THE OECD GUIDELINES ON MEASURING TRUST - WHY TRUST DURING COVID-19 MATTERS

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“Measuring Public Trust After A Pandemic And Economic Crises”
Building a New Paradigm for Public Trust Webinar Series

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Should we care?

Fertile field of research on impact of trust on economic and social outcomes

– K. Arrow (“virtually every commercial transaction has within itself an element of trust”, 1972)
– Yann Algan in HELG report (OECD, 2017), impacts on GDPpc, life-expectancy, SWB, etc.

The same holds true for success of most policies

– People’s trust in other people’s behaviours is critical for success of social distancing, vaccinations, etc.
– People’s distrust in governments explain why they don’t believe the ‘first best’ policies advocated by economists (trade agreements, environmental taxes)
‘Scars’ to public trust do not easily heal: impact of the 2009 financial crisis

Share of the population saying they have confidence in their national government, 2016/18 and 2010/12

Only ~43% of OECD population trust their government

Source: Gallup World Poll (database)
‘Rebounds’ in people’s trust in institutions are often short lived

Share of respondents who trust the federal government “always” or “most of the time”, United States

Source: Pew Research Centre
Gains in institutional trust during COVID-19 crisis?

Evidence that trust rose initially as governments took the lead

- **Edelman Trust Barometer** shows double digit rise in trust in government between Jan and May (CA, CHINA, FR, GE, IN, JPN, MEX, SAUAR, KO, UK, US)
- April 2020 (representative) survey by **Australia Institute** showed people in AUS, NZ, UK, IT, KO, US) evaluated positively the response by their government. Even in US, where confidence in official response was lowest, 3 in 5 people trusted what government said.

But more recent data indicates drops in confidence in some countries

- According to **Kantar polls**, the share of respondents in US, UK, Canada, Germany, France, Italy and Japan who approved how authorities handled the pandemic, fell from 54% in March, to 50% in April and 48% in May

We need frequent, internationally and temporally comparable data to monitor trust, especially now
OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust launched in 2017 as latest in a series on measuring various aspects of people’s well-being
Our Trust Guidelines also feature in the UN Praia Group Handbook on Governance Statistics

Chapter 9: Trust

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Alongside others:
- Responsiveness (lead)
- Openness (Paris21 lead)
State of available evidence

- Although some NSOs have collected trust data for some time (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand) most comparative evidence comes from non-official surveys (World Value Survey, Barometers, ESS) with small samples.
- Questions asked in official surveys differ in terms of what is assessed (trust/confidence), range of bodies/actors assessed by trustee, placement in survey, question wording, response scales, etc..

Goals of the Guidelines

- Summarise & extend what is known about reliability/validity of trust data.
- Act as a catalyst for further work by NSOs and researchers.
- Improve international comparability of trust measures through guidance on question wording and response scale.
- Longer term: increase number of countries regularly producing official trust measures.

Why are statistical guidelines needed?
What do the OECD Guidelines cover?

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<td>Concept and validity</td>
<td>• Conceptual framework and working definition of trust</td>
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<td>• Review of the statistical quality of trust measures</td>
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<td>Methodological issues</td>
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<td>Measurement</td>
<td>• Best practice in measuring trust in household surveys</td>
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<td>• Includes issues like planning, sample design and size, frequency, data coding, interviewer training</td>
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<td>Output and analysis</td>
<td>• Planning of statistical releases of trust data</td>
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<td>• Interpretation of results and analysis of microdata</td>
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<td>Prototype question modules</td>
<td>• A concrete set of question modules for data producers</td>
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What are our recommended survey questions? The OECD ‘core question module’

A1. And now a general question about trust. On a scale from zero to ten, where zero is not at all and ten is completely, in general how much do you trust most people? [primary measure]

A2. On a scale from zero to ten, where zero is not at all and ten is completely, in general how much do you trust most people you know personally?

Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0 10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust.

A3. [COUNTRY’S] Parliament?
A4. The police?
A5. The civil service?

Interpersonal trust
A1. Generalised trust
A2. Limited trust

Institutional trust
A3. Political system
A4. Justice system
A5. Non-political institution
Going beyond ‘core module’: experimental modules in OECD Guidelines

Evaluations
- Institutional trust questions use the same format as questions A3 to A5, but cover a wider range of institutions (e.g. armed forces, civil service, media)

Expectations
- If you were to complain about bad quality of a public service, how likely is that the problem would be easily resolved?
- If a natural disaster occurs, do you think that the provision by government of adequate food, shelter and clothing will be timely and efficient?

Experiences
- How often do you lend money to your friends?; How often do you leave your door unlocked?; How often have you signed a petition in the past month?

Experiments
- Trustlab (combined measures from behavioural economics (“games”), from experimental psychology (Implicit Association Test) and self-reported (survey) measures of trust and perceptions of its policy drivers
- Based on representative samples of 1,000 people, administered via online platform
- 8 countries (FRA, KOR, SVN, USA, DEU, ITA, GBR, JPN) in 2016-20
# OECD Policy framework to understand drivers of public trust

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<tr>
<th>Mandate</th>
<th>Concern Affecting Trust</th>
<th>Policy dimension</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide Public Services</td>
<td>- Provision, including respectful response to citizens; Quality and timeliness of public services;</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipate Change, Protect Citizens</td>
<td>- Anticipation and adequate assessment of challenges; - Consistent and predicable behaviour;</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use power and public resources ethically</td>
<td>- High standards of behaviour; - Commitment against corruption, Accountability</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
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<td>Listen, consult and explain to citizens</td>
<td>- Ability to know and understand what government is up to; - Engagement opportunities that lead to tangible results;</td>
<td>Openness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve living conditions for all</td>
<td>- Pursuit of socio economic progress for society at large; - Consistent treatment of citizens and businesses;</td>
<td>Fairness</td>
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Measuring trust beyond perceptions

• Understanding determinants of public trust through situational questions [How do you think government institutions would behave under a given specific circumstance? If X happens, do you trust government institutions to do Y?]

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<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Question(s)</th>
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<td>Reliability</td>
<td>If a natural disaster occurs do you think that the provision of food, shelter and clothing will be available?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>If a government employee has an idea that could lead to better provision of a public service, do you think that it would be adopted?</td>
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• Data collected through nationally representative households survey in Korea and via OECD TrustLab in 7 countries
What drives trust in Korean government institutions?

Government’s capacity to provide innovative ways in services provision (responsiveness) and foresight (reliability) are key to maintain trust.

All variables depicted here are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

Source: OECD case study
Trustlab found government integrity and reliability to be the most important determinants of trust – likely even more so during recovery.
Impact of the Trust Guidelines so far

- **Approved** by OECD Committee on Statistics and Statistical Policy (CSSP) in 2017

- **Positive evaluation** in context of global consultation on Praia Group Handbook
  
  - 4.7/5 for “*Overall, are you satisfied with the content of the chapter?*” (top 3 of all chapters)
  
  - 4.8/5 for “*Does the chapter have an adequate description of the issue/dimension of governance?*” (top 2 of all chapters)

- **Pick-up**
  
  - Eurostat’s EU-SILC started collecting annual data on interpersonal trust
  
  - We hope that data on trust in institutions will be included in the EU-SILC supplementary modules, and that NSOs in OECD countries will start monitoring trust on a frequent and comparable basis
THANK YOU

Download the Guidelines:


Approach us for participation in future rounds of Trustlab:

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