Media trust and affective political polarization: Does distance disparage trust?

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Preface

Before I start my paper, I wish to take some time to reflect on what got me through this assignment and be thankful for all the help I have been provided. Firstly, my supervisor Martin Søyland. Martins cool and calm demeanor and ability to quickly and analytically separate which ideas were interesting, and which may be a bit overzealous, and his ability to inspire me and get me fired up to pursue rigorously those ideas which seemed at first hopelessly optimistic, but later proved possible through determination and perseverance. Martins' complete mastery of the coding language R has also proved immensely valuable during the process of writing this paper.

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Thirdly I would like to thank the NRK for asking me to write an assignment for them, and the trust and confidence in believing that this assignment would be in their benefit. The reassurance of knowing that what one is working with is genuinely interesting and in the benefit of an institution you very much admire is always heartwarming, and a great inspiration during rainy days where the only thing one really wants to do is postpone one's responsibilities.

Lastly, I want to thank my fellow students who I have had the privilege of writing besides, especially those who wrote their thesis in the computer lab in the second floor or 'Eilert Sundts hus' at UiO. Our debriefing lunches and motivational speeches helped a fair deal in the daily procedures regarding the formation of this paper. I sincerely hope that their thesis' preform as well or better than this paper, and I wish for nothing but the best for my fellow students' future. I hope my company was as giving and meaningful as yours during this process, but I doubt it as their support and company was truly exceptional.

Abstract

This paper examines the link between polarization and media trust. Something worth studying as much of the literature seems to point to modern time as somewhat of a highpoint for polarization, as well as a low point for trust in traditional media. We have tried to examine the relationship between these two concepts and try to see in how different conceptualizations of these two phenomena affect each other. This quantitative approach factors different conceptualizations of trust with different measures for polarization to detail in what ways polarization affects trust.

Introduction

As of the American election in 2016, two phenomena occurred around each other seemingly both in and interdependent. Donald Trump led a large populist movement to challenge the political establishment and laid bare the deep political divide among the electorate in the United States, simultaneously as there rose a marked degree of criticism against the so-called 4th branch of government, namely the media. Such as then President Donald Trump repeatedly accusing the second largest cable news at the time of being 'fake'. Experts and scholars will point to both these phenomena being incremental and over a longer time, and rightly so. Nevertheless 2016 was a year for revelations both in terms of polarization, and in terms of media trust. This begs the question, are the two phenomena connected? Does polarization drive down media trust? To examine this, we need a clear case of polarization and a clear case of media in which respondents can place their trust.

This paper will examine the relationship between affective political polarization, in which the party is the political group, and trust within the Norwegian public media channel; the NRK.

Affective polarization will in this paper be understood as the political distance between the population driven by the presence of extra-political ingroup belonging and out group animosity which causes low government trust.

Furthermore, this paper will be giving a clear review on the literature and difficulties of studying trust and provide 2 definitions of trust through two different conceptualizations. Trust as self-reported trust, and trust as confidence in reciprocal value.

Using the given definition of affective polarization and the different conceptualizations of trust, this paper will provide linear regressions regarding the relationship between these two concepts.

Trust

In the US, the percentage of people expressing that they have a great or fair deal of confidence in the media has fallen from 72% in 1976 to 45% in 2018, which is a noticeable increase from its 2016 low of 32% (Jones 2018). Despite recent upticks from 2016 to 2018 the overall trend is clear, confidence in the media has fallen significantly over the last decades. According to Jesper Stromback (2020) this is because of less consumption of traditional media, the increase in alternative and social media as well as the prevalence of 'fake news' in circulation. This overlaps with many of the trends detailed in much of the polarization literature. Sides and Hopkins indicate in their book on political polarization in America that polarization has doubled in the house of representatives from around 40 percent to a little over 70 percent with a similar increase in the senate from 1974 till 2012 (2015, 3). Correlating well with the loss of faith in the media. Comparing the change in these two concepts seem to show a relationship between polarization and trust, yet to examine this supposed relationship we must first need to ask the question: What is trust?

Trust in the field of political science is a phenomenon which has been subject to a great deal of study but seems to take on similar yet different definitions regarding the field in which trust is measured. Roussau et al (1998, 394) famously mentioned that 'to date, we have no universally accepted scholarly definition of trust'. Scholars do, however, attribute several beneficial societal boons to having high levels of trust within their society.

Trust deals with the ability to act or behave in a manner that is predictable and correlated to one's words or actions. When someone utters the phrase 'I trust you' it is like saying that in this context I will be surprised if the outcome doesn't correlate with my belief in the way your actions would affect the situation. Trust can be placed in actors, institutions, movements, and groups, but it takes on different characteristics based on the entity one trusts. Trust in institutions is not the same phenomenon as say trust in a friend, as even though there are similar mechanisms which build and break trust, they are characterized by different phenomenon. Trust in a friend, is not the same as trust in a government.

Given that there is no scholarly accepted definition of trust, it is important to quickly supply a definition of trust that this paper can employ. So, trust shall for the sake of this paper be understood either as the normative degree of self-reported trust a respondent would admit too, this is the archetypal understanding of trust. Trust is in this conceptualization a normative and personal value grounded in the belief of consistency in actions. Or as the relational value of understanding the reciprocal benefit of the object one trusts. IE, I have trust in the government because I believe that they are upholding their part of the societal contract, and their actions are therefore in my benefit.

Benefits and causes of high trust

When studying trust, it is paramount to examine the mechanisms that build and break trust, and what the consequences of a high aggregate level of trust is. Trust leads to economic development. Humphrey and Schmitz (Humphrey 1996) even detail that the recognition that trust leads to economic development is 'old', as the understanding that several forms of organization that lead to increased economic output require large degrees of trust has been widely accepted for a long time. For instance, producers need a working relationship with both suppliers and customers. A lack of trust would in such cases make relationships difficult. Predictability in terms of deliveries and payments are vital to an organization, like a business's success, or a services predictabillty are all phenomenon that are based on trust. Extrapolating this, all reciprocity is based on trust. As people would be less likely to act in a reciprocally benefitting way if they did not trust or anticipate any benefit in return. A better way to imagine this would be to consider a corporate structure. Typically, the manager and workers relationship functions when the worker believes that hard work will be rewarded by his/her manager. If the worker knows, or even suspects that his/her manager will not reward his/her work proportionally to the time, effort and results they have provided, their incentives indicate that the worker will be less likely to work hard or even work at all. The trust between manager and worker in this setting makes the corporation more effective. This is true within states and their citizens as well, such as for example citizens will have less reservations about paying taxes if they trust that the government will put that money to good use.

Reciprocity, and by extension trust is caused by social capital. Social capital being a form of capital one accumulates from networks and competencies one usually wouldn't reach without

such networks. Social capital can be explained through a simple allegory. If we were to imagine someone renovating their house, the tools they use for renovation would represent their physical capital, their techniques for efficient painting would be their intellectual capital, and the friends they invite over would represent their social capital. On the micro level social capital regards the amount of friend and acquaintances individuals can draw help from to solve a problem. On the macro level it regards the number of potentially reciprocal connections between people in society.

American political scientist Robert Putnam linked the decline of social capital to falling trust in the public sector (Putnam, 2001). Much of the literature suggests that social capital is positively related to trust, meaning if you increase the amount of social capital in a society you increase the amount of trust. As social capital provides consistent interactions between people which can increase trust, specifically when implemented in daily challenges. For example, having your friends help you paint your living room is both very efficient, as the task at hand will done faster, but it is also trust generating, as one tests the predictability of one's friends, and is likely to leave the scenario with a heightened sense of trust in ones friends.

Coleman (Son and Feng 1998, 119) argues that as social capital is '*obligations and expectations, which depend on trustworthiness of the social environment*' social capital increases the reciprocity in a society. With this Coleman argues that social capital is a composite feature of trust, and social capital is a product of '*the trustworthiness of the social environment, information flow capacity of the social structure, and norms accompanied by sanctions*' (Son and feng 2019) Trustworthiness is a factor of the social environment and should be operationalized as a gross level of individual reported trust. On the other hand, in the same article Son and Feng (2019) argue by building on previous literature that trust and social capital could be explained as the same thing. Francis Fukuyama argues (Son and Feng 2019) that social capital is *'an instantiated informal norm that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals*.' Trust is by Fukuyamas explanation the same as social capital as both concepts are relational informal norms, which are inherent in social dynamics. For Fukuyama, trust deals with relational norms. As trust can vary based on the relationship between the parties, such as how trust between friends is not the same as the trust between individual and government. Trust is therefore in Fukuyamas view better understood as the acceptance of reciprocity between entities.

This paper will rely on these two different conceptualizations of trust:

A Coleman inspired understanding of trust would be how likely are you to admit to trusting a person, or organization, as a measure of the trustworthiness in the social environment.

A Fukuyama-inspired understanding of trust would differ, by examining the role of reciprocity in trust as trust is the same as social capital. Or a measure of the amount of reciprocally beneficial informal norms which are present in society. Meaning one would trust someone when you recognize that they are working in the respondents, or at least the publics interests.

As social capital can contribute too or may even be synonymous with trust, and social capital is built through continuous interactions with groups and institutions in society, such as volunteer groups, sports activities or as Putnam's arch example was: bowling leagues. How is trust broken? Lincoln Chafee, the former senator of Rhode Island said that 'Trust is built with consistency'. With this Chafee insinuates that trust, as a phenomenon is built over time with similar results in the same situations. Meier et al. (2015) points to 'expected continuity' as a central tenant of the 'process-based approach' to building trust between institutions. Expected continuity being the expectation of similar interactions in the future with similar results.

So, if continuity and consistency build trust, we can assume the inverse is true as well, namely that trust is broken through inconsistency and deceit. Much of the social psychology regarding trust is on the interpersonal level. Individuals will lose trust in each other if obligations and expectations are not met, but does this necessarily translate to the macro level? In short, yes. Being on the receiving end of a lie erodes trust, and more than that a lie erodes trust in interactions with those who were not involved in the initial deception (Gawn and Innes 2017). This is true both between individuals and other individuals, and between individuals and institutions. This says nothing on intra-institutional relationships, although there is no reason to believe any meaningful distances in behavior in this respect. Institutions that deter dishonesty and deception are therefore of potential higher economic value. Given of course that one agrees with the scholarly definition of trust as given by Meier et al, or by Gawn and Innes in their papers. As Gawn and Innes don't necessarily define trust, but rather insinuate that it regards the certainty of an absence of a lie in any given situation. This is one of the major weaknesses of studying trust. The lack of a clear conceptual framework, and by extension standardizations of measurement.

Weaknesses with studying trust

As mentioned earlier there is no universally accepted definition of trust. This lack of conceptual frameworks and standardization of measurements make it so that conceptual extrapolation and generalizations of trust becomes difficult. For example, Meier et al.'s (2015) approach to build trust regards inter-organizational trust between businesses. Businesses may not be entirely representative of organizations in terms of ease or methods of building trust. The underlying profit incentive may emphasize trust more than other organizations, and the inter-organizational relationship between businesses may be very different to the trusting relationship between individuals and organizations, or between individuals.

Additionally, as Son and Feng articulated, the conceptual differences between for example Fukuyama and Coleman regarding whether social capital is a composite feature to trust or trust itself speaks to the lack of a unifying conceptual framework for trust. Is trust necessarily reciprocal? Does trust need to be in one's benefit, as in can one trust in someone's untrustworthiness?

To summarize this chapter, trust is a societal good characterized by the benefit it grants to society. Trust is linked to several favorable outcomes such as economic development. Trust is built through consistency and is broken through deceit, inconsistency and subpar performance. Because there is no universally agreed upon definition of trust, much of the literature has discussed problems regarding the lack of conceptual frameworks and standardization of measurements when measuring trust, and the differences in trust regarding the social dynamics, such as interpersonal trust and interorganizational trust having different characteristics. We must seek to amend these problems in order to study trusts relationship with polarization. To better understand trust, we shall extrapolate 'media-trust' and 'government trust' from trust to easier operationalize an uncertain element such as trust for studying our dependent variable and understand government trust to help explain our dependent variable. We shall therefore narrow the scope of study in this paper to only government trust and media trust.

Government and media trust

Many scholars discuss trust in the government as a recognition of faith in the government's ability to act in a way which correlates to their conceptual responsibilities of serving the

public. In this conceptual understanding of trust, trust is a measure of acting in accordance with one's purpose and responsibilities given through a mandate of approval. Something which translates well with Fukuyama's understanding of trust. In this case, hypothetically governments can maintain large levels of trust without perfect transparency if its citizens believe that their actions are in their own interests. Governments may be very hesitant or even deceitful in commenting on certain operations, such as military intelligence, and still maintain large levels of trust if the citizens believes that they operate in the citizenries' interests.

On the other hand, trust placed in the news media is a direct product of trusting what one says. Conveying information is the news media's main responsibility. Nevertheless, media is more than just news media. Extra-news activities that media partakes in such as entertainment can also be trust building. Nevertheless, if one was to picture a pedestrian being asked whether he/she trusts the BBC for instance, chances are the answer would regard BBC news. One may therefore say that media trust should follow a more Coleman like understanding of trust as a measure of personal self-reported trust, but media trust may also be seen through a Fukuyama-esque understanding, as the medias' role is to inform the public which is a service in the public's interest. A Fukuyama-esque understanding of trust in the media would be that if the media accurately reports the news this has a reciprocal benefit to both the viewers and society and could therefore be trusted.

To build on this we can say that media trust is not necessarily the same as media accuracy. There are cases where media outlets have enjoyed high levels of trust without corresponding levels of accuracy. This is not to say that the media wont loose trust if it willfully misleads, but reporting may be done inaccurately, without suffering loss of trust. An honest mistake is easy to forgive, if handled correctly.

Secondly, more factors play into effect on the medias trust rather than just accuracy. Such as accessibility, transparency, readability and entertainment factor. If we were to assume that trust was just a product of belief in accuracy, more people would consume more difficult academic analysis, rather than stories retold in simpler terms. There is a reason the daily mail sells more than the financial times. As the financial times writes about phenomenon which are much less accessible to the average person, although it may portray a deeper and more nuanced retelling of the truth.

To expand upon in what way media can inaccurately rapport on events and still harness large amount of trust from their viewers. We should look to cases of highly partisan news

organizations who still managed to keep a high degree of trust. An example of this would be the high amount of trust the newspaper Pravda had during the cold war, Pravda was the official newspaper of the communist party. If an analysis of truth-to-trust was to be examined Pravda would rank quite highly on the scale of trust as its analysis fitted well with the Soviets ideological understanding of the world, while its systematic skewedness to cover stories in a light that favored its owner the Communist party of the Soviet Union would likely place it low on the truth scale.

Also, the total amount of trust in a country is somewhat dependent on the degree of partisan news in among the viewers. To quote Aaron Sorkins 'the newsroom, '*nowadays people choose the facts they want'*. Meaning the supply of media is so saturated that people could choose to consume media that better aligned with their own ideological understanding of the truth, without much compromise in terms of accuracy.

To explain this, we will use an allegory. Imagine a nation suffering from an increased level of inflation. And let's for instance say that this inflation was created by both demand and supply side factors, like for example a historic consumption from consumers on the demand side and a difficulty in imports on the supply side. Although most scholars agree that a combination of these factors are driving inflation up, the precise weighting of cause between these two factors are ambiguous. The discretion this gives media outlets in which they cover this case makes it so that viewers can select news which better cover concepts they find interesting or correlates to their ontological understanding of the world. While not compromising on the fact-based analysis of the situation. This fits well with Jesper Stromback's (Stromback 2020) analysis on falling media trust as a product of the rise of alternative media. Alternative media causes competing senses of truth, which causes a net fall in media trust. The market for alternative media, however, is a product of polarization.

Polarization

Polarization as a concept regards the relative distance in space between the entities in the polity. The traditional way of explaining polarization would be to picture an unpolarized electorate as a normal distribution within the 'overtons window', the conceptual explanation of all views that are considered acceptable within a society. Typically, one would imagine the spread of ideas within a society as a normal distribution, whereas the centrists are in the clear majority and votes sizzle out as one approaches the edges.

The archetypal form of polarization would then visualize itself as a binomial distribution with the distance between the two tops equaling the degree of polarization. This traditional view of polarization is very accurate for describing the phenomenon known as 'mass polarization'. Mass polarization regards the differences in political opinions between the masses. Mass polarization can be seen through a Rousseauean lens as a discord within the general will. As there is a sizeable lack in the number of moderate voices between the two tops within the electorate's distribution.

Mass polarization, however, regards the electorate. If we were to regard political parties as reactive to the general will, mass polarization would explain all differences between parties as they would position themselves to represent as many people as possible. However, if we regard political parties as having independent actors, that may not only reflect the general will, but also shape it through independent actors, interest groups, interactions and policy mass polarization does not reflect a proper understanding of the causes and effects of polarization. Elite polarization may also be worth studying. Elite polarization is when the differences between the party in government and the party in opposition get pulled to opposite poles. Elite polarization is generally more common within a two-party system. Systems where the electoral system facilitates to large parties with very little competition from smaller parties. Such as the US or the UK.

Lastly both mass and elite polarization regard the political differences between populations. Iyengar and Sood (2012) argues that polarization isn't necessarily political, but just as well personal. So called 'affective polarization' regards to what degree individuals favor politicians and parties that agree with them, while also measuring how much they 'loathe' their opponents. Affective polarization can be seen as the personal support of certain politicians and loathing of other politicians much in the same light as people have favorite football teams. Their political identity has triumphed over their independent search for political pragmatism. By extension the electorates belonging to their political group is the defining factor of their political identity, not their ideology.

Affective polarization shall in this paper be understood as polarization based on a having an affective out-group animosity towards other political groups as well as an in-group solidarity within your own. Which results in a loss of gross government trust.

Affective polarization can be used to explain the discrepancy as of why the population exhibits stronger signs of polarization than the real political differences would suggest. As

affective political polarization indicates that there is a difference in the real political distance between the electorate and its own normative perception of itself.

As affective polarization partakes in one's belonging within one's own ideological fellowship. Affective polarization can be understood from a psychological understanding of group affiliation.

What motivates this group affiliation is somewhat ambiguous. As the political belonging to a group comes both from an exaggerated feeling of solidarity to one own political group but can also as easily be defined as an exaggerated skepticism or animosity of other political groups. Iyenager et al. (2019) argues in terms of affective political polarization, that the literature on polarization is not precise enough to 'specify the conditions under which partisans are motivated by either in-group favoritism or out- group animosity' (Iyengar, et al. 2019). In other words, the degree in which affective polarization is driven by a love of one's own political identity or a view of opposing political parties as untrustworthy is unknown. In the literature of group conflict, most social psychologists argue that intra-group loyalty and solidarity is the dominant explanatory factor, IE Liverpool fans are motivated by their team's success more than the potential losses of all the other football teams. The so called 'social identity theory' exclaims that intergroup relations are a product of the self-conception individuals draw from groups (Hogg 2016). Groups are inherent to social dynamics and are necessary for individuals to function as a unit the individual can draw esteem from. Social identity theory therefore argues that in-group solidarity is the dominant explanatory factor for social groups, and by extension affective polarization.

On the other hand, politics is a combative arena and may therefore differ. Few phenomena are as contentious and suited for negativity bias than politics. Negativity bias being the cognitive bias individuals experience in which negative events has a bigger impact than positive events, even if their impacts are identical although inverse. Such as for example if one was given 50 dollars one day, and would lose them the next, negativity bias could cause the individual to perceive it as an all in all negative experience. Even though the total loss was 0. The discomfort of losing 50 dollars was worse than the comfort of winning 50. One could argue that a similar feeling in politics would be that the discomfort of losing an election, and the following insecurity of a political period in which one is opposed to their own government is a larger net loss than the net gain of comfort one would get from aligning with the party that wins the election.

Given that the perspective of out-group animosity as the prime motivator for affective polarization is defensible, this poses a challenge for the means in which we measure affective political polarization. As one would have to measure both the in-group solidarity as well as the out-group animosity while developing a metric to weigh these two factors appropriately. For the purpose of this paper, we shall therefore categorize in-group belonging and solidarity with out-group animosity as one operationalization of affective polarization. This operationalization characterizes affective polarization as the level of outgroup animosity given the presence of ingroup belonging. Treating them both as explanatory factors for affective polarization.

Building on this, affective political polarization has dire consequences and is considered an unwanted phenomenon. According to the literature examining affective political polarization in America (Westwood 2017) findings regarding party affiliation show that party affiliation, or their so call 'partyism' issues the primary cleavage in terms of group acceptance and discrimination in America as unlike other group distinctions such as religious, racial or cultural differences, 'there are no underlying social norms or societal pressure to moderate disapproval of political opponents'. In other words, politics is a team game where you are allowed to hate your opponents. Westwood also explains that these traits are universal across nations. In democracies, no matter the type, you are allowed to hate your political opponent to a much larger degree than you can hate other groups.

'Partyism' is affective polarization with the political party as the group one can be affiliated with. This is not to say that partyism and affective political polarization is the same concept, as affective political polarization doesn't necessitate the political party as the group one needs to belong too. Affective polarization can regard social movements, interest groups and other political entities. While partyism often entails the actions of both the electorate and the political actors. As one could accuse a politician of 'partyism' but one wouldn't refer to an actor as affectively polarized as polarization is a measure that only exists within a group, and is not a phenomenon attributed to the individual.

Although polarization is generally regarded as a negative phenomenon, with a negative connotation, a case may be argued for the virtue of polarization. If democracies are to be considered responsive to their voters, polarization would open the degree of acceptable views to discuss within the public window. If the goal of democracy is as Habermas proposed in producing the strongest government through the toughest argument, a wider net of ideologies

is beneficial to society. However, polarization is also linked to several negative phenomena such as ineffective government, lower trust within government and more political animosity within the electorate.

Consequences of polarization

Regarding the consequences of polarization Barer and Mcarthy found in their paper that the American congress produced 166% more legislation in the least polarized electoral term than in the most polarized electoral term (2013). Barber and Mcarthy goes on to argue that as the ideological divide between parties grow, the costs of negotiation in terms of losing favor with your base increases, and the deepened divide and further ideological differences between positions contribute to a reduced chance of successful negotiations. Therefore, there is a connection between polarization and legislative gridlock. Negotiations are paramount to a healthy democracy as without negotiations opposing parties do not adapt resolutions, something which disrupts their ability to govern.

This legislative gridlock extends to stagnation with public policies ability to adapt to demographic changes. For example, if a welfare payment was to be adjusted to inflation, the excessive cost of negotiations required to push such a resolution would not be worth it following a cost benefit analysis. Polarization as a concept is therefore linked to a higher degree of partisanship, zero-sum political games, slow and ineffective public policy and by extension a dissatisfied public as the public does not react well to a slow legislative apparatus. This, however, is a product of political actors within a polarized electorate, as negotiations is a process led by political actors, and not by the electorate. As discussed earlier, polarization affects both the electorate and the political actors, nevertheless this paper wishes to study the effect affective political polarization has on the respondent's media trust. Affective polarization among elites is therefore only relevant in the context of how it would affect the electorate.

Still, the increase in costs of negotiations and likely government gridlock translates into a loss of gross government trust in the population. Something which is well documented in the literature of polarization. Brady and Kent (2022) attribute the loss of trust in American gubernatorial institutions over the last 50 years to increases in polarization. Even clearer Banda and Kirkland (2018) exclaim that trust in state legislatures fall in accordance with political polarization among the masses in such a way that they attribute polarization is the

reason for the fall of government trust. Polarization causes a slower government with much less government trust. Polarization should therefore be avoided if governments wish for their people to retain trust in them.

Something to keep in mind is that Barber and Mcarthys analysis and most of the literature on polarization and trust are all based on the United States as their case study. A majoritarian democracy in which the electoral system is built to favor large party blocks. In a consensus democracy such as Norway the impact of polarization may be different. For example, one could argue that a majoritarian system breeds polarization as the two large voting blocs breed animosity, as the opposing party is all that stands in the way of one's political goal. The electorate either gets what they want with their own party in power, or they have their opponent.

However, one could also argue that in consensus democracies such as Norway the effect of polarization is even greater. This could be as consensus democracies electoral system electoral system unlike majoritarian democracies is not constructed to push as much policy through, but rather to construct stronger consensuses regarding potential policy. In a consensus model of democracy negotiations are much more important, as there are usually slimmer majorities so more parties are required to implement policy, and the larger number of parties involved, the larger the amount of negotiations are required to implement policy. If polarization affects both the costs and success rate of negotiations as argued in (Barber and McCarty 2013), it will stand to reason that polarization would affect consensus democracies more, not less than majoritarian democracies. Although this is an assumption we have not tested for. Majoritarian democracies may by design have larger levels of polarization, but polarization may have a greater effect on consensus democracies.

Nevertheless, for the sake of this paper we shall assume that polarization affects the respondents in comparable ways in both majoritarian and consensus based electoral systems. This is consistent with the findings of (Knudsen 2021) who documents that his '*findings suggest that the differences in levels of affective political polarization between the United States and Norway are indistinguishable from chance when using a measure of affective political polarization from voters*. Meaning, that in terms of comparing voters in the United States and Norway they are similarly affected by polarization. (Knudsen 2021) also points to that Norway, our case study is significantly less affectively polarized if one is to use a

measure of polarization in terms of respondents view towards political parties. Meaning that respondents have similar affective responses to ideologically opposed voters in democracies, but in the US, we can observe a greater deal of animosity versus the political party. According to Knudsen America is more affectively polarized towards its political parties, but as the affect towards the ingroups cannot be separated from chance, we can assume that affective polarization isn't necessarily a different phenomenon across electoral systems, although the magnitude may vary in terms of affective polarization towards political parties. Findings regarding affective political polarization in America can therefore be generalized to our case study of Norway in terms of voters but are slightly exaggerated in terms of political parties. This means that Norway and America suffer affective polarization in similar manners, and it is therefore in their sincere interests to avoid it. But how does one avoid affective polarization among the electorate? Moreover, what causes affective polarization in the electorate?

Causes of polarization

Bertoa and Rama (2021) wrote a paper where they argue that most scholars operate on a framework of three perspectives which causes polarization, mainly the economic, institutional and cultural dimension.

The economic dimension for polarization is based on the belief that populations hit by economic hardships will often blame those in charge of the economy, eagerly embracing any alternative and the harder the economic hardships have been, the more radical the alternative they are willing to adapt.

As for the institutional perspective, it regards the 'cartel party theory' that the highly professionalized-mainstream political parties have had a systemic move toward centric positions, giving more space and leeway for parties on the political extremities to pick up a higher degree of voters.

Lastly, the cultural dimension for polarization, states that due to the large globalization and Europeanization of the economy, the national sovereignty of economic issues have shrunk. The polity in most countries has therefore shifted its focus to social issues, such as abortion, migration, transgenderism etc. A more personal shift within politics, which seems less prone to compromise. '*The surge in votes for populist parties can be explained not as an entirely economic phenomenon, but in large part as a reaction against progressive cultural change*' (Inglehart and Norris 2019, 50). Adding that '*today the most heated political issues in*

Western societies are cultural'. The 'heatedness' of an issue speaks to the polarized nature of it, as concessions and negotiations are more difficult due to the real-political distance between the most normal positions.

These three dimensions are also complimentary, as (Van Biezen 2004) shows that both cultural shifts as well as the 'crisis of political parties' have led to polarization, especially in the wake of the great recession of 2008, and underlying economic figure, which enforces the synergy effect between these three dimensions for polarization.

To sum up this chapter we can establish that polarization is both a process and phenomenon regarding the shift of the electorate away from itself into different 'poles', characterized by a slower and less efficient government, resulting in a gross loss in government trust. Polarization is caused by economic, institutional and cultural factors, and affective polarization is when the distance between the electorate is a product of personal affective relationships with the political, rather than an ideological cause. So how can polarization our independent variable affect media trust?

How can polarization explain falling trust in public media.

Firstly, if two ideologically opposed new channels exist in a competitive scene. Producing different covers of similar stories, then it stands to reason that the aggregate trust in media falls as competing narratives of causal mechanisms of events could cause a competing sense of truth. As mentioned in Stromback (2020) competing media coverage and access to alternative channels cause a fall in media trust. Polarization could create a broader market for partisan news media, as more fringe leaning media consumers would mean more fringe media markets. Which again would undermine media trust. Additionally, many news channels are public, including the NRK the object of study in this paper. Meaning that they are under the management of the state. If polarization affects all political trust, why wouldn't it affect all public trust. As at the end of the day, the public is the political, at least in representative democracies. Introspectively building on this it could be assumed that a dissatisfaction with the political caused by polarization extends to the public. So, polarization would affect public institutions such as state media, as it is a public institution and under the stewardship of the political institutions. This rationalization is what gives ground to our hypothesis.

Hypothesis

Given the reasons stated above as to why polarization may affect respondent's media trust, our hypothesis for this paper is that affective polarization negatively affects our respondents trust in the NRK. As always, the null hypothesis is to not assume relationships, meaning our hypotheses look like this.

> **H0** = There is no relationship between affective polarization and our respondents trust in the NRK
>
> **H1** = Affective polarization negatively affects our respondents trust in the NRK

Of course, there is always the risk that the relationship is present, but not necessarily as predicted. For instance, there may be a reverse relationship between our independent and dependent variables from what we hypothesize, so for example polarization could cause an increase in media trust rather than a decrease. This would however be caught up in our regressions, a much more serious problem, however, could be that the relationship is inversed meaning that it is media trust which affects polarization. So, we must revise the reasons for why the academic literature implies that this is not the case.

Reverse causality

We have assumed for the purpose of this paper that polarization affects media trust, and that this is the connection we wish to study. As the fall of media trust from 1976 to 2018 (Jones 2018) correlates well with the increase in polarization in the same time area. To avoid a central logical fallacy in this study we must analyze if our dependent variable is in fact the dependent variable. We must examine if the causality we have assumed is in reverse, as our premises for studying this relationship may be reversed. That it is not affective polarization that affects media trust, but media trust that affects affective polarization. Jesper Strombacks analysis (2020) details the rise of alternative news as an explanatory fact for falling media trust. Does this translate to affective polarization? The evidence as explained by Prior (2013) shows that there is no clear link that partisan media causes polarization, and the evidence was '*mixed at best'*. Rather, he states that '*technological change has made it economically viable to cater to smaller audience segments.* That the phenomenon is better explained as '*The media catching up with partisan fringes',* and it is not partisan media which drives polarization, but rather media advances which allow them to pander to smaller ideological groups (Prior 2013, 119). Prior argues that in this sense it is in fact polarization which is driving media trust. As the market for polarized media is causing polarized media.

Another one-off Strombacks points was the prevalence of fake news contributes to a loss of media trust. For this there may be a stronger case as to how media trust could facilitate polarization. Still Osmundsen et al. (2021) shows that the prevalence of fake news is generally driven by goal-oriented actors. '*The main finding was that fake news sharing – as well as sharing of real news- reflects partisan goals.* Moreover, these goals were driven by an out-group animosity of harming one's political rivals. '*People share fake news out of animus toward political opponents rather than positive feelings towards their own party'* Osmundsen et al. (2021, 1012)*.* This out-group animosity which motivates actors to share 'fake news' is as discussed earlier a feature of affective political polarization. Out group animus being the driving force for the spreading of fake news makes it clear that affective polarization causes the spreading of fake news. The more partisan animosity, the more individuals spread fake news. Because of the findings of Prior detailing the lack of evidence suggesting that media trust affects polarization, and Osmundsen which points to Strombacks reasons for faltering media trust being a feature of polarization, we shall assume the relationship goes in the direction that polarization causes a drop in media trust, and not the other way around. Nevertheless, the absence of evidence does not mean the evidence of absence, so it may be that falling media trust causes polarization in Norway, although the literature does not suggest it. Which brings us on to our case of study: Norway.

Case selection

This paper shall examine the degree of affective political polarization in Norway, and its effect on media trust, as Norway is a country characterized by high trust and high media freedom. In the book '*European media in crisis'* (Balčytienė and Juraitė 2015) Norway ranked second in the assessment of both media freedom and trust in Europe. To examine the effect of affective polarization on media trust, it is prudent to examine a nation with few other influences on media trust. To maximize the explanatory factor of polarization, and leave out confounding variables such as media restrictions, which may cause both polarization and loss of media trust. Norway is also a well-documented example, with several bi-annual surveys which ask about central features of polarization and media trust. As well as having both public and private news to open for the possibility of differences in effect of polarization on public vs private news.

Regarding the potential weaknesses of Norway as a case selection, Norway has to its credit very low levels of polarization and very high levels of trust (Balčytienė and Juraitė 2015). This may cause difficulties in our regressions in that certain answers may be underrepresented and may give statistically challenging results. On the other hand, if significant results are found in a nation with such a low level of polarization, it should be easier to extrapolate to other cases.

Dataset

To quantitatively examine the relationship between polarization and media trust, we will require a quantitative dataset which contains data on the variables we wish to study. For this purpose, Ipsos Norways survey 'Norsk Monitor' is uniquely well suited. Ipsos is global leader in market and public research, and this is reflected in its datasets. Giving us a broad range of potential to draw our variables from. Both regarding our dependent variable and our independent variables.

The data set 'Norsk monitor 2022' contains a large amount of table data regarding both trust and consumption of NRK, the main object of our study, but also its competitor TV2. If future study deems it appropriate to compare public and private news. As well as several questions regarding government trust, and attitudes towards political parties.

Norsk monitor is a national survey which has collected panel data from 1985 about general attitudes and values in Norway. This includes various features which can be used as operationalization of polarization..

Another boon in our dataset is that background variables can usually also easily be controlled for, as Norsk Monitor asks each respondent to provide their sex, age, area of residency, area of birth and annual income, as well as another large amount of background variables. Having the ability to easily control for such variables makes it easier to examine for potential confounding. IE, men are more distrusting of media than women, and men consumer less news. If we control for sex in this situation, it will bring more clarity to the analysis.

Our initial hypothesis is that polarization affects the people's faith in public news media, and in this paper the NRK is the stand in for public news.

Central challenges to this study are firstly that of the data set. Norsk Monitor collects its data through a biannual survey, meaning it's privy to the weaknesses of survey data. Survey data is dependent on self-reporting. A practice which could in certain instances create reliability problems. Self-reporting is usually associated with problems such as respondents exaggerating their answers, a restraint to reveal embarrassing or personal details about themselves as well as being very dependent on the respondents' headspace at the moment, rather than their average sobered opinion. Additionally, there may be systemic differences in who partakes in the survey. For example, if a longer education translates into being more willing to partake in surveys, than the survey will not represent the average level of education within the populace. This, however, can be controlled for, by measuring the average education level of the survey, with the average education of the population. Something Norsk Monitor does. As Norsk Monitor is a representative study.

When it comes to measuring values and party affiliation self-reporting is the only alternative unless one was to construct a complex matrix measuring actions and thoughts operationalizing it into a table to measure ideologies. In short, for this study we will have to trust peoples own answers regarding their own beliefs and ideologies.

Operationalizations

Before we start our regressions, we need thorough operationalizations of the elements we wish to study. This paper seeks to examine the link between affective political polarization and media trust in public media channels, mainly the NRK. Affective political polarization being the independent variable and trust in the NRK being the dependent variable. We have already defined affective political polarization, as the distance between population tops between respondents who have an extra-political solidarity to a political group, an extra-political animosity to political groups one does not belong too which produces low government trust. Our questions should try to align with this definition. Our dependent variable on the other hand we have had a harder time trying to define. As Roussau et al (1998, 394) stated we have no clear definition of trust, but we can conceptualize trust through its relationship with social capital. If we follow a Coleman-esque approach of social capital as a composite feature of trust, or a Fukuyama-esque approach of them being

interchangeable. So, for our dependent variables, we shall look for questions which see trust as a degree of overall trustworthiness within the social environment, such as a self-reporting of trust. The alternative, being the Fukuama-esque sense of operationalizing trust would have to do with the respondents understanding of the view of NRK's reciprocal and relational benefit to society. So, for example a question where the respondent can insinuate how important the respondent believed the NRK was to society.

Methodology

To measure the effect these concepts of affective polarization and media trust have on each other, we shall use the method of the Ordinary Least squared regression. Ordinary least squared regressions (OLS) are a form of linear regression for choosing unknown parameters in a linear regression model. OLS however, has a few assumptions which need to be met in order to get unbiased results.

OLS requires a model linear in its parameters, with a random sampling of variables, with an absence of heteroskedasticity, meaning the variance changes over the dimension of the regression. Heteroskedasticity can be controlled for however, through the use of 'heteroskedastic robust standard errors.

An absence of autocorrelation, meaning that a variable is not influenced by itself from a previous timestamp. An absence of multi-collinearity, meaning multiple variables which overlap in their explanatory effect, and it requires that the error terms are normally distributed.

Multicollinearity is the statistical term for two or more independent variables correlating, which can cause problems for statistical tests.

Multicollinearity can be tested for by testing for by using a variance inflation factor.

These regressions will distinguish between trust in terms of the independent variable and trust in terms of the dependent variable. In that the trust in the independent variable is Government trust, and trust in the Media is conceptual trust, as distinguished in the chapter on trust

Our dataset reaches these assumptions, as Norsk Monitor samples the population systematically to reflect the Norwegian society, which means that the collected data is collected in such a way that it reflects a random sample from the population. Not

systematically affected by a lack of a certain age-group, sex, or education level. While heteroskedasticity and multicollinearity can be checked for in our regressions and autocorrelation does not appear unless one measures a variable over a set period of time.

Dependent variable – Media trust

Regarding the dependent variable our survey has 1 question which fits with our Coleman-esque and one question which fits with our Fukuyama-esque understanding of trust. Our Fukuyama-esque definition of trust as synonymous with social capital could be how important the respondent believes the institution is for their society. A recognition of the news as an important and beneficial institution in society is a confession of the trust one has in the role the media has and how well it preforms this role. This question is answered with 4 given answer alternatives. 1-Unimportant, 2-Somewhat unimportant, 3 somewhat important and 4-Very important.

The question is operationalized such: 'how much do you agree with the statement: the NRK is important for society'

For the second approach to operationalizing media trust, we may rely on a Coleman-esque understanding of trust as the respondents own normative understanding of trust. Understanding trust simply as a self-reported degree of trust may cause some problems regarding the cyclical definition of our variable, but it provides a clear conceptual framework and a somewhat standardization of measurements.

For the question: how much do you trust the NRK. The respondents can answer on a measure of 1 to 4. 1- No trust, 2- Some trust, 3-Fairly high trust, 4-Very high trust.

Both these questions have categorical answers from 1 to 4. In terms of regressions this is not exactly perfectly practical as it may cause problems with crooked residuals, however, trust as we have discussed is a difficult concept. Putting a continuous scale for operationalizing trust can cause some problems regarding how clear the question is presented to respondents. For example, on a continuous scale, would a 1 represent no trust, or active distrust. Additionally, it may be more difficult for respondents to know if they are for example a 6 or a 7. With 4 labeled categories it leaves minimal ambiguity for the level of trust the respondents report, although it may not be as precise, and may cause problems with our regressions.

Independent variable - government trust

Regarding the independent variable: affective polarization, we shall break up our definition of affective polarization into 3 parts.

These parts shall then operationalize affective polarization by creating measurable features for the three composite features we have described. Mainly, the low government trust as the product of polarization, the presence of ingroup solidarity and out group animosity, and a measure of polarization as political differences within the electorate.

In terms of government trust we shall run regressions on our dependent variable using variables that indicate low trust in democratic processes and low trust in political praxis as archetypal signs of polarization. Such as questions regarding the respondents self-reported trust in the Norwegian democracy and the self-reported trust in political systems and processes. Such as the question how much trust do you have in the Norwegian democracy, and how much trust do you have in the Norwegian polity.

The two questions which fit this conceptualization are measured in an identical fashion in which the respondents are given 4 possible answers to their question. 1- No trust, 2-Some trust, 3 Fairly high trust and 4-very high trust.

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Background variables

When controlling for the effect that polarization has on media trust, then it is important to control for certain background variables that could systematically affect both our variables in a confounding manner. So, we shall control for certain features to make the analysis as uniform as possible. The selected background variables we shall control for are.

Sex – It may stand to reason that men and women do not trust in a similar fashion and that could affect the validity of our regressions. Much of the scientific literature such as (Haselhuhn 2015) points to there being real differences in trust dynamics between the sexes. For instance, women trust more than men following a violation, women are less likely to lose trust in others following transgressions and women are more likely to regain trust after repeated transgressions. There may be legitimate reasons to control for sex here as the literature indicate several factors which may cause a systemic skewness in trust between the genders.

In our regressions we shall code women as 0 and men as 1, so a positive relationship suggests that men are more trusting than women, while a negative relationship suggests that women are more trusting than men.

Age – It is a well-documented concept that different age groups have different channels of consuming media and may be polarized on different levels. If consuming news from different channels has a significant effect on media trust, it stands to reason that there may be systematic skewness caused by not considering age in our regressions.

Age is already a numeric factor, so it doesn't need to be operationalized differently. In our regressions 1 unit of age increase could equal 1 year older. In such an operationalization, respondents with an age value of 99 will be 99 years of age. A positive relationship with age indicates that the elderly is more affected than youngers on our dependent variable. While a negative relationship indicates that younger people affect the dependent variable more. However, the effect of age on polarization or media trust may not be directly linear. As the elderly and the younger may differentiate themselves in a similar fashion to middle aged people. This can be accounted for by expressing age as a second-degree exponent. However, when running a residuals plot of a linear regression between age and our two dependent variable we can observe that the relationship is in fact linear. Meaning we are not going to transform age into a polynomial.

Highest fulfilled education – (Fredriksen 2016) points to evidence to suggest that education generally increases the degree of trust individuals have. Education is known to increase both the levels of news one consumes and the avenues in which one gets their news. Ones highest fulfilled degree of education may therefore also systematically affect the degree of government trust and outgroup animosity, without affecting their degree of media trust.

We will code highest fulfilled education on a scale from 1-5, where 1 translates into 8 years of education, 2 equals 'ungdomskolenivå' Norwegian junior high school. 3 equals 'vidregående nivå', or Norwegian high school. 4 Equals a lower degree in higher education such as a bachelors while 5 equals a higher degree within higher education such a master's degree or PhD.

Income – Income could very much affect the gross degree of trust an individual feels towards the government and political parties. As mentioned earlier, the economic dimension theory of polarization states that economic hardships are a primary driver of radical animosity towards leading parties and can lead to a systematic skewness of trusting the news, and may confound if it also causes polarization.

We will code income on a scale of 1 to 11. Where 1 communicates the respondent making up to 100 000 Norwegian kroner a year. Each subsequent number communicates another interval of 100 000 kroner until it reaches 8. Meaning 2 represents 100 000 – 199.000 and 3 represents 200 000 -299 000 and so on until it reaches 8, 8 symbolizes 700.000 to 1 million. 9 Then represents those who make between 1 million and 1.5 million a year, 10 represents those who make between 1.5 million and 2 million a year, while 11 represents those who make over 2 million a year. It is probably wise to assume that the effect of income or an increase of income is not constant. But rather varies based on the amount one increases from and too. For example, an annual salary increases from 100.000 kroner to 200.000 kroner a year compromises a more sizeable shift in lifestyle and choices than a shift from 900.000 kroner to 1.000.000 kroner a year. Methodologically speaking, the correct way to control this would have been to employ a log transformation to see the effect of relative gains of income. As going from 1 to 2 may encompass an increase of income of over 100% while going from bracket 8 to 9 may encompass as little as 10%, but as the data collected is given in brackets not as numeric values, we cannot log transform them, as the parameter is too small. This is a weakness of our dataset, and by extension of our paper.

Household income – To avoid discriminating against high income households in which the party asked does not qualify as a high earner, but still lives a similar lifestyle due to a large household income we will include household income in the regression.

Household income will be operationalized identical to income.

Background variables function in such a manner that if the regression coefficient increases or decreases by a measure of 10 percent after running the same regressions while including the background variables, then one of the background variables is functioning as a confounder. 10 percent being the arbitrary cutoff point used in statistics to determine confounder bias as

there is generally always some change in regression coefficients when employing multivariate regressions. Confounder bias is when an unknown variable is explaining variations in both our independent and dependent variables, without them interacting. Such as for example gender as a variable could confound for the negative relationship between height and hair size. The taller one is the shorter hair one has, of course unless controlled for gender as a confounding variable. A problem regarding income and household income could be that they could cause collinearity between the variables in a multivariate regression, as income, age and household income could correlate. Which would be a beach of the assumptions required to use OLS. However, a variance inflation test shows that this is not the case for our regressions.

Initial Regressions

Initially we will start by regressing the questions to which degree the respondents agree with these two statements. In the grand scheme of things, how happy are you with how the Norwegian democracy works as our independent variable, as this represents government trust. With the respondents' answers to the question 'How much do you agree with the following statement: The NRK is beneficial to society as our dependent variable, as this ascertains to media trust.

Table 1

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with democracy	0.475***	0.476***	0.474***	0.474***	0.468***	0.470***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.026)
Sex		0.011				0.014
		(0.025)				(0.035)
Income			-0.019***			-0.034***
			(0.007)			(0.012)
Household income				-0.019**		0.0004
				(0.009)		(0.011)
Education level					0.051***	0.076***
					(0.014)	(0.021)
Age						-0.003***
						(0.001)
Constant	1.571***	1.564***	1.680***	1.676***	1.395***	1.569***
	(0.064)	(0.066)	(0.074)	(0.100)	(0.080)	(0.122)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.161	0.165	0.174
Note:				*$p<0.1$; **$p<0.05$; ***$p<0.01$		

Model 1 regarding the relationship between satisfaction with democracy with the belief of the NRK as positive for Norwegian society shows us a positive and statistically significant relationship on the less than 0.01 level and a regression coefficient of 0.475. So, if the self-reported level of satisfaction with the Norwegian democracy rose by 1, then the reported answer of the NRK's importance rose by 0.475. Controlling for background variables this

estimate sinks to that of 0.470. While still being significant on the same level. This insinuates that the background variables have a small effect on the dependent variable, as it does not qualify at the confounder level of 10%.

On top of that this model has several weaknesses that are worth dissecting. Firstly, there is only 4 steps of data on both variables, which are all located at the ordinal level. Meaning that the data tells us nothing of the distance between datapoints. Since the respondents reacted to the question with text, we can't say anything about the difference in distance between the answers. As the distance between answers such as 'somewhat agree' and 'completely agree', does not necessarily equal the distance between 'somewhat agree' and 'somewhat disagree'. We can't with any certainty extrapolate the use of this data for other purposes than its direction. We can be sure of the direction, as the words all have the same denotative meanings, however the differences in connotation could present difficulties in generalizing.

The normative meaning of these words in Norwegian at the time of 2021 show that people will rate the NRK 0.470 point higher for every increase in level of satisfaction in the Norwegian democracy, however, due to the nature of the level of data the takeaways from such a model is the direction and its statistical significance.

Model 2 will then be regressing the same measure for polarization being the respondent's satisfaction with the Norwegian democracy with the coleman-esque operationalization of trust, that being a respondents self-reported trust in the institution. Model 2 shows another clear positive and statistically significant relationship between the variables. For every extra day of the week the respondent consumes media from the main channel of NRK, it increases their belief that the NRK is important for the Norwegian society by 0.460. This regression is statistically significant with a p-level of less than 0.1 and background variables have no effect on the regression coefficient.

Table 2

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with democracy	0.460***	0.459***	0.462***	0.469***	0.454***	0.460***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.028)
Sex		-0.029				-0.001
		(0.028)				(0.037)
Income			0.002			-0.040***
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Household income				-0.003		-0.005
				(0.010)		(0.012)
Education level					0.006***	0.007***
					(0.001)	(0.001)
Age						0.115***
						(0.022)
Constant	1.944***	1.962***	1.939***	1.959***	1.655***	1.377***
	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.082)	(0.108)	(0.077)	(0.129)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.131	0.131	0.130	0.137	0.152	0.181

Note:	$^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Model 2 is the last model regarding the respondent's satisfaction with the Norwegian democracy and it measures the relationship between the independent variable with the self-reported trust the respondent places in the NRK.

Satisfaction with democracy, however, is not the only operationalization of low trust that we can use. To mitigate the risk of misunderstanding we shall also regress the same question of degree of agreeing with how important the NRK is to society and how much the respondent themselves rapport trust in the NRK with how the respondents reply to the question of 'in the grand scheme of things how happy are with how Norwegian politics work'. Although polarization might not be the only explanatory feature for why people are unhappy with politics, it stands to reason that people further away from the political agenda would be less satisfied with politics. Directly translated the Norwegian word 'politikken' means the politics, but its normative meaning is closer to the English word 'the polity'. As it refers to

any and all entities and actors associated with politics. Both the process and its actors. While the English word 'polity' refers to an identifiable political entity. So when someone speaks of the polity in a nation one speaks of in a sense both the actors and the processes.

Models 3 and 4 shows us even more positive and statistically significant relationships between our independent variable and our dependent variables. As shown below.

Table 3

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with polity	0.277	0.276	0.281	0.292***	0.267***	0.271***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.019)
Sex		-0.010				0.025
		(0.028)				(0.038)
Income			-0.001			-0.037***
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Household income				-0.005		-0.005
				(0.010)		(0.012)
Education level					0.081***	0.114***
					(0.016)	(0.023)
Age						0.006***
						(0.001)
Constant	2.535*	2.542**	2.531***	2.534***	2.250***	2.043***
	(0.048)	(0.052)	(0.062)	(0.086)	(0.073)	(0.113)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.107	0.107	0.110	0.116	0.115	0.146

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Model 3 shows us that the more satisfied the respondent is with the polity, the higher they are likely to agree with the NRK's importance to society. With a regression coefficient of 0.277. This regression is also statistically significant at the below 0.1% level. Controlling for background variables however shows a low drop in the regression coefficient to 0.271, while remaining statistically significant, meaning the confounding is below 10% and we can assume no confounders. This model however, had a slightly lower adjusted r squared value of

only 0.146, meaning that the regressions stood for 14.6% of the variation within the dataset. This is much lower than the previous models as model 1 showed a 17.5% explanatory factor while model 2 shows approximately 18.1%.

While table 4 shows us similar results in that satisfaction with polity has a positive and significant relationship with one's self-reported personal trust in the NRK. With a regression coefficient of 0.263. Meaning that on average increasing 1 unit of measurement in the question of satisfaction with the polity increases the score of the self-reported trust in the NRK but 0.263 units. Controlling this for background variables shows a slight increase in the regression coefficient from 0.263 to 0.281, meaning it is just under the 10 percent cutoff point of having to assume confounders. The adjusted r-squared level of these models both table 4 and table 4 with background variables are 0.109 and 0.129 respectively.

Table 4

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with polity	0.262***	0.263***	0.263***	0.269***	0.256***	0.278***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.018)
Sex		0.027				0.040
		(0.026)				(0.036)
Income			-0.021***			-0.030**
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Household income				-0.020**		-0.0001
				(0.009)		(0.012)
Education level						-0.005***
						(0.001)
Age					0.050***	0.075***
					(0.015)	(0.022)
Constant	2.258***	2.240***	2.368***	2.336***	2.081***	2.249***
	(0.045)	(0.048)	(0.057)	(0.081)	(0.068)	(0.107)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.111	0.111	0.114	0.113	0.114	0.134
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01		

Secondly, these questions don't measure what we wish to study. We wished to study the effect of polarization on media trust, while this regression was based on questions regarding trust in democracy, not necessarily polarization. A product of polarization is a decrease of trust in political institutions, however conceptually this is not a necessity to polarization, just a typical effect. The last model measures the degree of polarization the respondents feel towards the conceptual understanding of democracy. In this respect, this question measures mass polarization. As a feature of how distraught the public is feeling with the political landscape. As discussed earlier, polarization is linked to falling trust in public institutions, however it is not the only explanatory factor of falling trust within civic life. To find a clearer link between polarization and media trust we shall construct a metric for polarization which fits with our definition of out group animosity given in-group belonging.

Independent variable 2- Belonging

As discussed earlier, the previous regressions are imperfect reflections of polarization, as even though polarization can be an explanatory variable in declining trust in government, its processes and its actors, it is not the only explanatory factor. Conceptually one could argue that all features and forms of disliking the polity, the politicians or the electorate across any political cleavage can be seen as polarization, as the distrust represents a real distance within prominent features which can explain political differences. Such as ideology, temperament or as discussed earlier group identity. This explanation, among other things does not explain intraparty distrust. For example, lifelong members of a party can be suspicious of actors within their own party's integrity. As mentioned earlier, trust in the political science literature is a phenomenon that lacks a definition, conceptual framework and standard measurements and therefore to assume that you can be distrustful of people you only disagree with would be a logical fallacy based on incomplete information. It's like stating that 'we cannot agree on what trust is, but we can be certain that you can only distrust your political opponents'.

Polarization should therefore by no account be seen only through a lens of the degree of trust you have in politics. As it affects the degree of distrust one has in opposing political entities, along with how much trust you place in your own political parties.

To control for polarization and not general distrust and to create questions closer to our definition of affective polarization as intra-group solidarity and outgroup animosity plus low public trust, we will create an index regarding respondents' willingness to vote for certain political parties. As a measure of their out-group animosity. As mentioned earlier, 'partyism' is a form of affective political polarization in which the political party is the group the individual feels affiliated with. So, questions regarding parties and respondent and respondents' relationships with parties could be a good measure of affective political polarization. This supposes that the party is the dominant political group individuals associate with, rather than ethnic, religious or geographic groups.

Among other questions in our questionnaire, the respondents are asked 'if a general election was to be held tomorrow, what are the chances that you would vote for party X'? The question is asked 9 times, in which the X is changed with the different parties represented in the Norwegian parliament in as of the time period 2017-2021. In which all parties are given a score of 1-10. Where 10 is assured, and a score of 1 indicates that the respondent would not consider voting for this party under any terms.

Theoretically, if categorized correctly, such an index would display to which degree one holds favorable views of one's own politics, contrasted by one's animus toward the opposing political block. An individual who holds views further from the hypothetical center of the political axis would give higher marks to parties within their side of the typical left/right cleavage, while simultaneously rewarding low marks to those on the opposing side. High marks will be classified as a score between 8-10 while low marks shall be classified as 1-3. Such an index would characterize having polarized views as giving a high score to one party while giving low scores to two parties on the other side of the typical left/right cleavage. We will the parties Rødt, Sosialistisk Venstreparti, Arbeidpartiet and Senterpartiet as left-wing parties, while Kristelig Folkeparti, Venstre, Høyre and Fremskrittspartiet as right-wing parties. These being the only parties present in the Norwegian parliament from 2017 to 2021.

The Norwegian electoral process is constructed in such a way that the voter does not possess a single transferable vote, so the voters are incentivized to only familiarize one with their own party. Uncertainty within the electoral process needlessly complicates the process for the individual and is therefore not in their own interest. As the respondents only cast one vote per

election, they are less likely to have equally favorable views of other parties. Given the way the question is phrased respondents might also understand it as a cumulative probability, so if it is very likely for a voter to vote for for example the Christian democrats, the KRF, that makes it less likely for them to vote for the conservative party Høyre. The literature on affective political polarization is as mentioned ambiguous in terms of the prime motivation for distrust, but also regarding the necessity of the uniqueness of an in-group solidarity. Is there a difference between belonging to one distinct political entity or can a broader alliance of political groups be permissible for the in-group solidarity required for affective political polarization. Group solidarity generally insinuates the presence of an affective 'home' in the group, nevertheless the political 'home' could be outside of the party structure and creating possibilities for overlapping solidarity among parties. For example, as mentioned earlier the most polarized topics in the modern world are social ones. So, if one was to have a strong conservative social group of belonging, such as for example a conservative church. It may cause overlap in party solidarity within the parties which represent the interests of said church. We shall therefore not conceptualize in-group solidarity as dependent on a unique adherence to a single political party. Instead, we shall operationalize it as adhering to at least one political party.

On the other hand, while marking the opposing block, we should state that they must mark two parties with low scores, as if we were to see the parties relative to each other the parties on the outer edges of the parliamentary parties, those being FRP on the right and RØDT on the left would probably warrant lower marks. A moderate right-wing voter would probably not consider a radical switch to the far left. Usually the furthest-out alternatives are the last party's individual consider voting for. To avoid the potential bias of everyone voting for the party furthest from them with low marks. This index provides a way to control for general distrust, as it shows that the respondents have favorable views on one of their parties, while also having a general distrust of more than one party on the opposing side of the political aisle. This metric fits well with our paper's operationalization of affective polarization as the presence of ingroup solidarity, outgroup animosity, plus distrust.

This matrix, however, bases itself on the fundamental analytical pattern of a majoritarian democracy. In which the right-left cleavage is the central cleavage responsible for animosity between political parties. As discussed earlier, Norway is a consensus democracy, and

consensus democracies have political cleavages that don't need to run alongside an arbitrary left-right axis. Social and cultural issues are among the most contentious in modern societies, and those don't necessarily correlate to our operationalized right-left axis.

Say for example that a single-issue respondent with a clear environmental focus was to respond to this survey. This respondent would respond with a high degree of confidence within parties that prioritize environmental issues and solutions, regardless of right/left distribution. Say for example that they were to declare their vote for SV or Venstre. As these parties are the ones traditionally associated with a clear environmental focus. These parties are on different sides of our operationalized left-right axis and would likely classify themselves such as well. Meaning that our respondent would prioritize parties independently of the right/left divide.

Let's say hypothetically that our respondent declared the same degree of confidence in these two parties, in which case it would be ambiguous how to categorize which side of the right-left axis our respondent would belong too. It is also likely that our respondent would be equally minded in terms of categorizing their least favorite parties, voting parties they view as negligent on the climate crises as low likelihood of getting their vote regardless of political axis. Our matrix for operationalizing ingroup solidarity and outgroup animosity as needing to be on diametrically opposed political axis's is therefore illogical.

We shall instead operationalize affective polarization by categorizing how many parties the respondents regarded as 'unlikely to vote for' as in creating a metric in which the more parties they have declared a likeliness of between 1-3 to vote for the more out-group animosity they have. By operationalizing out-group animosity this way, we have a more metric way of categorizing the degree of universality of out-group animosity. A higher score means more parties in the Norwegian parliament the respondent would not consider voting for. In this way we have a larger metric degree of measuring out-group animosity. We can then create a new matrix in which we keep the same criteria for in-group solidarity, scoring between 8-10 on the likelihood of voting for at least one party. The academic literature on in-group solidarity has not exclusively emphasized the importance of uniqueness in one's group solidarity, so we shall treat the presence of in-group solidarity, here operationalized as the response of between 8-10 for the likeliness of voting for at least one party as a dichotomy. Regardless of the parties one would consider voting for. Meaning we will treat the willingness to vote for all 9 parties between 8-10 like the same as willing to only vote for one

party between 8-10, as they both insinuate a group solidarity, as the party is a group, and not a perfect reflection of ideology. We can then regress the number of unfavorable parties, given in-group solidarity to at least one group, and measure that against our dependent variables regarding trust. The data within our new matrix is also on the continuous level, meaning we have a clear hierarchy and a natural null point. The highest level of data. This table tells us how much out-party animosity the respondent feels towards the political parties in the Norwegian parliament. A definitive feature of out group animosity given in group solidarity.

Our new variable which we shall code negative-polarization regards the number of parties the respondent would likely not vote for, scored between 1-3. The maximum number of parties asked for is 9, but as this is dependent on having a political 'home' within one party, the maximum number of parties possible to give low scores would be 8. So the score will be on a scale from 1-8.

Table 5

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amount of parties the respondent would not vote for given political belonging	-0.067***	-0.067***	-0.067***	-0.065***	-0.065***	-0.063***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Sex		0.005				-0.006
		(0.027)				(0.038)
Income						-0.002*
						(0.001)
Household income			-0.010			-0.017
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Education level				-0.011		0.003
				(0.010)		(0.012)
Age					0.072***	
					(0.015)	
Constant	3.474***	3.472***	3.524***	3.504***	3.182***	3.581***
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.053)	(0.077)	(0.074)	(0.083)
Observations	2,776	2,776	2,472	1,541	2,776	1,526
Adjusted R^2	0.026	0.025	0.027	0.026	0.033	0.030
Note:						*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Our regressions here show us a significant and negative relationship between animosity and our two independent variables. Meaning that the more parties you would not consider voting for, the less trust you have in the NRK. When measured on self-reported trust in the NRK, our variable for negative polarization has a regression coefficient of -0.067 meaning for each additional party the respondents report not wanting to vote for, their reported trust in the NRK sinks by 0.067. When controlled for our background variables this sinks to -0.063 so we can assume no confounders among our background variables. As the change in regression

coefficient is less than 10%. Given the low regression coefficient, it is unsurprising that the adjusted r squared is low at 0.026 and 0.030 when controlling for background variables. Meaning that outgroup animosity explains for roughly 2.6% of variation in terms of personal reported trust in the NRK.

Regarding the NRK's recognized benefit to society, the regression coefficient is even lower at -0.044, while staying statistically significant at the less than 0.01% level. When controlling for background variables the negative relationship becomes stronger at -0.058 meaning strong confounding background variables as the controlled for coefficient has a difference which is greater than 10 percent. Which in this case is age, as the regression coefficient had the greatest change when controlling for age. Including confounding variables in the model adjusts for their effect, giving us a more accurate estimate of the effect of the outcome.

These regressions measure the number of parties the respondents wouldn't vote for, which means that in this regards the answers of those who actively dislike parties, but it says nothing about the spread of respondent's answers regarding their positive attitudes towards more than one party, or how they feel about the parties in the middle. Our last regressions will therefore focus on giving a more holistic representation of polarization as not necessarily just the animosity towards parties, but rather a measure of the total spread of respondents' answers, creating a metric for polarization as the relative distance between voter's total preferences for parties, and not animosity.

Table 6

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amount of parties the respondent would not vote for given political belonging	-0.044***	-0.043***	-0.045***	-0.045***	-0.042***	-0.058***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.011)
Sex		-0.039				-0.036
		(0.029)				(0.039)
Income						0.009***
						(0.001)
Household income			0.007			-0.021
			(0.008)			(0.013)
Education level				0.005		-0.001
				(0.010)		(0.013)
Age					0.095***	
					(0.016)	
Constant	3.688***	3.705***	3.660***	3.679***	3.300***	3.454***
	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.058)	(0.081)	(0.079)	(0.085)
Observations	2,776	2,776	2,472	1,541	2,776	1,526
Adjusted R^2	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.021	0.057

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Independent variable 3- polarization

Lastly, we will create another metric for polarization, as so far, we have measured the consequences of affective polarization ie. Low government trust, with a composite feature of affective polarization, that being the degree of animosity towards other parties in the parliament given their belonging to a political group.

We shall now measure the actual distance between voters by adding each respondents' answers to the questions regarding the likeliness of voting for every party to a table and checking the variance. The variance is a measure of how much the answers vary and is found by finding the squared average from the mean. This means that respondents who give the largest amounts of 10s and 1s in the questionnaire regarding the likeliness of voting for said party will be the most 'partysan', while those who place most parties closer together, say hypothetically giving every party a score of 5, would be the least.

As stated, polarization only exists in between respondents. Respondents can therefore not be polarized. Yet we can measure the distance between the favorability they have for their preferred parties with the degree of un-favorability they feel for the other parties. Namely which the Norwegian parties in parliament, and a higher mean suggests both a higher degree

of favorability for parties they agree with and animosity for parties they do not favor. The variance in this way can when compared to the mean of other respondent's function as a measure for Polarization. Given that affect is the primary motivator for individuals, then this gives us another measure for affective polarization.

Another feature to consider is that larger parties may not face the brunt of the animosity, but the animosity could likely concentrate among smaller parties, as they are less likely to draw votes than bigger parties. Larger parties' commands confidence on behalf of several factors that smaller parties do not possess to equal degree, such as legacy and numbers, and voters are naturally drawn to larger parties.

We should therefore control the variance for a measure of how large the party is to ensure uniformity in animosity, and not a systematic bias based on size. So, we shall divide the variance by a measure of how large the party is. Doing so we shall focus on measures that translate to real political power and size, so the percentage of seats occupied in parliament from 2017 to the election in 2021 is the best answer, as our dataset is collected right before the election of 2021, meaning that the government at the time were elected in 2017. Even though we could have used several other metrics such as the percentage of the popular vote that party received or the number of members it has, these measures don't translate into direct political powers. Norway has a proportional representation system for 150 of their 169 parliamentary seats, while the remaining are granted as 'equalization mandates'(Utgjevningsmandater), representing counties, rather than population. There is therefore not a uniform weighting of democratic votes in Norway. A party's mandates in parliament are therefore a better measure of its real political power than the proportion of the popular vote it gets, as equalization mandates makes the popular vote not a sufficient operationalization of political representation.

We will then find the total percentage of mandates in the Norwegian parliament this party has. For example, if the labor party has 49 mandates in the parliament, we will find the percentage this is of the 169 total seats in parliament. The labor party will have 28.9% of the total mandates in parliament. We will multiply the variance within the respondents' answers regarding the likelihood of voting for a certain party with their percentage of votes. So, in the labor parties' case that would be equal to variance times 0.289.

We shall regress both our weighted and unweighted models for polarization on our dependent variables for NRK trust.

Table 7

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Varians in respondents	0.040***	0.039***	0.040***	0.049***	0.037***	0.049***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)
Sex		-0.025				0.001
		(0.030)				(0.042)
Income						0.006***
						(0.001)
Household income			0.009			-0.015
			(0.008)			(0.014)
Education level				0.006		0.002
				(0.011)		(0.014)
Age					0.110***	
					(0.017)	
Constant	3.023***	3.040***	2.974***	2.884***	2.614***	2.687***
	(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.063)	(0.089)	(0.078)	(0.098)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.030	0.030	0.032	0.048	0.044	0.066

Note: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Our unweighted variable for polarization shows a positive relationship of 0.04 with self-reported trust. The greater the degree of variance the population sees, the more the population agree to the statement that the NRK is important to society. This tables regression, however, is confounded by education level. As adding education level to the regression causes its regression coefficient to jump from 0.040 to 0.049, a jump of over 20%.

This means quite counter intuitively that a higher degree of variance increases the degree of trust the respondents place in the NRK.

Table 8

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Varians in respondents answers regarding political parties	0.033***	0.033***	0.033***	0.037***	0.031***	0.037***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Sex		0.012				0.010
		(0.029)				(0.040)
Income						-0.004***
						(0.001)
Household income			-0.014*			-0.014
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Education level				-0.011		0.006
				(0.010)		(0.013)
Age					0.080***	
					(0.016)	
Constant	2.764***	2.756***	2.829***	2.751***	2.466***	2.890***
	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.059)	(0.084)	(0.073)	(0.094)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.023	0.026	0.030	0.032	0.040

Note: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

When checking the unweighted polarization with our Coleman-esque understanding of trust as self-reported trust it shows a regression coefficient of 0.033 with a confounding variable on education level at 0.034, meaning a relationship of 11%, marginally above the cutoff point. Nevertheless, the regression coefficient is very weak. As the max variance would be 25, meaning that the max amount of effect variance in the respondent's answers regarding political parties would be 0.925, as it is equal to 0.037 the regression coefficient times the max number the variable may be. 0.925 being the difference between a person giving each party the same grade, and a person giving only 10s and 1s to parties. The 10% change in regression coefficients underline the presence of age as another confounder.

Table 9

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Weighted varians in respondents answers regarding political parties	0.371^{***}	0.367^{***}	0.370^{***}	0.766^{***}	0.380^{***}	0.604^{***}
	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.129)	(0.169)	(0.119)	(0.174)
Sex		-0.058^{*}				-0.038
		(0.031)				(0.042)
Income						0.005^{***}
						(0.001)
Household income			0.005			-0.018
			(0.008)			(0.014)
Education level				0.004		0.004
				(0.011)		(0.014)
Age					0.122^{***}	
					(0.017)	
Constant	3.364^{***}	3.396^{***}	3.343^{***}	3.272^{***}	2.885^{***}	3.147^{***}
	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.047)	(0.074)	(0.072)	(0.083)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.012	0.021	0.025

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

The confounding variables are sizably worse when weighted for by the number of mandates the parties have in parliament. Although the regression coefficient is nearly tenfold stronger at 0.371 implying heavily that large parties face much less polarization then, while still being statistically significant on the less than 0.01% level, this is a very weak correlation.

When we regress our unweighted variable for polarization on the self-reported recognition of NRK as an important factor in the Norwegian society we get a similarly strong correlation of 2.7. Meaning that a unit increase in the variance of political parties translates to an increase of 0.27 in our dependent variable, the self-reported trust in the NRK.

This is, however, strongly confounded by age and education level, as the background variables cause large confounding relationships, far above the 10% cutoff mark. Almost equal to the regression coefficient itself.

Table 10

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Weighted varians in respondents answers regarding political parties	0.270**	0.269**	0.278**	0.376**	0.277**	0.578***
	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.120)	(0.160)	(0.112)	(0.165)
Sex		-0.017				-0.019
		(0.029)				(0.040)
Income						-0.005***
						(0.001)
Household income				-0.017**		-0.017
				(0.008)		(0.013)
Education level					-0.012	0.007
					(0.011)	(0.013)
Age						0.090***
						(0.016)
Constant	3.054***	3.063***	3.137***	3.071***	2.700***	3.230***
	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.044)	(0.070)	(0.067)	(0.079)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.003	0.013	0.016

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Discussion

In examining the relationship between affective polarization and trust in the NRK we have discovered statistically significant relationships between the two concepts in every way we have selected to study them, still we have also found evidence of confounder bias in our last 5 models. We have utilized an analytical approach of dividing our independent variable into its consequences and two forms of its composite features. The independent variables we have used are government trust, as a measure of the consequences of polarization, outgroup animosity as the distinctive feature of affective polarization, and a measure of polarization itself. In which we checked the variance in voter likeliness to vote for parties and divided that by the parties' size.

Our regressions show that there is a statistically significant link between all our measures for government trust, our measures for out-group animosity and our measures for polarization with both our conceptual operationalizations of trust in the NRK. In which we operationalized trust as self-reported trust or a recognition of the NRK's reciprocal benefit for society. As mentioned, a difficult task while working with trust is the lack of conceptual frameworks and standardization of measurements. In this way, self-reported trust and self-reported confidence of the institutions benefit for society function as a measurement which

fits the conceptual frameworks summarized by Son and Feng (2019). Still, it is contingent on the understanding of trust as conceptualized by Coleman or Fukuyama.

This is shown again in our regressions on the relationship between government trust and media trust. As most of the literature on polarization points to declining trust in public institutions such as documented in (Banda and Kirkland 2018). A lower degree of trust in the government causes a shift to a lower degree of trust in the news. A noticeable distinction here, however, is that the NRK is public news, public owned and operated. There might be a meaningful difference in the degree low government trust affects private news differently, for breaking it down in clear terms, if you don't trust the government, you don't trust its news channels. This doesn't necessarily mean you don't trust its competitors. People can even make the argument that private news can to a larger degree pivot to partisan viewers, better than public new can. Additionally, the NRK produces more than simply news, and it is a multifaceted media organization, that produces informative and entertainment content as well. Something our questionnaire poorly controls for. Respondents were asked about their trust in the NRK, or the belief they have that the NRK is a benefit to society. Not the degree of trust they have in the NRK's news, and not the degree of benefit the NRK's news is to society. Nevertheless, it goes to show that government trust correlates with media trust. Government trust, however, is not the same as polarization, but rather a consequence of it.

Still, animosity reflects media trust. Our regressions reflect this by showing us that the number of parties an individual would not consider voting for in an election influences the degree of trust the respondent placed in the NRK. The longer the distance between the possibility of voting for a party, the higher degree of out-group animosity, and the larger number of parties one feels animus against the larger degree of gross animosity in the population. If animosity is the driver for spreading false news as evident in Osmundsen et al. (2021), then animosity can be explained as a reason for the decrease in media trust. But animosity isn't the greatest functional operationalization of polarization, as it only accounts for the extremes. Our measure of polarization as the variance of the response's individuals give the parties in the Norwegian parliament can therefore function as a measure of seeing polarization as a whole, and not simply only as the degree of animosity someone belonging to a political group has.

This measure, however, have given us counterintuitive results. Even when weighted for party size to accommodate the fact that different sizes of party's face polarization differently. The regressions indicate that polarization, increases media trust, something which is the complete counter to our hypothesis.

As animosity showed a negative relationship between the number of parties the respondent wouldn't vote for and media trust, why would variance show a positive relationship? This may be because variance also includes high scores. So, it is more a measure of political interest, than political division. Giving different scores to different parties indicate a mental categorization on which party the respondent would place in which order. Which would require more thought than giving each party the same score, which would probably be around the mean. As variance is a measure of the average distance from the mean the politically disinterested would probably give answers around the mean, while the politically active would have answers that vary more. Intuitively it could be assumed that the politically active consume more political news and could therefore have a higher degree of trust in the NRK, as consuming news increases the trust individuals have in news (Stromback 2020). Yet, this is still to be tested.

Findings

So, do these findings insinuate a relationship between affective polarization and a loss of media trust? Firstly, we are entirely dependent on the assumption based on the paper of Omundsen et al (2021) and Prior (2013) that the causes of falling media trust, as detailed by (Stromback 2020) are caused by features of polarization. Their findings regarding poor evidence of the relationship being the inverse of what we have suggested in this paper, namely that low media trust sparks polarization. Nevertheless, the absence of evidence does not equal the evidence of absence, meaning that even though the literature suggests no link, it would be prudent not to outright deny the possibility of a reverse causality. Building on the assumption of an absence of a reversed causality between media trust and polarization, our hypothesis was that affective polarization causes a loss of trust in the NRK, as the NRK is public media, and it is a fair assumption to believe that public news requires public trust something which affective polarization affects negatively. Polarization also creates a larger market for alternative news, which again negatively affects media trust. Ignoring that the NRK is a multifaceted and news is not the only trust generating process they possess.

We have wished to study affective political polarization and have in pursuit of this goal examined the consequences and features of affective political polarization on these operationalizations for media trust. In terms of consequences, affective polarization is not the only factor which affects government trust, as there is a myriad of others. Meaning that in this case, it leaves us open to confounder bias in variables we haven't checked for. We cannot trust the degree to which our relationship is not caused by confounding variables which we have not yet examined.

Animosity as operationalized in this paper is caused by an unwillingness to vote for other political parties. Or half the described effect of affective polarization. This is of course if we stick with the assumptions of (Iyengar and Sood 2012). That affect is the main reason for political affiliation, in that case animosity is a product of affective polarization. The dissenting opinion here would be that political polarization can also be ideological, and not purely a product of affect. Given this conceptual understanding of polarization respondents' animosity towards other parties is a mix of affect and ideology. People still have agency over their thoughts and values, but one's ideology is largely based on situational conditions. (Iyengar and Sood, 2012) also don't outright deny this, but rather underline that affect is the main drive for political belonging. Animosity as a metric for affective polarization is dependent on this assumption, and even so, the minority degree of animosity which is ideologically determined is not controlled for. Leaving another case of bias in which we cannot determine the explanatory effect of animosity as a product of affective polarization. Still, we assume that affect, not ideology is the driving force for participation within politics. In which case animosity as a feature of affective polarization, affects media trust.

Our measure for polarization lastly, has no models that do not get heavily confounded by age and education. Nevertheless, they were all significant with p-values at low levels, typically less than 0.01% even when controlling for age and education. Meaning in terms of pure polarization these two phenomena, age and education are closely related to polarization.

Building on that, interestingly, age and education level confounded much more when weighting the polarization index on party size while remaining statistically significant, meaning that age and education confound more when the parties are weighted for their political power in parliament. Additionally, our metric for polarization shows that the higher variance shows a positive relationship with media trust, so a higher variance induces more trust in news. As a higher variance indicates more political interest, as the case is more

important to the respondent and therefore requires them to consume more news. In this way, polarization may increase media trust, but this may also be simply a measure of political passion, rather than political polarization. As politically active respondents are more likely to give more varied responses, as they have more detailed perspectives on different parties due to their increased interactions with the political arena, and their answers should therefore deviate more from the mean, causing an increase in variance.

Conclusion

If trust is to be defined in a Coleman-esque view as self-reported trust, or a Fukuyama-esque view of confidence the respondent places in the institutions benefit for society, and affective polarization could be understood as polarization driven by personal affect characterized by an ingroup solidarity and outgroup animosity, then this paper shows that affective polarization, in which the political party is the political group the respondent identifies with, affects trust. This is of course given the assumptions stated in the scientific literature insinuating that it is not media trust that leads to polarization.

As summarized in this paper, affective polarization is characterized by ingroup-solidarity and outgroup-animosity, and it has the consequence of causing low trust in government proceedings, electoral processes, and political actors. By extension self-reported low trust in the Norwegian government, and its processes greatly affects self-reported trust in the NRK, but the evidence of this being caused solely by polarization is weak. As polarization is not the only cause of a loss of government trust.

Secondly, polarization operationalized as outgroup-animosity can explain a much lower degree of variation within trust in the NRK than government trust does but can to a higher degree of certainty be attributed to affective political polarization. The more parties you wouldn't vote for, the less trust you have in the NRK. Animosity for political parties causes a drop in trust.

Lastly, polarization as a measure of the variance in favorability shows another statistically significant and positive relationship, which may be caused by polarization acting as a source for political interests, causing more consumption of news. A practice which builds trust according to Jesper Stromback (2020).

Our study is limited to self-reporting, and a nation characterized by low polarization and high trust. That being Norway, still this study can open for larger systematic studies examining the

relationship between polarization and news. Or alternatively age, education level and polarization. Opening for potential skewedness's such as recency bias, or a different effect of private vs public news on the gross degree of trust they can sustain under a polarized political climate.

APPENDIX

Table 1

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with democracy	0.475***	0.476***	0.474***	0.474***	0.468***	0.470***
	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.026)	(0.020)	(0.026)
Sex		0.011				0.014
		(0.025)				(0.035)
Income			-0.019***			-0.034***
			(0.007)			(0.012)
Household income				-0.019**		0.0004
				(0.009)		(0.011)
Education level					0.051***	0.076***
					(0.014)	(0.021)
Age						-0.003***
						(0.001)
Constant	1.571***	1.564***	1.680***	1.676***	1.395***	1.569***
	(0.064)	(0.066)	(0.074)	(0.100)	(0.080)	(0.122)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.161	0.165	0.174

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 2

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with democracy	0.460***	0.459***	0.462***	0.469***	0.454***	0.460***
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.028)	(0.021)	(0.028)
Sex		-0.029				-0.001
		(0.028)				(0.037)
Income			0.002			-0.040***
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Household income				-0.003		-0.005
				(0.010)		(0.012)
Education level					0.006***	0.007***
					(0.001)	(0.001)
Age						0.115***
						(0.022)
Constant	1.944***	1.962***	1.939***	1.959***	1.655***	1.377***
	(0.070)	(0.072)	(0.082)	(0.108)	(0.077)	(0.129)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.131	0.131	0.130	0.137	0.152	0.181

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table 3

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with polity	0.277	0.276	0.281	0.292***	0.267***	0.271***
	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.014)	(0.019)
Sex		-0.010				0.025
		(0.028)				(0.038)
Income			-0.001			-0.037***
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Household income				-0.005		-0.005
				(0.010)		(0.012)
Education level					0.081***	0.114***
					(0.016)	(0.023)
Age						0.006***
						(0.001)
Constant	2.535*	2.542**	2.531***	2.534***	2.250***	2.043***
	(0.048)	(0.052)	(0.062)	(0.086)	(0.073)	(0.113)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.107	0.107	0.110	0.116	0.115	0.146

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table 4

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Satisfaction with polity	0.262***	0.263***	0.263***	0.269***	0.256***	0.278***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.018)	(0.013)	(0.018)
Sex		0.027				0.040
		(0.026)				(0.036)
Income			-0.021***			-0.030**
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Household income				-0.020**		-0.0001
				(0.009)		(0.012)
Education level						-0.005***
						(0.001)
Age					0.050***	0.075***
					(0.015)	(0.022)
Constant	2.258***	2.240***	2.368***	2.336***	2.081***	2.249***
	(0.045)	(0.048)	(0.057)	(0.081)	(0.068)	(0.107)
Observations	3,069	3,069	2,742	1,724	3,069	1,708
Adjusted R^2	0.111	0.111	0.114	0.113	0.114	0.134

Note: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table 5

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amount of parties the respondent would not vote for given political belonging	-0.067***	-0.067***	-0.067***	-0.065***	-0.065***	-0.063***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.010)	(0.008)	(0.010)
Sex		0.005				-0.006
		(0.027)				(0.038)
Income						-0.002*
						(0.001)
Household income			-0.010			-0.017
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Education level				-0.011		0.003
				(0.010)		(0.012)
Age					0.072***	
					(0.015)	
Constant	3.474***	3.472***	3.524***	3.504***	3.182***	3.581***
	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.053)	(0.077)	(0.074)	(0.083)
Observations	2,776	2,776	2,472	1,541	2,776	1,526
Adjusted R^2	0.026	0.025	0.027	0.026	0.033	0.030

Note: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table 6

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Amount of parties the respondent would not vote for given political belonging	-0.044***	-0.043***	-0.045***	-0.045***	-0.042***	-0.058***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.008)	(0.011)
Sex		-0.039				-0.036
		(0.029)				(0.039)
Income						0.009***
						(0.001)
Household income			0.007			-0.021
			(0.008)			(0.013)
Education level				0.005		-0.001
				(0.010)		(0.013)
Age					0.095***	
					(0.016)	
Constant	3.688***	3.705***	3.660***	3.679***	3.300***	3.454***
	(0.044)	(0.045)	(0.058)	(0.081)	(0.079)	(0.085)
Observations	2,776	2,776	2,472	1,541	2,776	1,526
Adjusted R^2	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.010	0.021	0.057

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 7

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Varians in respondents	0.040***	0.039***	0.040***	0.049***	0.037***	0.049***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.006)
Sex		-0.025				0.001
		(0.030)				(0.042)
Income						0.006***
						(0.001)
Household income			0.009			-0.015
			(0.008)			(0.014)
Education level				0.006		0.002
				(0.011)		(0.014)
Age					0.110***	
					(0.017)	
Constant	3.023***	3.040***	2.974***	2.884***	2.614***	2.687***
	(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.063)	(0.089)	(0.078)	(0.098)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.030	0.030	0.032	0.048	0.044	0.066

Note: $^*p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table 8

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Varians in respondents answers regarding political parties	0.033***	0.033***	0.033***	0.037***	0.031***	0.037***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Sex		0.012				0.010
		(0.029)				(0.040)
Income						-0.004***
						(0.001)
Household income			-0.014*			-0.014
			(0.007)			(0.013)
Education level				-0.011		0.006
				(0.010)		(0.013)
Age					0.080***	
					(0.016)	
Constant	2.764***	2.756***	2.829***	2.751***	2.466***	2.890***
	(0.044)	(0.048)	(0.059)	(0.084)	(0.073)	(0.094)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.024	0.023	0.026	0.030	0.032	0.040

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 9

	Dependent variable:					
	How much do you agree with the statement: The NRK is important to society					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Weighted varians in respondents answers regarding political parties	0.371***	0.367***	0.370***	0.766***	0.380***	0.604***
	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.129)	(0.169)	(0.119)	(0.174)
Sex		-0.058*				-0.038
		(0.031)				(0.042)
Income						0.005***
						(0.001)
Household income			0.005			-0.018
			(0.008)			(0.014)
Education level				0.004		0.004
				(0.011)		(0.014)
Age					0.122***	
					(0.017)	
Constant	3.364***	3.396***	3.343***	3.272***	2.885***	3.147***
	(0.027)	(0.031)	(0.047)	(0.074)	(0.072)	(0.083)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.003	0.004	0.003	0.012	0.021	0.025

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Table 10

	Dependent variable:					
	Self reported trust in the NRK					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Weighted varians in respondents answers regarding political parties	0.270**	0.269**	0.278**	0.376**	0.277**	0.578***
	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.120)	(0.160)	(0.112)	(0.165)
Sex		-0.017				-0.019
		(0.029)				(0.040)
Income						-0.005***
						(0.001)
Household income			-0.017**			-0.017
			(0.008)			(0.013)
Education level				-0.012		0.007
				(0.011)		(0.013)
Age					0.090***	
					(0.016)	
Constant	3.054***	3.063***	3.137***	3.071***	2.700***	3.230***
	(0.025)	(0.029)	(0.044)	(0.070)	(0.067)	(0.079)
Observations	2,785	2,785	2,485	1,536	2,785	1,525
Adjusted R^2	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.003	0.013	0.016

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

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