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Trust factors in the use of electoral technologies: Inputs from Australia, The Netherlands and Poland

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H2020 - Widening Fellowship holder (2022-23) for the project

Dynamics of Trust and Distrust Creation in Internet Voting



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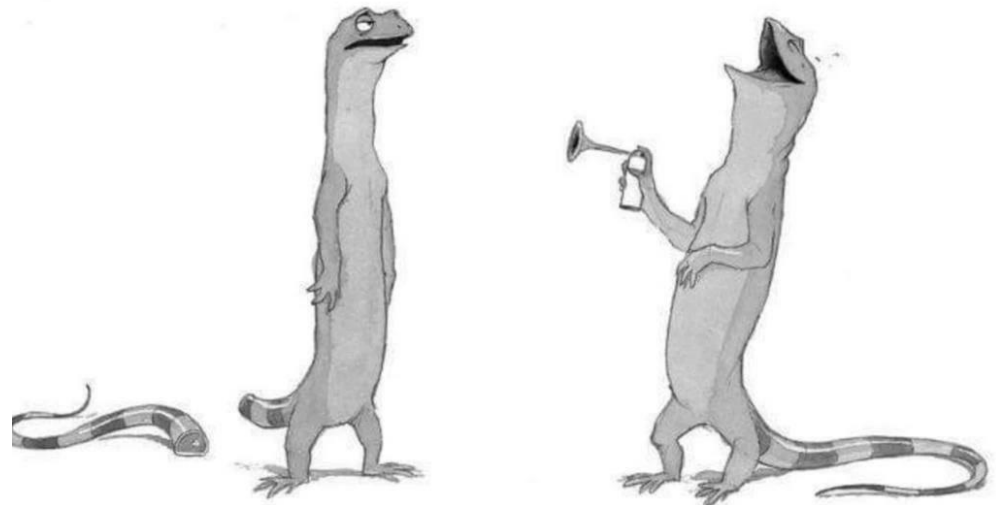


- Researching in the intersection between, Sociology, Technology and Democracy
- Marie Skłodowska-Curie researcher at Gdansk University of Technology (Poland).
- President of the TG10 [Digital Sociology](#) at ISA
- General Chair at [E-Vote-ID](#) and Program Coordinator at [Dg.O](#)
- Academic Editor at [Internet Policy Review](#)



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"You know what doesn't grow back, Susan? Trust."



The ELECTRUST Project

The internet has transformed every aspect of our daily life. While it has created new paths to government services, internet voting has not yet been fully implemented in elections for reasons related to citizens' lack of trust in internet voting technology.

The ELECTRUST project aims to study how trust and distrust are created in relation to internet voting. Specifically, how the discourses for and against shape voters' opinions around internet voting,

Interviews with experts + Qmethodology





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Trust factors in the use of electoral technologies...

Trust at the core

Complex definition  neighboring concepts

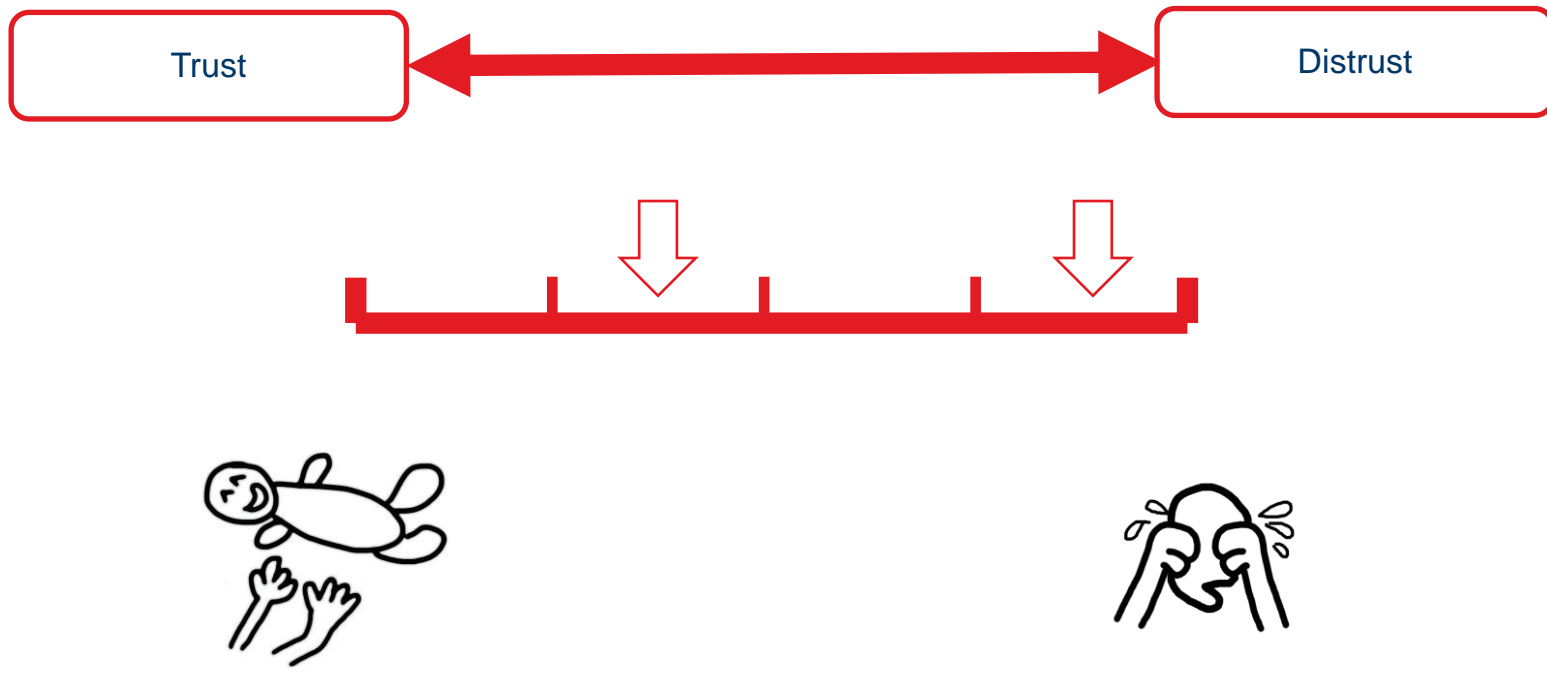
Trustworthiness vs confidence

Trust vs distrust



How did scholars approach the relation between trust and distrust?

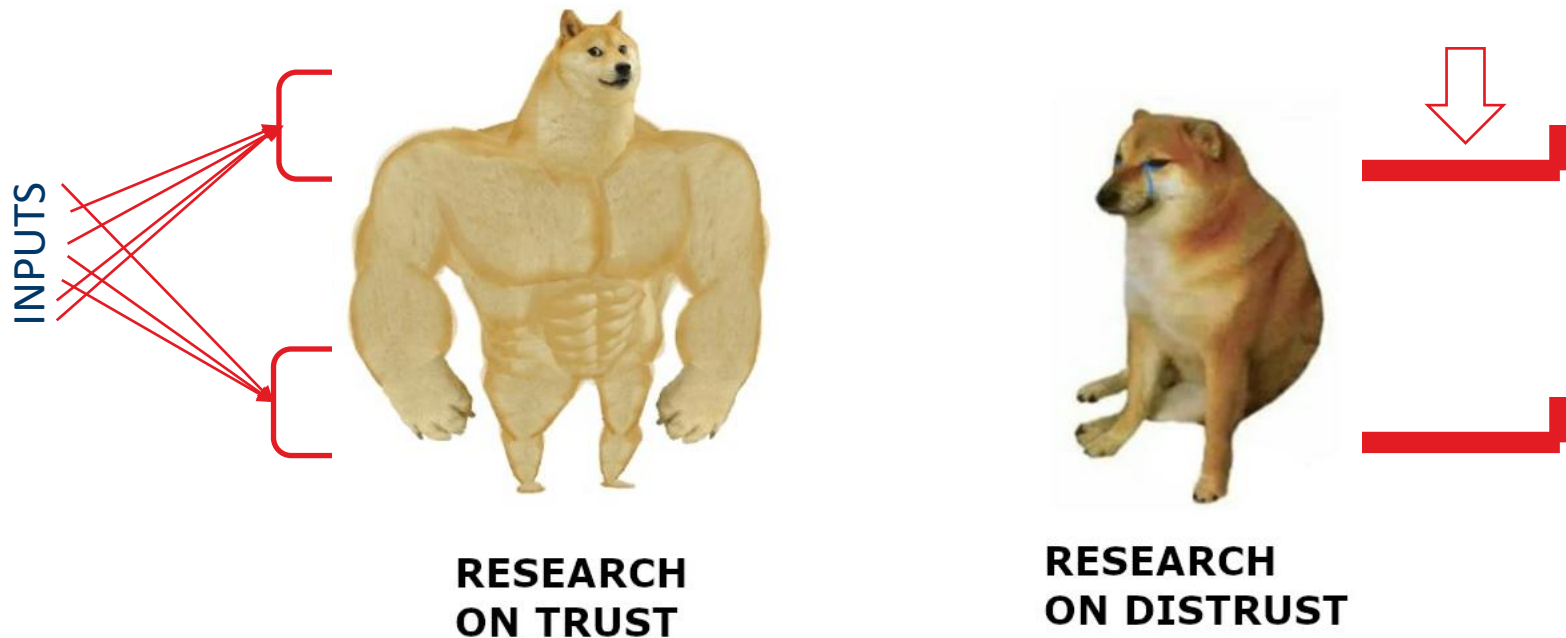
Trust and Distrust as symmetrically opposed concepts





How am I approaching this relation?

Trust and Distrust as two independent psycho-sociological constructs, which coexist and can have their own differential impacts on the adoption of technology, and whose definition is complex and multilayered





Defining trust

How has trust been defined?

- In the act of trusting, we put ourselves voluntarily in a position of vulnerability in front of others
- Taking this position entails some sort of risk

Trust as... *a psychological construct that entails the willingness to take risks in a given situation with a well-defined trustee* (Murnighan et al., 2004)

...assuming positive expectations with regard to a person's behavior within a situation that implies some degrees of risk (Marsh & Dibben, 2003).

Without trust, the capacity to enhance human cooperation reduces (Luhmann, 1979), diminishing social capital (Putnam, 2000) and slowing down economic development (Fukuyama, 1996)



Defining trust and Data-Based Technologies

How has trust been defined?

- In the act of trusting, we put ourselves voluntarily in a position of vulnerability in front of others
- Taking this position entails some sort of risk

Trust as... an antecedent or subsequent form of knowledge, a kind of bridge connecting ignorance and knowledge and having a strong relational binding and cohesive component (Simmel, 1964)

Trust lying in both inductive knowledge and faith (Möllering, 2001), being somewhere *in-between* rational and non-rational certitudes (Zinn 2008, 2016).



Defining trust

Properties of trust:

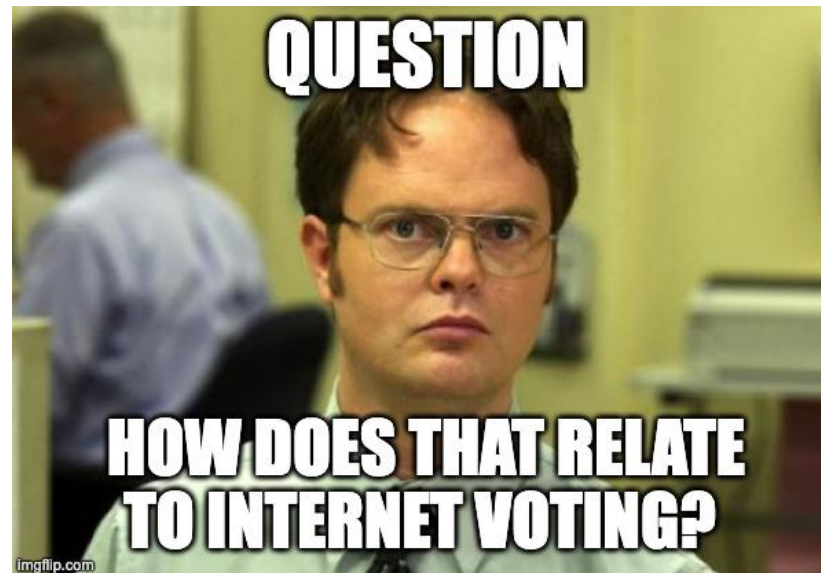
- Complexity reduction (Luhmann, 1979)
- Knowledge asymmetry (Giddens, 1991)
- Requires a certain level of institutionalized distrust (Sztompka, 2003)

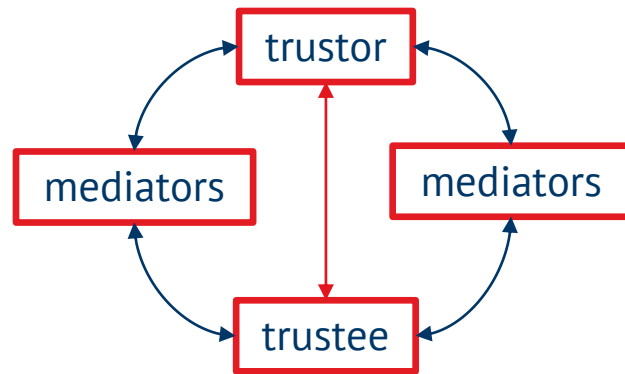
Uncertainty reduction (knowledge) makes risks identifiable



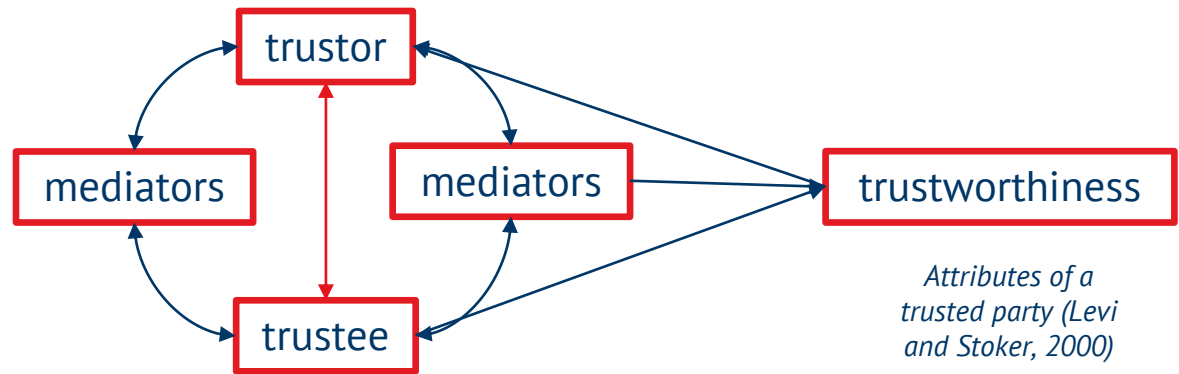
Defining trust

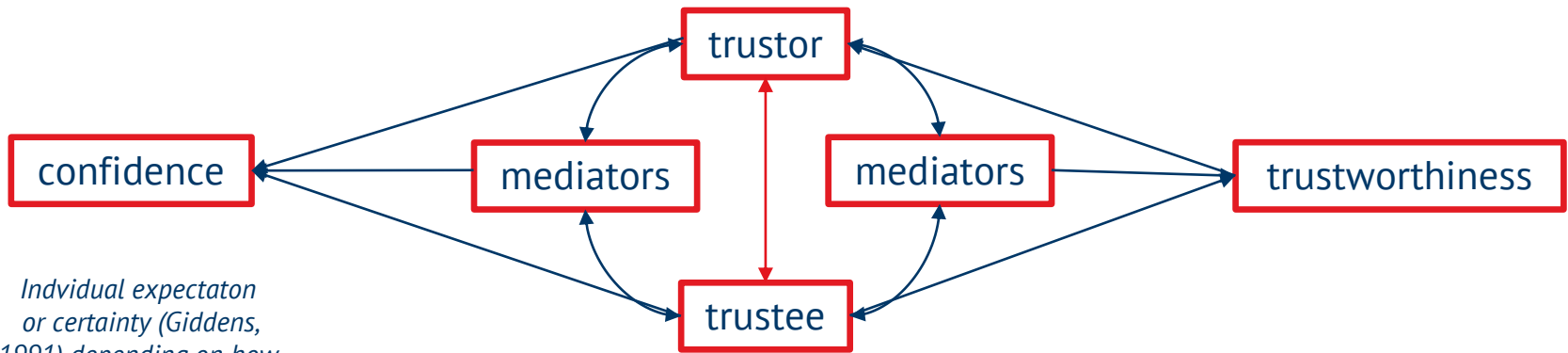
Interpersonal trust → Institutional trust → Trust in technology



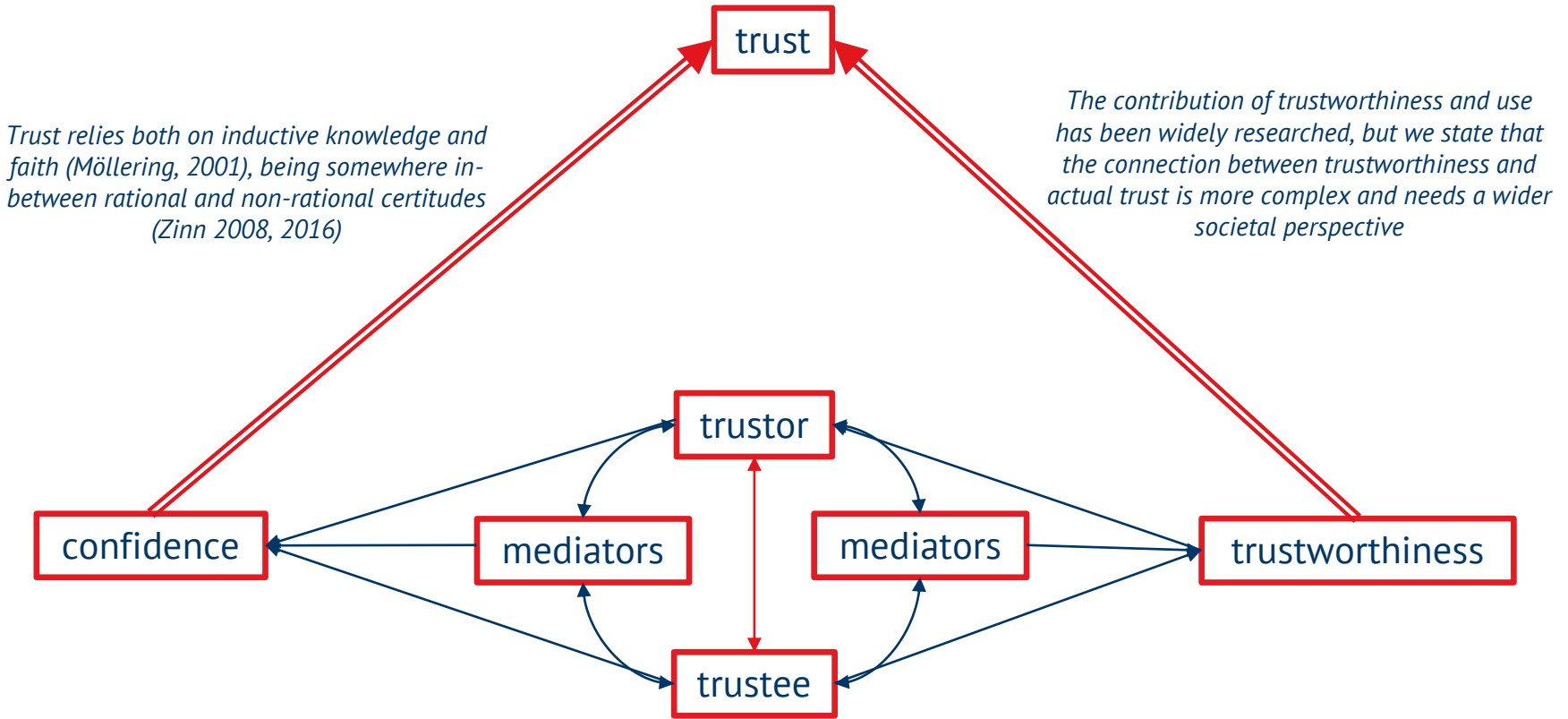


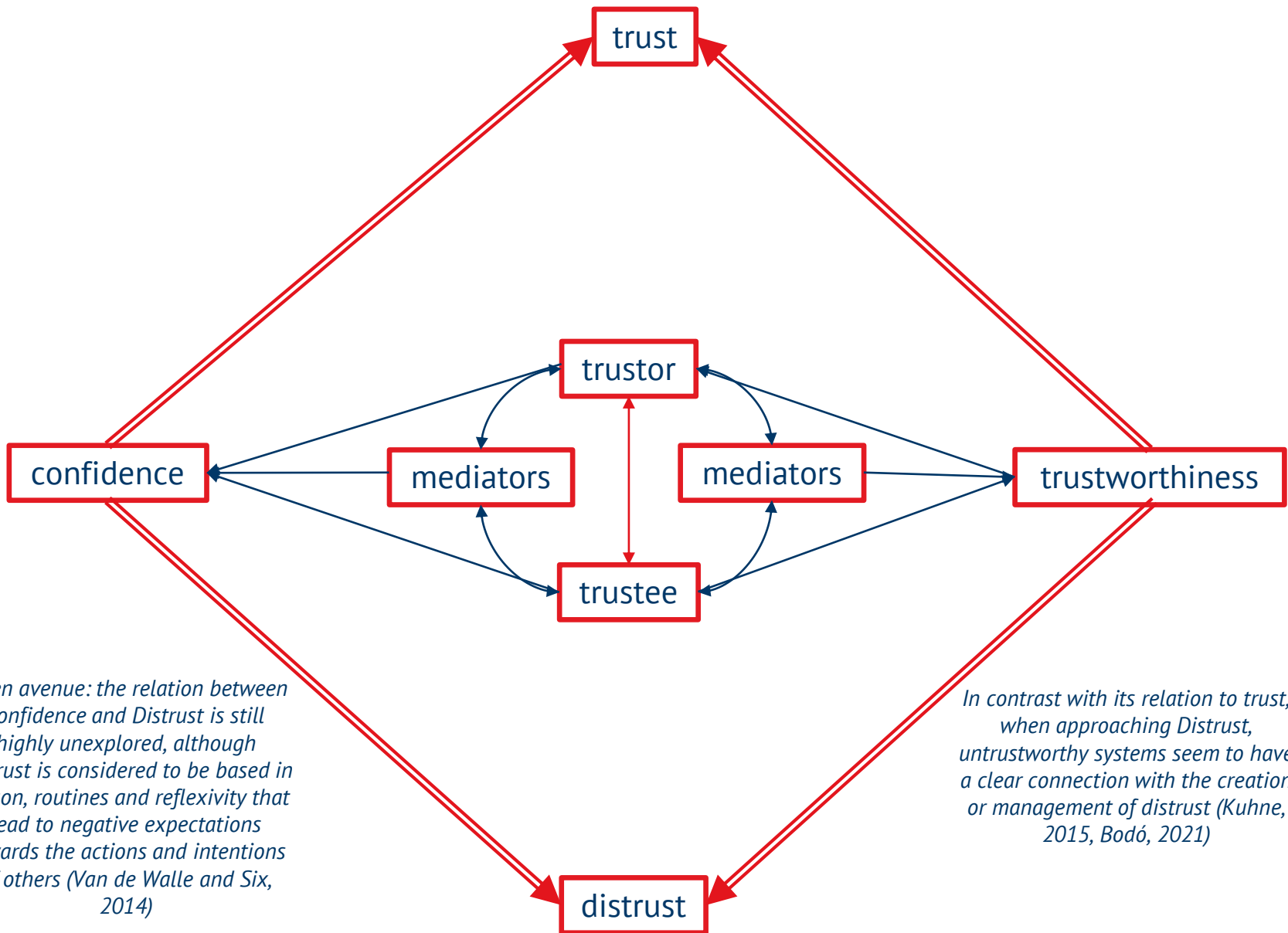
As the relation between trustor and trustee complexifies, mediators are key to understand the overcoming of knowledge asymmetry (Giddens, 1991)





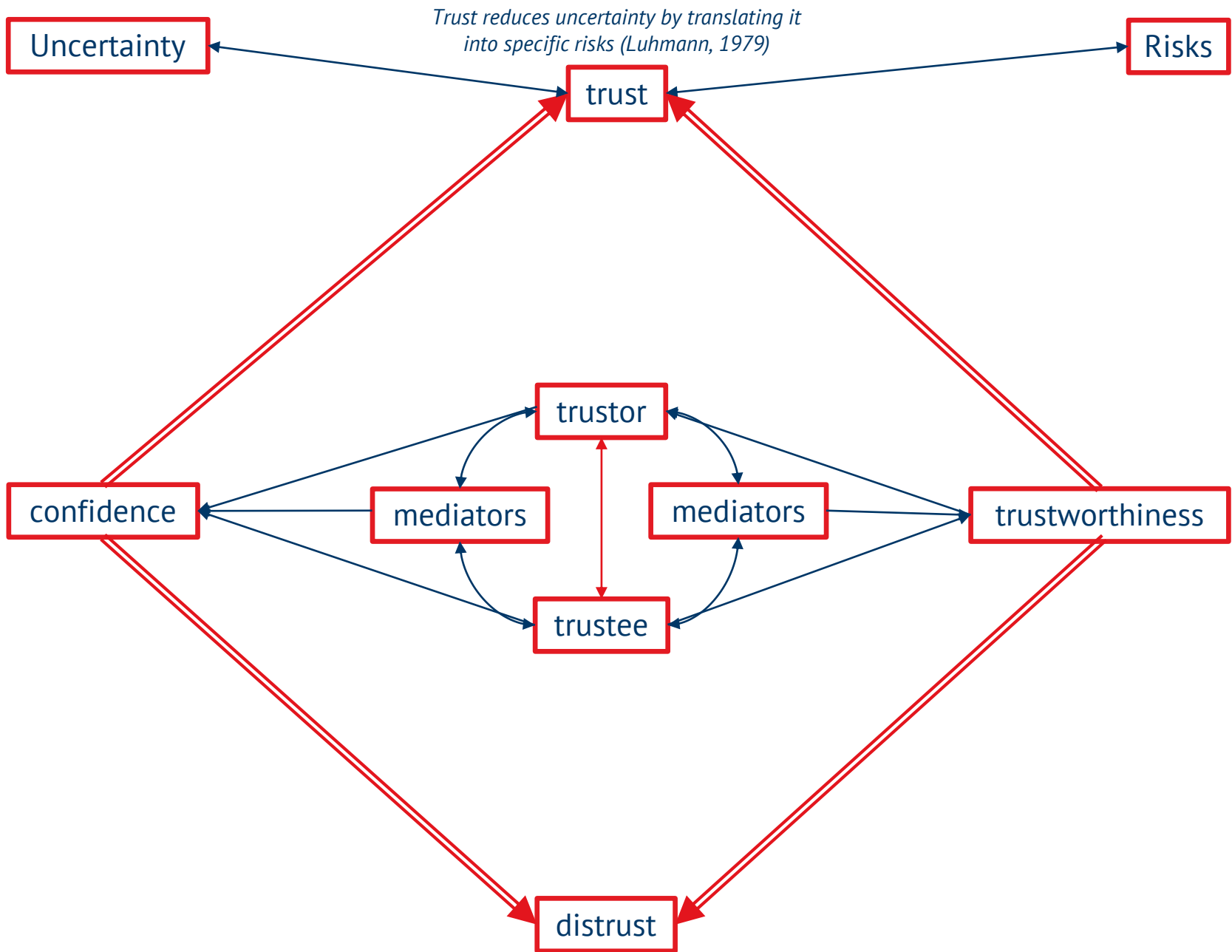
*Individual expectaton
or certainty (Giddens,
1991) depending on how
the trustor perceives the
trustee (Kiyonari et al.,
2006)*

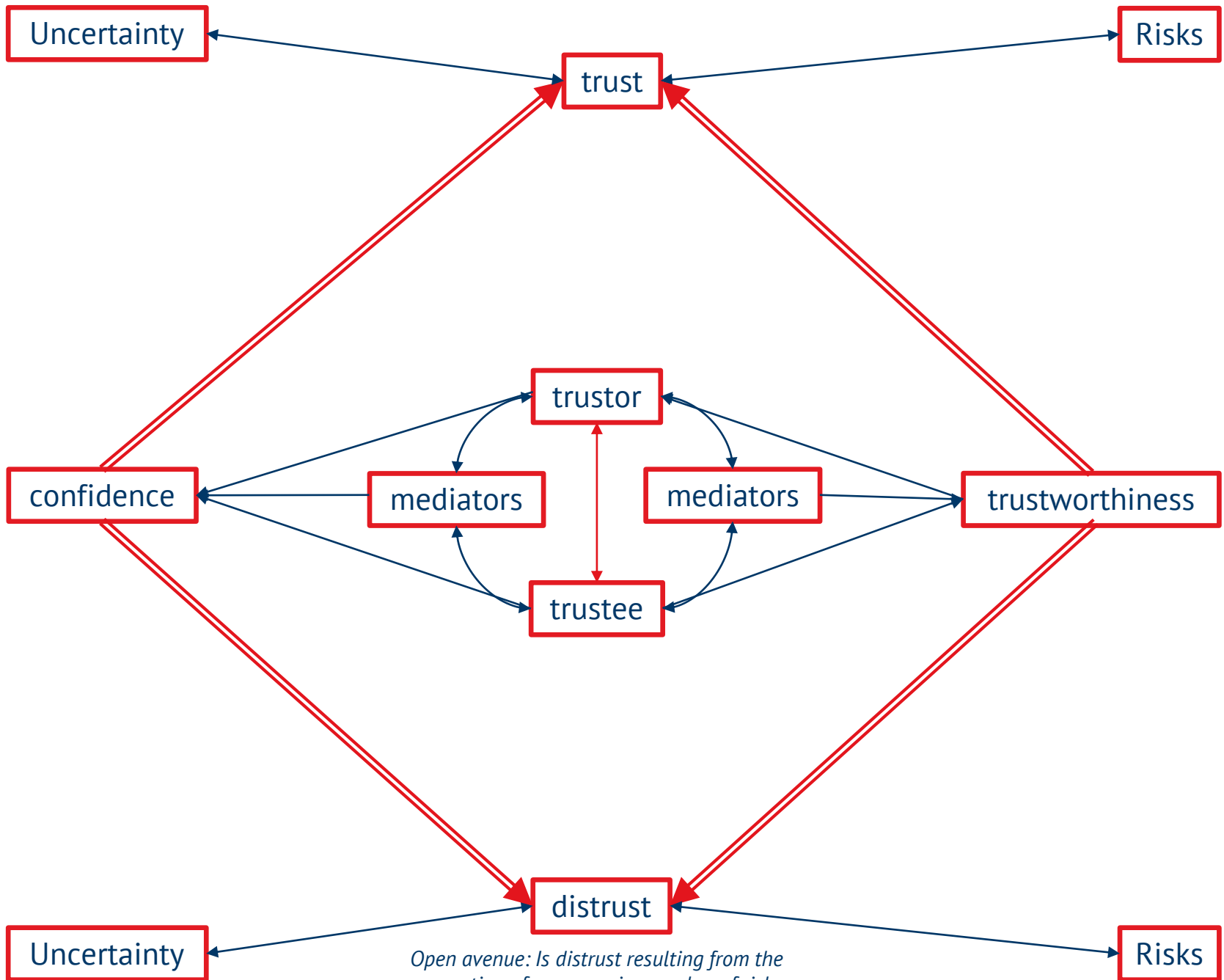




Open avenue: the relation between confidence and Distrust is still highly unexplored, although Distrust is considered to be based in reason, routines and reflexivity that lead to negative expectations towards the actions and intentions of others (Van de Walle and Six, 2014)

In contrast with its relation to trust, when approaching Distrust, untrustworthy systems seem to have a clear connection with the creation or management of distrust (Kuhne, 2015, Bodó, 2021)





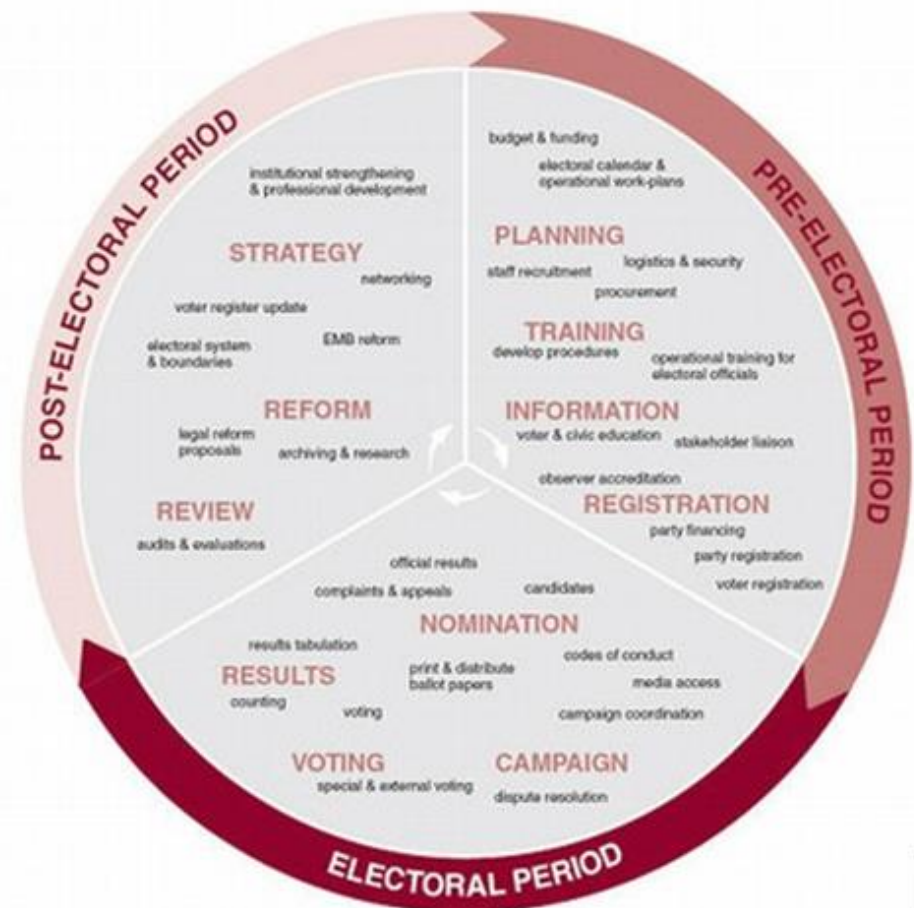
Open avenue: Is distrust resulting from the perception of an excessive number of risks and creates new forms of uncertainty?



Inputs from Poland

Poland: opening the electoral cycle

- 2014: Technology as a trigger of distrust.
- 2020: The lack of capacity of necessary stakeholders (postal service) to provide the service forced





Inputs from Australia



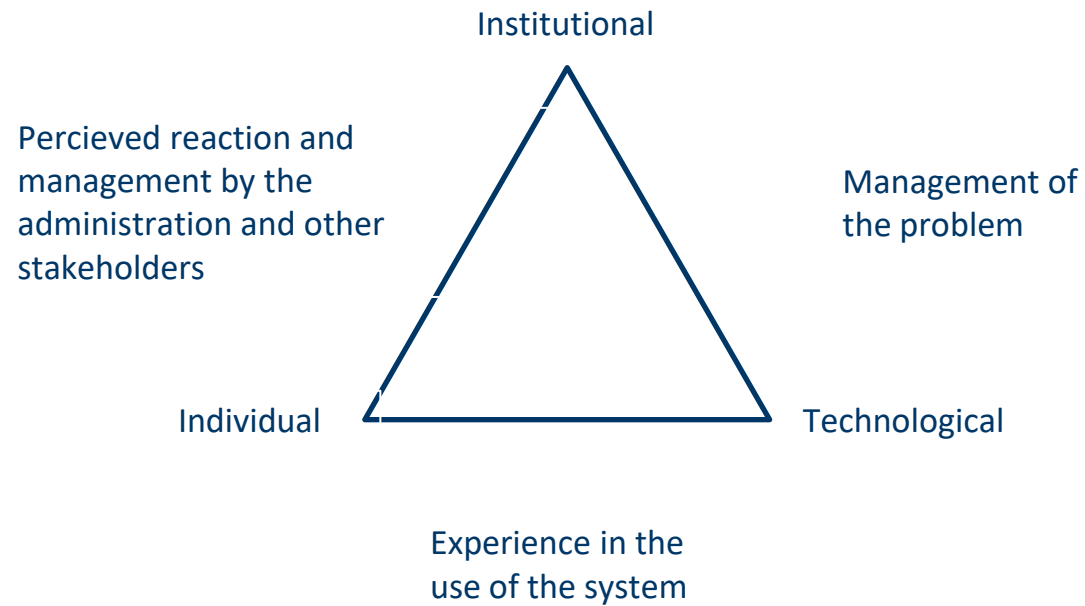
In use until 2019 (plans to restart in 2027).

Usage rates increased suddenly when the system was publicly criticised, but that (indirectly) brought to the failure.

Cryptographers vs. Visually impaired citizens, both aiming to improve the quality of democracy.

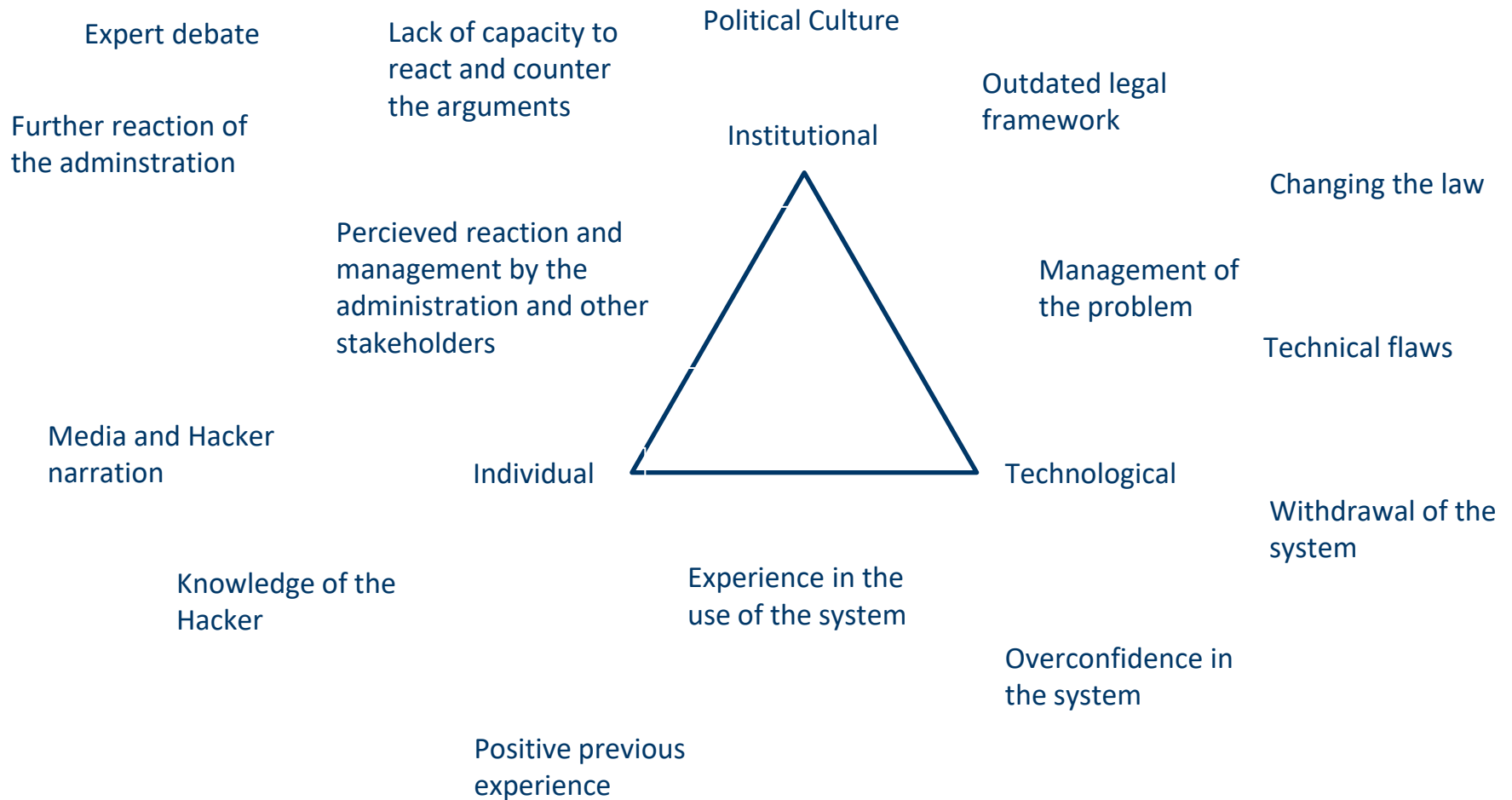


Inputs from The Netherlands



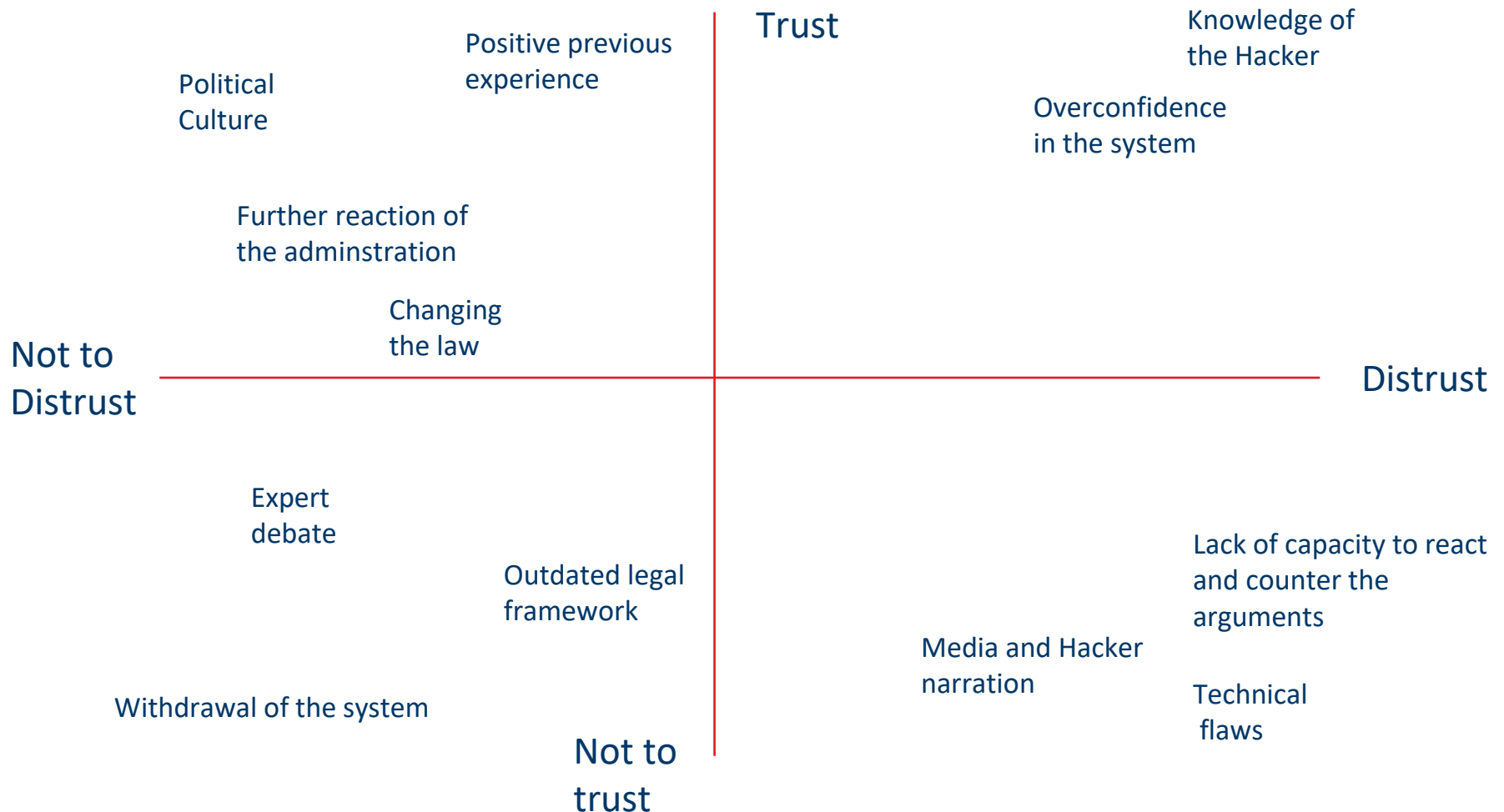


Inputs from The Netherlands





Inputs from The Netherlands





The paradoxes of trust

Paradox 1: Generalized distrust scenarios, but trust in external unsupervised stakeholders - Poland

Paradox 2: Distrust bringing trust? - Australia

Paradox 3: Trust and distrust in parallel? – The Netherlands



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Trust factors in the use of electoral technologies...

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