



TRUST: A PUBLIC POLICY CHALLENGE

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Trust is a way to focus on citizens

OECD Secretary General -- OECD Strategic Orientations

“Citizen well-being is also linked to confidence in the capacity and skills of public servants and institutions... but policymakers are still lacking actionable advice on how to retain or rebuild trust.”

Trust in what, by whom?

All our key institutions suffer from low trust:

governments, parliaments, political parties, media, corporations, banks, rating agencies, international organisations...

Many groups feel disconnected

young people, minorities, immigrants, women...

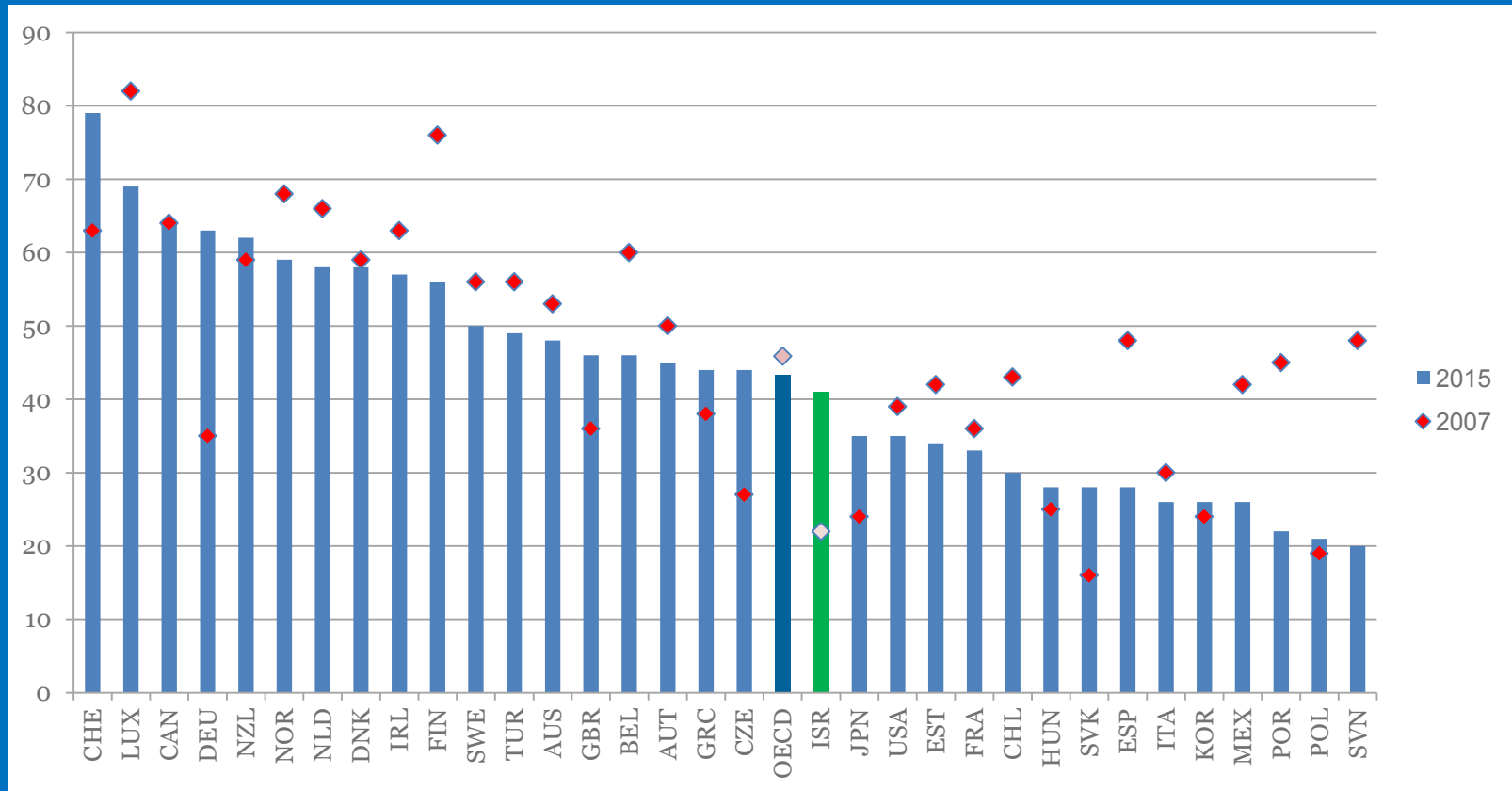
Trust is a complex issue that doesn't fit well with our policy toolkits...



The point of departure:

In most countries, trust in government is either low, declining or both

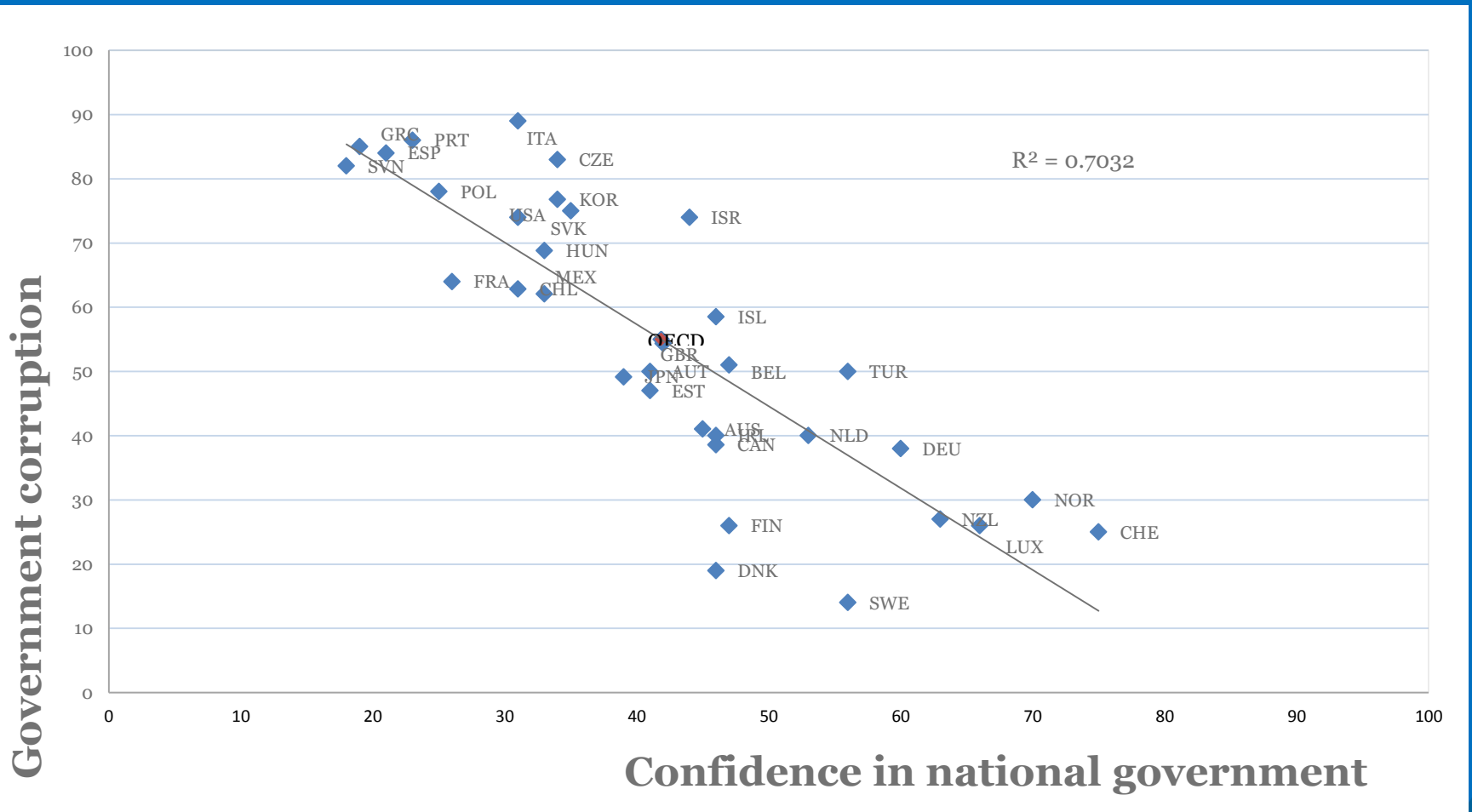
Confidence in national government in 2015 and its change since 2007
(% of respondents who expressed “confidence in their national government”)



Source: Gallup World Poll



Trust is closely linked to perception of the **values** of actors

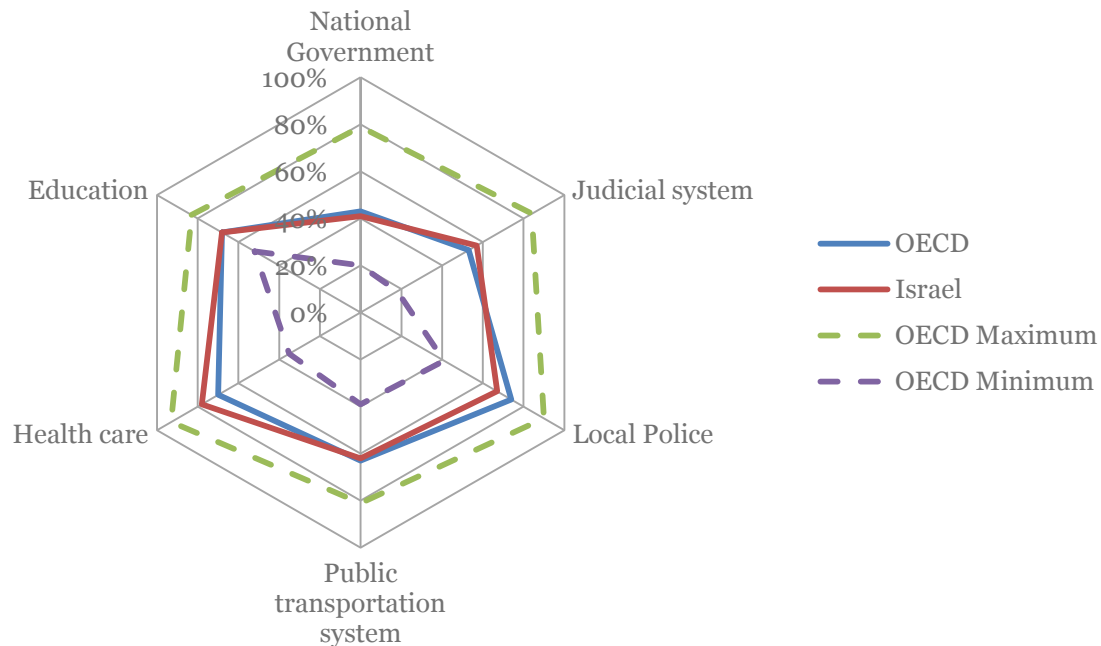


Source: Gallup World Poll; percentages of respondents



Trust in key services however is stronger... “customer satisfaction”

Confidence and satisfaction across public services (2015)



Source: Gallup World Poll;
(percentages of respondents who expressed confidence in the particular institution)



The relationship between citizens and government is under pressure...

Enormous global uncertainties:

- Slowdown in emerging economies, anaemic global demand, weak trade and investment growth, financial market volatility, migration, climate change...

Diverse domestic pressures:

- Scarce resources for public services
- High unemployment
- More vocal and demanding civil society

New priority for government => REBUILD TRUST

Demonstrate that the public sector can **lead** and **deliver**

Show that government is **listening**



Since the crisis, it's all about trust.

- **Tax:** who pays and who doesn't?
- **Migration:** how many and what will they cost?
- **Business:** who really makes public policy?
- **Climate:** who should make the sacrifices?
- **Science:** who should we believe?

Government action is everywhere constrained by
how trusted it is by citizens

high trust = capacity to act



Trust is important for all aspects of our societies

- the **economic** costs of low trust – high transaction costs, risk aversion among investors, non-compliance with regulations...
- the effect of low trust on **democratic processes** – low voter turnout, rise of radical parties, protest movements...
- the impact of low trust on **social cohesion** – alienation of groups, reluctance to support welfare systems...



It's not (or not only) about corruption...

Loss of trust comes from many “governance failures”

For example:

- Policies are designed and decisions taken without transparency and stakeholder consultation
- Policies are not enforced or not enforced fairly
- Outcomes are not evaluated and so the same mistakes are repeated

Focusing only on integrity can distort the issue of trust



OECD approach: Identifying the drivers of trust

Two keys to retaining trust

1. Competence
and
2. Values



Competence – three key drivers

1. Citizens expect government to be **reliable**

For example:

- Anticipating and dealing with crisis
- Managing public budgets

2. It should be **responsive** to citizen needs

For example:

- Engaging in real consultation in regulation
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3. And it must **efficient**

For example:

- Using digital government to speed up administrative procedures



Values – three key drivers

1. Citizens expect high standards of **integrity**

For example:

- Effectively regulating lobbying and managing conflict of interest

2. Government should strive to be more **open**

For example:

- Opening public datasets for citizens
- Making budgets more transparent, understandable and accessible
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3. Citizens should see that outcomes are **fair**

For example:

- Assessing the distributional impacts of structural policies
- Improving access to justice



Trust and public policy: a relationship that needs to be confronted

- Effective policymaking must include attention to trust
- Trust is an input to effective policymaking, not only an output or indicator of performance
- Without a foundation of trust, policy reform is partial, compromised and fragile
- BUT governments often prefer to avoid the issue – too **sensitive**, too “**personal**”

OECD wants to measure it and understand it...