



# Relationship between Trust and Information Consumption: Disentangling Cross-Country Variation

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# In the modern society...

- Constant growth of the amount of information
- New channels of information transmission
- Increasing complexity of social structure
- Exponential growth of population during 20 century
- Diversification of population



Informational transformations

Trust transformations

# Informational Approach towards Trust

Trust is a way of overcoming ambiguity

**Luhman:** Trust is always based on extrapolation of information that individual already has

**Giddens:** Trust as a weak inductive knowledge

**Gambetta:** Trust as an unsure answer on a lack of information

**Sztompka:** Trust lies between the past that cannot be undone and the future that cannot be known

**Elster:** One of the reasons to trust (or to distrust) is the high cost of information

**Lewis and Weigert:** Cognitive dimension of trust

# Contradiction #1

## How does informational growth affects certainty?

Growing amounts of information and information channels



Cheap and clear information

Complication of social structures, growth of uncertainty and informational entropy



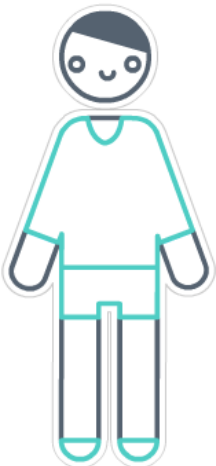
Overabundance of vague information

# Contradiction #2

## Trust - Information Consumption Relation

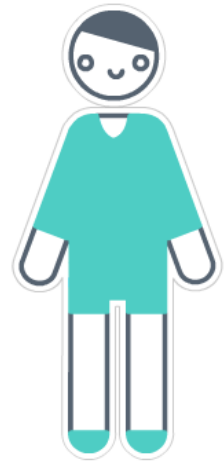
### Negative

*"I know everything about the world, so I don't need to trust anyone"*



### Positive

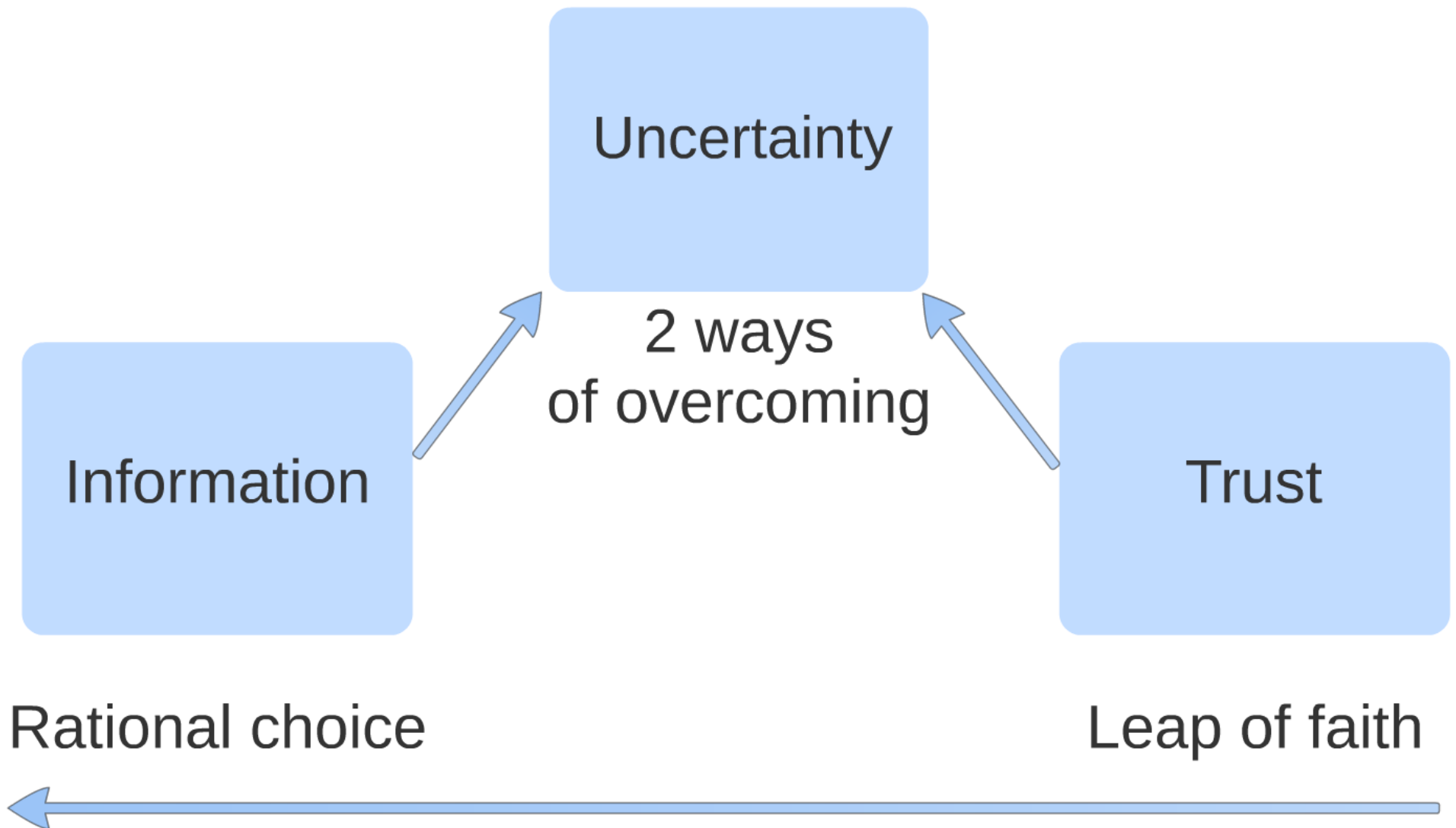
*"I know everything about the world, so it is safe for me to trust everyone"*



# Positive Relationship

- Social capital approach (J. Coleman, K. Newton)  
*Internet allows to gain social capital that leads to increase of trust*
- Modernization theory (R. Inglehart)  
*Both trust and information consumption are affected by subjective well-being*

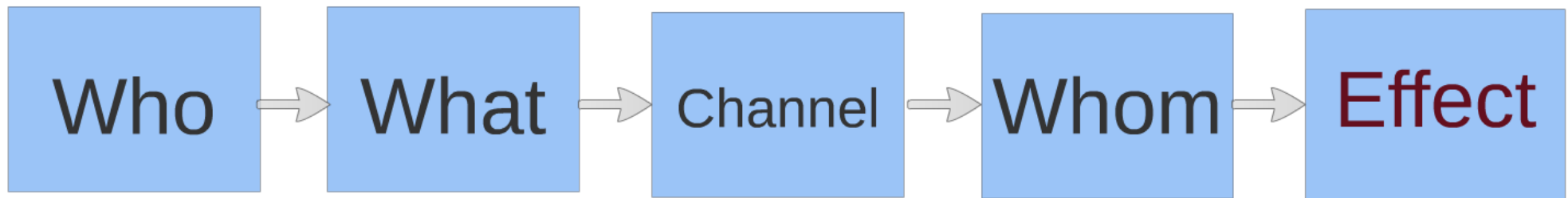
# Negative Relationship



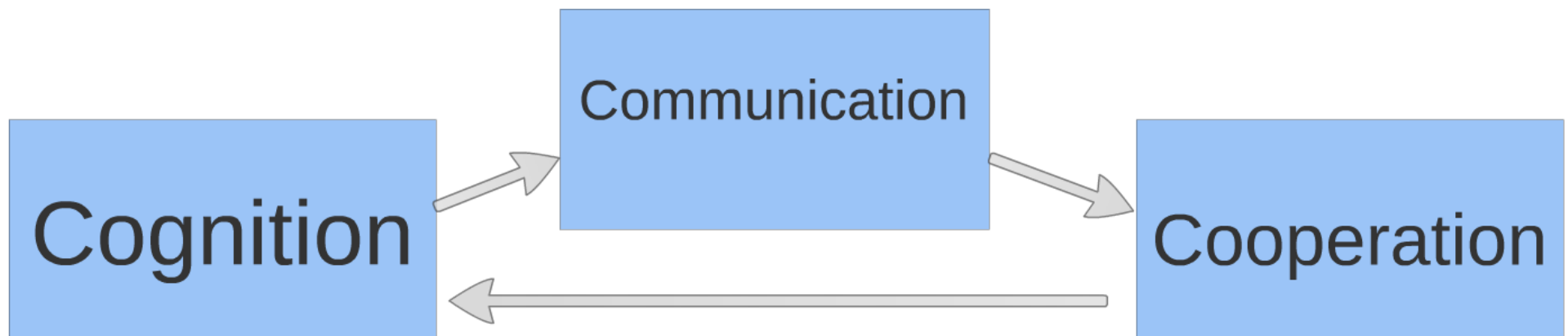
# Conditional Relationship

## media research

Laswell's communication model



Fuchs's communication model





# History of Internet-Trust Research

**1st wave:** 1990s; early stage of Internet development

Internet's unidimensionality

Trust as a part of civic life

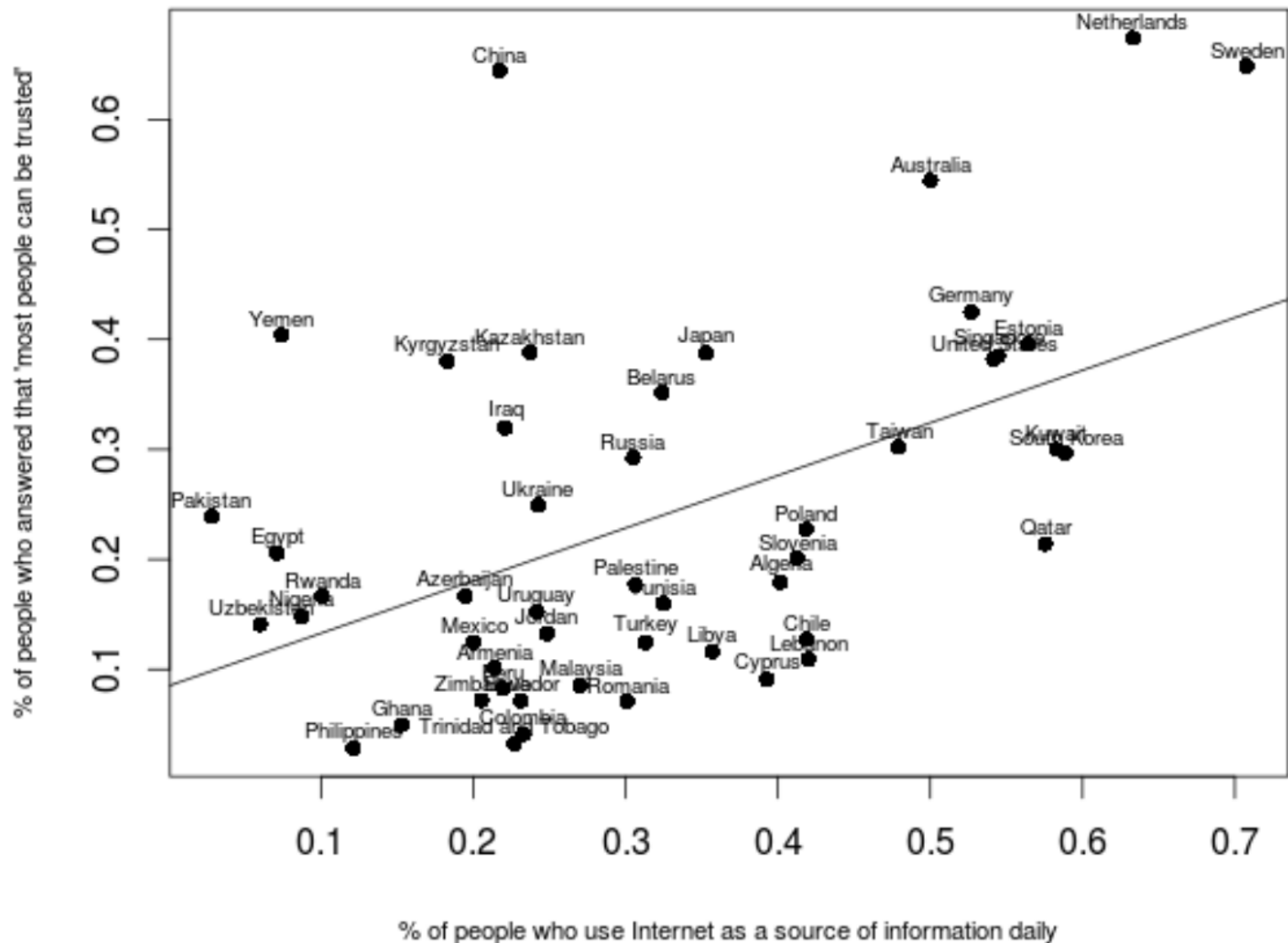
**2nd wave:** 2000s; social networks and web 2.0 development

Social capital approach

Time displacement explanation

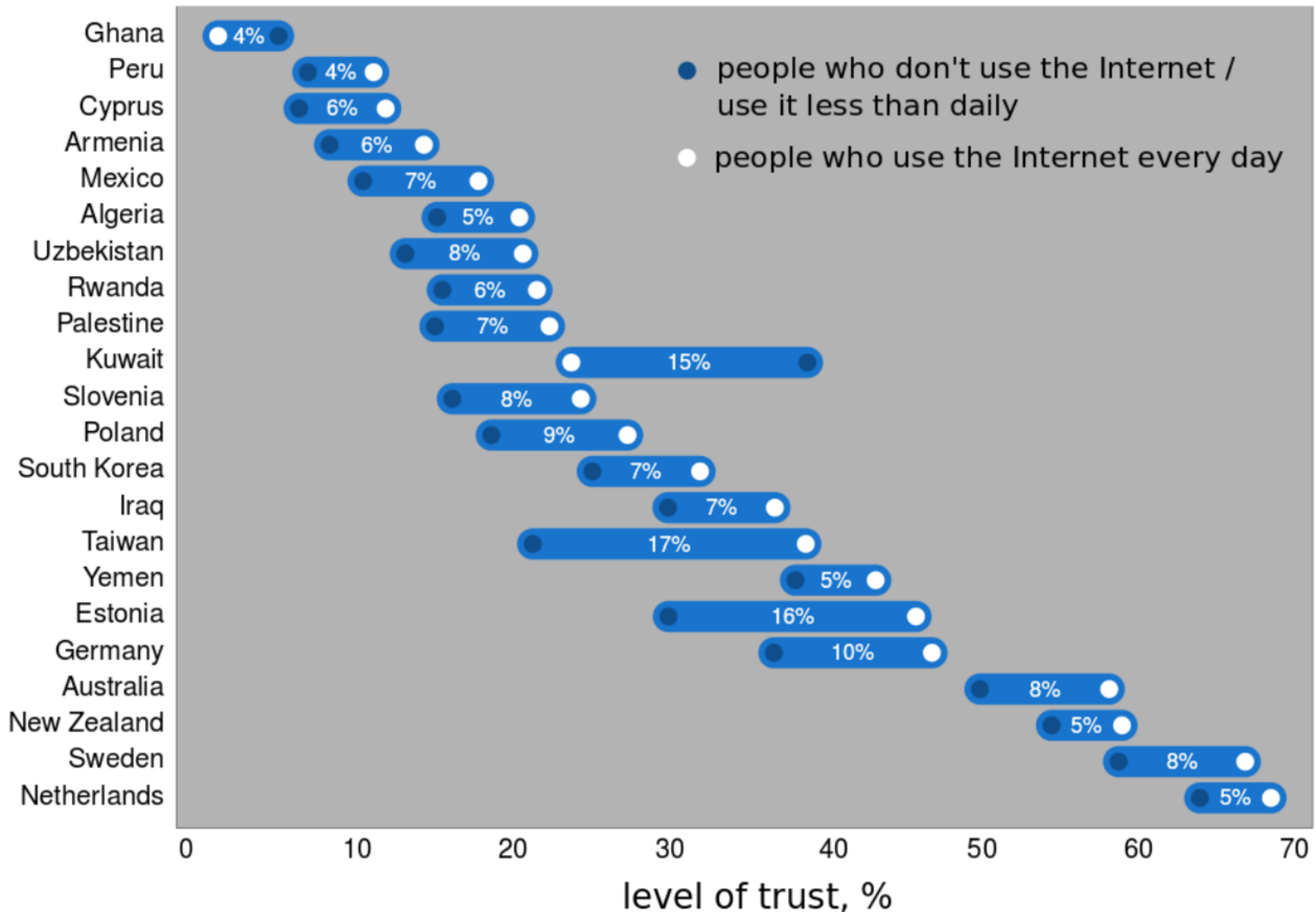
Trust as a part of social capital

# Trust and Internet Use: General Trends



Data from the WVS wave 6th. Country average for answer for a question “Generally speaking most people can be trusted” taken as a level of trust.

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# Empirical analysis: World Value Survey

- **50 countries** – no Bayesian approach is required for multilevel modeling
- **Non-homogenous sample** – from wealthy, highly-developed European countries to underdeveloped African countries
- More **relevant measurements** for information consumption – not just “using” but using as information source
- More **relevant measurements** for trust

# Dependent Variable 1: Generalized Trust

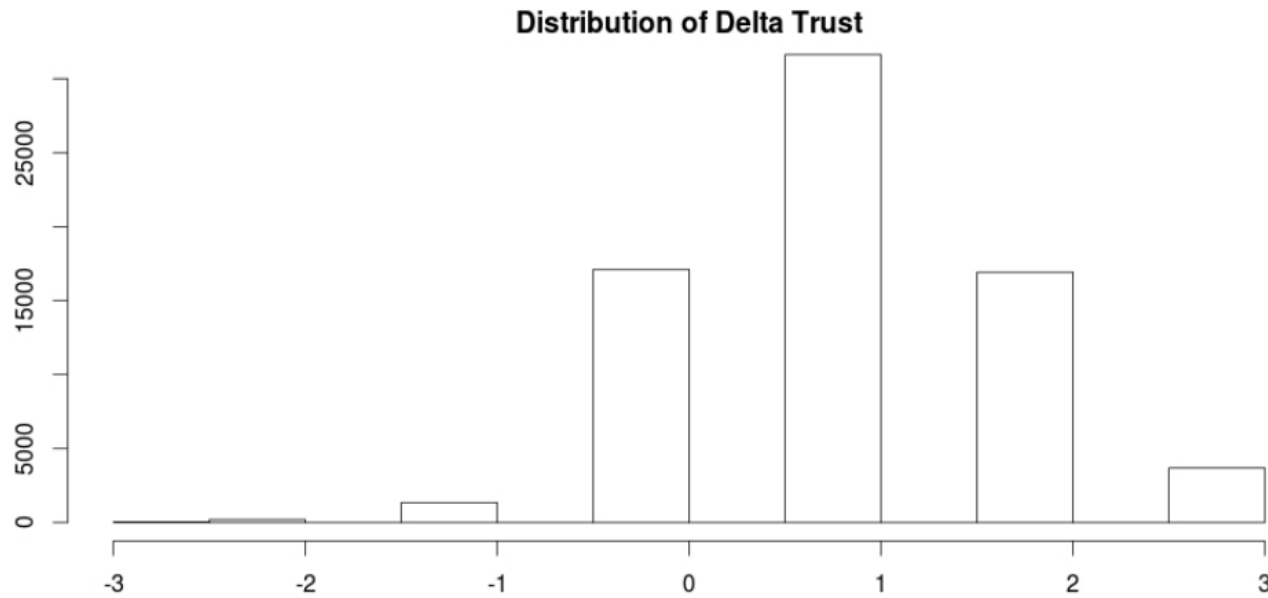
Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?

0 - Need to be very careful

1 - Most people can be trusted

# Dependent Variable 2: $\Delta$ Trust

$\Delta$  trust = trust to known people – trust to unknown people



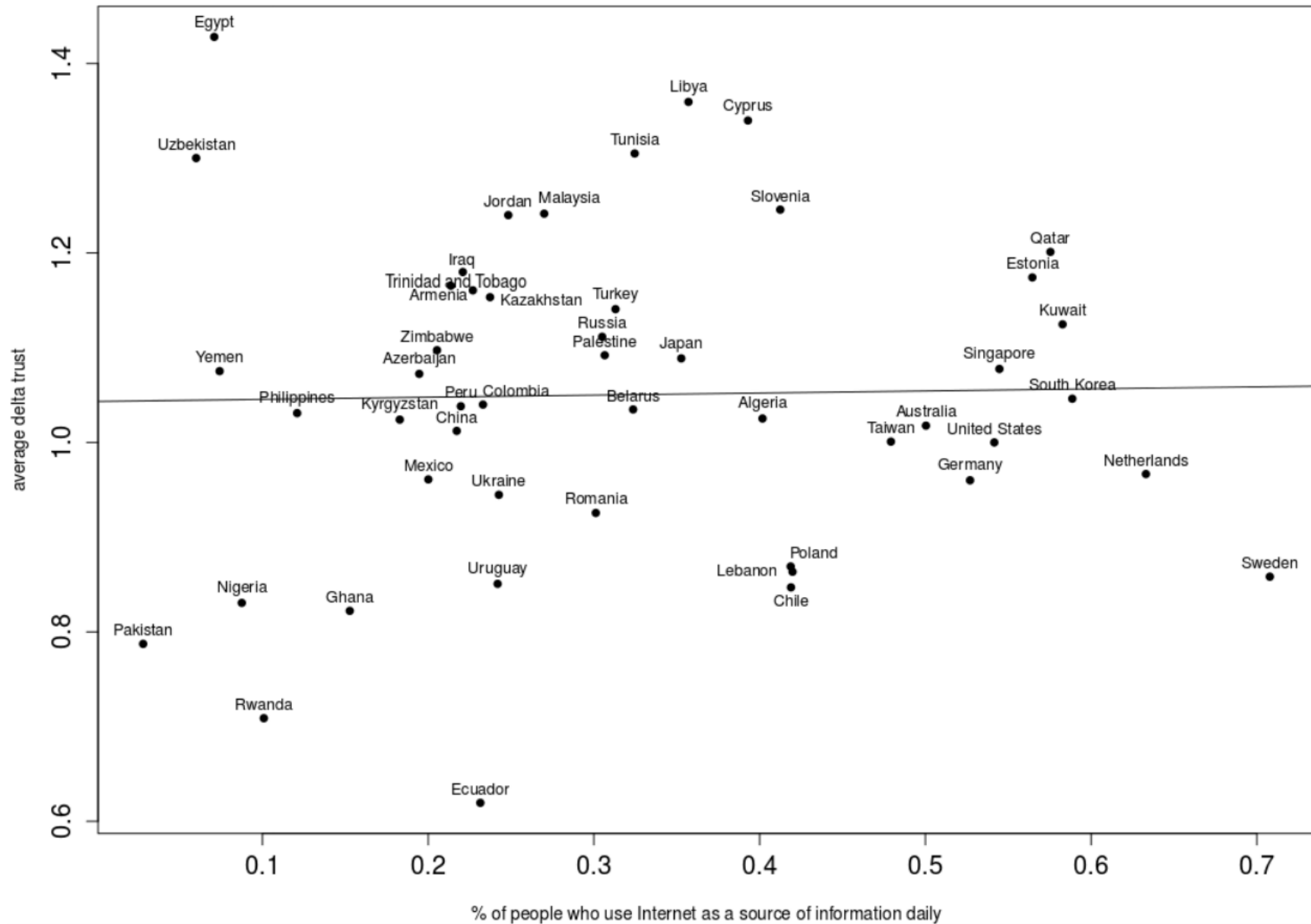
**WHY?**

Information affects trust to **unknown** people



$\Delta$  trust changes

# $\Delta$ Trust and Internet Use: general trend



# Empirical Analysis: Multilevel Regression

- **Intraclass correlation**
  - $\Delta$  Trust = 3.4 %
  - GT = 23.2 %
- A way of finding **causal heterogeneity**
- A possibility to include a large set of **controls**
- **Contextual analysis**



# Variables

## *Predictors*

- Internet
- TV
- newspaper

## *Controls*

- age
- gender
- subjective well-being
- education

# Model Coefficients (Fixed Effects)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	trust generalized linear mixed-effects (1)	$\Delta$ trust linear mixed-effects (2)
Subjective well-being	0.292 <sup>***</sup>	0.018 <sup>***</sup>
Gender: Female	-0.058 <sup>***</sup>	0.014 <sup>**</sup>
Age (scaled)	0.077 <sup>***</sup>	-0.017 <sup>***</sup>
Education Baseline: primary		
secondary	0.090 <sup>***</sup>	0.012
tertiary	0.436 <sup>***</sup>	0.004
Use the Internet as information source: Yes	0.095 <sup>***</sup>	0.039 <sup>***</sup>
Use daily newspapers as information source	0.066 <sup>***</sup>	-0.012 <sup>***</sup>
Use TV news as information source	-0.094 <sup>***</sup>	0.039 <sup>***</sup>
Constant	-1.570 <sup>***</sup>	1.022 <sup>***</sup>

**Thank you for  
your attention!**