Introduction to the
GOVTRUST Centre of Excellence

Prof. dr. Koen Verhoest
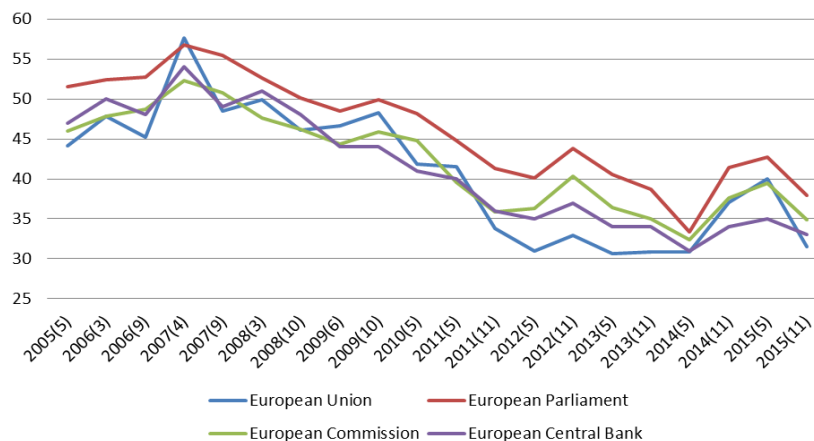
Coordinator of GOVTRUST

Research group Politics & Public Governance

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'Trust and distrust in multi-level governance'

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For a MLG system to perform well, trust is a fundamental condition...

Media

Citizens

Private organisations / interests

Politicians / policymakers

Administrations and regulatory bodies (departments/agencies)

Judicial actors (courts)

Subnational level

National level

Supranational level
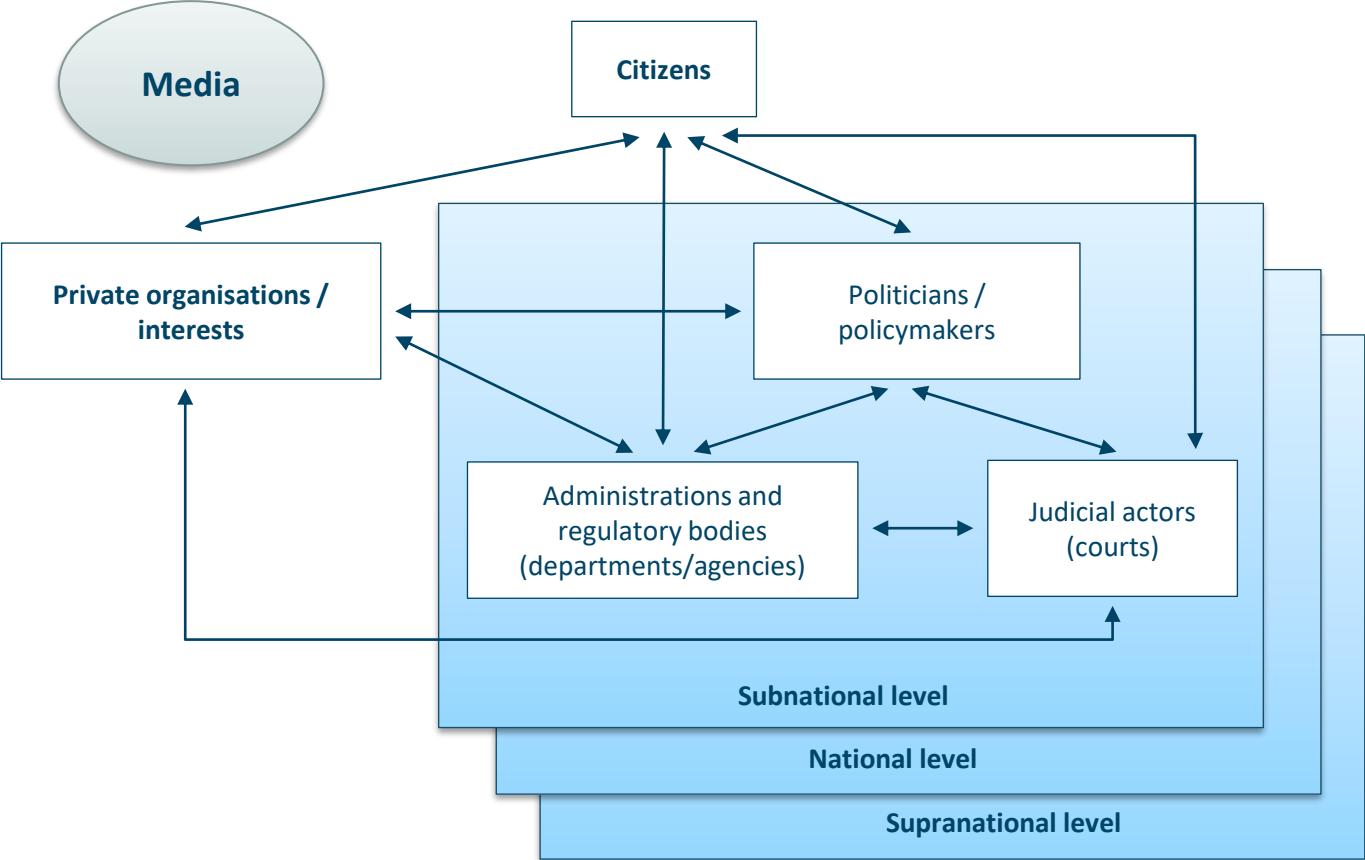
…but things are a bit more complicated

1) Multi-actor
   - Trust of citizens in MLG systems depends on trust relations between actors in MLG systems
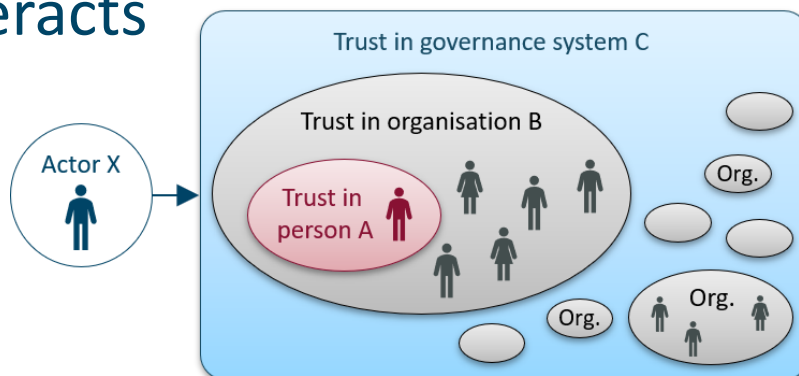
2) Trust matters, but also distrust
   - Functional patterns of trust/distrust

3) Dynamics and evolutions
   - Processes of trust building/depletion/restoration

4) Trust in persons, organizations and governance systems interacts

Focus

Multi-level governance

- In a variety of settings
- E.g., regulation, cooperation, decision-making, democratic processes, communication, networks, government-citizens interactions, …

Interactions / relations between actors

- Trust of citizens in the multi-level governance (MLG) system
- Trust between political, administrative, regulatory and judicial actors and involved societal actors at different levels within the MLG system

Trust / distrust

- And related concepts
- E.g., legitimacy, support, legal certainty, reputation, transparency, accountability, democratic quality, …
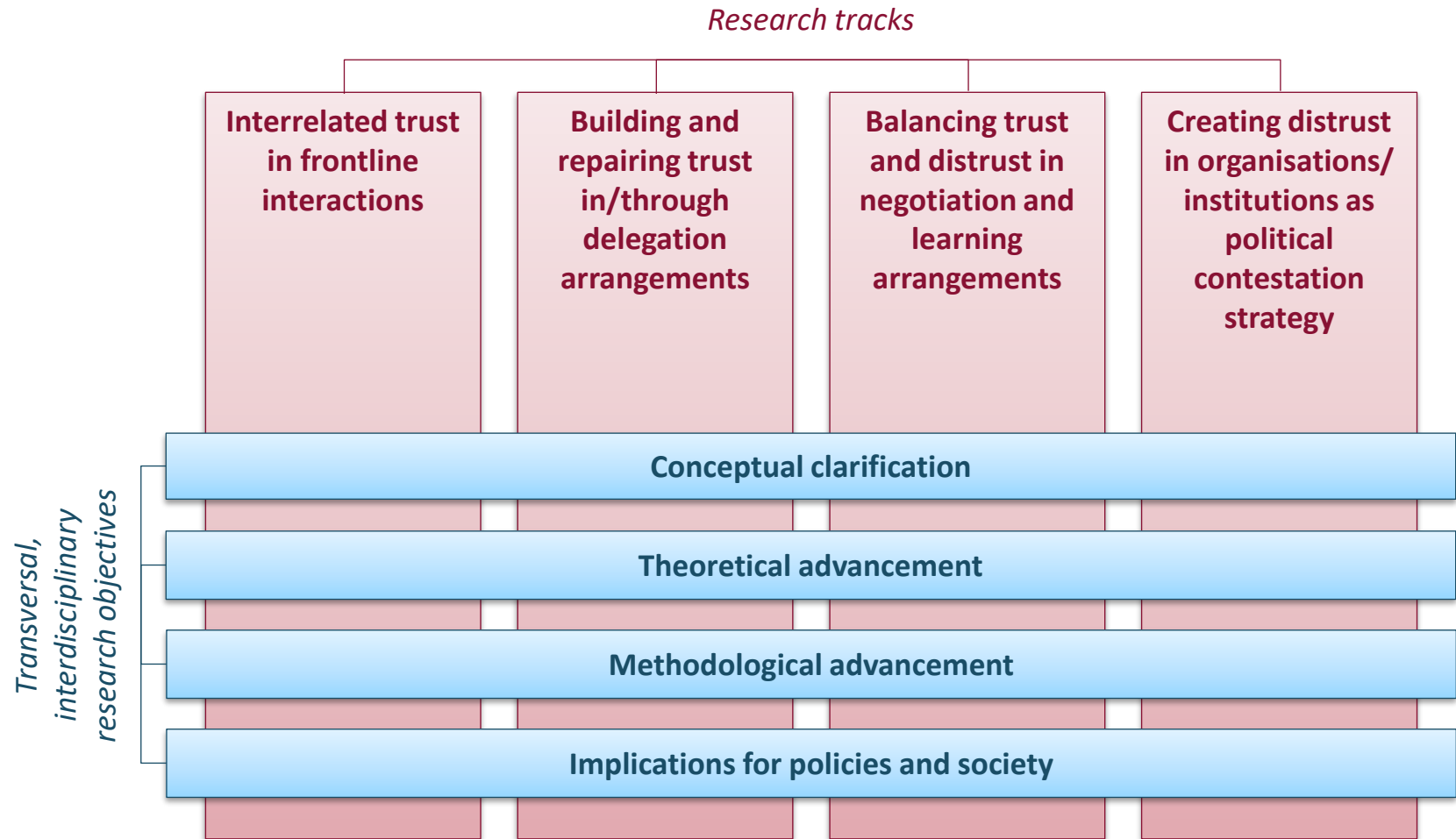
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MISSION

➢ GOVTRUST aims to provide a **substantial contribution** to our knowledge on the dynamics, causes and effects of trust and distrust in complex governance systems

➢ Conduct frontline interdisciplinary research with **innovative methods**

➢ Integrating high-level scientific expertise across **three faculties** and from **five disciplines:** political science, public administration, law, communication sciences and behavioural economics

GOAL

➢ Overarching research question: **What are the dynamics, causes and effects of trust and distrust in multi-level governance, more precisely between actors involved in designing and implementing regulations?**

➢ GOVTRUST seeks to have substantial **scientific and societal impact**, and aims to create a thriving research community with a strong multiplier effect

Research programme

Research tracks

Interrelated trust in frontline interactions

Building and repairing trust in/through delegation arrangements

Balancing trust and distrust in negotiation and learning arrangements

Creating distrust in organisations/ institutions as political contestation strategy

Transversal, interdisciplinary research objectives

Conceptual clarification

Theoretical advancement

Methodological advancement

Implications for policies and society

Consortium

- Coordination
  - Koen Verhoest & Esther Van Zimmeren
  - Research manager: Sophie Op de Beeck
- Promotors
  - Koen Verhoest – Politics & Public Governance (PPG), F. Social Sciences
  - Patricia Popelier – Government & Law (G&L), F. Law
  - Peter Bursens – Politics & Public Governance (PPG), F. Social Sciences
  - Michel Walrave – Media, ICT and interpersonal relations in Organisations and Society (MIOS), F. Social Sciences
  - Carolyn Declerck – Antwerp Center for Evolutionary Demography (ACED), F. Business and Economics
- Academic core group
- International scientific advisory board

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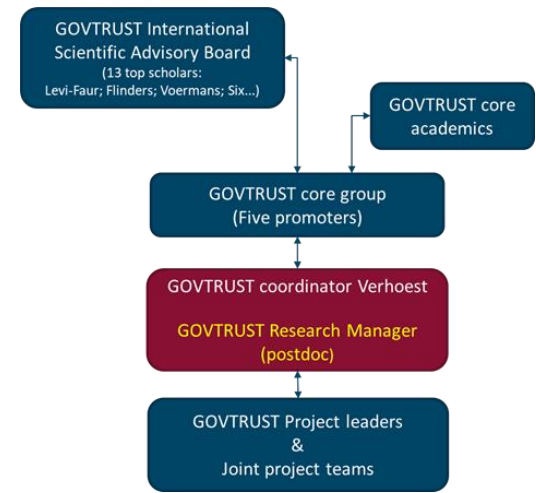
GOVTRUST 2020 by numbers

15
Projects submitted

11
Led by GOVTRUST

Funding sources

- FWO / BOF
- H2020
- MSCA-IF
- Jean Monnet CoE
- BELSPO BRAIN 2.0
- Flemish government

External partners from…

KU Leuven, UGent, UHasselt, Université Saint-Louis, Université de Liège, VU Amsterdam, Speyer, TiGRE Consortium, …

3 ongoing projects

2 granted   3 not granted

10 in evaluation

PUBLICATIONS

17

6 A1 journal articles
1 book chapter
4 reports/research notes
4 conference papers - in review

MEDIA OUTREACH

20

12 mentions in newspaper articles
2 opinion pieces
3 blog posts

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

15

3 seminars
4 internal meetings
4 webinars

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Ongoing projects – TiGRE

- ## Trust in Governance and Regulation in Europe (TiGRE)

  - H2020 Societal Challenge | 2020-2023 | 10 partners, coordinator: Université de Lausanne

  - Insights into the conditions under which regulatory regimes are trusted by analysing (drivers and effects of) trust dynamics between the involved actors

  - Focus on financial regulation, food safety, communication and data protection
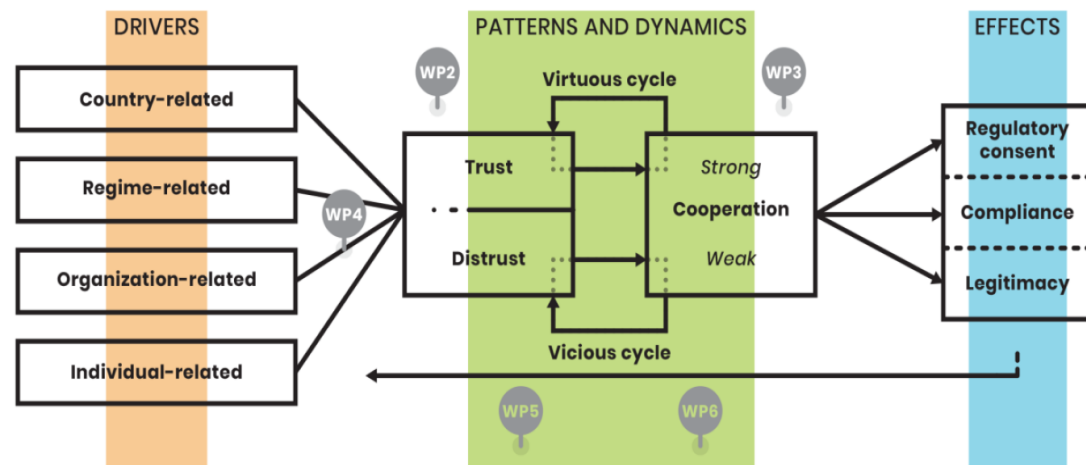

Figure 1.3-2: The TiGRE conceptual-analytical scheme.

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Ongoing projects – DIGI4FED

- Digital (R)evolution in Belgian Federal Government: An Open Governance Ecosystem for Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Blockchain
  - BELSPO BRAIN 2.0 | 2020-2022 | 4 partners, coordinator: KU Leuven
  - Insights into the use of (big) data to enable better public services through new technologies such as AI and Blockchain
  - WP on 'Trust in government decision-making based on artificial intelligence and big data' by citizens and partners
  - Focus on taxes and social security

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Ongoing projects – Trust & COVID-19

- Trust, legitimacy and intended compliance with COVID-19 exit strategy measures
  - BOF-UA | 2020-2021
  - Insights into the conditions under which COVID-19 exit measures are socially legitimate, legally sound, and stimulate citizen compliance
  - Evidence on the balance between public health and other values such as socio-economic needs
  - Strategy: experimental approach + legal analysis

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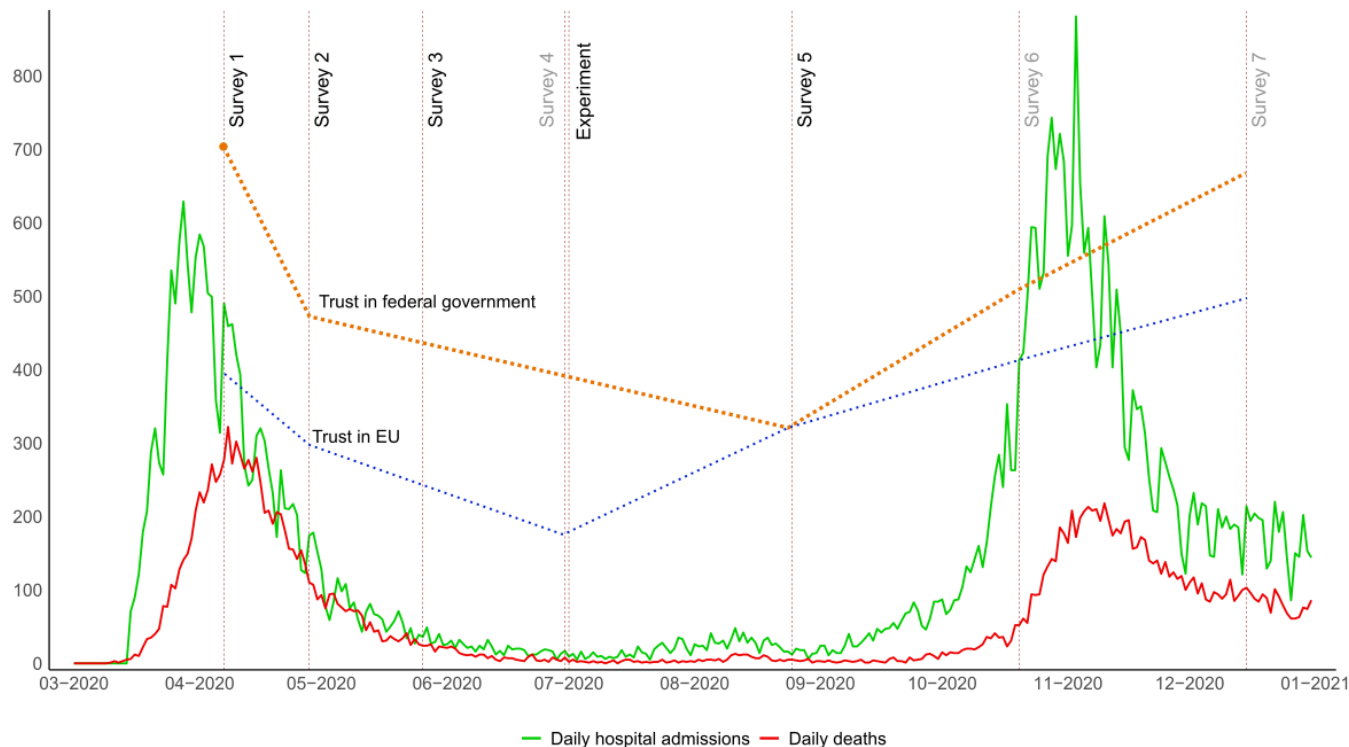Centre of Excellence

Trust & COVID-19 research

- **Corona Study**
  - (two-)weekly survey
  - Conducted by University of Antwerp
  - Impact of coronacrisis in Belgium

- **Experiment BOF project**
  - First survey experiment in June-July 2020 on support for exit measures

More information

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- Website and quarterly newsletter
  - www.uantwerpen.be/govtrust
- LinkedIn
  - https://www.linkedin.com/company/govtrust
- Contact
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