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**How regulatory agencies media  
communication affects citizens trust**

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## Participant short names

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| UNIL       | Université de Lausanne  |
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| HUJI       | The Hebrew University of Jerusalem                            |
| Uni-Speyer | German University of Administrative Sciences                  |
| AU         | Aarhus Universitet  |
| UiO        | Universitetet i Oslo  |
| UU         | Universiteit Utrecht  |
| Kozminski  | Akademia Leona Kozminkiego                                    |
| SCIPROM    | SCIPROM Sàrl  |



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## Summary

The goal of this experimental study is to evaluate the effect of different communication strategies performed by a regulator, after an incident of trust violation on citizens' trust in the regulator in the food, data protection and financial sector. Moreover, the experiment also evaluates the effect of the cause of incident of trust violation: over- or under- regulation, on citizens' trust in the regulator, and the effectiveness of the regulator's communication strategies in trust repair in the financial sector.

The analysis is based upon 3,109 observations and 19 variables. These were collected from a representative sample of Danish citizens, including 1,568 individual respondents who were asked to respond to two experimental vignettes. The analysis demonstrates that silence as a response appear to be most detrimental to citizens' trust after an episode of incident of trust violation. Further, the analysis points to more responsive and open strategies as being more effective for repairing trust. And finally, in the context of the financial sector, regulators appear to have much more possibilities to actively pursue strategies for trust reparation, in conditions of under-regulation, than in the context of over-regulation.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 TiGRE Work Package 6: The role of media for trust/distrust in regulatory regimes

Work package 6 focuses on the role of the media in generating trust and distrust towards actors in regulatory regimes. One of the aims of this work package is to analyse the effect of different communication strategies used by regulatory agencies and reported in the media on citizens' trust in those regulatory agencies. This report addresses the goals of work package 6 by presenting results from a survey experiment designed to evaluate the effect of different communication strategies performed by a regulator, after an episode of incident of trust violation on citizens' trust in the regulator. The survey experiment is based upon data collected among a representative sample of Danish citizens.

### 1.2 Experimental rationale

The goal of this experimental study is to evaluate the effect of different communication strategies performed by a regulator, after an episode of incident of trust violation on citizens' trust in the regulator. Moreover, the experiment also evaluates the effect of the cause of incident of trust violation: over- or under-regulation, on citizens' trust in the regulator, and the effectiveness of the regulator's communication strategies in trust repair.

The survey experiment is based on the theoretical and empirical work within the theoretical framework of crisis communication (Benoit 1995), trust repair strategies (Kim, 2018), as well as blame avoidance and reputation protective strategies within the context of politics and the public organisations (Hood, 2011; McGraw, 1990; Gilad et al 2015). The theoretical inspirations are chosen given that the context of the experiment is a public sector organisation, a regulatory agency, challenged in terms of the trust it may be granted by citizens suggesting a potential crisis which they may or may not wish to account for in an attempt to generate trust, that is respond to as well as acknowledge the problem or the responsibility for the incident of the trust violation. Five potential regulatory communication strategies are examined suggesting a continuum from being more closed and defensive to more open and responsive:

- Silence
- Admission of problem and excuse
- Admission of problem and justification
- Admission of responsibility and apology
- Admission of responsibility and promise of future action.

The analysis of the experiment is guided by three pre-registered hypotheses (<https://osf.io/8n3wh>). First, silence is compared to the other communication strategies. A refusal to respond to public inquiries about the incident of trust violation would signal unwillingness to demonstrate transparency and provide an account of the role of the regulatory agency in the incident. As transparency is seen as central for generating trust in governmental agencies in general (Grimmelikhuijsen and Meijer 2014), and regulatory agencies in particular (Löfstedt and Boudier 2014), we expect that silence would be less effective in generating citizens' trust, than any other type of communicative response.

Second, the communicative strategies where the agency takes responsibility for the occurrence of the incident of trust violation are compared to the strategies where the agency merely admits the existence of the problem, or refuses to comment on the problem. Thus, we expect that the communicative responses where the regulatory actively takes responsibility for the incident either combined with an apology or with announcing some future actions to mitigate such incidents to be repeated will be more effective at generating citizens' trust, than other types of responses.

Third, the nature of the incident of trust violation is also taken into account when considering citizens' trust in the regulatory agency and its ability to use communicative responses as trust repair strategies. We





investigate incidents of under- versus over-regulation. In conceptualising over- and under-regulation we follow Gilad et al. (2015:456). Thus, over-regulation characterises situations where regulatory standards or their enforcement impose an excessive burden on the regulated entities and the regulated field overall. In contrast, in conditions of under-regulation, the regulatory standards and/or their enforcement are found to be overly lenient and thus inadequate for protecting the public interest (Gilad et al., 2015). As regulation is the core activity of regulatory agencies, a failure to sufficiently regulate could be seen as a failure in delivering its core mandate (Gilad et al. 2015). In contrast, over-regulation does not signal such fundamental issue with the capabilities of the agency to perform its core task, but rather emphasises the costs of regulation (Gilad et al. 2015). Therefore, under-regulation would be seen as more problematic by the public, than over-regulation, and subsequently, any attempt to regain citizens' trust would be less effective in the context of under-regulation, than in the context of over-regulation. Therefore we expect that in the context of under- compared to over-regulation the response strategies will not be as effective in terms of generating trust among citizens.

### 1.3 Experimental design<sup>1</sup>

The survey experiment presents participants, being Danish citizens, with two vignettes describing an incident of trust violation in the domains of food safety, data protection, or finance (Annex 1). The description of the incident of trust violation is followed by an account of the communication strategy of the regulatory agency, with regards to the incident. Five potential communicative strategies are examined: silence, admission of problem and an excuse, admission of problem and a justification, admission of responsibility and an apology, and admission of responsibility and a promise of future action, alongside a control condition. The chosen communication strategy of the regulatory agency is the first manipulated variable in the survey experiment. In addition, the cause for incident of trust violation is examined as well. Thus, whether the incident of trust violation happens due to under- or over-regulation is the second manipulated variable. The cause of the incident of trust violation is only manipulated in the context of financial regulation, while in the domains of food safety and data protection, the cause is kept constant and said to occur due to under-regulation. Thus, the experiment contains 24 experimental groups in total, or 6 groups in the domain of food safety and data protection each, and 12 groups in the domain of finance. The design of the survey experiment is presented in Figure 1, while the survey flow is presented in Figure 2. As no hypotheses are made about the effects of the regulatory sector, each of the three regulatory domains are analysed separately, and thus, the experiment could be more accurately described as three separate experiments within one data collection effort.

The goal of the experiment is to estimate the effect of the different communication strategies that the regulator might take after an incident of trust violation, due to under- or over-regulation on citizens' trust in the regulator. Thus, after the presentation of each of the experimental vignettes, the respondents were asked about their perceptions of trustworthiness of the regulator in question. In addition to the measurement of trust in the regulator, the experiment measures six additional variables. Namely, at the beginning of the experiment, three background variables of the participants are recorded: their age, gender, and highest educational attainment. In addition, three potential covariates are measured as well: generalised trust, trust in the media, and familiarity with the regulatory regime in question.

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<sup>1</sup> We received very valuable comments and suggestions from Jan Boon (UAntwerpen); Thomas Schillemans (UU); Stephan Grimmlikhuijsen (UU) and David Levi-Faur (HUJI). In addition, in order to provide a realistic depiction of both under- and over-regulation, the Danish financial regulator was consulted during the development in the finance vignette. Hence, the head of communication helped to validate the realism in the experiments.



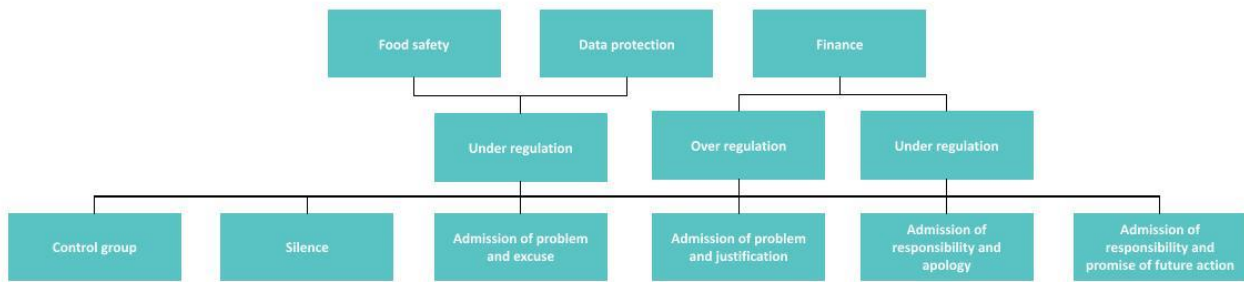


Figure 1. Overview of the experimental design. (Figure created by authors)

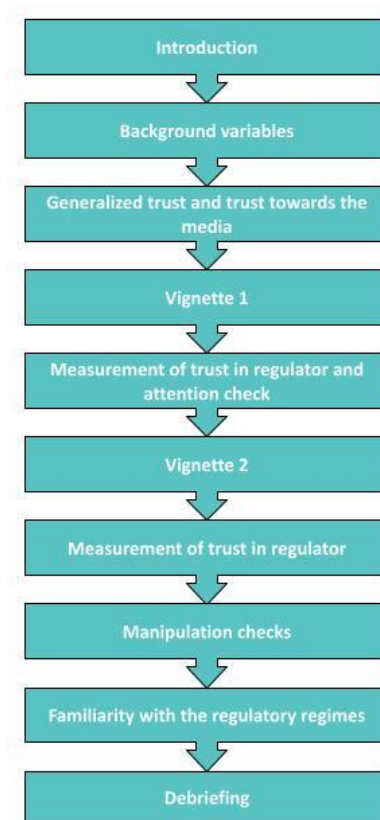


Figure 2. Flow of the survey experiment. (Figure created by authors)

### 1.4 Overview of the data

The experiment was fielded in Denmark between the period of end April to end June 2022, with the assistance of the company Userneeds<sup>2</sup>. The company Userneeds provided access to our research team to a nationally representative panel of respondents of the adult Danish population in terms of age, gender, and educational attainment. The dataset consists of 3109 observations, collected from 1,568 individuals, and the complete dataset contains 19 variables.

<sup>2</sup> <https://norstat.dk/norstat-og-userneeds>



## 2. Experimental analysis

### 2.1 Constructing the dependent variables

The dependent variable in the survey experiment is the trust citizens place in each of the three regulatory agencies: data protection, food safety, and finance. Citizens’ trust was measured using three items, each capturing one of the following three dimensions of trust: competence, benevolence, and integrity (Grimmelikhuisen & Knies, 2017). To construct the dependent variable of trust in each regulatory agency, we take a mean of the values of the three separate dimensions. Thus, the newly constructed trust variable has values that range from 1 – denoting very low levels of trust, to 7 – signifying high levels of trust. The internal consistency of the trust scale is measured using Cronbach’s alpha (Bland & Altman, 1997). The Cronbach’s alphas of each of the three composite trust variables are reported in Table 1, while the mean values of the three dimensions of trust, as well as the overall trust per sector, are presented in Figure 3.

Table 1. Cronbach’s alphas of all trust variables. (Authors’ calculations)

| Sector           | Food safety | Data protection | Finance |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| Cronbach’s alpha | 0.91        | 0.91            | 0.91    |

The Cronbach’s alphas for all three composite trust variables are 0.91, as displayed in Table 1, which denotes high degree of internal consistency (Bland & Altman, 1997). As displayed in Figure 3, the overall trust in the food safety regulator is somewhat higher than in the data protection and finance regulators. This difference is also statistically significant. In all three sectors, however, the trust levels gravitate around the mid-point of a 7-point scale. With regards to the three dimensions of trust, the integrity dimension appears to be the strongest in all three sectors, followed by the benevolence, while the competence of the three regulators generally receives the lowest scores.

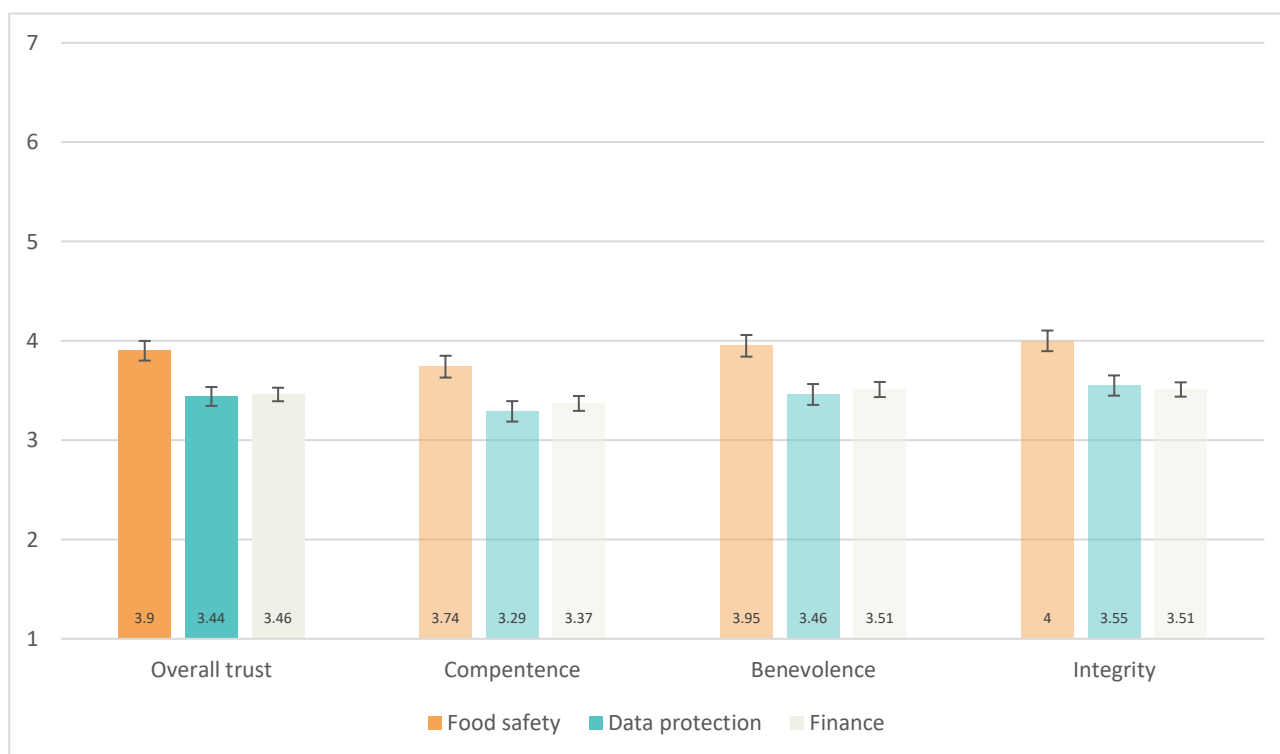


Figure 3. Trust in regulator per sector and trust dimension (95% ci). (Figure created by authors)



## 2.2 Manipulation checks

To test whether the experimental manipulations of communication strategy and over- vs. under-regulation were perceived as intended by the respondents, we look at the data from the two manipulation checks. To test the perception of the communication manipulation, participants were asked the following question:

*How did the [regulatory agency] respond when the news media contacted the agency to get a comment on the matter?*

*“1” – The agency chose not to comment despite being asked on the matter;*

*“2” – The agency acknowledged the problem and justified its work by pointing out that it fulfilled its responsibility;*

*“3” – The agency acknowledged the problem and excused it by pointing out its lack of resources;*

*“4” – The agency took on the responsibility and provided an apology;*

*“5” – The agency took on the responsibility and promised to make changes that ‘ensure’ the problem does not happen again.*

The respondents were asked to answer this question only for the second vignette they read, in contrast to the respondents who were placed in the control group and were not asked to answer this question. In Table 2, the responses to the manipulation check of the communication strategy are cross tabulated with the distribution of the communication manipulation. As the table displays, the majority of respondents in each of the experimental treatment groups identified the intended communication strategy correctly. A Chi-square test indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between the communication strategy experimental treatment and the response to the associated manipulation check:  $\chi^2(df = 16, N = 1267) = 1315.6, p < 0.01$ . We can thus conclude that the manipulation of communication strategy was perceived as intended by the respondents.

**Table 2. Crosstabulation of the communication strategy treatment and manipulation check.** (Authors’ calculations)

| Manipulation check  | Experimental treatment |         |  |                                 |   |  |
|---|------------------------|---------|--|---------------------------------|---|--|
|   | Control                | Silence | Admission of problem and justification | Admission of problem and excuse | Admission of responsibility and apology | Admission of responsibility and promise of future action |
| <i>“1” – The agency chose not to comment despite being asked on the matter;</i>   | 0                      | 172     | 32                                     | 13                              | 20                                      | 15   |
| <i>“2” – The agency acknowledged the problem and justified its work by pointing out that it fulfilled its responsibility;</i> | 0                      | 22      | 170                                    | 49                              | 33                                      | 41   |
| <i>“3” – The agency acknowledged the problem and excused it by pointing out its lack of resources;</i>                        | 0                      | 39      | 43                                     | 155                             | 30                                      | 67   |
| <i>“4” – The agency took on the responsibility and provided an apology;</i>   | 0                      | 12      | 10                                     | 20                              | 140                                     | 13   |



|  |   |        |        |        |        |        |
|--|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>"5" – The agency took on the responsibility and promised to make changes that 'ensure' the problem does not happen again;</i> | 0 | 11     | 19     | 13     | 16     | 112    |
| Percent of respondents passing the manipulation check  | / | 67.19% | 62.04% | 62.00% | 58.58% | 45.16% |

To test the perception of regulatory failure due to over- or under-regulation, participants were asked the following question with regards to the finance vignette:

*According to the bank, what was the reason that it has not had the opportunity to solve the failure in the IT-system?*

*"1" – They have waited a year for the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority to respond to their inquiry;*

*"2" – They used their resources looking into the details of the regulation and responding the inquiries from the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority;*

*"3" – The reason was not mentioned.*

In Table 3, the responses to this manipulation check are cross tabulated with the experimental treatment of over- and under-regulation. Similarly as for the manipulation check of communication strategy, the majority of respondents correctly identified the manipulation of over- versus under-regulation. In addition, a Chi square tests confirms that the relationship between the allocation of respondents to experimental groups and their responses to the manipulation check is also statistically significant:  $\chi^2(df = 2, N= 1538) = 803.9, p < 0.01$ . Again, we can conclude that the manipulation of over- versus under-regulation was perceived as intended by the respondents.

**Table 3. Crosstabulation of the over- and under-regulation treatment and manipulation check.** (Authors' calculations)

| Manipulation check  | Experimental treatment |                 |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|
|   | Under-regulation       | Over-regulation |
| <i>"1" – They have waited a year for the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority to respond to their inquiry;</i>  | 593                    | 74              |
| <i>"2" – They used their resources looking into the details of the regulation and responding the inquiries from the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority;</i> | 55                     | 527             |
| <i>"3" – The reason was not mentioned;</i>  | 109                    | 180             |
| Percent of respondents passing the manipulation check   | 78.33%                 | 67.48%          |

Even though not all subjects responded to the manipulation checks correctly, we decide against dropping these respondents off from the main analysis. This decision is based on the argument that excluding those participants could introduce bias in the data, for which we would not be able to account for (Aronow et al. 2019).



## 2.3 Effect of communicative response on citizens' trust

This section presents the results of the analysis of the effect that different communication strategies by the regulator have on citizens' trust. Table 4 presents the descriptives on citizens' trust in the regulator, per sector and experimental group. The results are also presented visually in Figure 4. As a reminder, trust is measured on a 7-point scale, where 1 is the lowest level of trust, while 7 is the highest. For all three regulatory sectors, citizens' trust in the regulator is the lowest when the regulator chooses to remain silent after an incident of trust violation. Which communication strategy is most effective in trust repair, and thus results in highest citizens' trust after an episode of incident of trust violation, will depend on the regulatory sector, although two strategies generally stand out: admission of problem and a justification, and admission of responsibility and a promise of future action.

Table 4. Trust communicative strategy

| Regulatory sector      | Communicative strategy                 |   |   |   |  |   |
|------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
|                        | <i>Control</i>                         | <i>Silence</i>                          | <i>Admission of problem and excuse</i>  | <i>Admission of problem and justification</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and apology</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and promise of future action</i> |
| <i>Food safety</i>     | 3.92<br>(1.48)<br>N = 117              | 3.56 <sup>a</sup><br>(1.41)<br>N = 123  | 3.76<br>(1.33)<br>N = 123               | 4.08 <sup>a</sup><br>(1.30)<br>N = 137        | 4.00<br>(1.32)<br>N = 124                      | 4.06<br>(1.36)<br>N = 120                                       |
| <i>Data protection</i> | 3.29 <sup>a</sup><br>(1.40)<br>N = 144 | 3.21 <sup>b</sup><br>(1.37)<br>N = 141  | 3.29 <sup>c</sup><br>(1.36)<br>N = 138  | 3.52<br>(1.36)<br>N = 131                     | 3.54<br>(1.39)<br>N = 129                      | 3.83 <sup>abc</sup><br>(1.28)<br>N = 124                        |
| <i>Finance</i>         | 3.40<br>(1.36)<br>N = 253              | 3.21 <sup>ab</sup><br>(1.34)<br>N = 260 | 3.29 <sup>cd</sup><br>(1.36)<br>N = 257 | 3.69 <sup>ac</sup><br>(1.42)<br>N = 278       | 3.50<br>(1.38)<br>N = 247                      | 3.66 <sup>bd</sup><br>(1.32)<br>N = 263                         |

Note: Table displays means, standard deviations in brackets, and sample size (n) per group. Equal superscripts per regulatory domain denote significance at 0.05 level with Tukey correction for multiple comparisons. Calculations made by authors.

The statistical analysis of the effect of different communication strategies performed by the regulator after an incident of trust violation on citizens' trust in the regulator is performed for each regulatory sector separately. This effect is estimated using a one-way Anova model with post-hoc comparisons between experimental groups. All statistically significant differences at 0.05 alpha level between experimental groups within a regulatory sector are marked with an equal superscript letter in Table 4. A Tukey correction has been applied on the threshold for significance in order to account for the multiplicity of comparisons.



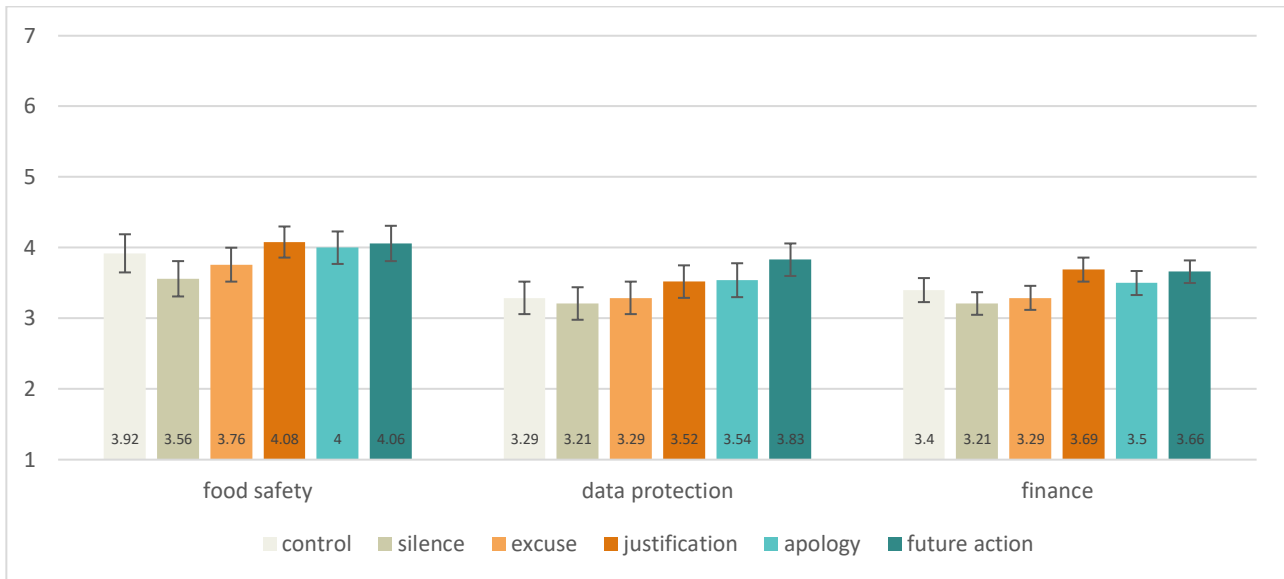


Figure 4. Trust in the three regulatory agencies per communication strategy (95% ci). (Figure created by authors)

For trust in the food safety regulator, an omnibus Anova tests indicates that different communication strategies do lead to differences in the trust levels reported by citizens:  $F(5, 738) = [2.70]$ ,  $p = 0.02$ . Looking more closely into the differences between experimental groups, we find that the significance in the omnibus test is driven by the difference between the communicative strategies of silence and admission of problem and justification: admitting the existence of a problem and providing a justification for it after an incident of trust violation in the food sector leads to significantly greater citizens’ trust in the regulator, than if the regulator remains silent in the face of media criticism.

In the domain of data protection, an omnibus Anova test also provides evidence of the effect of different regulatory communication strategies on citizens’ trust in the regulator:  $F(5, 801) = [3.72]$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The comparison between experimental groups reveals three statistically significant differences, and in each of these, admission of responsibility and promise of future action appears as a more effective trust repair strategy. Thus, when the data protection regulator admits responsibility for the incident of trust violation and outlines a planned action to rectify the problem, citizens’ trust in the regulator will be greater than when the citizens do not have any information about the response of the regulator (control condition); when the regulator responds to the media pressure with silence; and when the regulator admits responsibility for the problem and offers only excuses.

Finally, trust in the financial regulator also appears to be affected by the choice of communication strategy of the regulator after an incident of trust violation, according to an omnibus Anova test ( $F(5; 1552) = [5.12]$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The experimental group comparison reveals four statistically significant differences. The first two effects speak to the detrimental effect of silence on citizens’ trust in response to an incidents of trust violations: both admission of problem and justification, and admission of responsibility and promise of future action are more effective trust repair strategies than silence. The remaining two effects highlight the negative effect of making excuses on trust: again admission of problem and justification, and admission of responsibility and promise of future action lead to higher trust in the regulator after an incident of trust violation, than admission of problem and providing an excuse.

Overall, these findings offer considerable, yet not complete, support for the expectation that silence is least effective in terms of generating trust. Silence does appear to be most detrimental to citizens’ trust after an incident of trust violation. However, not all other communication strategies make a difference for citizens’ trust: admitting the presence of a problem and providing a justification has a positive effect on trust in the food safety and finance regulator; while admitting responsibility and offering a plan for resolving the issue is effective as a trust repair strategy in the domains of data protection and finance.



The evidence for the second expectation, that communicative responses where the regulatory actively takes responsibility for the incident either combined with an apology or with announcing some future actions to mitigate such incidents to be repeated will be more effective at generating citizens' trust, than other types of responses is more mixed. We do find evidence for the effectiveness of admitting responsibility and announcing future actions as a trust repair strategy, compared to other communicative actions in the domains of data protection and finance. There is no evidence, however, for the effectiveness of admitting responsibility and offering an apology as a strategy to repair citizens' trust in the regulator after an incident of trust violation.

## 2.4 Effect of incident of trust violation due to over- and under-regulation on citizens' trust

Here we present on the effects of the second manipulated variable: over- versus under-regulation. As this variable was manipulated only in the financial sector vignette, the analysis will focus on this subsample too. We first performed an Anova test on the differences in the overall levels of citizens' trust in the finance regulator between the experimental group that received a vignette reporting an incident of trust violation due to over-regulation, and the experimental group that was provided with a vignette reporting on an incident of trust violation due to under-regulation. Citizens' trust in the financial regulator was only marginally higher in the under-regulation experimental group (mean = 3.49, sd = 1.34, N = 766) than in the over-regulation group (mean = 3.44, SD = 1.41, N = 792), however, the difference in trust between the two groups was not statistically significant:  $F(1, 1556) = [0.58]$ ,  $p = 0.45$ .

As a second step in our analysis, we look at the effectiveness of the different communication strategies a regulator can take to repair citizens' trust, in the context of an incident of trust violation due to under-regulation and over-regulation. The results from this analysis are presented in Table 5 and visually displayed in Figure 5. Here again, trust is measured on a 7-point scale, where 1 denotes the lowest level of trust, while 7 the highest. Significant differences between groups in Table 5 are denoted with equal superscript.

An omnibus Anova test indicates that different communicative strategies performed by the finance regulator, after an incident of trust violation due to under-regulation, could have an effect on citizens' trust in the regulator:  $F(5, 760) = [7.03]$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The between-group comparison departs slightly from the results for the overall financial sector. Silence remains the least effective strategy for trust repair, and admission of the problem and providing a justification, as well as admitting responsibility and promising a future rectifying action are significantly more effective than silence. In addition, admitting the problem and providing a justification are significantly more effective at repairing citizens' trust than not reporting anything about the communicative response of the regulator (control group), and admitting the problem and providing an excuse.

In contrast to the under-regulation context, in conditions of incidents of trust violations due to over-regulation, we do not find evidence that different communication strategies could be used strategically by the regulator to repair citizens' trust ( $F(5, 786) = [1.42]$ ,  $p = 0.21$ ). Thus, none of the different communication strategies would have any significant effect on citizens' evaluation of the regulators' trustworthiness in conditions of over-regulation.

Finally, we compare the effectiveness of the communicative strategies for trust repair in conditions of under-regulation to those in conditions of over-regulation. We find that only the strategy of admission of problem and provision of justification leads to significantly higher levels of citizens' trust in conditions of under-regulation, as compared to over-regulation. The remainder of the communicative strategies do not lead to significantly different levels of citizens' trust in the two conditions.

These results run counter to the expectation that in the context of under- compared to over-regulation the response strategies will not be as effective in terms of generating trust among citizens. Regulators appear to have much more possibilities to actively pursue strategies for trust reparation in conditions of under-regulation, than in the context of over-regulation.





Table 5. Trust communicative strategy in over- and under-regulation

| Regulation manipulation | Communicative strategy                 |   |  |   |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---|
|                         | <i>Control</i>                         | <i>Silence</i>                          | <i>Admission of problem and excuse</i> | <i>Admission of problem and justification</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and apology</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and promise of future action</i> |
| <i>Under-regulation</i> | 3.38 <sup>a</sup><br>(1.25)<br>N = 123 | 3.08 <sup>bc</sup><br>(1.27)<br>N = 122 | 3.29 <sup>d</sup><br>(1.34)<br>N = 132 | 3.96 <sup>abde</sup><br>(1.36)<br>N = 142     | 3.53<br>(1.33)<br>N = 124                      | 3.63 <sup>c</sup><br>(1.34)<br>N = 123                          |
| <i>Over-regulation</i>  | 3.41<br>(1.47)<br>N = 130              | 3.32<br>(1.40)<br>N = 138               | 3.29<br>(1.38)<br>N = 125              | 3.41 <sup>e</sup><br>(1.43)<br>N = 136        | 3.48<br>(1.44)<br>N = 123                      | 3.69<br>(1.31)<br>N = 140                                       |

Note: Table displays means, standard deviations in brackets, and sample size (n) per group. Equal superscripts denote significance at 0.05 level with Tukey correction for multiple comparisons. Calculations made by authors.

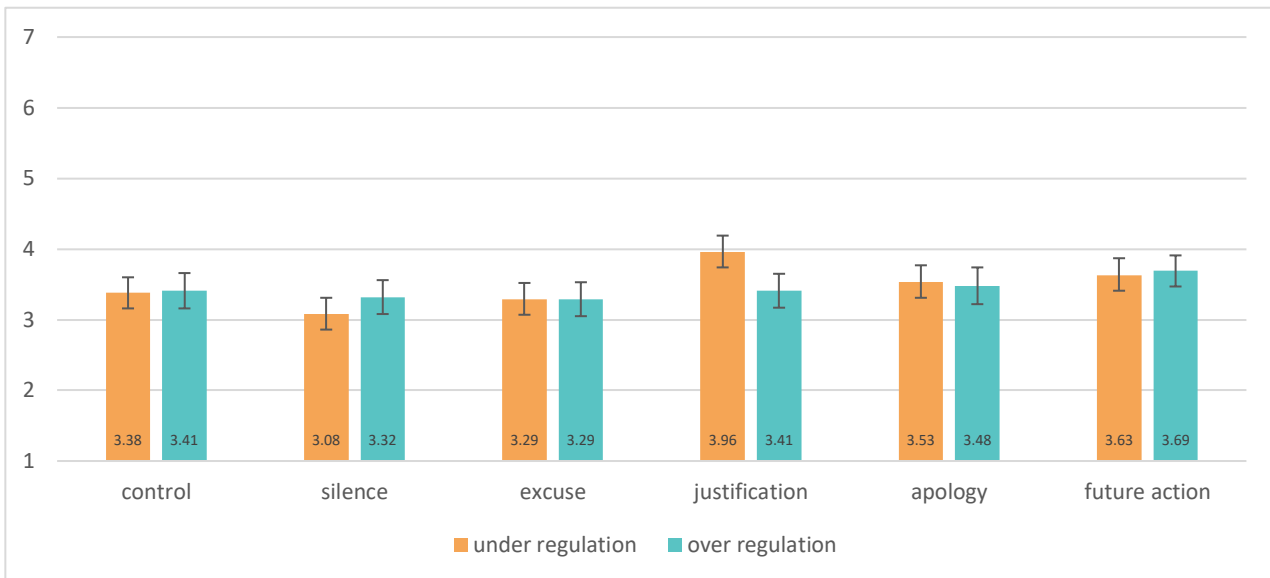


Figure 5. Trust in the financial regulator per communication strategy in conditions of under- and over-regulation (95% ci). (Figure created by authors)

## 2.5 Attention check

To provide more information about the quality of the responses in the dataset, the survey experiment included an item intended to test the attentiveness of respondents. Respondents were asked to move a slider to a defined point. From the 1,568 individuals who have completed the survey experiment, 1,212 have followed the instructions on the attention check item, and thus have passed the attention check. To test the robustness of the previously reported results, we ran the analysis once again on the subsample of respondents who have passed the attention check item.

### 2.5.1 Effect of communicative response on citizens’ trust – attentiveness check

Table 6 presents the analysis on the effect of different communication strategies on citizens’ trust in the regulator after an incident of trust violation, performed on the subsample of respondents who have passed



the attention check. An omnibus Anova test shows that the different communication strategies have a significant effect on citizens’ trust in the food safety regulator:  $F(5, 595) = [2.39]$ ,  $p = 0.04$ . However, the comparison between the trust levels of the groups receiving different communication strategies does not indicate any statistically significant differences at the alpha 0.05 level. This is likely due to the loss of statistical power, as a result of the exclusion of the inattentive respondents from the sample. In fact, the differences between the experimental group that received the silence treatment by the regulator on the one hand, and the groups which received apology, justification, and promise for future action on the other hand are all significant at the alpha 0.1 level.

Table 6. Trust communicative strategy – attention check

| Regulatory sector      | Communicative strategy                 |   |   |   |  |   |
|------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
|                        | <i>Control</i>                         | <i>Silence</i>                          | <i>Admission of problem and excuse</i>  | <i>Admission of problem and justification</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and apology</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and promise of future action</i> |
| <i>Food safety</i>     | 3.87<br>(1.56)<br>N = 96               | 3.51<br>(1.49)<br>N = 100               | 3.80<br>(1.34)<br>N = 100               | 4.06<br>(1.35)<br>N = 103                     | 4.07<br>(1.37)<br>N = 102                      | 4.06<br>(1.37)<br>N = 100                                       |
| <i>Data protection</i> | 3.14 <sup>a</sup><br>(1.43)<br>N = 105 | 3.07 <sup>b</sup><br>(1.38)<br>N = 105  | 3.20 <sup>c</sup><br>(1.38)<br>N = 108  | 3.42<br>(1.38)<br>N = 104                     | 3.41<br>(1.38)<br>N = 96                       | 3.82 <sup>abc</sup><br>(1.31)<br>N = 89                         |
| <i>Finance</i>         | 3.36<br>(1.38)<br>N = 209              | 3.10 <sup>ab</sup><br>(1.36)<br>N = 201 | 3.09 <sup>cd</sup><br>(1.36)<br>N = 194 | 3.67 <sup>ac</sup><br>(1.53)<br>N = 205       | 3.45<br>(1.37)<br>N = 191                      | 3.63 <sup>bd</sup><br>(1.36)<br>N = 208                         |

Note: Table displays means, standard deviations in brackets, and sample size (n) per group. Equal superscripts per regulatory domain denote significance at 0.05 level with Tukey correction for multiple comparisons. Calculations made by authors.

With regards to the data protection sector, the removal of the inattentive respondents did not affect the findings of the main analysis. The omnibus test remained significant ( $F(5, 601) = [3.77]$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and the differences between the experimental groups were found to be the same: admission of responsibility and promise of future action was found again to be a better communication strategy for trust repair, than no information and no communicative response at all, silence, and excuse.

Finally, the omnibus Anova test for the effect of regulatory communication strategies on citizens’ trust in the financial regulator, as before, indicated that differences in communications strategies will result in differences in citizens’ trust in the regulator ( $F(5, 1202) = [6.59]$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Just as for the data protection sector, the differences between groups were not affected by the removal of inattentive respondents: admission of problem and justification, and admission of responsibility were both found to be more effective at repairing citizens’ trust, than remaining silent or giving excuses.

This subsample analysis of respondents who passed the attentiveness check indicates that the results from the main analysis are very robust. Only one effect fell below the threshold of statistical significance.



### 2.5.2 Effect of incidents of trust violations due to over- and under-regulation on citizens’ trust – attentiveness check

Table 7 presents the analysis from the subsample of attentive respondents of the effect of over- and under-regulation on citizens’ trust in the regulator, and the effectiveness of the regulator’s communication strategies to repair trust after an incident of trust violation. Similarly as in the main analysis, we do not find a statistically significant difference in the overall trust level that citizens report in the finance regulator in conditions of incidents of trust violations due to under-regulation (mean = 3.41, sd = 1.39, N = 601) and over-regulation (mean = 3.37, sd = 1.43, N = 607):  $F(1, 1206) = [0.24]$ ,  $p = 0.62$ .

The omnibus Anova test for the effect of different communication strategies on citizens’ trust in the regulator in the context of under-regulation is, as in the main analysis, significant:  $F(5, 595) = [8.32]$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The reported differences between the experimental groups of different communicative strategies of the regulator are identical, as in the main analysis, with the addition of one more significant effect. Namely, in the sub sample of attentive respondents, the strategy of admission of responsibility and promise of future action is also found to be a more effective trust repair strategy, than admission of problem and excuse.

As in the main analysis, the omnibus Anova test for the effect of communication strategy on citizens’ trust in conditions of regulatory failure due to over-regulation did not reach statistical significance ( $F(5, 601) = [1.59]$ ,  $p = 0.16$ ), and no significant differences were found between the experimental groups.

Finally, as in the main analysis, the comparison of the effectiveness of the different communication strategies for trust repair in conditions of under- and over-regulation indicated a significant difference only for the strategy of admission of problem and provision of a justification. This strategy led to significantly higher levels of citizens’ trust in conditions of under-regulation as opposed to over-regulation.

Table 7. Trust communicative strategy in over- and under-regulation – attention check

| Regulation manipulation | Communicative strategy                 |  |  |   |  |   |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|
|                         | <i>Control</i>                         | <i>Silence</i>                         | <i>Admission of problem and excuse</i> | <i>Admission of problem and justification</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and apology</i> | <i>Admission of responsibility and promise of future action</i> |
| <i>Under-regulation</i> | 3.28 <sup>a</sup><br>(1.21)<br>N = 104 | 2.94 <sup>bc</sup><br>(1.30)<br>N = 93 | 3.04 <sup>de</sup><br>(1.38)<br>N = 97 | 3.99 <sup>abdf</sup><br>(1.42)<br>N = 105     | 3.48<br>(1.36)<br>N = 99                       | 3.63 <sup>ce</sup><br>(1.43)<br>N = 103                         |
| <i>Over-regulation</i>  | 3.45<br>(1.52)<br>N = 105              | 3.23<br>(1.41)<br>N = 108              | 3.13<br>(1.34)<br>N = 97               | 3.33 <sup>f</sup><br>(1.58)<br>N = 100        | 3.41<br>(1.39)<br>N = 92                       | 3.63<br>(1.30)<br>N = 105                                       |

Note: Table displays means, standard deviations in brackets, and sample size (n) per group. Equal superscripts denote significance at 0.05 level with Tukey correction for multiple comparisons. Calculations made by authors.

This additional analysis of the subsample of the respondents who passed the attentiveness check displays once again that the results of the main analysis are rather robust. All observed effects, but one, are identical as those in the main analysis.

## 2.6 Covariate analysis

The survey experiment measured three additional variables whose influence on the relationship between communication strategies and citizens’ trust in the regulator in conditions of regulatory failure, due to over- and under-regulation are analysed exploratively. The descriptive values of these three variables: generalised



trust, trust in the media, and knowledge of the work of the regulator are presented in Table 8. The consequences of the inclusion of these three variables as covariates in the analysis of the effectiveness of different communication strategies of regulators in trust repair is discussed in the following sub-sections.

**Table 8. Covariate descriptives**

| Variable   | Mean  | Standard Deviation | N    |
|--|-------|--------------------|------|
| Generalised trust                                      | 6.88  | 1.94               | 1568 |
| Trust in the media                                     | 5.92  | 2.07               | 1568 |
| Knowledge of the work of the food safety regulator     | 46.36 | 24.69              | 1568 |
| Knowledge of the work of the data protection regulator | 36.74 | 24.61              | 1568 |
| Knowledge of the work of the finance regulator         | 37.33 | 24.69              | 1568 |

Note: Generalised trust and trust in the media are measured on a 1-10 scale, where 1 denotes low and 10 denotes high, while the knowledge variables are measured on 1-100 scale, where 1 denotes low and 100 denotes high. Calculations made by authors.

### 2.6.1 Generalised trust

This section presents the results from the inclusion of the covariate of generalised trust, or the trust that people place in other people generally speaking, in the analysis of the effectiveness of different communication strategies for trust repair in conditions of over- and under-regulation. Table 9 presents the Anova models of the effectiveness of different communication strategies in the three regulatory sectors: food safety, data protection and finance, when the variable generalised trust is included as a covariate. The results indicate that generalised trust is consistently positively associated with citizens’ trust in the regulatory agency. Additional tests (not reported) indicated that there is no significant interaction between the variables of generalised trust and communication strategies, which indicates that the effectiveness of the different communication strategies of regulators for trust repair does not vary depending on the levels of citizens’ generalised trust.

**Table 9. Generalised trust as covariate – communication strategies.** (Authors’ calculations)

|                            | Food safety    |     |         |        | Data protection |     |         |        | Finance        |      |         |        |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----|---------|--------|-----------------|-----|---------|--------|----------------|------|---------|--------|
|                            | Sum of squares | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares  | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares | df   | F value | p      |
| intercept                  | 411.28         | 1   | 225.91  | < 0.01 | 379.38          | 1   | 206.44  | < 0.01 | 752.93         | 1    | 407.23  | < 0.01 |
| generalised trust          | 32.40          | 1   | 17.80   | < 0.01 | 20.26           | 1   | 11.02   | < 0.01 | 25.19          | 1    | 13.63   | < 0.01 |
| manipulation communication | 25.70          | 5   | 2.82    | 0.01   | 37.00           | 5   | 4.03    | < 0.01 | 52.20          | 5    | 5.65    | < 0.01 |
| residuals                  | 1341.72        | 737 |         |        | 1470.15         | 800 |         |        | 2867.66        | 1551 |         |        |

Table 10 presents the covariate analysis of generalised trust, this time focused on the effect of over- and under-regulation on citizens’ trust. Here we also find that generalised trust is positively associated with trust in the regulator, although, in conditions of under-regulation, this effect fails short of statistical significance. Additional analysis (not reported) again indicated that the effect of the different communication strategies in conditions of under- and over-regulation does not differ on the level of generalised trust of citizens.



**Table 10. Generalised trust as covariate – under- and over-regulation.** (Authors' calculations)

|                            | Finance – under-regulation |     |         |        | Finance – over-regulation |     |         |        | Finance        |      |         |        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----|---------|--------|---------------------------|-----|---------|--------|----------------|------|---------|--------|
|                            | Sum of squares             | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares            | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares | df   | F value | p      |
| intercept                  | 425.26                     | 1   | 246.20  | < 0.01 | 333.97                    | 1   | 171.14  | < 0.01 | 698.39         | 1    | 377.64  | < 0.01 |
| generalised trust          | 6.30                       | 1   | 3.65    | 0.06   | 18.99                     | 1   | 9.73    | < 0.01 | 25.34          | 1    | 13.70   | < 0.01 |
| manipulation communication | 59.11                      | 5   | 6.84    | < 0.01 | 15.94                     | 5   | 1.63    | 0.15   | 52.13          | 5    | 5.64    | < 0.01 |
| manipulation regulation    |                            |     |         |        |                           |     |         |        | 1.17           | 1    | 0.63    | 0.43   |
| residuals                  | 1311.02                    | 759 |         |        | 1531.85                   | 785 |         |        | 2866.49        | 1550 |         |        |

### 2.6.2 Trust in the media

This section presents the results of the analysis, including the covariate of citizens' trust in the media. Table 11 presents the models focusing on the main effect of different communication strategies, while Table 12 presents the models focusing on the effects of under- versus over-regulation. Media is consistently positive in relation to trust in the regulator, which the results in both Table 11 and Table 12 indicate. Additional analysis (not reported) indicates that trust in the media does not interact with either the manipulation of communication strategies, nor with the manipulation of over- versus under-regulation, and thus the effect of these two variables on citizens' trust does not depend on citizens' trust in the media.

**Table 11. Trust in the media as covariate – communication strategies.** (Authors' calculations)

|                            | Food safety    |     |         |        | Data protection |     |         |        | Finance        |      |         |        |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----|---------|--------|-----------------|-----|---------|--------|----------------|------|---------|--------|
|                            | Sum of squares | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares  | df  | F value | P      | Sum of squares | df   | F value | p      |
| intercept                  | 546.18         | 1   | 308.34  | < 0.01 | 451.04          | 1   | 248.44  | < 0.01 | 793.59         | 1    | 439.31  | < 0.01 |
| trust in media             | 68.66          | 1   | 38.76   | < 0.01 | 38.04           | 1   | 20.95   | < 0.01 | 91.09          | 1    | 50.42   | < 0.01 |
| manipulation communication | 27.91          | 5   | 3.15    | < 0.01 | 36.07           | 5   | 3.97    | < 0.01 | 49.21          | 5    | 5.45    | < 0.01 |
| residuals                  | 1305.46        | 737 |         |        | 1452.37         | 800 |         |        | 2801.76        | 1551 |         |        |

**Table 12. Trust in the media as covariate – under- and over-regulation.** (Authors' calculations)

|                            | Finance – under-regulation |    |         |        | Finance – over-regulation |    |         |        | Finance        |    |         |        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----|---------|--------|---------------------------|----|---------|--------|----------------|----|---------|--------|
|                            | Sum of squares             | df | F value | p      | Sum of squares            | df | F value | p      | Sum of squares | df | F value | p      |
| intercept                  | 386.98                     | 1  | 232.56  | < 0.01 | 409.84                    | 1  | 212.18  | < 0.01 | 732.43         | 1  | 405.33  | < 0.01 |
| media trust                | 54.33                      | 1  | 32.65   | < 0.01 | 34.57                     | 1  | 17.90   | < 0.01 | 91.00          | 1  | 50.36   | < 0.01 |
| manipulation communication | 51.29                      | 5  | 6.16    | < 0.01 | 16.77                     | 5  | 1.74    | 0.12   | 49.16          | 5  | 5.44    | < 0.01 |



|                         |         |     |  |         |     |         |      |
|-------------------------|---------|-----|--|---------|-----|---------|------|
| manipulation regulation |         |     |  | 0.94    | 1   | 0.52    | 0.47 |
| residuals               | 1262.99 | 759 |  | 1516.27 | 785 | 2800.83 | 1550 |

### 2.6.3 Knowledge of the work of the regulator

In this section, the covariate of the knowledge of the work of the regulator is included in the analysis. Table 13 presents the Anova models on the effects of communication strategies, while Table 14 on the effects of under- and over-regulation on citizens' trust in the regulator. As it is evident from Table 13 and Table 14, knowledge of the work of the regulator is consistently positively related to citizens' trust in the regulator. This relationship falls short of statistical significance only in the case of the subsample of under-regulation in the finance sector. Additional analysis (not reported) indicates that the knowledge variable does not interact with the manipulations of either communication strategies, nor under- and over-regulation, which signifies that the effect of the two main manipulated variables on citizens' trust in the regulator is not contingent upon citizens' knowledge about the work of the regulator.

**Table 13. Knowledge of the work of the regulator as covariate – communication strategies.** (Authors' calculations)

|                            | Food safety    |     |         |        | Data protection |     |         |        | Finance        |      |         |        |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----|---------|--------|-----------------|-----|---------|--------|----------------|------|---------|--------|
|                            | Sum of squares | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares  | df  | F value | P      | Sum of squares | df   | F value | p      |
| intercept                  | 942.14         | 1   | 516.24  | < 0.01 | 840.08          | 1   | 472.30  | < 0.01 | 1605.05        | 1    | 899.43  | < 0.01 |
| knowledge                  | 27.98          | 1   | 15.33   | < 0.01 | 70.15           | 1   | 39.44   | < 0.01 | 129.51         | 1    | 72.57   | < 0.01 |
| manipulation communication | 28.80          | 5   | 3.16    | < 0.01 | 36.37           | 5   | 4.09    | < 0.01 | 54.53          | 5    | 6.11    | < 0.01 |
| residuals                  | 1312.18        | 719 |         |        | 1385.63         | 779 |         |        | 2685.69        | 1505 |         |        |

**Table 14. Knowledge of the work of the regulator as covariate – under- and over-regulation.** (Authors' calculations)

|                            | Finance – under-regulation |     |         |        | Finance – over-regulation |     |         |        | Finance        |      |         |        |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----|---------|--------|---------------------------|-----|---------|--------|----------------|------|---------|--------|
|                            | Sum of squares             | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares            | df  | F value | p      | Sum of squares | df   | F value | p      |
| intercept                  | 425.26                     | 1   | 246.20  | < 0.01 | 333.97                    | 1   | 171.14  | < 0.01 | 1393.44        | 1    | 780.87  | < 0.01 |
| knowledge                  | 6.30                       | 1   | 3.65    | 0.06   | 18.99                     | 1   | 9.73    | < 0.01 | 130.20         | 1    | 72.96   | < 0.01 |
| manipulation communication | 59.11                      | 5   | 6.84    | < 0.01 | 15.94                     | 5   | 1.63    | 0.15   | 54.48          | 5    | 6.11    | < 0.01 |
| manipulation regulation    |                            |     |         |        |                           |     |         |        | 1.87           | 1    | 1.05    | 0.31   |
| residuals                  | 1311.02                    | 759 |         |        | 1531.85                   | 785 |         |        | 2683.82        | 1504 |         |        |



### 3. Concluding discussion of findings

The goal of this experimental study has been to evaluate the effect of different communication strategies performed by a regulator, after an incident of trust violation, on citizens' trust in the regulator. Moreover, the experiment also evaluates the effect of the cause of incident of trust violation: over- or under-regulation, on citizens' trust in the regulator, and the effectiveness of the regulator's communication strategies in trust repair.

Based upon 3,109 observations collected from a representative sample of Danish citizens, including 1,568 individual respondents, the analysis points to at least three conclusions.

First silence does appear to be most detrimental to citizens' trust after an episode of incident of trust violation. Hence, when confronted with negative media coverage illustrating incidents, which may violate the trust relation between regulatory agencies and the citizens at large, when aiming to repair trust, and staying silent despite having the opportunity to respond to the critique raised in the article is not an effective strategy.

Second the analysis points to more open and responsive strategies, which either provides a justifying account and hence explanation of the incident or provides an account, in which amending actions, in terms of preventing the problem to occur in future, are more effective for repairing trust among citizens. In particular, as admitting the presence of a problem and providing a justification has a positive effect on trust in the food safety and finance regulator; while admitting responsibility and offering a plan for resolving the issue is effective as a trust repair strategy in the domains of data protection and finance. These findings are in line with previous research pointing to transparency from government organisations as being vital for generating trust among citizens (e.g., Grimmelikhuisen and Meijer 2014).

Third in the context of the financial sector, and contrary to what was expected, regulators appear to have much more possibilities to actively pursue strategies for trust reparation in conditions of under-regulation, than in the context of over-regulation. While this runs contrary to what was expected, this result may be explained by the fact that the trustees are in this case citizens. While regulatees and maybe also politicians may be more occupied with incidents of over-regulation suggesting e.g., unnecessary administrative burdens placed upon regulatees from regulatory agencies, this may be of less concern to citizens.

While the findings are of practical relevance for regulatory agencies, when confronted with allegations of misbehaviours or -non-behaviours, suggesting either under- or over-regulations in the media, the conclusions should be read with attention to the fact that the experiment was performed in a context in which citizens have a comparatively high degree of trust in government organisations. This of course provides for some limitations in terms of the generalisability of the findings. In addition, for the conclusion of an apparent ineffectiveness of the communication strategies in the context of allegations of over-regulation may also be read with attention to the fact that this finding is based upon the financial sector only.

Having said that, the findings suggest that when confronted with negative media coverage suggesting that the regulator has failed to deliver on its core task (Gilad et al 2015) responding to such criticism is vital when considering restoring citizens' trust. Although all communicative responses should be crafted with the specific crisis in mind (Coombs 2012), the findings further suggests that, giving reasonable justifications or disclosing which particular actions etc. the regulator has taken to prevent future incidents is necessary – providing an excuse does not do the trick when it comes to generating trust among citizens.



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## Annexes

### Annex 1. Experimental vignettes

| Sector          | Vignette  | Vignette in Danish  |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Food safety     | <p><b>Citizens were poisoned by broccoli</b></p> <p>For a longer period of time, a large vegetable producer has been selling broccoli with excessive content of organic phosphorus to consumers in a number of major Danish supermarkets. Too much organic phosphorus can be toxic to humans.</p> <p>The problem occurred because the employees in charge of the task were not trained in working with pesticides.</p> <p>The vegetable producer regret that they did not discover the problem during self-check. However, they have not had any visits from the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration during the period in which the problem has taken place.</p> <p>We have contacted the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration, which is responsible for supervising the area, to get a comment on the matter.</p> | <p><b>Forbrugere blev forgiftet af broccoli</b></p> <p>En stor grønsagsproducent har i en længere periode solgt broccoli med et for højt indhold af organisk fosfor til forbrugerne i en række større danske supermarkeder. For meget organisk fosfor kan være giftigt for mennesker.</p> <p>Fejlen opstod fordi medarbejderne, der varetog opgaven, ikke var oplært i at arbejde med pesticiderne.</p> <p>Grøntsagsproducenten beklager, men påpeger, at de ikke har opfanget problemet i deres egenkontrol. De har dog heller ikke haft besøg af Fødevarestyrelsen i den periode, hvor overdoseringen har fundet sted.</p> <p>Vi har kontaktet Fødevarestyrelsen, der har ansvaret for at føre tilsyn med området, for at få en kommentar på sagen.</p> |
| Data protection | <p><b>Citizens' data was leaked after a trip to the hospital</b></p> <p>The personal information of several hundred citizens has been stolen from Rigshospitalet by hackers.</p> <p>The hackers were able to access the personally sensitive data because it was stored on a web server that was insufficiently protected.</p> <p>The hospital regrets the failure, but points out that they have been in constant contact with the Danish Data Protection Agency regarding the storage of data, but this has not led to orders or reprimands from the Danish Data Protection Agency.</p> <p>We have contacted the Danish Data Protection Agency, which is responsible for supervising the area, to get a comment on the matter.</p>  | <p><b>Borgeres data blev lækket efter en tur på hospitalet</b></p> <p>Flere hundrede borgeres personfølsomme oplysninger er blevet stjålet fra Rigshospitalet af hackere.</p> <p>Hackerne kunne få adgang til de personfølsomme data, fordi de blev opbevaret på en webserver, der var utilstrækkeligt beskyttet.</p> <p>Hospitalet beklager, men påpeger, at de har været i løbende kontakt med Datatilsynet om deres opbevaring af data, men det ikke har ført til anbefalinger eller påbud fra Datatilsynet.</p> <p>Vi har kontaktet Datatilsynet, der har ansvaret for at føre tilsyn med området, for at få en kommentar på sagen.</p>   |



|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
| Finance | <b>Citizen was overcharged DKK 20,000 in fee</b>   | <b>Borger betalte 20.000 kr. for meget i gebyr</b>  |
|         | <p>An early retiree was charged extra fee on debt for 15 years, due to failure in a bank's IT system. She is certainly not alone – at least 5,000 customers have had the same experience.</p>  | <p>Førtidspensionist blev opkrævet ekstra gebyr på gæld i 15 år på grund af fejl i banks IT-system. Hun er bestemt ikke alene - mindst 5.000 kunder har haft samme oplevelse.</p>   |
|         | <p>[The bank regrets the customers' bad experience, but points out that they have waited a year for the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority to return to the bank's inquiry to the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority. The bank has not been able to address the failure before the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority returned to their inquiry. / The bank regrets the customers' bad experience, but points out that they have not had the opportunity to solve the failure, due to the many resources they have had to spend looking into the details of the regulation and responding the inquiries from the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority related to the failure. That task has occupied both IT developers and the bank's legal department over the past year.]</p> | <p>[Banken beklager kundernes dårlige oplevelse, men påpeger, at de har ventet flere måneder på, at Finanstilsynet skulle vende tilbage på bankens henvendelse til Finanstilsynet. Banken har ikke kunnet adressere fejlen før, Finanstilsynet vendte tilbage på deres henvendelse. / Banken beklager kundernes dårlige oplevelse, men påpeger, at de ikke har haft mulighed for at rette fejlen på grund af de mange ressourcer, de har skullet bruge på at undersøge detaljerne i reguleringen og besvare henvendelser fra Finanstilsynet i forbindelse med fejlen. Den opgave har optaget både IT-udviklere og bankens juridiske afdeling det sidste år.]</p> <p>Vi har kontaktet Finanstilsynet, der har ansvaret for at føre tilsyn med bankerne, for at få en kommentar på sagen.</p> |
|         | <p>We have contacted the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority, which is responsible for supervising the banks, to get a comment on the matter.</p>   |   |



## Annex 2. Manipulation of communicative responses

| Group  | Manipulation  | Manipulation in Danish  |
|--|---|---|
| Silence  | [The Danish Financial Supervisory Authority / The Danish Data Protection Agency / The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration] did not want to make a statement on the matter.  | [Fødevarestyrelsen / Datatilsynet / Finanstilsynet] har ikke ønsket at kommentere sagen.  |
| Admission of problem and justification                   | [The Danish Financial Supervisory Authority / The Danish Data Protection Agency / The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration] recognizes the problem, but points out that the bank could have dealt with the issue without the involvement of the Authority. On top, the Authority points out that fast tracking the bank's inquiry would have caused delays on other inquiries and that the Authority has responded within the timeframes for this kind of inquiry. | [Fødevarestyrelsen / Datatilsynet / Finanstilsynet] anerkender problemet, men påpeger, at fødevarereproducentens egenkontrol levede op til tilsynets forskrifter og der derfor ikke var basis for at gennemføre særkontroller.            |
| Admission of problem and excuse                          | [The Danish Financial Supervisory Authority / The Danish Data Protection Agency / The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration] recognizes the problem, but explains that the problem arose due to an extraordinary number of inquiries, which have made it difficult for employees of Authority to make timely responses.   | [Fødevarestyrelsen / Datatilsynet / Finanstilsynet] anerkender problemet, men påpeger, at tilsynet ikke har haft ressourcer til at lave en særlig gennemgang af fødevarereproducentens egenkontrol. Derfor er fejlen ikke blevet opdaget. |
| Admission of responsibility and apology                  | [The Danish Financial Supervisory Authority / The Danish Data Protection Agency / The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration] recognizes its responsibility, and offers an unconditional apology to the citizens who have been affected by the fact that the Authority did not deal with the inquiry in a timely manner.   | [Fødevarestyrelsen / Datatilsynet / Finanstilsynet] vedkender sig et ansvar i sagen og giver en uforbeholden undskyldning til de borgere, der er blevet påvirket af situationen.  |
| Admission of responsibility and promise of future action | [The Danish Financial Supervisory Authority / The Danish Data Protection Agency / The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration] recognizes its responsibility, and explains that more personnel has been assigned to the job to avoid this situation in the future.  | [Fødevarestyrelsen / Datatilsynet / Finanstilsynet] vedkender sig et ansvar i sagen og forklarer, at tilsynet har tilført flere årsværk til området for at undgå, at en tilsvarende situation kan opstå igen.                             |



### Annex 3. Manipulation of under- versus over-regulation

| Group                            | Manipulation   | Manipulation in Danish  |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Opening text                     | <i>An early retiree was charged extra fee on debt for 15 years due to failure in a bank's IT system. She is certainly not alone – at least 5,000 customers have had the same experience.</i>   | <i>Førtidspensionist blev opkrævet ekstra gebyr på gæld i 15 år på grund af fejl i banks IT-system. Hun er bestemt ikke alene - mindst 5.000 kunder har haft samme oplevelse.</i>   |
| Manipulation of under-regulation | The bank regrets the customers' bad experience, but points out that they have waited a year for the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority to return to the bank's inquiry to the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority. The bank has not been able to address the failure before the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority returned to their inquiry.   | Banken beklager kundernes dårlige oplevelse, men påpeger, at de har ventet flere måneder på, at Finanstilsynet skulle vende tilbage på bankens henvendelse til Finanstilsynet. Banken har ikke kunnet adressere fejlen før, Finanstilsynet vendte tilbage på deres henvendelse.   |
| Manipulation of over-regulation  | The bank regrets the customers' bad experience, but points out that they have not had the opportunity to solve the failure, due to the many resources they have had to spend looking into the details of the regulation and responding the inquiries from the Danish Financial Supervisory Authority related to the failure. That task has occupied both IT developers and the bank's legal department over the past year. | Banken beklager kundernes dårlige oplevelse, men påpeger, at de ikke har haft mulighed for at rette fejlen på grund af de mange ressourcer, de har skullet bruge på at undersøge detaljerne i reguleringen og besvare henvendelser fra Finanstilsynet i forbindelse med fejlen. Den opgave har optaget både IT-udviklere og bankens juridiske afdeling det sidste år. |

