

How trust in politics and society affects trust in pension institutions

“Don’t be fooled by average figures, as trust is more complex than you might think”

Harry van Dalen and Kène Henkens – NIDI-KNAW, TiU TISEM

Dutch citizens are used to a pension system that looks after them in their old age. That trust may not only depend on what pension funds do, but also how institutions within the political domain (parliament or politicians) and societal institutions (law, media, science, etc.) are trusted. Behind the facade of a high trust society, there may be groups which are hard to reach and convince them to trust the pension system.

Principal Findings

- Three classes exist when it comes to understanding trust in politics and societal institutions:
 - a small but significant group that in general distrusts both 14%;
 - a large group that in general trusts both 51%;
 - a medium-sized group that displays broad-based distrust in politics but has broad-based trust in public institutions 35%.
- For all three groups, the perceived honesty of pension institutions is important for engendering trust.
- For people with a broad-based distrust of public institutions, an institution’s expertise is important for engendering trust.
- People who distrust political and societal institutions have substantially lower trust in pension institutions.

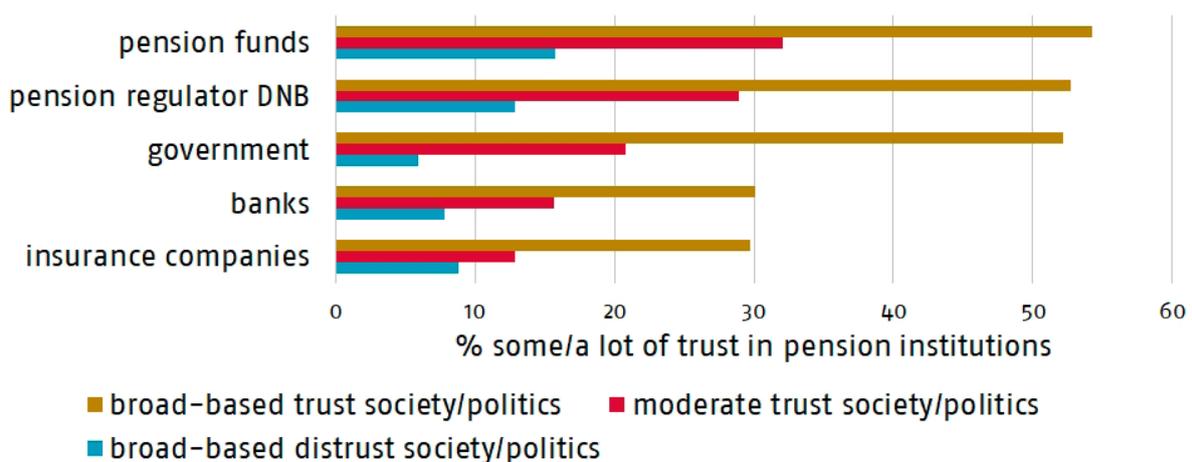


Figure: How differences in trust in politics and society affect trust in pension institutions

Key Takeaways for the Industry

- Pension communication and policy should take individuals’ trust in politics and societal institutions into account.



Want to know more? Read the paper ‘Hoe vertrouwen in politiek en maatschappij doorwerkt in vertrouwen in pensioeninstellingen’ (available in Dutch)