

# Conditions for critical trust

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**08.11.2022**



# Trust

- “A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (Rousseau et al., 1998)
- Trust presupposes a situation of risk (Luhmann, 2000) and involves a choice to make oneself vulnerable to another entity (Earle, Siegrist & Gutscher, 2012)
- The willingness to be vulnerable in a relationship (Mayer & Schorrmann, 1995)
- A person’s belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectations of positive behaviour (OECD, 2017)
- The relation between the self and an external actor. The ‘expectation of good will in others’ (Glanville & Paxton, 2007)



Risk

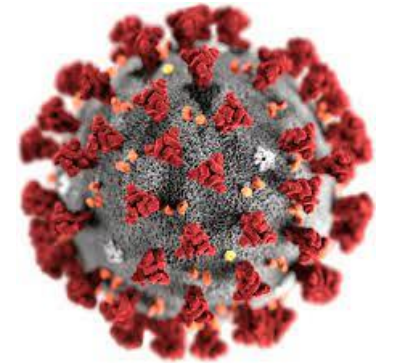
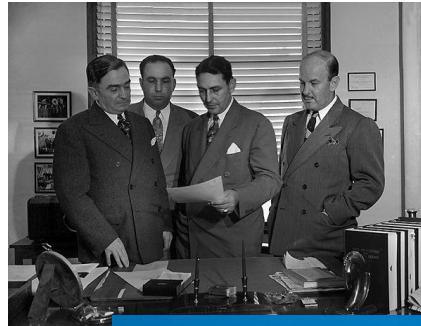
Vulnerable

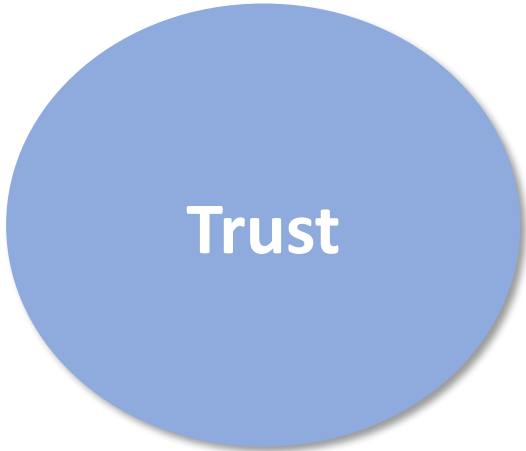
Expectation

# Someone trusts someone in relation to something



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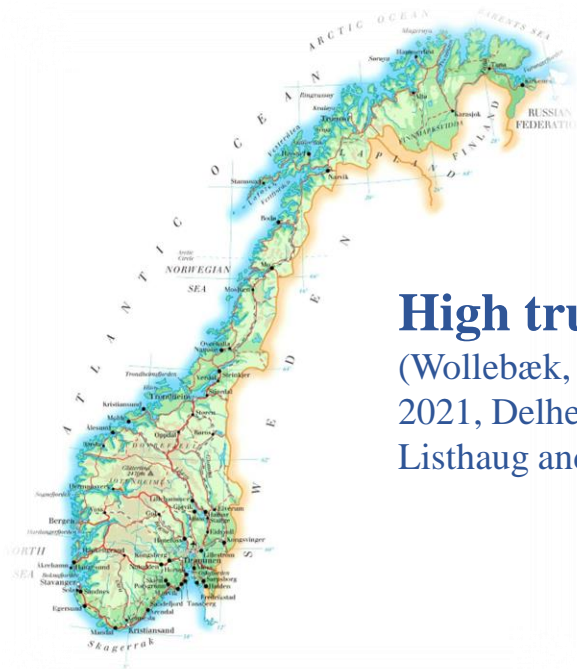


Acceptance of and compliance with authority advice or rules, policies

Effective functioning of democratic and societal processes

Lower risk perception

Increased responsiveness in crisis situations

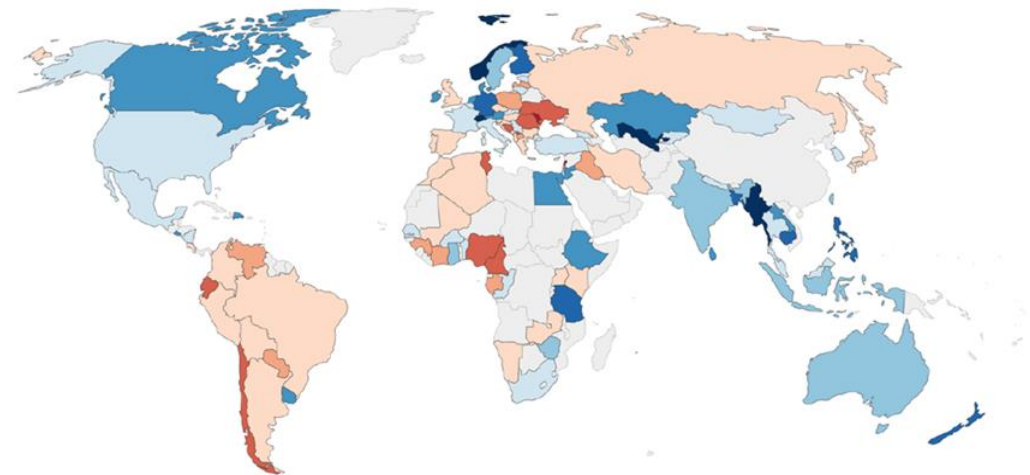


### High trust society

(Wollebæk, 2013, OECD, 2021, 2022, Hedenigg, 2021, Delhey & Newton, 2005, Kleven, 2016, Listhaug and Aardal, 2011)

### Share of people who trust their national government, 2020

The share of respondents who answered "a lot" or "some" to the question: "How much do you trust your national government?"



Trust in governments - important determinant of citizens' compliance with public health policies, especially in times of crisis (e.g.; OECD, 2021; Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020, Balog-Way and McComas, 2020; Slovic, 1999)

«Trust. It is about trust. What now is happening- with the support of the opposition – is only possible because so many of us trust that the authorities want what is best for us»

«We have trust in each other. A trust that is worth a lot more than any oilfond»

Erna Solberg, Norwegian Prime Minister Oct 2013 - Oct 2021



«It is this trust that will carry us through this crisis. Without the high trust between the citizens and the authorities, we could never have managed to get the population to voluntarily contribute to fight the Corona-virus»

“Maybe our biggest strength in Germany is the rational decision-making at the highest level of government combined with the trust the government enjoys in the population”

Prof. Hans-Georg, head of virology at University Hospital Heidelberg (Bargain and Aminjonov, 2020)



«Public trust has been one of the most important tools throughout the pandemic ... we need to keep working for this trust day by day »

Kjerkol, Minister of Health and Care Services, Oct 2021-



### Kommisjonens hovedbudskap (NOU 2021: 6 kapittel 2.2)

**1. Myndighetenes håndtering av pandemien har samlet sett vært god.**  
I en krevende situasjon for landet har myndighetene omstilt seg raskt og tatt beslutninger som har vært avgjørende for hvordan krisen har utviklet seg. Etter et år med pandemi er Norge blant de landene i Europa som har lavest dødelighet og som er minst rammet økonomisk. Myndighetene kunne ikke ha lyktes hvis ikke befolkningen hadde sluttet opp om smitteverntiltakene. I Norge har folk **tillit** til hverandre og til myndighetene. Det er én av faktorene som gjorde det norske samfunnet godt rustet til å møte krisen. (NOU, 2021)

Trust in public institutions is a cornerstone of the Norwegian administrative and political model. It has also been a crucial element in Norway's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Preserving and strengthening this "trust capital" will be essential for Norway in addressing future trade-offs and ch...

[More](#)

English

(OECD, 2022)



# Dominating ideas within research and practice

**Trust - ideal 'state of affairs'**

**The more/higher, the better**

- **Distrust - negative, to be prevented, reduced**



# Dominating ideas within research and practice



**Decline in public trust  
Post-trust society**

- **must build or rebuild trust**

**Trust - fragile, unstable**



*(e.g. Albach, et al., 2015, Rosati and Saba, 2004, Löfstedt, 2005; 2010, Renn, 2022 Gaskell et al., 2003, Hunt and Frewer, 2001, Twenge et al., 2014*


*OECD, 2022, Slovic, 1993; 1999; 2010, Savadori et al., 2013)*



Data :

## Norwegian public trust in institutions

- Trust during COVID (week 6, 2020 – 11, 2022)  
N = 520-1828, The Norwegian Directorate of health
- Trustbarometer - (2018-2022)  
N = 1000, Responsanalyse
- OECD Trust Survey (2006-2021),  
N = 1000, Gallup World Poll data



Dominating ideas  
within research and practice

# 1. Data from weekly national surveys conducted by Mindshare on behalf of the Norwegian Directorate of health

*(FHI, 2022)*

- Week 6, 2020 - week 12, 2022\*

*\*no surveys conducted in weeks 25, 26, 28, 30, 32 and 35 in 2020, weeks 29, 30 and 42 in 2021*

*“To what extent do you have trust in the authority’s management of the coronavirus?” (Week 6, 2020 – week 11, 2022)*

- **Trust - generally high**

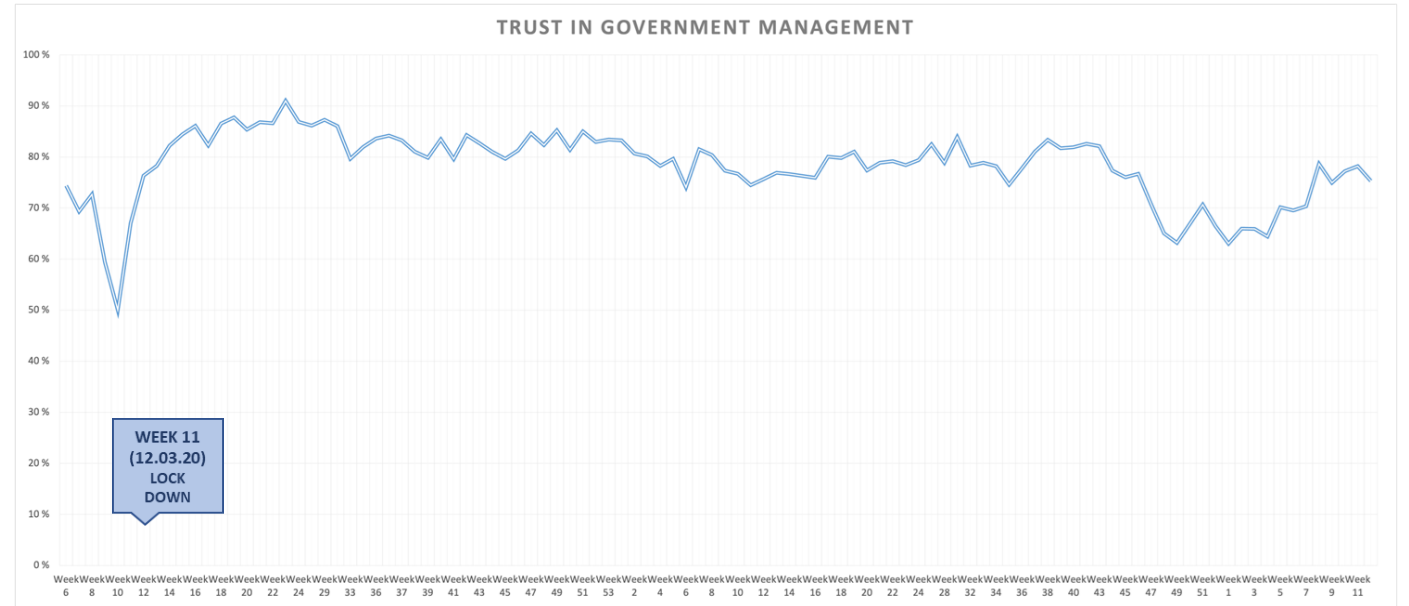
- **Fluctuates**

*Week 6-10/11 falls markedly (lowest in week 10 2020 = 50%)*

*Significantly increases again (highest in week 23 2020 =91 %)*

*Dropping around the turning of year 2021/22 (63%)*

*Gradually increases again (week 12 2022 = 75 %)*

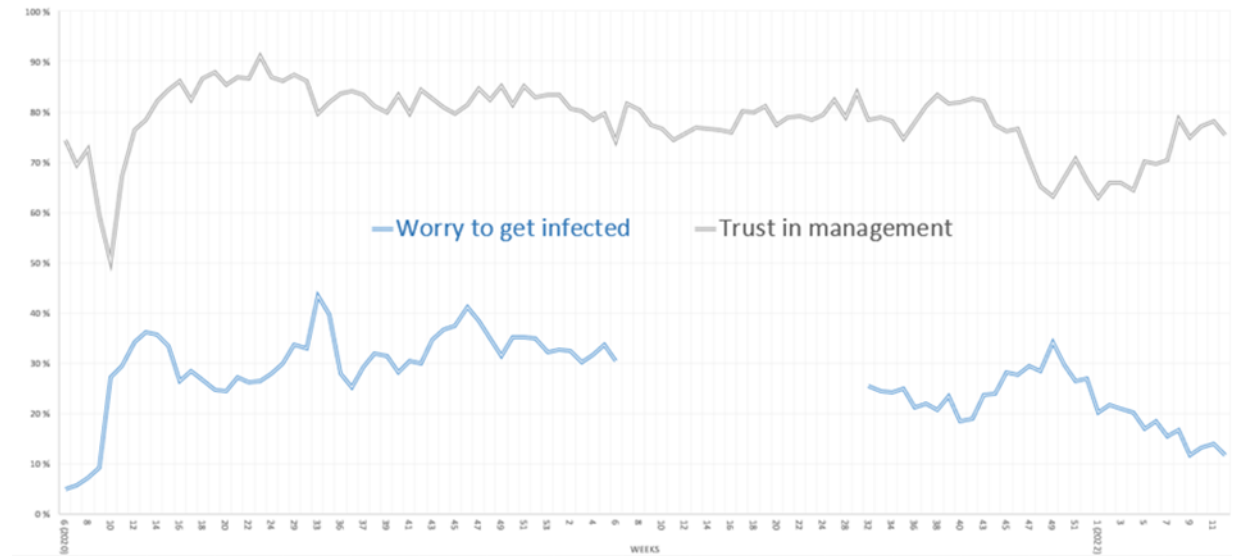


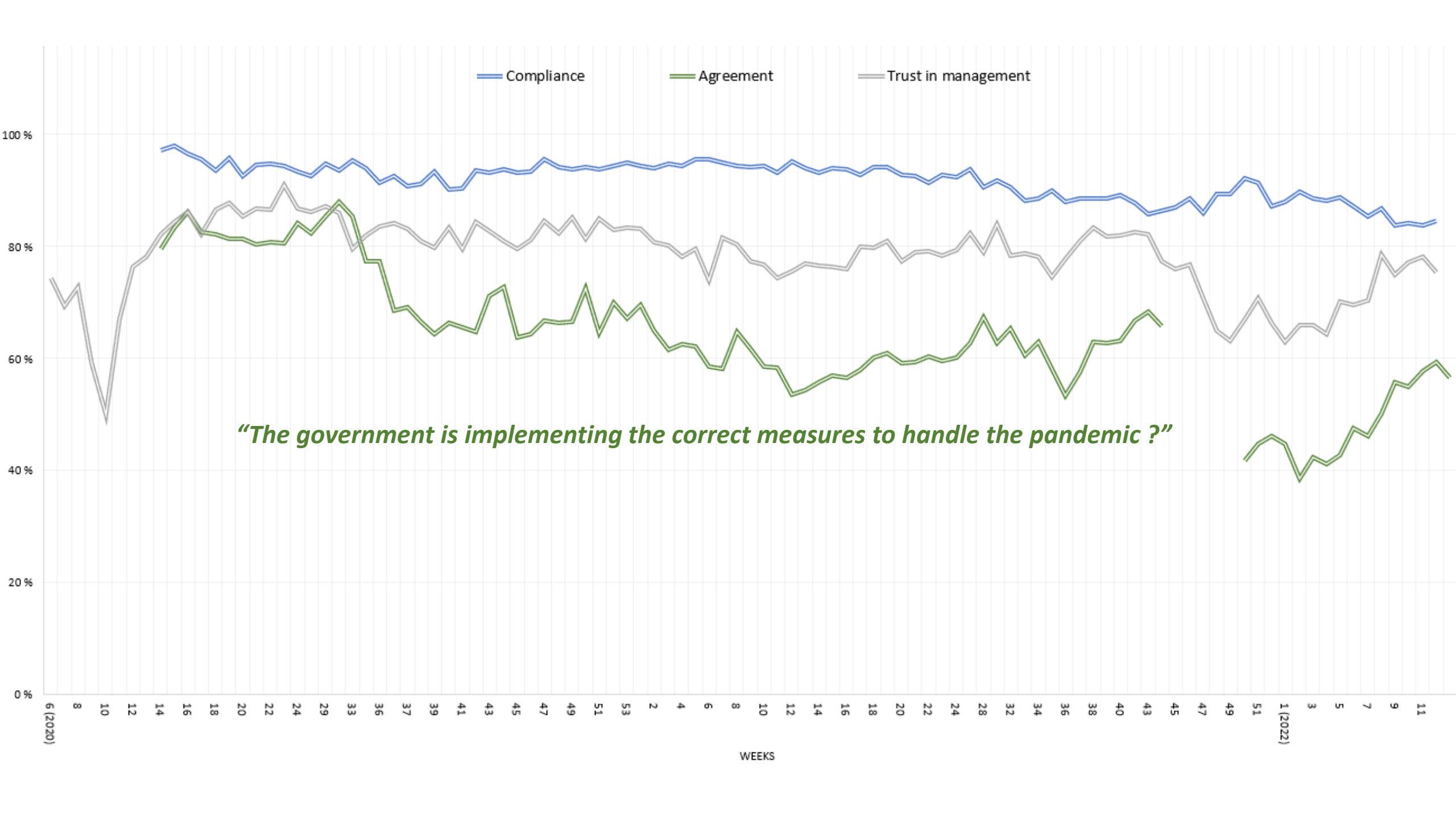
- **Drops in trust often coincide with increase in worry**

*Example : Week 6-10 2020: Worry: 5-27 %*

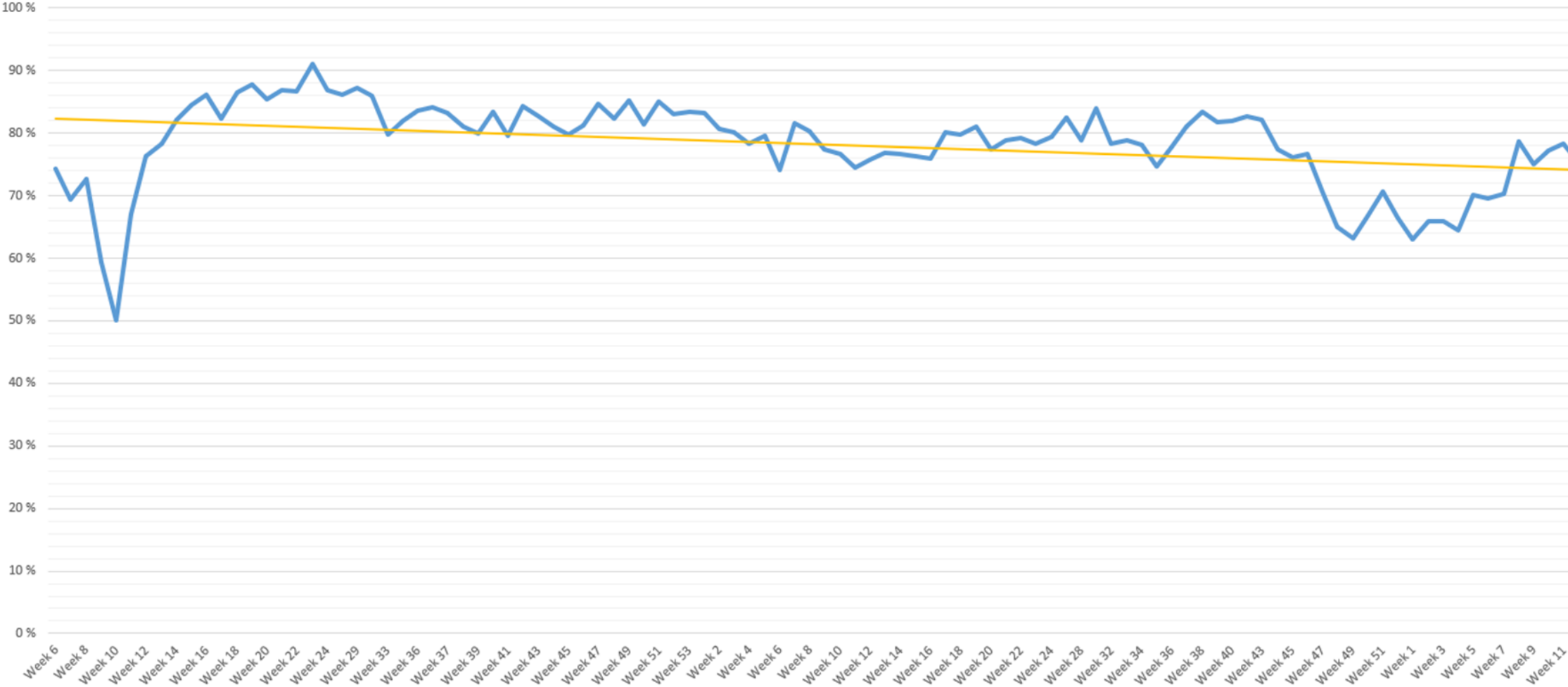
*Trust: 74-50%*

- **Short term**

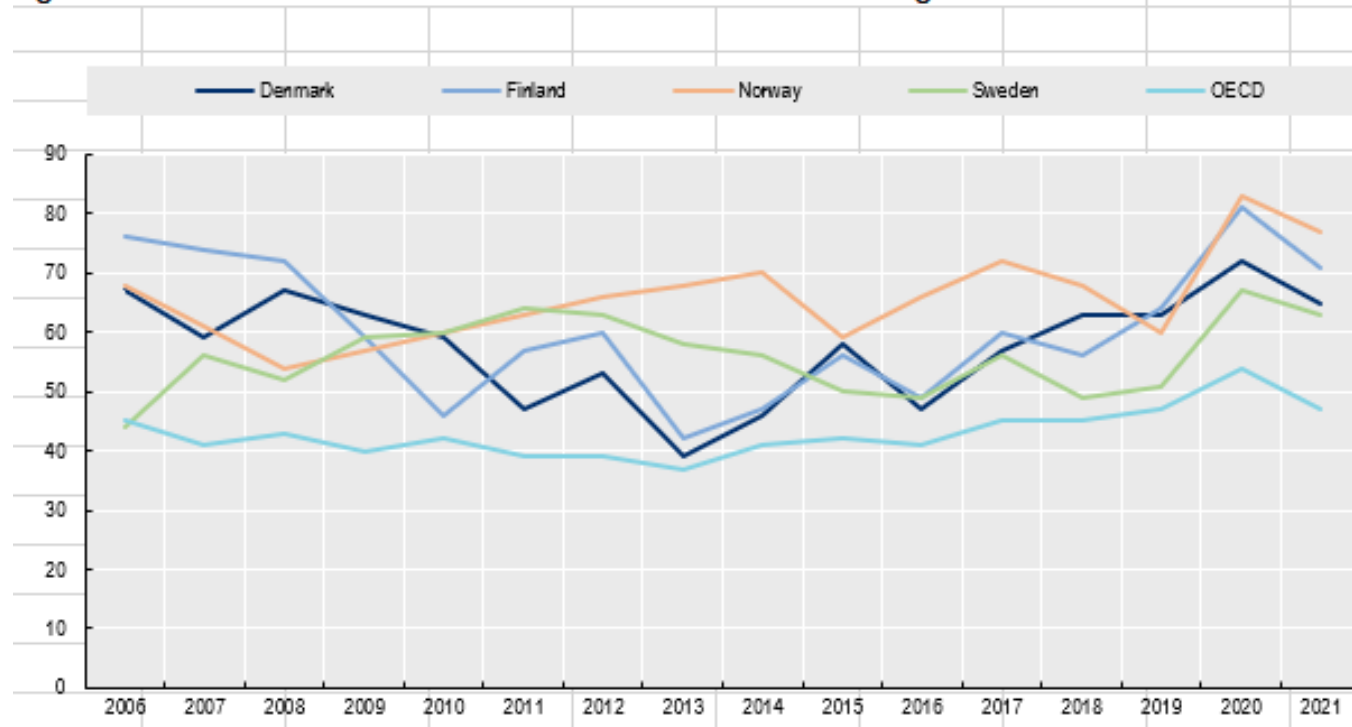




# Trust in government management



**Figure 1.1. Trust in Government in Scandinavia and the OECD in general**

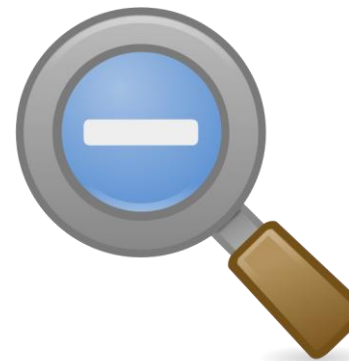


Percentage of citizens having trust in their national government 2006-2021 (OECD, 2022)

**2006-2021: Increase in trust 68 -77%. Strengthening during COVID-pandemic (OECD, 2022)**

**Levels of trust increased the two years (2020, 2021) of the pandemic (Trustbarometer, Olaussen and Kræmmer, 2022)**

**2020-data collected after lock-down and measures implemented**



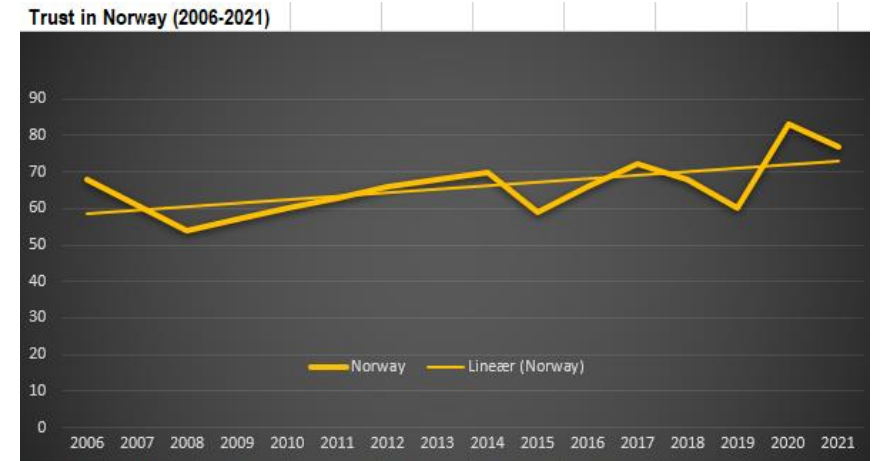
	Prosentandel 6-10 2018	Prosentandel 6-10 2019	Prosentandel 6-10 2020	Prosentandel 6-10 2021	Prosentandel 6-10 2022
Stortinget	70 %	67 %	77 %	78 %	70 %
Regjeringen	60 %	50 %	69 %	68 %	61 %
Kommunestyret i egen kommune	58 %	60 %	63 %	66 %	61 %
Norske medier som aviser, radio, tv	58 %	55 %	63 %	60 %	64 %
Sosiale medier som facebook, twitter, instagram	15 %	15 %	14 %	13 %	13 %
De politiske partiene i Norge	46 %	44 %	54 %	52 %	46 %
Norske arbeidstakerorganisasjoner som LO, YS, Unio osv	69 %	71 %	75 %	75 %	72 %
Norske arbeidsgiverorganisasjoner som NHO, Virke osv	61 %	65 %	66 %	64 %	66 %
Norske ideelle organisasjoner, som Røde Kors, Kreftforeningen osv	87 %	83 %	84 %	86 %	88 %
Antall spurte	1001	1000	1000	1000	1000

**Trustbarometer: Public trust in Norwegian institutions 2018-2022 (Olaussen and Kræmmer, 2022)**

# The 'rally-round-the-flag' effect

When societies are hit by a **crisis**, people tend to become more **favourable toward political leaders and trust in government often increases** irrespective of the wisdom of the policies it pursues. However, this increase in peoples' support for and trust in governments **is rarely long-term**

(Erhardt et al., 2021; Kritzinger et. al, 2021; Johansson, Hopmann & Shehata, 2021, Woods 2011; Hetherington & Nelson 2003; Bargain & Aminjonov 2020; OECD ; 2021, 2022)



Percentage of Norwegian citizens having trust in their national government

Trendline based on OECD (2022)



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	Prosentandel 6-10 2018	Prosentandel 6-10 2019	Prosentandel 6-10 2020	Prosentandel 6-10 2021	Prosentandel 6-10 2022
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2022: Norwegian trust levels –  
now back to ‘normal’,  
where we set out before the  
pandemic

*(Olaussen and Kræmmer, 2022)*

High trust

Trustbarometer: Public trust in Norwegian institutions 2018-2022



# Different data tells different stories

- **Distrust / declining trust/ Post trust society**
  - **Fragile, unstable**

vs.

**High, fluctuating, short-term changes,  
Elastic, relatively strong/ stable,  
increasing over time**

# Data supports the following statements :

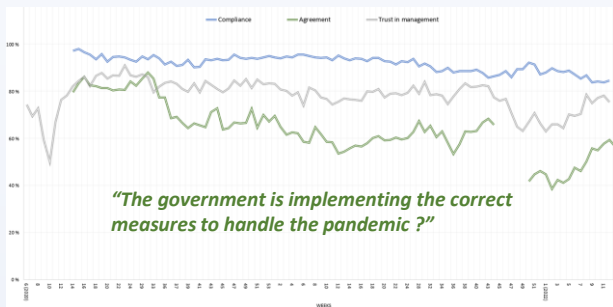
Claims of public distrust held by policy makers and academic scholars were based on **insufficient opinion poll data and results** (Van de Walle et al., 2008)

“Evidence of declining trust can be complemented by an almost **equally substantial body of evidence of stable or increasing** levels of trust”, (Raaphorst and Van de Walle, 2018)

Findings from longitudinal studies showed trust to be a **more stable phenomenon across time** than previously supposed in much risk literature, (Siegrist; 2021)

We **call the notion** labeling our society as “**posttruth**” or “**posttrust**” **into question** and kindle a more **positive outlook** in future research (Bearth and Siegrist, 2022)

# High, but not blind



*In 2022, 65 % Norwegians did not believe that Norway was sufficiently prepared to handle a pandemic like corona. Numbers even lower in March 2021 (Claussen, 2022)*

## FHI-overlege: - En tabbe å stenge ned skolene

- Nedstengingen av skolene under pandemien var en tabbe, fastslår overlege ved Folkehelseinstituttet og smitteverneksperter Preben Aavitsland. Men Helsedirektoratet holder fast ved at det var et nødvendig smitteverntiltak 12. mars 2020.



Erin Ramberg  
Journalist

Lilla Selthusvik  
gjiltsosjovik  
Journalist

Publisert 7. juli kl. 10:55  
Oppdatert 7. juli kl. 13:28

KRITISK: Overlege ved Folkehelseinstituttet, Preben Aavitsland, mener det var en tabbe å stenge ned landets skoler som smitteverntiltak da koronapandemien traff 12. mars 2020.

FOTO: ASBJØRN ODD BERGE / NRK



## Covid-19 og farlige eksperter

Økonomiprofessor Karen Ulltveit-Moe hevder i VG søndag 29. mars at kampen for å bekjempe coronaviruset har en høy pris for samfunnet. Dette er feil. Det er Covid-19 og forbrukerferd under en pandemi som setter økonomien tilbake, ikke tiltakene.

Oppdatert 30. mars 2020

## Koronakommisjonens rapport om myndighetenes håndtering av koronapandemien

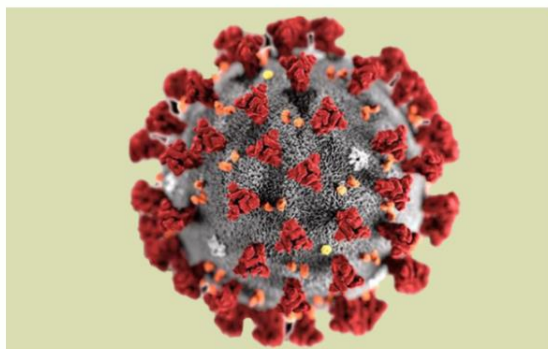


Foto: Mostphotos

Først publisert: 14.04.2021 | Sist faglig oppdatert: 14.04.2021

Koronakommisjonen la i dag frem sin evaluering av myndighetenes håndtering av koronapandemien.

## Pandemien har synliggjort forskningens usikkerhet

Under pandemien har befolkningen fått følge diskusjonene mellom forskere i media. Det har ikke minsket tilliten, ifølge TIK-forskere.



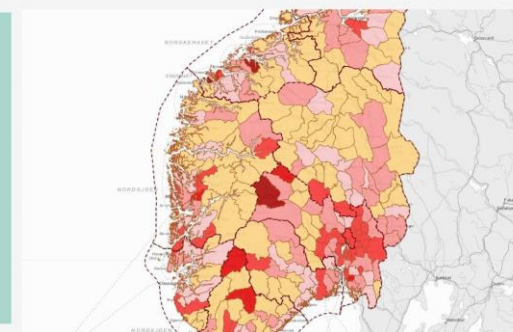
Koronaviruset

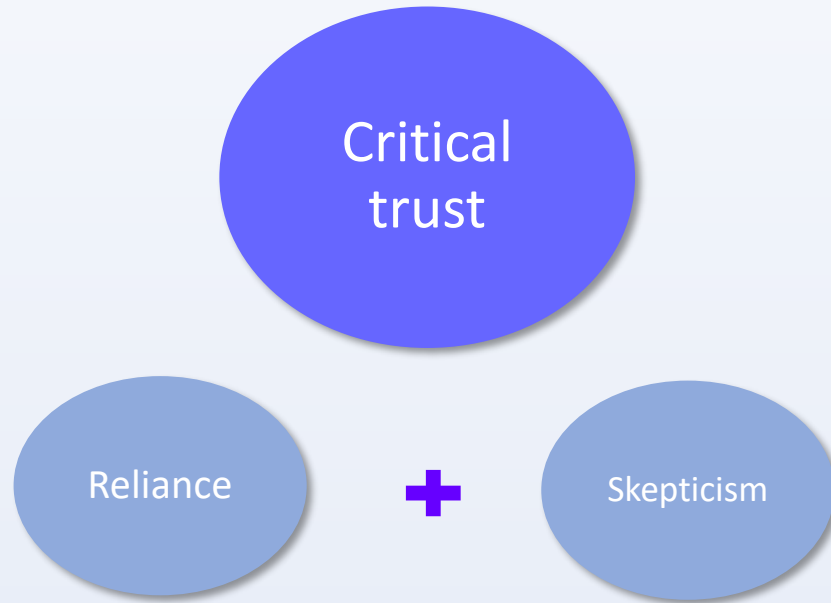
## Dobling av smittetallene: - Usikkerhet om utviklingen gjennom høsten og vinteren



DNB

Fra A til Å





<i>Level of general trust (Reliance)</i>	<i>High</i>	Acceptance /Trust	Critical trust
	<i>Low</i>	Distrust	Rejection/ cynicism
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Level of scepticism</i>			

**Typology of trust** (Pidgeon & Poortinga, 2003)

**Critical trust** - a pragmatic and practical form of reliance on a person or an institution combined with a degree of skeptical attitude towards the effectiveness, motivations and independence of this agency

Reflecting that the public can rely on institutions and at the same time possess a critical attitude towards them

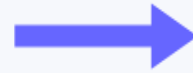
*(Pidgeon & Poortinga, 2003; Pidgeon et al., 2010; Walls et al., 2004)*



**Accounts of declining public trust or distrust  
- expressions of a critically trusting  
public?**

**Reflections of healthy skepticism or precaution,  
of an informed, knowledgeable,  
reflexive public?**

*(Fjaeran and Aven, 2021)*



**In relation to some risks - high trust may hinder action**

**Critically trusting citizens - more engaged and involved in debates and public participation initiatives**

**If involved, informed, made part of processes  
- more inclined to accept decisions/ policies**



**This requires not only focusing on public trust in institutions, but institutions also place increased trust in the public, their knowledge, capabilities of handling uncertainties and making risk-informed decisions**

**Steps taken in this direction**



*Thank you for your attention!*

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