How easy is to become alienated?

Stability and change of first-time voters’ civic attitudes over the election year

Jan Šerek, Zuzana Petrovičová, and Petr Macek
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
According to the popular image, young people are optimistic and naive about politics ...
... then they face the reality ...
... and become skeptical and alienated.
Main points of our presentation

• first-time voters‘ (age 19) political trust and trust in democracy were not shattered during the election year

• being an active voter had a positive impact on political trust

• satisfaction with the results enhanced trust in democracy
political beliefs are **being formed in late adolescence** and persist during the life (Sears & Levy, 2003; Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Vollebergh, Iedema, Raaijmakers, 2001)
Introductory notes

- political beliefs are **being formed in late adolescence** and persist during the life (Sears & Levy, 2003; Alwin & Krosnick, 1991; Vollebergh, Iedema, Raaijmakers, 2001)
- research suggests that political beliefs and behavior patterns are relatively **stable** in late adolescence (Hooghe & Wilkenfeld, 2008)
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- However, they can be affected by significant social influences (Jennings, 2002; Prior, 2010).
- Some beliefs related to the evaluation of everyday politics (political trust), but some related to the evaluation of the whole political system (trust in democracy) (Norris, 2011).
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• what are the consequences of first-time voters‘ experiences?
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some beliefs related to the evaluation of everyday politics (political trust), but some related to the evaluation of the whole political system (trust in democracy) (Norris, 2011)

what are the consequences of first-time voters‘ experiences?

can these experiences affect adolescents‘ political trust, or even their trust in democracy?
Basic questions

Do mean political trust and trust in democracy of first-time voters change over the election year?
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We expect that mean political trust will be more susceptible to change, particularly around the election.
Basic questions

Do mean political trust and trust in democracy of first-time voters change over the election year?

What variables predict individual changes?
Sample

- a five-wave panel study (Feb - Dec, 2010)
- general election between 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} wave
- 19-year-old Czechs (first-time voters)
Sample

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- general election between 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} wave
- 19-year-old Czechs (first-time voters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

Political trust (alphas > .70) (Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Stout, 2007)
1. Our politicians listen to the citizens who have elected them.
2. Our politicians devote much time to do something good for our society.
3. Our politicians care only about money.
4. Generally speaking, our politicians serve to the citizens.

+ a four-point response scales (1-4)
Measures

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Trust in democracy
Democracy is a form of government that is better than any other existing system.

+ a four-point response scale (1-4) (+ „I don‘t know“ = missing)
Trust in democracy over the whole year

N = 93
Trust in democracy over the whole year

Repeated measures ANOVA (Greenhouse-Geisser correction)

\[
F (3.53, 324.70) = 1.52 \\
p = .20 \\
\text{partial } \eta^2 = .02
\]

→ no significant changes

N = 93
Political trust over the whole year

Political trust

Feb  | May  | Jun  | Oct  | Dec

N = 116
Political trust over the whole year

Repeated measures ANOVA (Greenhouse-Geisser correction)

F (3.40, 391.49) = 13.60
p < .01
partial $\eta^2 = .11$

→ significant considerable changes

N = 116
Political trust over the whole year

Political trust

N = 116
Political trust over the whole year

Political trust

N = 116
Political trust over the whole year

Political trust over the whole year

Political trust

contrasts between adjacent time points

Feb May Jun Oct Dec

Political trust

N = 116
Political trust over the whole year

Political trust

N = 116

- F (1, 115) = 21.81, p < .01, partial η² = .16
- F (1, 115) = 0.41, p = .52, partial η² = .00
- Contrasts between adjacent time points
Political trust over the whole year

Political trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Political trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F (1, 115) = 21.81
p < .01
partial $\eta^2 = .16$

contrasts between adjacent time points
Political trust over the whole year

N = 116

Political trust

F (1, 115) = 21.81
p < .01
partial $\eta^2 = .16$

the only significant change happened during the election (between May and June)
First conclusions

there are more mean changes in political trust than in trust in democracy
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the only change in political trust happened between May and June, i.e. around the election
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election was associated with an increase of mean political trust
First conclusions

there are more mean changes in political trust than in trust in democracy

the only change in political trust happened between May and June, i.e. around the election

election was associated with an increase of mean political trust

on the other hand, no general pattern was present for trust in democracy
First conclusions

there are more mean changes in political trust than in trust in democracy.

the only change in political trust happened between May and June, i.e. around the election.

election was associated with an increase of mean political trust.

up to now, only mean changes were scrutinized ...

... what about individual-level changes?
Mean political trust increased during the election. What variables predict this change on the individual level?

Hypotheses:

1. Trust in democracy
2. Satisfaction with the election results
3. Active participation - voting
4. Media consumption
Mean political trust increased during the election. What variables predict this change on the individual level?

Hypotheses:

1. Trust in democracy
2. Satisfaction with the election results
3. Active participation – voting
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The election is supposed to be a „celebration of democracy“; therefore, those who trust in democracy can experience greater positive change in political trust after the election.
Mean political trust increased during the election. What variables predict this change on the individual level?

Hypotheses:

1. Trust in democracy
2. Satisfaction with the election results
3. Active participation
4. Media consumption

If adolescents are satisfied with elected politicians, their political trust can increase (Anderson & LoTempio, 2002; Banducci & Karp, 2003)
Mean political trust increased during the election. What variables predict this change on the individual level?

Hypotheses:

1. Trust in democracy
2. Satisfaction with the election results
3. Active participation - voting
4. Media consumption

being an active voter can lead to greater identification with the election results; therefore, positive change in political trust can be predicted by voting
Mean political trust increased during the election. What variables predict this change on the individual level?

Hypotheses:

1. Trust in democracy
2. Satisfaction with the election results
3. Active participation - voting
4. Media consumption

greater reception of information from media, particularly during the election campaign, can be associated with changes in political trust (literature suggests changes in both directions)
Preliminary descriptives

Satisfaction with the election results:

„How much satisfied are you with the results of general election?“
+ a four-point response scale (+ „I don‘t care“ = missing) (1 = not at all; 4 = very)
M(SD) = 2.63 (0.82), N = 260
Preliminary descriptives

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Media consumption:

„In the last month, how often did you follow political news in ...“
(1) TV/radio, (2) newspapers/magazines, (3) internet
+ a five-point response scale (0 = never; 4 = daily)
Preliminary descriptives

**Satisfaction with the election results:**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political trust</th>
<th>Trust in democracy</th>
<th>Media consumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1 (May) Mean (SD)</td>
<td>1.73 (0.50)</td>
<td>3.20 (0.69)</td>
<td>2.18 (0.94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 (June) Mean (SD)</td>
<td>1.96 (0.55)</td>
<td>3.13 (0.64)</td>
<td>2.04 (0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 - T1 Mean (SD)</td>
<td>0.22 (0.46)</td>
<td>- 0.07 (0.58)</td>
<td>- 0.14 (0.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation T1 with T2</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
measurement of political trust
all std. factor loadings above .5 + good model fit

→ adequate measurement

measurement of political trust

$x^2[30] = 27.95$
RMSEA = .05
CFI = .98
latent difference score model
(McArdle & Nesselroade, 1994; McArdle & Hamagami, 1995; 1998; 2001)
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maximum likelihood estimator (Mplus)
listwise (identical results obtained using FIML)

latent variable representing change between T1 and T2
Change polit. trust

Polit. trust T1

Polit. trust T2
hypothesis 1 - trust in democracy
N = 173

**Trust in dem. T1**

- **Trust in dem. T2**: -.52**

**Polit. trust T1**

- **Polit. trust T2**: -.29**
- **Change polit. trust**: .13
- **Change trust in dem.**: .20*

**Change trust in dem.**

- **Trust in dem. T2**: .23*
- **Trust in dem. T1**: .22**

$\chi^2[30] = 41.89$
$p = .07$
$RMSEA = .05$
$CFI = .98$
N = 173

\[ x^2[30] = 41.89 \]
\[ p = .07 \]
RMSEA = .05
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Trust in dem. T1
\[ .22^{**} \]
\[ .20^{*} \]
\[ .13 \]
Polit. trust T1
\[ -.29^{**} \]
\[ -.52^{**} \]
Trust in dem. T2

Change trust in dem.
\[ .23^{*} \]

Change polit. trust

Polit. trust T1
Polit. trust T2
N = 173

$\chi^2[30] = 41.89$
Meaning = .07
RMSEA = .05
CFI = .98

- Trust in dem. T1
- Trust in dem. T2
- Change trust in dem.
- Change polit. trust
- Polit. trust T1
- Polit. trust T2

- .20*
- .22**
- .23*
- .13
- -.29**
- -.52**
N = 173

\[ x^2[31] = 44.76 \]
\[ p = .05 \]
\[ RMSEA = .05 \]
\[ CFI = .98 \]

no significant drop in model fit
\[ \Delta x^2[1] = 2.87, p = .09 \]
The change of political trust was predicted by the initial trust in democracy. The initial trust in democracy (T1) predicted the change in political trust (Change polit. trust). The change in political trust negatively predicted the trust in democracy at T2. The structural model showed a significant fit with the following statistics: $x^2[31] = 44.76$, $p = .05$, RMSEA = .05, and CFI = .98. The sample size was $N = 173$. The model coefficients indicated that the trust in democracy at T1 had a positive influence on political trust at T2 ($r = .22^{**}$), while the change in political trust had a negative influence on the trust in democracy at T2 ($r = -.29^{**}$).
N = 173

\[ x^2[31] = 44.76 \]
\[ p = .05 \]
\[ RMSEA = .05 \]
\[ CFI = .98 \]

Change of political trust and change of trust in democracy were correlated.

\[ \chi^2[31] = 44.76 \]
\[ p = .05 \]
\[ RMSEA = .05 \]
\[ CFI = .98 \]
hypothesis 2 - satisfaction with the results

Trust in dem. T1

Trust in dem. T2

Change trust in dem.

Change polit. trust

Satisf. with election results

Polit. trust T1

Polit. trust T2
\[ \chi^2[39] = 48.90 \]
\[ p = .13 \]
\[ RMSEA = .04 \]
\[ CFI = .99 \]

N = 168
Trust in dem. T1 \rightarrow Trust in dem. T2

Change polit. trust \rightarrow Satisf. with election results

N = 168

\( x^2[39] = 48.90 \)
\( p = .13 \)
RMSEA = .04
CFI = .99

\( \chi^2[39] = 48.90 \)
\( p = .13 \)
RMSEA = .04
CFI = .99

satisfaction with the election results predicted change of political trust, and also change of trust in democracy
N = 168

$\chi^2[39] = 48.90$
$p = .13$
$RMSEA = .04$
$CFI = .99$

Trust in dem. T1

Trust in dem. T2

Change trust in dem.

Satisf. with election results

Polit. trust T1

Polit. trust T2

$.18^*$

$.51^{**}$

$.13$

$.27^{**}$

$.20^*$

$.32^{**}$

$.47^{**}$

Change polit. trust
N = 168

- Trust in dem. T1
- Trust in dem. T2
- Change trust in dem.
- Change polit. trust
- Satisf. with election results

\[ \chi^2[40] = 50.60 \]
\[ p = .12 \]
\[ RMSEA = .04 \]
\[ CFI = .99 \]

\[ N = 168 \]

- .51** from Trust in dem. T1 to Trust in dem. T2
- .18* from Trust in dem. T1 to Change trust in dem.
- .27** from Change trust in dem. to Satisf. with election results
- .20* from Polit. trust T1 to Trust in dem. T1
- .20* from Polit. trust T1 to Change polit. trust
- .47** from Change polit. trust to Satisf. with election results
- -.30** from Change polit. trust to Polit. trust T2

No significant drop in model fit
\[ \Delta \chi^2[1] = 1.69, \ p = .19 \]
Trust in dem. T1 → Voting

Voting → 79% yes

Preliminary analysis

Hypothesis 3 - Voting
Preliminary analysis

Trust in democracy T1

95% CI OR = (0.73; 9.12)

Voting

79% yes

95% CI OR = (0.81; 2.00)

Polit. trust T1

N = 190
N = 190

Preliminary analysis:

- Trust in democracy (T1) to voting
  - 95% CI OR = (0.73; 9.12)

Voting to political trust (T1)
- 79% yes
  - 95% CI OR = (0.81; 2.00)

Voting not predicted by political trust or trust in democracy at T1
Trust in dem. T1 → Trust in dem. T2

Change trust in dem.

Change polit. trust

Voting

Satisf. with election results

Polit. trust T1

Polit. trust T2
\[ \chi^2[48] = 56.87 \quad p = .18 \]
RMSEA = .03
CFI = .99
N = 168

\[ x^2[48] = 56.87 \]

\[ p = .18 \]

RMSEA = .03

CFI = .99

- Trust in dem. T1 → Change trust in dem. → Satisf. with election results
- Trust in dem. T2
- Change polit. trust
- Polit. trust T1 → Polit. trust T2

Path coefficients:
- Trust in dem. T1 → Trust in dem. T2: -.51**
- Change trust in dem. → Change polit. trust: .27**
- Change polit. trust → Satisf. with election results: .46**
- Voting
- Polit. trust T1

Additional path coefficients:
- Trust in dem. T1 → Voting: .23**
- Polit. trust T2
- Satisf. with election results

Significance levels:
- *: p < .05
- **: p < .01
N = 168

χ²[50] = 57.41
p = .22
RMSEA = .03
CFI = .99

Trust in dem. T1

.16*

.20*

.16*

.27**

-.51**

Change trust in dem.

-.32**

Deltaχ²[2] = 0.55, p = .76

no significant drop in model fit

Trust in dem. T2

Satisf. with election results

Voting

Polit. trust T1

Polit. trust T2

.46**

.23**
N = 168

\( x^2[50] = 57.41 \)
\( p = .22 \)
RMSEA = .03
CFI = .99

- Trust in dem. T1 \( \rightarrow \) Trust in dem. T2
  \( \rightarrow \) Change trust in dem.
  \( \rightarrow \) Change polit. trust
  \( \rightarrow \) Voting

- Voting predicted change in political trust
  (independent from satisfaction with the results)

\( \rightarrow \) Polit. trust T1

- \( .16^* \)
- \( .20^* \)
- \( -.51^{**} \)
- \( .27^{**} \)
- \( .46^{**} \)
- \( .23^{**} \)
- \( -.32^{**} \)
hypothesis 4 - media consumption

- Trust in dem. T1
- Trust in dem. T2
- Change in trust in dem.
- Change in polit. trust
- Satisf. with election results
- Voting

Media T1
Media T2
Polit. trust T1
Polit. trust T2


- **Trust in dem. T1**
- **Trust in dem. T2**
- **Change trust in dem.**
- **Change polit. trust**
- **Satisf. with election results**
- **Voting**

- **Polit. trust T1**
- **Polit. trust T2**

- **Media T1**
- **Media T2**

- $\chi^2[67] = 85.16$
- $p = .07$
- $RMSEA = .04$
- $CFI = .98$


\[ \chi^2[67] = 85.16 \]

\[ p = .07 \]

\[ \text{RMSEA} = .04 \]

\[ \text{CFI} = .98 \]
\[ x^2[67] = 85.16 \]

\[ p = .07 \]

RMSEA = .04

CFI = .98
**N = 150**

- **Trust in dem. T1**
- **Trust in dem. T2**
- **Media T1**
- **Media T2**
- **Change polit. trust**
- **Polit. trust T1**
- **Polit. trust T2**
- **Voting**
- **Satisf. with election results**

**media consumption independent from political trust and trust in democracy**

- **.71**
- **.25**
- **.43**
- **.25**

**no significant drop in model fit**

$\Delta \chi^2[6] = 7.43, p = .28$

**.20***

$x^2[73] = 92.58$
$p = .06$
$\text{RMSEA} = .04$
$\text{CFI} = .98$

**- .46**

**- .26**

**.43**

**.28**

**.28**
in a more complex model, the path from trust in democracy to change in political trust was not significant anymore.

N = 150

$\chi^2[73] = 92.58$
$p = .06$
$RMSEA = .04$
$CFI = .98$
Back to the hypotheses

What predicts individual changes in political trust?

1. Trust in democracy
2. Satisfaction with the election results
3. Active participation - voting
4. Media consumption
Back to the hypotheses

What predicts individual changes in political trust?

1. Trust in democracy: **weakly supported**

2. Satisfaction with the election results

3. Active participation – voting

4. Media consumption

adolescents who trusted more in democracy experienced a more positive change of political trust during the election

however, the association was weak and disappeared in a more complex model (with media consumption)
Back to the hypotheses

What predicts individual changes in political trust?

1. Trust in democracy: weakly supported
2. Satisfaction with the election results: supported
3. Active participation – voting
4. Media consumption

adolescents more satisfied with the election results experienced a more positive change of political trust

moreover, they experienced a more positive change of trust in democracy
(see Banducci & Karp, 2003)
Back to the hypotheses

What predicts individual changes in political trust?

1. Trust in democracy: weakly supported
2. Satisfaction with the election results: supported
3. Active participation - voting: supported
4. Media consumption

- adolescents who voted in the election experienced a more positive change in political trust (independent from their satisfaction with the results)

  - act of voting \(\rightarrow\) greater perceived personal responsibility for the results and greater perceived connection with the political system
  - reduction of a cognitive dissonance
Back to the hypotheses

What predicts individual changes in political trust?

1. Trust in democracy: weakly supported
2. Satisfaction with the election results: supported
3. Active participation - voting: supported
4. Media consumption: not supported

Media consumption around the election was not associated with changes in political trust or trust in democracy (see Moy & Scheufele, 2000). More detailed view is needed (see Chan, 1997).
Conclusions

a first encounter with the election process does not have to harm trust in politics and democracy in adolescents; it can enhance political trust
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Active participation (being part of the process) is important.
Conclusions

a first encounter with the election process does not have to harm trust in politics and democracy in adolescents; it can enhance political trust

active participation (being part of the process) is important → if politicians want to be trusted, maybe they should create more opportunities for youth active participation
Conclusions

a first encounter with the election process does not have to harm trust in politics and democracy in adolescents; it can enhance political trust if politicians want to be trusted, maybe they should create more opportunities for youth active participation (being part of the process) is important two skeptical comments without answers ...
Conclusions

A first encounter with the election process does not have to harm trust in politics and democracy in adolescents; it can enhance political trust.

Active participation (being part of the process) is important → if politicians want to be trusted, maybe they should create more opportunities for youth active participation.

Political trust „survived“ the election year, but how is it after two or three years?
Conclusions

a first encounter with the election process does not have to harm trust in politics and democracy in adolescents; it can enhance political trust

active participation (being part of the process) is important → if politicians want to be trusted, maybe they should create more opportunities for youth active participation

political trust „survived“ the election year, but how is it after two or three years?

satisfaction with the results predicted changes not only in political trust, but also in trust in democracy ...
Thank you for your attention!

Jan Šerek  serek@fss.muni.cz
Zuzana Petrovičová  petrovic@fss.muni.cz
Petr Macek  macek@fss.muni.cz