

# Do Germans support the euro?

**Daniel Gros and Felix Roth**

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## Abstract

This paper analyses public support for the euro in Germany. Drawing from the results of regular Eurobarometer surveys, it finds that the ongoing financial and sovereign debt crisis has reduced support for the euro among German citizens, but not dramatically so – at least not yet. In the 1990s, the German public was sceptical towards the euro. But since the introduction of euro banknotes and coins, a clear majority of citizens supports the euro – despite the financial and sovereign debt crisis. Moreover, on average, support for the euro is at a similar level in Germany as it is elsewhere in the euro area.

This salient finding, however, appears to contradict the results of a survey conducted by the Allensbach Institute, an influential public opinion polling centre in Germany, which concludes that an overwhelming majority of Germans do not trust the euro any more.

We suggest that this striking difference in findings could be due to three factors: a) the fact that the Allensbach Institute and Eurobarometer were measuring different concepts: *trust* in the euro and *support* for the euro, respectively; b) the Allensbach Institute's results might be biased, given the scaling of their trust question and c) the fact that Eurobarometer frames its survey questions explicitly in a European context, whereas the Allensbach surveys have a purely national context.



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There is a widespread belief in Germany (and elsewhere) that German citizens have turned against the centrepiece of the process of deeper European integration: the euro.<sup>1</sup> The Allensbach Institute, a well-known public opinion polling centre, reported that levels of trust in the euro started to decline in April 2010 (Köcher, 2010). More recently, other studies claim that an overwhelming majority of citizens have lost trust in the euro (Köcher, 2011 a & b; Petersen, 2011; Ankenbrand & Siedenbiedel, 2011). Two of these studies, utilising data on trust from public opinion polls conducted in May/June 2011 (Ankenbrand & Siedenbiedel, 2011) and August 2011 (Köcher, 2011a) assert that trust in the euro has reached a dramatically low level, with only 19% trusting the euro compared to 71% who mistrust the euro in May/June 2011. By August, these same authors reported that the percentage of those not trusting the euro had risen to 76%. Interestingly, however, not all surveys reach these same negative findings. For example, one survey conducted by the EMNID Institute in mid-2011 (DAPD, 2011) finds that two-thirds of German citizens believe that the euro will still be in use in 2021, and only one-third believes that the euro will have disappeared in ten years. A study by TNS Infratest in mid-November 2011 (DPA, 2011a) reaches the conclusion that 30% of German citizens still trust the euro, 36% still have partial trust in the euro and only 33% mistrust the euro. Another study by EMNID in December 2012 (DPA, 2011b) finds that 51% of German citizen negatively assess the future of the euro, whereas 44% positively assess the future of the euro.

Taking this diverse information from within the German public sphere as a starting point, the purpose of this paper is to analyse German citizens' support for the euro over a 21-year period from 1990 to 2011. It uses data from the Eurobarometer surveys conducted on a comparable basis in all EU member countries. Using this 21-year time period, this paper will first analyse graphically<sup>2</sup> the impact of the financial crisis (autumn 2008 – spring 2011) and the ongoing sovereign debt crisis (spring 2010 – spring 2011) on support for the euro.

Eurobarometer surveys cover a broad range of other questions related to trust in the European institutions, such as the European Central Bank (ECB), which we have used as the empirical basis of several studies showing that trust in the ECB has fallen sharply in the aftermath of the financial and sovereign debt crisis.<sup>3</sup> As a second step, therefore, this paper will compare trends in citizens' trust in European and national institutions to citizens'

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<sup>1</sup> The latest Standard Eurobarometer 75 (Eurobarometer, 2011) finds that the freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU and the euro represent the two most important identifying criteria of the EU for German citizens. A decrease in support for the euro by Europeans and Germans would thus be a worrying trend for the process of European integration.

<sup>2</sup> For an econometric analysis, see Roth, Jonung & Nowak-Lehmann, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> See Gros & Roth, 2009, 2010; Roth, 2009; and Roth, Gros & Nowak-Lehmann, 2011.

support for the euro. Third, we compare the findings of the surveys of the Allensbach Institute concerning trust in the euro with the trend in support for the euro from the Eurobarometer surveys, and put forward explanations as to why the results differ so significantly, and why the institute has found such high levels of mistrust. Fourth, drawing upon the results from the last Standard Eurobarometer (EB)75 (Eurobarometer, 2011), the paper provides evidence that a majority of German citizens favours deeper European economic integration. Fifth, the paper concludes and offers some tentative policy conclusions.

## 1. Measuring public support for the single currency

We draw our measure of public support for the euro from data on responses to Eurobarometer surveys carried out bi-annually between October 1990 (EB34) and spring 2011 (EB75). Eurobarometer surveys are normally administered in Germany to 1,500 (before EB62) or 2,000 respondents (from EB62 onwards), in face-to-face interviews in the respondents' homes. For each Standard Eurobarometer survey, new and independent population samples are composed. During our chosen time period (1990-2011), the basic sampling design in all member states is multi-stage and random (probability), guaranteeing a representative polling of the entire population. Although the Eurobarometer surveys started in 1973, the question relating to European Monetary Union and the euro was first introduced in October 1990 (EB34). To measure public support for the euro we analyse the responses to the following survey question:

What is your opinion on each of the following proposals? Please state for each proposal whether you are for it or against it.

The “proposal” that concerns us in this paper is then presented as: “A European Monetary Union with one single currency, the euro”.<sup>4</sup>

The respondent can then answer by using the following alternatives: “for”, “against”, “don't know”.

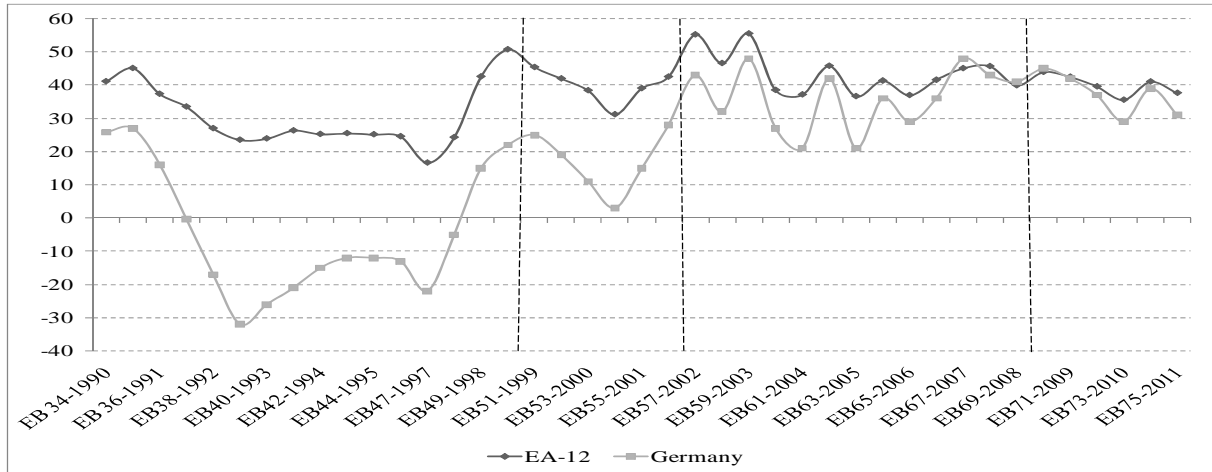
This type of question is standard in public opinion polls and the results have been widely used in the academic literature on public attitudes towards the single currency (see Kaltenthaler & Anderson, 2001; Banducci et al., 2003 & 2009; and Kaelberer, 2007, for example). As the response rate of the “Don't know” answer from German respondents fluctuates significantly (with a low of 3% in the year 2008 and a high of 36% in 1990 and

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<sup>4</sup> This question has been modified slightly over the 21-year period of our study. The wording of Standard Eurobarometers EB34-37 (autumn 1990 – spring 1992) was “Within this European Economic and Monetary Union, a single common currency replacing the different currencies of the Member States in five or six years time”. The wording of the question from EB38-40 (1992-1993) was: “There should be a European Monetary Union with one single currency replacing by 1999 the (national currency) and all other national currencies of the Member States of the European Community”. After the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the wording in EB41 was changed to: “(...) Member States of the European Union and European Community”. From EB42 onwards, the term “European Community” was dropped. From EB44 onwards, the “by 1999” was dropped. From EB46 onwards, the wording “euro” is introduced and the wording “European Monetary Union” is dropped. From EB48 onwards the wording “should” is replaced with “has”. From EB54 the wording “replacing the (national currency) and all other national currencies” is dropped. From EB54 onwards the wording “European Monetary Union” is reintroduced. From EB56 to EB72 onwards the wording “There has to be” is dropped, which now represents the wording as highlighted within the text. From EB73 onwards the wording “European Monetary Union” was replaced with “Economic and Monetary Union”. As it is unlikely that these changes in the framing of the question over time are responsible for any significant variation for our purposes, we ignore these modifications to the survey question. A similar line of argument is used by Banducci et al., 2003, p. 690.

1991), we focus on net support measured as the number of “for” responses minus the number of “against” responses to the above question for our descriptive analysis. Figure 1 shows the aggregated trend of citizens’ support in Germany in comparison to citizens’ support for the euro in an EA-12 country sample for the 1990-2011 period.

Figure 1. Comparison between Germany and EA-12 countries of net support, 1990-2011



Notes: Net support levels of above 0 indicate that a majority of citizens supports the euro. The aggregated figure for the 12 countries from the euro area (EA-12) applies population weights. The countries include Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Finland, Portugal, Ireland, Luxembourg and Greece. EA-12 is based upon approximately 500,000 individual observations. For more information on the data from the EA-12 country sample, see Roth, Jonung & Nowak-Lehmann D. (2011).

Four periods within the overall 21-year timeframe can be identified. Before the start of the European Monetary Union on 1 January 1999 (1<sup>st</sup> period), net support levels in Germany in autumn 1990 showed a clear majority of German citizens supporting the idea of a common currency (with a net support value of +26%). From 1990 until 1993, trust fell significantly to a net trust value of far below 0 in spring 1993. Some authors have argued that this decline was due to the EMS crisis after the unification of Germany (Banducci et al., 2003, pp. 693-694). Thus, for the five-year time period (from autumn 1992 to autumn 1997), a majority of German citizens did not support the euro. From autumn 1997 until autumn 1998, there was a rapid increase in support, and in autumn 1998, after a long period of very low support, a majority of Germans appeared to support the euro. When the monetary union started with the euro, initially only as a book-keeping entity in January 1999 (2<sup>nd</sup> period), interestingly, support for the euro fell by more than 20 percentage points – to essentially zero in the autumn of 2000. This drop is widely linked to the decline of the euro in value vis-à-vis the US dollar (Banducci et al., 2003 & 2009, p. 566; and Hobolt & Leblond, 2009).

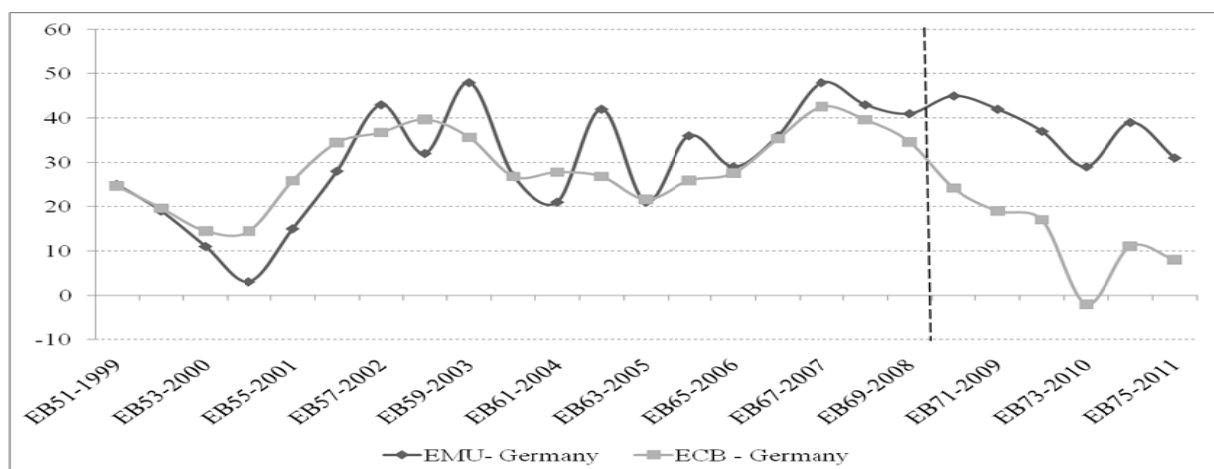
But once the physical euro entered into circulation on 1 January 2002 (3<sup>rd</sup> period), the net support increased by 15 percentage points from 28% to up to 43% and from autumn 2003 onwards, it remained at an average level of around 36% (with a standard deviation of 9%; 6% from spring 2008 onwards) until spring 2011. In the direct aftermath of the financial crisis, support for the euro even increased slightly from spring 2008 to autumn 2008. After a significant decrease during the crisis period until spring 2010, in the midst of the sovereign debt crisis, it increased again to 39% in autumn 2010 to decrease to 31% in spring 2011.

Figure 1 illustrates that the financial and sovereign debt crisis has not dramatically reduced German citizens’ support for the euro – at least not so far, and that since the introduction of the euro coins and banknotes in January 2002, a majority of German citizens has supported the euro up to now.

## 2. Trust in European and national institutions in comparison to support for the euro

But how does the trend in support for the euro compare to the citizens' trust in the ECB, the institutional framework of the euro? Figure 2 shows a comparison between German citizens' trust in the ECB and citizens' support for the euro. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, German citizens' trust in the ECB deteriorated and for the first time followed a completely different path from support for the euro (from spring 1999 to spring 2008, the two trends move closely together with a correlation coefficient of 0.83). It seems that German citizens hold the ECB responsible for not guaranteeing financial stability in the time period before the financial crisis (Roth, Gros & Nowak-Lehmann, 2011) but have not lost support for the single euro currency as such.

Figure 2. Trends of net support for the euro and net trust in the ECB, 1999-2011



Note: Net support levels of above 0 indicate that a majority of citizens supports the euro/trusts the ECB. Standard EBs 51-75. A Special EB71.1 (January/February 2011) has no information on support for the euro as it was not included in the time trend. However, it has to be pointed out that the inclusion of the special EB71.1 would show a dramatic decrease/structural break of citizens' trust in the ECB (see here also Gros & Roth, 2009, 2010; Roth, 2009; and Jones, 2009).

Trust in the ECB has thus fallen dramatically. Is this a generalised phenomenon in the sense that systemic trust has fallen in Germany in general? Table 1 indicates the trend in net trust in a number of institutions: the ECB, the European Union, the European Commission, the European Parliament, national parliaments and national government (data from Eurobarometer). Both the changes and the levels suggested in the table are interesting: German citizens' trust in the European institutions and the European Union has fallen more sharply than has their support for the euro. Whereas trust in the ECB has fallen by 28 percentage points (the strongest fall among all institutions), trust in the European Parliament has fallen by 19% and by 16% in the European Commission, but support for the European Monetary Union and the euro has fallen by only 10%. Moreover, support for EMU remains relatively high (31%), compared to only 8% for the ECB.

Comparing the EU institutions to national institutions, one finds that trust levels in the national government and parliament have actually increased by 6% and 9%, respectively. However, when one compares the level of trust in the national versus the European Parliament, or the national government versus the European Commission in 2011, one finds that in both cases trust remains slightly greater in the EU institution than in the national counterpart.

Table 1. Changes in Germans' net trust in national and European institutions in comparison to net support for the euro

Comparison	Spring 2008	Spring 2011	Spring 2011 - Spring 2008
Net trust ECB	36	8	-28
Net trust EU	-1	-20	-19
Net trust EP	18	1	-17
Net trust EC	7	-9	-16
<b>Net support EURO</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>-10</b>
Net Trust NG	-21	-15	6
Net Trust NP	-11	-2	9

Notes: ECB= European Central Bank; EU=European Union; EP= European Parliament; EC= European Commission; NG= National Government; NP= National Parliament.

Source: Data from Standard EB69-75 (2008-2011).

### 3. Net support for the euro versus trust in the euro

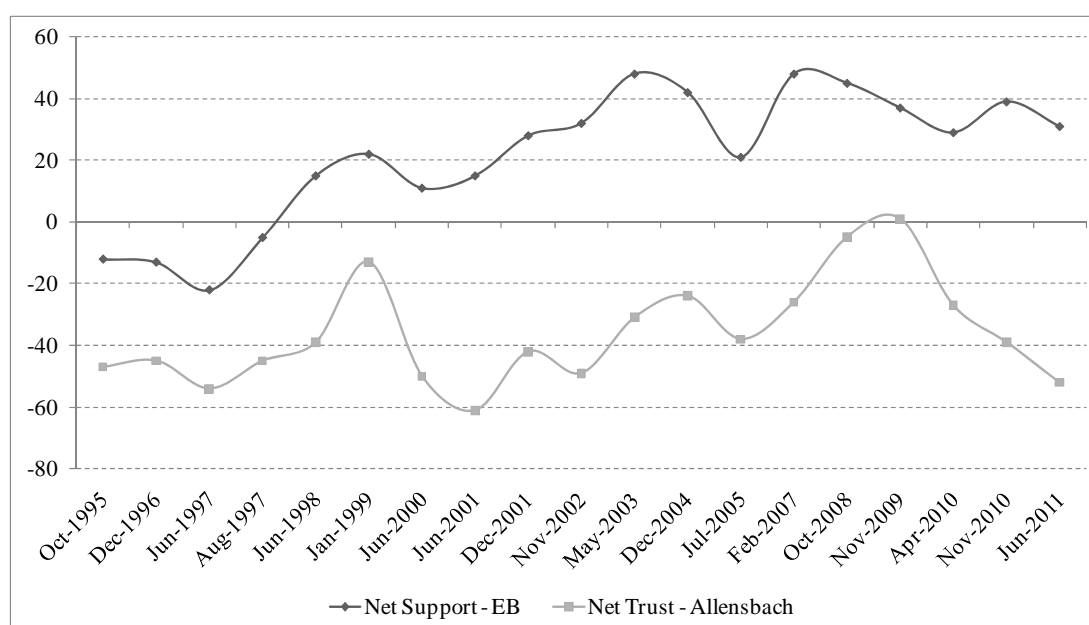
Figure 3 compares the data from our 'support' item from the Eurobarometer surveys with the available data from the Allensbach Institute on 'trust' in the euro. To highlight the striking difference between the published results from the Allensbach Institute, as reported in newspaper articles by Köcher (2011a & b), Petersen (2011) and Ankenbrand & Siedenbiedel (2011), and the results based on Eurobarometer data, we have constructed a net trust measure for the Allensbach data for the whole time period of 1995 to 2011 by subtracting the sum of the response "less trust" and "no trust at all" from the sum "great trust" and "very great trust". From June 2001 onwards, however, this is methodologically problematic and inadequate.<sup>5</sup> The Allensbach Institute (2007) and two newspaper articles by Petersen (2011) on 26 January 2011 and Köcher on 19 October (2011a), add the two response categories "less trust" and "no trust at all" and compare it to the response rate "great trust". As can be inferred from Table A1, Petersen assumes that that the two response rates "great

<sup>5</sup> According to the Allensbach Institute (2001) and Allensbach data on trust in the euro given to the authors by Dr. Petersen, from October 1995 until February/March 2001, Allensbach data consist of a scale with five possible responses varying from "no trust at all", "less trust", "great trust", "very great trust" and "undecided". According to the same sources and Köcher (2010), from June 2001 onwards, the trust item is only based on a scale with four response possibilities: "no trust at all", "less trust", "great trust" and "undecided". Thus the response "very great trust" is now missing. The reason for dropping the response "very great trust" has most likely been the fact that the response rate of "very great trust" was very small (from 2-4% from 1995-2001 and reached 0% (as reported by Dr. Petersen to the authors) in June 2001. As the scaling changes from 2001-02, two conclusions may be drawn. First, comparing data before 2002 with data from 2002 onwards seems to be empirically problematic as the trust items compared do not have the same scale. However, this is done by Petersen (2011) as can be seen in Table A1 in the Appendix. Second, adding the two negative responses "no trust at all" with "less trust" and comparing them with the one positive response "great trust" seems to be empirically problematic. Whereas Köcher (2010) still describes all three trends – "great trust", "less trust" and "no trust at all" (see here Figure A1 in the Appendix) – Petersen (2011) and Köcher (2011a & b) already start to add the two negative responses and compare it to the one positive response. This can be seen in Table A1 in the Appendix and becomes obvious in the newspaper article "Schicksalsthema Europa" by Köcher (2011a) on 19 October 2011, where she states that three-quarters of Germans mistrust (in the original article it is called "ein Misstrauensvotum abgeben") the euro, in comparison to 17%, who still trust the euro.

trust” and “very great trust” from 1995 to June 2001 can be compared to the single response rate “great trust” without the need for significant clarification or empirical discussion.

Whereas the Allensbach data indicate that a majority of citizens has distrusted the euro from October 1995 to 2011 in almost all time periods, the Eurobarometer surveys show that since the introduction of the euro on 1 January 1999, a clear majority of German citizens has supported the single European currency, the euro. The trend figures have in particular drifted apart since the start of the financial and sovereign debt crisis, from 2008 onwards. In May/June 2011, according to Allensbach, trust trend data reached a level of -52% (19% trust and 71% mistrust) (Ankenbrand & Seidenbiedel, 2011 and data given to the authors by Dr. Petersen). The support for the euro data changed only slightly and remained at +31% in May 2011. The difference between the Allensbach data on trust and the Eurobarometer item on support in May 2011 is startling. The difference in net value terms is 83%.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 3. Trends of net support for the euro based on EB data and net trust in the euro



Notes: Eurobarometer data are based upon approximately 55,00 individual observations. EB data from 1995-2009 were purchased by TNS EMNID. EB data from 2009-2011 were extracted from the European Commission website. In order to match EB data with Allensbach, data from EB 44, EB 46, EB 47, EB 50, EB 53, EB 55, EB 56, EB 58, EB 59, EB 62, EB 63, EB 67, EB 70, EB 72, EB 73, EB 74, EB 75 were taken. The time difference between the Allensbach and Eurobarometer data is nowhere greater than three months. Allensbach data have been provided to the authors by Dr. Petersen. Not all Allensbach observations could be utilised; only those which could adequately be linked to our Eurobarometer data.

As can be seen in Figure A2 in the Appendix, the difference is less startling for the time trend of the question whether German citizens would like to have back their old currency. This question actually indicates that, despite the crisis, fewer and fewer Germans want to have

<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Petersen (2011) argues in his article that there was only one year – 2002, when the euro went first into circulation – when a majority of German citizens trusted the euro. He claims that in all other time periods German citizens mistrusted the euro. As can be seen in Figure A1 this argument does not hold when analysing the information on trust in the year 2009. Following the logic of Petersen (who combines “less trust” with “no trust at all”), there would have been a majority of citizens who trusted the euro in 2009. However, as Table A1 clarifies, most curiously, in presenting his line of argument, Petersen has not taken the data point from 2009 into consideration, but jumps from an observation from October 2008 to November 2010. It is only by excluding the data point from 2009 that Petersen was able to claim that German citizens have consistently mistrusted the euro from 2003 onwards.



the Deutsche Mark (DM) back. However, the net values of 0 for/against the DM are still far below the values of the Eurobarometer survey on support for the euro. The two different sources of Allensbach data, however, already make clear that the loss of net trust in the euro does not imply that more Germans would like to have the DM back. The response to two additional questions asked by Allensbach (Allensbach Institute, 2011a) suggests that German public opinion remains nuanced: a majority of Germans believes that the exclusion of Greece would be the wrong decision (net value of +4%) and the founding of a hard eurozone together with France is considered by a majority of German citizens (45%) to be a bad solution and only 23% responding that it would be a good solution).

The puzzling question is now: why is the difference so significant between trust in and support for the euro? Two arguments can be put forward.

First, as one measure concerns “support” and the other concerns “trust”, the two measures should be compared with caution.<sup>7</sup> The question now, however, is which measure is more informative: “trust” in the euro or “support” for the euro? “Trust” in the euro should be interpreted as “trust” in the currency (see Kaelberer, 2007, pp. 625-26) in circulation, which would be comparable to trust in the Deutsche Mark, and involves a belief that the money can be reused for future transactions wielding the same purchasing power (value). Along these lines, Kaelberer (2007) calls inflation “the most important enemy of trust” (Kaelberer, 2007, p. 626). Support for the euro would most likely imply that although having lost trust in money in general, citizens might still support the new single currency, the euro, due to the fact that citizens believe the European level is better able to mitigate the negative consequences of the economic situation compared to the national level.<sup>8</sup> The support for the euro would then indicate that citizens are willing to “transfer power from the nation state to European institutions” (Kaltenthaler et al., 2001, p. 141). In addition, the question is not only directed towards the euro but also towards the European Monetary Union, the question being “*Are you for or against a European Monetary Union with a single currency, the euro?*” Thus, whereas the “trust” item seems to be appropriate to capture the theoretically profound concept of institutional trust, such as trust in the ECB, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the national government, the national parliament, a “support” item for the concept of the euro and the EMU is most likely a better measure than a “trust” item to clearly distinguish between the euro as being the *European* single currency (including the transfer to European institutions) and money in general.

Second, the outcome might be due to the i) quality of the data and ii) the scaling of the item or iii) the framing of the survey questions.

i) To test whether the quality of data differs, we conducted three validity tests aiming to compare the same items at the same time period on i) trust in the EU, ii) benefit of EU membership and iii) trust in the ECB between the Allensbach and Eurobarometer data.<sup>9</sup> Most astonishingly, the Allensbach data are always lower than the Eurobarometer data (Figures A3, A4, A5). As can be inferred from Figure A3 (the longest comparable time trend) it seems

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<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed elaboration of the difference between a “trust” and “support” item, see also Luhmann 2000, p. 70. One should note that the most recent literature in the field does not reflect an awareness of the distinction between “trust” in and “support” for the euro. To proxy trust in the euro, Kaelberer (2007) uses the support item from the Eurobarometer (Kaelberer, 2007, p. 630). Kaltenthaler & Anderson (2001) use the terms public confidence and support as interchangeable concepts (2001, p. 140).

<sup>8</sup> This is indicated by the fact that a majority of German citizens thinks that the financial and economic crisis is better overcome at the European level (Eurobarometer 75).

<sup>9</sup> We have to admit that matching the time periods could lead to some uncertainty because the precise month of the Allensbach data on trust in the EU and ECB was not stated.

that in the spring of 2002 and autumn 2005 the two trends still overlap closely, but from autumn 2007 onwards Allensbach data report lower trust values than Eurobarometer data. These results are puzzling and deserve attention in future research. For now we conclude that the quality of the data varies. Which dataset if of lesser quality is unknown. Both sets of data have been gathered via face-to-face interviews.

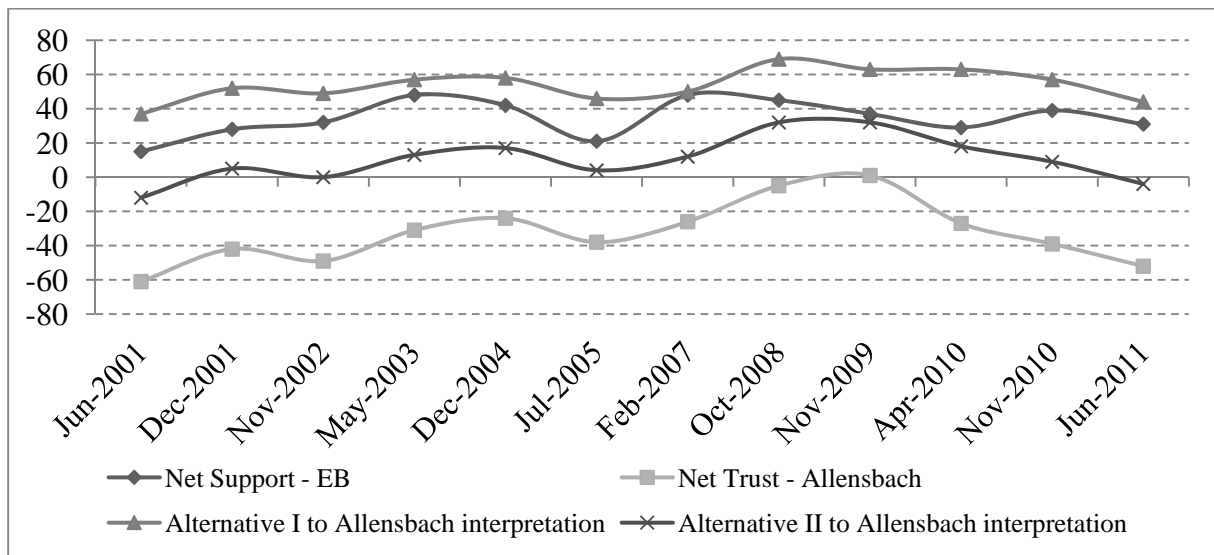
ii) The argument concerning the scale used to measure trust in the euro seems to be more important, however. From June 2001 onwards (Allensbach Institute, 2007 and data given to the authors by Dr. Petersen), it seems that the Allensbach Institute shifted its scale from a scale with five responses “no trust at all”, “less trust”, “undecided”, “great trust”, “very great trust” (which has been used from 1995- February/March 2001 to a scale with four responses: “no trust at all”, “less trust”, “undecided” and “great trust”).<sup>10</sup>

Taking this scale into consideration, it is a questionable move to combine the two responses “no trust at all” and “less trust” and then compare it with great trust (as has been done in Köcher, 2011a & b; Petersen, 2011; and Ankenbrand & Siedenbiedel, 2011). Combining these two response rates to form the new indicator “mistrust” imparts a bias towards the finding that a majority of citizens will most likely mistrust the euro – at least in the sense that the design of the scale makes the finding likely that a majority does not have “great trust” in the euro. Thus, after combining the two responses, Ankenbrand & Seidenbiedel (2011) write that 71% mistrust the euro (against 19% who trust the euro and three-quarters of the German population mistrust the euro (Köcher, 2011a) (with 17% still affirming trust).

More significantly, the response rate “less trust” might indicate that although there is less trust, there is still some trust. Based on the Allensbach logic of combining two responses to form the new indicator “mistrust”, another provocative interpretation could be to identify the response “less trust” as being some trust, and construct a new trust indicator consisting of “some trust” and “great trust”. This new trust indicator could then be compared to “no trust at all”. As this approach will have an upward bias, a second approach is just not to count “less trust” and construct a net measure between the response “great trust” and “no trust at all” (for an overview of the three trust trend categories, see Figure A6 in the appendix). In Figure 4, we analyse the trend graphs of both alternative specifications and, as assumed, the difference between Eurobarometer data and Allensbach data is less marked. Whereas our first alternative specification (adding “less trust” to “greater trust” and subtracting “no trust at all”) now provides higher levels of trust than support levels (net trust of + 44%), the second alternative specification (not considering “less trust”) is still lower than our support data from the Eurobarometer, but the difference is less significant. Our second specification renders a net trust level of -4% instead of -52%. This specification makes clear that there has been a net trust decline due to the sovereign debt crisis of 36% (from +32 to -4) but not by 53% (from +1 to minus 52). In particular the value of -4% makes clear that it is only a small minority that mistrusts the euro. The net value of -4% would also be a closer approximation to the TNS Infratest data (DPA 2011a), which found a -3% of net trust (30% trust vs. 33% mistrust the euro). Thus, the second alternative specification indicates that there has certainly been a significant decline in trust, but a far less dramatic decrease than the Allensbach findings have implied.

<sup>10</sup> The original terms in German are „sehr grosses Vertrauen“, „grosses Vertrauen“, „Unentschieden“, „weniger Vertrauen“, „kaum, gar kein Vertrauen“.

Figure 4. Comparison of alternative trends of Allensbach data with Eurobarometer data



Note: Standard EBs 55, 56, 58, 59, 62, 63, 67, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, and data given to the author by Dr. Petersen.

iii) Framing. One important difference between the Eurobarometer and the Allensbach surveys is the context: the Eurobarometer survey puts the context of the question into Europe since many (but by no means at all) questions concern Europe, European integration and the European institutions. The respondents might thus 'frame' their answers in a different way from when they are interviewed during an Allensbach survey, which has a purely national context. For instance, the difference in the data as depicted in Figures A3-A5 in the Appendix might be related to the framing effect.

#### 4. General support for European integration among German citizens

We may summarise our findings by saying that a majority of citizens still supports the euro and EMU, but only a small minority has 'great trust' in the common currency.

But what is the overall position of Germans towards European integration? We found that trust in the EU institutions remains slightly higher than in the corresponding national institutions (see Table 1).

And there are more indicators to show that a majority of German citizens remains in favour of deeper economic and European integration. Even in 2011, a majority of German citizens (net value of +18%) remains optimistic about the future of the EU. A majority thinks that the EU is better able to tackle effective actions against the financial and economic crisis than the national government (net value of 20% vs. 17%). An overwhelming majority (net value of 88%) agrees that the EU member states should work together to tackle the financial and economic crisis. A majority (net value of +68%) of German citizens thinks that a stronger coordination of economic policy among all EU member states is effective. A majority of German citizens (net value of +70%) thinks that a stronger coordination of economic and financial policies among the countries of the euro area would be effective to overcome the current financial crisis. A majority of German citizens (net value of 38%) thinks that EU membership is a good thing for Germany. A majority (net values of 49% and 65%) of citizens wants a common foreign policy and common defence and security policy. A majority of citizens thinks that Germany has benefited from the EU (net value of +6%) and a majority (+7 net value) of German citizens agrees that the interests of Germany are well taken into account in the EU. In addition, German citizens think that European Monetary Policy should

be emphasised by the European institutions to strengthen the EU in the next five years (with 45% the second most important item after energy policy). However, one has to admit that German citizens believe that the national government has been more effective in combating the crisis so far (45% vs. 46% for the EU and 66% vs. 29% for the national government). This would be in accordance with the increase of net trust in the national government and parliament, as depicted in Table 1.

## 5. Conclusion

Our analysis has shown that even in the midst of the 'euro' debt crisis, more German citizens *support* the euro (63%) than do not (only 32%). In addition, since the introduction of the euro in January 1999, a majority of German citizens has always supported the euro and monetary union, and the percentage of those hankering for a return to the DM continues to decline.

Our findings suggest the dramatic fall in *trust* in the euro as depicted by the Allensbach Institute will most likely concern trust in money in general, but does not necessarily mean a loss of German support for the euro as the centrepiece of European integration – the (Economic) and European Monetary Union.

Secondly, although there is undoubtedly a significant fall in trust in the euro, the dramatic fall as inferred by the institute for public opinion, Allensbach, is most likely due to an erroneous interpretation of the underlying scale. Alternative interpretations of the data show that the decline in trust in the euro is not so dramatic, but in fact it corresponds more closely to the support data of Eurobarometer.

Thirdly, in contrast to the high approval rating for the euro, we detect a significant fall in approval for the ECB; German citizens thus seem to blame the governance structure behind the euro but not the EMU and the euro itself. Eurobarometer data also indicate that German citizens are clearly in favour of deeper political integration.

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## Appendix

Figure A1. Trust trends as depicted in Allensbach Institute (2010)



Source: Allensbach Institute (2010).

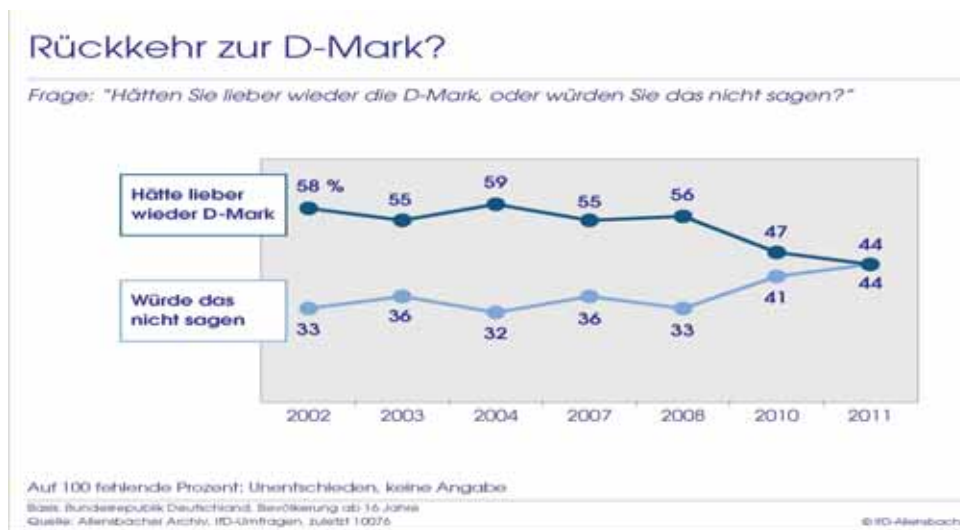
Table A1. Trust in the euro (among the German population age 16 and over)

FRAGE: "Wie viel Vertrauen haben Sie zu der gemeinsamen europaischen Wahrung? Wurden Sie sagen ..." (Question: *How much trust do you have in the common European currency? Would you say...*)

	All population		
	Very great/ great trust (%)	Less trust/ no trust at all (%)	Undecided (%)
1995, October	22	69	9
1996, December	21	66	13
1997, July / August	23	68	9
1998, June	25	64	11
1999, January	37	50	13
2000, May / June	21	71	8
2001, June	15	76	9
2002, January	49	40	11
2003, April	29	60	11
2004, December	33	57	10
2005, July	27	65	8
2007, February	31	57	12
2008, October	41	46	13
2010, November	26	65	9
2011, January	22	68	10

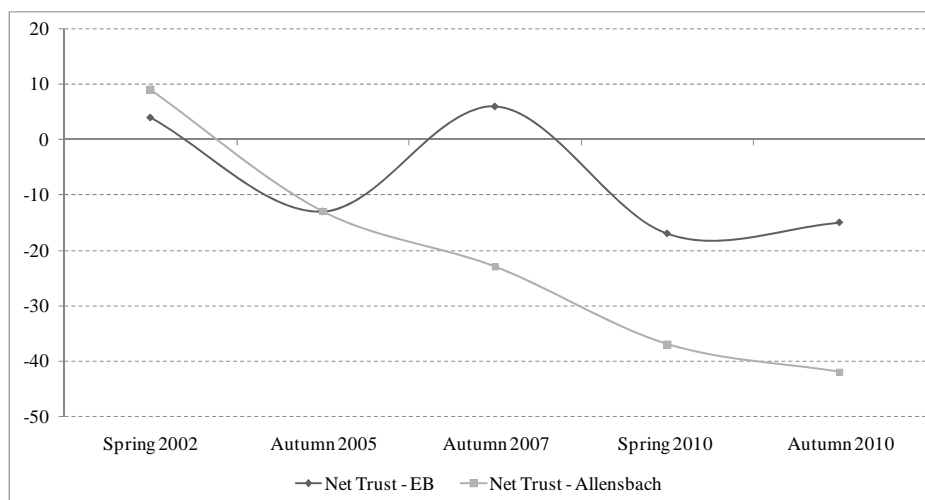
Source: Allensbach Institute (2011a) (translation by author).

Figure A2. Do Germans want the Deutsche Mark back?



Source: Allensbach Institute (2011b).

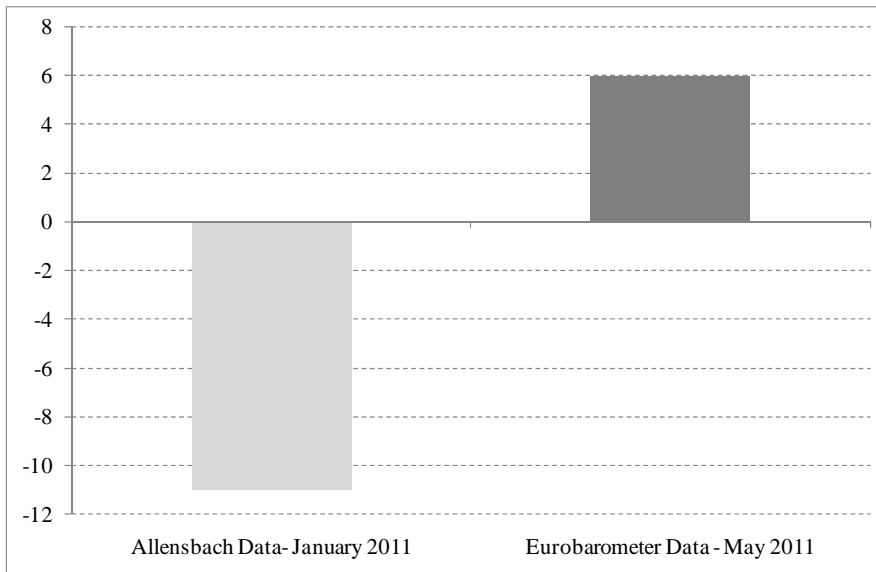
Figure A3. Comparison between trends in net trust in the EU – Eurobarometer vs. Allensbach data, 2002-10



Sources: Standard EB 57, the mean of EB 63 and 64, the mean of EB 67 and 68, EB 73, EB 74 and Allensbach Institute (2011a).

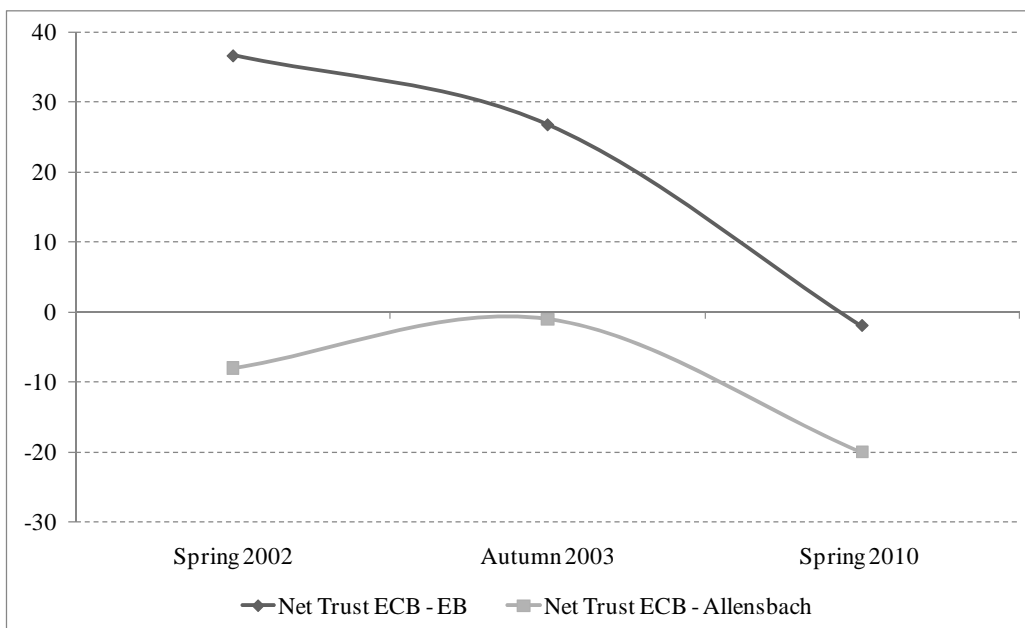


Figure A4. Benefit from EU membership, comparison of Allensbach and Eurobarometer data, 2011



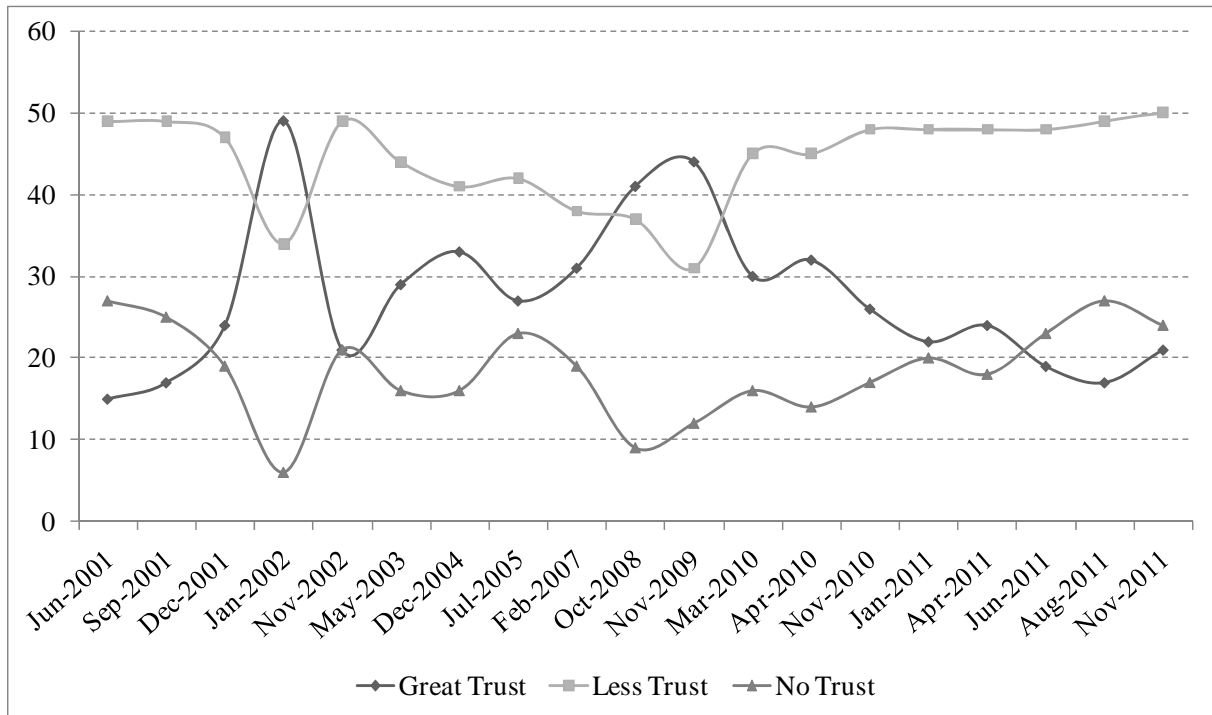
Sources: Standard EB 75 and Allensbach Institute (2011a).

Figure A5. Comparison between trends in net trust in the ECB – Eurobarometer vs. Allensbach data, 2002-10



Sources: Standard EB's 57, 60, 73 and Allensbach Institute (2010).

Figure A6. Comparison of three response categories with Allensbach trust data, June 2001-November 2011



Source: Data provided to the authors by Dr. Petersen, Allensbach Institute.



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