

Trust in Governmental Institutions:
How Government Performance Matters

Frederik Godt Hansen

Trust in Governmental Institutions:
How Government Performance Matters

PhD Dissertation

Politica

©Forlaget Politica and the author 2021

ISBN: 978-87-7335-280-9

Cover: Svend Siune

Print: Fællestrykkeriet, Aarhus University

Submitted August 31, 2021

The public defense takes place November 12, 2021

Published November 2021

Forlaget Politica

c/o Department of Political Science

Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University

Bartholins Allé 7

DK-8000 Aarhus C

Denmark

Acknowledgments

It is no secret that writing a PhD is a challenging task with a lot of ups and downs. Also more challenging than I expected beforehand. Indeed, it would not have been possible without the help, support, encouragement, and inspiration from colleagues, friends, and family. Moreover, these people also made the process an immensely enjoyable affair. I am happy to get this opportunity to express my gratitude.

I have been very fortunate to have Martin Bækgaard, Lene Aarøe, and Lasse Laustsen as supervisors. I am thankful for your unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the PhD. You have provided me with outstanding feedback which has improved the quality of my research tremendously. You also reminded me when to forget about work, and you were there with unconditional help and support when I needed you the most to help me through the hard periods of the PhD. I will always be incredibly thankful for that. I cannot imagine more competent and warm supervisors.

Moreover, I feel privileged to have been a part of the Department of Political Science at Aarhus University. It has always been a pleasure to work at the department where I have developed both personally and professionally as a researcher due to amazing and inspiring colleagues. The lockdown caused by Covid-19 made me remember the value of daily life at the department. In particular, it has been a true pleasure to be a part of the section of Public Administration (and Leadership) with so many skilled, inspiring, and warm people. I have always enjoyed our weekly meetings where I have benefited greatly from your careful and highly valuable comments on my project and papers. It has been a huge inspiration for me to see how much you care about your colleagues' work. There are many people from the section that I would like to thank, in particular Aske, Mathias, Stefan, Julian, Niels Bjørn, Jørgen, Sarah, Amalie, Karoline, Emily, Mathilde, Clara, Anders, and Mads Pieter for many good - academic and non-academic - conversations.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Gregg Van Ryzin for inviting me to Rutgers University for a longer research stay. Even though I never boarded the plane due to unforeseen circumstances (corona...), I am very grateful for your help and willingness to accommodate me at your institution. I hope we can arrange a stay in the future.

I would also like to thank my office mates Arzoo Rafiqi and Danielle May. Sharing an office with you have been a great pleasure and privilege. To the administration at the Department of Political Science, a heartfelt thanks to you all for making life at the department much more comfortable and for helping with all kinds of administrative tasks without hesitation.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my friends and family. To my family, you have always supported me in pursuing my dreams with infinite love and you are always there when I need you. I cannot express how grateful I am. To Dylan McKay, thank you for the countless of fun experiences we have had together over the years. Anders, Nicholas, and Niels, you guys definitely make me forget work when I need it the most - thank you for that! Food Club, I am equally grateful for our evenings together playing board games or watching more or less entertaining Netflix series. I enjoy every moment. Finally, Amalie, I am sincerely grateful that you have entered my life. Thank you for your unconditional patience, love, and understanding. I am looking very much forward to our adventures together in the future.

Frederik Godt Hansen
Aarhus, November 2021

Preface

This report provides a summary of my PhD dissertation titled "Trust in Governmental Institutions: How Government Performance Matters" written at the Department of Political Science, Aarhus University. The dissertation consists of this summary report and three individual research papers. The three papers, which are either accepted for publication or prepared for publication in international peer-reviewed journals, are displayed in the table below.

The aim of this summary report is to provide an overall research question and theoretical framework that ties the three papers together. In addition, the summary report gives an overview of the main methodological approach, discuss the broader results and contributions which cuts across papers and aims to provide avenues for important future research.

Table 1. Overview of papers in the dissertation

Paper
A. How Impressions of Public Employees' Warmth and Competence Influence Trust in Government. Published in <i>International Public Management Journal</i> .
B. Can Warm Behavior Mitigate the Negative Effect of Unfavorable Governmental Decisions on Citizens' Trust? Published in <i>Journal of Experimental Political Science</i> .
C. How the Brexit-negotiations Shaped Political Trust. <i>Unpublished manuscript</i> .

Contents

Acknowledgments	1
Preface	3
1 Introduction	7
1.1 Overview of papers and structure of the dissertation	11
2 Theoretical background	15
2.1 Definition of trust in government	16
2.2 Core explanations of trust in government	19
2.3 Existing performance explanations of trust in government	21
2.4 Unresolved issues regarding the performance-trust link	27
2.4.1 Street-level performance in citizen-state interactions	27
2.4.2 Performance in the political decision-making process	31
2.5 Overview of the dissertation’s theoretical model	33
3 Research designs and data	35
3.1 Overview of studies, designs, and data	35
3.2 The performance-trust link and selection	38
3.2.1 Using randomization and survey experiments	40
3.2.2 Using time and difference-in-differences	42
3.3 Concluding thoughts on internal and external validity	44
3.4 Measurement of citizens’ trust in government	45
3.4.1 Trust-measures and the dimensionality of trust in government	48
4 Results	53
4.1 Key findings: The domain of bureaucracy	53
4.1.1 To what extent do bureaucrats’ warmth and competence influence citizens’ trust in governmental institutions?	53

4.1.2	Does warmth moderate the impact of outcome favorability on citizens' trust?	59
4.2	Key findings: The domain of politics	61
5	Concluding discussion	69
5.1	Methodological caveats and ideas for solutions	71
5.2	What's next? Implications and further directions for future research .	75
	References	80
	English summary	101
	Dansk resumé	103

Chapter 1

Introduction

In every kind of relationship we can think of, say for instance with friends or partners, we can intuitively agree that trust is essential for a good relationship. Trust makes individuals rely on the other part, and we assume that people keep their commitments without having to invest in controlling or monitoring the other part (Fukuyama 1995).

In the same way, trust is vital for the relationship between citizens and governmental actors and institutions. Citizens are engaged in a relationship with governmental institutions because democracy requires a certain amount of delegation of authority from citizens to government. Citizens elect politicians to formulate policies in their interests, and in turn, the public administration and civil servants implement or regulate policies formulated on the political level (Strøm 2000). Given this chain of delegation with citizens as the ultimate principals, the legitimacy of governmental decisions and successful governance fundamentally relies on citizens having positive trust judgments about those who govern (Almond and Verba 1963; Dalton 2004; OECD 2019). That is lack of trust in government compromises citizens' willingness to comply with the regulations and respond effectively to the public policies that have to succeed to secure good governance (Scholz and Lubell 1998; Marien and Hooghe 2011). Trust even has a significant impact on our daily lives as the delivery of public services runs more effectively and with less friction when citizens enter encounters with public organizations and employees with a positive trust attitude towards government (Cooper, Knotts, and Brennan 2008).

While trust promotes good governance, proper functioning of the chain of delegation entails some measure of mistrust or skepticism in cases of ineffective government performance as it drives accountability by motivating change towards good governance (Rosanvallon 2008; Norris 2011; Zmerli and Van der Meer 2017). To illustrate that trust is a double-edged sword, effective governance of the pandemic of coronavirus disease

2019 demanded relationships between political leaders and citizens essentially characterized by trust. Higher levels of citizen trust in public institutions are a key contributor to public compliance with the health policies and tight restrictions that governments all over the world have enforced in response to the pandemic (Weinberg 2020; Olsen and Hjorth 2020; Van Bavel et al. 2020; Nielsen and Lindvall 2021). Yet, “*too* much trust may lead citizens to (naively) believe that government is effectively managing the pandemic when it is not” (Devine et al. 2020b, 4; emphasis in original). Put simply, trust has to be earned. This dissertation takes its point of departure in this notion and aims to advance our overall understanding of how the actions of government and the public sector influence citizens’ trust judgments about governmental institutions.

As a result of the implications for the quality of representative democracy, scholars have paid attention to explanations of higher levels of trust for decades (Miller 1974; Citrin 1974; Mishler and Rose 1997; Levi and Stoker 2000; Van Ryzin 2011; Newton, Stolle, and Zmerli 2018). Although many factors are considered, the notion that trust in government should be earned and thus varies as a function of citizens’ broader performance evaluations features well with the current literature.

In recent reviews of the literature on trust, the performance of government and the public sector (or whether public institutions and actors meet expected goals) is identified as one of the most studied and promising explanations for changes in trust (Zmerli and Van der Meer 2017; Citrin and Stoker 2018). While scholars have consistently identified and examined how performance is positively correlated with citizen trust in government, the main focus has been on perceptions of or the quality of government outputs and outcomes (e.g., Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval 2003; Kumlin 2004; Christensen and Laegreid 2005; Vigoda-Gadot 2007; Van Ryzin 2007, 2011). Indeed, public sector modernization reforms have focused extensively on tangible outcomes as the way to overcome problems with distrustful citizens (Moynihan 2008; Van de Walle 2016). Moreover, it is often aggregated or very general accounts of performance that are studied. For instance, research has examined how trust is influenced by macroeconomic outcomes such as the unemployment rate (e.g., Van Erkel and Van der Meer 2016) or the impact of general perceptions of public service quality (e.g., Van Ryzin 2015).

However, citizens might not have accurate information about government output and outcomes (e.g., accurate information about the unemployment rate). Even if citizens have access to performance information, the link to trust in government is not straightforward due to psychological biases in the interpretation of such information (Yang and Holzer 2006; Hvidman and Andersen 2016; Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2016; Boswell 2018).

Although the causal link between government performance and trust has been questioned (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003), this dissertation suggests that the performance-trust link might be clearer if we, to a larger extent, recognize alternative ways for citizens to evaluate the actions of government besides rating performance based on (aggregated and overall perceptions of) outputs and outcomes. This is particularly the case if we consider that citizens also have more or less direct experiences with both bureaucrats and politicians which may shape performance perceptions and subsequently influence trust judgments (Berg and Johansson 2020). Consequently, this dissertation argues that extant literature has an narrow understanding of performance, fails to take other dimensions of performance into account, and hence is likely to underestimate the impact of performance on trust.

Even though such other understandings of and approaches to how performance is linked to trust are not completely ignored in the current literature, they have received far less scholarly attention. This dissertation aims to contribute to broadening the rather narrow understanding of how the performance of government and the public sector influences citizen trust in government, and fundamentally argues that the effects are likely to be more wide ranging than current studies have established. More specifically, I seek to demonstrate that citizens' trust judgments about government are influenced by how citizens evaluate performance in two situations that have received little attention in the current literature: specific citizen-state interactions and the political decision-making process. Overall, this dissertation aims to show that citizens' trust in government is influenced by performance experienced in what I label "the domain of bureaucracy" (i.e., citizen-state interactions) and "the domain of politics" (i.e., the political decision-making process).

First, in the domain of bureaucracy, citizens frequently interact with public street-level bureaucrats such as teachers, nurses, police officers, or municipal workers in the delivery of public services (Lipsky 1980). As mentioned earlier, trust is important in such encounters because it can give street-level bureaucrats room for the bureaucratic discretion and flexibility needed to make decisions and deliver services important to citizens (Carpenter 2001; Lee and Van Ryzin 2020). Yet, these citizen-state encounters are arguably an important source of performance perceptions that subsequently might have an effect on broader trust judgments. If the perceived quality of public services indeed influences citizen trust, we should expect that citizens' experiences of bureaucratic behavior in specific citizen-state interactions is an important factor. In the words of Berg and Johansson, "the service experience builds trust through the relational service interaction," which is "in contrast to the rational judgment of service performance via

performance information” (Berg and Johansson 2020, 292; see also Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003).

In the first part of the dissertation, I build on this idea to conduct rigorous empirical investigations into how specific bureaucratic encounters form citizen trust in governmental institutions. I label this kind of performance ”street-level performance”, as it indicates how citizens perceive the performance of street-level bureaucrats. I put forward and test the argument that public employees’ performance in encounters with citizens not only influences citizens’ trust in that particular public employee but also broader trust in both administrative and political institutions of government. This underlines how citizens’ everyday encounters with street-level bureaucrats have the potential to impact general trust judgments because the interaction gives a concrete picture of how government as a whole is functioning. That is, trust evaluations can extend beyond the people directly responsible. Yet, before these interactions can influence citizen trust, we need to know how citizens assess and judge bureaucrats (de Boer 2020). Hence, as explained in more detail in Chapter 2, the dissertation draws on insights from social psychology about how people generally form impressions upon encountering others to make this contribution (e.g., Wojciszke, Bazinska, and Jaworski 1998; Fiske et al. 2002; Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007).

Second, in the domain of politics, current studies leave out an important aspect of how citizens might evaluate the performance of politicians. An inherent and fully legitimate part of a politician’s job description is to provide citizens with favorable decisions and outcomes that fit the policy preferences of the electorate (Popkin 1991; Allen and Birch 2015). While citizens might very well base their trust on evaluations of policy outcomes and outputs – such as the national economy – these outcomes are, at least partly, a result of a political decision-making process. In a democratic society, it is fully legitimate and in fact expected that politicians engage in political discussions and interact with each other when deciding which decisions and policies to make, resulting in policy outputs and outcomes. On the other hand, citizens also expect progress in the decision-making process. Thus, citizens, I argue, will punish politicians with lower trust if they do not get closer to a final decision. Building on insights from procedural fairness studies (Tyler 1990; Van Ryzin 2011; Bøggild 2016), this dissertation argues that citizens evaluate the performance and behavior of politicians when they make political decisions. In this part of the dissertation, I test whether citizens change their trust in government – in particular their trust in political institutions - according to whether the process reflects that politicians work towards outcomes.

In sum, this dissertation’s overall purpose is to advance our understanding of how

the performance of politicians and bureaucrats influences citizen trust in government. Therefore, it aims to shed light on the following overall research question: *How do citizen-state interactions and the political decision-making process influence citizens' trust in governmental institutions?*

These two explanations both originate from the central view in the literature that different aspects of government performance influence citizen trust in governmental institutions. Taken together, they show the importance of examining the behavior of both bureaucrats and politicians if we want to understand how citizens make trust judgments about government. The ambition of this dissertation is, thus, not to test the explanations against each other but to show how they both, in their own sense, have independent explanatory power of citizens' trust in governmental institutions.

1.1 Overview of papers and structure of the dissertation

In addition to this summary report, the dissertation consists of three individual research papers. While each individual paper contributes on its own to certain parts of the literature, I believe that this dissertation – by presenting evidence across papers – contributes to connecting the findings and answers the overall research question. Thus, each of the papers provides key insights into the overarching research question guiding this dissertation. Taken together, the papers advance our understanding of how the behavior of bureaucrats and politicians influences citizen trust in government.

Figure 1 provides a summary of the dissertation's overall argument and places the individual research papers in relation to each other. As Figure 1 shows, the argument of the dissertation can be divided into two parts: “the domain of bureaucracy” and “the domain of politics.” The two domains are separated by a dotted line to indicate that I test them discretely. At the same time, they are connected in the sense that they both relate to citizen trust in government. In sum, the figure neatly illustrates the argument of this dissertation: that we cannot fully understand citizen trust in government if we do not consider both how citizens experience the bureaucracy and how they perceive the behavior of politicians. This is not to say that the model presented here accounts for all possible explanations of trust in government, but rather to state that horizontal trust between citizens and government is created by both bureaucracy and politics.

Papers A and B collectively examine the influence of bureaucratic behavior in citizen-state interactions. They are both concerned with how citizens' assessments of bureaucrats' performance in such interactions subsequently influence trust judgments. The-

oretically, they both do so by drawing on insights from the psychology of impression formation (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007). This literature demonstrates that citizens assess bureaucrats' performance on two fundamental dimensions: warmth and competence. Thus, as explained in more detail in Chapter 2, these two dimensions are important factors of street-level performance. In particular, **Paper A** examines how traits related to bureaucrats' competence and warmth, respectively, influence trust in both political and administrative institutions of government.

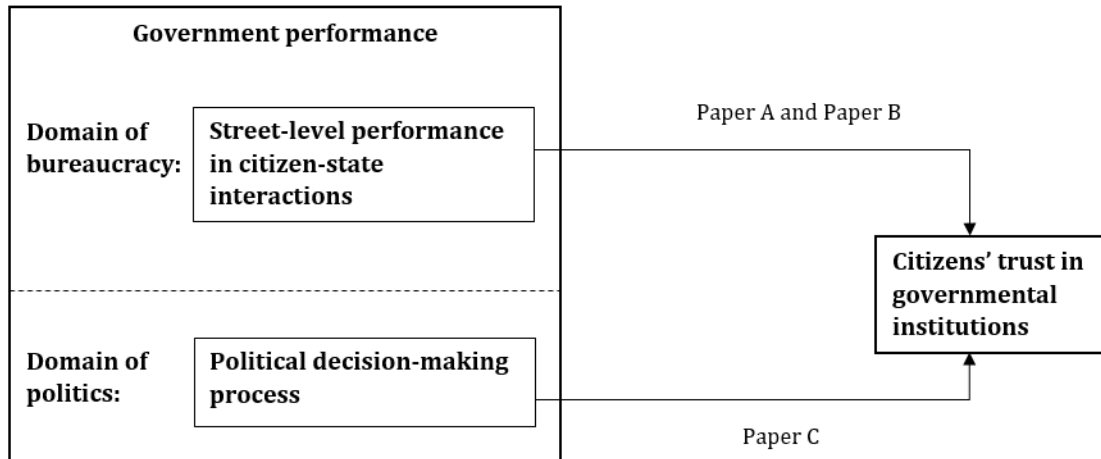
However, warmth-related traits - such as friendliness - might be more important for trust judgments depending on the context. An important contextual factor is the outcome of the interaction with the public sector. Often, these interactions end with a decision made by the bureaucrat that has implications for the citizen. Even though citizens might accept governmental decisions based on whether they maximize policy preferences, scholars have emphasized the social context and how people are concerned with other factors than the outcome favorability (Hibbing and Alford 2004). Therefore, **Paper B** tests the argument that warm behavior by bureaucrats can mitigate the negative effect of outcome favorability on citizen trust.

Another broader contextual factor is the kind of public service delivery under discussion. Even though this is not a factor about which I directly theorize in either **Paper A** or **Paper B**, the two papers test whether the influence of warmth-related traits is generalizable across different kinds of services. In addition, **Paper A** addresses the cultural context and examines the influence of street-level performance in both a Danish and US context.

Paper C highlights the political side of the model and investigates whether citizen trust is affected by how politicians perform when making decisions with important implications for citizens. Empirically, **Paper C** tells the story of how political events in the Brexit negotiation process influenced trust in Parliament and satisfaction with democracy in Great Britain. It suggests that how politicians behave in such a decision-making process has an impact on citizens' trust judgments. I will argue that this finding tells us something broader about the influence of the political process on citizen trust.

Finally, the papers focus on different objects of trust. That is, the papers do not all consider trust in government broadly or measure trust in a broad range of governmental institutions. In particular, **Paper A** emphasizes trust in civil servants and administrative institutions but goes on to investigate whether it spills over to trust in political institutions. **Paper B** examines trust in bureaucrats and the local government (the municipality), while **Paper C** focuses on trust in politicians and general satisfaction with democracy.

Figure 1. Structure of the dissertation’s papers



The rest of this summary report is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework used to investigate the overall research question. The chapter starts by defining the core concepts of trust in government and performance followed by a more detailed description of how citizen-state interactions and the political decision-making process, respectively, are expected to influence citizens’ trust in government. This includes a more detailed introduction to the psychological concepts of warmth and competence, which play a central role in the dissertation’s argument. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the overall empirical strategy including considerations on research designs and data. The dissertation relies on data from both online survey experiments and large-N representative surveys over time. The dissertation also uses data from different country contexts, and in some instances, I can compare the results of surveys conducted in Denmark and the US. The main findings of the dissertation are presented in Chapter 4. The chapter contains important findings from the three research papers as well as evidence about trust measurements that were not included in the dissertation’s papers. Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by discussing the contributions, implications, and limitations of my research project. Furthermore, ideas for future research are presented and discussed.

Chapter 2

Theoretical background

This chapter presents the dissertation's overall theoretical framework. It aims to give a general understanding of the current state of the literature and lay the groundwork for my contribution to it. Theoretically, the dissertation contributes with a better understanding of how the performance of both bureaucrats and politicians influence citizens' trust in government. As laid out in the introduction, the dissertation distinguishes between how street-level performance in citizen-state interactions can influence citizens' trust and whether the performance of politicians in the decision-making process is crucial for citizens' trust levels. Both parts build on trust being strongly linked to the performance of government actors and institutions. Before I present these theoretical arguments in more detail, I start the chapter by conceptualizing government performance and trust in government. Then I build on this conceptualization to develop my arguments about how the domains of bureaucracy and politics, respectively, are connected to citizens' trust. To do so, I draw on insights from social psychology to develop an argument that citizens' overall trust in government is influenced by perceptions of the warmth and competence of the bureaucrats they encounter. On the political side of the model, I discuss how citizens are also obsessed with how politicians perform while making decisions (i.e., in the decision-making process) and not only care about final outcomes when evaluating their trust in government.

2.1 Definition of trust in government

Definition of trust. Trust in government is an ambiguous and contested concept, and even though a common definition has been attempted in the literature, the field is plagued by a wide variation of definitions (Zmerli and Hooghe 2011; Van der Meer 2010; Hetherington 2005; Schoorman, Wood, and Breuer 2015). Some scholars argue that this lack of consensus is based on a heavy dependency on standard survey items which are used “without [...] even wondering what [political] trust actually refers to” (Hooghe 2011, 270). However, this is not only a conceptual problem tied to studies on trust in government but also to the conceptual literature on trust as such (PytlikZillig and Kimbrough 2016). In this dissertation, I draw on insights from psychological literature to get a conceptual understanding of trust in government.¹

Building on reviews of the trust literature, there is wide consensus that trust, at its core, is a relational concept (e.g., Rousseau et al. 1998; Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie 2006; Fulmer and Gelfand 2012; Schoorman, Wood, and Breuer 2015; PytlikZillig and Kimbrough 2016). This means that a trustor (e.g., a citizen) trusts a trustee (e.g., government). When we talk about trust in government, it reflects a vertical relationship between citizens (the one who trusts) and government (the one who is trusted) rather than a horizontal relationship as in the case of social trust. Trust implies interdependence and risk (Grimmelikhuijsen and Knies 2017); otherwise trust is not relevant in a relationship. Concerning interdependence, citizens want government to solve problems and thus depend on government to carry out policies, and at the same time, citizens have to comply with government policies and regulations if they are to have effect and solve citizens’ problems (Grimmelikhuijsen and Knies 2017). The relationship between citizens and government yields a risk since government hold power over citizens, which potentially may be abused. Trust then becomes “the trustor’s willingness to accept that potential” (Hamm, Smidt, and Mayer 2019, 2).

I use a general definition of trust that builds on the psychological definition by Mayer et al. (1995). Specifically, trust in this dissertation is defined as *the willingness to be vulnerable in a relationship* (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995; Schoorman, Wood, and Breuer 2015). This definition makes the central contribution that it distinguishes

1. Theoretically, some scholars argue that we cannot talk about having *trust* in government since citizens do not have enough information about governmental institutions to evaluate whether they should be *trusted* or not (Hardin 2000; Zmerli and Hooghe 2011). Rather, citizens can have confidence in institutions (Hardin 2000, 2013; Schnaudt 2019), and trust in government is at best “a very thin form of trust” (Zmerli and Hooghe 2011, 3). Despite this debate, I follow current studies which consistently use the label “trust” and consider it to be synonymous with “confidence” (Citrin and Stoker 2018).

trust from its antecedents and at the same time considers trust to be a psychological state rather than an action.

From a political science perspective, another often-cited and prominent definition builds on Hardin's "A trusts B to do X" (Hardin 2000). This definition also emphasizes trust as a relational construct and conceptualizes trust as a subjective evaluation of the relationship between citizens and government; often an evaluation of government based on expectations for performance (e.g., Miller 1974; Keele 2007; Hetherington and Rudolph 2008; Van der Meer 2010, 2017). This is a very rational perspective where trust simply reflects perceptions of government's trustworthiness. However, in the case of this dissertation, I am examining a broader relationship. The understanding of trust is broader since I am interested not only in whether citizens have trust in the governmental institutions directly responsible for a given task but also whether the handling of that task has further implications for trust in other governmental institutions. Moreover, this type of definition might be problematic in the sense that it does not clearly distinguish trust from specific drivers (Hamm, Smidt, and Mayer 2019). That is, even though they are tightly connected, "perceived trustworthiness is not trust *per se*" (Grimmelikhuijsen and Knies 2017, 586). For instance, if trust in its definition presupposes the existence of positive expectations for performance, trust itself is not distinguished from the factors that drive trust. Such a definition of trust would exclude that trust can be influenced by individuals' predispositions since the evaluation of government performance as the explanation for trust is a part of the trust concept itself (for a discussion, see Schoorman, Wood, and Breuer 2015).

This model of trust is further substantiated by the argument that trust has three different subfactors or dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral-intentional (Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie 2006). As this dissertation focuses on how government performance affects trust through cognitive judgments of trustworthiness, I have primarily emphasized the cognitive or rational side of trust throughout the dissertation's articles.

Finally, it is important to note that in the model, I do not distinguish conceptually between trust and distrust even though they have different implications (e.g., Cook and Gronke 2005; Van de Walle and Six 2014; Bertsou 2019). This is because I have focused on how to increase *trust* in my studies. Thus, one should remember that low levels on the trust measures in my results are not (necessarily) indicative of distrust as such.

Definition of government. However, with the definition of trust in place, what constitutes *government*? This is central since government can refer to many different institutions and actors (Bovens and Wille 2011). Even though political support and

trust in government are two different concepts, Easton’s distinction between specific and diffuse political support (Easton 1965, 1975) is a good starting point for our discussion. Specific support refers to support of current authorities, while diffuse support refers to a more fundamental support of the regime and democratic principles. In the literature on trust in government, it is not clear whether trust refers to diffuse support (Marien and Hooghe 2011; Jennings et al. 2017) or whether it fits between the two categories (Citrin and Stoker 2018). Norris (2011) made an important contribution by establishing a continuum between the two types of support, ranging from democratic values as the most diffuse to individual actors as the most specific (Norris 2011).

In this dissertation, I follow this idea and consider trust in government to be directed towards certain institutions or objects, which Norris (2011) labels “regime institutions.” Thus, I do not consider very abstract objects such as democratic principles or the political community, and I also exclude individual actors. Therefore, I am particularly interested in governmental institutions *per se* (e.g., parliament or the public administration). Many studies in the field are, in fact, concerned with this kind of trust in government, and with it, I am on par with the current literature.

Following my main interest in trust in governmental institutions *per se*, a key point in this project is that these institutions can be analytically split in two categories: political and administrative institutions (Bouckaert 2012). Extant literature argues for theoretically distinguishing between “representative” and “regulative” institutions (Schnaudt 2019). The former refers to the institutions working with politics and the development of public policies and generally includes institutions such as parliament, government, political parties, and politicians. The latter refers to institutions working with the implementation of these policies and includes the civil service, civil servants, and the police.

An important theoretical underpinning is the different roles institutions play in citizens’ everyday life. Regulative institutions are much closer in proximity to citizens than representative institutions. Citizens have more direct contact and interact more with regulative institutions (e.g., the police), while citizens usually do not interact with, for instance, politicians. This can have further implications for how citizens evaluate different governmental institutions. Trust in regulative institutions might be based on much more direct experiences, while trust in representative institutions might be based on second-hand information from, for example, the media (Nye, Zelikow, and King 1997).²

In this dissertation, I chose the labels “political” (representative) and “adminis-

2. Other reasons include varying purpose or function and varying expectations from citizens (Schnaudt 2019, 42-46).

trative” (regulative) to emphasize that they mark a distinction between politics and administration. However, the institutions included in the two categories are identical to the current literature that employs other labels.

To summarize, trust in government is a relational and psychological concept concerning *the willingness to be vulnerable to political and administrative institutions and actors* (building on the definitions of Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995; Weinberg 2020).

2.2 Core explanations of trust in government

In my understanding of trust, there are two central explanations (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995).³ First, a psychological explanation is that trust is influenced by a general, non-political, and stable predisposition to trust (also sometimes labeled “propensity to trust”), where you either trust or you do not (Rotter 1967). For instance, according to Uslaner (1998), trust is driven by personality traits like optimism or pessimism. In the sociological tradition, scholars also emphasize cultural values and early socialization as the most important driver of trust (e.g., Putnam 1995, 2000; Inglehart 1997; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Brehm and Rahn 1997; Keele 2007).

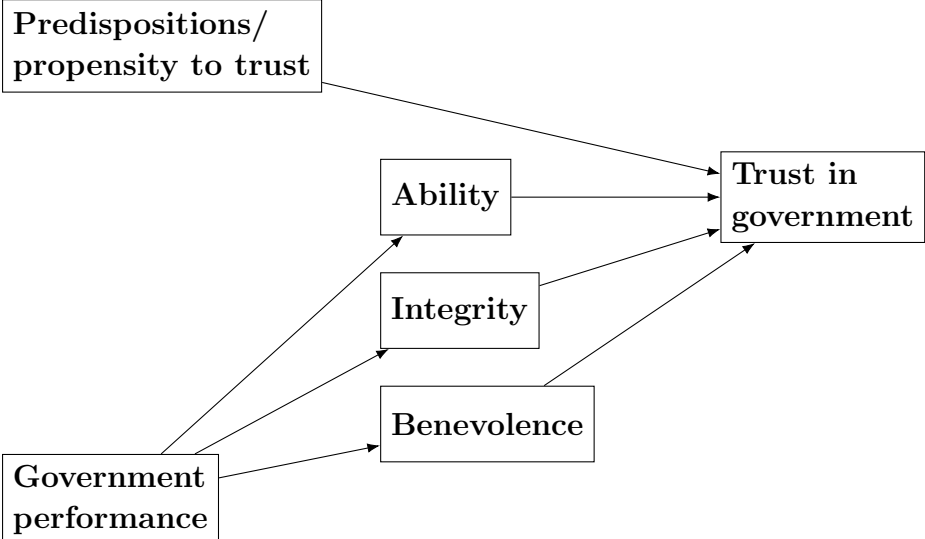
Second, the trustworthiness of government is a predictor of trust judgments towards government. This is generally acknowledged to be a multidimensional evaluation of government’s ability, benevolence, and integrity (McAllister 1995; Rousseau et al. 1998; Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer 2014). Ability relates to the technical skills and capabilities of the trustee to accomplish a task of interest. Benevolence concerns whether the trustee genuinely cares about the trustor’s interests and well-being (e.g., Levi and Stoker 2000). Finally, integrity refers to “the trustee follow[ing] a set of internalized values the trustor finds acceptable” (Hamm, Smidt, and Mayer 2019, 2). This approach to trust explanations is much more rational and depends on how citizens subjectively perceive the relationship they have with government without considering their personal characteristics (see Hardin 2000). Such evaluations of government’s trustworthiness are generally argued to be strongly affected by prior government performance (e.g., Huseby 2000; Van der Meer 2010, 2017; Weinberg 2020). Figure 2 provides an overview of these core explanations of trust in government.

Such rational performance explanations that influence trust through perceptions of trustworthiness are the core starting point for my dissertation. In the next section,

3. Alternative explanations also exist in the literature, for instance theoretical explanations of trust with a background in cognitive psychology, which emphasize heuristic shortcuts (e.g., Thaler and Sunstein 2008).

I define what is meant by the term “government performance” before I give a short review of prior research on the performance-trust link.

Figure 2. Overview of common trust explanations



Note: The figure is based on Mayer et al. (1995), Hamm et al. (Hamm, Smidt, and Mayer 2019), and Weinberg (2020).

2.3 Existing performance explanations of trust in government

Current understandings of performance. Although there are several explanatory factors in relation to trust in government, one - if not *the* - most important driver, broadly speaking, seems to be government performance. As explained earlier, this dissertation takes its starting point in such general performance explanations of trust. However, what constitutes government performance in this dissertation, and how does it relate to the understanding of performance otherwise used in the literature?

Performance in a public setting is a debated concept in the literature. At its core, performance is a question of whether main objectives and goals are achieved (Andersen, Boesen, and Pedersen 2016; Hvidman 2019). Another important feature about performance is that different stakeholders can decide what constitutes good performance (Andersen, Boesen, and Pedersen 2016). For instance, in a public school setting, stakeholders such as teachers and parents might take into account dimensions of performance that are not captured by administrative measures (Favero and Meier 2013). Thus, performance is generally considered a complex and multidimensional concept as the public sector has many multiple and conflicting goals to accomplish (e.g., Boyne 2002, 2003; Chun and Rainey 2005; Andrews, Boyne, and Walker 2011; Andersen, Boesen, and Pedersen 2016).

In a prominent definition, Boyne (2002) conceptualizes performance with reference to multiple dimensions in terms of outputs, outcomes, responsiveness, and efficiency. Scholars, however, also emphasize process as a performance factor (often mentioned in contrast to outcomes) (Selden and Sowa 2004; Van Ryzin 2011; James 2011). The current understanding of performance in the literature on trust in government follow this multidimensional understanding, but mainly considers the dimensions of outputs, outcomes, and process. In this dissertation, I also employ a wide definition of performance, and agree that these are significant dimensions, but also argue that important dimensions are missing in current performance-trust studies. In the next section, I elaborate more on how existing studies have examined the relationship between government performance and trust in government. Section 2.4 presents how this dissertation extends our understanding of how performance can influence citizens' trust.

Literature review of performance explanations. For decades, political scientists have devoted attention to citizens' general attitudes towards governmental institutions - despite using different overlapping concepts (Levi and Stoker 2000; Citrin and Stoker

2018). The primary aim of this section is to give a brief overview of the most prominent findings in the - rather extensive - literature that connects government performance to citizen trust in government. In this review, I have limited attention to studies that have used the terms “trust in government” or “political trust.”⁴

At its core, the relationship between performance and trust builds on the intuitively appealing argument that when government performs better, citizens get more satisfied, which consequently generates greater trust in government (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003). Theoretically, as explained earlier, government performance is expected to affect citizen trust through its influence on the trustworthiness of government (understood as ability, integrity, and benevolence). For instance, if we think of government performance as delivering macroeconomic outcomes, it is expected that this kind of performance predicts citizen trust since a prospering economy is expected to affect citizens’ perceptions of government’s ability.

According to Bouckaert et al. (2002), there are generally two ways to study the performance-trust link. First, micro-performance theory refers to the quality or perception of government service delivery as the main driver of trust in government. Second, macro-performance theory relates variations in trust to macroeconomic indicators such as inflation or unemployment. This idea of producing outcomes to convince skeptical citizens (Van de Walle 2018) parallels the ideas from recent performance management movements that explicitly emphasize that decisions should be based on performance information and oriented towards creating results (i.e., outcomes and outputs) (Behn 2003; Moynihan 2008; Van de Walle and Van Dooren 2008; Van de Walle and Roberts 2008). Publishing performance information should, thus, enable citizens to hold government accountable for results and consequently pressure government to improve performance. This outcome-orientation is believed to be very important to citizens and to create more trust in government.

The table below provides a summary of important examples from the literature of how performance is related to citizen trust. It is structured along themes that reflect the particular aspects of performance that have been studied, particularly outputs, outcomes, and - although to a lesser extent - process performance.

As the extensive list of examples under the header **Economic performance** in Table 2 shows, the most studied type of performance is the state of the national economy. From the related literature on economic voting, we know that voters punish and reward politicians based on economic performance (and partisanship) (e.g., Nannestad and

4. This literature review builds on the review presented in my master’s thesis (Hansen 2019).

Paldam 1994; Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000; Tilley and Hobolt 2011; Bisgaard 2015; Vinæs et al. 2019). However, the literature on trust goes deeper than the accountability mechanism linking economic performance to vote choice and emphasizes a broader set of governmental institutions rather than only citizens' attitudes towards the incumbent.

In relation to this, most studies in broader political science relate government performance to trust in government by examining macroeconomic outputs and outcomes (e.g., Keele 2007; Van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2017). As Tom Van der Meer in a recent review of the literature argues: "That political trust tends to go hand in hand with subjective evaluations of the economy is by now almost a truism" (Van der Meer 2018). However, the same trend is not found in studies examining objective indicators of macroeconomic performance such as GDP or unemployment rates. It is suggested that the decisive factor is whether scholars use cross-sectional or longitudinal designs since citizens appear to make historical rather than social comparisons (e.g., Oskarsson 2010; Van Erkel and Van der Meer 2016). The effect of performance is even more complex and dynamic as citizens base their trust on the aspect of performance they find most important at a given point in time (Hetherington and Rudolph 2008, 2015). Furthermore, the authors find evidence for a negativity bias in the sense that trust declines more during recessions compared to the increase in trust in times of economic prosperity (Hetherington and Rudolph 2008).

People also tend to adjust their trust in government according to how they perceive **political performance** and in particular the performance of the incumbent government. Indeed, this is heavily driven by polarization (especially in the United States) (Pew 2017), but there are also indications that trust in government in general is affected by dissatisfaction with politics (Miller 1974; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Citrin and Stoker 2018).

In the field of public administration, studies have, to a larger extent, emphasized trust directed towards administrative institutions, while political science literature has mainly focused on political institutions of government. One part of this of line research - often with a background in New Public Management (NPM) - suggests that providing citizens with **performance information** (especially about results) is key to securing higher trust in government (Van de Walle and Roberts 2008; Van Dooren, Bouckaert, and Halligan 2015; Van de Walle 2016). The argument is that citizens need such information about the outcomes and outputs of public service delivery to make an informed decision about their level of trust. Thus, appropriate measurement and communication of performance (e.g., through transparency) is key to the performance-trust link (Yang and Holzer 2006). However, this direct link is questioned in the literature since citizens

tend to be biased in their interpretation of performance information (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003; Bækgaard and Serritzlew 2016; Olsen 2015; James and Van Ryzin 2017).

Table 2. Overview of ways performance affects citizen trust

Examples in the literature	
Outputs/outcomes	
Economic performance	Subjective evaluations of national economic performance tend to affect trust in government at the aggregate level (e.g., Keele 2007; Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Bovens and Wille 2008) and at the individual level (e.g., Citrin and Green 1986; Lawrence 1997; Elinas and Lamprianou 2014), including outside the US and Western Europe (e.g., Park 2017; Mishler and Rose 1997). Objective macroeconomic performance indicators do not consistently lead to higher trust among citizens. On one hand, factors such as economic inequality (Anderson and Singer 2008), unemployment rate (Van Erkel and Van der Meer 2016), GDP (Marien 2011), and inflation (Anderson 2009) are found to have a significantly positive effect. On the other hand, the same types of objective outcomes are found to have no effect in other studies (e.g., Dalton 2004; Rahn and Rudolph 2005; Van der Meer and Hakhverdian 2017).
Political performance	Citizens' trust tends to be subject to the performance of the president and political performance in general (e.g., Citrin 1974; Citrin and Green 1986; Miller and Listhaug 1999).
Performance information	In general, better measurement of and knowledge about performance are expected to make citizens able to base their trust on performance (Yang and Holzer 2006). Citizens can, for instance, gain knowledge about performance through transparency, which is an inherent idea in the NPM doctrine (Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer 2014; Grimmelikhuijsen 2012; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Hood 1991).
Satisfactory public service quality/organizational effectiveness	Citizens have more trust in government when public organizations deliver services effectively (e.g., Kim 2010; Christensen and Laegreid 2005; Kumlin 2004; Berg and Johansson 2020). Satisfaction with public service plays an important role in mediating the effect of performance on trust in government (Van Ryzin 2013; Morgeson 2013; Morgeson, VanAmburg, and Mithas 2011; Van Ryzin 2007; Morgeson and Petrescu 2011; Vigoda-Gadot 2007; Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval 2003). Some studies point in another direction of a negative attitude toward public organizations <i>per se</i> (Hvidman and Andersen 2016; Marvel 2016), although it might only be evident among a subpopulation (Hvidman 2019).
Process	
Procedural fairness and probity	Procedures such as impartiality, honesty, and respect are found to determine trust (Tyler 1990; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Van Ryzin 2011; Magalhães and Aguiar-Conraria 2019; Magalhães 2016; Linde 2012). Furthermore, some evidence points in the direction of an effect of scandals (and media coverage thereof) on trust (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000; Orren 1997; Pharr 2000).
Corruption	Corruption is argued to be an important source of low trust (Uslaner 2002, 2008). It is found to negatively affect trust, for instance, in civil servants (Anderson and Tverdova 2003) and in parliament (Van der Meer 2010).

Note. This overview builds partly on the overview of explanations presented in Hansen (2019).

Another related line of research in public administration has studied the impact of citizens' satisfaction with or perceived quality of public service delivery on citizen trust. In general, the perceived performance of public service delivery seems to be positively correlated with citizen trust (Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval 2003; Kumlin 2004; Christensen and Laegreid 2005; Van Ryzin 2007, 2011). A prominent example is Van Ryzin (2007) who links different findings from his research into a conceptual model that, in the following causal order, link managerial strategy, objective performance, subjective perceptions of performance, satisfaction, and trust (see also Vigoda-Gadot and Yuval 2003). Another important contribution to this literature is the work on the expectancy disconfirmation model (e.g., Van Ryzin 2013; Morgeson 2013) where satisfaction with public sector performance is a product of perceived performance and prior expectations. These studies go a step further and add trust in government to the model as the ultimate outcome of interest, thus arguing that satisfaction with public service delivery mediates the effect of performance on trust (Morgeson and Petrescu 2011). Again, these studies mainly emphasize performance in terms of the outcomes of public services.

Evidence also points in the direction that citizens factor more than outcomes into their evaluation of trust in government. Citizens also base their trust on evaluations of the actions of governmental institutions against criteria of fairness/justice in the process (e.g., Tyler 1990; Bøggild 2016). Along these lines, probity in the form of government scandals in some instances elicit lower trust in government among citizens (Chanley, Rudolph, and Rahn 2000). Such aspects of administrative process are also identified in the public administration literature as key to building trust in governmental institutions and employees (e.g., Kim 2005; Van Ryzin 2011). Studies, for instance, demonstrate the conditions under which citizen participation and deliberation enhance trust attitudes (e.g., Wang and Wan Wart 2007; Vigoda-Gadot and Mizrahi 2008; Nielsen 2016). Moreover, feelings of a corrupt government lead to lower trust, as corruption only benefit the few at the expense of the rest of the population (Uslaner 2002, 2008).

2.4 Unresolved issues regarding the performance-trust link

The review above highlights the important contributions and insights into how different dimensions of performance have been argued to influence citizens' trust in government. The purpose of this section is, therefore, to elaborate how this dissertation expands the current model in linking government performance to citizens' trust. In my view, current literature pays limited attention to two important issues regarding government performance that need to be scrutinized further. My argument concerns the influence of government performance on citizens' trust in government but distinguishes between performance in two domains of government: *the domain of bureaucracy* and *the domain of politics*.

First, the influence of specific citizen-state interactions on citizen trust have received surprisingly little attention; in particular, whether the impressions citizens form of public employees in such direct interactions have more general effects on how they judge their trust in broader governmental institutions. This is what I label *street-level performance in citizen-state interactions*, which takes place in *the domain of bureaucracy*. Second, it is unclear whether citizens evaluate their trust in government based on how politicians perform in the political decision-making process. The most prominent view on process performance has been to examine whether the process is perceived as fair by citizens (e.g., Tyler 1990; Van Ryzin 2011). However, I argue that it is also important for citizens' trust judgments whether the political decision-making process reflects that politicians make progress towards outcomes that matter to citizens or on issues where politicians have made a political promise. I label this part *the political decision-making process* in the *domain of politics*. Both issues are addressed separately in the next sections.

2.4.1 Street-level performance in citizen-state interactions

The importance of citizen-state interactions and street-level bureaucrats has a long tradition in political science and public administration dating back to Lipsky's (1980) influential book *Street-level Bureaucracy*. In this line of research, street-level bureaucrats are defined as employees who interact with citizens and have substantial discretion in their work (Lipsky 1980). For instance, Lipsky argued that street-level bureaucrats use different coping mechanisms in interactions with citizens to manage pressure from limited resources and an infinite demand of services. Accordingly, research on street-level

bureaucracy has mainly examined bureaucrats' assessments of citizens (e.g., Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003; Yang 2005; Tummers et al. 2015; Raaphorst, Groeneveld, and Van de Walle 2018). However, less attention has been paid to how citizens judge bureaucrats in citizen-state interactions (de Boer 2020).

As explained above, current studies have mainly emphasized that perceived quality of public service performance - in terms of outputs and outcomes - is strongly correlated with citizen trust (e.g., Kumlin 2004; Van Ryzin 2007; Berg and Johansson 2020). A central point in this dissertation is that studies only give limited insights into how citizens experience the behavior of street-level bureaucrats in direct interactions; in particular, whether they adjust their levels of trust in government based on the performance that they experience in such concrete bureaucratic encounters. In this dissertation, I argue that citizens also get information about the performance and functioning of the public sector through these interactions with public employees in the delivery of public service. Therefore, I expect that trust judgments are influenced by citizens' evaluations of the *street-level performance* of public employees in citizen-state interactions. This is a broader understanding of government performance than current literature on the performance-trust link is concerned with.

To develop this argument, I build on insights from social psychology. According to research in the field of social psychology, it is well-established that individuals spontaneously form impressions of other people and that these impressions color their subsequent assessments, evaluations, and behavior towards the other (Wojciszke, Bazinska, and Jaworski 1998; Fiske et al. 2002; Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007; Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2007; Brambilla et al. 2012; Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012). According to this prominent line of research on social cognition, individuals essentially form impressions of others in a specific interaction along two fundamental dimensions: warmth and competence (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007; Fiske 2019). Even though various models use different labels for these dimensions,⁵ they all agree that there are two fundamental dimensions of social cognition that can explain social perception of individuals and groups (Judd et al. 2005; Abele and Wojciszke 2007; Abele et al. 2008; Goodwin, Piazza, and Rozin 2014; Abele and Hauke 2020).

An important study in this relation was conducted by Rosenberg et al. (1968) who asked participants to sort personality traits according to whether they were likely to be associated with the same person (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007; Goodwin, Piazza, and Rozin 2014). Results provided evidence for a two-dimensional model: social good-

5. For instance, some scholars refer to warmth as “communion” and competence as “agency” (e.g., Fiske 2019) or use the labels morality and competence (Wojciszke 2005).

bad and intellectual good-bad. This laid the groundwork for later work, which labelled these dimensions with reference to warmth (social good-bad) and competence (intellectual good-bad) (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007). Specifically, the competence dimension refers to traits related to abilities such as intelligence, skill, and efficacy (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007; Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2007; Abele et al. 2008; Brambilla et al. 2012). Warmth, on the other hand, refers to perceived intent and relates to traits such as good-naturedness, kindness, friendliness, and sincerity (Fiske et al. 2002; Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2007). Importantly, warmth is argued to consist of two subcomponents: sociability (also labelled “pure warmth”) and morality (Leach, Ellemers, and Barreto 2007; Brambilla et al. 2012; Goodwin, Piazza, and Rozin 2014). Sociability refers to “cooperation and forming connections with others (e.g., friendliness, likability)” (Brambilla et al. 2012, 151), while morality indicates characteristics with moral relevance (e.g., honesty or sincerity). In **Paper A**, I examine the more general warmth dimension, which consists of both subdimensions, while **Paper B** emphasizes the influence of the sociability/“pure warmth” subcomponent.

The dimensions of warmth and competence are argued to be roughly orthogonal to each other. Even though there is some debate about which of the dimensions is most important to impression formation,⁶ the main point is that citizens form impressions of both the warmth and competence of public employees in citizen-state interactions. Since impression formation along these two fundamental dimensions is argued to strongly influence subsequent behavior and attitudes (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007; Cuddy, Fiske, and Glick 2007), I expect citizens’ perceptions of public employees’ warmth and competence (i.e., street-level performance) to impact levels of trust in governmental institutions.

However, which governmental institutions - if any in particular - should we expect street-level performance to influence? To examine whether street-level performance has a stronger influence on some governmental institutions, I examine different relevant trust outcomes. As argued above, citizens may trust administrative and political institutions differently. This distinction, I argue, is particularly relevant when examining the effect of street-level performance. Street-level performance should, first and foremost, have the strongest impact on trust in bureaucrats since the specific bureaucrat that citizens encounter primarily gives an impression of the behavior of bureaucrats in general. Bureaucrats are a part of the broader set of administrative institutions and actors, and thus, the interaction with a public employee might further give a broader picture of the functioning of administrative governmental institutions (Soss 1999; Berg and Johansson

6. For a discussion, see Laustsen and Bor (2017).

2020). Finally, political institutions are ultimately responsible for the performance in citizen-state interactions and public service delivery in general. Consequently, citizens are expected to follow the chain of accountability when they form trust judgments of government based on the performance they perceive in citizen-state interactions. The broader point of this argument and inclusion of different trust outcomes is that citizens' concrete interactions with street-level bureaucrats not only are expected to influence their trust in that specific bureaucrat but also in broader governmental institutions. This is illustrated in the dissertation's papers on street-level performance. In **Paper A**, I examine the effect of warmth and competence impressions on trust in civil servants, administrative institutions, and political institutions, while **Paper B** investigates trust in bureaucrats and in the municipality.

Moreover, I expect warmth to influence citizens' trust in government more strongly in certain situations. Current studies on the performance-trust link have, to a large extent, emphasized performance in terms of outcomes, and here, an important aspect is whether these outcomes are favorable to citizens. Considering street-level performance, the idea is that when public employees in citizen-state interactions provide outcomes that are favorable to citizens, trust will increase (e.g., Popkin 1991; Allen and Birch 2015). This is a very intuitive expectation. The ambition here is not to test the specific theoretical mechanism, but the hypothesis is supported by different theoretical perspectives including my-side bias where citizens tend to defend their own beliefs and interests when interpreting new information, such as decisions made by bureaucrats (Perkins 1985; Stanovich, West, and Toplak 2013). However, no matter the particular theoretical mechanism, the expectation is the same: Favorable outcomes increase citizens' trust.

Even though citizens might have a strong tendency to interpret decision outcomes made by bureaucrats in a biased way, there are limitations to the strength of this tendency (e.g., Kunda 1990; Stanovich and West 2007; Redlawsk, Civettini, and Emmerson 2010). New information might, if it is unambiguously pointing in the opposite direction of prior beliefs, lead people to accept that information and change their evaluation. For instance, studies have shown that other parts of the social context - such as procedural fairness (Bøggild 2016) - can mitigate the negative effect of unfavorable outcomes on citizens' trust. Accordingly, I argue that impressions of a bureaucrat's warmth can function as information that might counterweigh negative information from an unfavorable decision. Thus, an important argument in this dissertation is that street-level bureaucrats' warmth can lead to a less biased evaluation and thus a smaller decrease in trust in government when citizens encounter an unfavorable decision (see **Paper B**).

2.4.2 Performance in the political decision-making process

In the following section, I advance my contribution to our understanding of how performance in the domain of politics can also influence citizens' trust in governmental institutions. This relates to the second part of the overall research question, which **Paper C** contributes to answer. As is the case with the domain of bureaucracy and the performance of street-level bureaucrats, I intend to demonstrate how the performance of politicians might impact trust judgments. I will show that citizens genuinely care about the process and not only the final outcomes. In the domain of politics, I am not only interested in whether outcomes are favorable to individuals but also simply whether politicians work towards making decisions on important political issues; no matter the favorability to individual citizens. However, there are also parallels between the two domains since the effect is expected to be stronger among citizens who would benefit from politicians agreeing on a decision. In this way, outcome favorability also plays an important role in the domain of politics (see Figure 3).

Even though prior studies have paid attention to process performance (cf. the review above in **Section 2.3**), there is more to the process than simply considering whether it has been fair or whether citizens have been treated equally. Obviously, these are important factors - particularly for public sector organizations - but the question is to what extent citizens also evaluate government based on whether politicians in the decision-making process actively make an effort towards a final decision? I build the argument on prior literature, which, on the one hand, shows that citizens care about getting favorable outcomes and decisions from governmental institutions that fit with policy preferences (e.g., Popkin 1991; Allen and Birch 2015) and on the other hand argues that citizens attend at least as much to whether the process is perceived as fair and legitimate (Tyler 1990; Van Ryzin 2011; Bøggild 2016). Accordingly, prior work has either studied the correlation between final decisions that fit with policy preferences and trust or whether a more fair process leads to greater trust in government. In this dissertation, I combine these two views.

Put simply, as also described in **Paper C**, the main argument is that citizens not only care about *how* decisions come about but also *whether* decisions come about. In general, I expect that citizens react emotionally on whether politicians are able to agree on prominent political issues (e.g., frustration if they cannot reach an agreement). Such emotional reactions will subsequently manifest themselves in the level of trust in government. Thus, citizens are, for instance, expected to lower their trust in government if the decision-making process indicates a lack of progress towards a final decision. Obviously, this expectation presupposes that citizens initially have an expectation that

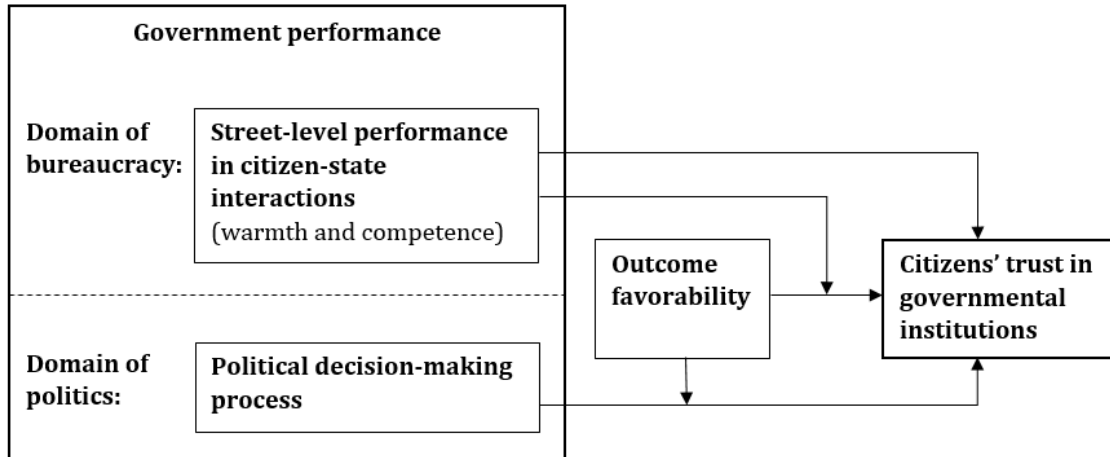
politicians should deliver on a given issue. Hence, concerns about whether politicians make progress towards a decision is particularly significant and vital in relation to political promises. If citizens are to respond according to the idea of democratic accountability, they should reward and punish government based on whether the promise is being maintained (Key 1966; Thomson 2011; Thomson and Brandenburg 2019). I expect that citizens “punish” government with lower trust when they are not able to agree on a political issue and that citizens will “reward” government with higher levels of trust when a political promise is respected. It is important to underline that these expectations concern the decision-making process, and thus, in **Paper C**, I investigate events in the decision-making process which either indicate significant progress towards an outcome or significant lack of progress towards a decision on a political promise.

If citizens take performance in the decision-making process into account when evaluating their trust in government, an important question is under what conditions such process performance is most and least influential. In this dissertation, I focus on the potential moderating effect of individual differences in whether the political promise is beneficial to the individual citizen. As argued earlier in this chapter, there is a basic human tendency toward defending pre-defined (political) interests and positions (Kunda 1990; Kruglanski and Webster 1996; Taber and Lodge 2006; Stanovich, West, and Toplak 2013). Furthermore, existing work suggests that citizens can have different perceptions of performance based on their prior beliefs (e.g., partisanship) (Tilley and Hobolt 2011; Bisgaard 2015). Given that citizens use their prior beliefs to interpret performance in the decision-making process, I expect a divided response to the same events in the decision-making process based on whether citizens benefit from the political promise. Thus, if citizens benefit from the promise being respected, I expect that citizens will react more strongly to events in the political decision-making process compared to citizens who do not benefit directly from the promise being kept.⁷

7. In **Paper C**, I use the Brexit negotiations as the empirical case and compare trust levels among Remain-voters and Leave-voters. Since Leave-voters would benefit from the promise of Brexit being respected, I expect them to react more strongly in terms of trust compared to Remain-voters.

2.5 Overview of the dissertation's theoretical model

Figure 3. Theoretical model of the dissertation



Chapter 3

Research designs and data

In this chapter, I first provide an overview of the data and designs used in the dissertation's three articles. Second, the chapter summarizes the major methodological challenges that arise in answering the main research question, which is a causal question of how government performance influences citizen trust in government. This is followed by a discussion of how the dissertation has handled these challenges from a research design perspective and why the strategy primarily relies on an experimental approach. Finally, after discussing considerations about internal and external validity, the last part of the chapter presents a wider discussion about the measurement of trust in government. The chapter does not go into a detailed discussion about the specific designs employed in the dissertation, but rather, it takes an overall view on the general methodology and design choices that cut across papers. For detailed information about the specific designs, I refer to the design sections in the respective papers of the dissertation.

3.1 Overview of studies, designs, and data

This dissertation consists of three individual empirical papers, each of which examines an important part of the overall research question. Table 3, shown below, outlines how each paper answers a specific research question, which contributes to the overall aim of the dissertation. Further, the table summarizes the methodological choices made in the articles with respect to data, research design, and key variables. To test the expectations, I draw on a rich set of data, which consists of both original survey experiments and large-N cross-sectional data over time. The dissertation relies on diverse experimental treatments and the effects are tested on a range of different trust measures. In addition, the articles are based on large-scale and most often nationally

representative samples from diverse country contexts (Denmark, the United States, and Great Britain). I later return to the advantages and limitations of these choices in terms of both internal and external validity.

Papers A and B both examine the core claim that citizens build their trust in government on bureaucratic behavior experienced through citizen-state interactions on the dimensions of warmth and competence. **Paper B** complements the findings of **Paper A** by examining whether warm behavior by bureaucrats in citizen-state interactions can reduce the otherwise (expected) negative effect of unfavorable outcomes on citizen trust in government. The studies rely on two types of survey experimental research designs by experimentally manipulating bureaucratic warmth and competence in realistic vignettes (**Paper A** and **Paper B**) or by priming respondents to recall interactions with warm or competent bureaucrats (**Paper A**).

Paper C, on the other hand, makes use of large representative cross-sectional surveys over time to assess whether citizens changed their levels of trust in government as a consequence of how politicians performed in the political decision-making process concerning Brexit. This paper exploits that the British Election Study (BES) collected multiple representative surveys that were fielded immediately before and after important events in the Brexit negotiation process, which reflected how politicians performed. Using such an event-centered logic, **Paper C** tests the levels of citizen trust in government before and after these events. Moreover, as the paper empirically focuses on Brexit, an important question is whether “Leave” and “Remain-voters” reacted differently. Thus, I also compare the trends over time for these two groups of citizens.¹

1. See **Paper C** for more specific details about the research design.

Table 3. Overview of studies, designs, and data

Paper	Core research question	Research design and data	Key variables
A	To what extent do specific citizen—state interactions affect citizen trust in government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study 1: two randomized survey experiments conducted in the US (N = 816) and Denmark (N = 1,299) where respondents were primed to recall interactions with public employees but randomly assigned to recall interactions with either warm, cold, competent or incompetent bureaucrats. • Study 2: Randomized survey experiment conducted in the US (N = 1,164). Respondents were exposed to vignettes in which bureaucrats' competence (high competence/low competence) and warmth (high warmth/low warmth) were manipulated. • Subjects were recruited through the Amazon Mechanical Turk Platform (US experiments) or YouGov's online panel (DK experiment). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent variables (IVs): Experimental treatments; through either priming (study 1) or vignettes (study 2). • Dependent variables (DVs): four measures of citizen trust in government; trust in bureaucrats, administrative institutions, political institutions, and overall government.
B	To what extent can warm bureaucratic behavior reduce the negative effect of unfavorable outcomes on citizen trust in government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Randomized survey experiment conducted in Denmark where respondents were randomly assigned to vignettes manipulating outcome favorability (favorable/unfavorable) and bureaucrats' warmth (high warmth/low warmth). • Subjects were recruited through YouGov's online panel (N = 1,613). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV's: Experimentally manipulated vignettes. • DV's: Citizen trust in bureaucrats and the municipality.

Continued on next page

Paper	Core research question	Research design and data	Key variables
C	To what extent do citizens change their levels of trust in government as a reaction to performance in the political decision-making process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from the British Election Study (BES): repeated representative cross-sectional surveys collected in the UK from June 2016 to December 2019. • Dependent on the event analyzed and the outcome variable used, N is between 15,708 and 67,306 for the analysis including all citizens and between 8,045 and 52,793 when comparing “Leave” and “Remain” voters. The BES collects responses from about 30,000 citizens in each survey wave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV’s: Political performance in the political decision-making process measured as the timing of events where citizens are exposed to either negative or positive performance; status as “Remain” or “Leave” voter in the Brexit referendum. • DV’s: Trust in members of Parliament and satisfaction with democracy.

Notes: The survey experiments conducted in Denmark are all collected via YouGov’s online panel which are sampled to be representative of the Danish population on age, gender, education, and geographic region of residence. For detailed information about data, research design, experimental stimuli, and so on, I refer to the individual papers.

3.2 The performance-trust link and selection

The key argument of this dissertation, which is also reflected in the overall research question, is that citizens’ perceptions of how government performs influence levels of citizen trust in government. Testing this claim constitutes major methodological challenges as it involves a causal statement and hence calls for research designs ensuring high internal validity. What are the particular challenges in making causally valid claims about the influence of government performance on citizen trust?

Examining the research question of this dissertation requires a comparison of two counterfactual worlds: one where a citizen experiences good government performance and one where the same citizen experiences bad government performance. However, the challenge is that we cannot observe both states of the world for a given citizen simultaneously. This constitutes the fundamental problem of causal inference (Holland 1986) because there are always two potential outcomes but we can only observe one of them. Therefore, we can never know for certain what would have happened to the trust level of citizen i if that individual had been exposed to bad rather than good government performance.

One way to address this challenge would be to use observational data and compare

individuals who have experienced good and bad government performance. The mean difference in trust between these two groups would then be used as the estimate of the causal effect of government performance on citizens' trust. Such an identification strategy, however, would imply serious concerns related to the internal validity of my estimates.

First, there might be unobserved differences between the groups that could also explain differences in observed trust in government. For instance, research suggests that characteristics such as education, ideology, and social trust correlate with levels of trust in government (Christensen and Laegreid 2005), and at the same time, these factors are probably also correlated with how government performance is perceived. Such selection issues would give a biased estimate of the causal effect as we cannot know whether a given difference in trust is due to a difference in performance or initial differences in background characteristics. Even though some of these characteristics (e.g., education) might easily be measured in a survey, trust in government might still be correlated with unobservables such as more general character traits.

Second, the use of observational data is problematic since citizens might evaluate their perception of government performance based on their initial level of trust in government (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003; Rudolph 2017; Haugsgjerd and Kumlin 2020). We may, for example, imagine that citizens with low levels of trust use that as a heuristic to make other evaluations about government in a broad sense, including perceptions of government performance. Such a situation of reverse causality would again result in biased estimates of the causal effect as I am not able to disentangle the effect of performance on trust from the effect of trust on performance (James, Jilke, and Van Ryzin 2017).

In sum, an observational approach is problematic since it is likely to suffer from significant issues of selection bias and reverse causality. This is a general challenge in the literature on trust in government. Prior studies do to a large extent make use of cross-sectional data and thus mainly reflect correlations between performance and trust. As Van der Meer (2018) summarizes, "it would be unwise to treat these strong correlations between economic evaluations and political trust as compelling evidence for a causal effect." Thus, he calls for a more stringent methodological approach that better takes endogeneity issues into account to get a more solid causal understanding. To address these challenges concerning internal validity, I need to use research designs that can address the problem of selection bias in a plausible way. The following sections describe how I approach the challenge in terms of the research designs employed in the dissertation's papers.

3.2.1 Using randomization and survey experiments

To overcome the challenges discussed above, two of the papers (Paper A and Paper B) are based on randomized survey experiments. The experimental approach has several advantages in terms of maximizing internal validity. It is often said to be the gold standard to study causal inference as it allows for strong causal claims based on one central assumption: that the treatment is fully controlled and randomized (Gerber and Green 2012; Angrist and Pischke 2014).²

Random assignment to treatment and control groups ensures that individuals in the experimental groups are similar (on average) on unobservable characteristics (e.g., Baekgaard et al. 2015). Thus, this identification strategy eliminates the above-mentioned selection problems *by design*. At the same time, the experiment allows the researcher control over the independent variable. This makes it possible to improve measurement validity by carefully manipulating the information that reaches participants. Further, the experimental research design allows for manipulation of the treatment before measuring the dependent variable, which addresses the specific challenge concerning reverse causality. For instance, consider Paper A in which I randomly assign citizens to imagine or recall different specific interactions with the public sector. Here, the random assignment ensures that individuals in the different conditions are similar on all characteristics, besides treatment, and at the same time, the experimental approach enables me to carefully control which type of interaction the respondent imagines or recaptures. Due to randomization and the controlled environment, the causal effect of performance on trust can be estimated by simply comparing mean trust in government across the experimental treatment groups. In sum, the main contribution of the experimental studies is that they maximize the internal validity.

However, it is not without problems to employ survey experiments. While the experimental setup has the potential to solve the selection problem, a critical concern is the vulnerability to issues of external validity. The debate about external validity in experiments regards both that experimental research often relies on convenience samples and the extent to which results can be generalized across settings (Sears 1986; McDermott 2011; Mutz 2011).

Regarding the first critique, the central concern is that the use of non-representative samples such as students or online opt-in samples (e.g., Amazon MTurk) is challenging for the external validity. Respondents in these convenience samples are not being drawn from a population with known probability but rather self-select into a given study (Mullinix et al. 2015, 110). Thus, these samples might be systematically different

2. Hence, the label RCT (randomized controlled trials).

from the population to which the researcher wants to generalize the results (Coppock 2019). In particular, it questions whether the causal estimates are biased because of differences between the convenience sample and a representative population sample (Stock and Watson 2014). Even though this is an empirical question relevant in each study that uses these kinds of samples, research has found that experimental results from MTurk samples are, in general, externally valid as they yield similar results to representative population-based samples (e.g., Druckman and Kam 2011; Mullinix et al. 2015; Coppock, Leeper, and Mullinix 2018; Coppock 2019). Thus, we can be confident that these non-representative samples can better replicate results from population-based samples than initially assumed. In my experiments, I have either recruited nationally representative samples or otherwise used a highly diverse set of respondents from Amazon MTurk. This is an online platform where citizens (workers) are paid by researchers to participate in different studies.³ While MTurk allows for rapid data collection, a main concern has been that workers do not pay enough attention to the survey questions or that they have such extensive prior experience with surveys that they can infer the purpose of the experiment and try to live up to those expectations to receive compensation for their work (Berinsky, Huber, and Lenz 2012; Goodman, Cryder, and Cheema 2013; Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko 2009). Even though research points to these concerns being unwarranted, I have carefully followed the latest developed tools to heighten the data quality of MTurk samples (e.g., made sure that respondents are attentive by using different attention checks).

Concerning the second critique about external validity, the central concern is whether results can be generalized across contexts. In this regard, **Paper A** draws on data from two diverse countries: Denmark and the United States. This enables me to test the cross-cultural generalizability of the argument about the influence of bureaucrats' warmth and competence. Denmark and the US diverge on different important factors such as general level of social trust and trust in government, size of the public sector, type of welfare state, and degree of political polarization. This is important since cultural differences may impact how people respond to information. In a larger perspective, I use data from both Denmark (**Papers A and B**) and the US (**Paper A**) to test the argument regarding the domain of bureaucracy, while I draw on data from Great Britain to examine the influence of the domain of politics. Thus, I have, in general, tested the overall argument about the impact of government performance on citizens' trust in government with data from a diverse set of countries. Moreover, **Paper A** (US Postal

3. I aimed to offer reimbursements around the minimum hourly wage based on an estimate of the mean duration of the given survey.

service as the case in study 2) and **Paper B** (elderly care as the case) together examine whether the effect of bureaucrats' warmth can be replicated across public service areas. This is important for the external validity and explores whether the general argument from Fiske et al. (2007) is a universal psychological mechanism that is important in a public sector setting in general.

Another central concern with experiments is the artificial settings, i.e., the situations in the surveys are remote from real-world experiences with bureaucrats. In general, I try to meet this challenge and increase ecological validity by using experimental treatments that reflect information citizens could receive in the real world. For instance, the experimental setup in **Paper B** was constructed to reflect how citizens would normally interact with bureaucrats in the delivery of elderly care in Denmark. Moreover, I have done extensive pre-testing of the experimental material's credibility and realism to improve the ecological validity.

In **Paper A**, I aim to overcome issues of ecological validity by priming subjects in the experiment to think about government performance in different negative and positive terms (Gadarian and Albertson 2014). That is, rather than assigning participants randomly to designed information about performance, I prime participants to think about an actual interaction with government (see **Paper A** for more details). On the one hand, this approach lowers the ability for the researcher to have full control over the information that reaches participants, but on the other hand, it improves realism.

A final limitation of survey experiments is that treatments are often low in intensity. At least, this is applicable for the treatments used in **Paper A** (study 2) and **Paper B**, where respondents have to imagine a situation. The low intensity of treatments imply that null results are hard to interpret, but on the other hand identified causal effects in the experiment are likely to be even larger in the real world.

3.2.2 Using time and difference-in-differences

This dissertation does not only draw on experiments as an identification strategy. In particular, **Paper C** uses high-quality observational data from the BES (Fieldhouse et al. 2020) consisting of representative repeated cross-sections over time of the aggregate unit of British citizens (2014 to 2019). Having data over time enables me to employ research designs which exploit that citizens are exposed to certain events indicating either positive or negative government performance over time. This creates a pre-treatment and post-treatment period, thus enabling me to estimate the mean change in citizen trust in government from pre-treatment to post-treatment, i.e., simply comparing the mean trust in government before being exposed to a political event of good government

performance with mean trust in government after the same political event. By looking at changes from before to after these events, it is possible to rule out unobserved time-invariant factors. For instance, if citizens respond with lower levels of trust in government after an event of bad government performance compared to before that event, this change is not influenced by time-invariant factors (e.g., gender or education level) because they are held constant.

Furthermore, a key expectation in **Paper C** is that all citizens do not react with the same strength to events, which indicates how politicians perform in the decision-making process. Citizens who benefit from the political issue at stake, are argued to react strongly to these events since they profit from progress in the decision-making process and suffer from a lack of progress. That is, the same events might reflect “good” performance for some citizens and “bad” performance/less good performance for other citizens. Thus, I also employ a difference-in-differences design (Angrist and Pischke 2009, 2014) where the development in trust in government before/after events in the political decision-making process is compared between two groups of citizens (see **Paper C** for more details). Again, this design eliminates selection problems with regard to time-invariant factors, including the possibility that the two groups of voters initially differed in terms of trust in government. At the same time, the difference-in-differences strategy takes account of the general time trend (i.e., the general trend in citizen trust across all citizens in the time period analyzed).

However, while time-invariant confounders are ruled out in these designs, unobserved time-variant factors that explain changes in citizen trust in government are still a concern for the validity of the causal estimates. It could, for instance, be the case that the economy declined at the same time as one of the analyzed events and that the economy influences citizen trust in government (Van der Meer 2017). To the extent that the economy is unobserved, we would attribute the effect of the economy to the political event indicating performance in the decision-making process. Thus, the identifying assumption behind these designs is the absence of unobserved time-variant factors that also explains citizen trust in government. More generally, the main concern is that we do not know the answer to the counterfactual question of how citizens would have changed their trust in government in the absence of a given event. Therefore, in **Paper C** where these designs are used, I provide critical tests of the identifying assumptions to assess the robustness of the findings to time-variant confounders (see e.g., Dinas et al. 2019). For instance, I aim to reduce the risk of time-variant confounders by using survey data just around the event of interest and by assessing pre-treatment trends in trust in government. All the particular tests are presented in more detail in **Paper C**.

Even though the designs presented in this section do not maximize internal validity as much as randomized experiments, they still have advantages compared to the cross-sectional designs that otherwise dominate the general research on the performance-trust link. Most importantly, this approach contributes highly to the ecological and external validity as it presents an unique opportunity to study how citizens evaluate trust in government based on real-world government performance. This is a clear advantage to survey experimental designs that often maximize internal validity but rely on artificial treatment (e.g., Slothuus 2016). In sum, the real-world setting combined with the use of high-quality data (British Election Study) from large representative samples ensure high external validity for the article using these non-experimental designs (Paper C), even though it has limitations concerning internal validity.

3.3 Concluding thoughts on internal and external validity

Taken together, the research designs employed in this dissertation have generally sought to prioritize internal validity given the causal nature of the dissertation’s overall research question. The experimental designs used in Paper A and Paper B were chosen precisely to maximize internal validity. However, these design choices come at the expense of external and ecological validity despite careful choices levelled at addressing challenges of, for example, realistic experimental treatments and diverse samples. Paper C, on the other hand, contributes to high ecological and external validity as it is based on the real-world case of Brexit (and the subsequent process) while at the same time considering internal validity by exploiting changes over time. Thus, bearing in mind the broader focus of this dissertation, the survey experimental designs are supplemented by the study carried out in a real-world setting to tell us something more externally valid about the influence of government performance on citizen trust in government.

However, considering the two parts of this dissertation – the domain of bureaucracy and the domain of politics – a potential limitation of this approach is that all the experiments are carried out in relation to the influence of bureaucrats’ performance on citizen trust while the observational approach which favors the ecological validity is used to examine how politicians’ performance predicts citizen trust in government. In the discussion section, I return to a broader discussion of the advantages and limitations of the design choices of this dissertation and how future research might make use of research designs that complement the ones employed in this dissertation.

3.4 Measurement of citizens' trust in government

A cross-cutting aim of this dissertation is to get a better understanding of citizen trust in government. But how does one go about measuring this concept? This dissertation generally relies on measures from large national and international surveys to measure citizen trust in government (see Table 4). The most common indicator, in an American setting, is the item from the American National Election Studies (ANES), which asks, "How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?" This question wording is heavily used by surveys such as Pew (2017) and political science scholars in general (Citrin and Stoker 2018). Another often-used measure is the indicator from the European Social Survey (ESS) where people respond to how much they personally trust a set of different institutions (e.g., national government, the national parliament, or the police).⁴ This measurement model has the advantage that it can be applied to specific parts of government or particular institutions.

Work on the empirical measures of citizen trust in government has shown that such measurement is imperfect and not without problems. For example, it has been discussed what the term "government" in the ANES measure refers to among citizens, whether low levels of trust in these often-used measures in fact constitute deep mistrust or simply are a measure of healthy skepticism, and whether it is in fact trust per se that is measured and not a general attitude towards government as a whole (e.g., Citrin 1974; Miller 1974; Cook and Gronke 2005; Van de Walle and Six 2014; Gershtenson and Plane 2015; Bertson 2019).

While the measures used in this dissertation by no means are exempted from such criticism, taking on the challenge to carefully redefine and reconsider how to measure citizen trust would be enough for a whole dissertation in itself. Even though I highly prioritized maximizing the internal validity in order to obtain causal estimates, I also aimed to address measurement issues and related shortcomings in different ways.

First, the dissertation's papers all use multiple measures of citizen trust in government, and the measures are different across the papers as well. This strategy ensures that the findings are not a product of using only a single measure. Given that different trust measures have their own strengths and weaknesses, using multiple of them in the same study should all else being equal minimize the limitations. **Paper A**, in particular,

4. In this context, Gallup and World Value Survey also ask about *confidence* in different institutions although with a different measurement scale compared to the ESS. Likewise, Eurobarometer makes people respond to trust in institutions of government but on a dichotomous scale (tend to trust; tend not to trust).

seeks to mitigate drawbacks by using four different trust measures modeled on both the ANES and the ESS (see Table 4 for details).

Second, all papers deliberately posed measures of not only the subject that performed a given task (bureaucrats in Papers A and B; politicians in Paper C) but also an outcome measure directed at broader trust attitudes. Specifically, Paper A asks about trust in broader administrative and political institutions, Paper B asks about general trust in the municipality, and Paper C employs a very broad measure of satisfaction with democracy. It is important to note that the "satisfaction with democracy" item is not meant to measure citizens' trust. However, it was used in Paper C to get a sense of whether politicians' performance also influenced even broader attitudes related to political support (Norris 2011).

Third, to reiterate, the measures used in the dissertation's articles build on measurement models from national election studies (ANES and BES) and large international surveys such as the ESS. These measures are generally used by scholars interested in citizen trust in governmental institutions or similar phenomena. Thus, the dissertation's findings can build directly on earlier work and develop it further without changing the way of studying performance and measuring citizen trust in the same dissertation. If I, in this dissertation, also had used a redefined measure of trust in combination with the novel view on performance (by, for instance, considering warmth and competence), it would be hard to know whether the results were due to a new measurement model of trust or because warmth/competence in fact were important drivers of trust. The next step for future research is obviously to further advance the measurement of citizen trust and test whether the results of this dissertation generalize to such measures.

Table 4. Overview of outcome measures

Paper	Trust in government measures
Paper A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How much of the time do you think that the government in Washington is doing the right thing?” (Just about always, most of the time, only some of the time, or never; modelled on question wording used in the ANES). • Additive index of trust in political institutions: <i>How much do you personally trust [the national government, national parliament, politicians, political parties]?</i> (0 = no trust at all, 10 = completely trust; modelled on question wording used in the ESS). • Additive index of trust in administrative institutions: <i>How much do you personally trust [the police, the public administration]?</i> (0 = no trust at all, 10 = completely trust; modelled on question wording used in the ESS). The additive index also included the item below about trust in civil servants. • “Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country.” (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree; modelled on question wording used in the ISSP).
Paper B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How much do you trust the caseworker to make the right decisions?” (0 = no trust at all, 10 = completely trust; modelled on question wording used in the ESS). • “How much do you trust the municipality to make the right decisions?” (0 = no trust at all, 10 = completely trust; modelled on question wording used in the ESS).
Paper C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How much trust do you have in members of Parliament in general?” (1 = no trust, 7 = great deal of trust; item used in the BES). • “On the whole, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how democracy works in the UK?” (1 = Very dissatisfied, 4 = Very satisfied; item used in the BES).

Notes: In the additive index of trust in civil servants in Paper A, trust in civil servants was measured using the question wording presented in this table in the main analysis. In study 2 of Paper A, the question wording from the ESS was also included in the survey (“how much do you personally trust civil servants” on a 0-10 scale), but the item only figures in a supplementary analysis (see Paper A for more details).

3.4.1 Trust-measures and the dimensionality of trust in government

The use of different survey questions to measure citizens' trust in government across the dissertation's papers begs the question of how these measures are correlated and whether they actually measure the same latent concept of trust in government. To test this, I performed a number of principal component analyses with a range of items reflecting the measures used across all papers (see Table 4). The analyses are based on the same data as used for Paper A since the data set include some additional trust measures that were not employed in Paper A because they did not fit with the research question of that specific paper.⁵ However, with my data, it was not possible to use the exact measures that are employed in Paper B and Paper C. In Paper B, I ask about trust in a specific bureaucrat and the municipality, but in these principal component analyses, I have to use measures of general trust in civil servants and trust in local government. Also, in Paper C, I use a measure of trust in British Members of Parliament, yet here I have to rely on the general measure of trust in politicians. While this is not perfect, the following principal component analyses still indicate whether my measures reflect the same latent variable (trust in government).

Table 5 shows the results of these principal component analyses, which include both American and Danish respondents. As one factor with an eigenvalue above 1 was extracted and all the factor loadings are considerably large, the results indicate a one-factor solution. The results stay substantially the same using the full set of items that were used to construct the additive indices of trust in administrative and political institutions (see Table 6). This indicates that the trust measures employed in this dissertation load on the same dimension of trust in government.

However, if we rather split the sample into Danish and American respondents - to test whether the dimensionality is the same across country context - the picture is less clear. For the American respondents, the trend stays the same and the data shows a clear tendency towards one latent factor as the eigenvalue for the second factor is .66. Even if I split the American respondents into groups of high and low political interest, the resulting principal component analyses still suggest a single dimension. This indicates that the results are not driven by citizens not knowledgeable enough to distinguish between different institutions.⁶ Turning to the Danish respondents, the

5. See Paper A for a more detailed explanation and argumentation of the outcome measures used in that individual research paper.

6. Respondents with high political interest was defined as citizens who responded that they were "Very interested" or "Extremely interested" in information about what is going on in government and politics. The eigenvalue for the second factor in the principal component

Table 5. Principal component analysis of final trust measures used across papers

Items	Factor loadings
Trust government in Washington/Copenhagen (Paper A)	.79
Trust in political institutions (Paper A)	.91
Trust in administrative institutions (Paper A)	.90
Trust in civil servants (Papers A and B)	.75
Trust in local government (Paper B)	.80
Trust in politicians (Paper C)	.88
Satisfaction with democracy (Paper C)	.70
N	1,897
Cronbach's alpha	.81

Notes: PCA for both DK and US respondents. One factor with eigenvalue above 1 extracted (eigenvalue = 4.76). N = 1,897.

Table 6. Principal component analysis of trust items used across papers

Items	Factor loadings
Trust government in Washington/Copenhagen (Paper A)	.79
Trust in national government (Paper A)	.83
Trust in national parliament (Paper A)	.90
Trust in political parties (Paper A)	.88
Trust in politicians (Papers A and C)	.90
Trust in the police (Paper A)	.68
Trust in the public administration (Paper A)	.87
Trust in civil servants (Papers A and B)	.68
Trust in local government (Paper B)	.80
Satisfaction with democracy (Paper C)	.68
N	1,729
Cronbach's alpha	.88

Notes: PCA for both DK and US respondents. One factor with eigenvalue above 1 extracted (eigenvalue = 6.48). N = 1,729.

eigenvalue for a second factor is almost 1 with a value of .94. This suggests that at least among Danish citizens, there might be two latent factors. It speaks to a larger debate about whether citizens have one form of trust (Hooghe 2011) or whether they rather distinguish between institutions when making trust judgments (Fisher, Van Heerde, and Tucker 2010).

Theoretically, citizens might in particular distinguish between administrative and analysis for high political interest is .64 and .83 for low political interest.

political institutions (Schnaudt 2019; Fisher, Van Heerde, and Tucker 2010; Camões and Mendes 2019). Furthermore, survey measures of trust in government over time illustrate that even though measures correlate, they have different trends over time, and trust in political institutions might be more sensitive to changes of government party (Citrin and Muste 1999; Keele 2005; Citrin and Stoker 2018). From this perspective, it is expected that trust in the police, civil servants, and public administration load on a separate factor of trust in administrative institutions, while trust in politicians, political parties, national government, and national parliament load on another factor of trust in political institutions (see also the discussion in Paper A). The three remaining items could potentially fit both factors. Trust in the local government could be tied to both the political as well as the administrative part of local government. The “trust in government in Washington” item from the ANES has been discussed a lot in studies on trust because it is not clear whether it refers to a specific institution (Citrin and Stoker 2018). However, most scholars seem to believe that it relates to the federal government (Gershtenson and Plane 2007), and thus, I expect it to be more strongly correlated with political institutions. Lastly, satisfaction with democracy is not directly measuring trust, but I expect the measure to be correlated with both dimensions as both trust and satisfaction with democracy indicate broader attitudes about the political system in general. The item is included in this analysis because I employ the item in Paper C to test some wider-ranging effects that go beyond trust.

Based on the indications from the PCA and the theoretical arguments for the existence of two dimensions of trust, I performed a factor analysis to explore whether this could be supported in the data. Table 7 presents the results in the form of rotated factor loadings with oblimin rotation. This rotation method allows for correlation between the two factors and was chosen given the debate about the dimensionality of trust, which indicates that the two dimensions might be correlated even though they are empirically separated. The findings indicate that Danish citizens distinguish between political and administrative institutions since the items clearly fall into two clear-cut dimensions that overlap with the theoretical expectations.⁷ As expected, satisfaction with democracy is somewhat correlated with the trust items but does not load as clearly on either of the dimensions compared to the other trust items. The two factors are strongly correlated ($r = .70$), but ideology is much more strongly correlated to trust in political institutions ($r = .44$) compared to administrative institutions ($r = .08$).

Overall, the results from the above principal component and factor analyses show

7. The results stay substantially the same with the use of orthogonal (varimax) rotation. Oblimin rotation is used as it allows for correlation between factors.

Table 7. Rotated factor loadings for Danish respondents

Items	Factor 1 (pol. inst.)	Factor 2 (adm. inst.)
Trust government in Washington/Copenhagen	.70	
Trust in national government	.91	
Trust in national parliament	.88	
Trust in political parties	.78	
Trust in politicians	.93	
Trust in the police		.62
Trust in the public administration		.80
Trust in civil servants		.78
Trust in local government		.68
Satisfaction with democracy		.40
N	1,146	1,155
Cronbach's alpha	.94	.85

Notes: Eigenvalues from the principal component analysis are 6.27 for the first factor and .94 for the second factor. Rotated factor loadings (oblimin). Loadings < .3 are left blank. Only Danish respondents. Bold font indicates that the items are a part of the respective theoretical dimension. Cronbach's alpha values are based on the items in bold font. N = 1,083.

that trust measures generally are highly correlated and reflect the same latent variable. This means that citizens appear to have one form of trust and thus that it matters to a lesser extent whether we ask about trust, for instance, in the national government or in the public administration. In relation to the results presented in this dissertation, it implies that I can compare results across the individual papers because the different trust measures employed in the articles generally load on the same dimension of overall trust in government.

However, the Danish respondents appear to distinguish empirically between administrative and political institutions when evaluating their trust. This suggests that there are some cultural differences in the dimensionality of trust. One possible explanation is that differences in political culture (Hooghe 2011) and the welfare state system enable Danes to better distinguish the administrative part from the political level (since they have many more experiences with public service). At the same time, the US political system is much more politicized compared to a Danish setting, which might further blur the distinction between government institutions even though they perform distinct tasks. Yet, given the strong correlation between the two dimensions among the Danish respondents, trust in administrative institutions might still be highly related to trust in political institutions - also in a Danish setting. In Paper A, I explore the possibility

of two distinct dimensions as I have separate measures of trust in administrative and political institutions. In Paper B, I employ both a measure of trust in a specific bureaucrat and a measure of trust in the municipality (local government). Even though both of these items might give an indication of trust in the administrative part of government, it made sense to employ both measures with the specific purpose of the paper in mind. Likewise, even though measures load on the same overall dimension of trust, we will always get a better and more comprehensive picture of trust by using diverse indicators.

More generally, the analyses presented in this section also speak to whether we can compare results from studies that use different measures of trust; in particular, whether it is possible to compare results from the US, which often use the measures from the ANES, with results from Europe, where the trust in institutions items are often used. Results from the US might to a higher extent indicate a more overall measure of trust in government, since the ANES measure loads on the same dimension as the trust in institutions items for the American respondents in my data. If we want to compare such American results with findings from European studies, we might have to measure both trust in political and administrative institutions. Of course, Danish respondents might be a special case and future research could investigate in more detail whether this distinction between administrative and political institutions is only valid for specific countries with, for example, a particular political culture or type of welfare state.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter presents a summary of the dissertation's main findings. The findings are related to the overall research question I aim to answer in this dissertation: *How do citizen-state interactions and the political decision-making process influence citizens' trust in governmental institutions?* It is structured such that I first present a summary of the main results concerning the domain of bureaucracy and the influence of street-level performance (Papers A and B). That is, I present results about the impact of citizens' impressions of bureaucrats' warmth and competence on trust in government and the moderating effects of outcome favorability. Second, the key findings from Paper C on the domain of politics are shown. In particular, this part of the chapter shows findings related to how political performance in the decision-making process affects citizen trust.

4.1 Key findings: The domain of bureaucracy

4.1.1 To what extent do bureaucrats' warmth and competence influence citizens' trust in governmental institutions?

One of the most important arguments in this dissertation is that citizens' trust in governmental institutions is influenced by whether bureaucrats are perceived to perform competently and warmly. In particular, my claim is that when citizens interact with bureaucrats who appear competent and/or warm, they respond with more trust compared to citizens who interact with incompetent and/or cold bureaucrats. Hence, citizens automatically make impressions of the bureaucrats they interact with along the warmth and competence dimensions, which subsequently influence how they evaluate government in terms of trust.

The influence of warmth on citizens' trust. First, I present the results concerning warmth where Table 8 shows the overall effects of warmth across the dissertation's articles. I generally find support this expectation, which is tested in **Papers A and B**. To do this, I conducted three survey experiments across **Papers A and B**. In the first experiment, which was employed among both a sample of Danish and US respondents, I primed respondents to recall an interaction with a public employee that was either competent, incompetent, cold, or warm (randomly assigned to one of the four conditions). After the treatment, participants indicated their trust in different governmental institutions. The experimental results regarding the warmth treatment (comparing the "cold" and "warm" conditions) are presented in the first row of Table 8.

Table 8. Summary of the effect of warmth across the dissertation's articles

	Trust gov. in Was.	Trust bureaucrat	Trust adm. inst.	Trust pol. inst.	Trust municipality
Warmth (priming - Paper A))	DK: insign. US: insign.	DK: insign. US: insign.	DK: insign. US: insign.	DK: insign. US: insign.	
Warmth (priming - att. subjects - Paper A))	DK: insign. US: .07 (.025)**	DK: insign. US: .071 (.035)*	DK: insign. US: .058 (.027)*	DK: insign. US: .066 (.027)*	
Warmth (vignette - Paper A))	US: .045 (.012)***	US: .052 (.016)**	US: .031 (.012)*	US: .029 (.014)*	
Warmth (vignette - Paper B))		DK: .091 (.012)***			DK: .047 (.012)***

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Interestingly, the results suggest no effects of the priming manipulation among both Danish and US respondents. I also restricted the sample to only include participants who passed an attention check in the survey. This is not by any means a perfect solution, and importantly, the results are no longer experimental since I condition on a non-experimental variable (the attention check). These non-experimental results are presented in the second row of Table 8 and show significant correlations of warmth among US respondents across all trust measures. For the Danish sample, results still

suggest that bureaucrats' warmth plays no role in trust evaluations. Overall, this is rather surprising given the vast amount of evidence from social psychology which strongly suggests that warmth is very important for perceptions of other individuals. One reason for why I do not observe any effects among Danish citizens might be due to ceiling effects as Danish citizens initially have high levels of trust in government.¹

However, as I discuss in more detail in **Paper A**, another explanation for such lack of expected effects might be due to the design where I *prime* respondents to recall real-world interactions. While this design heightens the ecological validity, it is a less controlled experimental setup (importantly, I still had control over the randomization). That is, I had less control of the independent variable in the sense that it is harder to control what citizens in fact thought about during the priming exercise. In addition, there is a controversy in social psychology about the reliability of priming effects due to failure to replicate particular priming effects (Molden 2014; Payne, Brown-Iannuzzi, and Loersch 2016; Sherman and Rivers 2021).

While these findings using only attentive respondents point in the expected direction (at least for the US respondents), the internal validity is challenged. Thus, I also conducted two additional survey experiments, which manipulated bureaucrats' warmth in a more controlled setup in written vignettes about the public organization the United States Postal Service (**Paper A**) and access to public elderly care (**Paper B**), respectively. In the latter case, I specifically show that citizens who interact with a public employee regarding getting access to elderly care change both their trust in bureaucrats and their broader trust in the municipality significantly according to whether the public employee was perceived as a warm person or not. In combination with the results from **Paper A**, this in general suggests that warmth influences citizen trust across different areas of the public sector and a range of governmental institutions. Interestingly, when using a more controlled experimental set-up, warmth also has a substantial and significant effect on citizen trust among Danish citizens (cf. the findings from **Paper B** shown in the bottom row of Table 8).

Wider-ranging effects of bureaucrats' warmth on citizens' trust. As expected, the warmth treatments have the largest effects on trust in bureaucrats. For instance, the experimental results from the vignette experiments show that trust in bureaucrats increases with 5.2-9.1 percentage points as an effect of the warmth treatments (see

1. For instance, in the latest Eurobarometer Survey, Denmark has a substantially higher level of trust in national parliament compared to the mean of other members of the European Union (65% tend to trust Danish national parliament, while it is 36% for the rest of EU's member states taken together) (Eurobarometer 2021).

Table 8). However, an interesting finding concerning street-level performance is that warmth among bureaucrats appears to influence overall trust in government and not only trust in the bureaucrat with whom citizens interact or bureaucrats in general. This is evident in both **Paper A** and **Paper B**. This suggests that citizens get an informed picture of how government is functioning through their perceptions of street-level performance in citizen-state interactions, which they subsequently use to evaluate broader trust in government. In particular, I find that street-level performance affects trust in administrative (e.g., the public administration) and political institutions (e.g., national parliament) of government in **Paper A** and general trust in the municipality in **Paper B**. Even though the effect sizes are smaller for the more general trust measures, the effects are still substantially interesting given the low intensity of the survey experimental treatments.

Another way to illustrate the wider-ranging effects of street-level performance on citizens' trust is to examine whether bureaucrats' warmth influences citizens' tendency to be willing to file a complaint against the municipality for a given decision. Until now, and for the most part of this dissertation, I have emphasized trust attitudes. Filing a complaint can be seen as a more drastic measure since it involves actual behavior (which requires some effort and probably overcoming administrative burdens). Thus, it says something about whether trust has consequences for citizen behavior. In that respect, I find that willingness to file a complaint against the municipality with regard to a decision about getting access to public elderly care is correlated with citizens' trust in bureaucrats and the municipality ($r = .41$). Further, when bureaucrats show high warmth in interactions with citizens, individuals are significantly less inclined to file a complaint against the municipality (see Table 9).² This corresponds to an effect size of .15 standard deviations on the dependent variable.

In addition, outcomes also matter in this case as citizens are significantly less inclined to complain when they receive a favorable decision compared to receiving an unfavorable decision (see Table 9). However, these results might underestimate the effect of warmth since we would expect that warm behavior should primarily decrease the willingness to complain when outcomes are unfavorable to individual citizens. In other words, if outcomes are favorable in the first place, citizens have very little encouragement to complain, and thus, warmth should not change the willingness to complain. Looking only at respondents who received unfavorable outcomes, warmth has a marginally significant effect on the willingness to complain in the expected direction ($p = .087$), while warmth

2. This analysis was not a part of **Paper B** since it was not a part of the pre-registered hypotheses. In this way, the analysis can be interpreted as exploratory.

Table 9. Impact of experimental treatments on tendency to file a complaint against the municipality

	Model 1	Model 2
Outcome favorability (OF)	-.21 (.017)***	-.20 (.024)***
Warmth	-.05 (.017)**	-.041 (.023) ⁺
Warmth * OF		-.014 (.034)
Constant	.73 (.014)***	.73 (.016)***
Number of obs.	1,384	1,384
Adjusted R ²	.10	.10

Note: The dependent variable (willingness to file a complaint against the municipality regarding the decision) is measured on a 0-1 scale. The outcome favorability and warmth treatments are the same as used in Paper B.

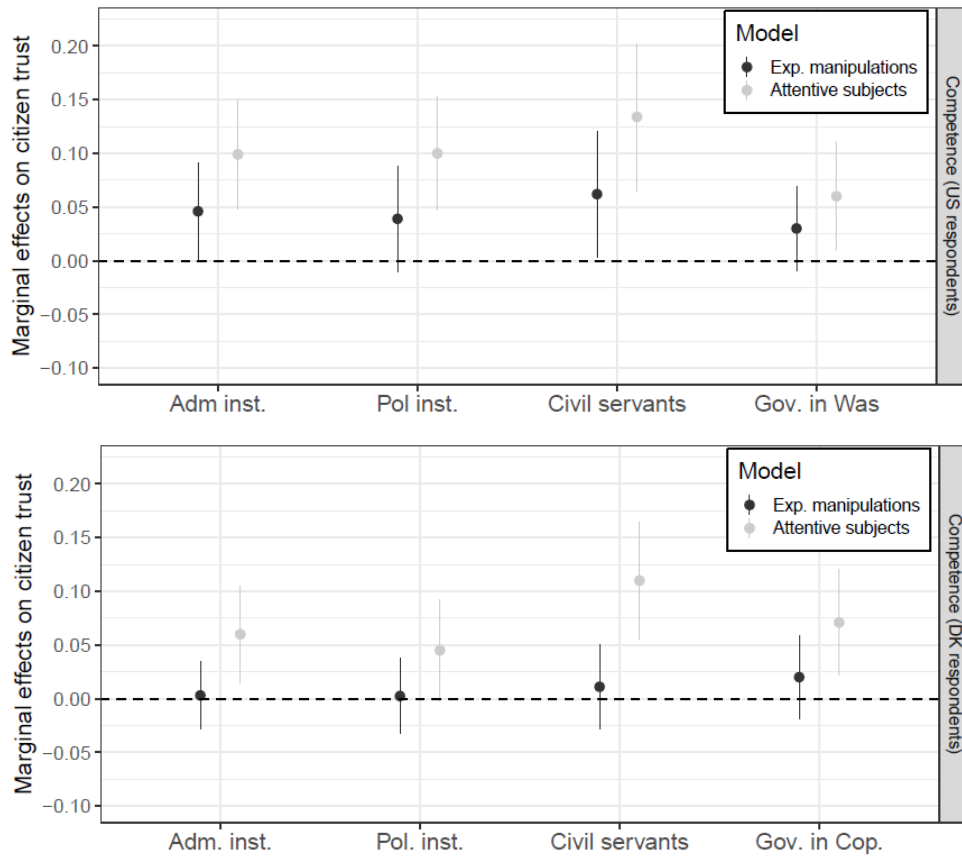
⁺p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

makes citizens significantly less inclined to complain when outcomes are favorable ($p = .023$). Thus, it appears that warmth mainly has an effect on the tendency to complain about a decision because warmth makes citizens who encountered a favorable outcome even more positive about the decision. However, the insignificant interaction term between the two experimental manipulations in Model 2 of Table 9 shows that warmth does not play a significantly larger role when outcomes are unfavorable compared to when they are favorable.

The influence of competence on citizens' trust. Concerning competence, the upper panel of Figure 4 shows that when US citizens were primed to recall an interaction with a competent public employee, they have significantly more trust in civil servants and broader administrative institutions compared to participants who were primed to recall an interaction with an incompetent bureaucrat. The experimental manipulation of competence, on the other hand, has no effects on trust in political institutions or trust in government in Washington. As was the case with warmth, the results are insignificant for Danish respondents across all trust measures. However, when only using respondents who passed an attention check (see the gray dots in Figure 4), the results indicate that competence significantly influences citizens' trust in government - also across country contexts. These results are not experimental and should be interpreted carefully, but the pattern of results is further supported by the findings from the more controlled experimental setup in Study 2 of Paper A, where the competence manipulation has a significant impact on trust in civil servants and administrative institutions (see Figure

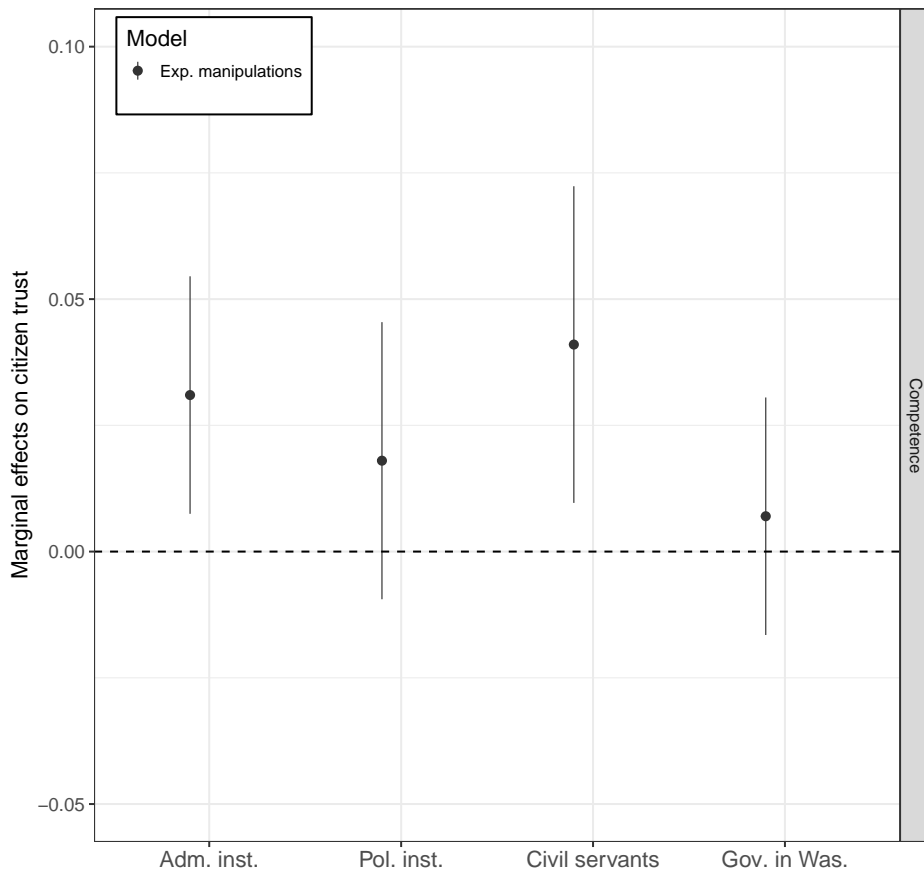
5).

Figure 4. Marginal effects of competence: Priming experiment (Paper A)



Notes: Reprint from Paper A (Study 1). Dots are unstandardized OLS estimates and spikes are the associated 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5. Marginal effects of competence among US respondents: Vignette experiment (Paper A)



Notes: Reprint from Paper A (Study 2). Dots are unstandardized OLS estimates and spikes are the associated 95% confidence intervals.

In sum, the dissertation’s results suggest that how street-level bureaucrats perform in citizen-state interactions - in terms of warmth and competence - has important effects not only for citizens’ trust judgments of governmental institutions but also in relation to further behavioral measures regarding the willingness to complain about governmental decisions. Yet, it is important to note that the results further indicate different effects across cultural contexts.

4.1.2 Does warmth moderate the impact of outcome favorability on citizens’ trust?

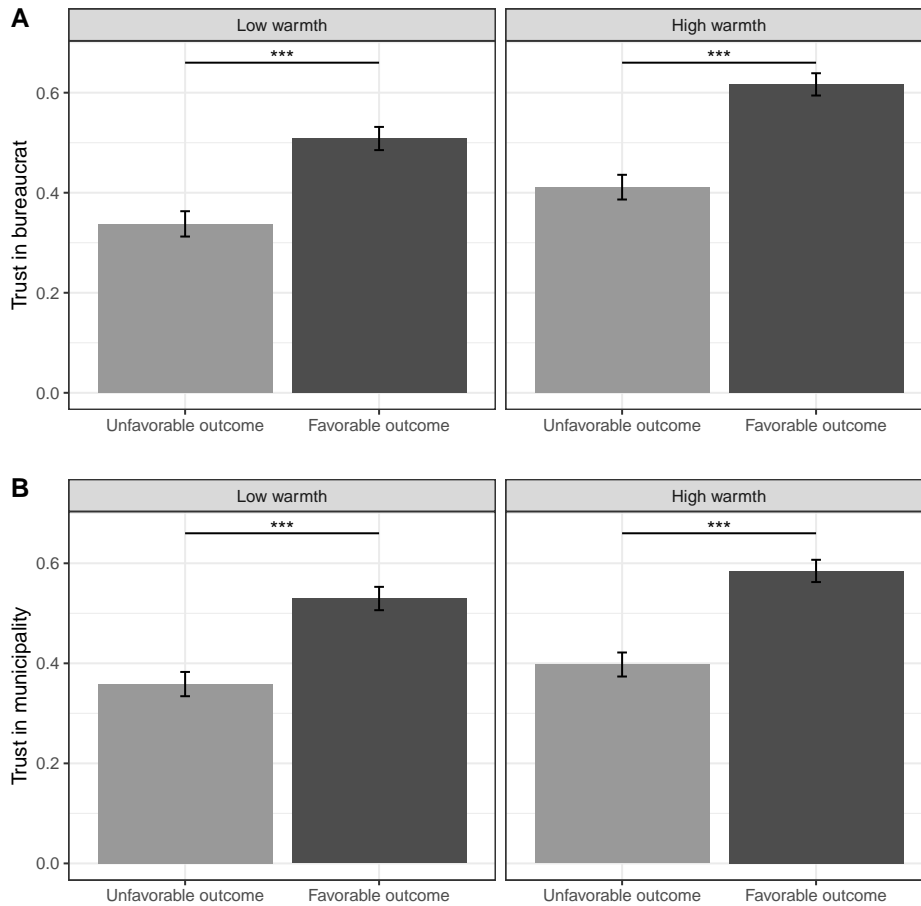
In this dissertation, I expect warmth to be context-specific in the sense that positive impressions of bureaucrats’ warmth might be more important in cases where bureaucrats provide citizens with an unfavorable outcome compared to situations where the outcome is favorable to the individual. As pointed out in the introduction, outcomes

has been heavily emphasized in current studies on trust in government. However, the negative influence of unfavorable outcomes on citizens' trust in government might be reduced when bureaucrats perform well on the warmth dimension.

I test this claim in **Paper B** and the overall results are presented in Figure 6 below. First, the results suggest that receiving a favorable decision increases citizens' trust in both the specific bureaucrat they interacted with as well as their trust in the municipality (compared to getting an unfavorable decision). The effect sizes are, on average, about 18 percentage points more trust in both the bureaucrat and the municipality. Second, Figure 6 reveals that this difference in trust due to outcome favorability is not moderated by warmth, which is against the expectations. For instance, in Panel A of Figure 6, we can see that the difference between the unfavorable and favorable outcome conditions in cases of low warmth is not significantly different from the difference between unfavorable and favorable outcome conditions when bureaucrats' warmth is high. Interestingly, however, the lack of a significant interaction effect also indicates that warm behavior matters for citizens' trust in government independently of outcome favorability.

To sum up, the dissertation finds that warm bureaucratic behavior and outcome favorability do not strengthen or weaken each other's effects. This means, in particular, that warmth has a strong direct influence on citizens' trust in governmental institutions, but this effect is not found to be stronger when outcomes are unfavorable to citizens.

Figure 6. Marginal effects of outcome favorability conditioned by bureaucrats' warmth (Paper B)



Notes: Reprint from Paper B. Effect of the outcome favorability manipulation on trust in the bureaucrat (Panel A) and trust in the municipality (Panel B) conditional on the warmth treatment. Bars are means and lines are 95% CIs. *** $p < 0.001$.

4.2 Key findings: The domain of politics

Besides contributing with an emphasis on the importance of street-level performance for citizens' trust in governmental institutions, I argue that it is necessary to look further at the political decision-making process if we want to get a better understanding of the performance-trust link. As argued in the theory section, citizens may not only be concerned about whether the process has been fair (Tyler 1990) but also more generally whether the political decision-making process indicates that politicians are progressing towards a decision. My main expectation is that if politicians keep discussing without any sign of an end product, citizens will lower their trust. On the other hand, I expect to see an increase in trust levels if politicians actively work towards a final decision. If this is the case, we should expect that citizens react strongly to events in the political

decision-making process, which either indicates significant progress or lack of progress towards a decision. This overall hypothesis is tested in **Paper C**.

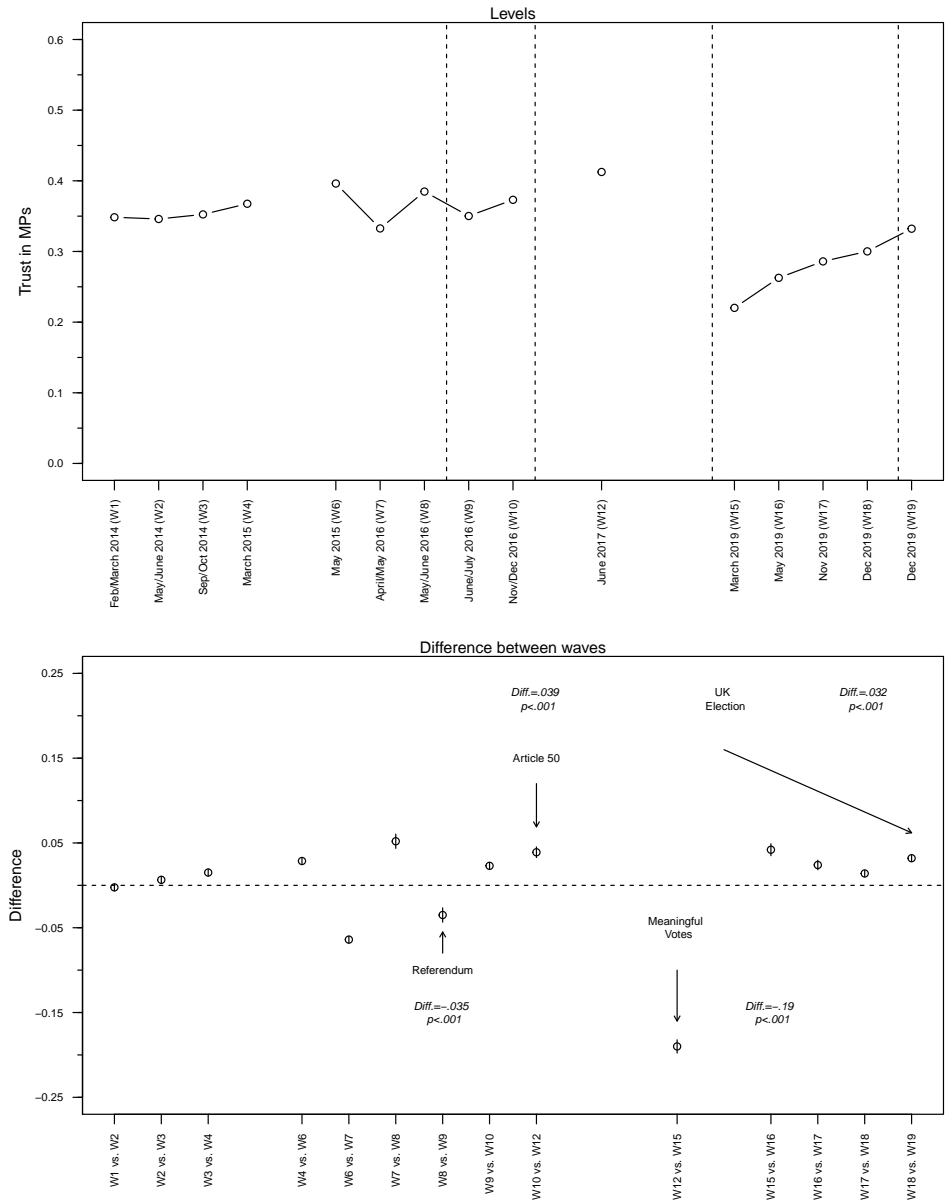
The paper finds mixed evidence for the hypothesis as citizens strongly react negatively to events that indicate lack of progress towards a decision, while events that reflect substantial progress are not followed by a strong positive reaction in terms of trust in government. The empirical case of **Paper C** is the political negotiation process on how to leave the European Union that British politicians were faced with in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum on June 23, 2016, where a majority of British citizens voted to “Leave” the European Union. In the paper, I used repeated cross-sections of representative samples of British citizens (see Chapter 3 and **Paper C** for more details) to examine how levels of citizens’ trust changed from *before* to *after* events in the negotiation process that either provided citizens with evidence of progress towards a decision on Brexit or events which reflected lack of progress towards a final decision concerning Brexit.

In the paper, I thoroughly argue that two political events after the Brexit referendum are particularly relevant to study (**Paper C** includes an extensive timeline of events following the Brexit referendum). First, the triggering of Article 50 by Prime Minister Theresa May set an official date for leaving the European Union, and thus, this was expected to be followed by a sharp increase in citizens’ trust in government. Second, a big part of the negotiation process was marked by multiple votes against a proposed Withdrawal Agreement in Parliament (also called “Meaningful Votes”). As this period in the process heavily indicated that politicians could not agree on a deal, I expected that it would be followed by a sharp decline in trust in government. With the data over time and these events, it was possible to identify whether citizens changed their trust according to how politicians performed in the political decision-making process. I examined both how citizens changed their trust in Members of Parliament (MPs) and their satisfaction with democracy to get an even broader measure of system support.

The overall results from this analysis (focusing on trust in MPs) are presented in Figure 7. The top panel of the figure shows how the overall level of trust developed over the whole time period analyzed (February 2014 to December 2019), while the lower panel presents the difference in trust levels between waves. Moreover, the lower panel of Figure 7 emphasizes the estimates that concern the two important events of the political decision-making process as well as two estimates that concern a referendum and an election. The two last estimates are examples of other important events in this time period and can be used as a sort of aspiration level or benchmark to which the effect sizes of the two events in the decision-making process can be compared. Concerning

the event of Article 50, the findings suggest that citizens' trust in Members of Parliament increases significantly but not substantially more compared to other "normal" fluctuations in trust. Thus, the formal triggering of Article 50, which reflects a positive event indicating progress towards a final outcome, did not substantially increase citizens' trust. This was against the expectations. However, when turning attention to the event of Meaningful Votes, the results provide strong evidence for a significant and substantial jump in citizens' trust in government. In particular, trust in Members of Parliament decreased with 19 percentage points from before to after this event. Overall, the findings indicate that negative events - as indicated by lack of progress in the decision-making process - in accordance with the expectations predict a decrease in trust.

Figure 7. Trend over time in trust in Members of Parliament (Paper C)



Notes: Reprint from Paper C. The upper plot shows the trend in mean trust in Members of Parliament across all BES-waves. The plot in the lower panel presents the difference in means between waves with associated 95% confidence intervals. Results are from two-sided t-tests. The difference between waves in which the expected important events happen are highlighted. The vertical dotted lines indicate the timing of four different events: (1) the Brexit referendum, (2) triggering Article 50, (3) the timing of the “Meaningful Votes,” and (4) UK general election.

Even though the findings provide mixed support for the expectations, it might be that certain citizens react more strongly to the events. As argued in the theory section, progress towards a final outcome might benefit specific citizens, and to protect their own interests and position, these citizens are expected to react more strongly in terms of trust compared to citizens who do not have something at stake to the same extent.

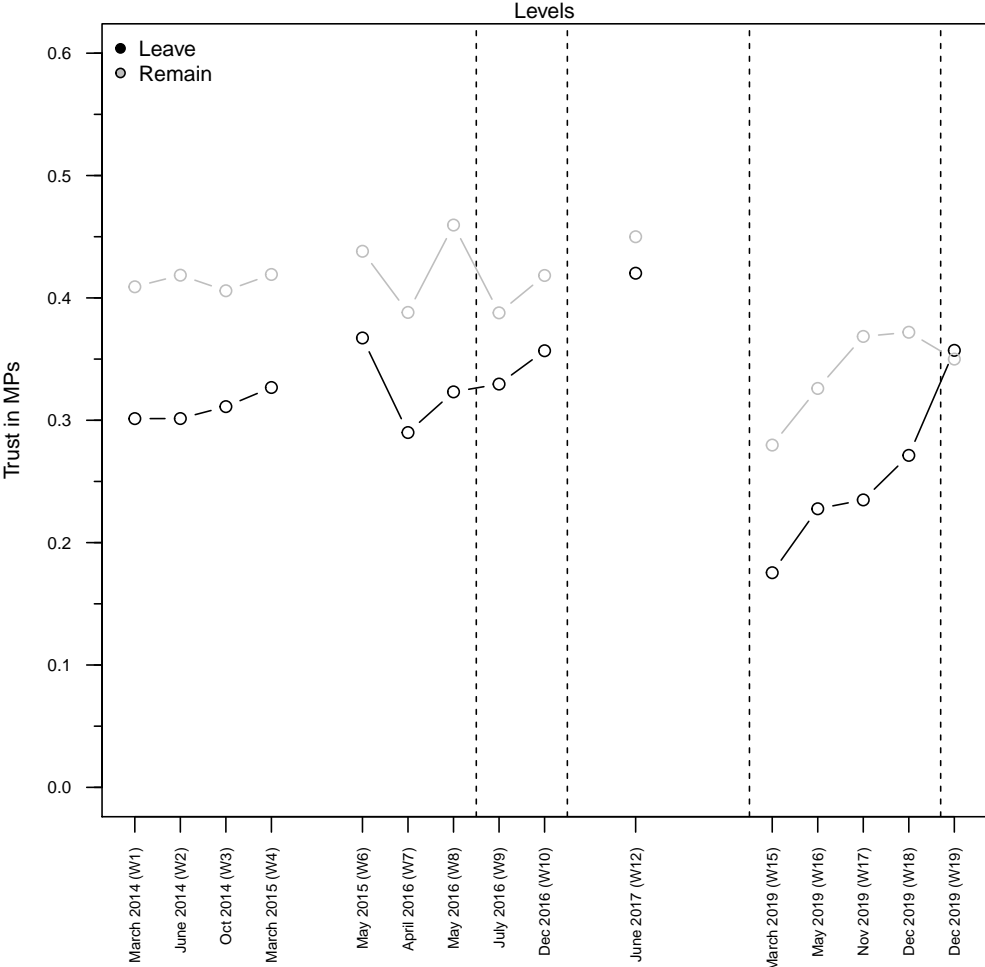
To test this theoretical expectation, I split the sample in Remain and Leave-voters because Leave-voters are expected to react more strongly since they will benefit more from the decision (i.e., leaving the European Union in the case of **Paper C**). Figures 8 and Figure 9 below visualize the results by showing both how the trend in trust in Members of Parliament developed for the two groups of citizens (Figure 8) and the specific difference in trends before and after events in the decision-making process (Figure 9). The lower panel also includes the difference-in-differences estimate concerning the Brexit referendum itself and a United Kingdom general election since they enable me to measure substantial effect sizes. From current studies, we know that winners of elections develop significantly more positive attitudes towards government and democracy compared to electoral losers, and these effects are of substantial size (Anderson and LoTempio 2002; Blais and Gélinau 2007; Hansen, Klemmensen, and Serritzlew 2019). Therefore, these two electoral events are good frames of reference to measure how substantial the effect sizes of the two other events are.

The results suggest that Remain and Leave-voters were divided in their response to the two events in the decision-making process. For both events, Leave-voters responded more strongly than Remain-voters in the sense that they adjusted their trust in government more in response to the events. Again, the effects are strongest concerning the event of Meaningful Votes (DiD = $-.07$), while the substantial effect size with regard to Article 50 (DiD = $.031$) is smaller. Importantly, however, both groups of voters lower their trust in government after the Meaningful Vote event, but Leave-voters lower their trust significantly more over the time period from before to after the event. In terms of substantial significance, it is interesting that the absolute effect size of the Meaningful Vote event is comparable to the effect size of the referendum itself. This result suggests that this event was a strong predictor of citizens' trust and more generally that prominent negative events in the political decision-making process can be important for citizens' trust judgments.

In sum, the results from the domain of politics show that citizens care about performance in the political decision-making process. However, the results appear to be most consistent in cases where politicians do *not* perform in the decision-making process, while citizens are less willing to adjust their trust when performance is good. While this might indicate that citizens are impacted by a negativity bias, it might, on the other hand - as I also discuss in **Paper C** - be because the event of negative performance in this particular case is stronger than the event of positive performance. Moreover, it can be discussed to what extent the prominent case of Brexit can be generalized to other decision-making processes. I return to this discussion in both the individual paper and

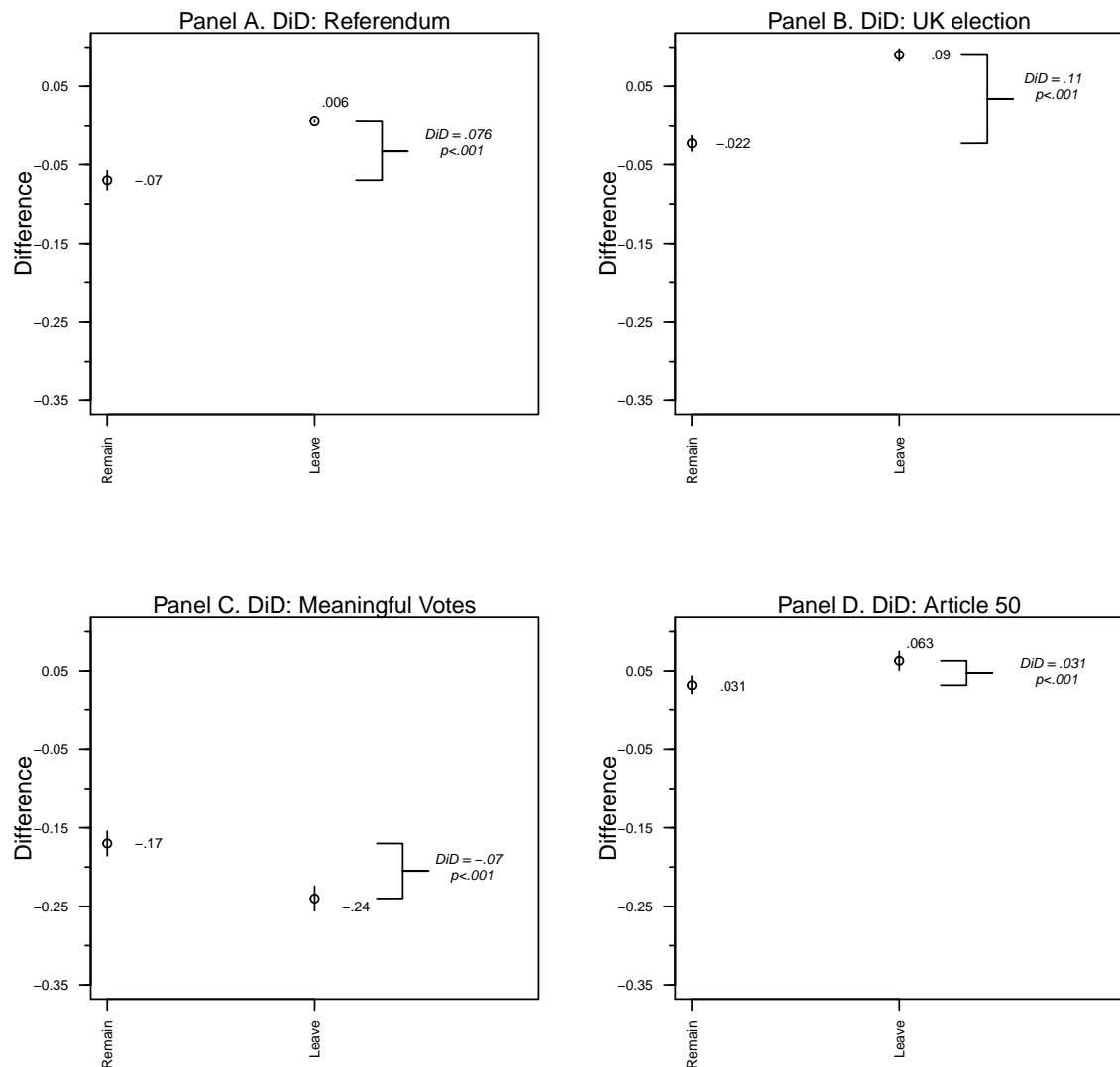
in the following Chapter 5.

Figure 8. Trend over time in trust in Members of Parliament for Leave -and Remain voters (Paper C)



Notes: Based on data from Paper C. The plot shows the trend in mean trust in Members of Parliament across all BES-waves. The vertical dotted lines indicate the timing of four different events: (1) the Brexit referendum, (2) triggering Article 50, (3) the timing of the Meaningful Votes, and (4) the UK general election.

Figure 9. Difference-in-differences estimates for four different event (Paper C)



Notes: Based on data from Paper C. The plots provide estimates for the difference in trust in MPs between two waves (before and after an event) conditional on Remain/leave status with associated 95% confidence intervals. DiD = difference-in-differences estimate. Panel A compares waves 8 and 9, Panel B compares waves 18 and 19, Panel C compares waves 12 and 15, and Panel D compares waves 10 and 12.

Chapter 5

Concluding discussion

For decades, there has been a scholarly interest in understanding and explaining citizens' trust in government (e.g., Miller 1974; Citrin 1974; Levi and Stoker 2000; Van Ryzin 2011; Zmerli and Hooghe 2011; Zmerli and Van der Meer 2017; Kettl 2017; Citrin and Stoker 2018). As described in the introduction, a central idea in this literature is that citizens base their trust on evaluations of performance (e.g., Van Ryzin 2011; Zmerli and Van der Meer 2017; Citrin and Stoker 2018). This line of research has contributed with important insights into how select performance factors, such as macroeconomic performance, are correlated with citizen trust (e.g., Van der Meer 2018). However, as further argued throughout the dissertation, the view of performance has, until now, been rather narrow. In particular, the performance of street-level bureaucrats in citizen-state interactions and the political decision-making process have received little attention. With this dissertation, I have contributed with important insights into the literature on the proposed link between performance and citizen trust (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003; Yang and Holzer 2006) by answering the following overall research question: *How do citizen-state interactions and the political decision-making process influence citizens' trust in governmental institutions?*

I examine this question by combining theories from social psychology with insights from public administration (Grimmelikhuijsen et al. 2017). The dissertation contributes with a comprehensive investigation of how citizens take the performance of both bureaucrats (the domain of bureaucracy) and politicians (the domain of politics) into account when they make trust judgments about government. The dissertation's papers consist of both large-N survey-experimental data and cross-sectional data over time.

Concerning the first part of the research question, the dissertation demonstrates that citizens' impressions of bureaucrats along the dimensions of warmth and competence in citizen-state interactions influence subsequent trust judgments directed towards gov-

ernmental institutions. The results indicate that citizens not only change their trust in bureaucrats according to whether bureaucrats are perceived as warm and/or competent, but they also alter their trust in broader administrative and political institutions. Thus, the dissertation's results suggest that citizens' overall trust in government can be influenced by how citizens perceive the performance of concrete citizen-state interactions. This shows how concrete citizen-state interactions - which might at first seem relatively unimportant in the bigger picture - in fact can be crucial to trust attitudes that are fundamentally important for democratic societies. Besides influencing trust attitudes, street-level performance has further consequences for citizen behavior. The dissertation provides evidence which shows that citizens are more inclined to complain about governmental decisions when bureaucrats are perceived as cold rather than warm. One explanation might be that warmth positively affects trust judgments, which subsequently matters for the tendency to complain about a given decision. Even though I cannot establish that this behavioral reaction is driven by trust, the findings are consistent with the idea that trust attitudes - as argued throughout the trust literature - have behavioral relevance.

Another contribution concerns the finding that street-level bureaucrats' warmth has an effect on citizen trust no matter the favorability of outcomes delivered to citizens. However, against the expectations, bureaucrats' warmth does not mitigate the negative effect on trust in cases of unfavorable outcomes. Still, the findings are important since they further establish the significance of warmth impressions for trust evaluations, and they challenge the prominent view among scholars that politicians and bureaucrats simply should provide citizens with favorable outcomes to earn citizens' trust. Specifically, the results contribute to the growing literature which emphasizes that citizens also weigh other dimensions than outcome favorability, such as procedural fairness, when evaluating trust (e.g., Tyler 1990; Van Ryzin 2011; Bøggild 2016).

With regard to the second part of the research question, results show that citizens are also affected by the performance of politicians in the decision-making process. Citizens appear to change their trust in government depending on whether politicians work towards a final decision on prominent political issues. That is, citizens tend to punish government with lower levels of trust when they have the feeling that politicians do not make progress towards a decision, but rather stand still and keep discussing an issue without any sign of reaching an agreement. Moreover, the dissertation shows that this tendency is most widespread among citizens who would benefit from politicians reaching a final decision. Thus, also when looking at politicians' performance, outcome favorability plays a central role in forming trust judgments. This means that the disser-

tation contributes to the literature by showing that politicians can earn citizens' trust by not only providing final outcomes that are favorable (e.g., Allen and Birch 2015) or acting fair in the process (e.g., Tyler 1990) but also by showing that they actually work towards making a decision on issues that are important to citizens - especially if they have made a promise about the given political issue.

5.1 Methodological caveats and ideas for solutions

This dissertation gives valuable insights relevant to literature on the performance-trust link. However, it should be considered that the choices made throughout the dissertation entail important methodological limitations. In the following, I discuss the most important limitations and propose how future research can handle these challenges.

First, although all the dissertation's studies were designed to ensure high internal validity, the Brexit paper in particular (**Paper C**) hinges upon untestable identifying assumptions (e.g., parallel trends assumption). Therefore, one might question the internal validity of the findings from the domain of politics. As argued in Chapter 3, the design and difference-in-differences model in the Brexit paper were useful in testing the expectations in a real-world setting, thus accommodating concerns about the ecological validity. However, this choice did not come without a cost. As I discuss more in the paper, although I address these concerns through tests of potential violations to the identifying assumption, I acknowledge that it limits the paper's ability to say something certain about cause and effect. Hence, I encourage scholars to carefully design experiments that can take issues concerning internal validity into account. For instance, scholars could design survey-experiments in which citizens are presented with vignettes describing a political decision-making process where it varies to what extent politicians can agree on a final decision. It might even be a conjoint setup (Hainmueller, Hangartner, and Yamamoto 2015; Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015) where it is possible to vary and experimentally test several parameters at once (e.g., vary the political issues, length of discussion, or whether it is a specific political party or political parties in the national parliament in general that cannot decide). While the findings from this dissertation suggest that real-world performance in a political decision-making process predicts citizens' trust, randomized controlled experiments could further confirm the causality and – in combination with the findings of this dissertation - provide really strong evidence in line with my expectations.

Second, the survey-experimental designs used to investigate the influence of street-level performance in the domain of bureaucracy maximized the internal validity through

randomization. While this design choice ensures the internal validity, this part of the dissertation has limitations in terms of ecological validity (Blom-Hansen, Morton, and Serritzlew 2015). In Chapter 3, I mentioned some of the steps taken to address this limitation (e.g., designing the experiments such that respondents received experimental material to which they could relate). Still, the experimental manipulations are fictional, and the environment (a survey) is simpler and more artificial compared to a real-world setting. One way to further emphasize the ecological validity is to choose other research designs. For instance, scholars could, in future studies, test the dissertation's expectations through qualitative interviews with citizens about their real interactions with the state and how these interactions influence their views on government. This would also help in identifying more clearly the theoretical mechanism connecting perceptions of warmth and competence to broader trust in governmental institutions.

A central theme of this dissertation has been to identify the influence of citizen-state interactions on citizens' trust through randomized vignette experiments, where individuals had to imagine an interaction with a bureaucrat. A concern might be that this is not an actual encounter/interaction. Generally, I would expect effects to be larger in real-world settings because the interaction has real implications, and that warmth/competence are felt more directly in actual encounters. However, a next step for future studies could be to use other manipulations of the interaction and bureaucrats' warmth and competence. For instance, scholars could present respondents with validated pictures of warm (cold) bureaucrats or videos of actors hired to play warm (cold) bureaucrats. Such studies could, for instance, be done in a laboratory experimental setup (Nielsen 2016). This would get us closer to manipulating real-world interactions with bureaucrats.

Another way to address the above concerns about ecological and external validity could be to design field experiments. It could, for instance, be interesting to make a collaboration with municipalities or local government institutions and try to manipulate bureaucrats' warmth by randomly assigning bureaucrats to either a treatment group, which receives knowledge about the positive effects of warmth and thus, encourage them to behave in a warmer manner, or a control group who receives no such information. Afterwards, one could survey citizens who had interacted with bureaucrats about their trust attitudes. This would be a way to test whether warmth has effects on citizen trust in a more naturalistic setting.

Third, questions remain about the external validity of the dissertation's findings. The results are based on a diverse set of data from different countries (Denmark, the United States, and the United Kingdom). In **Paper A**, I directly address the cross-cultural

generalizability of the main expectations about the effects of street-level performance as I conducted the same experiment in both Denmark and the United States.¹ Moreover, Papers A and B in combination test whether the effect of bureaucrats' warmth on citizen trust generalize across countries, i.e., Denmark and the United States. These two countries were chosen because they represent differences in political, institutional, and cultural settings as well as differences in initial level of trust in government. Denmark may constitute a conservative case because the high level of initial trust and high expectations to government leave little room and make it harder for performance to further increase citizen trust. Overall, the results regarding bureaucrats' warmth generalize across countries, even though some of the findings from Paper A point to Danish citizens not responding as strongly to street-level performance as US citizens. This shows that future research could contribute by conducting studies across countries to more fully understand the cross-cultural generalizability. This could also include cross-cultural tests of the boundary effects of street-level performance (e.g., interaction effects between outcome favorability and bureaucrats' warmth). Furthermore, since the arguments concerning the domain of politics were tested only among British citizens, it would be valuable for future research to address the generalizability to other country contexts. Again, it could be the case that citizens with higher initial levels of trust in government (e.g., in Denmark) would *not* react as strongly to negative events in the political decision-making process. In sum, since all the dissertation's studies are conducted in Western countries, we fundamentally lack knowledge about whether the findings are externally valid outside WEIRD-countries (Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) (Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan 2010). This has been outside the scope of this dissertation, but it would be an important next step for future research.

A related limitation is that the dissertation has investigated the research question on a few select cases: two functional categories of the public sector (i.e., elderly care and the postal service) in the domain of bureaucracy and one political issue (Brexit) in the domain of politics. While both public sector areas can be considered service-oriented, they differ because elderly care, all else being equal, is more salient to citizens and constitutes a core welfare service. This suggests that the identified effects are generalizable to service areas of the public sector. However, the results might be different in other settings, such as regulation-oriented organizations. For example, de Boer (2020) shows that citizens make this distinction and regulation-oriented bureaucrats are considered less warm and competent than bureaucrats working in service-oriented organizations.

1. In Study 1 of Paper A, the same experiment was conducted across countries.

Thus, we should be careful about generalizing the results to all areas of the public sector. Concerning the domain of politics, Brexit constitutes a very prominent case where a lot was at stake for citizens. Therefore, some caution is needed in terms of whether we would identify the same results with a less salient political issue. Furthermore, we cannot take for granted that citizens react in the same way to how politicians perform in the decision-making process at the local level. Citizens might feel more attached to local politics because local politicians deal with problems more relevant to citizens and such issues affect citizens more directly. Moreover, people generally have more trust in local government (e.g., Fitzgerald and Wolak 2016). This may imply that we should find even larger effects of political performance at the local level. However, this is speculation that should be taken up in future research.

A fourth limitation concerns that I am only able to examine short-term effects of government performance on citizen trust. One possibility to address this limitation would be to conduct follow-up surveys or in other ways make temporal space between the measures of performance and trust. This would allow such future studies to test whether performance has a persistent effect on trust in the long-term or whether trust levels quickly return to the level from before a given change in performance.

Fifth, the survey-experimental studies in particular are limited by the intensity of treatments and the subsequent small effect sizes. For instance, the effect of the warmth manipulation on trust in the municipality reflects a rather small effect size of .19 in **Paper B** (for trust in the bureaucrat, the effect size is .36). Similar effect sizes are also present in **Paper A**. While this could make one concerned about the substantial significance of the findings, I argue that there is reason to believe that the identified effects are substantially interesting. Mainly, the treatments have consisted of cues about bureaucrats' warmth and competence, and the setting is artificial with a vignette describing a fictitious scenario. Therefore, the treatment intensity is low. We should expect the effect size to increase substantially in actual encounters with bureaucrats where a lot more is at stake for citizens. Again, field experiments could be conducted in future research to test whether the potential effect sizes are, in fact, larger in a real-world setting.

Finally, while this dissertation has provided insights about citizens' trust evaluations, we know less about how such trust attitudes affect decision-making and behavioral responses. Indeed, the argument for why it is important and interesting to study citizen trust is that the level of trust has implications for citizen behavior. As described in the introduction, the level of citizen trust, for instance, has implications for whether citizens follow government regulations (Marien and Hooghe 2011). Generally, this ques-

tion has been outside the scope of this dissertation, but I have shown that street-level performance influences the willingness to complain about governmental decisions. Future research could contribute by carrying out a more comprehensive test of the link between performance, trust, and behavioral outcomes. For instance, it could be interesting to examine whether citizen trust influences voice or exit behavior (Hirschman 1970; Dowding et al. 2000; Dowding and John 2008) such as choosing private rather than public providers of service.

5.2 What's next? Implications and further directions for future research

Besides highlighting the main contributions of the dissertation and the methodological caveats, an important question is the practical implications of the dissertation's findings. These implications provide further directions for future research as they point to many important research questions related to this dissertation's overall research question. In this section, I propose and discuss such implications. In addition, I will discuss select research questions - unrelated to the methodological limitations presented above - which I hope that future research will investigate. The perspectives discussed in the remainder of this chapter are just a few out of the many that could possibly have been discussed in relation to the dissertation's findings and research question. First, the section will discuss the practical implications of the results for the public sector, public managers, and politicians. The second part concerns a discussion of the theoretical implications of the overall findings on the performance-trust link. In both subsections, I discuss how the implications lay the groundwork for important future research.

Implications for bureaucracy and politics

First, the results demonstrated that warmth impressions of bureaucrats influence citizens' trust judgments. These results give rise to questions about whether public managers should use information about their employees' warmth in their decision making. At first, the implication is that public managers should use data or information about the level of warmth among employees in motivation and hiring processes. However, this depends to some degree on whether warmth is a stable personality/character trait or a value that public managers are able to change.

No matter what, the suggestion based on the findings would be that public managers use warmth as a part of their decision making in the hiring process of new bureaucrats.

Even though warmth is only partly visible to public managers in job interviews (compared to e.g., education level), this could be used to choose bureaucrats who increase citizens' trust through their behavior and subsequently pave the way for more efficient public service delivery (e.g., Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004; Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2007; Cooper, Knotts, and Brennan 2008). The implication is more complex regarding motivation of bureaucrats. If public managers are to motivate bureaucrats who are already employed to act in a warmer and friendlier way, it would require that warmth is changeable. In their seminal work, Fiske and colleagues write: "the warmth dimension captures *traits* that are related to perceived intent, including friendliness, helpfulness..." (Fiske, Cuddy, and Glick 2007, 77, emphasis added). This means that the warmth dimension theoretically builds on traits. Even though warmth is probably only partly mutable and individuals have different initial levels of warmth, it could be interesting for future research to examine whether public employees' level of warmth could be changed, for example, through public value management (Andersen et al. 2020; Moore 1995, 2013) where public managers spread and embed central values in their organization. One could at least imagine (speculatively) that such management over time could create positive changes in bureaucrats' warmth. Even small changes in the warmth of bureaucrats might be enough to generate more positive trust judgments among citizens.

A related point is that citizens often have repeated interactions with the same bureaucrat, and in such cases, citizens might rely heavily on their first impression of bureaucrats' warmth (Willis and Todorov 2006). Previous studies in social psychology have demonstrated that evaluations are made very fast and spontaneously on, for instance, trustworthiness (e.g., Engell, Haxby, and Todorov 2007; Todorov, Pakrashi, and Oosterhof 2009). While implicit first impressions generally are hard to change, it is possible to update them with new information that is believable, diagnostic, or makes you reinterpret the original information (Ferguson et al. 2019; Cone, Mann, and Ferguson 2017; Cone, Flaharty, and Ferguson 2021). Moreover, there might be some basic stability in citizens' perceptions of bureaucrats' warmth, which makes it harder to change such perceptions. For instance, it might be harder to change perceptions among citizens with low initial trust in government because it colors their fundamental view of government and bureaucrats. I encourage scholars to investigate the conditions under which it is possible to update citizens' first impressions of bureaucrats' warmth.

Another related implication of the dissertation's results is that public organizations should design measures on their employees' warmth rather than simply on efficiency, outputs, and outcomes, which have otherwise been the main priority in performance management doctrines (e.g., Pollitt and Bouckaert 2004). For instance, the results im-

ply that warmth should be used in satisfaction surveys as it might make satisfaction results a more promising performance measure (Stipak 1979; James 2009; Andersen and Hjortskov 2016). In addition, a design suggestion for future research would be to examine whether information about public employees' warmth can be used actively by public managers. One could imagine future studies scrutinizing experimentally whether indicators of warmth are perceived as valid and legitimate by bureaucrats and public managers, or to what extent they influence decision making in public organizations. It would also be valuable to know whether warmth can be used to change citizens' perceptions of overall performance because warmth might reflect a value that citizens want public organizations to produce (Moore 2013). It would be obvious to present such information more qualitatively or in episodic frames rather than hard/quantitative performance indicators. Prior work shows that individuals generally react more strongly emotionally to episodic frames (Aarøe 2011), but we know little about whether public managers respond to such information (Olsen 2017).

The final point that I will discuss concerning implications and future research related to the domain of bureaucracy is whether citizens in fact have a stereotypical notion of bureaucrats on warmth and competence. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that variation in warmth and competence among bureaucrats significantly influences citizens' trust in government. However, future research could take a step back and examine whether citizens initially have certain perceptions of bureaucrats (see e.g., de Boer 2020) to map stereotypes in the public sector and citizen-state interactions. This is important to more fully understand the mindset with which citizens go into meetings with bureaucrats and to contribute to the general literature on stereotyping and discrimination (e.g., Raaphorst, Groeneveld, and Van de Walle 2018; Jilke and Tummers 2018; Pedersen, Stritch, and Thuesen 2018; Andersen and Guul 2019). For instance, it could be interesting to investigate whether citizens perceive public employees more negatively on warmth and competence compared to private employees (Hvidman and Andersen 2016). Furthermore, there might be differences in citizens' stereotypes of public employees across public sector areas. For instance, nurses might be perceived as warmer than employees at the DMV. This would be interesting to examine because it has practical implications. That is, working towards creating higher levels of warmth among employees has a bigger potential to make a difference in service areas where initial warmth is low. If researchers want to follow this research agenda further, it would also be interesting to map and examine public employees' stereotypes about citizens and even compare citizen and bureaucrat stereotypes.

In this case, it would be valuable to utilize the method of reverse correlation from

social psychology, which enables researchers to study citizens' mental representations of public employees based on judgments of randomly varying stimuli (Brinkman, Todorov, and Dotsch 2017; Dotsch and Todorov 2012; Dotsch et al. 2008). This method is useful as it handles concerns with social desirability bias by studying stereotypes in a much more subtle way. For instance, it would be possible to visually depict whether citizens have stereotypes about bureaucrats being warm, competent, or trustworthy.

Concerning the domain of politics, one might question whether the results imply that politicians should discuss important political issues less. Even though events in the decision-making process which reflect that politicians cannot agree on a decision are followed by a decline in trust, the immediate suggestion would not be for politicians to simply discuss important political issues to a lesser extent. Politicians are, after all, elected by citizens to represent them and take certain political positions. It is their job to defend and handle the interests of their voters. This means that attitudes play a central role for politicians, and we expect them to be passionate and concerned about fighting for such (ideological) attitudes. For instance, we would expect politicians to fight for getting Brexit done if this were a political viewpoint upon which they were elected or have otherwise promised to work for. On the other hand, we as citizens also expect politicians to work towards consensus and common policy interests that are beneficial for society at large (Weinberg 2020). Thus, we may have to live with the fact that long political debates can lower the level of trust in government because such political discussions are part of a healthy democratic society.

However, important questions related to this discussion remain unanswered. First, it would be interesting to study if performance in the political decision-making process has consequences for behavioral measures such as electoral behavior. Second, future research should provide insights into the relative effect of process versus outcomes. Is the political decision-making process trivial if outcomes in the end turn out in favor of the individual citizen? The results of this dissertation preliminarily suggest that trust rather quickly returns to previous levels. Thus, the question becomes whether the effect of performance in the political decision-making process is short-lived or whether it has long-term implications for politicians.

Implications for the performance-trust link

Overall, the findings have important implications for democracy. Previous work has emphasized that the causal link between performance and trust might not be as straightforward as one would initially assume (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003; Yang and Holzer 2006). This is, for instance, due to citizens having different expectations for

government (Huseby 2000; Van Ryzin 2013), there being a discrepancy between performance and perceptions of performance (Stipak 1979), or trust influencing performance (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2007). These studies point to that the link between performance and trust is not as strong as one would initially expect. This more complex link between performance and trust have implications for democratic accountability and good governance since citizens should be critical and keep government accountable based on measures of performance (Zmerli and Van der Meer 2017; Norris, Jennings, and Stoker 2019; Devine et al. 2020a) However, the findings of this dissertation provide evidence that citizens do, in fact, react to the performance of both bureaucrats and politicians according to the assumptions about democratic accountability and the chain of delegation (as mentioned in the Introduction). On the other hand, the findings also demonstrate that trust is not only a thermostatic response to changes in performance but also to some extent at least is an affective response to whether outcomes are favorable or not to the individual. Favorable outcomes do not necessarily equal good government performance. This illustrates that trust is influenced by other factors than performance, and thus, there are boundaries for how much government and the public sector can change citizens' trust. Yet, even though the strongest direct effects in the dissertation originate from manipulations of outcome favorability, the findings still show that government performance plays an important role in building trust (e.g., that warmth has a significant direct effect on trust independent of outcome favorability). In sum, the findings of this dissertation show that it is important to keep studying and extend our understanding of how the performance of governmental institutions influences citizens' trust judgments.

Concerning the dissertation's overall model, I encourage scholars to develop and extend the model by, for example, examining the reverse causal relationship going from trust in government to (perceptions of) government performance, or by uncovering the extent to which bureaucrats and politicians have trust in citizens in order to more fully understand the different trust relationships, all of which are important to the functioning and legitimacy of a democracy. It could, for example, be the case that bureaucrats' impressions of citizens' warmth and competence matter for bureaucrats' trust in citizens. Mutual trust between citizens and governmental actors is significant for good democratic governance (Yang 2005).

Bibliography

- Aarøe, Lene. 2011. "Investigating frame strength: The case of episodic and thematic frames." *Political Communication* 28 (2): 207–226.
- Abele, Andrea E., Amy J. C. Cuddy, Charles M. Judd, and Vincent Y. Yzerbyt. 2008. "Fundamental Dimensions of Social Judgment." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 38 (7): 1063–1065.
- Abele, Andrea E., and Nicole Hauke. 2020. "Comparing the Facets of the Big Two in Global Evaluation of Self versus Other People." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 50 (5): 969–982.
- Abele, Andrea E., and Bogdan Wojciszke. 2007. "Agency and Communion from the Perspective of Self versus Others." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93 (5): 751–763.
- Allen, Nicholas, and Sarah Birch. 2015. "Process Preferences and British Public Opinion: Citizens' Judgements about Government in an Era of Anti-Politics." *Political Studies* 63 (2): 390–411.
- Almond, Gabriel A., and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Andersen, Lotte Bøgh, Andreas Boesen, and Lene Holm Pedersen. 2016. "Performance in Public Organizations: Clarifying the Conceptual Space." *Public Administration Review* 76 (6): 852–862.
- Andersen, Lotte Bøgh, Carsten Greve, Kurt Klaudi Klausen, and Jacob Torfing. 2020. *Offentlige styringsparadigmer: konkurrence og sameksistens*. København: Djøf.
- Andersen, Simon Calmar, and Thorbjørn Sejr Guul. 2019. "Reducing minority discrimination at the front line—Combined survey and field experimental evidence." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29 (3): 429–444.
- Andersen, Simon Calmar, and Morten Hjortskov. 2016. "Cognitive biases in performance evaluations." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 26 (4): 647–662.

- Anderson, Cameron D. 2009. "Institutional Change, Economic Conditions and Confidence in Government: Evidence from Belgium." *Acta Politica* 44 (1): 28–49.
- Anderson, Christopher J., and Andrew J. LoTempio. 2002. "Winning, Losing and Political Trust in America." *British Journal of Political Science* 32 (2): 335–351.
- Anderson, Christopher J., and Matthew M. Singer. 2008. "The Sensitive Left and the Impervious Right: Multilevel Models and the Politics of Inequality, Ideology, and Legitimacy in Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4-5): 564–599.
- Anderson, Christopher J., and Yuliya V. Tverdova. 2003. "Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 47 (1): 91–109.
- Andrews, Rhys, George A. Boyne, and Richard M. Walker. 2011. "Dimensions of Publicness and Organizational Performance: A Review of the Evidence." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (suppl.3): i301–i319.
- Angrist, Joshua David, and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 2014. *Mastering Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bækgaard, Martin, and Søren Serritzlew. 2016. "Interpreting Performance Information: Motivated Reasoning or Unbiased Comprehension." *Public Administration Review* 76 (1): 73–82.
- Bækgaard, Martin, Caroline Baethge, Jens Blom-Hansen, Claire A. Dunlop, Marc Esteve, Morten Jakobsen, Brian Kisida, John Marvel, Alice Moseley, and Søren Serritzlew. 2015. "Conducting Experiments in Public Management Research: A Practical Guide." *International Public Management Journal* 18 (2): 323–342.
- Behn, Robert D. 2003. "Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures." *Public Administration Review* 63 (5): 586–606.
- Berg, Monika, and Tobias Johansson. 2020. "Building Institutional Trust Through Service Experiences—Private Versus Public Provision Matter." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 30 (2): 290–306.
- Berinsky, Adam J., Gregory A. Huber, and Gabriel S. Lenz. 2012. "Evaluating Online Labor Markets for Experimental Research: Amazon.Com's Mechanical Turk." *Political Analysis* 20 (3): 351–368.
- Bertsou, Eri. 2019. "Rethinking Political Distrust." *European Political Science Review* 11 (2): 213–230.

- Bisgaard, Martin. 2015. "Bias Will Find a Way: Economic Perceptions, Attributions of Blame, and Partisan-Motivated Reasoning during Crisis." *The Journal of Politics* 77 (3): 849–860.
- Blais, André, and François Gélinau. 2007. "Winning, Losing and Satisfaction with Democracy." *Political Studies* 55 (2): 425–441.
- Blom-Hansen, Jens, Rebecca Morton, and Søren Serritzlew. 2015. "Experiments in Public Management Research." *International Public Management Journal* 18 (2): 151–170.
- Bøggild, Troels. 2016. "How Politicians' Reelection Efforts Can Reduce Public Trust, Electoral Support, and Policy Approval." *Political Psychology* 37 (6): 901–919.
- Boswell, C. 2018. *Manufacturing Political Trust: Targets and Performance Measurement in Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bouckaert, Geert. 2012. "Trust and Public Administration." *Administration* 60 (1): 91–115.
- Bouckaert, Geert, Steven Van De Walle, Bart Maddens, and Jarl K. Kampen. 2002. *Identity vs Performance: An Overview of Theories Explaining Trust in Government*. Leuven, Belgium: Public Management Institute.
- Bovens, Mark, and Anchrit Wille. 2008. "Deciphering the Dutch Drop: Ten Explanations for Decreasing Political Trust in The Netherlands." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 74 (2): 283–305.
- . 2011. "Falling or Fluctuating Trust Levels? The Case of the Netherlands." In *Political Trust: Why Context Matter*, edited by Sonja Zmerli and Marc Hooghe, 47–66. Colchester, UK: ECPR Press.
- Boyne, George A. 2002. "Theme: Local Government: Concepts and Indicators of Local Authority Performance: An Evaluation of the Statutory Frameworks in England and Wales." *Public Money and Management* 22 (2): 17–24.
- . 2003. "Sources of Public Service Improvement: A Critical Review and Research Agenda." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 13 (3): 367–394.
- Brambilla, Marco, Simona Sacchi, Patrice Rusconi, Paolo Cherubini, and Vincent Y. Yzerbyt. 2012. "You Want to Give a Good Impression? Be Honest! Moral Traits Dominate Group Impression Formation." *The British Journal of Social Psychology* 51 (1): 149–166.
- Brehm, John, and Wendy M. Rahn. 1997. "Individual-Level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital." *American Journal of Political Science* 41 (3): 999–1023.

- Brinkman, L, Alexander Todorov, and R Dotsch. 2017. "Visualising mental representations: A primer on noise-based reverse correlation in social psychology." *European Review of Social Psychology* 28 (1): 333–361.
- Camões, Pedro J., and Sílvia M. Mendes. 2019. "Do Citizens Trust the Civil Service Differently? Comparing the Determinants of Confidence in Political-Administrative Institutions." *International Journal of Public Administration* 42 (14): 1234–1244.
- Carpenter, Daniel. 2001. *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks, and Policy Innovation in Executive Agencies, 1862-1928*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Chanley, Virginia A., Thomas J. Rudolph, and Wendy M. Rahn. 2000. "The Origins and Consequences of Public Trust in Government: A Time Series Analysis." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 64 (3): 239–256.
- Christensen, Tom, and Per Laegreid. 2005. "Trust in Government: The Relative Importance of Service Satisfaction, Political Factors, and Demography." *Public Performance & Management Review* 28 (4): 487–511.
- Chun, Young Han, and Hal G. Rainey. 2005. "Goal Ambiguity in U.S. Federal Agencies." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 15 (1): 1–30.
- Citrin, Jack. 1974. "Comment: The Political Relevance of Trust in Government." *American Political Science Review* 68 (3): 973–988.
- Citrin, Jack, and Donald Philip Green. 1986. "Presidential Leadership and the Resurgence of Trust in Government." *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (4): 431–453.
- Citrin, Jack, and C Muste. 1999. "Trust in Government." In *Measures of Political Attitudes*, edited by JP Robinson, PR Shaver, and L Wrightsman, 465–532. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Citrin, Jack, and Laura Stoker. 2018. "Political Trust in a Cynical Age." *Annual Review of Political Science* 21 (11): 49–70.
- Cone, Jeremy, Kathryn Flaharty, and Melissa J Ferguson. 2021. "The long-term effects of new evidence on implicit impressions of other people." *Psychological Science* 32 (2): 173–188.
- Cone, Jeremy, Thomas C Mann, and Melissa J Ferguson. 2017. "Changing our implicit minds: How, when, and why implicit evaluations can be rapidly revised." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 56:131–199.
- Cook, Timothy E., and Paul Gronke. 2005. "The Skeptical American: Revisiting the Meanings of Trust in Government and Confidence in Institutions." *The Journal of Politics* 67 (3): 784–803.

- Cooper, Christopher A., H. Gibbs Knotts, and Kathleen M. Brennan. 2008. "The Importance of Trust in Government for Public Administration: The Case of Zoning." *Public Administration Review* 68 (3): 459–468.
- Coppock, Alexander. 2019. "Generalizing from Survey Experiments Conducted on Mechanical Turk: A Replication Approach." *Political Science Research and Methods* 7 (3): 613–628.
- Coppock, Alexander, Thomas J. Leeper, and Kevin J. Mullinix. 2018. "Generalizability of Heterogeneous Treatment Effect Estimates across Samples." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115 (49): 12441–12446.
- Cuddy, Amy J. C., Susan T. Fiske, and Peter Glick. 2007. "The BIAS Map: Behaviors from Intergroup Affect and Stereotypes." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 92 (4): 631–648.
- Dalton, Russell J. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De Boer, Noortje. 2020. "How Do Citizens Assess Street-Level Bureaucrats' Warmth and Competence? A Typology and Test." *Public Administration Review* 80 (4): 532–542.
- Devine, Daniel, Jennifer Gaskell, Will Jennings, and Gerry Stoker. 2020a. "Exploring Trust, Mistrust and Distrust." *Discussion paper for the 1st Digital Workshop of the ESRC 'TrustGov' project*.
- . 2020b. "Trust and the Coronavirus Pandemic: What Are the Consequences of and for Trust? An Early Review of the Literature." *Political Studies Review*, 274–285.
- Dinas, Elias, Konstantinos Matakos, Dimitrios Xeftaris, and Dominik Hangartner. 2019. "Waking Up the Golden Dawn: Does Exposure to the Refugee Crisis Increase Support for Extreme-Right Parties?" *Political Analysis* 27 (2): 244–254.
- Dotsch, Ron, and Alexander Todorov. 2012. "Reverse correlating social face perception." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 3 (5): 562–571.
- Dotsch, Ron, Daniël HJ Wigboldus, Oliver Langner, and Ad van Knippenberg. 2008. "Ethnic out-group faces are biased in the prejudiced mind." *Psychological Science* 19 (10): 978–980.
- Dowding, Keith, and Peter John. 2008. "The three exit, three voice and loyalty framework: A test with survey data on local services." *Political Studies* 56 (2): 288–311.

- Dowding, Keith, Peter John, Thanos Mergoupis, and Mark Van Vugt. 2000. "Exit, voice and loyalty: Analytic and empirical developments." *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (4): 469–495.
- Druckman, James N., and Cindy D. Kam. 2011. "Students as Experimental Participants: A Defense of the 'Narrow Data Base.'" In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, edited by James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, 41–57. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Easton, David. 1965. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: John Wiley.
- . 1975. "A Re-Assessment of the Concept of Political Support." *British Journal of Political Science* 5 (4): 435–457.
- Elinas, Antonis A., and Iasonas Lamprianou. 2014. "Political Trust in Extremis." *Comparative Politics* 46 (2): 231–250.
- Engell, Andrew D, James V Haxby, and Alexander Todorov. 2007. "Implicit trustworthiness decisions: automatic coding of face properties in the human amygdala." *Journal of cognitive neuroscience* 19 (9): 1508–1519.
- Eurobarometer. 2021. *Standard Eurobarometer 94*.
- Favero, Nathan, and Kenneth J. Meier. 2013. "Evaluating Urban Public Schools: Parents, Teachers, and State Assessments." *Public Administration Review* 73 (3): 401–412.
- Ferguson, Melissa J, Thomas C Mann, Jeremy Cone, and Xi Shen. 2019. "When and how implicit first impressions can be updated." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 28 (4): 331–336.
- Fieldhouse, Edward, Jane Green, Geoffrey Evans, Hermann Schmitt, Cees Van Der Eijk, Jon Mellon, and Chris Prosser. 2020. "British Election Study Internet Panel Waves 1-19."
- Fisher, Justin, Jennifer Van Heerde, and Andrew Tucker. 2010. "Does One Trust Judgment Fit All? Linking Theory and Empirics." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 12 (2): 161–188.
- Fiske, Susan T. 2019. "Political Cognition Helps Explain Social Class Divides: Two Dimensions of T Candidate Impressions, Group Stereotypes, and Meritocracy Beliefs." *Cognition* 188:108–115.
- Fiske, Susan T., Amy J. C. Cuddy, and Peter Glick. 2007. "Universal Dimensions of Social Cognition: Warmth and Competence." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 11 (2): 77–83.
- Fiske, Susan T., Amy J. C. Cuddy, Peter Glick, and Jun Xu. 2002. "A Model of (Often Mixed) Stereotype Content: Competence and Warmth Respectively Follow from

- Perceived Status and Competition.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 82 (6): 878–902.
- Fitzgerald, Jennifer, and Jennifer Wolak. 2016. “The roots of trust in local government in Western Europe.” *International Political Science Review* 37 (1): 130–146.
- Fukuyama, Francis. 1995. *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks.
- Fulmer, C. Ashley, and Michele J. Gelfand. 2012. “At What Level (and in Whom) We Trust: Trust Across Multiple Organizational Levels.” *Journal of Management* 38 (4): 1167–1230.
- Gadarian, Shana Kushner, and Bethany Albertson. 2014. “Anxiety, Immigration, and the Search for Information.” *Political Psychology* 35 (2): 133–164.
- Gerber, Allan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Gershtenson, Joseph, and Dennis L. Plane. 2007. *Trust in government: 2006 American national election studies pilot report*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies.
- . 2015. “In Government We Distrust: Citizen Skepticism and Democracy in the United States.” *The Forum* 13 (3).
- Goodman, Joseph K., Cynthia E. Cryder, and Amar Cheema. 2013. “Data Collection in a Flat World: The Strengths and Weaknesses of Mechanical Turk Samples.” *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 26 (3): 213–224.
- Goodwin, Geoffrey P., Jared Piazza, and Paul Rozin. 2014. “Moral Character Predominates in Person Perception and Evaluation.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 106 (1): 148–168.
- Grimmelikhuijsen, Stephan, Sebastian Jilke, Asmus Leth Olsen, and Lars Tummens. 2017. “Behavioral public administration: Combining insights from public administration and psychology.” *Public Administration Review* 77 (1): 45–56.
- Grimmelikhuijsen, Stephan G. 2012. “Linking Transparency, Knowledge and Citizen Trust in Government: An Experiment.” *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 78 (1): 50–73.
- Grimmelikhuijsen, Stephan G., and Eva Knies. 2017. “Validating a Scale for Citizen Trust in Government Organizations.” *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 83 (3): 583–601.
- Grimmelikhuijsen, Stephan G., and Albert J. Meijer. 2014. “Effects of transparency on the perceived trustworthiness of a government organization: Evidence from an

- online experiment.” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 24 (1): 137–157.
- Hainmueller, Jens, Dominik Hangartner, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2015. “Validating vignette and conjoint survey experiments against real-world behavior.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112 (8): 2395–2400.
- Hainmueller, Jens, and Daniel J Hopkins. 2015. “The hidden American immigration consensus: A conjoint analysis of attitudes toward immigrants.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (3): 529–548.
- Hamm, Joseph A., Corwin Smidt, and Roger C. Mayer. 2019. “Understanding the Psychological Nature and Mechanisms of Political Trust.” *PLOS ONE* 14 (5): e0215835.
- Hansen, Frederik Godt. 2019. “Trust in Governmental Institutions: How Government Performance Matters,” Master’s thesis. Department of Political Science, Aarhus University.
- Hansen, Sune Welling, Robert Klemmensen, and Søren Serritzlew. 2019. “Losers Lose More than Winners Win: Asymmetrical Effects of Winning and Losing in Elections.” *European Journal of Political Research* 58 (4): 1172–1190.
- Hardin, Russell. 2000. “Do We Want Trust in Government?” In *Democracy and Trust*, edited by Mark E. Warren, 22–41. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2013. “Government without Trust.” *Journal of Trust Research* 3 (1): 32–52.
- Haugsgjerd, Atle, and Staffan Kumlin. 2020. “Downbound Spiral? Economic Grievances, Perceived Social Protection and Political Distrust.” *West European Politics* 43 (4): 969–990.
- Henrich, Joseph, Steven J Heine, and Ara Norenzayan. 2010. “Most people are not WEIRD.” *Nature* 466 (7302): 29–29.
- Hetherington, Marc J. 2005. *Why Trust Matters: Declining Political Trust and the Demise of American Liberalism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hetherington, Marc J., and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2008. “Priming, Performance, and the Dynamics of Political Trust.” *Journal of Politics* 70 (2): 498–512.
- . 2015. *Why Washington Won’t Work: Polarization, Political Trust, and the Governing Crisis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hibbing, John R., and John R. Alford. 2004. “Accepting Authoritative Decisions: Humans as Wary Cooperators.” *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (1): 62–76.

- Hibbing, John R., and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. 2002. *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs about How Government Should Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Vol. 25. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Holland, Paul W. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference." *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 945–960.
- Hood, Christopher. 1991. "A Public Management for All Seasons?" *Public Administration* 69 (1): 3–19.
- Hooghe, Marc. 2011. "Why There Is Basically Only One Form of Political Trust." *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 13 (2): 269–275.
- Huseby, Beate Margrethe. 2000. "Government Performance and Political Support: A Study of How Evaluations of Economic Performance, Social Policy and Environmental Protection Influence the Popular Assessments of the Political System," Inst. for sosiologi og statsvitenskap, Fakultet for samfunnsvitenskap og teknologiledelse, Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet.
- Hvidman, Ulrik. 2019. "Citizens' Evaluations of the Public Sector: Evidence From Two Large-Scale Experiments." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 29 (2): 255–267.
- Hvidman, Ulrik, and Simon Calmar Andersen. 2016. "Perceptions of Public and Private Performance: Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *Public Administration Review* 76 (1): 111–120.
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1997. *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Inglehart, Ronald, and Wayne E. Baker. 2000. "Modernization, Cultural Change, and the Persistence of Traditional Values." *American Sociological Review*, 19–51.
- James, O. 2011. "Performance Measures and Democracy: Information Effects on Citizens in Field and Laboratory Experiments." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (3): 399–418.
- James, Oliver. 2009. "Evaluating the expectations disconfirmation and expectations anchoring approaches to citizen satisfaction with local public services." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 19 (1): 107–123.
- James, Oliver, Sebastian R. Jilke, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2017. *Experiments in Public Management Research: Challenges and Contributions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- James, Oliver, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2017. "Motivated Reasoning about Public Performance: An Experimental Study of How Citizens Judge the Affordable Care Act." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 27 (1): 197–209.
- Jennings, Will, Nick Clarke, Jonathan Moss, and Gerry Stoker. 2017. "The Decline in Diffuse Support for National Politics." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 81 (3): 748–758.
- Jilke, Sebastian, and Lars Tummers. 2018. "Which clients are deserving of help? A theoretical model and experimental test." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 28 (2): 226–238.
- Judd, Charles M., Laurie James-Hawkins, Vincent Yzerbyt, and Yoshihisa Kashima. 2005. "Fundamental Dimensions of Social Judgment: Understanding the Relations between Judgments of Competence and Warmth." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 899–913.
- Keele, L. 2005. "The Authorities Really Do Matter: Party Control and Trust in Government." *Journal of Politics* 67 (3): 873–886.
- Keele, Luke. 2007. "Social Capital and the Dynamics of Trust in Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 51 (2): 241–254.
- Kervyn, Nicolas, Susan T. Fiske, and Chris Malone. 2012. "Brands as Intentional Agents Framework: How Perceived Intentions and Ability Can Map Brand Perception." *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 22 (2).
- Kettl, Donald F. 2017. *Can Governments Earn Our Trust?* Cambridge: Polity.
- Key, V. O. 1966. *The Responsible Electorate*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Kim, Seok-Eun. 2005. "The role of trust in the modern administrative state: An integrative model." *Administration & Society* 37 (5): 611–635.
- Kim, Soonhee. 2010. "Public Trust in Government in Japan and South Korea: Does the Rise of Critical Citizens Matter?" *Public Administration Review* 70 (5): 801–810.
- Kruglanski, Arie W., and Donna M. Webster. 1996. "Motivated Closing of the Mind: "Seizing" and "Freezing."" *Psychological Review* 103 (2): 263–283.
- Kumlin, Staffan. 2004. "The Personal and the Political." In *The Personal and the Political: How Personal Welfare State Experiences Affect Political Trust and Ideology*, edited by Staffan Kumlin. Political Evolution and Institutional Change. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Kunda, Ziva. 1990. "The Case for Motivated Reasoning." *Psychological Bulletin* 108 (3): 480–498.
- Laustsen, Lasse, and Alexander Bor. 2017. "The Relative Weight of Character Traits in Political Candidate Evaluations: Warmth Is More Important than Competence, Leadership and Integrity." *Electoral Studies* 49:96–107.

- Lawrence, R.Z. 1997. "Is It Really the Economy Stupid?" In *Why People Don't Trust Government*, edited by Joseph S. Nye, Philip Zelikow, and David C. King, 111–132. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Leach, Colin Wayne, Naomi Ellemers, and Manuela Barreto. 2007. "Group Virtue: The Importance of Morality (vs. Competence and Sociability) in the Positive Evaluation of in-Groups." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93 (2): 234–249.
- Lee, Danbee, and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2020. "Bureaucratic Reputation in the Eyes of Citizens: An Analysis of US Federal Agencies." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 86 (1): 183–200.
- Levi, Margaret, and Laura Stoker. 2000. "Political Trust and Trustworthiness." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (1): 475–507.
- Lewicki, Roy J., Edward C. Tomlinson, and Nicole Gillespie. 2006. "Models of Interpersonal Trust Development: Theoretical Approaches, Empirical Evidence, and Future Directions." *Journal of Management* 32 (6): 991–1022.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael, and Martin Paldam. 2000. "Economic Voting: An Introduction." *Electoral Studies* 19 (2): 113–121.
- Linde, Jonas. 2012. "Why Feed the Hand That Bites You? Perceptions of Procedural Fairness and System Support in Post-Communist Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 51 (3): 410–434.
- Lipsky, Michael. 1980. *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Magalhães, Pedro C, and Luis Aguiar-Conraria. 2019. "Procedural Fairness, the Economy, and Support for Political Authorities." *Political Psychology* 40 (1): 165–181.
- Magalhães, Pedro C. 2016. "Economic Evaluations, Procedural Fairness, and Satisfaction with Democracy." *Political Research Quarterly* 69 (3): 522–534.
- Marien, Sofie. 2011. "The Effect of Electoral Outcomes on Political Trust: A Multi-Level Analysis of 23 Countries." *Electoral Studies* 30 (4): 712–726.
- Marien, Sofie, and Marc Hooghe. 2011. "Does Political Trust Matter? An Empirical Investigation into the Relation between Political Trust and Support for Law Compliance." *European Journal of Political Research* 50 (2): 267–291.
- Marvel, John D. 2016. "Unconscious Bias in Citizens' Evaluations of Public Sector Performance." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 26 (1): 143–158.
- Mayer, Roger C., James H. Davis, and F. David Schoorman. 1995. "An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust." *The Academy of Management Review* 20 (3): 709–734.

- Maynard-Moody, Steven Williams, and Michael Musheno. 2003. *Cops, Teachers, Counselors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- McAllister, Daniel J. 1995. "Affect-and Cognition-Based Trust as Foundations for Interpersonal Cooperation in Organizations." *Academy of Management Journal* 38 (1): 24–59.
- McDermott, Rose. 2011. "Internal and External Validity." In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, edited by James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, 27–40. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miller, Arthur H, and O. Listhaug. 1999. "Political Performance and Institutional Trust." In *Critical Citizens: Global Support for Democratic Government*, edited by Pippa Norris, 204–216. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Miller, Arthur H. 1974. "Political Issues and Trust in Government: 1964–1970." *American Political Science Review* 68 (3): 951–972.
- Mishler, William, and Richard Rose. 1997. "Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies." *The Journal of Politics* 59 (2): 418–451.
- Molden, Daniel C. 2014. "Understanding priming effects in social psychology: What is "social priming" and how does it occur?" *Social Cognition* 32:1–11.
- Moore, Mark H. 1995. *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- . 2013. *Recognizing Public Value*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Morgeson, Forrest V. 2013. "Expectations, Disconfirmation, and Citizen Satisfaction with the US Federal Government: Testing and Expanding the Model." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 23 (2): 289–305.
- Morgeson, Forrest V., and Claudia Petrescu. 2011. "Do They All Perform Alike? An Examination of Perceived Performance, Citizen Satisfaction and Trust with US Federal Agencies." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 77 (3): 451–479.
- Morgeson, Forrest V., David VanAmburg, and Sunil Mithas. 2011. "Misplaced Trust? Exploring the Structure of the e-Government-Citizen Trust Relationship." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (2): 257–283.
- Moynihan, Donald P. 2008. *The Dynamics of Performance Management: Constructing Information and Reform*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

- Mullinix, Kevin J, Thomas J Leeper, James N Druckman, and Jeremy Freese. 2015. "The Generalizability of Survey Experiments." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 2 (2): 109–138.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2011. *Population-Based Survey Experiments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nannestad, Peter, and Martin Paldam. 1994. "The VP-Function: A Survey of the Literature on Vote and Popularity Functions after 25 Years." *Public Choice* 79 (3): 213–245.
- Newton, Kenneth, Dietlind Stolle, and Sonja Zmerli. 2018. *Social and Political Trust*. Edited by Eric M. Uslaner. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nielsen, Julie Hassing. 2016. "Do Group Decision Rules Affect Trust? A Laboratory Experiment on Group Decision Rules and Trust." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 39 (2): 115–137.
- Nielsen, Julie Hassing, and Johannes Lindvall. 2021. "Trust in government in Sweden and Denmark during the COVID-19 epidemic." *West European Politics*, 1–25.
- Norris, Pippa. 2011. *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, Pippa, Will Jennings, and Gerry Stoker. 2019. "Trust by Verify: The Role of Cognitive Skills and the Media Environment." *Paper presented at American Political Science Association's Annual Meeting 2019*.
- Nye, Joseph S., Philip Zelikow, and David C. King. 1997. *Why People Don't Trust Government*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- OECD. 2019. "Government at a Glance 2019." *OECD Publishing*.
- Olsen, Asmus Leth. 2015. "Citizen (Dis)Satisfaction: An Experimental Equivalence Framing Study." *Public Administration Review* 75 (3): 469–478.
- . 2017. "Human interest or hard numbers? Experiments on citizens' selection, exposure, and recall of performance information." *Public Administration Review* 77 (3): 408–420.
- Olsen, Asmus Leth, and Frederik Hjorth. 2020. "Willingness to Distance in the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Retrieved from: osf.io/uanhg*.
- Oppenheimer, Daniel M., Tom Meyvis, and Nicolas Davidenko. 2009. "Instructional Manipulation Checks: Detecting Satisficing to Increase Statistical Power." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45 (4): 867–872.
- Orren, Gary. 1997. "Fall from Grace: The Public's Loss of Faith in Government." In *Why People Don't Trust Government*, edited by Joseph S. Nye, Philip Zelikow, and David C. King, 77–107. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Oskarsson, S. 2010. "Generalized Trust and Political Support: A Cross-National Investigation." *Acta Politica* 45 (4): 423–443.
- Park, C.M. 2017. "Political Trust in the Asia-Pacific Region." In *Handbook on Political Trust*, edited by S. Zmerli and T.W.G. Van Der Meer, 488–508. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Payne, B Keith, Jazmin L Brown-Iannuzzi, and Chris Loersch. 2016. "Replicable effects of primes on human behavior." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 145 (10): 1269.
- Pedersen, Mogens Jin, Justin M Stritch, and Frederik Thuesen. 2018. "Punishment on the frontlines of public service delivery: Client ethnicity and caseworker sanctioning decisions in a Scandinavian welfare state." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 28 (3): 339–354.
- Perkins, David N. 1985. "Postprimary Education Has Little Impact on Informal Reasoning." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 77 (5): 562–571.
- Pew. 2017. "Public Trust in Government: 1958-2017."
- Pharr, Susan J. 2000. "Officials' Misconduct and Public Distrust: Japan and the Liberal Democracies." In *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?*, edited by Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam, 174–201. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Pollitt, Christopher, and Geert Bouckaert. 2004. *Public Management Reform: A Comparative Analysis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1991. *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1995. "Tuning in, Tuning out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America." *PS: Political science & politics* 28 (4): 664–684.
- . 2000. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." In *Culture and Politics*, 223–234. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- PytlikZillig, Lisa, and Christopher Kimbrough. 2016. "Consensus on Conceptualizations and Definitions of Trust: Are We There Yet?" In *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Trust*, edited by Ellie Shockley, Tess M. S. Neal, Lisa M. PytlikZillig, and Brian H. Bornstein, 17–47. New York: Springer.
- Raaphorst, Nadine, Sandra Groeneveld, and Steven Van de Walle. 2018. "Do Tax Officials Use Double Standards in Evaluating Citizen-Clients? A Policy-Capturing Study among Dutch Frontline Tax Officials." *Public Administration* 96 (1): 134–153.

- Rahn, Wendy M., and Thomas J. Rudolph. 2005. "A Tale of Political Trust in American Cities." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69 (4): 530–560.
- Redlawsk, David P, Andrew JW Civettini, and Karen M Emmerson. 2010. "The affective tipping point: Do motivated reasoners ever "get it"?" *Political Psychology* 31 (4): 563–593.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre. 2008. *Counter-Democracy: Politics in an Age of Distrust*. Vol. 7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenberg, Seymour, Carnot Nelson, and P. S. Vivekananthan. 1968. "A Multidimensional Approach to the Structure of Personality Impressions." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 9 (4): 283–294.
- Rotter, Julian B. 1967. "A New Scale for the Measurement of Interpersonal Trust." *Journal of Personality* 35 (4): 651–665.
- Rousseau, Denise, Sim Sitkin, Ronald Burt, and Colin Camerer. 1998. "Not So Different After All: A Cross-Discipline View of Trust." *Academy of Management Review* 23.
- Rudolph, Thomas J. 2017. "Political Trust as a Heuristic." In *Handbook on Political Trust*, edited by Sonja Zmerli and Tom W. G. Van der Meer, 197–211. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Schnaudt, Christian. 2019. *Political Confidence and Democracy in Europe: Antecedents and Consequences of Citizens' Confidence in Representative and Regulative Institutions and Authorities*. Contributions to Political Science. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Scholz, John T., and Mark Lubell. 1998. "Trust and Taxpaying: Testing the Heuristic Approach to Collective Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (2): 398–417.
- Schoorman, F. David, Mallory M. Wood, and Christina Breuer. 2015. "Would Trust by Any Other Name Smell as Sweet? Reflections on the Meanings and Uses of Trust Across Disciplines and Context." In *Motivating Cooperation and Compliance with Authority: The Role of Institutional Trust*, edited by Brian H. Bornstein and Alan J. Tomkins, 13–35. Nebraska Symposium on Motivation. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Sears, David O. 1986. "College Sophomores in the Laboratory: Influences of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology's View of Human Nature." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51 (3): 515–530.
- Selden, Sally Coleman, and Jessica E. Sowa. 2004. "Testing a Multi-Dimensional Model of Organizational Performance: Prospects and Problems." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14 (3): 395–416.

- Sherman, Jeffrey W, and Andrew M Rivers. 2021. "There's nothing social about social priming: derailing the "train wreck"." *Psychological Inquiry* 32 (1): 1–11.
- Slothuus, Rune. 2016. "Assessing the Influence of Political Parties on Public Opinion: The Challenge from Pretreatment Effects." *Political Communication* 33 (2): 302–327.
- Soss, Joe. 1999. "Lessons of welfare: Policy design, political learning, and political action." *American Political Science Review* 93 (2): 363–380.
- Stanovich, Keith E., and Richard F. West. 2007. "Natural Myside Bias Is Independent of Cognitive Ability." *Thinking & Reasoning* 13 (3): 225–247.
- Stanovich, Keith E., Richard F. West, and Maggie E. Toplak. 2013. "Myside Bias, Rational Thinking, and Intelligence." *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 22 (4): 259–264.
- Stipak, Brian. 1979. "Citizen satisfaction with urban services: Potential misuse as a performance indicator." *Public Administration Review*, 46–52.
- Stock, James H, and Mark W. Watson. 2014. *Introduction to Econometrics*. 3rd edition. New York: Pearson.
- Strøm, Kaare. 2000. "Delegation and Accountability in Parliamentary Democracies." *European Journal of Political Research* 37 (3): 261–289.
- Taber, Charles S, and Milton Lodge. 2006. "Motivated Skepticism in the Evaluation of Political Beliefs." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 755–769.
- Thaler, Richard H., and Cass R. Sunstein. 2008. *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Thomson, Robert. 2011. "Citizens' evaluations of the fulfillment of election pledges: Evidence from Ireland." *The Journal of Politics* 73 (1): 187–201.
- Thomson, Robert, and Heinz Brandenburg. 2019. "Trust and citizens' evaluations of promise keeping by governing parties." *Political Studies* 67 (1): 249–266.
- Tilley, James, and Sara B. Hobolt. 2011. "Is the Government to Blame? An Experimental Test of How Partisanship Shapes Perceptions of Performance and Responsibility." *The Journal of Politics* 73 (2): 316–330.
- Todorov, Alexander, Manish Pakrashi, and Nikolaas N Oosterhof. 2009. "Evaluating faces on trustworthiness after minimal time exposure." *Social Cognition* 27 (6): 813–833.
- Tummers, Lars L. G., Victor Bekkers, Evelien Vink, and Michael Musheno. 2015. "Coping During Public Service Delivery: A Conceptualization and Systematic Review of the Literature." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 25 (4): 1099–1126.

- Tyler, Tom R. 1990. *Why People Obey the Law*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Uslaner, Eric M. 1998. "Social Capital, Television, and the "Mean World": Trust, Optimism, and Civic Participation." *Political Psychology* 19 (3): 441–467.
- . 2002. *The Moral Foundations of Trust*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2008. *Corruption, Inequality, and the Rule of Law*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Van Bavel, Jay J., Katherine Baicker, Paulo S. Boggio, Valerio Capraro, Aleksandra Cichocka, Mina Cikara, Molly J. Crockett, et al. 2020. "Using Social and Behavioural Science to Support COVID-19 Pandemic Response." *Nature Human Behaviour* 4 (5): 460–471.
- Van de Walle, Steven. 2016. "New Public Management: Restoring the Public Trust Through Creating Distrust?" In *Ashgate Research Companion to New Public Management*, edited by Tom Christensen and Per Lægreid, 309–320. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- . 2018. "Explaining Citizen Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Public Services." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Public Administration and Management in Europe*, edited by E. Ongaro and S. Van Thiel, 227–241. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Van de Walle, Steven, and Geert Bouckaert. 2003. "Public Service Performance and Trust in Government: The Problem of Causality." *International Journal of Public Administration* 26 (8): 891–913.
- . 2007. "Perceptions of Productivity and Performance in Europe and The United States." *International Journal of Public Administration* 30 (11): 1123–1140.
- Van de Walle, Steven, and Alasdair Roberts. 2008. "Publishing Performance Information: An Illusion of Control?" In *Performance Information in the Public Sector: How It Is Used*, edited by Wouter Van Dooren and Steven Van de Walle, 211–226. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Van de Walle, Steven, and Frédérique Six. 2014. "Trust and Distrust as Distinct Concepts: Why Studying Distrust in Institutions Is Important." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 16 (2): 158–174.
- Van de Walle, Steven, and Wouter Van Dooren. 2008. "Introduction: Using Public Sector Performance Information." In *Performance Information in the Public Sector: How It Is Used*, edited by Wouter Van Dooren and Steven Van de Walle, 1–8. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Van der Meer, Tom W. G. 2017. "Political Trust and the "Crisis of Democracy"." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*.

- Van der Meer, Tom W. G. 2018. "Economic Performance and Political Trust." In *The Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*, edited by Eric M. Uslaner, 599–616. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2010. "In What We Trust? A Multi-Level Study into Trust in Parliament as an Evaluation of State Characteristics." *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 76 (3): 517–536.
- Van der Meer, Tom W.G., and Armen Hakhverdian. 2017. "Political Trust as the Evaluation of Process and Performance: A Cross-National Study of 42 European Countries." *Political Studies* 65 (1): 81–102.
- Van Dooren, Wouter, Geert Bouckaert, and John Halligan. 2015. *Performance management in the public sector*. London: Routledge.
- Van Erkel, Patrick F.A., and Tom W.G. Van der Meer. 2016. "Macroeconomic Performance, Political Trust and the Great Recession: A Multilevel Analysis of the Effects of within-Country Fluctuations in Macroeconomic Performance on Political Trust in 15 EU Countries, 1999-2011." *European Journal of Political Research* 55 (1): 177–197.
- Van Ryzin, Gregg G. 2007. "Pieces of a Puzzle: Linking Government Performance, Citizen Satisfaction, and Trust." *Public Performance & Management Review* 30 (4): 521–535.
- . 2011. "Outcomes, Process, and Trust of Civil Servants." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (4): 745–760.
- . 2013. "An Experimental Test of the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory of Citizen Satisfaction." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 32 (3): 597–614.
- . 2015. "Service Quality, Administrative Process, and Citizens' Evaluation of Local Government in the US." *Public Management Review* 17 (3): 425–442.
- Vigoda-Gadot, E., and F. Yuval. 2003. "Managerial Quality, Administrative Performance and Trust in Governance Revisited: A Follow-up Study of Causality." *International Journal of Public Sector Management* 16 (7): 502–522.
- Vigoda-Gadot, Eran. 2007. "Citizens' Perceptions of Politics and Ethics in Public Administration: A Five-Year National Study of Their Relationship to Satisfaction with Services, Trust in Governance, and Voice Orientations." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 17 (2): 285–305.
- Vigoda-Gadot, Eran, and Shlomo Mizrahi. 2008. "Public sector management and the democratic ethos: A 5-year study of key relationships in Israel." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 18 (1): 79–107.

- Vinæs, Martin, Frederik Hjorth, Peter Thisted Dinesen, and Kim Mannemar Sønderskov. 2019. “When Do Citizens Respond Politically to the Local Economy? Evidence from Registry Data on Local Housing Markets.” *American Political Science Review* 113 (2): 499–516.
- Wang, XiaoHu, and Montgomery Wan Wart. 2007. “When public participation in administration leads to trust: An empirical assessment of managers’ perceptions.” *Public administration review* 67 (2): 265–278.
- Weinberg, James. 2020. “Can Political Trust Help to Explain Elite Policy Support and Public Behaviour in Times of Crisis? Evidence from the United Kingdom at the Height of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic.” *Political Studies*, 1–18.
- Willis, Janine, and Alexander Todorov. 2006. “First impressions: Making up your mind after a 100-ms exposure to a face.” *Psychological Science* 17 (7): 592–598.
- Wojciszke, Bogdan. 2005. “Affective Concomitants of Information on Morality and Competence.” *European Psychologist* 10 (1): 60–70.
- Wojciszke, Bogdan, Roza Bazinska, and Marcin Jaworski. 1998. “On the Dominance of Moral Categories in Impression Formation.” *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 24 (12): 1251–1263.
- Yang, Kaifeng. 2005. “Public Administrators’ Trust in Citizens: A Missing Link in Citizen Involvement Efforts.” *Public Administration Review* 65 (3): 273–285.
- Yang, Kaifeng, and Marc Holzer. 2006. “The Performance–Trust Link: Implications for Performance Measurement.” *Public Administration Review* 66 (1): 114–126.
- Zmerli, S., and M. Hooghe. 2011. *Political Trust: Why Context Matters*. Colchester, UK: ECPR Press.
- Zmerli, Sonja, and Tom Van der Meer, eds. 2017. *Handbook on Political Trust*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

English summary

In recent years, surveys have shown how trust in government has been declining in many Western democracies. This is important knowledge since democratic legitimacy builds upon citizens' trust, and trust is crucial for the success of public policies and public service delivery. A vast amount of research has provided valuable insights into core explanations of citizens' trust in government. One of the most prominent explanations for changes in citizens' trust is government performance. However, this dissertation argues that the existing literature is likely to underestimate the impact of government performance on citizens' trust due to a narrow understanding of what constitutes performance.

While the performance-trust link is recognized in the literature by examining aggregated accounts of performance such as the influence of macroeconomic performance on citizens' trust, considerably less attention has been devoted to other understandings of the performance-trust link. This PhD dissertation sheds light on this issue by examining the influence of two important aspects of performance: (1) the performance of street-level bureaucrats in citizen-state interactions and (2) the performance of politicians in the political decision-making process.

Concerning the performance of street-level bureaucrats, the dissertation draws on insights from social psychology to argue that citizens assess the bureaucrats they encounter on the dimensions of warmth and competence, which subsequently influence trust evaluations of governmental institutions in general. Regarding the performance of politicians, I examine the extent to which citizens change their trust when politicians do not fulfill political promises. Citizens are expected to punish politicians with lower levels of trust if they feel that politicians do not make progress in the decision-making process and do not focus in their work towards a final decision on issues where they have made a political promise. Thus, I examine the effect of events in the political decision-making process which indicate that politicians do not make such progress. Specifically, this dissertation examines how British citizens changed their level of trust due to events in the political decision-making process which indicated that British politicians did not

get any closer to fulfilling the political promise of Brexit (i.e., the promise of leaving the European Union).

To test these hypotheses, this dissertation uses multiple large-scale survey experiments involving citizens from different cultural contexts as well as advanced quantitative designs based on observational survey data over time (e.g., difference-in-differences design).

Survey experimental findings show that street-level bureaucrats through warm and competent behavior can positively influence citizens' trust in government. Specifically, when citizens encounter street-level bureaucrats who they consider high on warmth and/or competence, their levels of trust in both bureaucrats and broader administrative and political institutions of government increase. However, contrary to the theoretical expectations, the negative effect of receiving unfavorable outcomes on citizens' trust was not mitigated by bureaucrats' display of warmth. Finally, the dissertation demonstrates that citizens respond with less trust when events in the political decision-making process indicate that politicians do not make progress towards reaching an agreement on issues where they have made a political promise. The dissertation comprises three independent papers suggesting new ways to further investigate the performance-trust link.

Dansk resumé

Nyere undersøgelser viser, at tilliden til offentlige institutioner og myndigheder er dalende i mange vestlige demokratier. Denne viden er vigtig, da demokratisk legitimitet bygger på tillid hos befolkningen, og er afgørende for succesfulde offentlige politikker og god offentlig service. Studier har gentagende gange leveret værdifuld viden om de vigtigste forklaringer på, hvornår en befolkning har høj tillid til offentlige institutioner. En af de vigtigste forklaringer skal findes i de offentlige institutioners præstationer (government performance). Denne afhandling argumenterer for, at den eksisterende litteratur formentlig underestimerer den indflydelse, som performance har på befolkningens tillid til offentlige institutioner, fordi man hidtil har haft en snæver forståelse af, hvad performance består af.

Mens performance-trust linket er anerkendt i litteraturen ved at undersøge effekten af overordnede performance faktorer på tillid, såsom makroøkonomisk performance, ved vi stadig meget lidt om andre forståelser af dette link. Denne afhandling sætter derfor fokus på to afgørende aspekter: (1) effekten af frontlinjemedarbejderes performance i interaktioner med borgeren og (2) effekten af politikeres performance i den politiske beslutningsproces.

Med hensyn til frontlinjemedarbejdernes performance trækker afhandlingen på indsigter fra socialpsykologien. Disse indsigter bruges til at argumentere for, at borgerne vurderer mødet med offentligt ansatte på to parametre - varme og kompetence. Disse vurderinger forventes at smitte af på den generelle tillid til offentlige institutioner. Vedrørende politikernes performance undersøger jeg, hvorvidt borgernes tillid ændrer sig, når politikerne ikke leverer på politiske løfter. Borgerne forventes at straffe politikerne med lavere tillid, hvis de har en følelse af, at der ikke sker fremskridt i beslutningsprocessen og politikerne ikke arbejder målrettet henimod at træffe en endelig afgørelse på emner, hvor de har givet et politisk løfte. Derfor undersøger jeg effekten af begivenheder i den politiske beslutningsproces, der indikerer, at politikerne ikke gør sådanne fremskridt. Specifikt undersøger jeg i afhandlingen, hvordan britiske borgers tillid ændrede sig som et resultat af begivenheder i beslutningsprocessen, der

indikerede, at britiske politikere ikke kom tættere på at indfri løftet om at forlade EU.

For at undersøge disse forventninger gør afhandlingen brug af flere omfattende spørgeskemaeksperimenter blandt borgere fra lande med forskellige politiske og kulturelle sammensætninger samt avancerede kvantitative designs baseret på spørgeskemadata over tid (såsom difference-in-differences design).

Eksperimentelle undersøgelser viser, at frontlinjemedarbejdere gennem varm og kompetent adfærd kan have en positiv indvirkning på befolkningens generelle tillid til offentlige institutioner. Når borgerne møder varme og/eller kompetente frontlinjemedarbejdere, øges deres tillid til både den specifikke medarbejder samt til administrative og politiske institutioner i bredere forstand. I modsætning til det man kunne forvente, kan en varm adfærd dog ikke mindske den negative effekt af ugunstige beslutninger truffet af frontlinjemedarbejdere. Endelig viser afhandlingen, at borgerne udviser mindre tillid, når begivenheder i den politiske beslutningsproces indikerer manglende fremskridt i forhold til at nå til enighed på emner, og hvor de har givet et politisk løfte. Afhandlingen består samlet af tre selvstændige artikler, der leverer et bud på nye måder, hvorpå performance-trust linket kan yderligere undersøges.