

Trust in institutions and its determinants

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Outline

- Why is trust important?
- What is shown by existing evidence?
- The OECD approach to trust
- Some concluding remarks
- Next steps

Why is trust important?

“A person’s belief that another person or **institution will act consistently with his/her expectations of positive behaviour” (OECD 2017)**

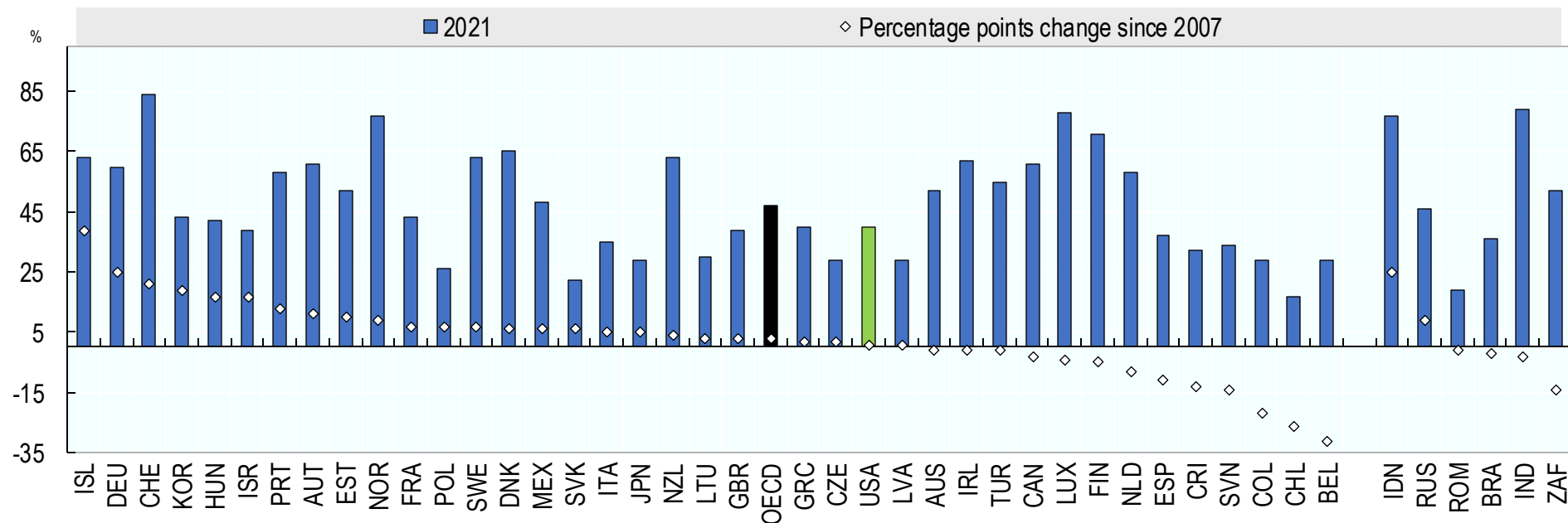
- Foundation for **legitimacy and stability** of political systems and prerequisite for people’s **political voice** in democratic countries.
- It influences governments’ **ability to govern** where success of policies depends on **citizen compliance, buy-in and participation**.
- It also **mediates support** for long term policies (i.e. environment, debt sustainability, inequalities)
- Outcome of **good governance**

What is shown by existing evidence

➤ Trust indicators are volatile

- Between 2007 and 2021 trust decreased in many countries, on average **less than half of people** trust their government **in 2021**
- In 2021, **40% of people** in the US reported trusting the government

Levels of trust in government and its change

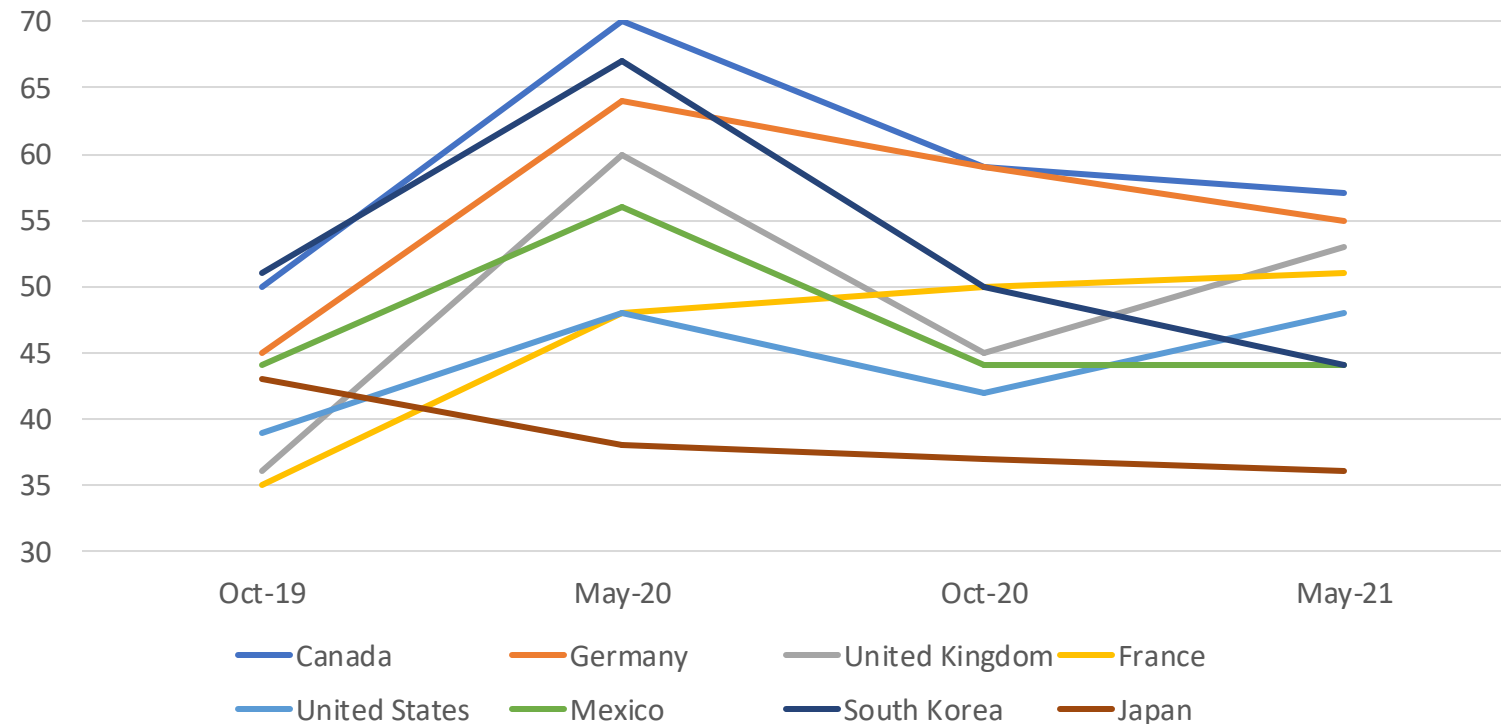


Source: World Gallup Poll.

Particularly in times of crisis “Rallying round the flag”

- Trust increased following the COVID outbreak but the aftermath is unknown

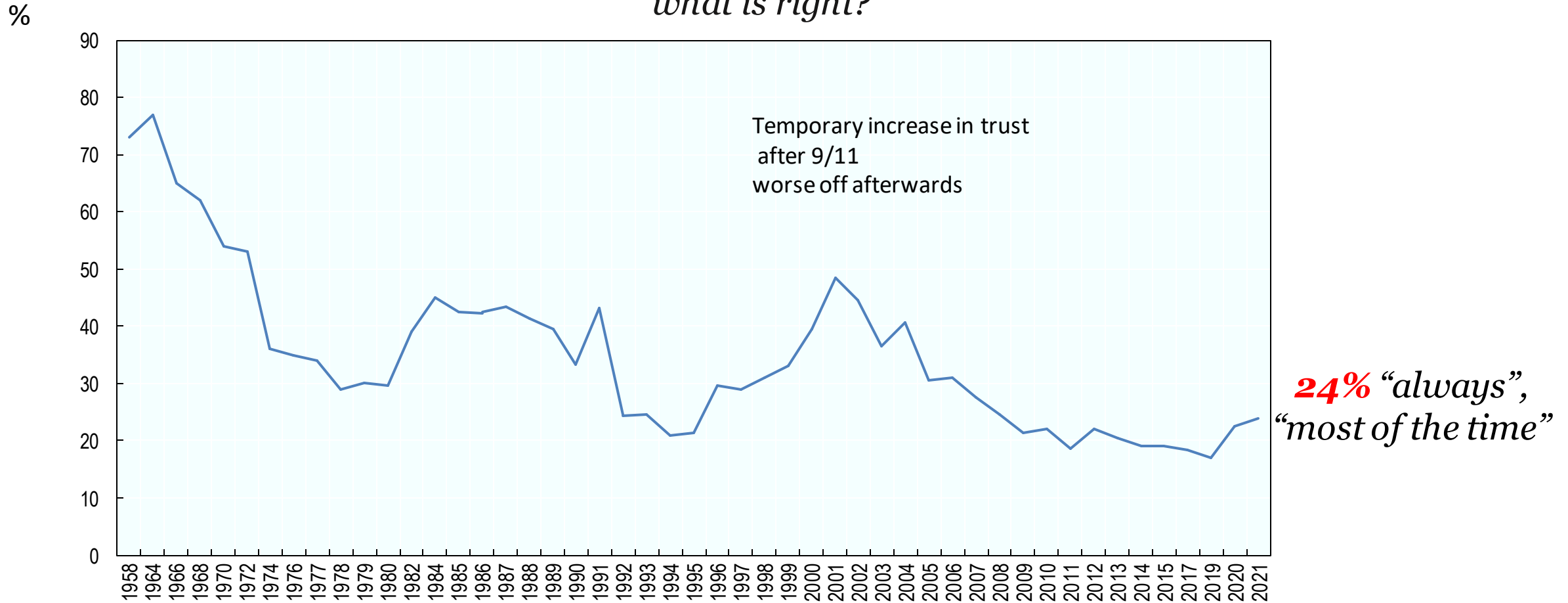
% Share of population that trusts the government “to do what is right”



Notes: 9-point scale, top 4. Source: OECD calculations based on Edelman Trust Barometer

In some contexts evidence of a structural decrease in trust levels

“How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right?”

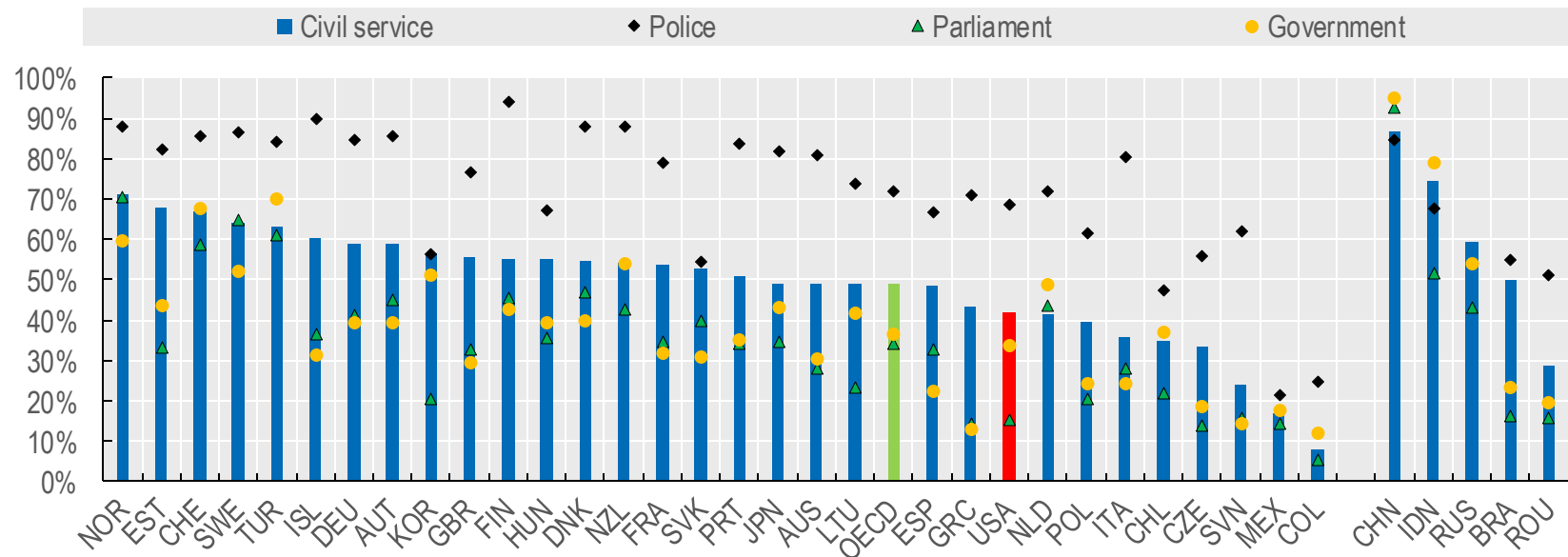


Source: Pew Research Center

and there is wide variation across institutions

- On OECD average 72% of the population trust the police, 49% trust the civil service, 37% trust the national government and about one in three trusts their national parliament
- In the US, 68% trust the police, 42% the civil service, 33% the government and only 15% the parliament

Trust in government, the civil service, the parliament and the police, 2017-2020



Source: OECD calculations based in the World Values Survey and European Values Study, 2017-2020.

Investing in trust: analytical framework

- Trust depends on the congruence between citizen's (and businesses) preferences and the perceived actual functioning of government (Bouckaert and van de Walle, 2003)
- Distinction between “trust in competence”, the ability to confirm to expectations, and “trust in intentions”, to perform in good faith according to the best competence (Noteboom 2007; Choi and Kim 2012)
- The “logic of consequences” where trust is derived causally from (i) outcomes, and (ii) the “logic of appropriateness”, where trust is based on values, integrity and transparency (Bouckaert 2012)

 Two main concepts/drivers **competences and values**

OECD framework to measure drivers of trust through a population survey

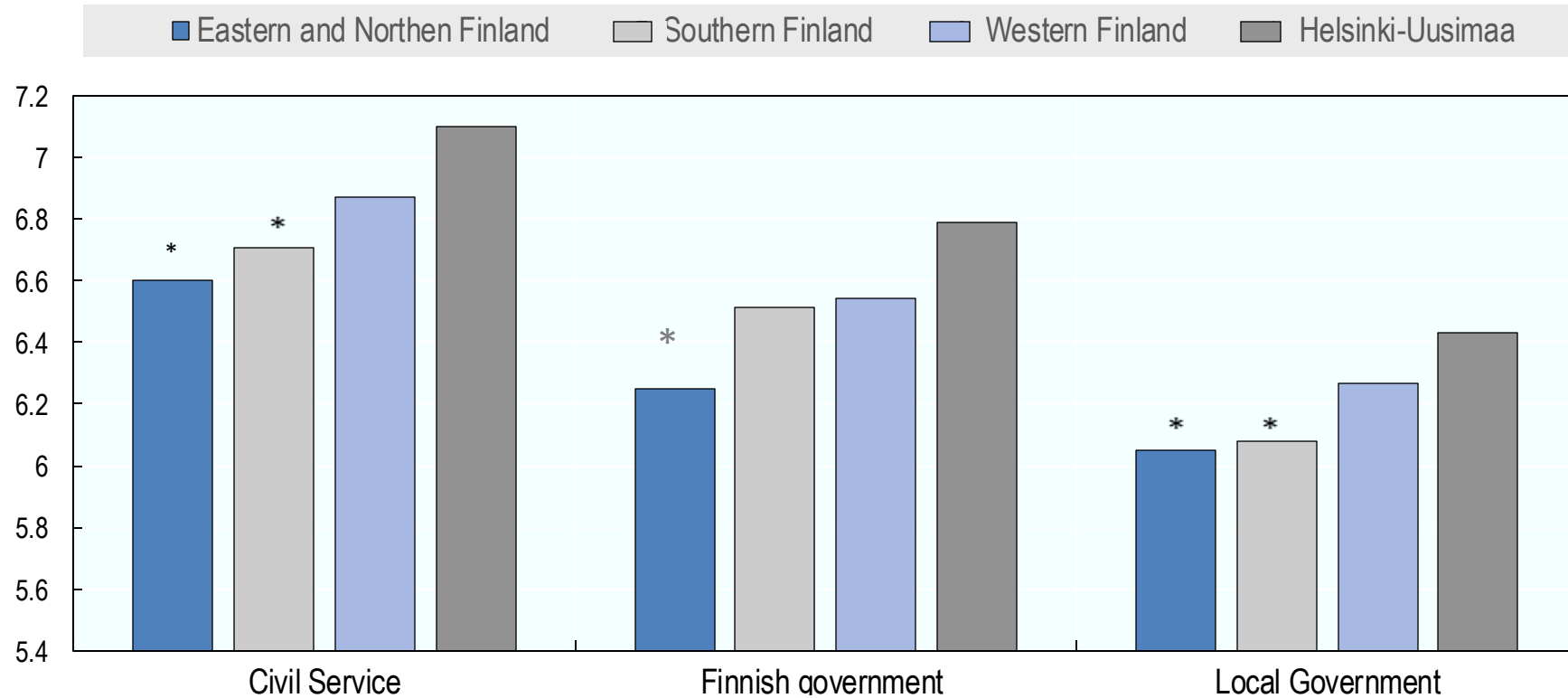
Levels of trust in different public institutions		
Trust in national government, local government, civil service, parliament, police, political parties, courts, legal systems and intergovernmental organisations		
Public Governance Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions		
Competencies	Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide efficient, quality, affordable, timely and citizen-centred public services that are co-ordinated across levels of government and satisfy users. Develop an innovative and efficient civil service that responds to user needs.
	Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticipate needs and assess evolving challenges. Minimise uncertainty in the economic, social and political environment. Effectively commit to future-oriented policies and co-operate with stakeholders on global challenges.
Values	Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide open and accessible information so the public better understands what government is doing. Consult, listen, and respond to stakeholders, including through citizen participation and engagement opportunities that lead to tangible results. Ensure there are equal opportunities to be part of and participate in the institutions of representative democracy.
	Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align public institutions with ethical values, principles, and norms to safeguard the public interest. Take decisions and use public resources ethically, promoting the public interest over private interests while combating corruption. Ensure accountability mechanisms between public institutions at all levels of governance. Promote a neutral civil service whose values and standards of conduct uphold and prioritise the public interest.
	Fairness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve living conditions for all. Provide consistent treatment of businesses and people regardless of their background and identify (e.g. gender, socio-economic status, racial/ethnic origin).
Cultural, Economic and Political Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual and group identities, traits, and preferences, including socio-economic status; interpersonal socialisation and networks. Distrust of and disengagement from the system. 		
Perception of government action on intergenerational and global challenges		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of government commitment to and effectiveness in addressing long-term challenges. 		

Note: Elements highlighted are new to the framework

Source: Brezzi, González, Prats, Nguyen (2021)

Trust divides, region, education, income

Average trust is higher in Helsinki-Uusimaa than in other Finnish regions, 2020

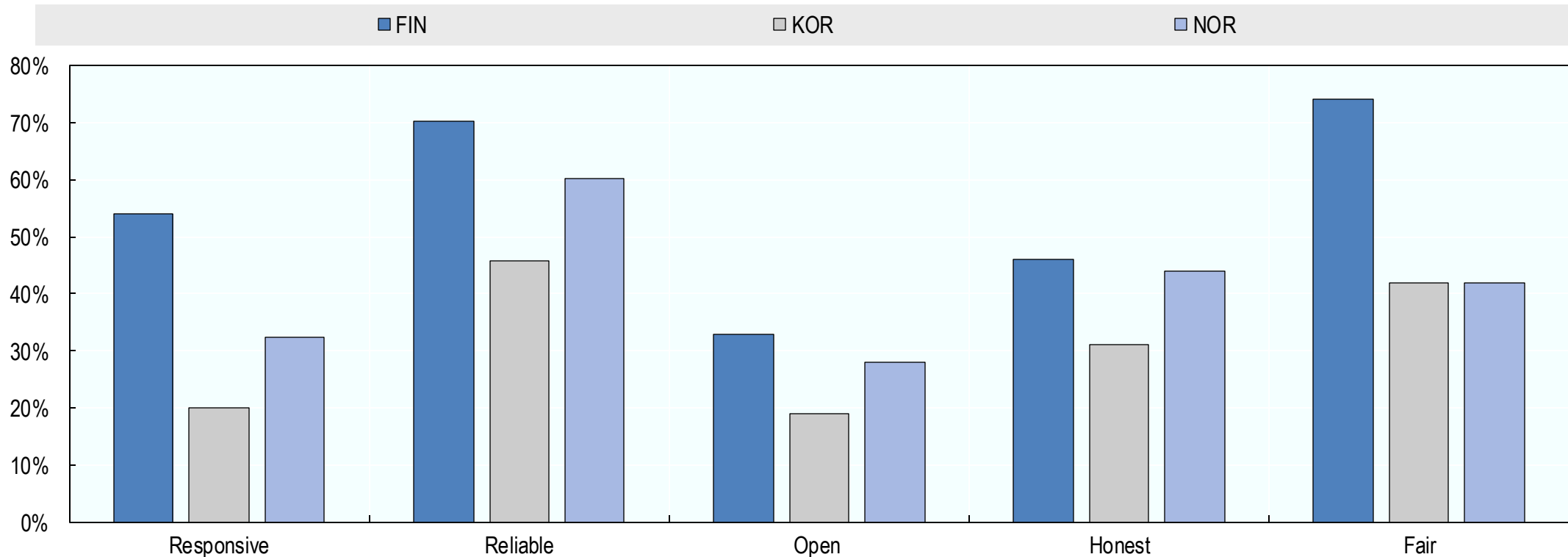


Source OECD Trust Survey

OECD Trust survey: Compare citizens' assessment in key drivers of trust across countries

- Better evidence allows targeting policy action

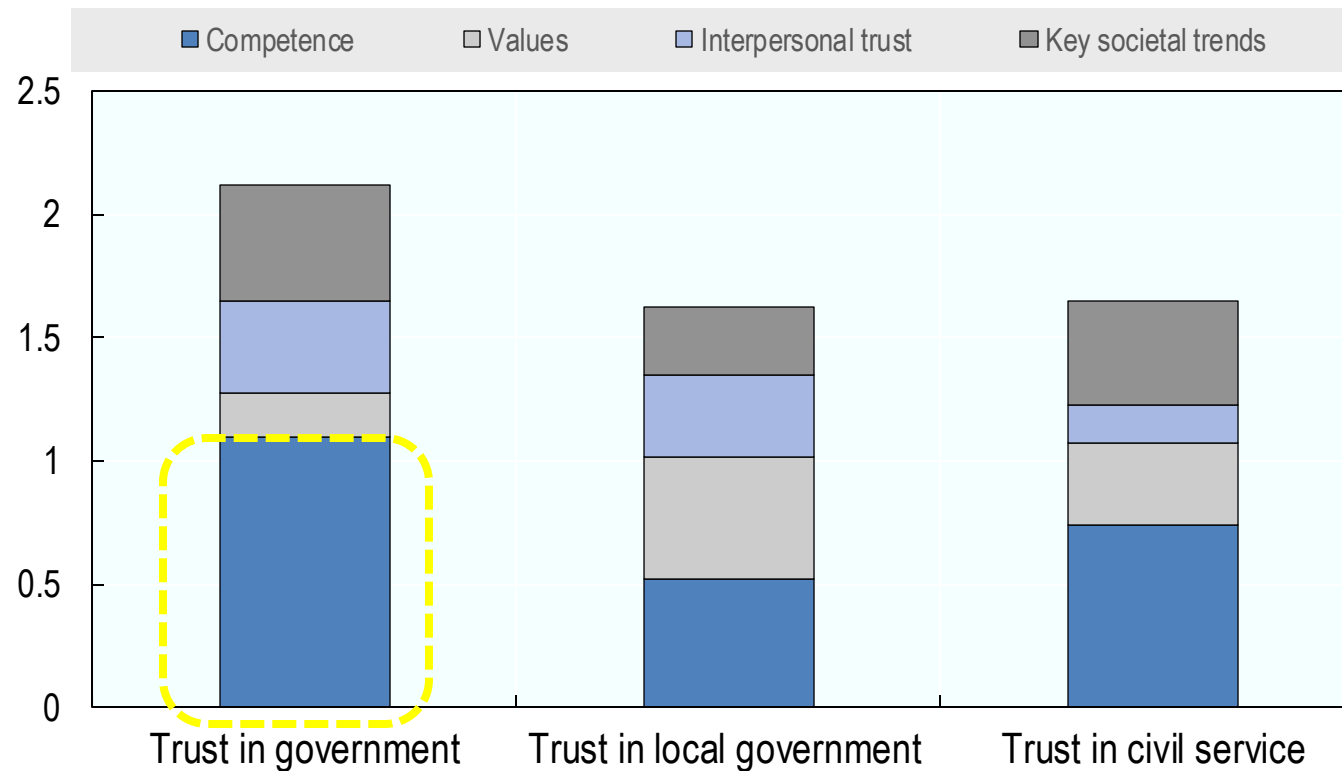
Percentage of the population considering their government to be responsive, reliable, open, honest and fair



Source: OECD Trust survey applied through country case studies

Trust “pay-off” of different trust drivers in Finland

Increase in trust levels associated with 1-point increase in competence, values, interpersonal trust, and key societal trends; Finland, 2020



Source: OECD (2021) “[Drivers of trust in public institutions in Finland](#)”

Conclusions

- Institutional trust is key for functional democracies
- Existing measures of trust are hard to interpret as they are influenced by many factors and don't discriminate between **institutional** and **political** trust, **need for better measurement**
- Understanding and measuring the drivers of institutional trust could lead to **actionable policy recommendations**
- Perceptions of **institutional performance** strongly correlate with both trust in government and trust in others
- Perceived service **responsiveness and reliability** are the strongest determinant of trust in government in a subset of countries
- The determinants of trust vary across institutions

Next steps Institutional trust is key metric in assessing a country's social and economic state

- OECD Trust Survey has been applied in 20 OECD countries in November/December 2021 (nationally representative population samples)- results April 2022 – expand the survey carried out in Korea, Finland and Norway.
- For the first time get coherent measures of different drivers of public trust across key dimensions of government competence and values.
- Mix of perception, evaluation and experience questions
- Possible to disaggregate measures by socio-economic groups, broad regions, and institutions (e.g. parliament, police, judiciary)
- Module on long term governance challenges
- In the medium-term, monitor every 2-3 years:
 - Level of trust in different institutions
 - Main drivers per country among responsiveness, reliability, integrity, openness and fairness
- In depth country studies

Thanks for your attention!

OECD Trust Survey

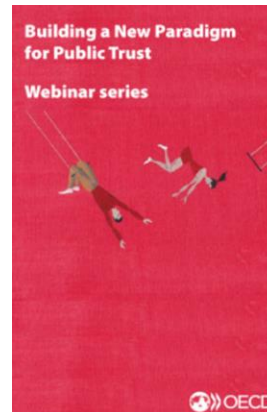


OECD Trust Framework and case studies



Norway
New Zealand
Brazil....

Webinar Series



Website: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/trust-in-government.htm>

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