

Revisiting Dynamics of Social Capital, Government Performance, and Government Trust: Does Asian Context Matter?

Sang Ok Choi, Professor, Department of Public Administration, Korea University, Seoul, South Korea, +82+2 3290-2284, sangchoi@korea.ac.kr

Kee Hoon Choung, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Public Administration, Korea University, Seoul, South Korea, pigul@korea.ac.kr

Abstract

Existing literature generally agree social capital can play an important role mediating between government performance and government trust. Whether such theory holds in Asian context, however, requires greater examination; not only has there not been much empirical investigation, but the findings have not been consistent with many of existing literatures. For example, Kim (2005) finds that social capital was negatively associated with political trust in South Korea, contrary from existing literature that emphasizes a positive effect social capital can have on the performance and trust. While Kim's finding makes important contribution, yet important questions still remain. Specifically, do existing literatures on this topic show enough empirical evidence to theorize different mechanism in Asia? Reviewing existing literature on this topic, we could not find research that specifically focused on Asia. Second, if such thing as Asian context exists, then what's the causal mechanism behind it? Although Kim's research highlights the differing result, its limitation comes from explaining the causal mechanism of why such difference arises. In this context, this research makes significant contributions to the existing volumes in several ways. First, using more recent dataset, the SAIS-USKI (Johns Hopkins Study of Advanced International Studies, U.S. Korea Institute) survey 2011, this research attempts to validate whether Kim (2005)'s finding holds. Second, we apply more rigorous method to test Kim's result. In reality, social capital and elements of government performance interact to affect government trust. However, in many literatures, including Kim's, the effect of interaction has not been incorporated. As a result, the analysis does not incorporate the degree in which social capital mediate government performance, but rather, only examines specific effects of government performance after controlling for social capital. Finally, this research offers an explanation for Asian mechanism. Given the national context of South Korea, different contextual factors may have a stronger explanatory power than social capital affecting government trust. Specifically, since our data comes from South Korea, we employ two contextual factors – political ideology and media perception – that we assess may have stronger effect on perception of government trust than social capital. Overall, our research makes significant contributions to the existing literatures on integrative model of government trust through offering explanation for different dynamic between social capital, government performance, and government trust.

Keywords: public trust; government performance; political ideology; bureaucratic politics

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Introduction

Much of the existing literature on public trust in government analyzes specific government performance and contextual factors. Authors such as Mishler and Rose find that government performance, such as competency and responsiveness of the government, plays an important role (Mishler and Rose, 2001; Kim S.E. 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). On the other hand, authors such as Putnam and others emphasize contextual factors, such as social capital (Putnam, 1995, 2000; Kelle, 2004), political scandal, and partisan affiliation (Pew, 1998; Chanley et al., 2000; Rudolph and Evans, 2005). Much of the existing literature, however, emphasize the relationship between certain specific factors and trust in government, paying less attention to the collective dynamic of government performance and contextual factors shaping public trust. In this regard, this study aims to make contributions by analyzing the interplay between government performance and contextual factors. Specifically, to gauge the interaction between the two, research model uses mediated moderation effects to analyze government performance with three following contextual variables: social capital, political ideology, and media perception.

In addition to making methodological contribution, research model also makes significant contributions to the current literature of the public trust in two ways. First, this study challenges the mainstream assumption by Putnam's Social Capital Theory that societies with greater social capital would likely also have greater public trust. Second, the model includes newly emerging government performance variables and process-oriented and bureaucratic politics. These variables not only make our analysis more rigorous, but shed new light on the areas of government performance.

Literature Review

Public Trust in government

Trust is a complex, subtle, and often-elusive concept, subject to scrutiny across disciplinary specializations (Ruscio, 1997). Similar terms—such as political trust, faith, confidence, and satisfaction—are often used interchangeably with the concept of trust (Park, 2011; Barber, 1983; Kim S.E., 2005; Mundy, 2007), contributing to persistent definitional ambiguity in the scholarly literature (Kim S. E, 2005). Similarly, a number of divergent conceptualizations of public trust in the context of governance are debated because trust in government encompasses one in a wide variety of bureaucratic institutions, departments, government agencies, as well as that of individual politicians and public servants (Thomas, 1998). Despite the multiplicity of definitions, some commonalities are found among the concepts of trust in government (Levi and Stoker, 2000; Forster and Nilakant, 2005; Kim S. E., 2005).

First, the concept of trust in government combines cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions⁵ within rational or psychological reasoning⁶ (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Kim S. E., 2005). The increase of trust in government reflects positive evaluations of relevant concepts, such as credible commitment, benevolence, honesty, competency, and fairness (Mayer et al., 1995, 2007; Kim S. E., 2005). Second, trust in government permeates both interpersonal and organizational levels, primarily within performance and ethical perspectives (Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Thomas, 1998). Organization-level trust refers to citizens' evaluation of the overall performance of the national government or specific government institutions (Ruscio, 1997; Blind, 2007). Interpersonal trust implies citizens' appraisal of public servants and political leaders' abilities to fulfill campaign promises, promote compassionate governance, and govern fairly and honestly (Nye, 1997). Third, public trust in government does not exist in a vacuum (Blind, 2007).

Many exogenous factors may influence trust in government over time, such as social capital (Putnam, 1995, 2000; Kelle, 2004), political scandal, and partisan affiliation, socio-economic conditions (Pew, 1998; Chanley et al., 2000; Rudolph and Evans, 2005; Jang, 2013).

Government Performance Factors as Quality of Bureaucracy

Although quality of bureaucracy includes many dimensions⁷, this paper uses competence, responsiveness, procedural performance, and bureaucratic politics as indicators. The first two variables, competence and responsiveness, have been widely used in traditional literatures, whereas the latter two, procedural performance and bureaucratic politics, are recently emerging indicators. In sum, we believe that combining traditional and emerging variables allow us to rigorously analyze the relationship between quality of bureaucracy and public trust in government.

Many scholars perceive high performance as the root of trust in government while pointing out poor performance as the primary reason for distrust (Yang and Holzer, 2006; Fard et al., 2007; Keele, 2007; Mundy, 2007). This is not to suggest that a direct and mechanical relationship exists between government performance and trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003). Actual performance may not directly translate into citizen's perception since different psychological and social interactions necessarily intervene⁸. This complex relationship prevails not only because measuring performance of the public sector empirically is difficult, but also because citizens may perceive performance selectively through their own interests or general attitudes toward government (Miller and Borrelli, 1991; Mayer et al., 1995; Pew, 1998). Accordingly, the effectiveness of service delivery and consistency in its operation are often decisive in citizen's satisfaction with government performance (Van de Walle and Bouckaert, 2003; Mundy, 2007). The level of satisfaction is also largely affected when the

citizen detects not only open and reliable administrative procedures but also the sincere effort by the government agency to respond the public needs (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 1995; Glaser and Denhardt, 2000). Competency, responsiveness, consistency and transparency together constitute the overall citizen satisfaction regarding the government performance while simply classifying each factor into either process or output oriented aspect is rather complex⁹.

Competency

Competency may be defined by qualifications, knowledge, and skills necessary to effectively maintain and increase organizational productivity and outputs (Barber, 1983, Mayer et al., 1995; Kim S. E., 2005). Without competency, government agencies can neither formulate better policies nor deliver quality public services to satisfy the rising public expectations. Hence, a number of scholars have described government competency as being an important determinant of government trustworthiness (Berman, 1997; Braithwaite and Levi, 1998; Kim S.E., 2005). Indeed, ineffective local government services and incompetent government agents are proven to often undermine public trust (La Porte and Metlay, 1996; Berman, 1997). Therefore, competency is an important factor that encourages public trust when the government is able to deliver sound policies and quality services.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to how well government identifies the needs of the people and incorporates those needs into policies and programs. For citizens, responsiveness refers to how fast and accurately government agencies respond to their demands (Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2008). Likewise, Thomas and Palfrey (1996) argue that responsiveness refers to the speed and accuracy with which a service provider replies to citizens' requests¹⁰. Therefore, a responsive bureaucracy

is expected to encourage greater public trust in the government (Glaser and Denhardt, 2000; Yang and Holzer, 2006; Keele, 2007; Vigoda-Gadot et al., 2008).

Consistency and Transparency

In addition to the responsiveness, the consistency of government policies and actions will also improve public trust in government. Trust can be established if the public believe that there is a consistency between what the government promised to do and what it actually accomplishes (La Porte and Metlay, 1996; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Citrin and Muste, 1999; Kim S. E., 2005). Thus, government can foster public trust by consistently providing quality public services. In other words, institutional consistency may be the primary vehicle through which a government can achieve its trustworthiness (Hetherington, 2004). Openness and transparency is understood as the availability and accessibility of relevant information about government functions. Transparency depends not only on the quantity and quality of information that the government provides to its people but also on the improvement of the information dissemination system (Yang and Holzer, 2006). Transparent governance may encourage greater public participation and reduces levels of corruption, creating improved level of public trust and government legitimacy (Blind, 2007).

Bureaucratic Politics

Another important factor to trust in government is bureaucratic politics. Bureaucratic politics refers to the level of conflict and the use of power by government members in their efforts to influence others and secure interests at both interpersonal and intra-organizational level (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). In this view, government employees may act in the interest of their respective agencies instead of the general public interest (Cropanzano et al., 1997; King, 1997). Citizens' perceptions of bureaucratic politics are linked to their view on the bureaucracy as being

insensitive, promoting the interests of powerful individuals or groups based on political considerations, and engaging in unfair practices (Forester and Nilakant, 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). In this respect, several studies indicate that citizens tend to trust the government when they feel that public officials are using their power for citizen's rights and public demands (King, 1997; Nye, 1997; Kim S.E., 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Thus, citizen perceptions regarding government actions serving only a few groups, presence of favoritism in promotional system, or political pressures on government operations are conceptualized under bureaucratic politics.

Contextual Factors and Moderating Effects

Political Ideology or Royalty

Among various contextual factors external to government dimensions, political ideology or political royalty is often discussed in relation to trust in government (Park, 2011). King's (1997) research based on National Election Studies (NES) data highlights a strong relationship between political ideology and trust in government¹¹. Citizens who support the ruling party tend to be more trusting of the government in general, while citizens who identify with the opposition party tend to be less trusting of government even if the ruling party governs well (Pew, 1998; Rudolph and Evans, 2005; Mundy, 2007). Conversely, people who support the opposition party in general tend to more negatively assess the bureaucratic politics and performance of the government (Keele, 2005; Mundy, 2007). From existing literature, we can expect that political ideology or royalty may moderate the relationship between government performance indicators and public trust in government (Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Moy and Scheufele 2000; Park, 2011). For instance, people may have negatively assessed government performance regardless of actual quality of government performance. Public trust in government is sometimes influenced by people's subjective perceptions, which are 'subject to political discourse and framing (Yang

and Holzer, 2006: 115)'. In other words, we can see people perceive public confidence of government partially in terms of their political tendency or propensity regardless of actual government performance.

Social Capital

The second contextual factor is social capital, a concept that encompasses the social connections, individual networks, and interpersonal trust that is facilitated in communities through coordination in pursuit of a mutual goal (Putnam, 2000). Though controversial, many researchers have argued that distrust of government is not so much the result of government actions as a reflection of a general decline in interpersonal and societal trust (Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Nye, 1997; Putnam, 2000; Blind, 2007; Keele, 2007; Mundy, 2007). Citizens who participate in civic activities learn interpersonal trust from interacting with each other, and then, connote a belief of bringing about changes or a sense of connectedness, leading to the social trust (Putnam, 2000). By turn, social trust encourages citizens to have upbeat views of the government and its institutions (Mishler and Rose, 2001; Blind, 2007; Keele, 2007). In contrast, citizens that are not civically engaged may feel politically disenfranchised and may adopt a cynical view of their elected officials, community leaders, and the government institutions; as a result, their performance is negatively perceived (Blind, 2007). In short, social capital may influence public trust in government either directly or indirectly as it affects the individual's evaluation on the government-related activities.

While authors including Robert Putnam have emphasized the positive role of social capital in harvesting greater public trust via political participation, other scholars debate whether this finding can be generalized and applied across the world. Authors such as Brehm and Rahn

(1997) find a negative relationship between civic engagement and public trust¹ in a developing world, and Gamson (1968) also finds that greater social distrust leads to increase in active political involvement. Similarly, Kim (2005) also finds a negative relationship between social capital and political trust. Kim maintains that rather than social capital, it is the perception of political performance that impacts trusts, such as the perception of the government's handling of corruption, inflation, and poverty. On the other hand, author such as Newton (1999) questions whether the two has any meaningful relationship. Indeed, numerous scholars engage in similar debate, as they maintain that the trust produced from social capital does not necessarily translate to public trust. Moreover, they claim that public trust has to do with the performance of the government, rather than social capital. From these mixed results of the relationship between social capital and trust in government, we may make inference about whether there exists an indirect effect of social capital on the link of government performance and trust in government. Mundy (2007) argues that socio-cultural changes, for example including interpersonal connections and trust, can affect trust in government to decline both indirectly, by affecting expectation of government performance, and directly by affecting citizen attitudes. From this kind of underlying logic in the existing literature, we can propose a kind of indirect effect of social capital on trust in government and government performance.

Media Influence

Finally, the media, as a powerful medium of delivering information about government, influences public perception of government activities and trust. The scandal-obsessed media plays an important role in eroding public trust in government and affecting public evaluations on government performance (Orren, 1997; Mundy, 2007). Audiences who are exposed to this negative reporting might have negative views on the performance and ethics of government.

¹ Public trust refers to political trust.

Therefore, the more critical the media is of the government even when the government is performing well, the less the public will evaluate the government actions and ethical attributes positively (Chanley et al., 2000; Blind, 2007). It is important to know if people think the information about the government disseminated by the news media is trustworthy and reliable, and to understand whether people consider such information from the media as important in evaluating government activity. Within this context, we can propose that media influence may moderate the link between trust in government and government performance. Figure 1 presents and summarizes a conceptual framework of public trust in government for this study.

[Figure 1 Here]

Data and Methods

Data and Measures

This study uses the SAIS-USKI survey data of 2011 (hereafter the SAIS 2011 survey) regarding Korean perceptions on public trust in government. The SAIS 2011 survey was conducted during September-December 2011 as a national survey with an N of 850 to understand better what people think about their country and how it works. A stratified random sampling with quota considerations given to age and gender was employed. The sampling showed equal results (male: 50%, female: 50%) by gender.

Public Trust in Government. The variable is based on survey questions of respondents' perceptions on public trust in government (one question) and trust in ten public service areas (ten questions), including economic development, medical health, public education, social welfare, pension, environment protection, public transportation, public safety, judiciary, and military. For

the variable, we use a composite value of mean scores of the questions. Values of mean and standard deviation are 2.14 and .67, respectively. (1=strongly distrust, 4=strongly trust)

Government Performance Factors as Quality of Bureaucracy. Four variables are composed of government factors. First, competency variable is based on two survey questions, including respondents' perceptions on government employees' professional knowledge and capacity for their jobs. For the variable, we use a composite value of mean scores of the questions. Values of mean and standard deviation are 2.33 and .64, respectively. (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree) Second, responsiveness variable is based on two survey questions, including respondents' perceptions on government's appropriate response to complaints and demands of the public, and accurate/fair applications of services and regulations. For the variable, we use a composite value of mean scores of the questions. Values of mean and standard deviation are 2.84 and .81, respectively. (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree) Third, consistency and transparency variable is based on respondents' perceptions on government's corruption and government employees' misconducts. Values of mean and standard deviation are 3.17 and .76, respectively. (1=strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree) Fourth, bureaucratic politic variable is based on respondents' perception on government's concerns for all the public, not a special group. Values of mean and standard deviation are 1.65 and .75, respectively. (1=strongly disagree, 3=strongly agree)

Contextual Factors. Contextual factors include three variables. First, political ideology variable is measured by asking respondents whether they voted for the current administration (Presidential Candidate) at the 2007 presidential election. Values of mean and standard deviation are .41 and .49, respectively. (1=vote for, 0=not vote for) Second, social capital variable is from two questions regarding respondents' perceptions on their willingness to involve in community

issues, and their involvements in non-political voluntary organizations. For the variable, we use a composite value of mean scores of the questions. Values of mean and standard deviation are 1.97 and .88, respectively. (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) Third, media influence variable is based on respondents' perceptions on reliability and truthfulness of media messages. Values of mean and standard deviation are 2.07 and .66, respectively. (1=strongly disagree, 3=strongly agree) Age, gender(dummy 1=men), and education variables are also used. Table 1 and 2 summarizes descriptive and correlation statistics of all variables.

[Table 1, 2 Here]

Findings and Discussion

Basic Results

The effects of government performance factors and contextual factors on public trust in government are estimated using the OLS regression model. Tables 3 report the results of regression estimates of public trust in government. The adj R^2 ranges from .20 to .35.

[Table 3 Here]

Model 1 and model 2 include only government performance and contextual factors with control variables, respectively. All government and contextual variables are statistically significant with public trust in government in two models. Model 3(full model) supports positive relationships between government and contextual factors, and public trust in government, although social capital does not have any relationship with public trust in government (coefficient= -.0164). This implies that both government and contextual factors are significant predictors to explain public trust in government, as previous studies fully or partially support (Yang and Holzer, 2006; Fard et al., 2007; Keele, 2007; Mundy, 2007; Berman, 1997;

Braithwaite and Levi, 1998; Kim S.E., 2005; Blind, 2007). While various research findings contributed to increasing knowledge on trust in government, the ambiguous and complex factors have spawned rich and varied. In this sense, findings of this study result in several important contributions to developing this field.

Theoretically, this study interestingly does not confirm Robert Putnam's social capital theory emphasizing the positive role of social capital in harvesting greater public trust, and partially confirms research findings of other scholars (i.e., Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Kim, 2005; Park, 2011; Newton, 1999). We argue that the mainstream assumption by Putnam's social capital theory may not be applicable to every place, which societies with greater social capital would likely also have greater public trust.

The findings also provide practical implications to public administration arena. The model presented here makes a clear distinction between newly developed government-related and contextual factors. Accordingly, the model highlights the governmental factors driving the level of public trust or the effect of each factor in relation to public trust, as compared to contextual factors. This is especially crucial in recognizing which part of government management must offer the greatest opportunities for improving overall trust. For instance, if the model indicates distinctively that competency and responsiveness of public organizations are the decisive factors for recent decrease in public trust in government, the government can concentrate on redressing those problems in training public employees and reforming the administrative process.

In addition, considering "process-oriented" and bureaucratic politics as well as "result-focused" performance provides a meaningful implication on public management reform. If process-oriented performance is found more closely related to the low level of public trust, the government can increase it within a short period of time because public administration process

can be improved relatively faster than policy outcomes. From positive influence of bureaucratic politics on trust in government (coefficient =.0820), we can enrich our knowledge of public trust in government and public attitudes toward democracy and governance, resulting in better policy making. Moreover, the model identifies uncontrollable contextual factors that persistently influence the level of trust and gives an intuition of how these factors mold individual's permanent perception in terms of evaluating government performance and trust in government. Therefore, the model can clarify why different countries demonstrate unequal levels of trust while evaluations on government performance are seemingly the same.

Mediated Moderation and Moderated Mediation Effects

When the strength of the relationship between two variables is dependent on a third variable, moderation is said to be occurring. The third variable, or moderator (W), interacts with an independent variable (X) in predicting a dependent variable(Y) if the regression weight of Y on X varies as a function of W. That is, M moderates the relationship between X and Y. Sometimes, we have much confused about what effects should be described as mediated moderation vs. moderated mediation and how to properly address them. Researchers may be interested in probing the interaction effects of X and W on M and on Y separately to clarify the nature of key relationships. James and Brett (1984) asserted moderated mediation which involves relations that “require the addition of a moderator for either the $m=f(x)$ or $y=f(m)$ relations, or both” (p. 314). Moderated mediation occurs when the strength of an indirect effect depends on the level of some variable, or in other words, when mediation relations are contingent on the level of a moderator.

In general, to examine whether a mediation effect exists, the Sobel-Goodman tests would be used to check whether a mediator carries the influence of X to Y. A variable may be considered a mediator to the extent to which it carries the influence of a given independent variable (X) to a

given dependent variable (Y). Generally speaking, mediation can be said to occur when (1) the X significantly affects the mediator, (2) the X significantly affects the Y in the absence of the mediator, (3) the mediator has a significant unique effect on the Y, and (4) the effect of the X on the Y shrinks upon the addition of the mediator to the model.

This study conducts a moderated hierarchical linear regression analysis to test about whether a moderating effect of political ideology exists on the link between government performance and public trust in government. Table 4 shows that four variables (competency, responsiveness, bureaucratic transparency, and bureaucratic politics) associated with government performance indicators as quality of bureaucracy are moderated by political ideology variable, although competency and responsive variables are not statistically significant.

[Table 4 Here]

Specifically, with regard to moderating effects of political ideology, the higher the political ideology, the lesser the extent to which bureaucratic transparency would rely on public trust in government. Political ideology weakens the link between public trust in government and only two variables that bureaucratic politic variable interaction term $b = -.1374$) is more moderated by political ideology than bureaucratic transparency (interaction term $b = -.0996$). That is, political ideology would weaken the link between bureaucratic transparency and public trust in government, which shows the moderating effects of political ideology on public trust in government: political ideology decreases the relationship between bureaucratic transparency and public trust in government.

Likewise, the relationship between bureaucratic politics and public trust in government is moderated by political ideology. Table 4 shows that the higher the political ideology, the lesser the extent to which bureaucratic politics would rely on public trust in government. That is,

political ideology would weaken the link between bureaucratic politics and public trust in government: political ideology decreases the relationship between bureaucratic politics and public trust in government. Figure 2 shows the effects of political ideology on public trust in government, bureaucratic transparency, and bureaucratic politics.

[Figure 2 Here]

After testing for moderating and mediating effects, the results show that only transparency and bureaucratic politics variables are statistically significant. One explanation for such result is that competency and responsiveness variables, due to the insular nature of bureaucracies, are relatively less likely to be susceptible to political influence. For example, bureaucracies, characterized by professionalism and competency, are relatively less likely to be moderated or mediated by political ideology. In this context, this finding is consistent with the findings from “Bureaucracy and Growth: A Cross-National Analysis of the Effects of “Weberian” State Structures on Economic Growth” by Peter Evans and James E. Rauch (1999), which emphasizes the functions of bureaucracy and its insular nature from political influence.

On the other hand, in the case of bureaucratic politics variable, which reflects citizen’s reaction towards bureaucracies promoting interests of powerful individuals or groups based on political considerations, may serve as indirect basis for the greater response. Essentially, we can assume that when the level of bureaucratic politics is greater, more likely that the group with lower political ideology’s trust in government would have greater margin for increase. This is because political ideology variable can lead to crowding-out effect.

For further analysis, as shown in Table 5, this study tests the moderated mediation effect of political ideology on the relationship between bureaucratic transparency and public trust in government. It shows the mediation effect of political ideology is significantly with approximately 18.4% of the total effect (of bureaucratic transparency on public trust in

government) being mediating. Also, Table 6 also shows the moderated mediation effect of political ideology on the relationship between bureaucratic politics and public trust in government. It reveals the mediation effect of political ideology is significantly with approximately 10.3% of the total effect (of bureaucratic politics on public trust in government) being mediating.

[Table 5, 6 Here]

However, we did not find out the moderating effects of media influence on public trust in government shown in Table 4. Although social capital in Model 3 does not show statistically significant relationship with public trust in government ($b = -.0164$, ns), the moderating effects of social capital may exist. Further examination should be made because, generally speaking, basic conditions and requirements of testing moderating effects should have statistically significant relationship with an independent variable and dependent variable (Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes, 2007).

Concluding Remarks

This study attempts to analyze the interplay between government performance and contextual factors. Particularly, this study examines mediated moderation effects to analyze government performance with three following contextual variables: social capital, political ideology, and media perception. This study makes significant contributions to the current literature of the public trust in two ways. First, this study challenges the mainstream assumption by Putnam's Social Capital Theory that societies with greater social capital would likely also have greater public trust. Second, the model includes newly emerging government performance variables and process-oriented and bureaucratic politics. These variables not only make our analysis more rigorous, but shed new light on the areas of government performance.

Despite these several positive features, a number of caveats are worth noting. The elements in this model are analytically separable, but in reality are subject to multiple endogenous linkages. While some studies reveal that government performance affects the level of public trust, other studies claim that public trust increases the level of performance. This view¹³ suggests that governments with popular support function more smoothly and effectively than those with less public trust. Hence, public trust provides governments with legitimacy, greater decision making powers, political resources, and public cooperation (Rusico 1997; Citrin and Muste 1999). Even if the relationship that trust affects government performance is possible, this claimed direction is rather exceptional. For example, Dirks and Ferrin (2001) discovered that the effects of trust on performance outcome are rather inconsistent and weak (455). Moreover, the social exchange theory reveals that citizens are more likely to react, rather than encourage, to the efforts government make for better services¹⁵.

Likewise, some scholars contend that distrust stimulates political participation. In fact, distrust on government encourages citizens to participate in order to change the status quo (Levi and Stoker, 2000; Mundy, 2007). Furthermore, some scholars assert that the relationship between trust and cooperation is not unidirectional, denoting that participation may affect the level of trust (Kim S.E., 2005; Kim J. Y., 2005). However, while these arguments are useful for in-depth analysis of trust in government, they are not likely to be widely applicable. Levi and Stoker (2000), for example, concede that these suggestions are more likely to be restricted to certain kinds of political activities. As little evidence is provided, this paper employs a positive and unidirectional approach in a more practical purpose. This approach bases on the assumption that citizens may, with time and experience, translate their trust into more tangible reactions toward government and the political system (Kim S. E., 2005; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007).

Other scholars also present competing, often intricate views on casual relationship between social capital and trust in government, although this study does not confirm the relationship between two sides. For instance, some scholars maintain that increasing social distrust actually enhance political trust¹⁶ (Brehm and Rahn, 1997). On the other hand, social trust is also thought to be weakly related to public trust in government, meaning that social trust does not have any impact on political revitalization (Kim J. Y., 2005). Such claims are based, however, upon developing democratic states or underdeveloped countries (Mishler and Rose, 2001, p35). Although one must concede that the same unidirectional relationship between social capital and trust cannot equally apply to every societal context, several studies indicate that the positive relationship between social capital and trust is common across the developed democratic countries (Putnam, 2000, Keele, 2007).

Therefore, as this model has been developed based on the common ground of democratic societies, further investigation should be followed in the future. Another notable limitation is omission of other important factors or dimensions of trust. The role of leadership throughout history, for instance, suggests the character or quality of political leader might be as important as the other government related variables¹⁷. The propensity for trust is also considered to be an important variable, especially when conducting the cross national analysis because s a variety of demographic and cultural characteristics across countries shapes the initial propensity for trust¹⁸ (Mayer et al., 1995, 2007). Certainly, the risk of omitted factors is inherent in all model building exercise, as analysis and abstraction from a complex realities must always simplify and reduce. The objective of the model set forward in this paper has been to clarify and integrate the findings from existing research and propose new aspects of trust. Further empirical elaboration research is required to redress the potential limitations in this model and for better future research.

Notes

1. Since the mid-1960, public trust in government has been decreasing in all of the advanced industrialized countries except Netherlands where trust in government increased from the 1970s to 1990s (Blind 2007).
2. National Partnership for Reinventing government (NPR) was an inter-agency task force to reform the way the US federal government functions. NPR was created on March, 1993 under the Clinton administration.
3. Its 1997 annual report on the public service warned that public has come to be perceived as the unattractive place to work. In response, a series of public service human resources initiatives were announced, under the general title of La Releve. Its central objective was to build a modern and vibrant institutions able to use fully the talents of its people < <http://dsp-psd.communication.gc.ca/Pilot/LoPBdP/EB/prb987-e.htm#OVERVIEW>>
4. In February 1988, the prime minister of the United Kingdom announced that the government accepted the recommendation of a major report of the Efficiency Unit, called "Improving Management in Government: Next Steps" the central feature in this initiative is the separation of policy work from operational activities, with the latter is assigned to executive agencies created within departments. These agencies are given greater managerial autonomy, but operate within published policy and resource frameworks.
< http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/att_9306ex5e_e_5993.html>
5. Cognitive dimension implies that the individual develops trust based on his evaluative belief which can be constructed from somewhere between full knowledge and complete ignorance (La Porte and Metlay 1996). Affective notion means that the individual citizen is willing to be vulnerable to the government with the emotional attachment to it, thus abandoning control mechanism (Mayer et al. 1995). Within behavioral dimension, citizens' trust will increase as the government behaves as promised, works toward common interest of citizens, and maintain fair and competent administration (Kim S.E. 2005; Mundy 2007).
6. As rational reasoning indicates, the person has the adequate reason to believe that the government's interest is encapsulated in his interest. Psychological reasoning shows that people are seeking moral values and attributes represented by the political institution or individual. For a fuller treatment, see:
<Hardin, Russell. "Street-Level Epistemology of Trust." *Politics and Society* 21(1993): 505-529.>
<Warren, Mark E. *Democracy and Trust*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.>
7. Quality of bureaucracy is such a challenging concept to be conceptualized and measured. A variety of similar concepts have been used in the literature, including quality of government and governance (Choi, 2012; Kim, 2012). In this paper, we use the concept of quality of bureaucracy highlighting both process- and results-oriented government performance indicators to explain public trust in government.
8. Within employee's perspective, the studies suggests that bureaucratic politics often results in diminished employee performance, higher level of stress and strain, lower level of job satisfaction, reduced commitment to the organization, and additional negative reactions by employees, such as delivery of low quality services, increased turnover intentions, and higher rates of actual turnover (Vigoda-Gadot 2007).

9. Van de Walle and Bouckaert (2003) state that a unilateral focus on performance will not be sufficient because perception of performance is not only created in government-Citizen interactions but also in everyday Citizen-Citizen relations.

10. Van de Walle and Bouckaert (2003) state that making a distinction between output and process aspects in practice is rather impossible – due to the nature of government performance, they are often intertwined.

11. Speed refers to the amount of time citizens must wait for a government agency to reply to their requests. Accuracy is the extent to which the provider's response appropriately meets the needs or wishes of the service user.

<Stewart, John, and Stewart Ranson. "Management in the Public Domain." *Public Sector Management*. Ed. David Mckevitt and Alan Lawton. London: Sage, 1994. 54-70.>

12. King (1997) links the decline in NES trust in government indicators to partisanship or political polarization.

13. Likewise, research conducted by Hetherington and Nugent (2001) suggests that a decline in public trust engenders a rise in public support for the devolution of governmental decision making and a rejection of the government's involvement in public affairs.

<Hetherington, Marc J., and John D. Nugent. "Explaining Public Support for Devolution: The Role of Political Trust." *What is it about Government that Americans Dislike?* Ed. John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. 134-151.>

14. With respect to this claim, trust in government is regarded as a key to developing high performing public agencies of administrations (Ruscio 1997; Citrin and Muste 1999).

15. Social exchange theory is more elaborated in:

<Blau, Peter M. *Exchange and Power in Social Life*. New York: Willey, 1986.>

16. This claim is well found in:

<Gamson, William A. *Power and Discontent*. Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1968.>

17. It is discussed with more details in:

<Weber, Max. "Politics as a Vocation," *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Ed. Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948. 115-128.>

18. The recent GLOBE project by House and colleagues measured the cultural orientation of sixty-two societies around the world (Mayer et al. 2007). This research has led to the inevitable question of how trust is different across cultures. Mayer et al. (2007) believe that one of the ways that cultures affects trust is through 'propensity for trust'.

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Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Trust in Government	2.14	.67	1	4
Quality Of Bureaucracy				
Competency	2.33	.64	1	4
Responsiveness	2.84	.81	1	4
Transparency	3.17	.76	1	5
Bureaucratic Politics	1.65	.75	1	3
Contextual Factors				
Political Ideology	.41	.49	0	1
Social Capital	1.97	.88	.5	4.5
Media Influence	2.07	.66	1	3
Age	41.19	12.33	19	77
Gender(men=1)	.50	.50	0	1
Education	2.42	.63	1	3

N=850

Table 2 Correlation Statistics of Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Trust in government										
2. Competency	0.4452									
3. Responsiveness	0.4457	0.6262								
4. Transparency	0.2323	0.2959	0.1965							
5. Bureaucratic Politics	0.3074	0.3612	0.419	0.1469						
6. Political Ideology	0.2665	0.0959	0.1218	0.1813	0.137					
7. Social capital	-0.1355	-0.1922	-0.1955	0.008	-0.0471	0.0286				
8. Media Influence	0.3505	0.1818	0.2009	0.074	0.0959	0.1101	-0.0884			
9. Age	0.1372	0.0216	0.0509	0.0781	0.058	0.2438	0.0383	0.0282		
10. Gender	-0.0571	-0.0306	0.008	0.0233	-0.0071	0.0277	0.0667	-0.0225	-0.0108	
11. Education	-0.0771	-0.0495	-0.0653	-0.0151	-0.0003	-0.0427	0.0631	0.006	-0.536	0.2031

Table 3 Parameters Estimates for Public Trust in Government

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Government Factors			
Competency	.2260***		.2082***
Responsiveness	.1997***		.1536***
Transparency	.0854**		.0626**
Bureaucratic Politics	.0980***		.0820***
Contextual Factors			
Political Ideology	-	.2928***	.2115***
Social Capital	-	-.0473***	-.0164
Media Influence	-	.3181***	.2345***
Age	.0061***	.0044**	.0037**
Gender(men=1)	-.0818**	-.0629	-.0651
Education	.0370	-.0112	.0007
R-squared	.2649	.2034	.3621
Adj R-squared	.2612	.1972	.3537

** P < .5, *** P < .01

Table 4 Moderating Effects of Contextual Factors on Public Trust in Government

Variable	Moderating Effects of Political Ideology	Moderating Effects of Social Capital	Moderating Effects of Media Influence
Competency	-.0192	-.0347*	.0202
Responsiveness	-.0402	-.0276	.0410
Transparency	-.0996**	-.0531***	.0275
Bureaucratic Politics	-.1374***	-.0283	.0541

P < .5, * P < .01

**Table 5. Mediating Effects of Political Ideology
on Public Trust in Government and Bureaucratic Transparency**

DV=Trust in Government	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Transparency (path c)	.1981915	.0301049	6.58	0.000	.1390993 .2572837
Constant	1.5087	.0986635	15.29	0.000	1.315036 1.702364
F=43.34, R-squared = .0504 Adj R-squared=.0493 Root MSE=.65336					

DV=Political Ideology	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Transparency (path a)	.1114295	.0224728	4.96	0.000	.0673182 .1555408
Constant	.0701612	.0736505	0.95	0.341	-.074405 .2147281
F=24.59, R-squared = .0029 Adj R-squared=.00281 Root MSE=.48772					

DV=Trust in Government	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Political Ideology(path b)	.3280421	.045496	7.21	0.000	.2387389 .4173453
Transparency (path c`)	.1616379	.029643	5.45	0.000	.1034523 .2198235
Constant	1.485684	.0957714	15.51	0.000	1.297697 1.673672
F=49.02, R-squared = .1074 Adj R-squared=.1052 Root MSE=.63385					

Sobel-Goodman Mediation Tests	Coef.	Std. Err	Z	P> t
Sobel	.03655356	.00894693	4.086	.00004396
Goodman-1 (Aroian)	.03655356	.00900516	4.059	.00004925
Goodman-2	.03655356	.00888832	4.113	.00003913
a coefficient	.111429	.022473	4.95842	7.1e-07
b coefficient	.328042	.045496	7.21034	5.6e-13
Indirect effect	.036554	.008947	4.0856	.000044
Direct effect	.161638	.029643	5.45282	5.0e-08
Total effect	.198191	.030105	6.58336	4.6e-11

Proportion of total effect that is mediated: .1844356
Ratio of indirect to direct effect : .22614474
Ratio of total to direct effect : 1.2261447

**Table 6. Mediating Effects of Political Ideology
on Public Trust in Government and Bureaucratic Politics**

DV=Trust in Government	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Bureaucratic Politics(path c)	.269588	.0295089	9.14	0.000	.2116647 .3275113
Constant	1.696947	.0536488	31.63	0.000	1.59164 1.802255
F=83.46, R-squared = .0937 Adj R-squared=.00926 Root MSE=.63817					

DV=Political Ideology	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Bureaucratic Politics(path a)	.0875704	.0227052	3.86	0.000	.0430022 .1321385
Constant	.284309	.0412792	6.89	0.000	.2032818 .3653362
F=14.88, R-squared = .0181 Adj R-squared=.0169 Root MSE=.49103					

DV=Trust in Government	Coef.	Std. Err	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]
Political Ideology(path b)	.3167505	.0443981	7.13	0.000	.229601 .4039
Bureaucratic Politics(path c')	.24185	.0288996	8.37	0.000	.1851227 .2985773
Constant	1.606892	.0535717	30.00	0.000	1.501736 1.712049
F=69.76, R-squared = .14764 Adj R-squared=.1454 Root MSE=.61931					

Sobel-Goodman Mediation Tests	Coef.	Std. Err	Z	P> t
Sobel	.02773796	.00817552	3.393	.00069181
Goodman-1 (Aroian)	.02773796	.00823744	3.367	.00075907
Goodman-2	.02773796	.00811314	3.419	.00062876
a coefficient	.08757	.022705	3.85685	.000115
b coefficient	.316751	.044398	7.13433	9.7e-13
Indirect effect	.027738	.008176	3.39281	.000692
Direct effect	.24185	.0289	8.36863	0
Total effect	.269588	.029509	9.13581	0

Proportion of total effect that is mediated: .1028902
Ratio of indirect to direct effect : .11469075
Ratio of total to direct effect : 1.1146907

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Public Trust in Government

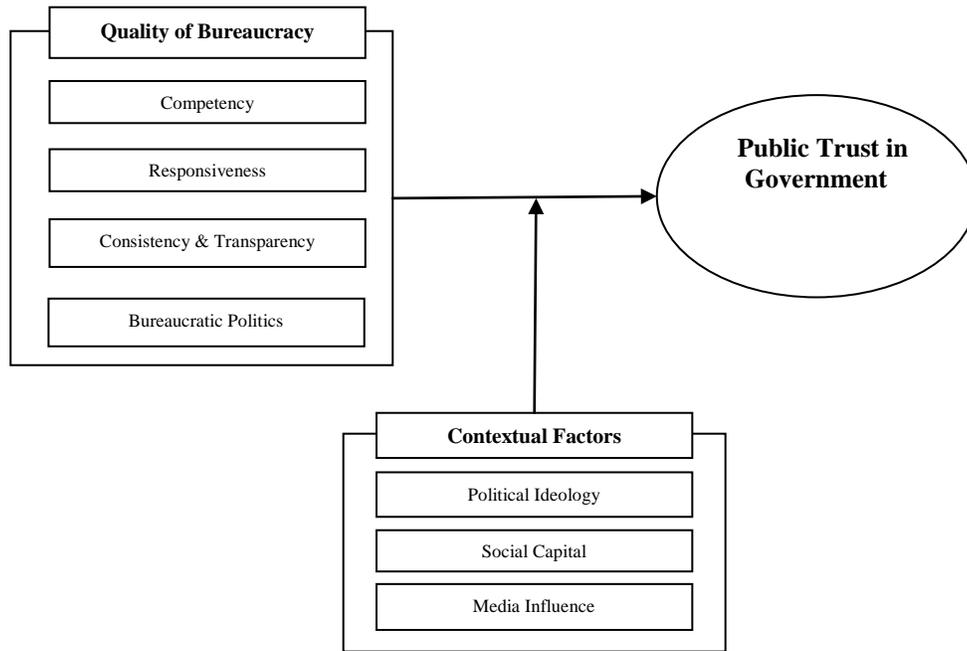


Figure 2. Moderation effects of political ideology on public trust in government

