

8. SOCIAL COHESION INDICATORS

Confidence in institutions

A cohesive society is one where citizens have confidence in public institutions and believe that social economic institutions are not subjected to corruption. Confidence and corruption issues are dimensions that are strongly related to societal trust.

In OECD countries, on average **less than half of the population (43%) reported trust in their national government** in 2016-17 (Figure 8.4). Switzerland, Luxembourg and Norway stood at the top of the ranking with more than two-thirds of people reporting confidence. At the other end, less than one third of the population reported confidence in Greece, Chile, Italy and Slovenia. There is a six-fold difference between Switzerland and Greece, the two countries with respectively the highest and lowest confidence in national government. Among emerging economies, confidence in national government is highest in India and Indonesia, with confidence levels comparable with Switzerland, and lowest in Brazil and Colombia, but still higher than in Greece.

In most OECD countries, the share of people expressing confidence in the national government is higher among the richest quintile than in the poorest quintile of the population; some of the largest gaps being observed in Australia and New Zealand. However, the poorest share of the population does report higher confidence rates than their richer peers in four OECD countries (France, Greece Turkey and the United States) and in several key partner economies (Brazil, Colombia, India and South Africa).

Trust in the local police and military is considerably higher than trust in the national government, with respectively 74% and 73% of the OECD population reporting confidence in these two institutions in 2016-17 (Figure 8.5). People also report having more confidence in the judicial system (52% on average across the OECD) and in the financial system (46%), but confidence levels vary significantly across countries, with confidence in the judicial system ranging from around 20% in Chile and South Korea to around 85% in Denmark and Norway. Confidence levels for all institutions are higher in 2016-17 than they were in 2006-07, except for financial institutions, as a result of the financial crisis in 2007-08 that generated a severe economic crisis. Also trust in the national government experienced a decline during the economic downturn, with the greatest losses observed in Chile and Greece (around 30 percentage points). Since 2014-15, trust in the national government is rising again, as it is for financial institutions.

Gallup World Poll data also present data on perception of corruption in governments (Figure 8.6). On average across OECD countries in 2016/17, **more than half of respondents (54%) perceived widespread corruption in their**

government. Denmark and Sweden report the lowest levels (under 20%) whereas the highest levels are perceived in the Czech Republic, Italy, Lithuania and Spain at above 80%. Perception of corruption is above the OECD average in all key partner countries and is also above 80% in Colombia, Indonesia and South Africa. In the last decade, perception of corruption deteriorated most in Chile, Slovenia and Spain while it improved most in Germany and Poland.

Definition and measurement

Data on confidence in institutions is taken from the Gallup World Poll, which is conducted in more than 150 countries around the world, and based on a common questionnaire, as translated into the predominant languages of each country. With few exceptions, all samples are probability based and nationally representative of the resident population aged 15 years and over in the entire country, including rural areas. While this ensures a high degree of comparability across countries, results may be affected by sampling and non-sampling error, and variation in response rates. Hence, results should be interpreted carefully. Data are averaged over a two-year period to minimise the impact of year-on-year fluctuations. Data are available by some socio-demographic groups.

Data on confidence is based on binary questions: Do you have confidence in each of the following: in the national government, in financial institutions or banks, in the judicial system and courts, in the local police force, in the military.

Data on corruption perception is based on the binary question: "Is corruption widespread throughout the government in this country, or not?"

Further reading

OECD (2017), *Government at a Glance 2017*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-en.

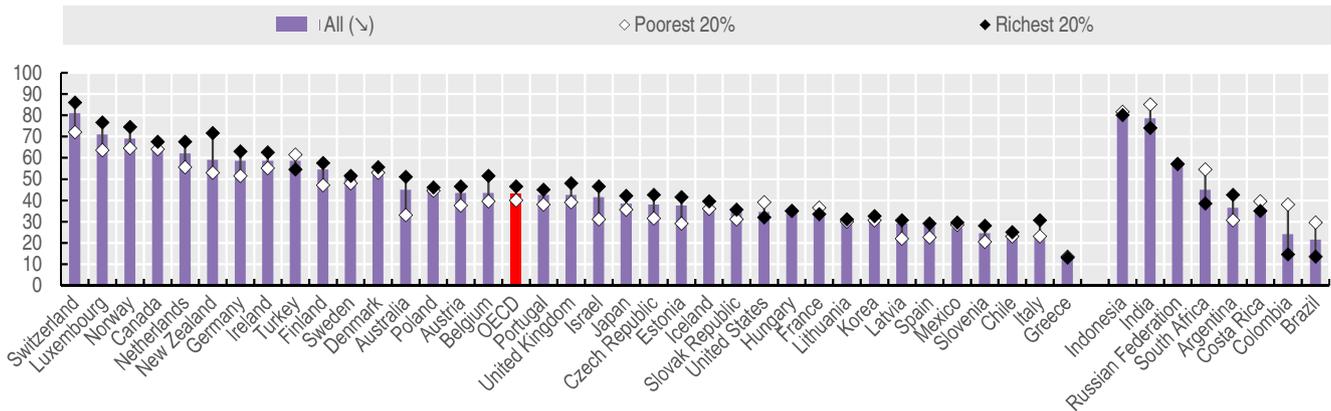
OECD (2017), *How's Life?*, OECD Publishing, Paris, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/how_life-2017-en.

Figure notes

Figure 8.6: 2008 data instead of 2006/07 for Iceland and Luxembourg.

8.4. Less than half of the OECD population reports trust in their national government

Percentage of people reporting having confidence in national government, by household income, in 2016-17

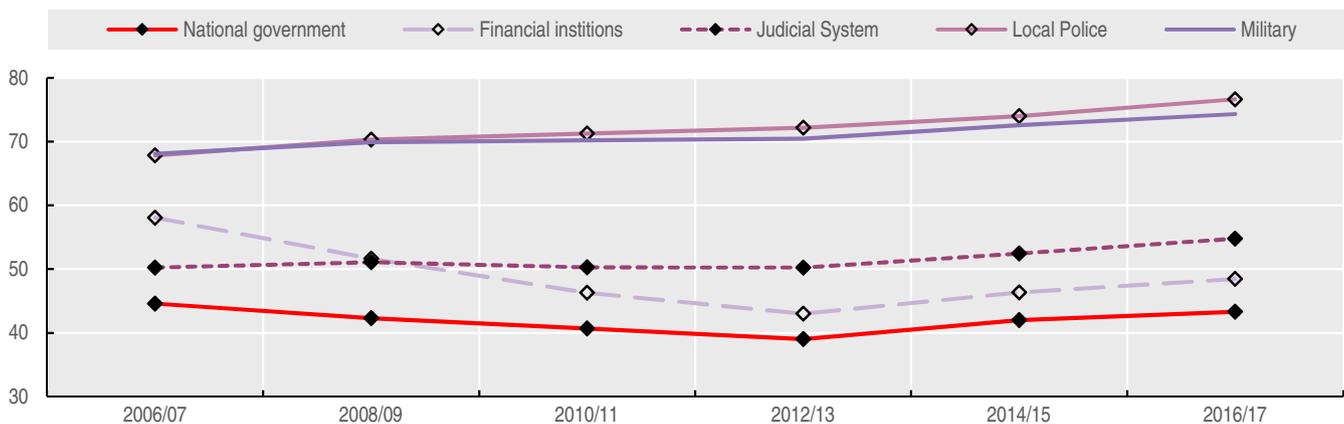


Source: Gallup World Poll, www.gallup.com.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933939655>

8.5. People have most trust in the local police and military

Trend in percentage of people reporting having confidence in specific institution, OECD average

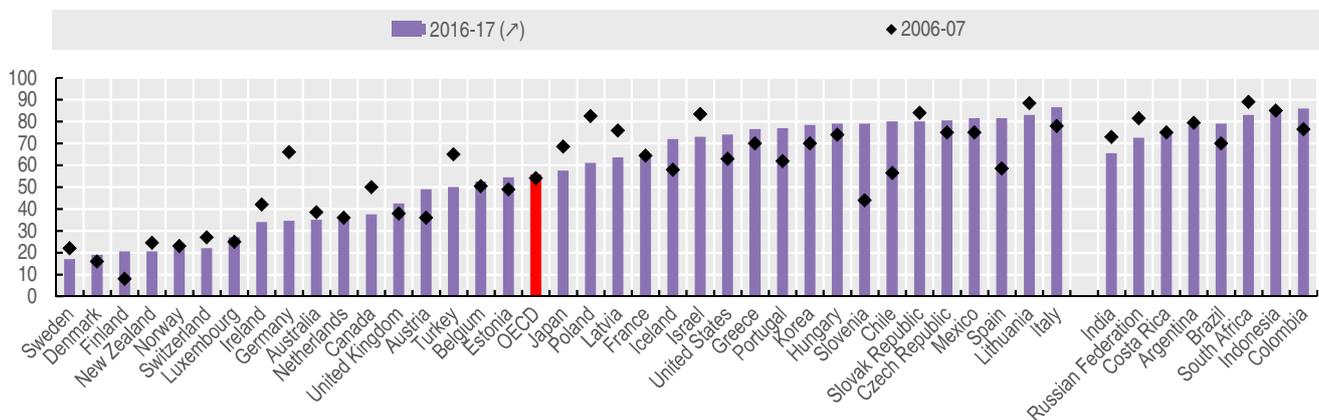


Source: Gallup World Poll, www.gallup.com.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933939674>

8.6. More than half of the population perceives corruption in their government

Percentage of people reporting that corruption is widespread throughout the government, in 2016-17 and 2006-07



Source: Gallup World Poll, www.gallup.com.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933939693>



From:
Society at a Glance 2019
OECD Social Indicators

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2019-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2019), "Confidence in institutions", in *Society at a Glance 2019: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/599e6540-en>

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