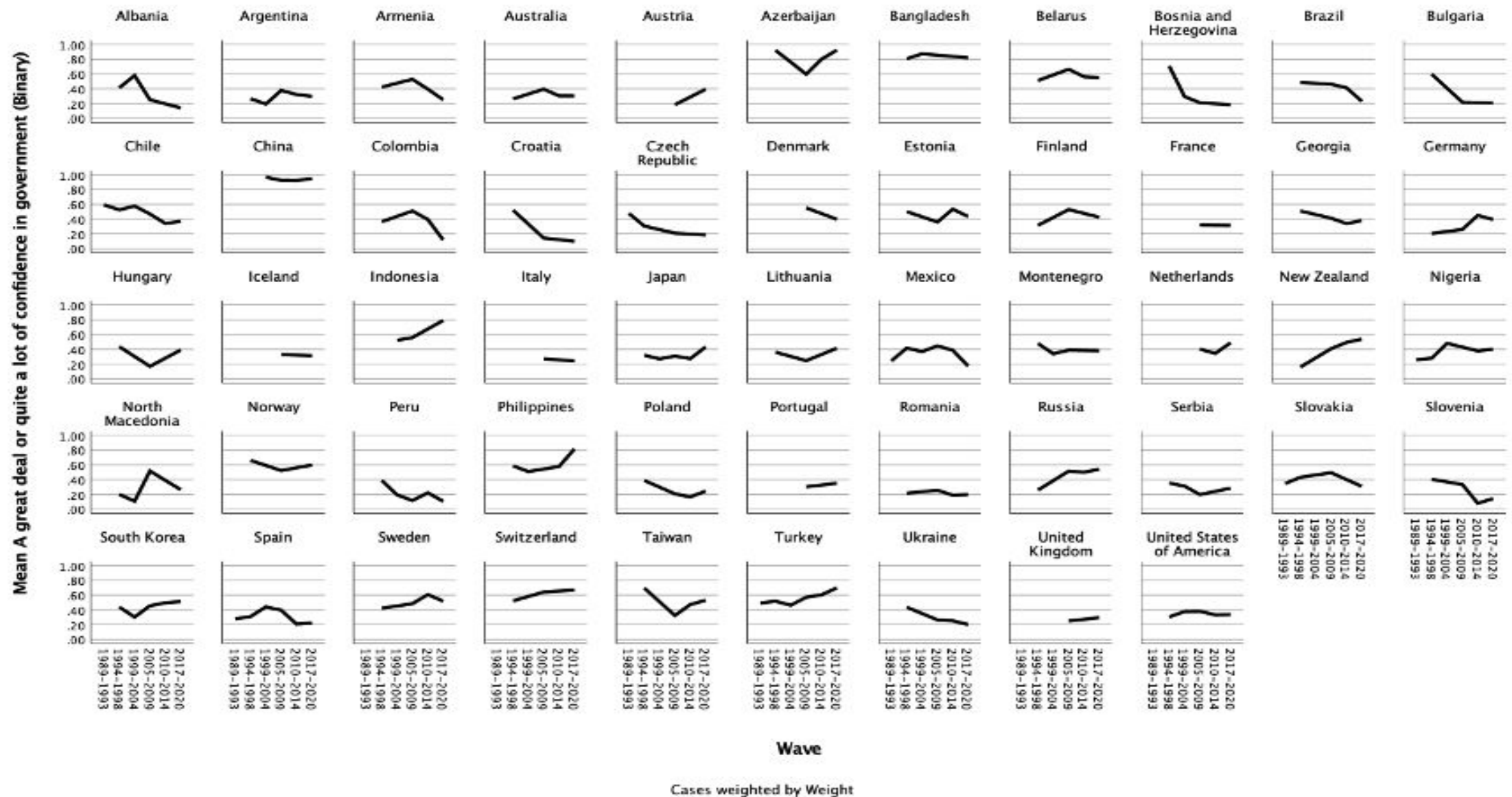


Figure 4.7: Trends in confidence in government



Note: "I am going to name a number of organizations. For each one, could you tell me how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal of confidence, quite a lot of confidence, not very much confidence or none at all?" Total % responding 'A great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in the national government.

Source: European Values Survey/World Values Survey County Pooled Dataset Waves 2-7 (1989-2021) in 53 societies.

What are the origins of trust and trustworthiness?

Individual trait

- Trust is an inherited characteristic from parents or a fixed personality trait in individuals, like optimism or extroversion
- (Uslaner)



Societal culture

- Trust reflects stable and enduring cultural attitudes and beliefs acquired in early childhood from predominant norms and values within each society
- (Inglehart)



Performance theories:

- ‘Trustworthiness’ is defined as an informal social contract where principals authorize agents to act on their behalf in the expectation that the agent will fulfil their responsibilities in future with competency, integrity and impartiality, despite conditions of risk & uncertainty.



Typology of citizen's trust judgments

		TRUST BY PRINCIPALS	
		Negative	Positive
AGENCY PERFORMANCE	Positive		Skeptical trust
	Negative	Skeptical mistrust	

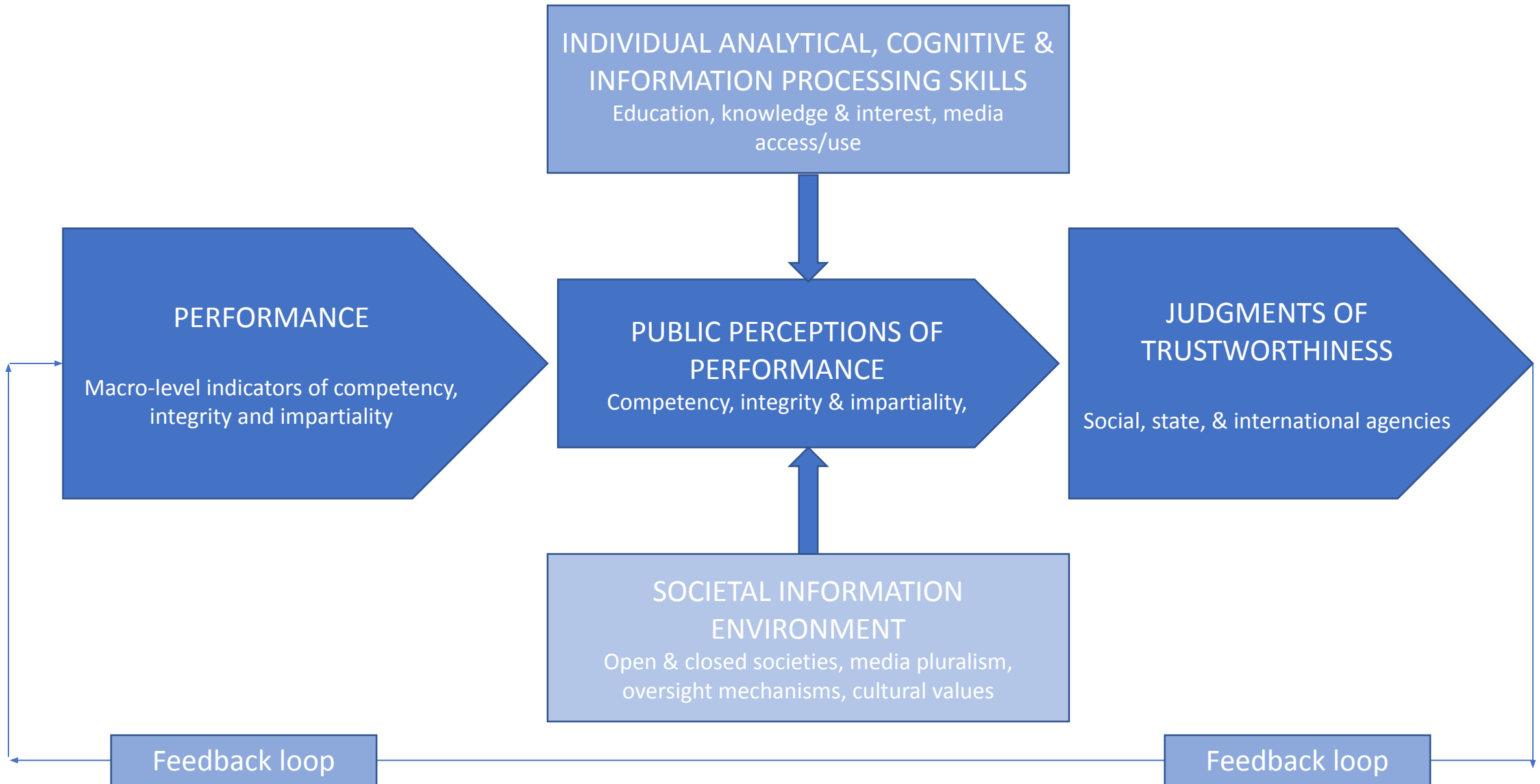
Typology of citizen's trust judgments

		TRUST BY PRINCIPALS	
		Negative	Positive
AGENCY PERFORMANCE	Positive	Cynical mistrust	Skeptical trust
	Negative	Skeptical mistrust	Credulous trust

Independent drivers.

Intermediary conditions.

Judgments of trustworthiness



Structure

- I. Conceptual & theoretical framework
- II. Research design and data
- III. Results and analysis
- IV. Conclusions



Public opinion data

- World Values Survey/European Values Survey 7-waves 1981-2021
- Currently covering 115 diverse open and closed societies
- WVS-EVS measures interpersonal trust, institutional confidence & trust in global governance
- TrustGov Project (ESRC) added new batteries on trust to WVS surveys in 12 diverse closed societies

European *Values* Study



World Values Survey

Pooled WVS-EVS coverage waves 1-7, 1981-2021

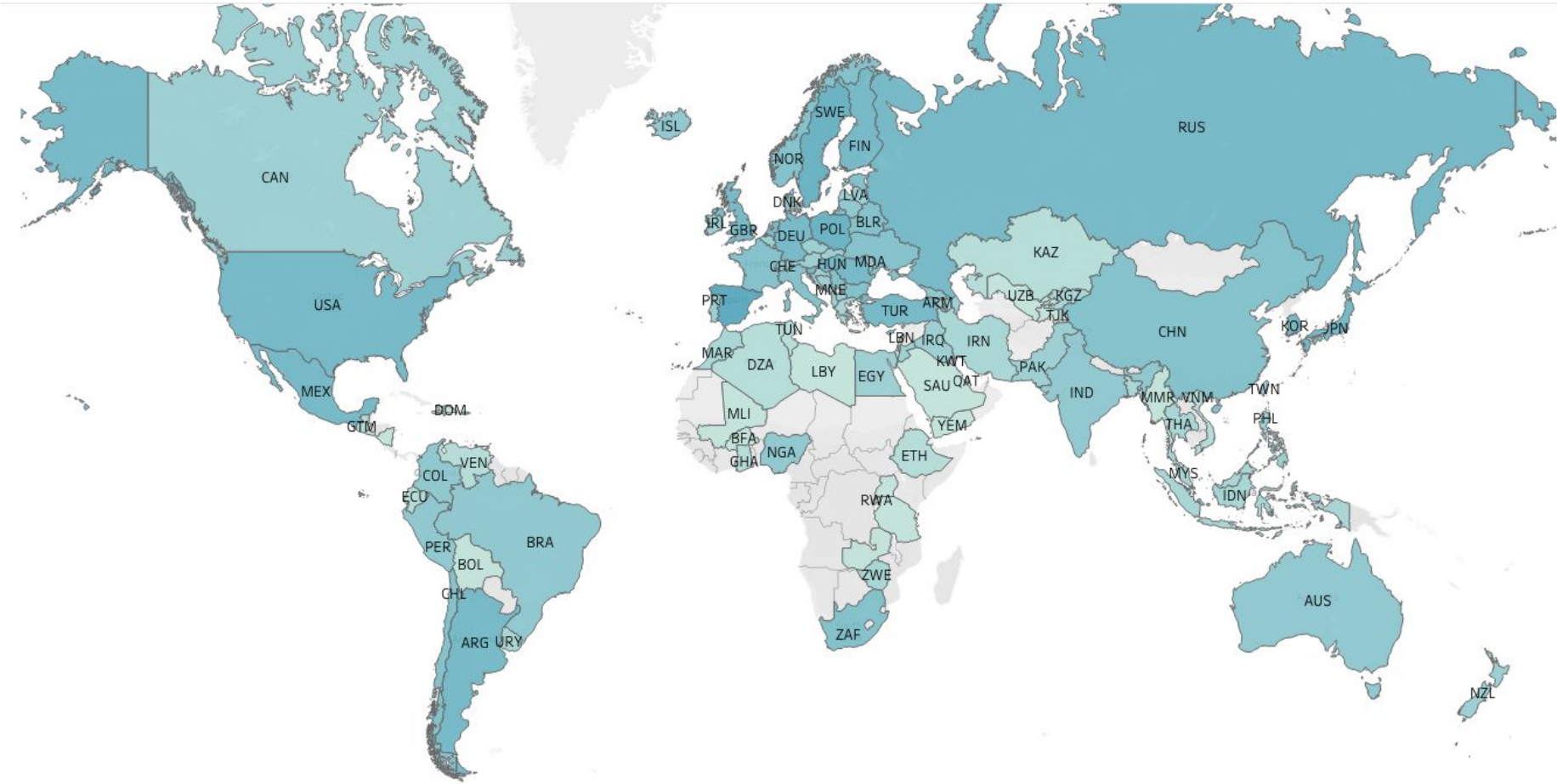
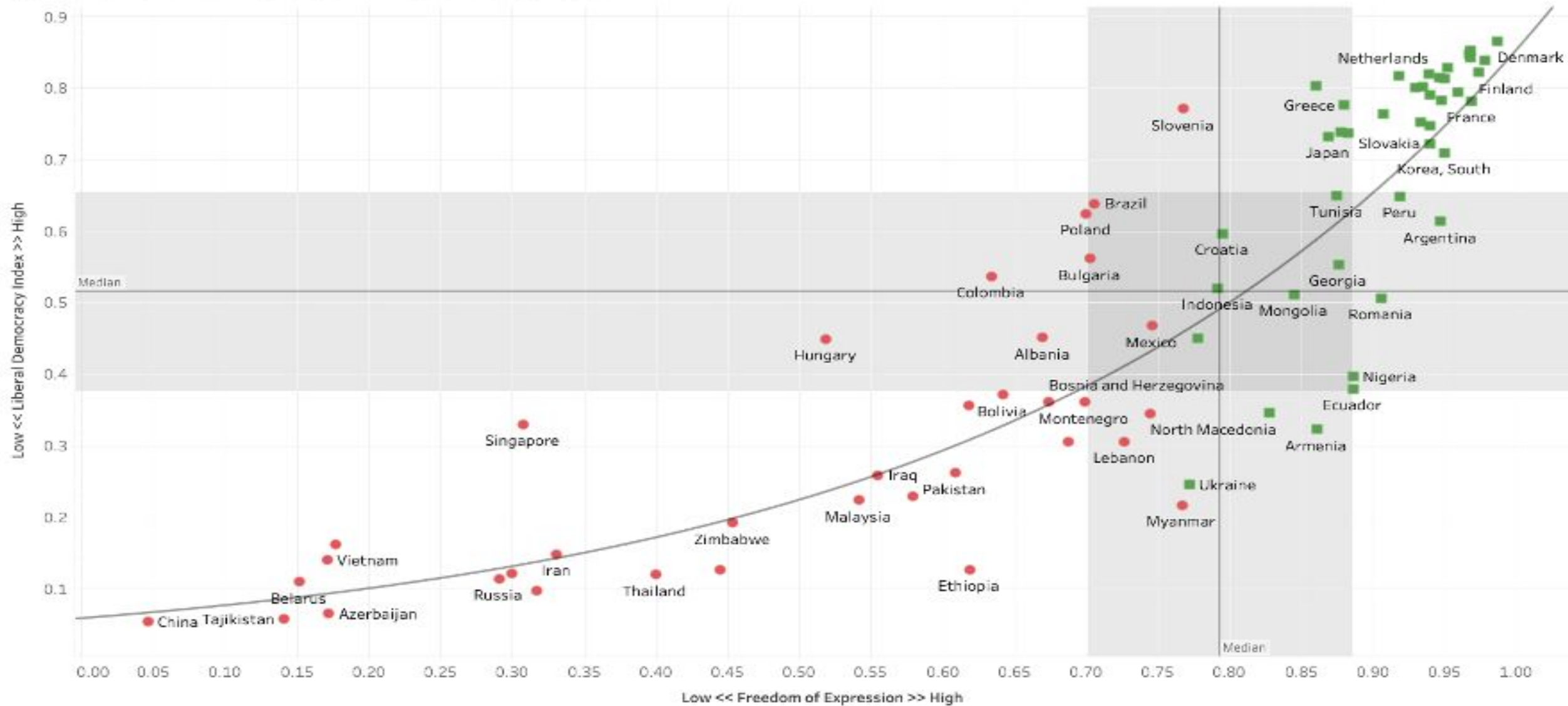


Figure 3.4: Liberal democracy and freedom of expression



Note: Vertical axis: Liberal Democracy 0-100-point index, 2020. Horizontal axis: Freedom of Expression and Alternative Sources of Information Index

Sources: Varieties of Democracy 11.1 dataset <https://www.v-dem.net/en/>.

Trust dimensions	GLOBAL GOVERNANCE	NATIONAL GOVERNANCE	SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & PRIVATE SECTOR	MEDIA AND TRADITIONAL GROUPS	OUT-GROUP TRUST	IN-GROUP TRUST
	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	0.80				
The World Bank	0.79					
NATO	0.78					
International Criminal Court (ICC)	0.77					
The World Trade Organization (WTO)	0.77					
The United Nations	0.71					
The World Health Organization (WHO)	0.69					
Major Regional organization	0.62					
Parliament		0.77				
The Government		0.76				
Political Parties		0.75				
Elections		0.67				
The Civil Service		0.66				
Justice System/Courts		0.64				
Police		0.58				
The Women´s Movement			0.73			
The Environmental Protection Movement			0.72			
Charitable or humanitarian organizations			0.69			
Universities			0.57			
Banks			0.46			
Major Companies			0.45			
The Press				0.68		
Television				0.65		
Religious organizations				0.58		
Armed Forces				0.57		
Labor Unions				0.42		
People of another nationality					0.82	
People of another religion					0.79	
People you meet for the first time					0.74	
Most people can be trusted					0.46	
How much you trust your family						0.79

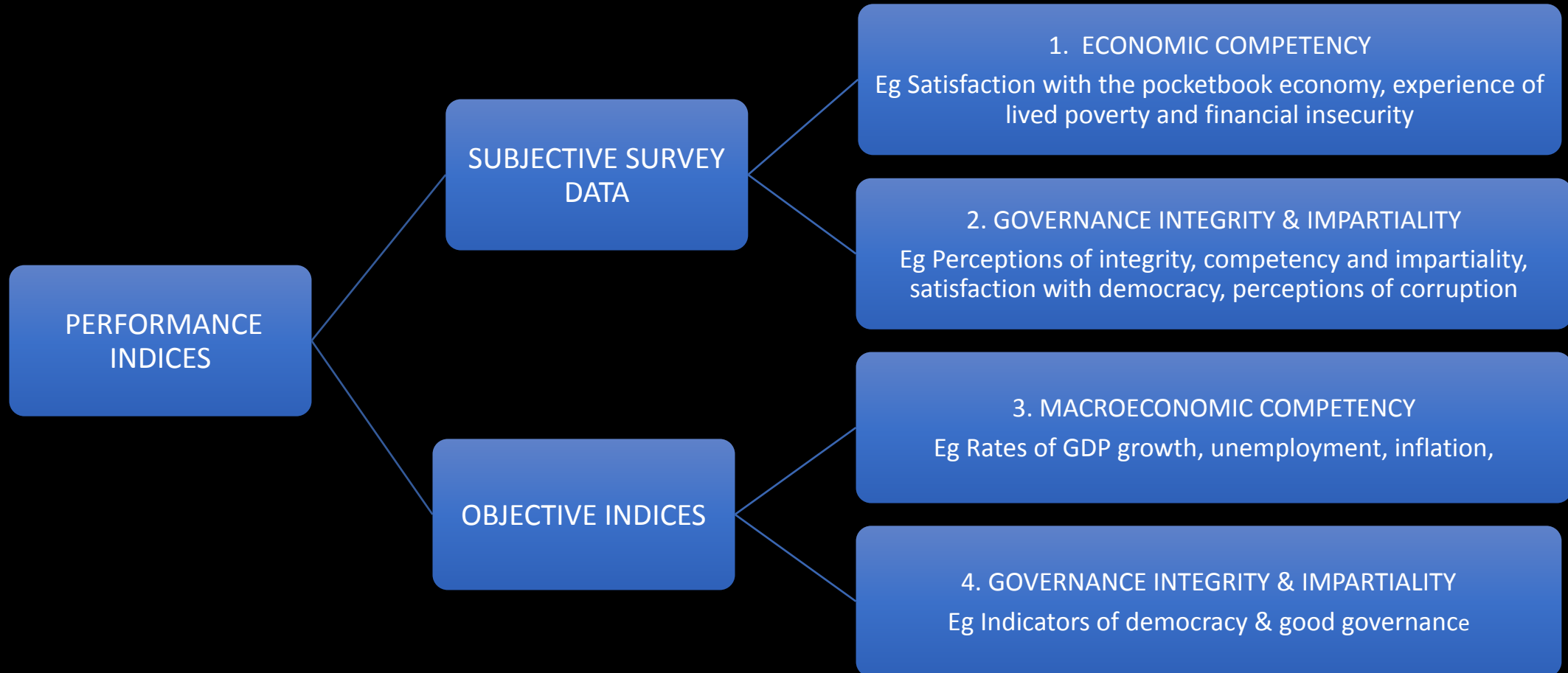
Analytical strategy

1. Measure levels of public trust in diverse agents & societies

2. Gauge subjective perceptions and objective indices of agency performance

3. Compare whether public trust correlates with performance indices

Types of performance benchmarks



Structure

- I. Conceptual & theoretical framework
- II. Research design and data
- III. Results and analysis**
- IV. Conclusions



Table 6.1: Perceived quality of governance and political trust

		OPEN SOCIETIES				CLOSED SOCIETIES			
		B	SE	Beta	Sig.	B	SE	Beta	Sig.
PERCEIVED QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE	Satisfaction with the political system (low to high)	1.50	0.04	0.22	***	2.02	0.05	0.28	***
	How democratically this country is being governed today	0.67	0.04	0.09	***	0.67	0.05	0.09	***
	Perceptions of corruption in the country (low to high)	-0.85	0.04	-0.11	***	-1.15	0.04	-0.14	***
	Involved in corruption: State authorities (low to high)	-2.84	0.15	-0.12	***	-4.58	0.16	-0.18	***
	Involved in corruption: Local authorities (low to high)	-1.80	0.16	-0.08	***	-1.60	0.17	-0.06	***
	Involved in corruption: Civil service (low to high)	-1.36	0.15	-0.06	***	-0.61	0.16	-0.02	***
	Frequency ordinary people pay a bribe (low to high)	-1.54	0.11	-0.08	***	1.09	0.11	0.05	***
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS	Income scale (low to high)	-0.30	0.05	-0.04	***	-0.44	0.05	-0.04	***
	Currently unemployed (0/1)	-0.76	0.33	-0.01	*	-0.46	0.35	-0.01	N/s
	Lived poverty Index (low to high)	0.09	0.01	0.08	***	-0.04	0.01	-0.03	***
	Feel financially secure (low to high)	3.27	0.11	0.15	***	1.19	0.12	0.05	***
	Household financial security (low to high)	0.35	0.10	0.02	***	0.78	0.11	0.03	***
	Satisfaction with financial situation (low to high)	0.24	0.04	0.03	***	0.10	0.04	0.01	*
	Standard of living compared with your parents (Worse/Better)	0.66	0.12	0.03	***	2.10	0.13	0.08	***
CONTROLS	Sex (male)	-0.13	0.17	0.00	N/s	0.17	0.19	0.00	N/s
	Age (years)	-0.02	0.01	-0.02	***	-0.04	0.01	-0.03	***
	Education (Low to high scale)	-1.41	0.13	-0.06	***	-2.35	0.13	-0.09	***
	News media use (newspapers, TV News, radio news)	0.07	0.03	0.01	**	0.27	0.03	0.04	***
	Social media use (internet, FB/Twitter, mobile phone, email)	0.10	0.02	0.03	***	-0.17	0.02	-0.05	***
	(Constant)	51.30	0.97			66.50	1.04		
	Number of respondents	29,432				31,380			
	Number of Societies	42				38			
	Adjusted R ²	0.31				0.37			

Note: The model uses OLS regression with individual-level survey data in 80 societies where the dependent variable is the EVS/WVS Trust in Government standardized index (including government, parliament, parties, and the civil service). The table presents the beta (B), standard error (SE), standardized beta coefficients, and their significance (P.). All models were tested and found to be free of problems of multicollinearity. P. *.05 **=.01 ***=.001 N/s not significant

Source: European Values Survey/World Values Survey wave 7 (2017-2021).

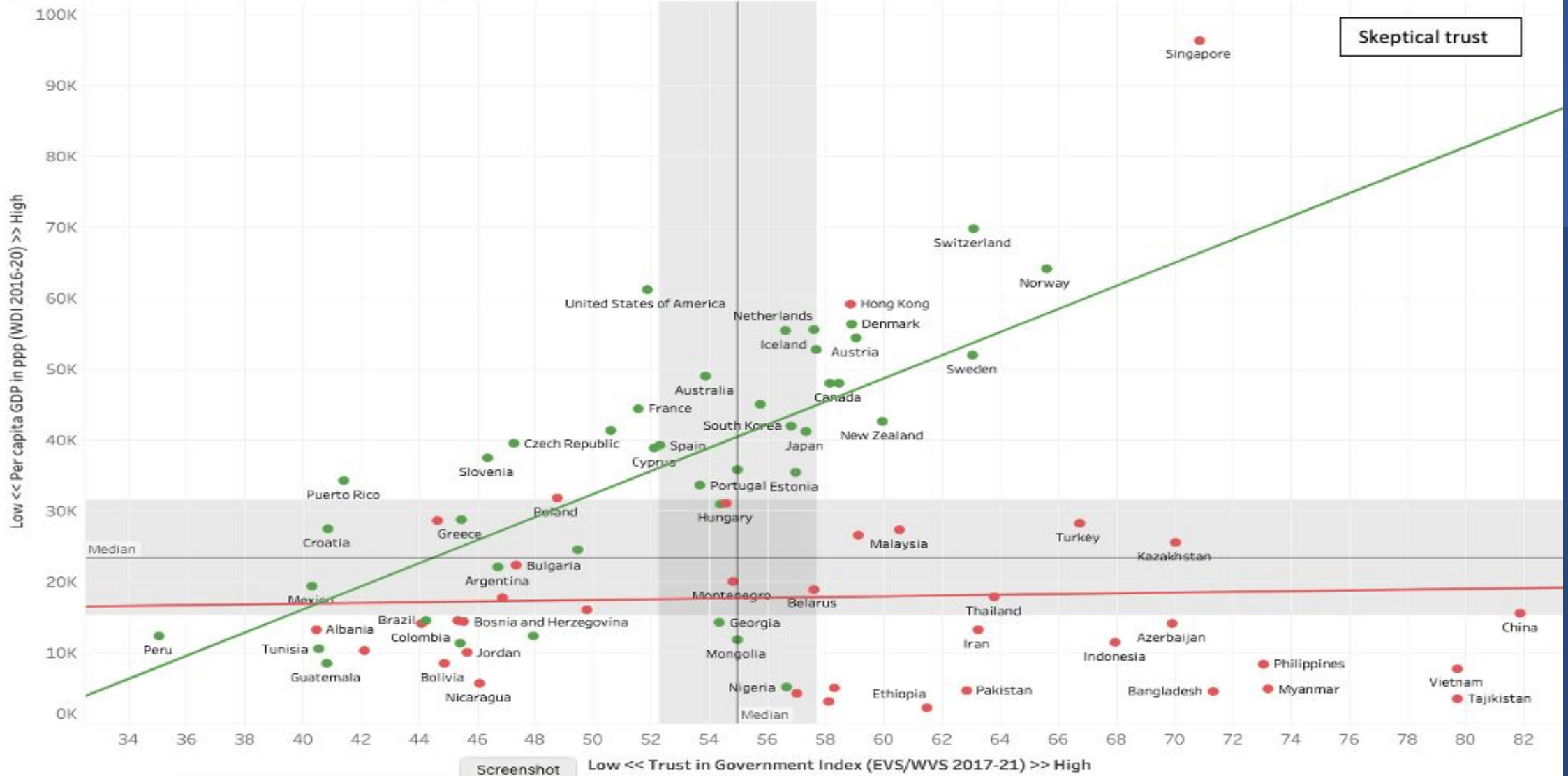
Table 5.1: Bivariate developmental indicators and trust in government

Indices	Open societies		Closed societies		Definitions
	Correlation (R)	Significance (P)	Correlation (R)	Significance (P)	
ECONOMIC INDICATORS					
Economic growth	.287	*	.233	N/s	Mean annual % change in GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Parity (current international \$)
Economic development	.686	***	.112	N/s	GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2017 international \$)
Unemployment	-.293	*	-.498	***	The total unemployed as a % of the total labor force
Inflation	-.152	N/s	.094	N/s	Mean annual % change in consumer prices
Income <u>share</u> for highest 20%	-.490	***	-.021	N/s	Income share held by highest 20%
Income <u>share</u> for lowest 20%	.445	**	.331	N/s	Income share held by lowest 20%
SOCIAL INDICATORS					
Secondary education attainment	.583	***	-.188	N/s	Educational attainment, at least completed lower secondary, population 25+, total (%) (cumulative)
Homicide rate	-.599	***	-.153	N/s	Intentional homicides (per 100,000 people)
Longevity rate	.259	N/s	-.108	N/s	Life expectancy at birth, total (years)
Maternal mortality rate	-.005	N/s	.118	N/s	Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)
Number of societies	25-43		18-39		
Number of respondents	29,432		31,380		

Notes: The table presents the simple bivariate correlation coefficients between the mean Trust in Government 100-point standardized index (including government, parliament, parties, and the civil service) for each society, from the EVS/WVS, and macro-level socio-economic indicators, lagged mean for 2016-2019, from the World Development Indicators. Open and Closed societies were categorized by the V-Dem Freedom of Expression Index (dichotomized). Sig.*=.05 **=.01 ***=.001 N/s not significant.

Sources: European Values Survey/World Values Survey wave 7 (2017-2021)/ World Development Indicators (World Bank).

Figure 5.3: Level of economic development and trust in government



Note: The horizontal axis is the mean EVS/WVS Trust in Government standardized scale (including government, parliament, parties and the civil service) for each society. The vertical axis is the mean level of development (per capita GDP in ppp) derived from the World Development Indicators (World Bank). Open and Closed societies are categorized by the V-Dem Freedom of Expression Index (dichotomized). **Source:** European Values Survey/World Values Survey wave 7 (2017-2021).

Trust in government is positively linked with good governance & democracy in open societies, but not in closed societies

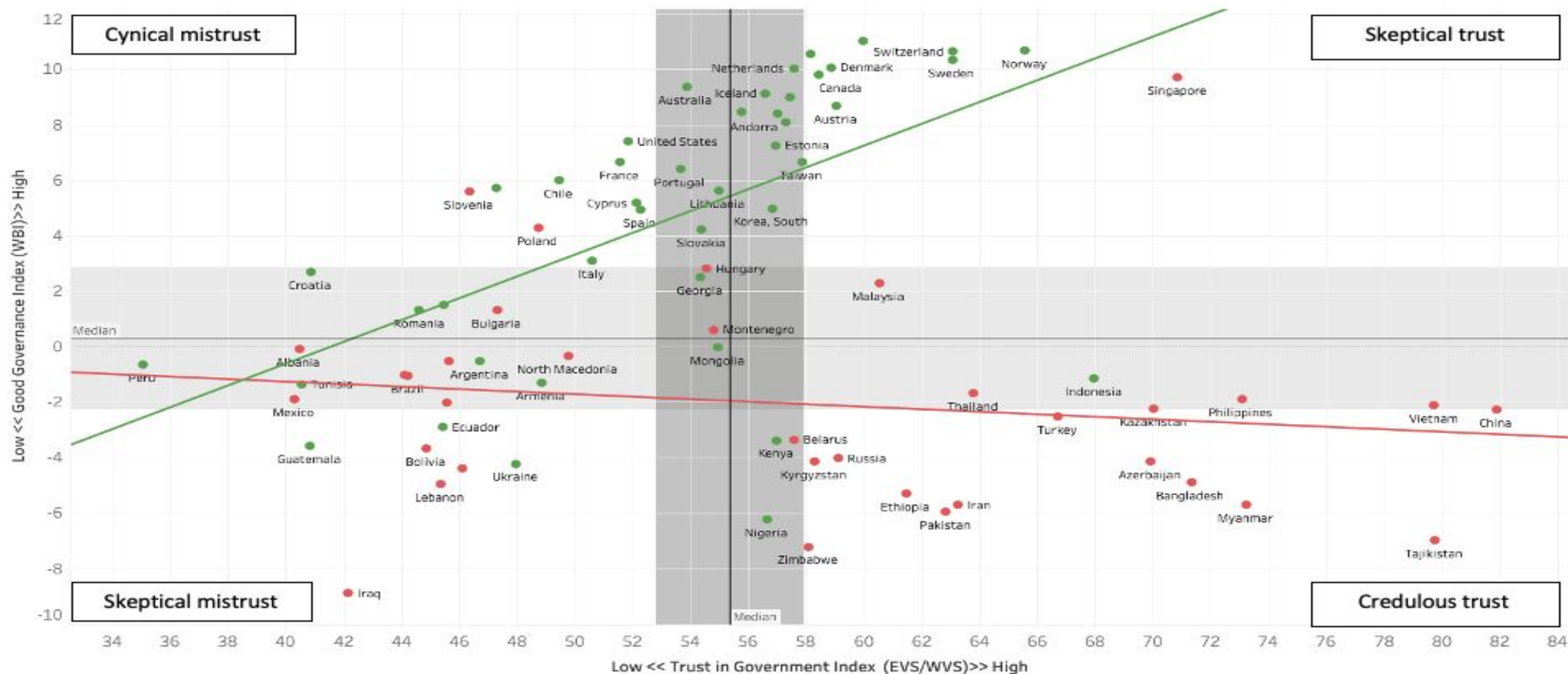
Table 6.1: Quality of good governance and societal-level trust in government

	Open societies		Closed societies	
	R	P	R	P
Good Governance Index (WB)	0.558	***	-0.147	N/s
Control of corruption (WB)	0.581	***	-0.013	N/s
Government effectiveness (WB)	0.589	***	0.046	N/s
Political stability (WB)	0.398	**	-0.059	N/s
Rule of law (WB)	0.579	***	0.004	N/s
Regulatory quality (WB)	0.514	***	-0.140	N/s
Voice and accountability (WB)	0.520	***	-0.603	***
Liberal democracy index (V-Dem)	0.365	**	-0.639	***
Number of societies	43		35	

Notes: Simple correlations between the EVS/WVS Trust in Government 100-point standardized index (for parliaments, government, political parties and the civil service) and macro-level indices of good governance in a society, matched to the year of the survey. R=Correlation coefficient P *** Coefficient is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed). ** Correlation coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Open and closed societies are categorized based on the V-Dem Freedom of Expression and Alternative Sources of Information index (dichotomized around the mean).

Source: European Values Survey/World Values Survey Wave 7; WB World Bank Institute Worldwide Governance Indicators; V-Dem Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem 11.0)

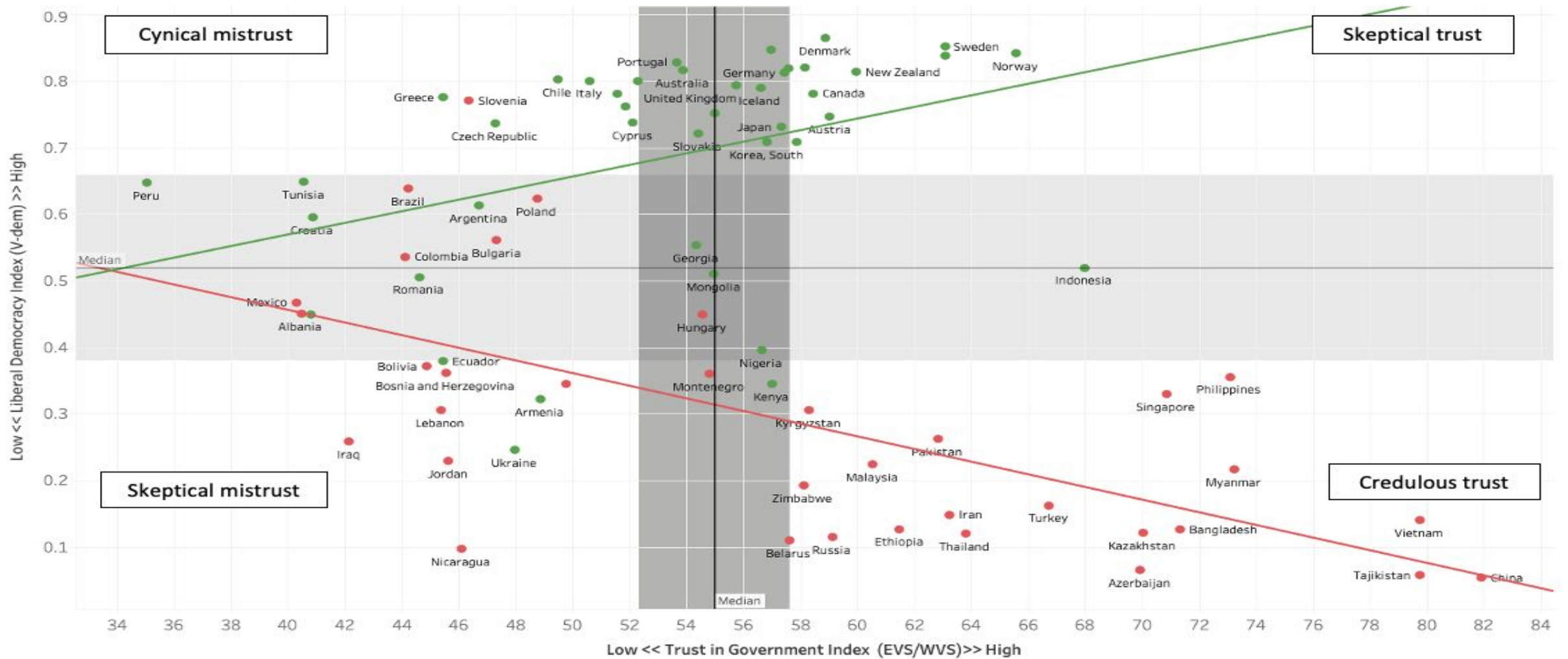
Figure 6.1: The WBI Good Governance Index and trust in government



Notes: The horizontal axis is the EVS/WVS Trust in Government standardized scale (including government, parliament, parties, and the civil service). The vertical axis shows the Good Governance Index as derived from the six World Governance Indicators (World Bank Institute). Open Societies (Green) and Closed Societies (Red) are categorized by the V-Dem Freedom of Expression Index (dichotomized).

Source: European Values Survey/World Values Survey wave 7 in 80 societies (2017-2021); <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/>.

Figure 6.2: The V-Dem Liberal Democracy Index and trust in government



Notes: The horizontal axis is the EVS/WVS Trust in Government standardized scale (including government, parliament, parties, and the civil service). The vertical axis shows the Liberal Democracy Index as derived from the Varieties of Democracy project (V-Dem-11). Open Societies (Green) and Closed Societies (Red) are categorized by the V-Dem Freedom of Expression Index (dichotomized).

Source: European Values Survey/World Values Survey wave 7 in 80 societies (2017-2021); <https://www.v-dem.net/en/>

Structure

- I. Conceptual & theoretical framework
- II. Research design and data
- III. Results and analysis
- IV. Conclusions



Key claims

1. We should challenge normative assumptions about trust's beneficial consequences and focus on government trustworthiness
2. Trust is always valuable for governments by inducing compliance – but not always for citizens.
3. Erroneous beliefs involve both cynical mistrust *and* credulous trust
4. Due to individual-level cognitive skills *and* societal-level information environments
5. Need to build government trustworthiness: competency, integrity, impartiality- and institutional guardrails

