

DIRECCIÓN DE SERVICIOS DE INFORMACIÓN Y ANÁLISIS ESPECIALIZADOS
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ABSTRACT:

Declining political trust has long been seen as a challenge for democracies, and parliaments seek to counter this through public engagement. Many parliaments have established visitor centres and both expanded and professionalised their visiting services. Parliamentary visiting programmes are in high demand with some parliaments attaining millions of visitors every year. However, little is known about how such programmes impact on visitors. Therefore, the present study investigates whether or not political trust changes as a result of a visit to parliament, and whether it makes a difference when visitors observe a parliamentary debate. N = 746 adult parliamentary visitors to the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany, were asked about their trust in politics in a pre-post study at both the beginning and the end of their visit. Results showed that visiting parliament had only a very small positive effect on political trust, and that there was no significant difference in impact between visit programmes with vs without observing a plenary debate. Results are also relevant for the question of the stability of political trust in adulthood.

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