

News media consumption moderating effect on political and social trust: European cross-national study

By Levy Kiazayila Ndongala

Abstract

This article explores the mediation effect of news media's consumption on social and political trust of European citizens. Using the European Social Survey-2016(ESS8)- data collected between 2016 and 2017 through structured interview among 23 European countries, results show that political trust is associated with social trust. In turn, the relation is not moderated by news media consumption. The absence of the moderating effect of internet use can be explained by the increase access of internet in most of European countries, therefore, reducing the impact of socioeconomic resources on political participation or on trust. Similarly, the absence of effect of traditional news media can be explained by the fact that the negative effect of TV news consumption is counterbalanced by the positive effect of newspapers and reduce to none the general effect of traditional media consumption. Moreover, the findings reveal the influence of contextual factors-the year of study or social proximity - on the overall mediation effect. The year around the world economic recession, 2010 (ESS5), results show a significant moderating effect of news media consumption. Similar to year 2002 (ESS1), when most of the former URSS satellite countries and Russia did not participate in the survey, results indicate the existence of a moderating effect.

Keywords: News media consumption, social trust, political trust, European Social Survey.

Introduction

Media has been acknowledged as a fourth estate or a pillar of democracy on its persuasive authority in shaping citizens choices processes or in its capacity of framing political realm and influencing social realm(Ranjan and Kashyap, 2014). In this perspective, evidence suggests that news media have become one of the most contextual factors affecting the deterioration of the level of trust, whether social trust (Chang, 2018) or political trust(Putnam, 2000). More importantly, trust has been considered as one of the core features of society, enabler of propitious environment for economic growth, democratic governance and societal welfare(Growiec and Growiec, 2016; Fu, 2018; Daskalopoulou, 2019). Trust creates a sense of orderly behaviour for a democratic system, and a sense of reliability of expectancies(Owen and Dennis, 1998; Moy and Scheufele, 2000). Further, the evidence suggested that the consumption of news media as a driving cause of the decline of the level of trust (Robinson, 1976; Owen and Dennis, 1998). Later on, after the famous video of malaise theory that argued that the news media reinforced the political cynicism, many scholars supported the existence of association between news media consumption and distrust (Patterson, 1994; Nye, 1997; Putman, 2000; Norris, 2000; Chang, 2018).

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The last three decades have seen a dramatic change of informational landscape. With the development of online technology, citizens face more opportunities for political activism, societal activism and participation within institutions. While population trust in western countries towards the news media is eroding, we are noticing an opposite attitude from the developing countries. News media is sometime used as weapon for political causes- restricting access during the electoral period or restricting access during the social unrest in order to control the mass. This recent development of informational landscape has heightened the need to continuously researching on the influence of news media in building democratic systems. While there is enough evidence to suggest that news media consumption as a predictor of both dimension of trust(Patterson, 1994; Nye, 1997; Putman, 2000; Norris, 2000; Brynin and Newton, 2003; Chang, 2018), very little studies investigated the moderating effect – the strengthening, the diminishing or the negating- of the news media consumption on the established relation between societal trust and political trust. This article aims to fill this literature gap. Using a robust and credible cross countries survey of data collected among 23 European countries, this study examines the direct relation between political trust and societal trust among European citizens and the moderating effect of news media consumption. The article begins by giving a literature review on the concept of trust and news media. Then, it will go on in presenting the conceptual framework and hypotheses, and research methods. research results. The remaining consist of a discussion and a conclusion.

Literature

Trust, social trust and political trust

From the past three decades literature on trust focus more on the backslide trend of people trust in the institutions and governing bodies among developed countries(Putnam, 2000; Dalton, 2005 and Catterberg and Moreno, 2006). Traditional media was pointed out as the explanatory factor behind the deterioration in citizen trust (Moy and Scheufele, 2000).The concept of trust in itself is mosaic and multidimensional as it embraces numerous social realities. It refers to individual actions as well as to the order of the society (Beldad et al., 2010). Therefore, trust is a core feature of society, a generative causal for a democratic governance, economic growth and societal wellbeing(Putnam, 1995; Growiec and Growiec,2016; Fu, 2018; Daskalopoulou, 2019). At the individual level trust is understood as an attitude and an emotion. It influences the environment as well as a resultant of learning experience. As a psychological construct, there is a variability in the individual disposition of trust and a variability to the level of trust. So, the degree of trust can be explained from past experience or from the cultural background(McKnight et al., 2002). Giannatale et al.(2016) argue that the notion of social connection is associated to the notion of trust. Their findings reveal that the higher the level of risk aversion, the lower the proportion of the financial transaction between two agents. Similarly, Mcknight et al.(2002) assert that trust intention and willingness depend on the interactional partners. In turn this relation is reciprocal (Giannatale et al., 2016).

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As a sociological construct, trust is apprehended as a generalised expectation of considering others predisposition and willingness to handle other people's freedoms and actions. In this perspective, trust is a key enabler for initiation and maintenance of societal connections (Blau, 1964). According to Barber (1983) there are three social expectations- technical competence, obligations and responsibilities, and perpetual natural and social order. Therefore, as a sociological expectation, trust regulates societal conducts, social order, legal obligation between parties (Torpe and Lolle, 2011). The general expectation is the confidence that the other social actors are honest and trustworthy with matters entrusted to them. In this regard the object of trust is a networking of collective units. Consequently, trust is a collective attribute of relation between individuals as a whole- trust is an institutional construct. As an institutional concept, it means the people dependency of their wellbeing in the hands of others- groups, institutions (Sztompka, 1999). So, as a social attribute, trust stimulates people interaction and cooperation, therefore is an institution attribute. For a rational economic actor, the expectation of trust is based on the rational calculation from parties. Hardin (1991) argues that the concept of trust is justifiable in the economic rationality on the basis of expectation of other members or of the institution behaviour.

The conceptualisation of the construct trust as explained from the previous paragraphs leads to the understanding of its societal role in building relations of the entire society. Rathbun (2011) and Sonderskov (2011) assert that individuals to whom are attributed social trust are more optimistic, cooperative, and engaged to the community. They are more likely to be supportive of policies for minorities communities and more redistributive policies (Justwan et al., 2018). Therefore, trust influences the public policy preferences (Rothstein and Uslander, 2008; Justwan et al., 2018). In another words, trust which is deeply rooted social reality underlies societal order in all its manifestation- economics, social and political (Tabellin, 2010). Social capital theory suggests that it is not possible to achieve structural societal endeavours without some degree of social trust, social norms or obligations (Coleman, 1988, 1990). It is the social capital that constitutes the bridge between the social and the politics (Granovetter, 2005).

Granovetter (2005) demonstrated in his study on the impact of social structure on economic outcomes that social trust influences the flow of information to the point of affecting labour market. Similar to this view, Putnam (1993) concluded in its comparative study on the development of Italy that the faster development of the North of Italy is due to the degree of social capital. The author implies that social capital supersedes institutions, or it is the driving variable of institutions. However, some of the empirical studies on the relation between social trust and institutions indicate ambiguous results on the causality direction between both factors (Berg et al., 1995; Anderson et al., 2004; Cribb and Brown, 1995; Miguel et al., 2012). The reason of the inconsistencies in the findings could be because of the differential item functionality (DIF) from the World Values Survey (WVS) general trust question (GTQ) "whether most people can be trusted". People from different backgrounds can have various understanding of this types of question in case a cross-national survey. This can explain the conflicting findings from the past studies on the direction of causality between social trust, economic development or institutions (Delhey et al., 2011; Schneider, 2017). This current study will generate fresh insights into the relation between social trust with institutions using

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a European Social Survey (ESS). European Social Survey demonstrated to have a high score of equivalence in understanding the concept trust in a cross-countries context (Shneider, 2017).

Notwithstanding, the literature clearly indicates the likelihood evidence of an association between social trust and institutions. Since 60s, political trust has been an important parameter for democracy and political order (Schneider, 2017). Without political trust institutions resort to the use of repression to govern people. Some past studies indicated that the low level of political trust is correlated to the non-compliance to the country regulation on tax, on trust to the institutions, to the low social capital or generalised trust (Rothstein, 2003; Catterberg and Moreno, 2006; Hooghe and Marien, 2010; Schyns and Koop, 2010). Similarly, according to social capital theory, social trust is principally associated with political trust (Craig, 1993; Newton, 1999b; Freitag, 2003; Glanville and Paxton, 2007; Zmerli and Newton, 2008; Uslaner, 2008; Freitag and Buhlmann, 2009; Newton and Zmerli, 2011). The above findings reveal that political trust can lead to the stability or instability of institutions (Citrin and Muste, 1999). Therefore, any understanding on how citizens can create and maintain trust is highly important for democracy and for good governance.

There are two classes of thoughts on the concept political trust. Some scholars traced it back from attitudes and values learned at the infancy and later transmitted to the next generation (Inglehart, 1997; Putnam, 2000). This cultural perspective postulates that political trust originates from interpersonal trust individuals gained at their infancy and later translated onto political institution trust as an institution attribute (Putnam, 1993). The institutional perspective suggests that political trust is rationally based, and impact citizen expectation and evaluation of institutional performance outcomes (Hetherington, 1998). This implies that citizen attitude towards institution differ from one another depending on individual knowledge and experience (Hudson, 2006). It also implies that political trust is a cognitive phenomenon associated with knowledge and beliefs (Hardin, 2006). People with high degree of cognitive ability choose to trust as a consequence of rational cognitive process to ensure collective actions (Hollis, 1998). According to Sturgis et al. (2010), Schoon and Cheng (2011), there is a positive relation between intelligence and social and political trust. Whether a cultural perspective or an institutional perspective, trust is learned and related to life experience (Hudson, 2006). While cultural perspective emphasis on the early experience which cannot be changed later, the institutional perspective prioritises the contemporary experience with institutions through incentives (Mishler and Rose, 2001). As a result of this, media as an institution plays a fundamental role in shaping cognitive ability of individuals in each societal dimensions, therefore, moderate trust.

News Media, political and social trust

Among empirical studies conducted in the past, political trust was found related with education, occupational status, family social background, unemployment and childhood general cognitive ability (Deary et al., 2008; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 1995; Schoon and Cheng, 2011). Moreover, studies investigating the causes of the deterioration of the level of trust concluded that "news media" was the most significant factor associated with the level of political trust (Nye, 1997), and social trust (Putnam, 2000). Pfau et al. (1998) argue that the level of political distrust results from news media's contents. This is consistent with social

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capital theory which suggests that contextual factors influence individual trust. In this perspective, news media consumption is a moderator factors effecting both dimensions of trust- political and social trust. Similarly, media coverage influences public cynicism and political apathy.

Robinson(1976) was one of the pioneers who suggested that news media influences beliefs about political trust such as trust in government. He argues in his video on malaise theory that the content of television coverage reinforces political cynicism (Hart et al., 1990; Patterson, 1994; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). Oppositely, mobilisation theory suggests the process of communication for political goals has a double directionality (Norris, 2000). The more people are informed politically, more will be the level of trust, exposure and participation to news media. However, not all the medias have the same impact on political trust or on the double directionality of trust. According to malaise theory(Robinson, 1976), there is a greater cynicism among those who watch TV than to those who use other form of media. While the consumption of television news influence negatively political trust (O’Keefe, 1980; Hetherington, 1998), newspaper’s consumption is positively related with trust. Furthermore, there are empirical studies conducted in US showing in the 60s that the decline of political trust within American society happened at the same time the deterioration of social trust. Media was pointed as one of the reasons of the deterioration on both trust (Putnam, 1995; Norris, 1996). While most of past studies investigated the impact of the use of traditional news media as an explanatory variable to the deterioration of trust, more and more studies nowadays investigate the effect of internet and social media use on political and social trust. According to Gil de Zuniga et al. (2010) the reading of online news is a significant indicator of a more expressive mode of online participation. In the similar way, Boulianne (2015) suggests that social media correlates with civic engagement.

Thus far, the literature review has shown that there is a relation between social trust and political trust. In addition, the previous literature pointed news media consumption as one of the causes of socio-political trust deterioration. Findings from various studies showed different strengths or directions in the relation between the two dimensions of trust. However, none of the past studies attempted to look on the effect modifier that the consumption of news media might have on the established relation between political and social trust. While most of the past studies were conducted in the context of US using a World Value Survey data (WVS), which was criticised for its differential item functionality (DIF), this current study uses the European Society Survey (ESS) for its appropriateness to uncover an eventual association between trust and news media at cross countries context. The following paragraph moves on to suggest theoretical framework to conceptualise prospect relation between both dimension of trust and news media.

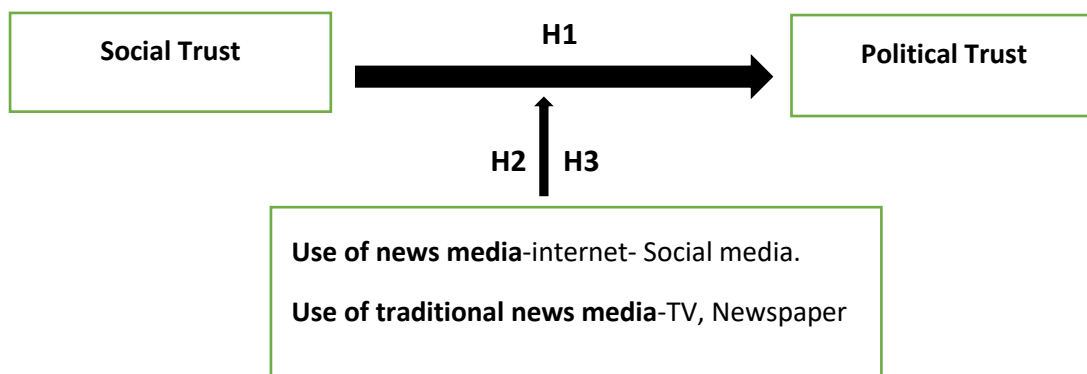
Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Extensive research has shown that political trust depends on interpersonal trust or trust in people or social trust. The rationale explanation resides on the fact that people interact and

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participate with others in their communities and are more likely to trust each other. According to Putnam(1995) more people are connected, therefore, more trust is developed, both social and political trust. This argument is supported by Damico et al.(2000) empirical findings which have established the relation between people with low level of interpersonal trust and low level of political trust. Similarly, a higher interpersonal trust is related to higher political trust at the individual level of analysis. Through participation in group, people nurture connectedness and trust, consequently to a greater political trust (Brehm and Rahn, 1997). For Brehm and Rahn (1997) this relation of causation between participation and trust is reciprocal. Hence, based on social capital, social network and theory of improvement, it is arguable to link social trust and political trust. Furthermore, based on malaise theory, some scholars support the view that media coverage of politics fosters a cynical public which end up of not being well informed and bearing a negative opinion of government or its representatives (Patterson, 1993). The supporters of this view found in news media content the reason of this cynicism, and consequently of distrust towards institutions and governments. In opposite view, mobilisation theory asserts a positive relation between the consumption of news media and the level of trust. Hence, the current study frames the variable news media usage as negatively or positively related to social and political trust. Hence, the quest for this research is to answer the question if news media moderates the relation between social and political trust. The investigation tests the following hypotheses:

H1, social trust is a positively associated with political trust. H2, the news media consumption- television and newspapers- moderate negatively the relation between social trust and political trust. H3, the news media consumption- internet- moderates positively the relation between social trust and political trust.



To test the above hypotheses, we conduct a correlation and multiple linear regression analysis. Political trust (Y_i) is the dependent variable. Social trust (X_i) and News media exposure(Z_i) are respectively independent variable and a moderator variable. At the first step, we test the association between Y_i to X_i . In addition, at the second step, the model integrates the moderator variable, Z_i , to test the moderation effect on the relation between political trust and social trust (Y_i, X_i, Z_i).

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Research methods

This current study uses secondary data from the European Social Survey 2016 -2017(ESS8). This is a cross sectional data collected with the objective to monitor and interpret European citizens changing attitudes and values in changing European's Institutions. Among the topics of data collected, there is a topic relative to news media and to trust. The survey used a rigorous random probability sampling technique to collect data from 23 European countries through face-to-face structured interviews (ESS8, 2016). The sample includes over 15 years old participants living in a private household regardless status. Participants were from United Kingdom, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Netherland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Russia and Switzerland. The screening of the survey indicates that 44387 valid responses were collected. To measure political trust as a dependent variable (DV), we use various indicators such as trust in European parliament (trstep), trust in country parliament (trstplm), trust in politicians(trstplt), trust in politics parties (trstprt), trust in United Nations(trstun), trust in legal systems(trstlgl) and trust in police(trstplc). A Likert's type questions were asked to the interviewees within a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means the respondent does not trust at all the institution, and 10 representing a complete trust. In addition, the independent variable(IV)social trust was measured using three measurement variables- most people can be trusted(ppltrst), most people try to be fair(pplfair), and most people try to be helpful(pplhlp). Similarly, Likert type questions were asked within a scope of 0 (you can't to be careful) to 10(most people can be trusted). Furthermore , the variable media consumption was measured by asking respondents to specify on the duration spent on watching, reading and listening to news about politics and current affairs(nwspol) or time spend using internet(netustm). Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regressions were used to establish relationship between social trust and political trust. For moderating regression analysis, we tested the moderating effect of news media consumption on the function political and social trust. To test the variable political trust, we used separately each indicator of the dependent variable. Therefore, the analysis has seven multiple regression models. Some scholars adopted a broadest perspective by using all the indicators to measure the level of trust towards institutions(Andre, 2014), whereas others used only some of the indicators such only trust in parliament and trust in United Nation(Allum et al.,2011; Coromina and Davidov, 2013). To reduce the probability of measurement errors in cross national analysis(Schneider, 2017), it appears to us more appropriate, due to geographical disparities, to use each indicator of the political trust separately. **Y model_i = a₁ + a₂PPLTRST +a₃PPLFAIR+a₄PPLHLP+e_i; i→from 1 to 7.** Where: PPLTRST= most people can be trustful; PPLFAIR= most people try to be fair; PPLHLP=most people try to be helpful; NWSPOL=watching, reading and listening news on TV; NETUSTM=how much time do you spend using internet for news? **Ymodel₁: Trstep-** trust in European Parliament; **Ymodel₂:Trstplm-**trust in country parliament; **Ymodel₃:Trstlgl-**trust in legal systems; **Ymodel₄:Trstplt-**trust in politicians; **Ymodel₅:Trstprt:** trust in politics parties; **Ymodel₆:Trstun-**trust in United Nations; **Ymodel₇:Trstplc-**trust in police.

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Research results

Model 1 Trust in European Parliament(Trstep), social trust and News media

A further moderating multiple regression was conducted by testing on the interaction of news media consumption towards trust on European Parliament. The first analysis tested the moderating effect of the use of traditional news media(Nwspol- watching, reading and listening's to news on TV. This was followed by assessing the moderating effect of the online media(Netustm- time spend using internet). We also test the extent to which the strengths of the linear relation between social trust (Ppltrst-most people can be trustful) and trust in European Parliament. The findings indicate that Ppltrst is the highest predictor of trust in European Parliament ($b=0.2868$, $p=0.000$). Consumption of traditional news media (Nwspol) did not add significantly on the relation of Ppltrst and Trstep(R^2 change =0.0001; $p=0.0734$). the beta term of the Nwspol is zero ($b=0.000$; $p=0.8910$) and the coefficient of the interaction term (ppltrst x nwspol) is negative ($b= -0.0001$; $p=0.0734$). Both results are not significant.

The assumption test for parametric correlation and multiple linear regressions were conducted. Multicollinearity assumption was not violated which means the predictors variables are not highly correlated between themselves. The variance inflation factors (VIF) were respectively 1,605; 1.602; 1.156, which are largely inferior to the threshold value of VIF(5)(Field, 2009). Data were normally distributed. However, the model suffers of heteroskedasticity as the Breusch-Pagan test indicates a $R^2 \times N(0.002 \times 40564=81.128)$ above the critical value of 7.81. Data set for model 1 (Trstep) reveals a central tendency measurement of $M=4.28$ and $SD=2.517$. Further analysis shows a positive weak association between trust in European Parliament and Ppltrst($b=0.266$; $p=.000$); trust in European Parliament and Pplfair($b=0.234$; $p=.000$); trust in European parliament and Pplhlp($b=0.224$; $p=.000$). In addition, regression analysis indicates that predictors variables are statistically significant indicators of trust in European Parliament: Ppltrst($b=0.178$; $t[27.635]$; $p=0.000$), Pplfair($b=0.110$; $t[15.743]$; $p=0.000$) and Pplhlp($b=0.107$; $t[16.558]$; $p=0.000$). The indicators can explain 8.7% of the variance of the dependent variable trust in European Parliament(Trstep). **$Y_{model_1} = 2.138 + 0.178 PPLTRST + 0.110 PPLFAIR + 0.107 PPLHLP$** . A moderating multiple regression analysis was conducted by testing on the interaction of news media consumption towards trust on European Parliament. The first analysis tested the moderating effect of the use of traditional news media- Nwspol, watching, reading and listening to news on TV. This was followed by assessing the moderating effect of the online media- Netustm, time spend using internet. We also test the extent to which the strengths of the linear relation between social trust -Ppltrst, most people can be trustful and trust in European Parliament. The findings indicate that Ppltrst is the highest predictor of trust in European Parliament ($b=0.2868$, $p=.000$). Consumption of traditional news media (Nwspol) did not add significantly on the relation of Ppltrst and Trstep(R^2 change =0.0001; $p=0.0734$). The beta term of the Nwspol is zero ($b=0.000$; $p=0.8910$) and the coefficient of the interaction term (ppltrst x nwspol) is negative ($b= -0.0001$; $p=0.0734$). Johnson-Neyman method reveals that there is no statistical significance transition points within the observed ranged of Nwspol. Turning now for the netustm- number of times spent using internet for news-, the change is

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also insignificant (R_2 change = 0.0001; $p=0.1834$). The interaction coefficient equals to zero ($b=0.000$; $p=0.1834$). Hence, the above findings confirm the hypothesis 1. There is a weak relation between trust in European parliament and generalised trust (PPLTRST= most people can be trustful; PPLFAIR= most people try to be fair; PPLHLP=most people try to be helpful). However, the media consumption – television and newspapers- does not moderate the relation between trust in European and social trust. Thus, hypothesis 2 cannot be confirmed. In the same way, we have to reject hypothesis 3 as the use of internet does not moderate either the relation between trust in European parliament and social trust.

Model 2 Trust in country parliament, social trust and news media

The results obtained from the Pearson correlation analysis indicate a weak positive relation between trust in country parliament and social trust: $Trstplm$ and $Ppltrst$ ($r=0.338$; $p=0.000$). The same result is shown when we used the predictor “most people try to be fair” ($r=0.338$; $p=0.000$) or “most people try to be helpful” ($r=0.286$; $p=0.000$). In addition, regression model suggests that social trust’s intercept as represented by three predictors, $Pptrst$ ($b=0.220$; $p=0.000$), $Pplfair$ ($b=0.161$; $p=0.000$) and $Pplhlp$ ($b=0.136$; $p=0.000$) is statistically significant to predict the level of trust in country parliament. It means that any variation of the predictor $Ppltrst$ of one unit will predict an increase of political trust of 22%; or each time individual increase in trustworthiness relative to considering “other people are trying to be fair”, there is an increase in trust in country parliament of 16.1%; or an increase in trust to the country parliament of 13.6% to any variation of one unit of $Pplhlp$. The R-square (0.145) signifies that 14.5% of the variation of trust in country parliament can be explained by the predictors. $Y_{model2} = 1.791 + 0.22PPLTRST + 0.161PPLFAIR + 0.136PPLHLP + e_2$. The moderation effect of the news media consumption on the relation between political trust and social trust was conducted. The findings indicate that R-square (0.115) did not change despite the adding of the moderator variable. Similarly, when the consumption of news through TV and newspaper is replaced by the use of internet, the R-square (0.112) remains the same. Therefore, it is arguable to ascertain that there is not a moderating effect. Hence, the above results can confirm the hypothesis 1, whereas hypotheses 2 & 3 are rejected.

Model 3 Trust in legal system, social trust and news media

Descriptive central tendency of measurement variables shows that deviance of the variables observed are not far away from the hypothetical value of the means- $Trstlgl$ ($M=5.42$; $SD=2.606$), $Ppltrst$ ($M=5.8$; $SD=2.174$), $Pplfair$ ($M=5.81$; $SD=2.174$) and $Pplhlp$ ($M=5.22$; $SD=2.243$). The tolerance and the variance inflation factors suggest that there is not an issue of multicollinearity. The R-square of 0.140 suggest that the regression model explain 14% of the variation of the dependent variable-trust in legal system. The social trust measurement variables were statistically significant- $Ppltrst$ ($b=0.229$; $P=.000$), $Pplfair$ ($b=0.139$; $P=.000$) and $Pplhlp$ ($b=0.149$; $p=.000$). Similar to model1 and model2, results from Breusch-Pagan test suffers of heteroskedasticity. Further analysis of Pearson correlation suggests the existence of a slightly weak positive correlation between trust in legal system and $Ppltrst$ ($r=0.164$; $P=.000$), $Pplfair$ ($r=0.092$; $p=.000$) and $Pplhlp$ ($r=0.107$; $p=.000$). In the same

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way multiple linear regression analysis shows that for any increase of one unit of Ppltrst, Pplfair and Pplhlp will increase respectively of 22.9%, 13.9% and 14.9% the level of trust in legal system, mutatis mutandis. $Y_{\text{model 3}} = 2.631 + 0.229\text{PPLTRST} + 0.139\text{PPLFAIR} + 0.149\text{PPLHLP} + e_3$. Moreover, the moderating regression indicates that Ppltrst is the highest predictor of trust in legal system. It is apparent that the integration of News media display no change at all in the established relation between both dimension of trust. The analysis indicates that the interaction of the R-square change of focal predict(Ppltrst), and of the moderator variable(Nwspol) has a no – effect ($R^2=.0000$). Johnson-Neyman test suggests that there is not statistically significance transition points within the observed range of the moderator. The same conclusion is drawn when the moderator variable Nwspol is replaced by Netustm. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed, whereas hypotheses 2&3 are rejected.

Model 4 Trust in politicians, social trust and news media

The data set for this model was normally distributed. There was no violation of the constant variance assumption. R-square adjusted(0.146) suggests that the regression model explains 14.6% of the variation of trust in politicians- $Y_{\text{model 4}} = 0.993 + 0.195\text{PPLTRST} + 0.135\text{PPLFAIR} + 0.163\text{PPLHLP} + e_4$. The Breush-Pagan suggests that the model suffers of heteroskedasticity. The VIF equalled to 43.29 ($R^2 \times N = 0.001 \times 43292 = 43.29$), which is largely superior to the critical value of 7.81 within a probability of exceeding of 0.05. Descriptive analysis indicates that trust in politician -Trstplt- has a lower mean ($M=3.66$; $SD=2.416$) compared to Ppltrst ($M=5.28$; $SD=2.358$), Pplfair ($M=5.81$; $SD=2.177$) and Pplhlp($M=5.21$, $SD=2.245$). Further Results from the Pearson correlation analysis suggest a significant relationship between trust in politicians and social trust. The relation is positive and weak- Pplfair($r=0.301$), Ppltrst($r=0.332$), Pplhlp($r=0.303$). Similarly, the multiple regression analysis results indicate that trust in politicians' variation depends on the predictor Ppltrst($b=0.195$; $\text{sig}=.000$); Pplfair($b=0.135$; $\text{sig}=.000$) and Pplhlp($b=0.163$; $\text{sig}=.000$). Furthermore, moderation analysis on the impact of News media consumption on the relation political and social trust indicate that the interaction variable (Ppltrst x Newspol) has a R-square change extremely insignificant (0.0001). Johnson-Neyman method also indicates that there is no statistical significance transition points within the observed range of the moderator. People can be trusted -Ppltrst- was the strong predictor of trust in politicians ($b=0.3413$; $p=.0000$). News media usage through TV(Nwspol) has a beta value of zero ($b=.0000$; $p=0.5990$). Thus, there is not an interaction between predictors. Similarly, when testing the impact of internet usage(Netustm), results show a R-square of 0.0001 with $p=0.0814$ for the test of highest order unconditional interactions(Ppltrst x Netustm). Interestingly, the coefficient of interaction variable is observed to be slightly negative ($b= - 0.0001$). It means for any unit increase of internet usage, there is an inverse effect on trust in politicians. Hence, similarly to model1,2,3, hypothesis 1 is confirmed, whereas hypotheses 2 & 3 are rejected.

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Model 5 Trust in politics parties, social trust and news media

Data assumption tests were conducted. Results indicate that there is not multicollinearity between the predictors for the model 5. The estimated VIF are largely below the critical value of 5. The model explains 13.7% of the variation of the outcome – trust in politics parties. All the indicators of the variable social trust were found statistically significant with a $p < 0,05$ - Ppltrst($b=0.189$), Pplfair ($b=0.125$), Pplhlp($b=0.156$). $Y_{\text{model 5}} = 1.097 + 0.189\text{PPLTRST} + 0.125\text{PPLFAIR} + 0.156\text{PPLHLP} + e_5$. The correlation analysis indicates that trust in parties' politics is positively related to the social trust. The relation is positively weak - Ppltrst ($r=0.323$, $p=.000$), Pplfair ($r=0.290$, $p=.000$) and Pplhlp($r=0.295$, $p=.000$). Furthermore, moderating regression analysis suggests the absence of moderation. The coefficient of interaction term (Ppltrst x Nwspol) is zero. In addition, Nwspol is not showing to be a predictor variable of the outcome variable trust in politics parties. R-square change of the interaction term is 0.000 with a $p=0.1249$. Similarly, results show that there is not a moderation effect of the interaction- Ppltrst x Netustm is zero ($b=.0000$). In this basis, results indicate that there is a weak and positive relation between trust in politics parties and social trust. Thus, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. However, hypotheses 2&3 on the moderation effect of the consumption of news media were rejected.

Model 6 Trust in United Nations, social trust and news media

Descriptive analysis indicates that data are closed to the central tendency values- Trstun ($M=5.02$; $SD=2.608$). Pearson correlation results demonstrate that there are three predictors which are correlated with trust in United Nation. The correlation is slightly a weak positive correlation- with Ppltrst ($r=0.248$, $p=.0000$), with Pplfair ($r=0.248$, $p=.0000$) and with Pplhlp($r=0.214$, $p=.0000$). Regression analysis indicates that predictors can explain the variation of trust in United nations within the model $Y_{\text{model 6}} = 2.756 + 0.172 \text{ PPLTRST} + 0.151\text{PPLFAIR} + 0.90\text{PPLHLP} + e_6$. With a R-square of 0.088, 8.8% of the variation of trust in United Nations can be explained by the predictor social trust (PPLTRST, PPLFAIR and PPLHLP). Further analysis on the moderating regression analysis suggests an absence of any interaction between the predictors and the moderator – Nwspol and Netustm. R-square change of the interaction variable is insignificant ($R^2=.0000$; $p=0.2482$). The predictor Nwspol shows a slightly negative coefficient, but insignificant ($b= -0.0001$, $p=0.5355$). Thus, there is not a moderating effect from the consumption of news media. In this basis, findings suggest that there is a weak positive relationship between trust in United Nations and social trust. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. However, hypothesis 2&3 are rejected for lack of moderation effect.

Model 7 Trust in police, social trust and news media

The normality assumption for model 7 was met. The descriptive statistics indicate the absence of multicollinearity (VIF of 1.586 with a tolerance of 0.630; VIF of 1.581 with tolerance of 0.632 and a VIF of 1.440 with a tolerance of 0.695). However, the model suffers of heteroskedasticity as indicated by the scatterplot of the residual regression standardised. The correlation analysis reveals that trust in police-Trstplc is correlated with Ppltrst($r=0.268$, $\text{sig}=0.000$), Pplfair ($r=0,270$, $\text{sig}=0.000$) and Pplhlp($r=0.245$, $\text{sig}=0.000$). This is a slightly weak

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positive correlation. The regression analysis illustrates that the model fit with the data. 10.2% of the variation of trust in police can be explained from the independent variables ($R^2=0.102$). $Y_{\text{model7}} = 4.143 + 0.139\text{PPLTRST} + 0.157\text{PPLFAIR} + 0.118 \text{PPLHLP} + e_7$. Further analysis on moderating effect reveals that R^2 change equal to 0.0000 and statistically insignificant for . In the similar way, the analysis of scatterplot indicates that there is no change at all in the established association between trust in police and social trust when the interaction factor – $Nwspol$ ($R^2 =0.000$) and $Netustm$ ($R^2=0.000$)- was introduced. In this basis, the model can confirm the hypothesis 1 that there is a positive relation between trust in police and social trust. However, the hypotheses 2 & 3 are rejected for no moderating effect from the usage of news media.

Discussion

In model 1, trust in European Union parliament is used as a measurement of political trust variable, while three other measurements are used for social trust- most people can be trusted, most people try to be fair, and most people can be helpful. The model was statistically significant as it can explain 8.7% of the variation in the level of trust in European parliament within the regression equation $Y_{\text{model1}} = 2.138 + 0.178\text{PPLTRST} + 0.110\text{PPLFAIR} + 0.107\text{PPLHLP} + e_1$. Pearson correlation indicates that there are three significant relationships between political trust and social trust. Those relations were slightly weak positive association. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. This corroborates with the trust compatible model which argues that social and political trust tend to go together at the same direction as a mutually reinforcing patterns (Newton and Zmerli, 2011). Similarly, the findings are comparable with previous studies which ascertain that political trust and social trust are interrelated (Newton, 1999a; Craig, 1993). While some studies concluded to a strong relationship (Freitag, 2003; Glanville and Paxton, 2007; Freitag and Bhuhlmann, 2009; Wright, 1976; Craig, 1993), this current study found a slightly weak association. However, a cautious is required in the reading of this current finding as the assumption of homoscedasticity was violated. It is well known that ESS8(2016) variables are hypothetical, they measure attitudes. Thus, it is unlikely to nullify biases which might be caused by differential interpretation factors. Hence, you cannot always be positive in your findings in case of hypothetical constructs (Phillips and Burbules, 2000). Nevertheless, strong evidence supported that ESS survey has a high equivalence in understanding of political trust across different nations (Schneider, 2017). Therefore, the current findings are valid. Another explanation of the weak association might be justified by the principle of social proximity or social connection. European Union is still in a building process. Till today European populations seem not to identify themselves to the European parliament located in Brussels. Thus, European parliament variable can appear remorse to participants radius of interest. Consequently, this might tend to affect negatively their propension to trust toward European institutions. Trust is influenced by the environment and learning experience. For an Israelite, who is not subjected by European parliament decisions, would have tendency to trust less the institution which is less socially connected to him. Thus, the inclusion of countries such Israel and Russia in data sampling might affect the strength and the direction of association.

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To the question of the moderation effect of news media consumption, moderating regression analysis indicate that there is not a moderating effect toward trust in European Union parliament. The extremely small change of R-square ($R^2=0.0001$; $p=0.0734$) for usage of traditional media is statistically insignificant. Similarly, the introduction of the use of internet variable gives an extremely small variation of R-square ($R^2=-0.0005$) and is also statistically insignificant. In addition, the coefficient of the moderator factor through traditional media is zero. In another words, news media does not explain the variation that might exist in the level of political trust and social trust. Far more than expected, the interaction term has an extremely small negative coefficient ($b=-0.0001$). This is not surprising as it can be justified by the malaise theory, which argues that negative content reinforces political cynicism. A high usage of internet tends to lower the level of trust in European, although this finding is not statistically significant. Hence, the hypothesis 2 which suggest that media consumption- television and newspapers- moderate negatively the relation social trust and political trust is rejected. Similarly, the hypothesis on a moderating effect of usage of internet on the relation political-social trust is rejected. This corroborates with the findings of Strandberg and Carlson(2017) who argue that it is unlikely internet would enhance a general mobilisation among the politically passive people as the technology is becoming a universal tool for communication, accessible by all. Therefore, the consumption of internet will have a zero effect on political trust. Additionally, traditional media nullifies its effect on political or social trust. Past studies found that television viewing affects negatively social trust and newspapers influence positively trust (Putnam, 1995; Norris, 1996). This can explain why the moderator consumption of news media which includes watching television and at the same time reading newspapers can be reduced to none, as the effects nullify each other. For further insights, it will be more interesting to ask separately the question of how often participants used TV for news or use newspaper for news and public affairs.

For model 2, on trust in country parliament, results indicate a weak positive association with social trust. 14,5% of the variance of trust in country parliament can be explained by the model. When compared to model 1 of trust to European Union parliament, trust in country parliament has higher Pearson correlation within the spectrum of weak coefficients [+0.30, +0.50]. This finding can be understood based on cultural theories and institutions. The cultural theories argue that political trust is originated from culture sphere and transmitted from generation to generation. This justifies why individual trust, which is embedded in people culture, is associated with political trust. Therefore, trust in country parliament is likely to have a higher correlation coefficient compared to trust in European Union parliament which is far away from citizen culture. According to Giannatale et al. (2016) proximity is collateral. The higher the risk of aversion, the lower the propension to trust. If more people consider that country parliament is socially connected to them or their problems, their propension to trust to country parliament is likely to be higher than their propension to trust an institution which appears to be far from their culture- European Union parliament. At the same time institutions theories support the views that political trust is rationally based and influenced by individual expectation. In a period of sustained economic growth for example, the propension to trust institution is likely to increase. Contrary, in a period of economic recession, trust in institution is likely to decrease. As previously found in model 1, there is not

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a moderating effect from consumption of news media. The addition of both moderators – Newspl and Netustm and their interactions with predictors did not change the R-square. Therefore, the variation of the outcome trust in country parliament does not change neither. There is not in literature review comparative studies with the current findings. For Moy and Scheufele(2000) there is no effect at all between media consumption and political trust. Gross et al.(2004) demonstrated , just after 09/11 that the association between news media consumption and higher political trust was reduced to none one year later. In their discussion, they argued that media content was part of the explanation. Just after 09/11 the content was more patriotic, and one year later, it returns to its cynicism negative content. Therefore, in absence of particularity within the economic or social situation, it is likely that news media will not moderate the relation between social and trust in country parliament.

The model 3 equation indicates that 14% of the variation of trust in legal system can be explained by the measurement of social trust. This finding is identical with the findings from model 1 and model 2. In case of trust in European parliament, the model explains 8.7% of the variation of the outcome variable, while it explain 14.5% for trust in country parliament. The weak positive relationship within the spectrum of lowest weak coefficients[+0.00, +0.30] might be explained by the fact that the concept of police forces, armed forces or courts which are seen to belong to a different dimension of the factor trust, are likely to cause a problem in cross-national equivalence or are subject to correlation errors. Schneider (2017) found that trust perception in parliament, government and political parties tend to differ with trust in protective body- police, armed forces or courts. He found that impersonal distrust and protective institutions is higher among the former URSS countries. Thus, this can explain why the relation between trust in legal system and social trust appears to be the weakest when compared to other political trust measurements. Furthermore, similar to previous models, no moderating effect was found. The addition of interactive term(ppltrst x nwspol) did not change at all the relation between trust in legal system and social trust. However, traditional news media showed a tiny and negative coefficient. This means one unit of additional of the predictor news media-traditional media- will reduce the propension to trust in legal system. In contrast, the use of internet had a zero-value coefficient. Malaise theory which suggests that the use of news media creates cynicism can explain this current finding of the lack of moderating effect. Therefore, hypotheses 2 and 3 are rejected, while hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Similarly in model 4, trust in politicians was found correlated with social trust, a weak positive relation within the radius of weak association [+0.30; +0.50]. Trust in politicians is among the constructs which was found to be more predictable of the construct political trust (Allum et al., 2011; Coromina and Davidov, 2013). This can explain why model 4 shows a slightly a higher correlation compared to trust in country parliament or trust in European Union or trust in legal system. In the same way to the previous models, there was no statistical significance transition points within the observed range of moderator variable (R^2 change = 0.0001 for traditional news; R^2 change = 0.0001 for internet consumption). The repetitive results on lack of moderating effect can be explained by the increase of the level of individual distrust toward news media. According to Gallup-Knight foundation survey (2018) news media was eroding in US and was perceived as bias. In other words, people trust less and less news media.

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Therefore, its effects are annihilated because of that. The homo-economicus trustor expects from other parties or from institution to maximise its outcomes. When he expects that nothing good would come from news media, it is likely that he will be less influenced by it. Consequently, it is arguable that the moderating effects of news media consumption to be reduced to none.

Model 5 on the trust in politics' parties provides identical findings with the previous models. A weak positive relation was found. Once again, there is no moderating effect from news media consumption on the relation political and social trust. The change of R-square was 0.000. Comparably, Boulianne (2009) found no effect of the use of internet on political engagement. Similarly, Bimber and Copeland (2013) found no relation between online media use and political engagement for the US election from 1994 to 2004. However, these findings varied years later. For both authors, the findings were explained by the media content message and not by the extent of consumption of online media. Referring to the Gallup survey(2018) in their recent survey on the level of distrust towards news media, we might argue that there is no effect at all from news media toward political trust. Consequently, there is not either a moderating effect of news media toward the established function social and political trust. Hence, hypothesis is confirmed, while hypotheses 2 and 3 are rejected.

For model 6, on trust in United Nations, a weak positive relationship with social trust was found. The model explain 8.8% of the variation of trust in United Nations. It is similar with trust in European parliament model. In addition, both models have their correlation coefficients in the second range of weak coefficients [+0.00; +0.30]. Thus, the same argument of social proximity or social connection be applied in the context of trust in United Nations. As far the institution appears to be in the perspective of the trustor, higher the aversion of risk, and therefore, lower the propension to trust. This is likely to explain how the correlate coefficients for trust in European parliament and trust in United Nations are similar and are the lowest. Similar to other models, news media does not moderate the association between political trust and social trust. R-square change for model 6 is 0.000 for traditional media as well as for internet use. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed while hypotheses 2&3 are rejected.

The Pearson correlation analysis for model 7, on the trust in police, indicates a positive a weak relation with social trust. 10.2% of the variation of trust in police can be explained by the social trust predictors. As previously argued in the model relative to trust in legal system, trust in police has been considered as part of a different dimension of the intercept political trust. People trust in police tends to differ with trust in parliament (Schneider, 2017). According to Schneider (2017) this type of cross-national survey is likely to create error of correlation. Therefore, this indicator deserves by itself a further study and re-classification, being removed from the list of political trust indicators to be added to the group of social trust. Further, no moderating effect was found. This corroborates with the argument of Chang(2018) who suggested that the positive effect of media consumption in boosting political interest are outweighed by the negative effects of media usage on satisfaction with democracy. Consequently, media usage has no effect at all on the concept social and political trust on an aggregate level. Thus, hypothesis 1 is confirmed and hypotheses 2&3 are rejected.

Conclusion

Trust has been considered by scholars in literature review as an important factor in regulating social interaction of citizens. It is apprehended as a cornerstone underlying social reality in all of its manifestations- social, politics, beliefs, legal or economics (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Being at the foundation of social life, any decline of trust is likely to be considered as priority in advanced democracies because of the domino effects a distrust might bring to the societal foundation such as institutions or democracy. Some of the empirical studies indicate that political trust is related to social trust. Further, other studies enquired on the causes of the decline of the level of political trust and concluded that news media was among the causes. Most of the studies were conducted in the context of United States using World Value Survey which was criticised for its higher level of differential item functionality (DIF). In addition, the test was conducted by considering news media as a predictor variable. Results showed different strengths or directions in the association between both dimension of trust and news media. However, none of the previous studies attempted to find out on the moderating effect the consumption of news media would have on the established relation between political trust and social trust using a more credible cross-national dataset such as ESS8(2016). Hence, to fill this gap in literature we suggested to test three hypotheses- H1, that political trust is positively related to social trust; H2, news media consumption through watching, listening to TV moderates the association between social and political trust; H3, news media consumption through internet moderates the association between political and social trust.

The findings suggest that there is a weak positive association between political trust and social trust within the radius of $[+0.00; +0.50]$ of Pearson correlation coefficient. All findings from the seven models are identical. The results corroborate with previous studies which concluded that there is a relation between social trust and political trust (Justwan et al., 2018; Granovetter, 2005; Miguel et al., 2012; Rothstein, 2003; Schyns and Koop, 2010; Newton and Zmerli, 2011; Freitag and Buhlmann, 2009). Thus, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. However, our findings contrast with other scholars who argued that there is no relation at all (Hall, 1999; Craig, 1993; Wright, 1976; Doring, 1992). The discrepancy of various results can be explained because of sampling, measuring and period effects. The current study is contemporary, and it results from one of the robust and credible cross-national social data surveys. ESS8 (2016) passed the test of validity and equivalence of empirical measures. In addition, it has been evidenced that the intercept political trust is equivalently perceived across countries (Schneider, 2017). Therefore, the findings can be upheld and validated in regard of the robustness of the sampling and measurement used.

In addition, news media consumption does not moderate the association political and social trust. SPSS(PROCESS) estimation indicates in all seven models that the interactive term added-Newspol or Netustm- does not change the strength or the direction of the models. This is consistent with Strandberg and Carlson (2017) finding, which suggests that it is unlikely the use of internet would enhance general mobilisation contrary to mobilisation theory. The non-

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moderating effect of traditional news media can be explained by malaise theory and virtuous circle theory. Malaise theory argues that consumption of news media via television impacts negatively trust (Putnam, 1995; Norris, 1996; Becker and Whitney, 1980; O'Keefe, 1980; Hetherington, 1998). In contrast, virtuous circle theory argues that the use of news media via newspapers influences positively social trust (Putnam, 1995; Norris, 1996; O'Keefe, 1980; Hetherington, 1998). Hence, when assessing the impact of media by using in the same measurement both channels of traditional news media- television and newspaper- it is likely to see both effects to nullify each other and be reduced to none as effects counterbalance each other. This is consistent with some of the empirical studies such with Moy and Scheufele (2000) who concluded that there is no effect at all between media consumption and political trust. Hence, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are rejected.

Furthermore, it is imperative to highlight that some of the findings are context driven. In period of plain recession, data analysis for the same questions provides a different outcome when compared to the period of sustained economic growth. We used data for year 2002(ESS1) and 2010(ESS5). The choice was guided by three elements- one relative to global culture differential, a second one was relative to a different economic context(a year just after world recession of 2008) and a third was the year when the question relative to the use of traditional news media was separated in two, one question for TV and another for newspapers. The findings indicate that political trust was correlated to social trust, which was consistent with the current findings. In addition, news media consumption significantly moderates the function political-social trust. This is in contrast with the findings from 2016(ESS8) data. Therefore, we can argue that the strength and direction of the relation between both dimension of trust and news media consumption are context oriented. It is obvious in period of recession or a year after a recession period, the propension to trust institution would be low, therefore, the level of trust is affected by it. Similarly, when the consumption of news media measurement is separated between television and newspapers, results suggest a moderating effect of news media consumption on trust. We also found that internet interacts or moderate political and social trust for ESS1 (2002) and ESS5(2010). Hence, the concept trust is context orientated. Therefore, a cross sectional, although repetitive, has the disadvantage of giving a partial topography of reality. In consideration of this limitation, we will recommend adopting a longitudinal strategy by covering various economic periods. We will also recommend a replication of this current study by removing countries based on the criteria relative to global culture differential, social proximity or social connection and differential in interpretation order and protective institutions– Israel, Russia, all old satellite state of the former URSS.

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