



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Political trust: Pillar or peril for democracy

Empirical tests of the consequences of political trust on individuals' attitudes and behaviors

Ouattara, E.M.S.

Publication date

2025

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Ouattara, E. M. S. (2025). *Political trust: Pillar or peril for democracy: Empirical tests of the consequences of political trust on individuals' attitudes and behaviors*. [Thesis, fully internal, Universiteit van Amsterdam].

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.



Political Trust: Pillar or Peril for Democracy?

Political Trust: Pillar or Peril for Democracy?

Empirical Tests of the Consequences of Political Trust
on Individuals' Attitudes and Behaviors

Ebe-Manyé Ouattara

Ebe-Manyé Ouattara

Political Trust: Pillar or Peril for Democracy

Empirical Tests of the Consequences of Political
Trust on Individuals' Attitudes and Behaviors

Ebe-Manyé Ouattara

Political Trust: Pillar or Peril for Democracy. Empirical Tests of the
Consequences of Political Trust on Individuals' Attitudes and Behaviors

ISBN 978-94-6506-802-2

Printed by: Ridderprint BV, www.ridderprint.nl

Copyright © 2024 by Ebe Ouattara

All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission of the author.

Political Trust: Pillar or Peril for Democracy

Empirical Tests of the Consequences of Political Trust on
Individuals' Attitudes and Behaviors

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. ir. P.P.C.C. Verbeek

ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde
commissie,

in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit
op dinsdag 28 januari 2025, te 11.00 uur

door Ebe Manyé Siibin Ouattara
geboren te Opelika

Promotiecommissie

Promotor: prof. dr. T.W.G. van der Meer Universiteit van Amsterdam

Copromotor: dr. E.H. Steenvoorden Universiteit van Amsterdam

Overige leden: prof. dr. W. van der Brug Universiteit van Amsterdam

dr. A. Hakhverdian Universiteit van Amsterdam

dr. G. Schumacher Universiteit van Amsterdam

prof. dr. C.T. van Ham Radboud Universiteit

prof. dr. W.J. Jennings University of Southampton

Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragwetenschappen

To Hanya, and Youéhi,
In memory of Na-Youéhi

Preface

This dissertation, *Political Trust: Pillar or Peril for Democracy?*, is based on the following articles.

- Ouattara, E., Steenvoorden, E., & van der Meer, T. (2023). Political Trust as an Evaluation against Normative Benchmarks? A Two-wave Survey Experiment on the Role of Normative Benchmarks in the Evaluative Model of Political Trust. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 35(2), edad015.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/edad015>
- Ouattara, E., & Van Der Meer, T. (2023). Distrusting democrats: A panel study into the effects of structurally low and declining political trust on citizens' support for democratic reform. *European Journal of Political Research*, 62(4), 1101–1121.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12561>
- Ouattara, E., & Steenvoorden, E. (2023). The Elusive Effect of Political Trust on Participation: Participatory Resource or (Dis)incentive? *Political Studies*, 00323217231194820.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217231194820>
- Ouattara, E. (2024). A Reservoir of Support: Disentangling the Effects of Diffuse and Specific Support on Voluntary Compliance. *working paper*

This research was supported by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), grant no. 452-16-001

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction.....	13
Chapter 2. Political Trust as an Evaluation against Normative Benchmarks?	33
Chapter 3. Distrusting Democrats: How low and declining political trust influence support for democratic reform	63
Chapter 4. The Elusive Effect of Political Trust on Participation: Participatory Resource or (Dis)incentive?	89
Chapter 5. A Reservoir of Support: Disentangling the Effects of Diffuse and Specific Support on Voluntary Compliance	115
Chapter 6. Conclusion.....	139
Appendices.....	153
References.....	263
English Summary	283
Nederlandse samenvatting	287

Acknowledgments

I have often heard a PhD being likened to running a marathon. I haven't managed to run one yet. However, the little I've seen from watching my favorite athletes train and compete tells me the analogy is not so far-fetched. This has been a long and wonderful journey.

Gratitude is the word that comes to mind as I reach the end of this long-journey. Running this far has only been possible thanks to the incredible support of my wonderful family, amazing friends, thoughtful colleagues and dedicated and understanding supervisors.

I would first like to thank my coaches (my supervisors) Tom van der Meer and Eefje Steenvoorden, for their unwavering support. I have heard the saying "a coach cannot give you confidence, but they can surely take it away." I do not agree. Tom and Eefje gave me confidence! Over the past few years, I often found myself wondering whether my work was good enough or at times whether I belonged. To quote my favorite distance runner, Sifan Hasan, "what have I done?". And yet, Tom and Eefje consistently reassured me of the value of my work. When doubts creeped in, they instilled confidence in me. I am grateful for their intellectual generosity and the countless hours that went in providing extremely constructive feedback over even the most mundane piece of work I provided to them. I often found myself to be my biggest critic and their ability to nudge me toward the finish line at every juncture is a testament to their professionalism and empathy. I wish every PhD the joy of having such supervisors!

I am equally grateful to my peers, fellow PhD students who taught me so much along the way. A PhD is not a solo journey. You are surrounded by peers running by your side, training and prepping every day. The most enjoyable part of my PhD was learning from the amazing friends and colleagues from the B10.01 office: Lisanne, Hannah, Ellis, Laura, Natalie, Lea, Ugur, Patrick, Remko, Sander. Thank you for taking time to answer all sorts of questions such as "What's your writing process? How do you read? How do you deal with journal rejections?". I learned the day-to-day routines of academic life from you. I would also like to thank Isabella, Sanne, Maaïke, Christian, Anne-Louise, Nick, Hayley, Thomas, Merve, Linet and Eda who also helped sharpen the ideas found in this book. My peers have been a constant sounding board for half-baked ideas. It is thanks to them that I have continued on this journey.

No sporting event would be complete without dedicated supporters and fans. A special thanks to my family and friends who cheered me all the way to the finish line. Over 8 years ago, I was blessed to meet four amazing individuals. My best friends: Sherilyn, Yoren,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mridula and Hasan. I would be a poor man if you ever invoiced me for the countless hours you have spent patiently listening to my ramblings about measurement theory, causality, writing and political trust.

To my wonderful family (La grande Famille Vé) in Côte d'Ivoire your love, prayers and support were indispensable on this journey. Bernhard, Yi-lien, Yokai and Leja – I don't know where I would be had you not welcomed me with open arms in your family. Thank you for listening to me working through ideas over Christmas dinners!

To my incredible late mother, Debora Tryphène Na-Youéhi, who raised me as a single mom; a fact I still find absolutely baffling, now that I am a dad. Na-Youéhi, my rock, I wish you could have seen this project come to fruition. We did it! The older I get, the more I appreciate just how much you sacrificed for me. Becoming a father has left me marveling at your strength, love and dedication. You sowed this crazy idea of completing a PhD in the first place. Thanks to you, that seed is blossoming.

To my amazing partner, Hanya, this piece of scholarship is just as much yours as it is mine. It is dedicated to you. Thank you for creating the space and time for me to get this project done. You unwittingly became a political trust experts the moment I signed up for this PhD. You encouraged me on my lowest days, celebrated my successes with me and helped me deal with all life threw at us as I balanced a PhD, full time job, grief and fatherhood. There aren't enough words to say thank you.