

2 Institutional trust and its determinants in Norway

This chapter analyses the factors that influence trust in public institutions in Norway and describes differences in trust levels across various socio-economic groups, by gender, income, education, migrant background and geographical location. Based on primary data collected for this study through the OECD Trust Survey, it presents a compound analysis on the determinants of institutional trust in Norway for the government, the local government and the civil service. It finds that the reliability of policies is the most important driver of trust in the national government, and that responsiveness of services and openness of policies are key drivers of trust in the local government while impartiality of treatment has the highest impact in trust in the civil service.

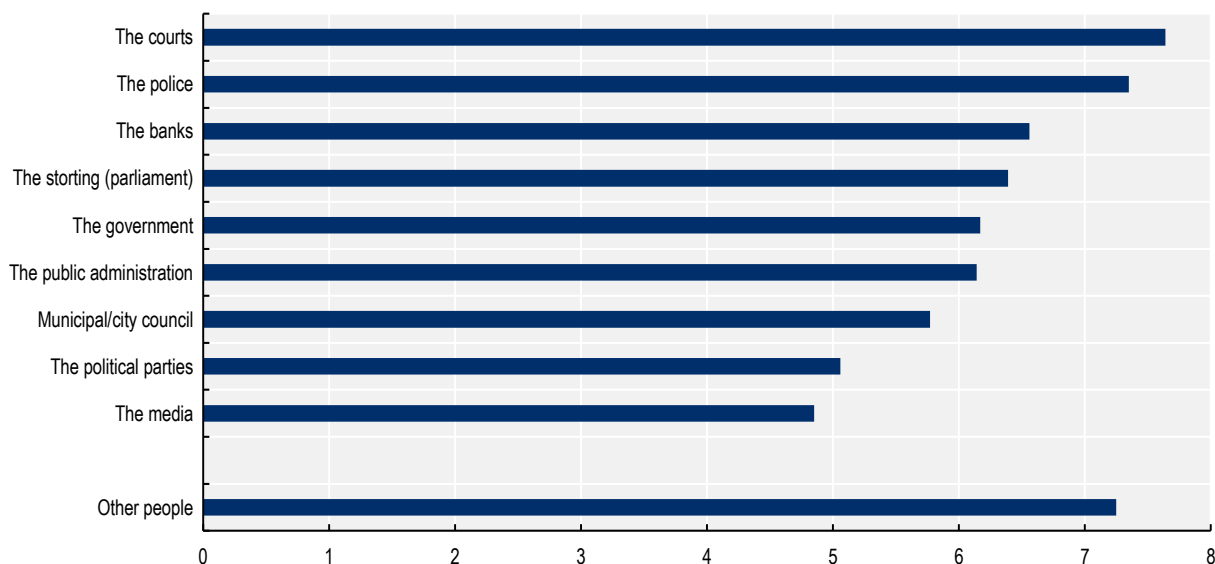
Institutional trust is high but it varies depending on the institution

This chapter provides an overview of institutional trust in Norway, highlighting differences among institutions and population groups. It also provides an analysis of the main determinants of Norwegians' trust towards the national and local governments and the public administration. Past research suggests that drivers of trust are multidimensional. Trust depends on both individual characteristics of citizens, such as their economic resources and feelings of political efficacy, as well as macro-level institutional features and public governance mechanisms. Macro-level drivers of trust include factors such as the legitimacy and credibility of policy choices, while public governance drivers refer to how decisions are made, whether citizens are involved in decision-making processes, the extent to which policies indeed address citizens' political demands, or the quality of policies implemented and services provided, as described in the OECD Framework on Drivers of Trust (Brezzi et al., 2021^[1]; Haugsgjerd and Segard, 2020^[2]).

The evidence presented in this chapter relies mainly on the OECD trust survey applied through the Norwegian Citizens Survey (see Boxes 1.4 and 1.5 in Chapter 1) that gauges Norwegians' assessment of institutional trust and its drivers.

In general, Norwegians have high confidence in their institutions and trust each other. On a 0-to-10-point scale, with zero meaning no trust at all and ten complete trust, average trust levels are above 5 for all the institutions considered with the exception of the media (Figure 2.1). In other words, between 45% and 55% of respondents give a score of 5 or higher. The most trusted institutions are the legal system (7.64 on average), the police (7.35 on average) and the banks (6.56).

Figure 2.1. Average levels of trust in public institutions



Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust/you cannot be too careful) to 10 (complete trust/most people are trustworthy). Weighted average values are reported.

Source: OECD Trust survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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Institutions of a political administrative nature, encompassing both institutions whose representatives are linked to the political cycle (e.g. the parliament) and those predominantly composed of civil servants (e.g. the public administration or the local government), tend to be less trusted when compared to law and order institutions – but still, averages remain high.¹ Of these, the national parliament is trusted the most by respondents (6.39 on average), which is closely followed by the government (6.17) and the public

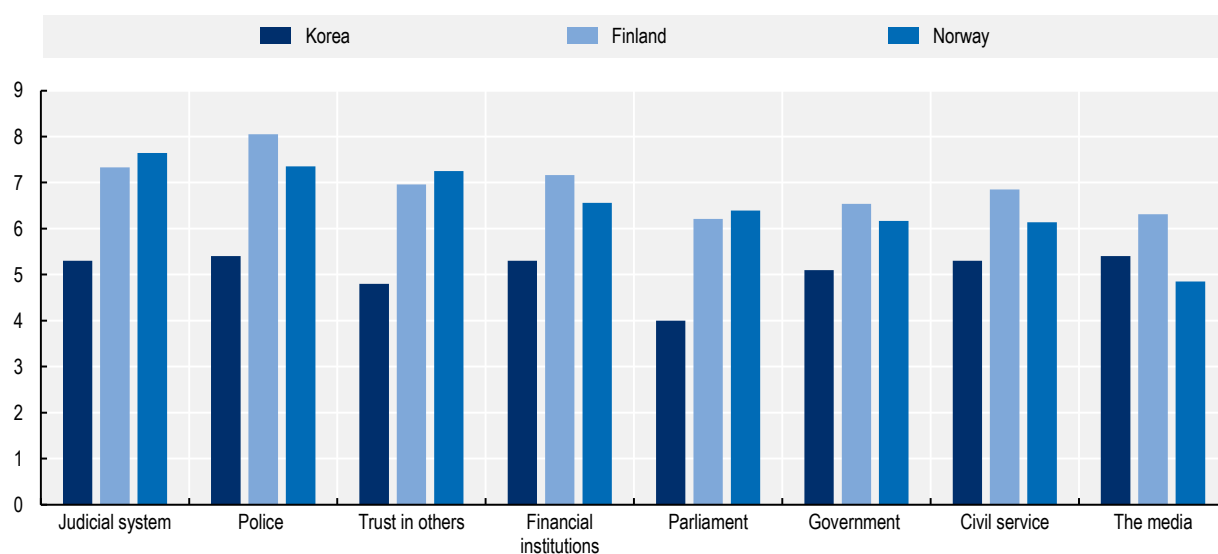
administration (6.14). Political parties, in contrast, are the least trusted institution of those of a political administrative nature. While Norwegians report strong levels of support for the *political structures* (legislative and executive branches of government as well as for their politically neutral civil service), they may not always be content with those citizens who are the actual office-holders; and this result holds over time (Norris, 2009^[3]).

The least trusted public institution in Norway is “the media” (average of 4.85). Norway has a strong public broadcaster, a wide variety of (local) newspapers, and independent media outlets (Aalberg and Curran, 2012^[4]). However, this is not necessarily reflected in people’s self-reported trust. As currently included, the term media² is broad and also encompasses unedited media sources that may be associated with the spread of disinformation. Some of interviewees signalled the rise of social media, and concerns about “fake news” and political communication styles as potentially affecting trust levels in the media.

Trust in other people is comparatively high (7.25 on average). Trust in others is a crucial measuring stick of social capital. High levels of social trust indicate that citizens are positive about the moral standards in their country. It is a clear signal that citizens feel that they are part of broader societal network. In societies where trust is widespread, all sorts of monitoring and security costs are reduced, and citizens are more likely to express solidarity towards one another. Hence, when citizens feel that they can trust most other people in their country, including strangers, migrants, people with a different economic background, etc., societies usually tend to function better, because co-operation is facilitated (Holmberg and Rothstein, 2017^[5]; Rothstein and Stolle, 2008^[6]). Additionally, it has been said that interpersonal trust may function as a predictor of political trust (Lipset and Schneider, 1983^[7]) (Newton, Stolle and Zmerli, 2017^[8]). An empirical study with data from World Value Survey (WVS) finds a strong correlation between social (interpersonal) and political trust. According to the authors, trust in governmental institutions is shaped through social relationships and in this way, these relations also have an impact on institutional performance (Newton and Norris, 2000^[9]).

Norway has the highest percentage of respondents trusting others (79%), the judicial system (84%) and the parliament (68%) compared to Finland and Korea (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Average trust levels in OECD countries with available information



Note: Trust Survey applied in the Consumer Confidence Survey, applied by Statistics Finland in August 2020. Trust in financial institutions, the judicial system and the media are based on the October 2020 collection of the Pulse Survey implemented by Statistics Finland at the request of the Prime Minister’s Office. Data for Korea on the civil service are from the report Understanding the Drivers of Trust in Government Institutions and represent the situation in 2017. Trust in Norway is captured through the OECD Trust survey applied in the 2021 Citizens Survey.

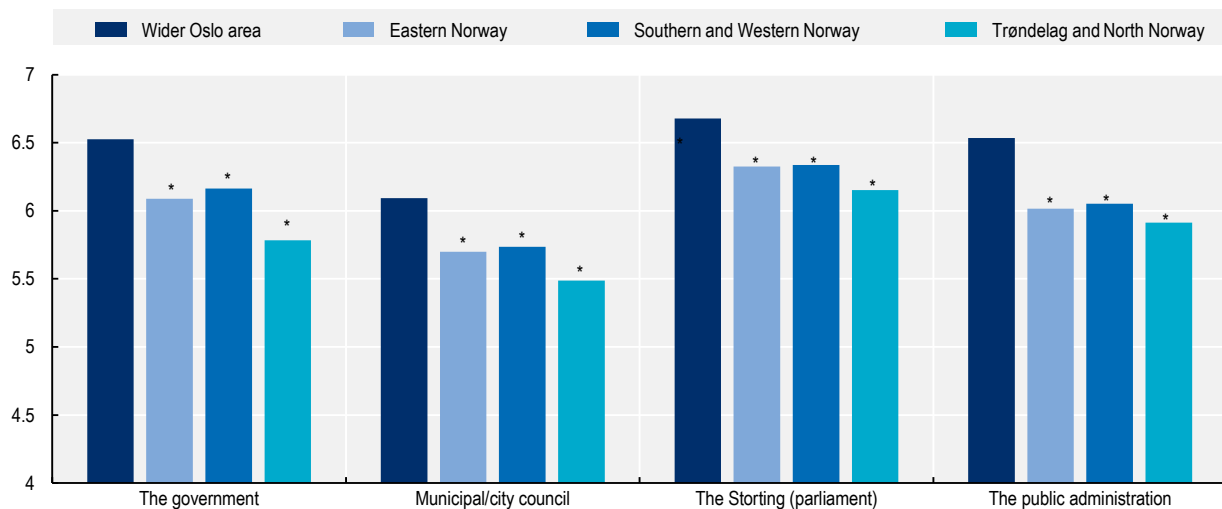
Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in the Consumer Confidence Survey; Statistics Finland; OECD/KDI.

There are trust divides with the potential of affecting social cohesion

High averages of institutional trust could hide important differences between population groups. Indeed, levels of trust in governmental institutions are significantly lower for rural residents, lower-income households, and the less educated. In turn, some sources suggest that there are groups of citizens who are not convinced of the trustworthiness of their institutions (Haugsgjerd and Seggaard, 2020^[2]), which is consistent with the findings of the OECD Trust survey.

The main source of social divisions across the Norwegian population is associated with Norway's geographical characteristics and centre-periphery dynamics. Rural dwellers feel that national politics are dominated by the urban centres, which are more strongly connected to the global economy, are more culturally diverse, etc. Past research highlights that rural residents feel they lack influence on politics (Stein, Buck and Bjørnå, 2019^[10]). In rural areas, moreover, access to public services is often more limited, simply because public institutions are farther away from people, which could reduce access and ultimately satisfaction with public services (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005^[11]; Stein, Buck and Bjørnå, 2019^[10]). Although the levels of trust in institutions remain relatively high in Norway's more peripheral regions, they are lower than those in the greater Oslo area for all four institutions surveyed (central government, local councils, parliament, public administration) (Figure 2.3). Data from a nationally representative sample carried out in the Medborgerpanel study³ further shows that half of Norwegians strongly agree or agree with the statement that their authorities do not consider rural and non-urban Norway when making decisions (Figure 2.4).

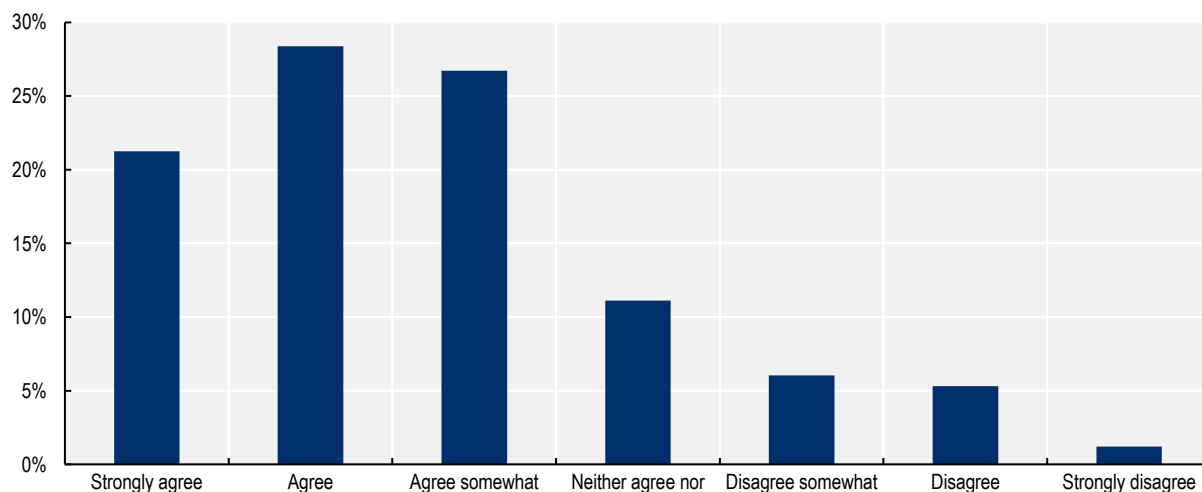
Figure 2.3. Average levels of institutional trust, by region




Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95% compared to the Wider Oslo area that is considered as reference group.

Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

Figure 2.4. Percentage of respondents agreeing with “Government authorities’ have little consideration for non-urban and rural Norway”

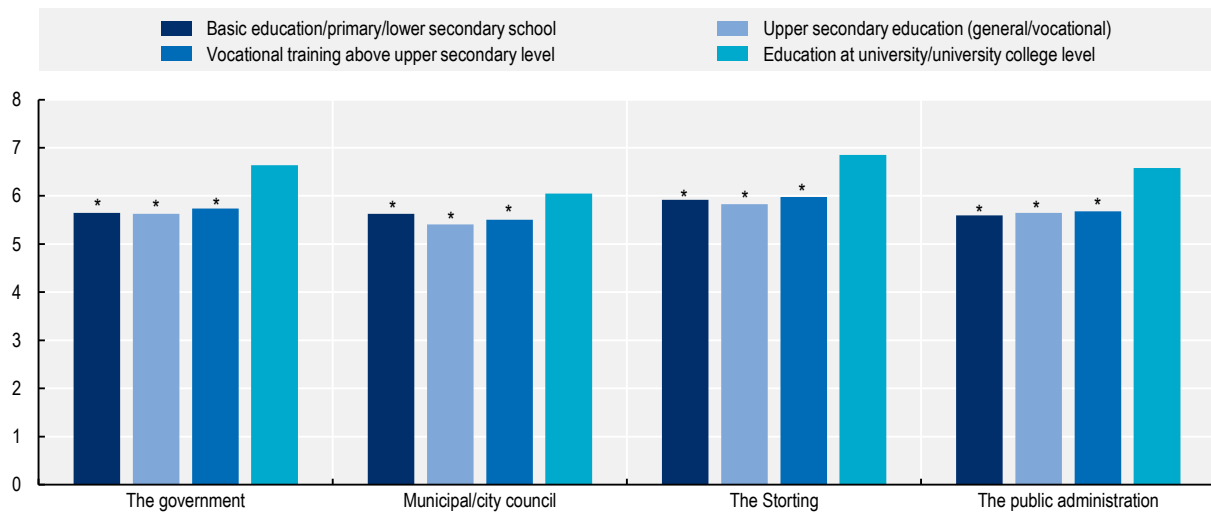


Note: Percentage of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with the question: “To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following assertion? Government authorities’ have little consideration for non-urban/rural Norway”.
Source: Medborgerpanel, round 18 (June 2020).

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Second, there are other trust gaps when looking at other social divides in Norway. Citizens’ economic resources and educational background matter. Highly educated Norwegians have, on average, higher levels of trust in various public institutions, and this difference is statistically significant in comparison with all other education groups (Figure 2.5). Cleavages are particularly pronounced in the case of the national government, parliament and the public administration, where there is an almost 1-point difference in the average level of trust among the highest educated and the other education groups. Trust divides are the smallest in the case of the local municipal or city councils. These councils seem to be more successful in representing all citizens regardless of one’s educational background, which could be associated with the vicinity to leaders and proximity to the issues being discussed.

Trust among the highly educated is significantly higher. In established democracies, the higher educated are typically more interested and engaged in politics and have higher levels of political knowledge (Bovens and Wille, 2017^[12]; Schlozman, Verba and Brady, 2012^[13]). This pattern is repeated in Norway, where people with lower levels of education more commonly consider that their institutions are not responsive towards them, or may feel less capable of influencing politics themselves. As civil servants and politicians tend to be higher educated, such perceptions can, to some extent, also be seen as rational: previous cross-national research has already highlighted that policy makers tend to be more responsive towards the policy demands of the higher educated (Bovens and Wille, 2017^[12]; van Elsas, 2015^[14]). People with lower levels of education in Norway may also have had less exposure to topics such as governance and democracy, or opportunities for political engagement while they are students. As about 35% of the Norwegian population above the age of 16 have completed a higher education degree (Statistics Norway, 2021^[15]), an important part of the adult population may feel less connected to their public institutions and could result in a feeling that public institutions govern for a few rather than for the many.

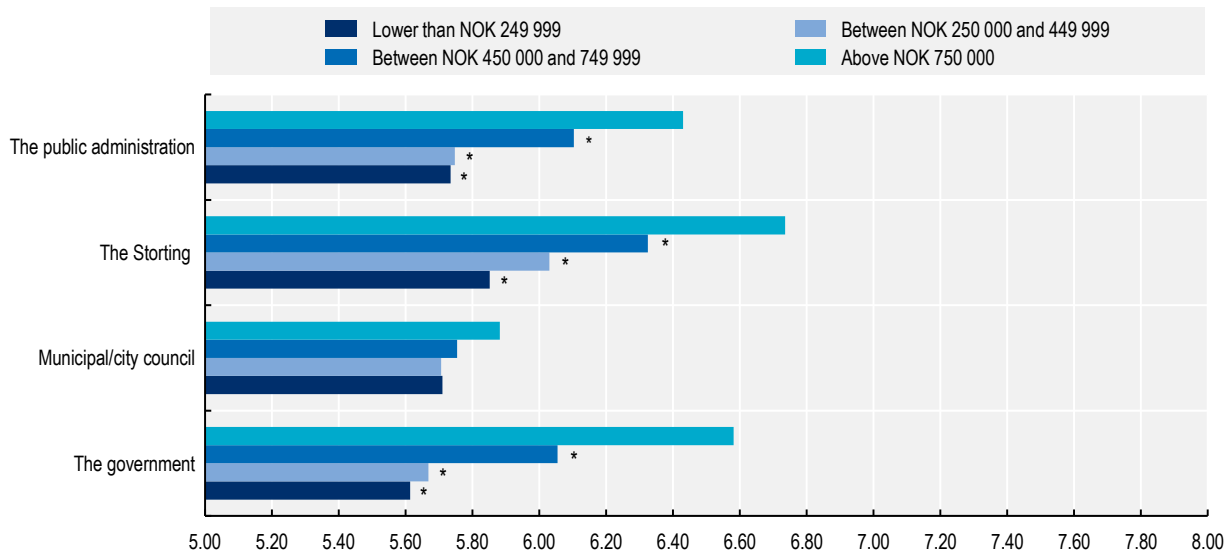
Figure 2.5. Average levels of institutional trust, per level of education

Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that the differences are statistically significant at 95%, the reference group for statistical tests is the highest educated.

Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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Very similar trust divides can be observed in Figure 2.6, which depicts the average levels of trust for different income groups. Respondents falling into lower income brackets have, on average, lower institutional trust, and trust gaps between the wealthier and poorer respondents amount to a 1-point difference approximately. The local councils seem to be trusted by all citizens, regardless of their income, even though the difference between the highest and lowest income bracket is still statistically significant.

Figure 2.6. Average levels of institutional trust, per household income

Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. Households' total gross annual income (i.e. before taxes) reported. NOK 249 999 is equivalent to EUR 25 221. NOK 449 999 is equivalent to EUR 45 397. NOK 750 000 is equivalent to EUR 75 663. Exchange rate calculates as of January 14 2022 when 1 EUR is equivalent to 9.91 NOK. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95%. The reference group for statistical test is the highest income group.

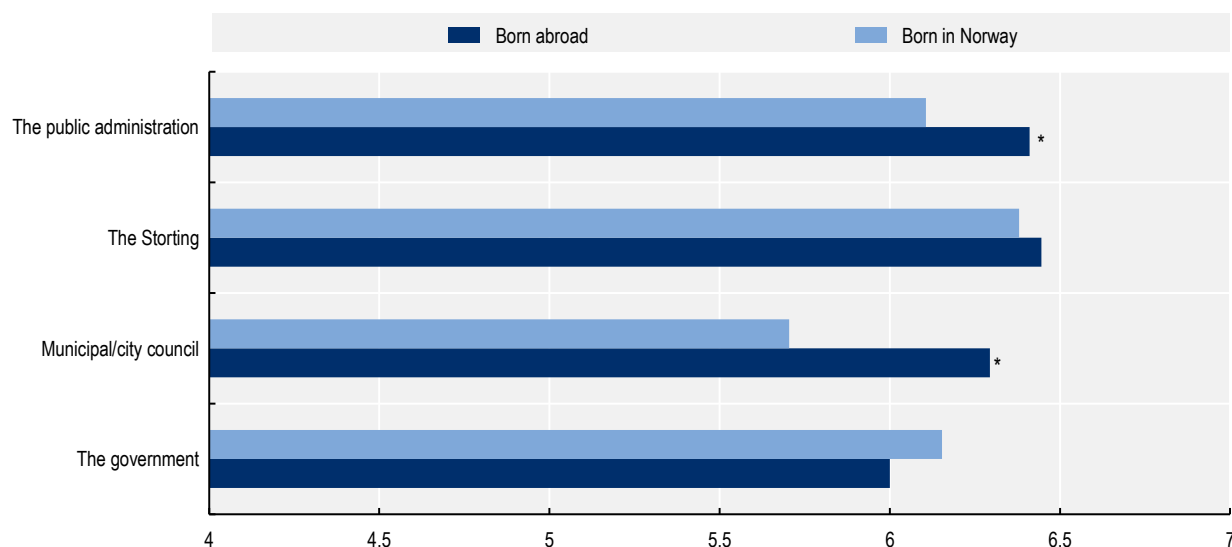
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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A third potential source of (dis)trust is connected to Norway's increasing diversity. In recent years, migration to the country has been the driving force of population growth. In 2019, about 20% of the population had foreign roots (either born abroad, or having both parents born abroad) (Statistics Norway, 2019). In keeping with trends from other countries (Kriesi et al., 2006^[16]), this has meant that the increasing diversity of Norway's population, and the debate as to whether more or less migration is acceptable, has become a defining aspect of Norwegian politics. A divide is observed between citizens who fear that immigrants could pose a threat to the Norwegian welfare state, or the Norwegian identity, and citizens who feel that this increasing diversity is good for the Norwegian society (Ivarsflaten and Strømsnes, 2013^[17]; McLaren, 2012^[18]; Schumacher and van Kersbergen, 2014^[19]). According to Grindheim (2019^[20]), this increasing salience of migration as a political theme, has driven the perception amongst Norwegians that their institutions are unresponsive, and may have given rise to populist sentiments.


When comparing average levels of trust expressed by Norwegian residents who were born abroad with trust levels of respondents born in Norway, we observe that migrants actually have higher levels of trust in public institutions (Figure 2.7). The difference between the "native" population and those born abroad is the strongest (and statistically significant) in the case of the public administration and the municipal council. These institutions play an important role in the daily life of migrants, such as overseeing migration applications and offering integration programmes. Hence, it could be concluded that migrants, on average, have a positive experience with these services, which enhances their trust.

Figure 2.7. Average levels of institutional trust, by foreign origin

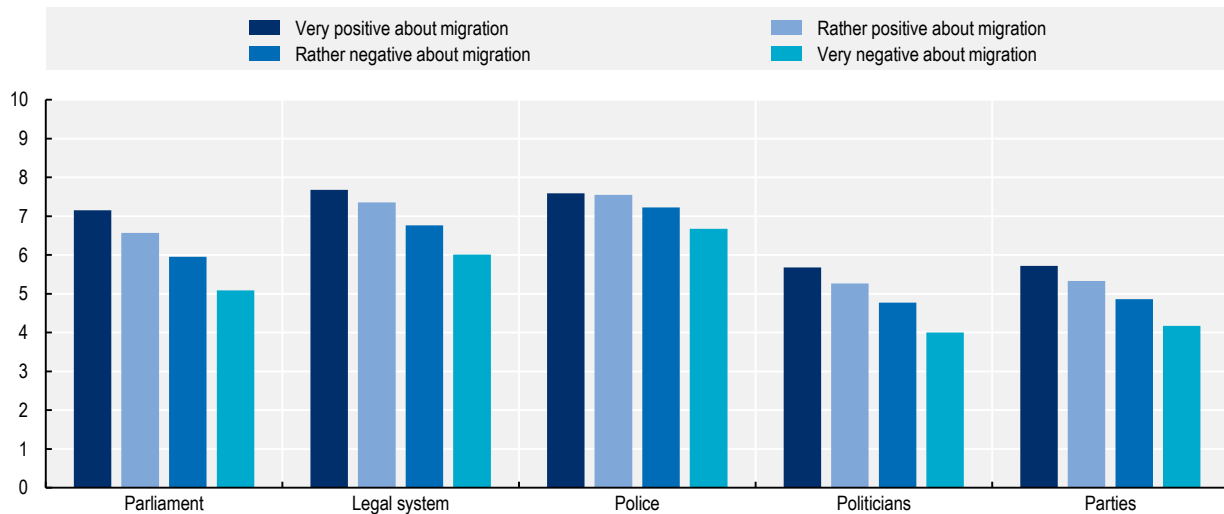


Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95%. Reference group for statistical tests is born in Norway.

Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.


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While migrants may have higher trust levels, people who are worried about migration, on the other hand, record lower levels of institutional trust. In Figure 2.8, which is calculated on the basis of European Social Survey data, it becomes immediately clear that citizens who are sceptical about migration believe that their institutions are not trustworthy. At first sight then, Norway's increasing diversity does point to a widening political divide about the issue of diversity. Nevertheless, recent research by Statistics Norway (2020) has also shown that negative views on migrants and migration are decreasing in Norway.

Figure 2.8. Migration concerns and institutional trust in Norway

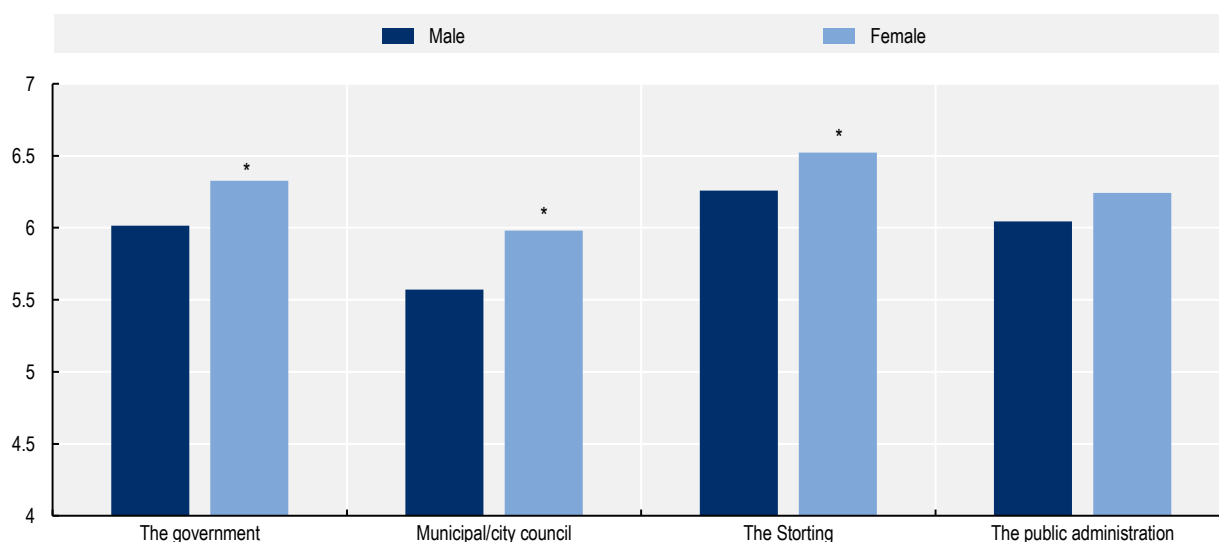
Note: This figure presents average levels of institutional trust in Norway. Trust questions have a scale from 0 (no trust at all), to 10 (Complete trust). Being in favour or against migration is operationalised through a sum-score on the basis of the following questions: is it generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries? Cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries? The country is made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries. Respondents are divided per quartile (those in the lowest quartile are the most negative about migration, etc.).

Source: European Social Survey (rounds 1-9).

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Finally, trust differs by citizens' gender (Figure 2.9). Women tend to express higher trust in institutions, and statistically significant differences are observed for all institutions with the exception of the public administration. This finding is surprising, as past research indicated that the relationship between one's gender and political trust is usually not very consistent in OECD member countries (Catterberg and Moreno, 2006^[21]; McDermott and Jones, 2020^[22]). It is possible to argue the opposite. As men are more often represented in parliaments, in leadership positions, etc., women should be less likely to have faith in politics. The authors have indeed shown that women seek to counter this imbalance in political power through participating in unconventional forms of political participation (e.g. political consumption) that are less dominated by men (Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier, 2010^[23]). However in Norway, women are more likely to have faith in their public institutions than men, which could be an indication of the high levels of gender equality Norway achieves. The share of women in leadership positions, both in politics and the public administration, have increased the number of women parliamentarians went from 39.6% in 2017 to 44.4% in 2021. In turn, in 2020 the share of women in middle management positions is 50% while in senior management it amounts to 44% (OECD, 2021^[24]). In addition, these findings could also indicate that female Norwegians are more likely to feel part of their social community, and they could be particularly positive about the country's extensive welfare institutions (McDermott and Jones, 2020^[22]).

In contrast to research in other OECD member states, the influence of other demographic characteristics, (e.g. the respondents' age) or other political factors (e.g. political interest or union membership) is rather limited or even insignificant (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005^[11]; Citrin and Stoker, 2018^[25]; Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017^[26]). The elderly are slightly more trusting, but differences are minimal.

Figure 2.9. Average levels of institutional trust, by gender

Note: Scale ranges from 0 (no trust) to 10 (complete trust). Weighted average values are reported. The * means that differences are statistically significant at 95%. The reference group for statistical tests is men.

Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey.

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This section explored some of the most important trust cleavages in Norway in a descriptive manner, and uncovered trust cleavages by education, income, and place of residency. Trust cleavages between men and women also exist. These gaps tend to overlap, as peripheral regions tend to have more lower educated and poorer residents, and more limited economic opportunities. Thus, trust cleavages get a clear spatial dimension. A similar conclusion was drawn in the case of neighbouring Finland, which is a country with very similar characteristics (OECD, 2021^[27]). Researchers have moreover shown that these trust cleavages between the centre and periphery have been stable in the past two decades in Scandinavian countries, highlighting that this is a structural problem, also for Norway (Mitsch, Lee and Morrow, 2021^[28]).

Norway has a solid economy and welfare state but the lack of strategic management of resources could hamper trust

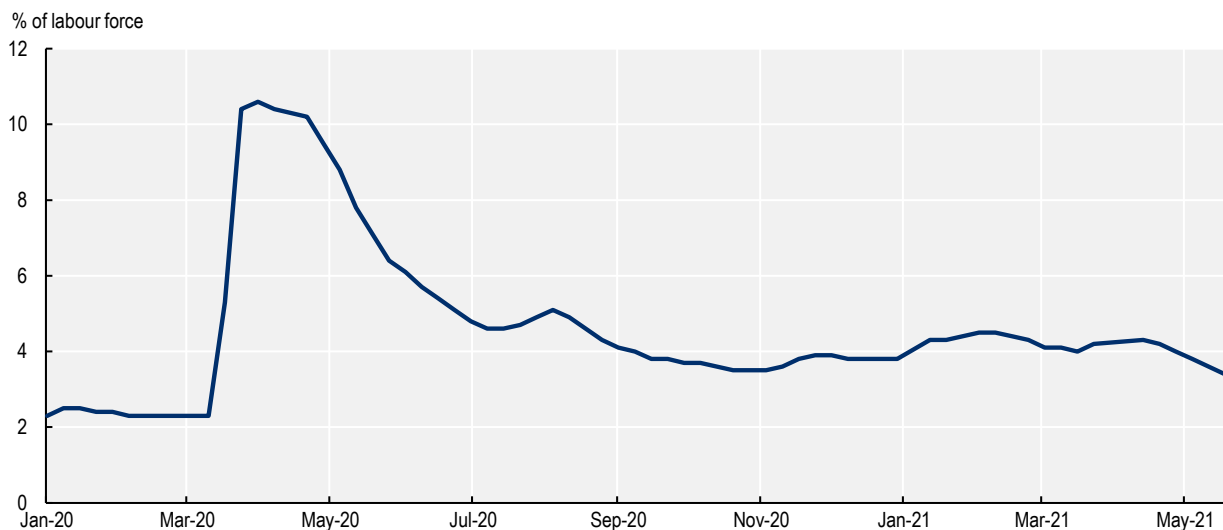
In democratic societies, citizens' political preferences translate into policies. However, it is equally true that such policies influence how citizens think about their public institutions (Kumlin and Stadelmann-Steffen, 2014^[29]). Because trust is, at its core, dependent on the evaluations by citizens of the performance of their political institutions. Moreover, economic performance has long been singled out as a key driving factor behind trust. There are good reasons for this: the state of the economy could have direct effects on people's lives and is an important component influencing the level of well-being of a given population. In positive phases of the economic cycle, citizens tend to reward their institutions for economic prosperity with higher trust, and oppositely when the economy is performing poorly trust levels decrease (Van Erkel and Van Der Meer, 2016^[30]).

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the last two years can be seen as a reminder that exogenous shocks are key in explaining trust. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the vulnerability of Norway's economy in the face of global trade dynamics, but it also underlined the importance of Norway's welfare state to protect citizens against economic crises.

Just as in the rest of the world, the economic consequences of the pandemic were substantial in Norway. A decrease of 2.5% of the GDP was recorded in 2020 (OECD, 2021^[31]) and the strongest fall for the Norwegian economy since the 1970s. The size of the economic shock caused some businesses and government services to almost completely shut down to limit the spread of COVID-19. In some cases, this led to long-term economic hardship (Koronakommisjonen, 2021^[32]). Unemployment rates increased to over 10% of the active population in the first wave of the pandemic (see Figure 2.10) (OECD, 2021^[31]), with most people being temporarily laid off and having to rely on unemployment schemes to preserve their income (Koronakommisjonen, 2021^[32]). A sizeable part of the decline of Norway's economy could moreover be attributed to the international context, including plummeting oil prices and a weaker currency. To compensate for this economic decline, and as mentioned previously (Section "Trust and COVID-19, fighting and recovering from the pandemic" in Chapter 1), the Norwegian government engaged in widespread business and household support measures (Bjertnæs et al., 2021^[33]; Koronakommisjonen, 2021^[32]). These ended up costing about NOK 178 billion (about EUR 17.9 billion) in the 2020 national budget (Koronakommisjonen, 2021^[32]).

Figure 2.10. Unemployment rate in Norway 2020-21

Registered unemployment rate



Source: OECD (2021^[31]) "Economic Forecast Summary (May 2021)", *Norway Economic Snapshot*, OECD, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/economy/norway-economic-snapshot/>.

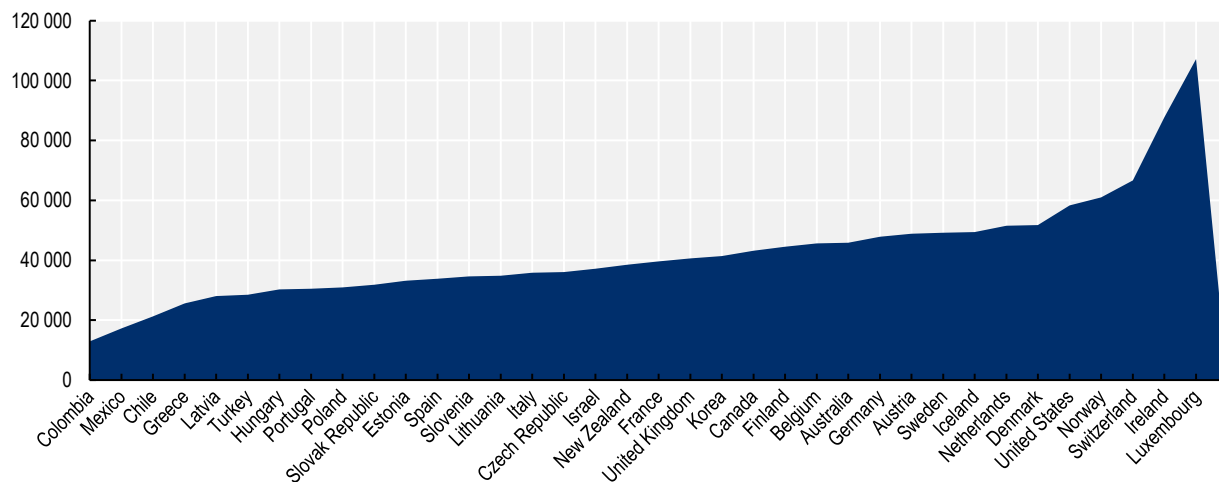
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However, the economic damage was more limited than expected, as more conservative estimates expected a drop that could reach 6% of Norway's GDP (OECD, 2020^[34]). However, the Norwegian economy has been able to absorb the shock and proved resilient, GDP was predicted to grow again by 3.4% in 2021, and 3.7% in 2022 (OECD, 2021^[31]).

Nevertheless, a full recovery of the pandemic will remain dependent on the enduring effectiveness of vaccines in the face of new potential mutations of the virus. Further, it will take some years to overcome other trends, such as compensating for the fact that fewer jobs were created in 2020 (Bjertnæs et al., 2021^[33]; Koronakommisjonen, 2021^[32]). Still, the outlook is positive as the Norwegian economy is projected to recover from the effects of the pandemic. The capacity to absorb shocks may have positive effects for institutional trust in Norway as institutions have managed to limit the effect of the crisis.

A key element explaining the resilience of the Norwegian economy is its welfare model: it combines good quality and well-paid jobs, with high (although stagnating) productivity and extensive public services. Labour market participation rates of the adult population are high (but declining). In consequence, most citizens have access to decent living standards, and poverty rates (before and after taxes and transfers) are low. Norway maintains the fourth highest GDP per capita of all OECD member states (Figure 2.11).

Figure 2.11. GDP per capita, Norway in a comparative perspective, 2020

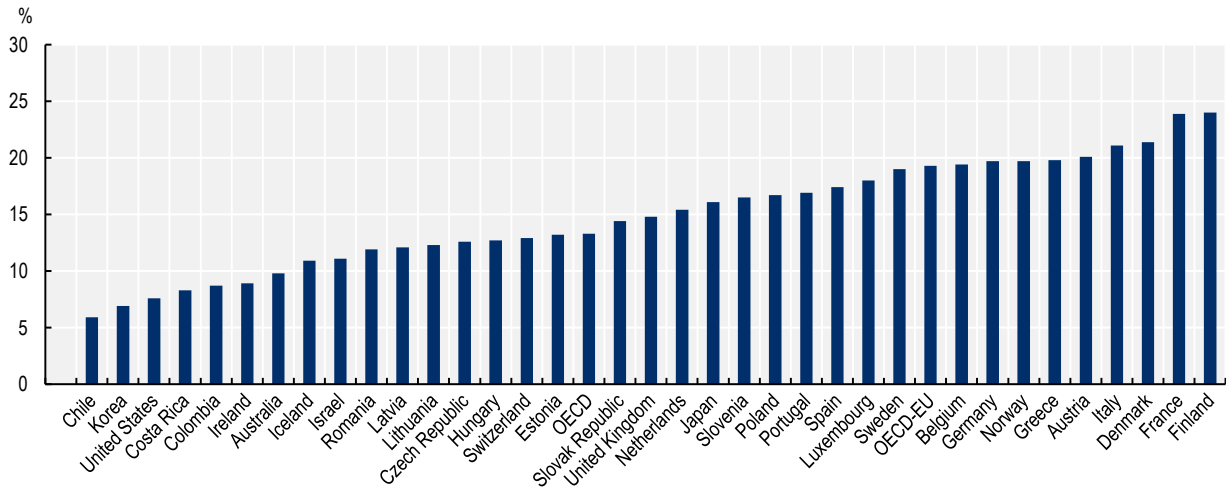


Note: GDP per capita, expressed in US dollars at constant prices, 2015 PPPs. Data from 2020 reported.
Source: OECD productivity statistics, 2021.

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Citizens care about a fair distribution of economic resources in their country, and low levels of poverty and inequality are conducive to higher trust in public institutions (Goubin and Hooghe, 2020^[35]; Schnaudt, Hahn and Heppner, 2021^[36]). In Figure 2.12 and Figure 2.13, we present data from the OECD Social and Welfare Statistics on the extent of social protection in Norway (Figure 2.12) and the level of income inequality in Norway (Figure 2.13). The figure on social protection depicts the percentage of Norwegian GDP that is allocated to social services. In total, Norway spent about 19.7% of its GDP in 2019 on social protection, which is a sizeable amount, and puts it among the top spenders of the OECD. Further, Figure 2.13 depicts the Gini coefficient for all OECD member states. Lower scores imply lower levels of inequality (perfect equality is measured as 0, perfect inequality as 1). As can be observed, income inequality is comparatively low in Norway and taxes and transfers play an important role in reducing it. Indeed, the Gini coefficient changes from 0.39 before taxes and transfers to 0.27 which is amongst the smallest of OECD member countries (OECD, 2021^[24]).

Figure 2.12. Public expenditure on social protection as a % of GDP, Norway in a comparative perspective

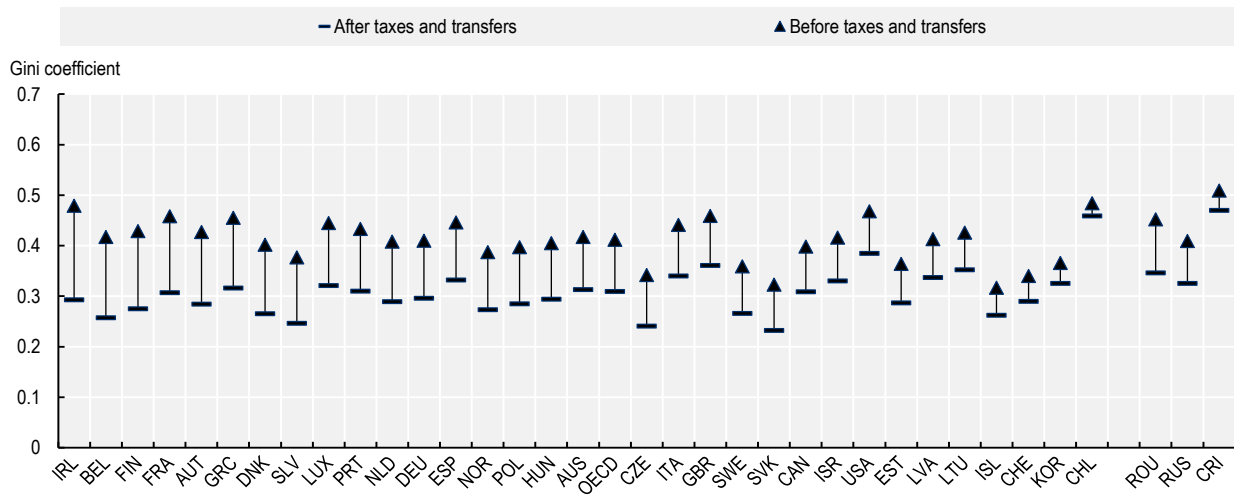


Note: Public expenditure on social protection as % of the Gross Domestic Product, data from 2019 reported.

Source: OECD Social and Welfare Statistics, 2021.

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Figure 2.13. Differences in household income inequality pre-and post-tax and government transfers



Note: Countries are ranked from the highest to the lowest difference before and after taxes. All Gini coefficients are based on the 2012 new income definition and are for the working-age population, disregarding the effect of public pension schemes.

Source: OECD (2021^[24]), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>.

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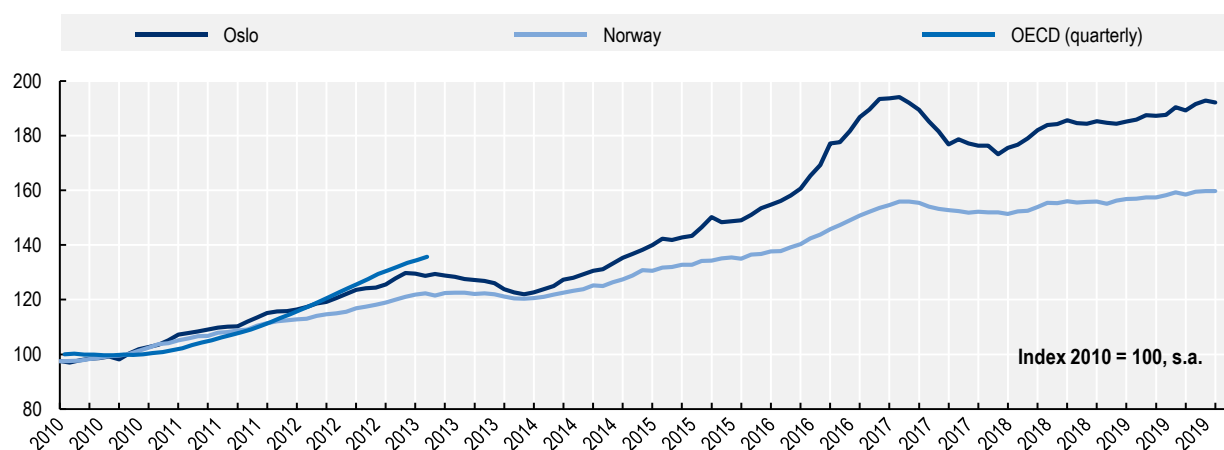
There are, however, structural challenges threatening the Norwegian economy in the mid to long term, which may strain public trust. One is connected to Norway's labour force participation, which has been structurally declining over the last two decades: the number of adults that are part of the active population is going down. Further, among those adults who are part of the active workforce, Norway records the highest number of long-term sick leave absences in OECD countries. Similarly, 12% of the population aged between 20-64 years' of age relies on disability benefits. This is in contrast to neighbouring Sweden, Finland and Denmark, where only 6% of the population receives disability benefits (OECD, 2019^[37]). Such

trends increasingly put the Norwegian welfare state under pressure, as high activity rates are quintessential in sustaining the social solidarity that is underpinning these universal welfare services (Esping-Andersen, 2008^[38]; OECD, 2019^[37]). It also points to the fact that a significant minority of the adult population cannot take part in a meaningful way in the workforce, which may affect their feeling of belonging in Norwegian society. All of these trends have the potential to undermine trust and will need to be addressed through different economic policies (OECD, 2019^[37]) and (OECD, 2021^[31]).

A second long-term trend with the potential of harming trust, is the narrowing fiscal space in Norway: health care and pension costs are rising as the population gets older, and putting public financing under pressure. Non-oil deficits are reaching the boundary of 3% of the National Oil Fund. The margin of discretionary spending is reducing, and there is little scope to further expand public services without implementing fiscal consolidation (OECD, 2019^[37]). Norway already has one of the highest tax burdens in the OECD, and the size of Norway's public sector in terms of public employment is the largest of all OECD member states (OECD, 2021^[24]). Moreover, labour costs are already high and there are little prospects of further productivity growth (as productivity is already high). In consequence, it is important to further improve 'value for money' in public spending, and to focus on public sector innovations while remaining within the boundaries of current budgets and staff capacity (OECD, 2019^[37]).

A third and final major risk for the Norwegian economy in general, and trust in particular, is the housing market. Recent developments could contribute to creating a sense of economic insecurity that has been associated with diminishing trust. Housing prices are rising faster than disposable incomes, and household debt levels are expanding. The current debt per household in Norway is among the highest of all OECD member states. There is a substantial risk that this will undermine consumption in the longer run, reduce Norwegians' purchasing power, and dampen economic growth. It also poses macro-financial risks in terms of debt sustainability of banks (OECD, 2019^[37]). Given the importance of citizens' personal economic resources, and the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and trust levels, it is important to ensure that housing remains affordable and accessible for all Norwegians (Goubin and Hooghe, 2020^[35]; Van Erkel and Van Der Meer, 2016^[30]).

Figure 2.14. Housing prices are high and getting higher



Note: s.a. stands for seasonally adjusted prices.

Source: Calculations based on Real Estate Norway (Eiendom Norge) data; OECD Economic Outlook (database).

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The economic consequences of the pandemic, as well its repercussions for trust in public institutions are likely to fuel debates in Norway in the years to come. However, and more fundamentally, the size of the public sector seems to have reached its limit, and structural economic reforms will be necessary to ensure that all citizens remain included in the Norwegian economy and enjoy similar social standards in the longer run.

The quality and appraisal of public services

Access to quality services, such as education, health care, transportation and justice is essential to connect people with opportunities, higher-paid jobs, better living standards and longer, more fulfilling lives (OECD, 2020^[39]). Research finds that people who directly and frequently benefit from services are able to provide accurate assessments of those services (Van Ryzin, 2007^[40]; González, 2020^[41]). A positive relation between perceived performance and user satisfaction has been established in the literature. The mechanism linking performance and satisfaction is known as “expectancy disconfirmation theory”. According to this theory, citizens evaluate government services through a combination of experience (including with private providers), expectations and information received from others (Young Mok, Oliver and Van Ryzin, 2017^[42]; Oliver, 2010^[43]). Concretely, experienced or expected service attributes such as ease of access, quality of services and courtesy of treatment, among others would shape satisfaction levels (OECD, 2021^[24]) (IPSOS, 2011^[44]). In turn, levels of satisfaction with services influence public trust (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017^[26]; Van Ryzin, 2007^[40]). Box 2.1 presents a good example of how this model has been articulated in a measurement instrument (e.g. the Australian Citizens Experience survey)

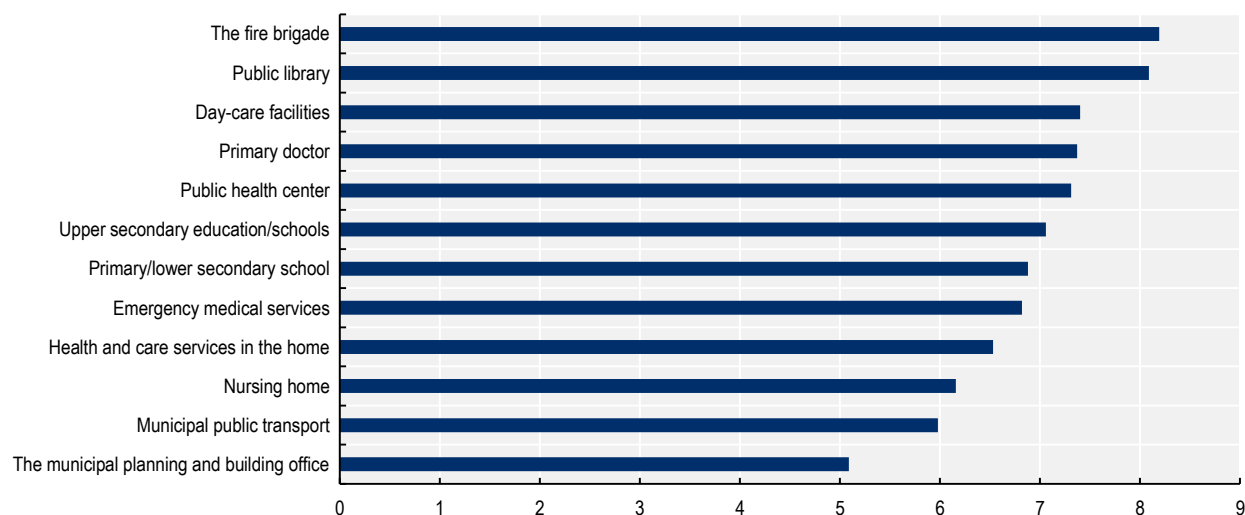
Given the comprehensiveness of its welfare model, the public sector in Norway has significant direct involvement in service provision. However, the responsibility for the provision of services is divided among the three levels of government. The central level has responsibility for services such as the police, labour and several social benefits, tax collection and central agencies and regulatory bodies. Municipalities (i.e. local level) are responsible for much of the direct service provision including education (from day care to junior high school), health centres and emergency rooms, care for the elderly and local transport and infrastructure. Municipalities are fully integrated into the welfare state and are responsible for about half of public service production (Borge, 2010^[45]). In turn, the counties have the responsibility for country roads and secondary education.

Satisfaction with municipal level services

The citizen satisfaction survey reports on satisfaction with a wide variety of services at the municipal and state levels. In general, satisfaction with municipal services tends to be high in Norway. On average on a scale of 0-10 all services scored higher than five. However, there is wide variation, services such as the fire brigade and public libraries (above 8 on average) fare significantly better than municipal public transport systems and the municipal planning and building office (see Figure 2.15).

Figure 2.15. Average levels of satisfaction with municipal services, 2021

Average on a scale of 0-10



Note: Answer to the question: How satisfied are you with the following services?

Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

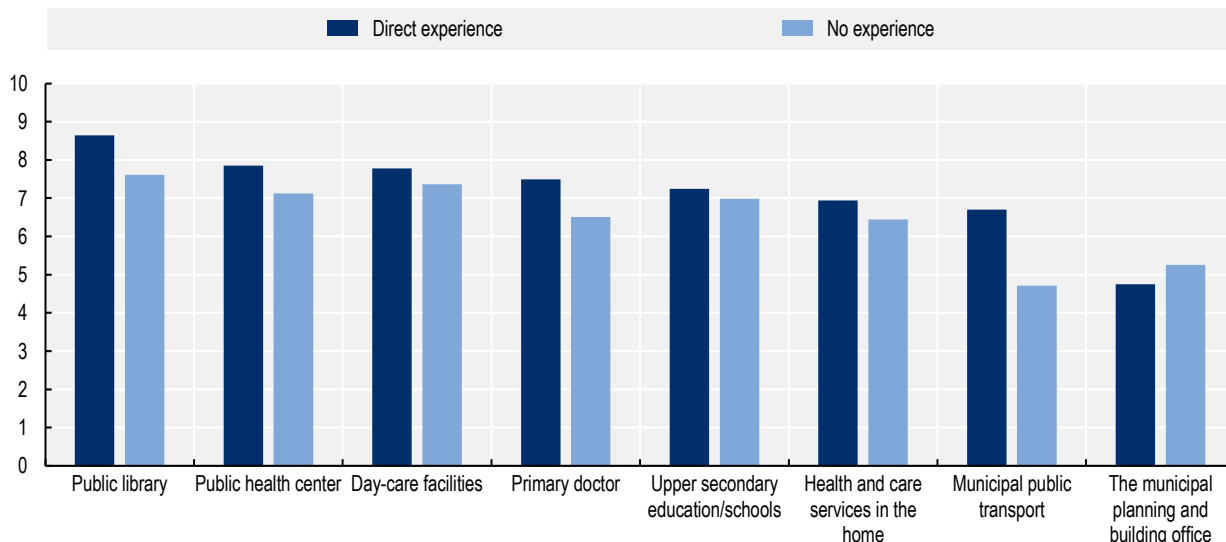
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It is, however, important to note that level of exposure to these services varies as more people tend to use services such as visits to their primary doctor, the public health centre and municipal public transport more frequently than others. In turn, services such as day care facilities or nursing homes are predominantly used by specific segments of the population. Lack of direct experience does not necessarily prevent survey respondents from answering satisfaction questions about both types of services (i.e. services they have used and others they have not used).

Figure 2.16 depicts average satisfaction levels by direct experience over the past 12 months. For the majority of services considered, people with recent experience reported higher satisfaction levels. Differences are larger in the cases of public libraries and municipal public transport systems. The only service for which direct exposure results in lower levels of satisfaction is the municipal planning and building office as those who had recently used those services actually reported, on average, statistically significantly lower levels of satisfaction with services. It is nevertheless worth mentioning that direct experience with services varies significantly as for instance only small shares of the population report using services such as nursing homes (6%) and the municipal and planning office (13%).

Figure 2.16. Average satisfaction with municipal levels by direct experience

Average on a scale of 0-10



Note: Have you used the service in the past 12 months? How satisfied are you with the following services? Only services for which the difference is statistically significant at 95% based on a t-test are displayed.

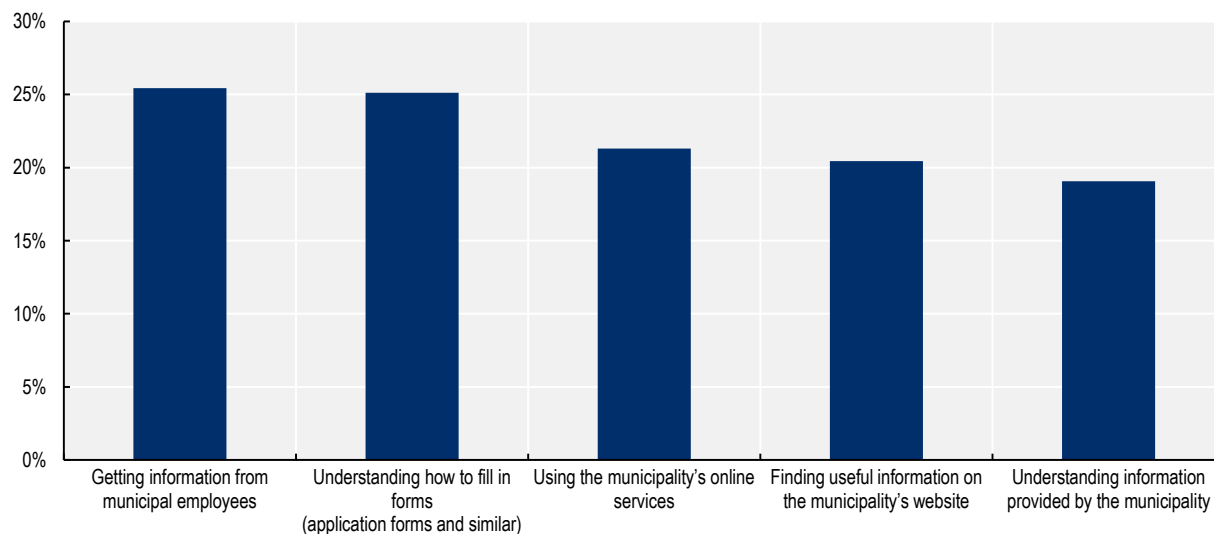
Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Additionally, research has documented the existence of the so-called halo effect, i.e. the notion that attitudes towards the public sector could influence people's answers to questions about satisfaction with public services (Van de Walle, 2017^[46]). In addition to general satisfaction questions, the Norwegian Citizens Survey includes a handful of general questions about how easy or difficult it is to access and use information, fill out forms and how useful and understandable that information. It also assesses how easy or difficult it is to use online services. While the majority of the Norwegian population finds it easy to perform each of these tasks, between 19% and 25% of Norwegians find some of them rather difficult. Figure 2.17 shows the percentage of the population (0-4) who finds them difficult. About one-quarter of the Norwegian population finds it difficult to get information from municipal employees or understand how to fill in forms. About 20% of people find it rather difficult to use municipal services online, finding information on the website or understanding the information provided by the municipality.

Figure 2.17. Percentage of the population reporting that each of the following are difficult

On a scale from 0 (difficult)-10 (easy) percentage of respondents who answer 4 or less



Note: Answer to the question: How easy or difficult do you consider the following to be in your municipality?

Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

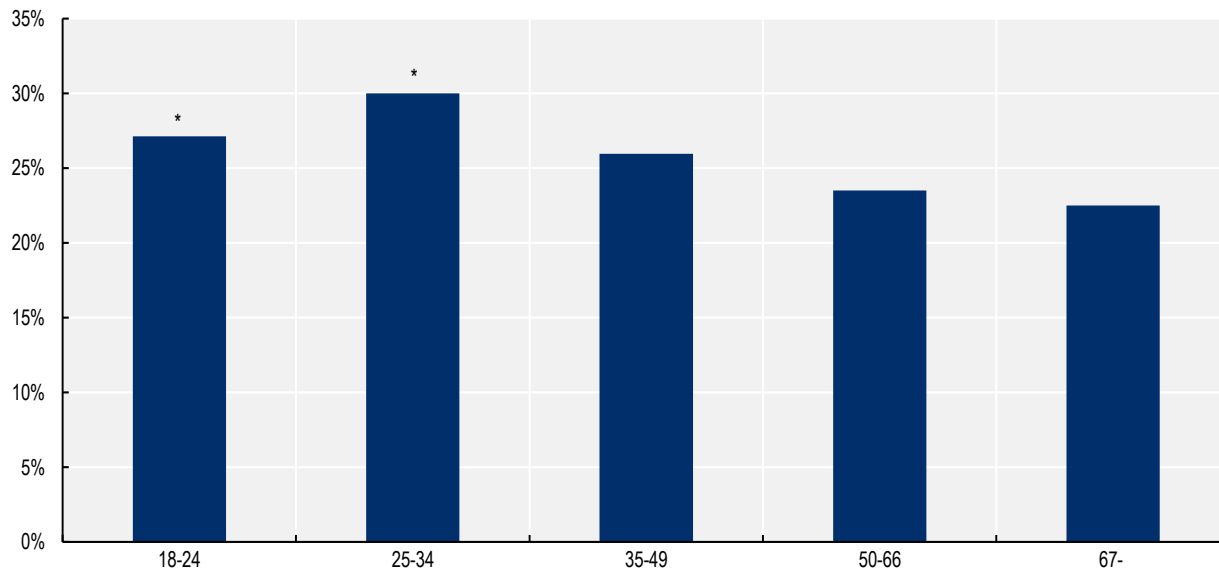
StatLink  <https://stat.link/s7xn0a>

There is, however, variation across different groups. A higher proportion of people in younger cohorts report that they struggle to obtain information from municipal employees. As such, while this is the case for one-third of respondents who are between 25 and 34 years of age and 27% of those who are 18 - 24 year olds only 22.5% of those who are 67 or older report encountering such difficulties (see Figure 2.18). A natural interpretation of these differences is that younger cohorts are more used to digital technologies and online solutions and therefore are less accustomed and tend to rely less in direct interaction with municipal employees.

In turn, people who are more educated systematically encounter fewer difficulties in their different interactions with municipal employees through direct or online channels. For instance, while over 35% of the Norwegian population with basic education have difficulties understanding how to fill in forms, the share is 20% for those with a tertiary education. To conclude, satisfaction with municipal services is high in Norway however, there is variation by services and recent exposure (in the past 12 months), which tends to positively influence satisfaction levels for most services. Still, some segments of the population encounter problems in finding information or when trying to access services through online or direct channels. Ensuring that municipal services continue adapting and striving to simplify while ensuring that all segments of the population have access is essential in preserving people's institutional trust.

Figure 2.18. Difficulties getting information from municipal employees by age group

On a scale of 0 (difficult)-10 (easy) percentage of respondents who answer 4 or less



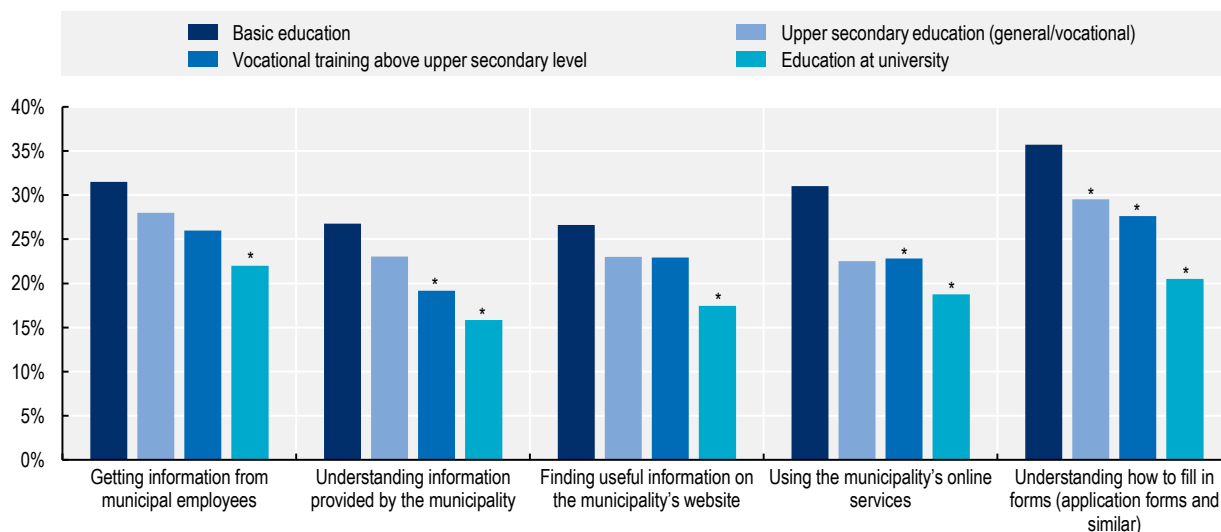
Note: Answer to the question: How easy or difficult do you consider the following to be in your municipality? The * means that the difference is statistically significant at 95%; the reference group for comparisons is 67 or more.

Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Figure 2.19. Percentage of the population who finds difficult each of the following by education level

On a scale of 0 (difficult)-10 (easy) percentage of respondents who answer 4 or less



Note: Answer to the question How easy or difficult do you consider the following to be in your municipality? The * means that the difference is statistically significant at 95% the reference group is basic education.

Source: OECD calculations based in the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/9jkazw>

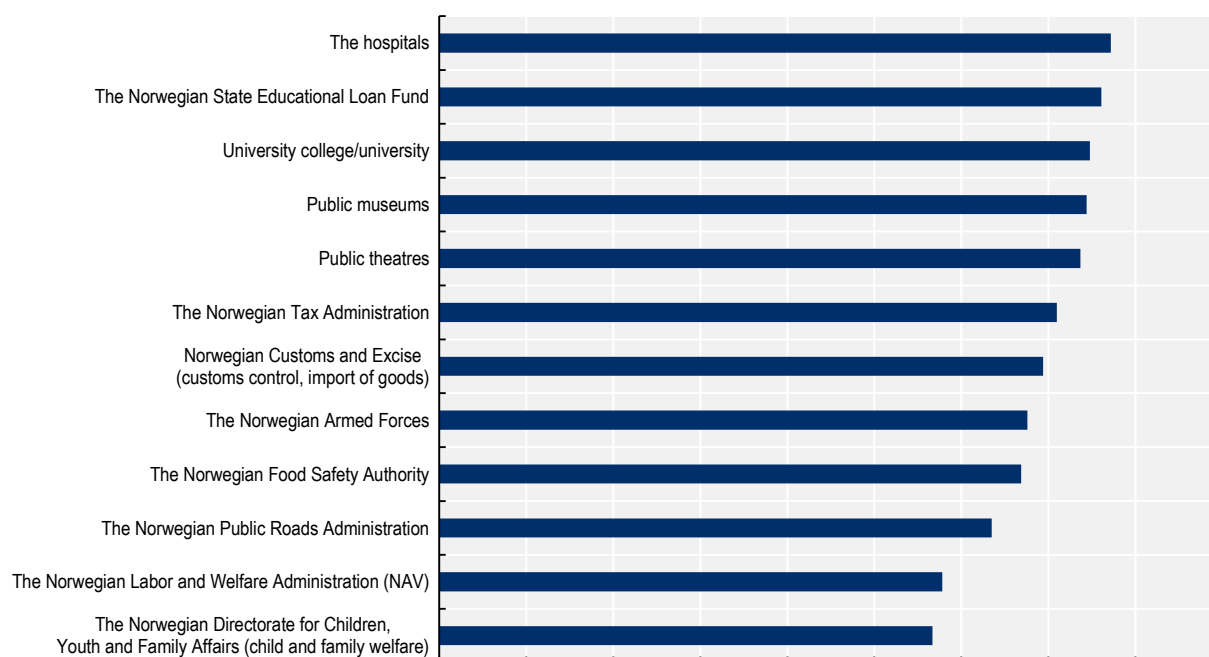
Satisfaction with state level services

As previously indicated, the central or state level remains responsible for the provision of key services to the Norwegian population. Norway has a long tradition of central agencies. It is expected that these agencies are professional, implement public policies and provide services, regulation and surveillance (Christensen and Laegreid, 2021^[47]). Accordingly, many agencies either focus predominantly on a regulatory role, still with direct implications in people's lives (e.g. the Norwegian Food Safety Authority) or a mixed role whereby they are part of designing the regulation of a given sector and providing direct services or benefits to people (e.g. the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration NAV). The State is also responsible for some key services such as hospitals, public museums and theatres. Still, people's awareness and knowledge of some state provided services tends to be vague and they are harder to identify. Accordingly, fewer respondents answer questions about satisfaction with state provided services or report having had direct experience with them.

Out of all the services that fall under the responsibility of the state, the highest levels of satisfaction are reported with hospitals followed by the Norwegian State Education and Loan Fund, Universities as well as public museums and public theatres. In turn, some agencies in charge of managing benefits and providing assistance such as the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and the Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family fare comparatively poorly in levels of satisfaction (although still above five). The Norwegian Tax Administration and the Norwegian Customs and Excise Agency have comparatively high levels of satisfaction as reported by citizens. In the case of the tax administration, some of the interviews conducted for this study associate high levels of satisfaction with the tax agency to a successful digitalisation process whereby it is much easier for people to find personal information, calculate their taxes, tax returns are pre-filled out and there are feedback mechanisms between people and the administration.

Figure 2.20. Average levels of satisfaction at the state level

Average from 0-10



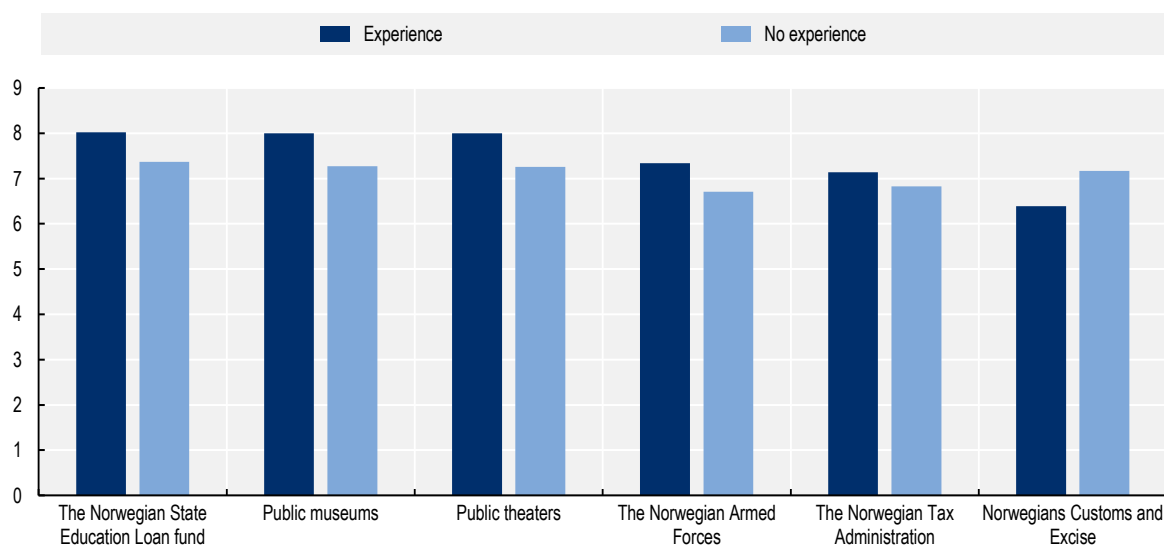
Note: Answer to the question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following state services?

Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

In the case of services provided by the state, in fewer instances there are differences that are statistically significant by experience (see Figure 2.21). Like municipal services, the majority of State services score high. The difference is the largest in the case of public museums and public theatres, which in turn have been used in the past 12 months by 15% and 9% of the population respectively. Some 15% of the population reports recent contact with the Norwegian Customs and Excise Agency, those with recent experience report on average lower satisfaction levels. Nonetheless, it is worth noticing that average satisfaction levels with the Custom and Excise Office have, on average, increased from 66.2% in 2017 to 69.5% in 2021 (Direktoratet for forvaltning og økonomistyrings, 2021^[48]).

Figure 2.21. Average satisfaction by experience, state level services

Average from 0-10



Note: Answer to the question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following state services? Have you used any of the following services in the past 12 months? Only differences statistically significant at 95% are displayed.

Source: OECD calculations based on the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Box 2.1. The Australian Citizen Experience Survey

In 2018, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in Australia launched the project of a Citizen Experience Survey with the objective of informing senior secretaries in the Centre of Government about the future of services. The baseline of the survey was established in March 2019 and data are collected every four months allowing for regular monitoring. The framework under which the survey works recognises the importance of both experience and expectations in shaping satisfaction and ultimately leading to the perception of the trustworthiness of Australian public services.

Figure 2.22. Conceptual model of the Australian Citizen Experience Survey



Source: Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Key features of the survey design are mentioned below

- People can answer the survey whether or not they have accessed services in the last twelve months
- Respondents are sourced from a non-probability panel which pays a very small financial incentive for completing (less than USD 5)
- Responses are anonymous and de-identified
- Participants are excluded from doing this survey again for at least 12 months
- The Survey takes 15-20 minutes to respond
- The questions respondents are asked are shaped by the answers they provide. In this way the survey acts a little like a 'choose your own adventure' – or 'tell us your story from your shoes'. It fully places the citizen at the centre
- The survey specifically asks people to, as best as they can, only consider their past experiences with services, and not their views on the Government or governmental policies

Source: Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

The determinants of public trust in public institutions

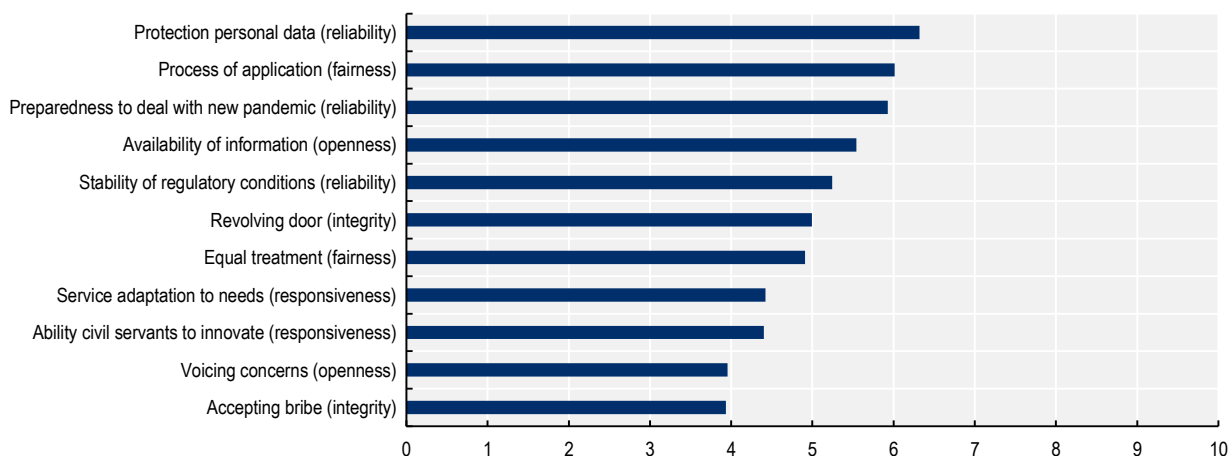
The OECD Trust Survey implemented as part of this case study makes it possible, for the first time in Norway, to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the determinants of trust. As presented in Chapter 1 the survey includes questions on trust levels of institutions (see Table 1.2) and also 11 questions on the

determinants of public trust according to the five dimensions included in the OECD Framework (see Table 1.4) on the determinants of public trust (i.e. responsiveness, reliability, openness, integrity, fairness). Respondents were asked how likely or unlikely certain events or conditions were in the case of their public sector. In Figure 2.23, the average values of the respondents' general assessment of the quality of Norway's institutional system is presented.

Questions pertaining to reliability are especially high: on average citizens feel that their institutions can be trusted to protect their data, ensure stable rules and norms, and are prepared to manage future crises, such as for example a new pandemic. All told, citizens are confident their state can be relied upon to organise the safe and orderly management of Norway's society. Citizens also believe that their state is open – as measured through the accessibility of information about public services – and that it treats citizens fairly – as measured through a question about equal treatment by public services. Level of innovation and openness to change scored less positively. Less than half of the respondents think the government would move quickly to correct problems to improve services (responsiveness), or that citizens are able to voice their concerns and influence a systematic change of services when this would be necessary (openness). Finally, integrity perceptions are mixed. Overall, respondents do not think that their members of parliament can be bribed to change their voting behaviour in the Storting; yet about half of the respondents think it is likely that politicians would accept a business job in turn for a political favour (revolving door).

Figure 2.23. Drivers of institutional trust in Norway

Average values



Note: In the case of the integrity questions respondents were asked about the likelihood of misconduct occurring so a lower value actually means it is less likely to happen.

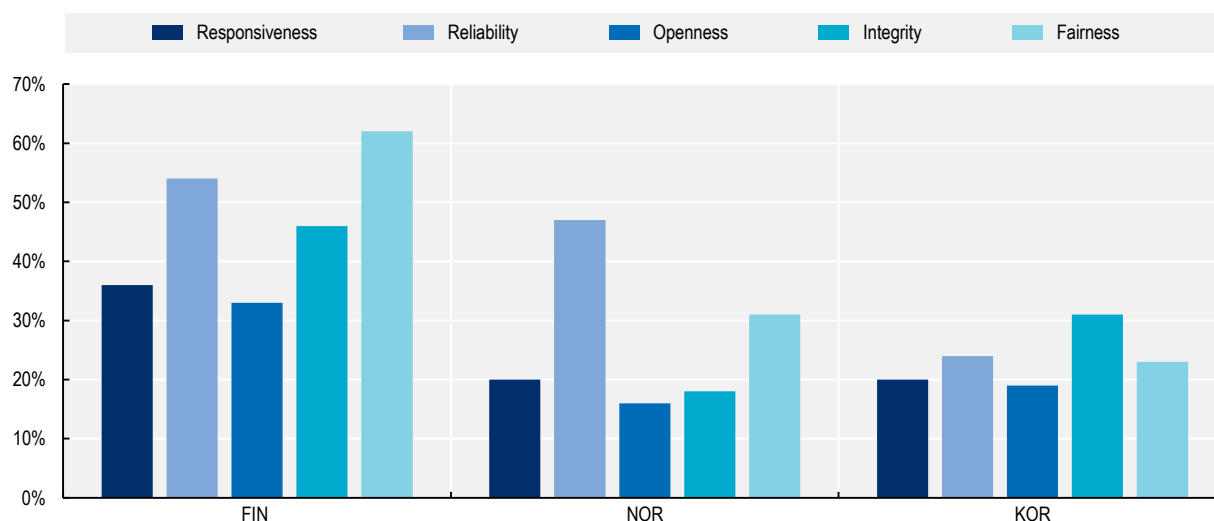
Source: OECD (2021), OECD Trust Survey applied in the Norwegian citizens survey. Scale ranges from 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). Weighted average values reported.

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In comparative terms Norwegians are highly positive about the performance of their public services (Figure 2.24). As indicated before, reliability is high and it looks like these are the highest across a sample of OECD member states. Norway also scores well on the fairness dimension (42%), in comparison with countries such as Italy or Slovenia, but Germany and Finland (46% and 62%) do better. In contrast, only 28% of Norwegians believe that their institutions are open, while this percentage is 33% in Finland, 36% in Germany, and even 47% in the USA. For the other two dimensions, Norway's score are usually high, but not necessarily the highest for this sample of OECD countries (with Finland usually scoring the best

across these dimensions). In sum, citizens believe that their institutions are qualitative, reliable, and that administrators and politicians work for the good of citizens, but they do not believe that their institutions are innovative or very open.

Figure 2.24. Percentage of the population that believes their government is responsive, reliable, open and fair and demonstrates integrity



Notes: Data for Korea are also from 2017 and were collected by the Korean Development Institute in co-operation with the OECD. The scale used for Finland is 1-10. In the case of Finland, data are based on the special module on Trust in Public Institutions Survey, fielded by Statistics Finland in the framework of the Consumer Confidence Survey in August 2020. In the case of Norway, data are based on the Citizens Survey fielded by DFØ in the summer of 2021. Percentage of the population answering 7-10 for each of the drivers.

Source: OECD Trust Survey applied in the Consumer Confidence Survey; Statistics Finland; Trustlab; OECD/KDI, Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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The analysis presented in the following pages focuses on three main trust indicators. Trust in the central government is the most widely used statistic in the field of trust and captures both political and institutional factors (OECD/KDI, 2018^[49]; Algan, 2018^[50]). The other two main trust indicators are trust in the local government and trust in the civil service. As discussed in the previous section, municipalities play a key role in Norway in terms of service provision and interaction with people living in Norway. In turn, and considering that Norway has a comparatively large public sector, both in terms of public spending and public employment (OECD, 2021^[24]) public servants (both at the central and municipal level) play a key role in policy formulation and are often the face of service provision and policy implementation. They thus play a crucial role in building the trust relationship between people and public institutions “If I cannot trust the local policemen, judges, teachers, and doctors, then whom in this society can I trust?” The ethics of public officials become central here, not only with respect to how they do their jobs but also to the signals they send to citizens about what kind of “game” is being played in the society” (Rothstein, 2013^[51]).

Trust in the central government

Figure 2.25 displays the key determinants of trust in government. Reliability or government preparedness to address future challenges stand as the most important determinant of trust in government in Norway. An increase of one standard deviation in government’s reliability could lead to an increase of about 0.5 points in trust in government. The question capturing this aspect relates specifically to the potential spread in Norway of a new contagious disease and how likely it is that government institutions will be prepared to protect people’s lives. Considering that the survey was conducted during the spring and early summer of 2021 it is no surprise that the COVID-19 outbreak is still vivid in people’s minds and affected people’s

response. While overall it is recognised that the authorities have handled the pandemic well, it is also acknowledged that they were unprepared when the COVID-19 emergency arrived (Corona Commission, 2021^[52]). It is expected that crises will become more common. Accordingly, further strengthening preparedness and assessing potential risks for the society at large will be important in preserving trust in government.

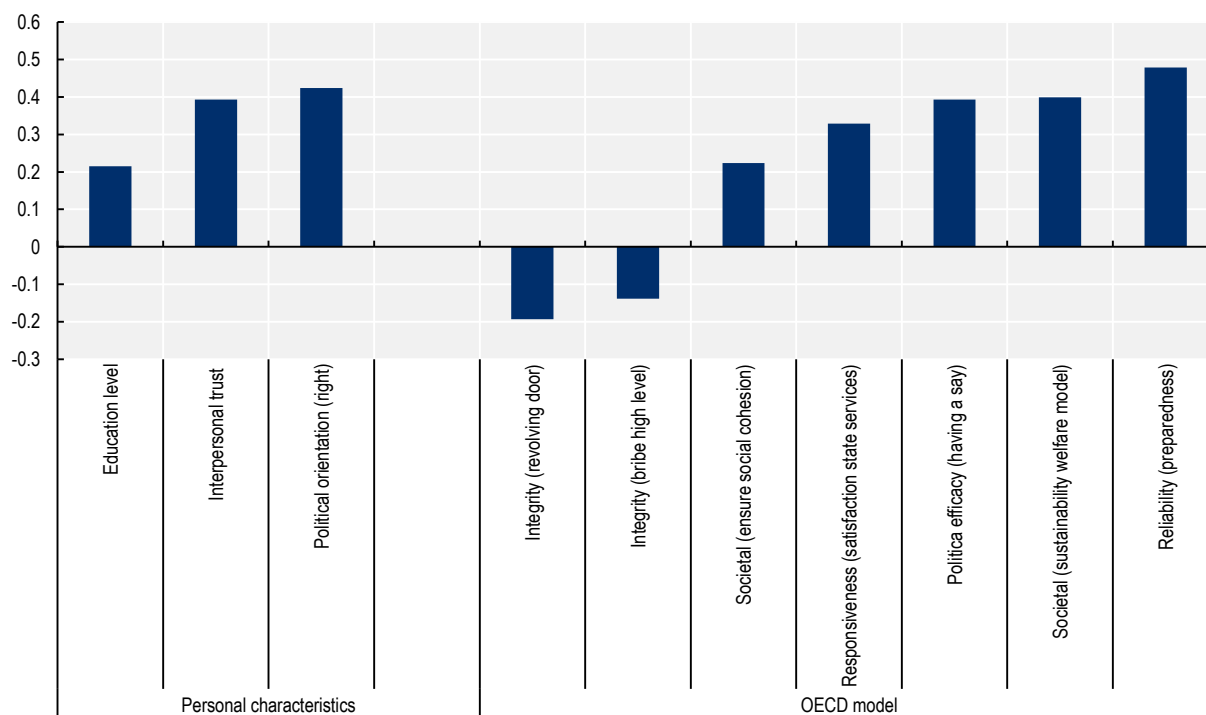
Other factors influencing levels of trust in government are the extent to which public institutions are perceived as doing enough to ensure the sustainability of the welfare system. Norway has a comprehensive and generous welfare system that contributes to equality, reducing poverty, minimising uncertainty and enhancing well-being. Such systems, alongside complementary measures, have cushioned the effects of the economic downturn brought on by COVID-19. Still, pressures exist regarding the sustainability of the welfare system as well as the need to rethink them in view of socioeconomic changes and developments (Kangas and Kvist, 2018^[53]). Evidence suggests that economic crises that lead to welfare retrenchment hurt trust in government while, in turn, positive experiences of good welfare performance positively influence trust levels (Zmerli and van der Meer, 2017^[26]). Accordingly, the evolution and performance of the welfare system will be key for maintaining high levels of trust in government in Norway.

The policy making style in Norway is characterised by collaboration, consultation and the involvement of affected stakeholders. Norwegians display the third-highest levels of external political efficacy among OECD countries (OECD, 2021^[24]). Ensuring that active and functional mechanisms through which people could have their voice heard persist and are reinforced, which is critical to maintaining and strengthening levels of trust in government. The perception of having a say in what the government does is the third-largest determinant of trust in government.

In turn, perceived corruption or expected lack of integrity has the potential to undermine trust levels. Both of the integrity questions included as part of the OECD trust survey are statistically significant with the expected negative sign (expectations of corruption or misconduct diminish trust levels) and added together are the fourth-most important determinant of trust in government. While levels of integrity in Norway are comparatively high, there are risks that concerns will increase about corruption, which could be triggered by repeated episodes of misconduct by politicians or bureaucrats. This could affect democratic legitimacy and trust (Linde and Erlingsson, 2013^[54]). In turn, some personal characteristics influence levels of trust in government. The more people report to be politically on the right the higher the trust in the government, one plausible explanation is that at the moment of the data collection the governing coalition was led by the right. In turn, levels of interpersonal trust also influence institutional trust, this is consistent with views arguing that trust in others is a necessary condition for the development of trust in institutions. In short, institutional trust stems from interpersonal trust (Fukuyama, 1996^[55]).

Figure 2.25. The determinants of trust in government in Norway

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation increase in...



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. The label starts with the policy dimension.

Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

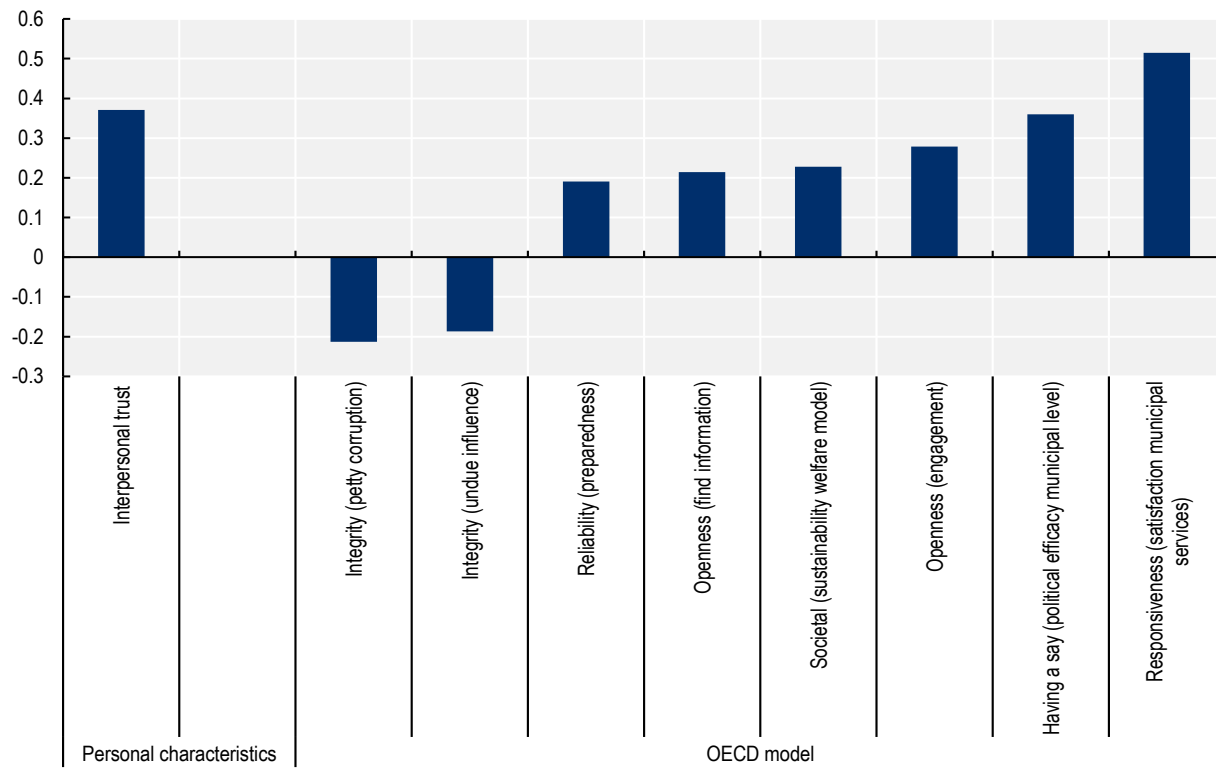
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Trust in the local government

Trust in the local government is influenced by a different mix of determinants. Satisfaction with municipal services stands as the most important driver of institutional trust (see Figure 2.26). Such a result underscores the crucial role played by services in shaping people's appraisal of public institutions and the crucial role they play in preserving the trust relationship. External political efficacy at the municipal level stands as the second most important determinant of trust in the local government and further confirms the importance of having channels for people to influence policy making. Along the same lines, both of the openness components in terms of availability of information and engagement opportunities have a statistically significant effect on trust in the local government and, taken together, represent the most important driver. Focusing on satisfying citizens' expectations regarding democratic decision making possibilities is important for strengthening trust in the local level. In turn, further strengthening people's sense of empowerment to influence governmental systems may help translate openness efforts into higher trust (Schmidhuber, Ingrams and Hilgers, 2020^[56]).

Figure 2.26. The determinants of trust in the local government in Norway

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation increase in...



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. The label starts with the policy dimension.
Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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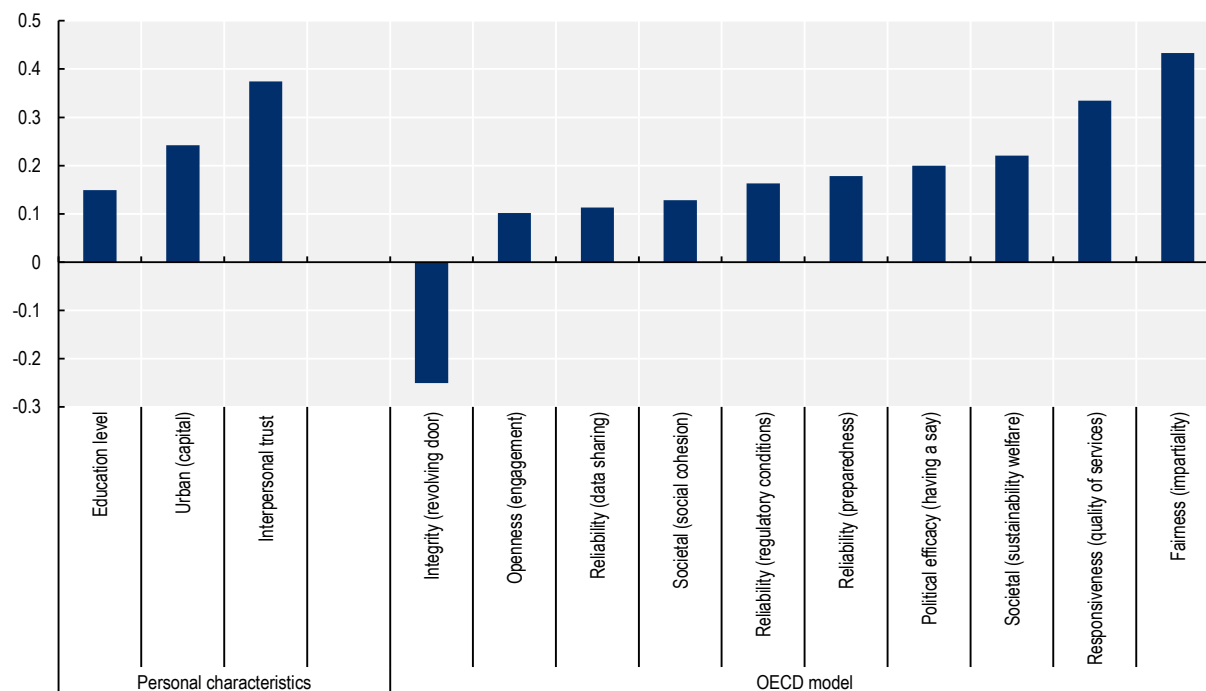
Trust in the civil service

The third institution analysed as part of this case study is the civil service (both at the municipal and national level). In Norway, the civil service is considered meritocratic and professional and the level of mutual trust between agencies, and between agencies and ministries (Christensen and Laegreid, 2005^[11]). The most important determinant of trust in the civil service corresponds to the fairness dimension of the OECD trust framework and refers to impartiality of treatment when addressing the administration. Accordingly, an increase of one standard deviation in expectation of impartial treatment will lead to an increase of 0.43 points in public trust (see Figure 2.27). The second most important determinant is the responsiveness of public services or the extent to which they respond to people's complaints. When people believe that public institutions are doing enough to ensure the sustainability of the welfare system they are more likely to trust the civil service. Factors that lead to more trust in the civil service include: the preparedness to cope with future risks (e.g. new contagious diseases), stability of regulatory conditions and a reliable use of personal data shared with the administration. In turn, levels of external political efficacy (e.g. having a say in what the government does) both at the central and local government levels also increase levels of trust in the civil service.

When people expect their politicians and officials to engage in misconduct, it affects levels of trust in the civil service and indicates the importance of considering integrity risks. People living in Oslo and those with higher levels of education have higher levels of trust in the civil service. According to some of the interviews carried out for this study, this could be explained by the fact that people in Oslo live closer to a wider number and variety of government agencies and more educated people find it easier to understand the different instances, requirements and jargon of the administration.

Figure 2.27. The determinants of trust in the civil service in Norway

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation increase in...



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. The label starts with the policy dimension.

Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey.

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Comparative analysis of institutional trust determinants

Table 2.1 shows the determinants of trust levels in the three institutions studied as well as those factors that are overlapping. The positive sign within brackets indicates the institution for which the coefficient is larger. Political orientation (being further to the right) only shows significance for trust in government. In turn, aspects capturing satisfaction with services or openness (access to information and engagement) are stronger as determinants of public trust in the case of trust in the local government. Impartiality of treatment (fairness) and all aspects measuring the reliability dimension have a positive influence in trust in the civil service.

Table 2.1. Comparison of the determinants of trust in public institutions in Norway

	Trust in government	Trust in local government	Trust in civil service
Personal characteristics			
Education level	(+)		
Interpersonal trust	(+)		
Political orientation (right)			
Urban (capital)			
Institutional characteristics (OECD model)			
Member of starting/or at the municipal level accepting bribe (lack of integrity)		(+)	
High level politician/or at the municipal level exerting influence (lack of integrity)			(+)
Service adaptation (responsiveness)			
Satisfaction services (responsiveness)		(+)	
Preparedness to fight a new disease (reliability)	(+)		
Stability of regulatory conditions (reliability)			
Protection of shared data (reliability)			
Engagement issues affecting community (openness)		(+)	
Finding information (openness)			
Impartiality of treatment (fairness)			
Having a say (political efficacy)	(+)		
Societal (sustainability welfare model)	(+)		
Societal (ensure social cohesion)	(+)		

Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government, the local government and the civil service in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%. + presents the institution for which the coefficient is the highest.

■ Variables that influence trust in government in a single institution

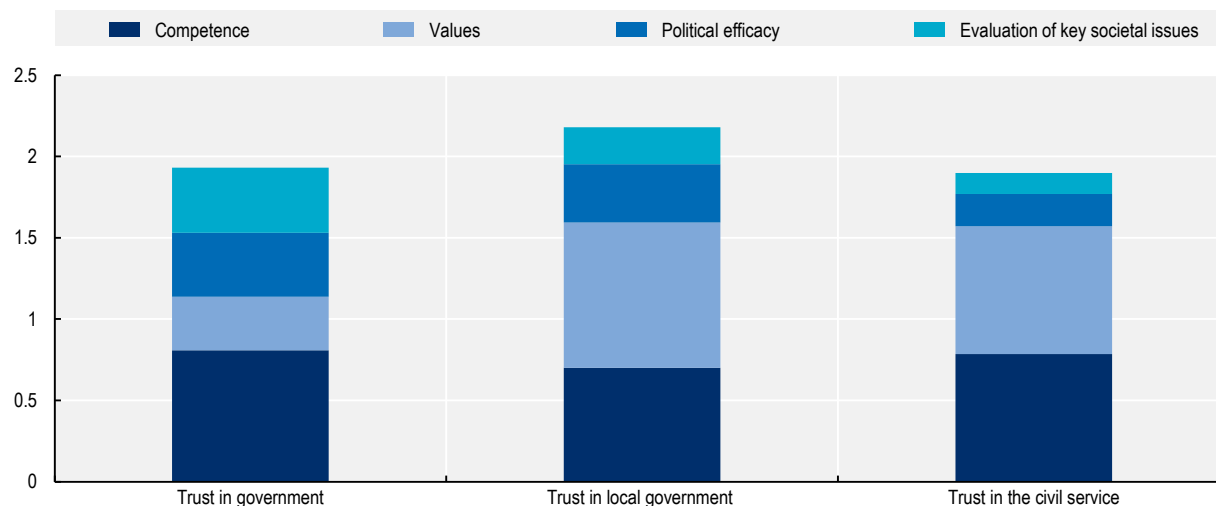
■ Variables that influence trust in more than one institution

Figure 2.28 presents the expected changes in the level of trust in government, local government and the civil service following a one standard deviation increase in each of the factors that are statistically significant. For example, if the different components of competence (i.e. responsiveness and reliability) increased by one standard deviation, trust in national government would increase by 0.81 points. Similarly, if significant components of values (i.e. absolute value of integrity) increased by one standard deviation, trust would change by 0.33 points. A change of one standard deviation in the evaluation of the role of public institutions in key societal trends, in particular expectations about the sustainability of the welfare system and preserving social cohesion would improve trust by 0.40 points, the largest relative change for the three institutions under consideration.

In the case of trust in the local government, increases of one standard deviation of ‘values’ components, specifically openness and integrity will lead to an increase of trust in the local government of 0.84 points compared to changes in competences (i.e. responsiveness and reliability) that will influence trust in the local government by 0.70 points. In the case of the civil service, both changes in values (0.79) and competences (0.79) have an equivalent effect in trust levels. Changes in external political efficacy have a higher relative effect on trust levels in government (0.40) and the local government (0.36) than in the civil service (0.20). Compared to other countries with similar administrative traditions and cultural contexts there are some similarities and differences in the key determinants of institutional trust (see Box 2.2).

Figure 2.28. The determinants of self-reported trust in public institutions in Norway...

Change in self-reported trust associated with a one standard deviation in aggregate policy dimensions or other determinants



Note: This figure shows the most robust determinants of self-reported trust in government, the local government and the civil service in an ordinary least squares estimation that controls for individual characteristics. All variables depicted are statistically significant at 99%.

Source: OECD Trust Survey fielded as part of the Norwegian Citizens Survey. The integrity component that has negative coefficients is treated in absolute values.

StatLink  <https://stat.link/tpnyfv>

Box 2.2. The Determinants of Trust in Public Institutions in Finland

In 2020, the OECD in co-operation with the Ministry of Finance in Finland carried out a case study on the determinants of public trust in Finland, which was also based on the OECD Trust survey. Like Norway, Finland is a high trusting society where institutional trust is a cornerstone of the administrative culture. In Finland the so-called Finnish paradox was identified showing that although the country has comparatively high levels of institutional trust, the levels of political efficacy are low and participation through formal mechanisms has been diminishing. The report shows that different elements of government competences and values are important for building institutional trust in Finland. The Finnish government has put together an inter-agency expert group to advance in the implementation of the recommendations put forward by the report, some of which are included below.

- Keep measuring people's trust in government, in order to identify pockets of distrust that may fracture the Finnish social contract. Strengthen the role of institutional trust as a key element for collectively addressing the societal transformations in Finland (e.g. ageing, climate change, a more diverse society).
- Take a cohesive approach to service design and delivery in the digital age, such as setting standards, guidelines and initiatives to secure people's involvement across the design and delivery of services.
- Reinforce and promote the core values of serving people as part of the administrative culture and profile and display the work carried out by the administration, including during crises. Address the noxious effects brought about by hate speech and higher exposure of civil servants through social media.

- Reform the design process of government programmes by clarifying responsibilities and enhancing dialogue between the political leadership and the senior civil service to facilitate the inclusion of subjects such as climate change, intergenerational justice, equality, etc. in the recovery plans.
- Strengthening political efficacy by engaging citizens in policy choices and monitoring results, and by giving regular feedback on inputs provided by civil society.
- Public accountability and transparency can be reinforced by focusing on results rather than processes, fostering innovation and experimentation in the civil service, and identifying clear and measurable results to be monitored in user-friendly and open source formats.
- Strengthening existing structures and adopting a systemic and unified approach that focuses on longer scenarios would strengthen foresight exercises.
- Strengthen the Finnish culture of public integrity by clarifying the existing channels for reporting wrongdoing and improving the measures for managing conflicts of interest and pre- and post-public employment.
- Secure equality in the availability of and participation in early childhood education as well upper secondary education. Implement specific protective measures in the school transitions of children and young people with an immigrant background.
- Finland could repeat the OECD trust survey in the future as regular monitoring tools to evaluate governance outcomes, identify levers for change and improve evidence-based decision making.

Source: OECD (2021^[27]), *The Determinants of trust in public institutions in Finland*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/52600c9e-en>.

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Notes

¹ The relative order of trust in different institutions varies by sources. For example according to the 2019 Norwegian elections study trust in the municipal council is 5.7 on average (same value as in the OECD trust survey) but in this case higher than trust in the national parliament (5.5) and the national government (5.4). These discrepancies demonstrate that trust level fluctuate. A potential source explaining these discrepancies refers to the timing of the surveys, trust tends to be higher after elections, which can influence the trust averages in local election studies while the OECD trust survey was fielded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

² Recent versions of the OECD Trust survey have included a variation by formulating the question in terms of "the news media"

³ <https://search.nsd.no/study/NSD2546>



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