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**BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
Review of Literature and Emerging Issues**

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BUILDING TRUST IN GOVERNMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: Review of Literature and Emerging Issues

One simple question occupying the mind of an ordinary citizen in the streets today is the following: Whom should I be wary of if not the government who wields great power with great temptations to abuse it (Bentham 1999). This should not come as a surprise when democracies themselves are conceived, and correctly so, as regimes of regulated and institutionalized political conflict (Dunn 1988, Braithwaite 1998, Strompka 1999, Thompson 2004). In both the developed and the developing world, citizens asking themselves this very same question play a political game of delegation of power with uncertain outcomes. This is so mainly because the motivations and actions of political leaders cannot be known in advance with certainty (Przeworski 1991). Trust, in this regard, emerges as one of the most important ingredients upon which the legitimacy and sustainability of political systems are built.

If a certain degree of suspicion on the part of the citizenry is a necessary condition for a healthy democracy, why is trust so important for good governance? How can individual political representatives and political institutions such as governments and their respective branches foster and develop trust in a way and degree to assure good governance? How does trust relate to the new social, political and economic requirements imposed by globalization and why is it crucial, now more than ever, to cultivate and maintain trust? This article tries to shed light unto these questions, and investigates the place and importance of trust in today's globalised societies and governments. It does that by first embarking upon a close examination of the theoretical definitions of the multifaceted concept of trust. It then draws on empirical examples and survey results to show various determinants of trust as well as how and why trust is emerging as a crucial issue facing the present-day governments. Thirdly, the article attempts to establish the actual and potential causal links between different types of trust and effective governance. Finally, the conclusion of how the timely and critical themes of the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing the Government can contribute to a better understanding and fostering of trust and good governance follows.

1. DEFINITIONS OF TRUST: What is trust? What are its variants?

Trust is a complex interpersonal and organizational construct (Duck 1997; Kramer and Tyler 1995). "Trust occurs when parties holding certain favorable perceptions of each other allow this relationship to reach the expected outcomes" (Wheless and Grotz 1977, 251). A trusting person, group or institution will be "freed from worry and the need to monitor the other party's behavior, partially or entirely" (Levi and Stoker 2000, 496). In that sense, trust is an efficient means for lowering transaction costs in any social, economic and political relationship (Fukuyama 1995). Trust is also much more than that. It is the underpinning of all human contact and institutional interaction (Tonkiss, Passe, Fenton and Hems 2000, Misztal 1996). Trust comes into play every time a new policy is announced (Ocampo 2006).

Trust in general has two main variants. Trust assessed in political terms is the so-called *political trust*.¹ Political trust happens when citizens appraise the government and its institutions, policy-

¹ Some scholars make a distinction between the concepts of "confidence" and "trust," associating the former with a passive emotion accorded to the overall sociopolitical system, and conceptualizing the latter as a group of more dynamic beliefs and commitments accorded to people (Giddens 1990, Luhmann 2000, Noteboom 2002, Paxton 1999, Seligman 1997, Sztompka 1999). This article uses these two terms interchangeably.

making in general and/or the individual political leaders as promise-keeping, efficient, fair and honest. Political trust, in other words, is the “judgment of the citizenry that the system and the political incumbents are responsive, and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny” (Miller and Listhaug 1990, 358). As such, “political trust is a central indicator of public’s underlying feeling about its polity” (Newton and Norris 2000, 53).

Political trust can be directed towards the political system and its organizations as well as the individual political incumbents. The first category of political trust is referred to as the *macro-level or organizational trust*. The organizational political trust refers to an issue-oriented perspective whereby citizens become trustful or distrustful of government “because they are satisfied or dissatisfied with policy alternatives” (Miller 1974, 951). The organizational political trust can be further subdivided into the components of *diffuse or system-based trust*, and *specific or institution-based trust*. Diffuse political trust refers to the citizens’ evaluation of the performance of the overall political system and the regime. Specific political trust, on the other hand, is directed towards certain political institutions, such as the Congress or the local police force. The second category of political trust, or the so-called *micro-level or individual political trust*, happens when trust is directed towards individual political leaders. The individual political trust involves a person-oriented perspective whereby citizens become trustful or distrustful of government “because of their approval or disapproval of certain political leaders” (Citrin 1974, 974-75).²

Both the organizational and the individual political trust depend on credible policy-making. Credibility can be defined as an unquestioned criterion of a good policy. Credibility, in general, is assessed in terms of the different perceptions of performance associated with different policies. A reasonable expectation of improved performance as such is a necessary condition for establishing credibility of a new policy rule (Taylor 1982). In the political economy literature, the term credibility is mostly used in reference to macroeconomic policy, more particularly the disinflation programs (81). In fact, the emergence of the notion of credibility itself is associated with the monetary-policy actions taken by the central banks of different countries, and how these actions have affected variables such as long-term interest rates and other asset prices. Greater credibility has usually been associated with policies that have been successful in keeping the inflation down, and in garnering support for central bank independence (Blinder 2000).

Central bankers and economists define credibility as “living up to its word” (Blinder 2000, 1431). In this regard, credibility becomes directly related to the notion of political trust because as a government agency makes policies that consistently produce successful results, trust develops over time. On the contrary, if a government agency or a firm produces policies that repeatedly lack credibility, distrust ensues, and is likely to persist. That is why every organizational action and policy is also a potential act of building trustworthiness (Porte and Metlay 1996, 345).

The organizational and individual political trust is a categorization based on the object towards which trust is directed. Political trust also has variants based on the different types of motivations people have when trusting their political institutions or leaders. Accordingly, political trust can be accorded based on rational and/or psychological models of reasoning (Leach and Sabatier 2005). *Rational political trust* involves an interest-based calculation whereby citizens evaluate whether

² Some scholars question the very meaning of political trust based on the idea whether the latter is directed towards the incumbent leaders or the political regime (Worthington 2001). Bean (1999), for instance, concludes that in the Australian context, political trust is understood and perceived as incumbent-based only. A country-specific analysis of the concept of political trust would thus be beneficial for a thorough understanding of the notion.

the government and/or the political leaders act in accordance with their partisan agenda. This is also what Warren (2006) refers to as the *first-order* or *encapsulated trust*: In the first-order trust, trust exists for A when he delegates to B control over C in which A has an interest. A has a good reason to trust B when A can know that his interests are encapsulated in B's interests. By the same token, "B becomes trustworthy to the extent that he attends to A's interests" (Warren 1999, 24-26). The results of the National Election Surveys (NES) conducted in the United States between 1964 and 2002 have shown that trust changes in accordance with partisan control of the presidency and the congress (Keele 2005). Citizens who follow the tenets of rational political trust, therefore, tend to trust the political party or the political leaders with whom they identify.

Political trust, however, transcends partisan and/or ideological attachments. A recent work by Hetherington (2004) argues that trust in government by itself has now become an important and independent predictor of support for government policies, and more important than partisanship or ideology alone. Warren (2006), by the same token, maintains that the first-order or encapsulated political trust based on the maximization of self-interest is not sufficient for genuine political trust to occur. According to Warren (2006), the rational political trust depends upon another, equally, if not more, important type of political trust, i.e. the *psychological* or the *second-order political trust*. Psychological political trust involves an assessment of the moral values and attributes associated with a certain government, political institution and/or individual political leaders. As such, it refers to the perspective that people might have on the trustworthiness of their political representatives. In political trust based on psychological reasoning, people search for sincerity and truthfulness in the personality, public appearances, speeches and behavior of their political leaders (7).

While an analytical categorization of political trust in terms of the nature of its targets, i.e., organizations and/or individuals, and its motivations, i.e., rational and/or psychological, is useful for didactic purposes, different variants of political trust are mutually inclusive and work together. Lack of trust towards specific incumbents, for instance, can transform itself into a distrust of different political institutions, and ultimately, of the political system as a whole. People (or trustees), in trusting their representatives and political institutions, combine rational and psychological political trust,³ thereby trying to strike an acceptable balance between the maximization of their interest and their perception of the ethical qualities of the political elite (or trusters). The legitimacy and durability of democratic systems, in other words, depend in large part on the extent to which the electorate trusts the government to do what is right and perceived as *fair* (Easton 1965, 1975) as well as what is *efficient* (Citrin and Green 1986, Feldman 1983, Hetherington 1998, Lawrence 1997, Keele 2004b).⁴

Political trust does not emerge, nor does it operate, in a vacuum. Social trust, which refers to citizens' confidence in each other as members of a social community, is inseparable from the notion of political trust. According to Putnam's eminent theory of social capital, civic engagement in a community and the interpersonal trust among its members contribute to the

³ Job (2005) also affirms the coexistence of rational and relational bases of political trust in the Australian political context. Accordingly, relational view of trust refers to an emphasis on ethics and honesty, while the rational view of trust focuses on the economic performance and ability of institutions and leaders to meet needs.

⁴ Klandermands, Roefs and Olivier (2001), for instance, show that in the case of South Africa, political trust depends largely on whether the government can effectively decrease poverty and inequality in the deeply divided South African society. Chanley, Rudolph and Rahn (2000), by the same token, demonstrate that a skillful handling of the economy along with a mitigation of the concern about crime will contribute to an increase of political trust in the United States (254).

rising of overall social trust in a given society (1993, 1995a, 2000). Face-to-face contact with members of the community in societal associations allows people not only to get to know each other better in personal terms, but it also permits them to extend the positive feeling derived out of this civic experience to strangers in the society and in the government. It is a well-known fact that citizens who are not involved in civic activities tend to view the government and its institutions in more negative terms. Keele (2004) confirms that social capital has a significant and strong effect on trust in government apart from, and along with, government performance (16).

While social trust and political trust are not mutually exclusive of each other, there is a controversy in the literature about the causality of the relationship as well as the direction of this causality, if any. Is it the social capital and the forging of social trust which then breeds political trust, or is it the other way around? Can trustworthy governments foster social capital and create trustful and active civic communities? What are some of the tools to converge social and political trust in order to bring about efficient and durable political systems? Different theoretical schools offer different answers to these questions: Modernization theorists, like Almond and Verba (1963) and Finifter (1970), maintain that increasing social trust is associated with increasing political participation, especially in the form of voting. Increased participation, in turn, is a generally accepted sign of political trust and democratization. Sociologists, on the other hand, associate increasing social distrust, and not trust, with a more active political involvement, and eventually, enhanced political trust (Gamson 1968). Tarrow (2000), for instance, goes as far to affirm that contentious politics, in the form of increased social protests and new social movements, constitutes a sign of working trust in industrialized democracies.⁵

Social capital can be defined as a “lubricant of interactions among people” since it facilitates collective and collaborative action (Arrow 1974, 23). Nevertheless, this should not be taken to mean that social capital or social trust can readily transform themselves into political trust in every society and at all times. Veenstra (2002), for instance, illustrates that participation in a breadth of civil society organizations increases social trust, but not political trust in Canada. This and similar findings bring a group of scholars called the *new-institutionalists*⁶ to maintain that it is not the social capital that produces political trust, but a trustworthy government, which then generates interpersonal trust. New institutionalists insist that it is the state, and the political trust it embodies, which promote social trust as well as a productive economy, a peaceful and a cooperative society, and ultimately, democratic governance (Fukuyama 1995, Levi 1997). Indeed, governments today dispose of a multitude of political, economic and social tools to empower citizens and foment social trust, *inter alia* decentralization, use of technology for better access to information and services, efficient economic policy making and undertakings that directly fight political distrust, such as anti-corruption laws, fighting crime and innovative reforms in public institutions (Johnston, Krahn and Harrison 2006). At the same time, however, societies where people trust each other are more receptive and better able to harness these institutional reforms.

The interplay of social and political trust is even more crucial for crisis and post-crisis countries. Whether the crisis in question is economic, political or social in its origins, this group of countries abides by unique parameters of rule-making and institution-building. The literature on the

⁵ New social movements refer to the increasing number of non-ideological, culturalist, environmentalist and anti-globalization protests staged by citizens, who are relatively younger, more educated and wealthier (Tarrow 1994).

⁶ New Institutionalism is a paradigm of political science that puts emphasis on the relative autonomy of political institutions, particularly the state. New Institutionalism also acknowledges inefficiencies in history in the sense that it recognizes that interest-based actions of individual individuals do not always end up in optimal outcomes (March and Olsen 1984).

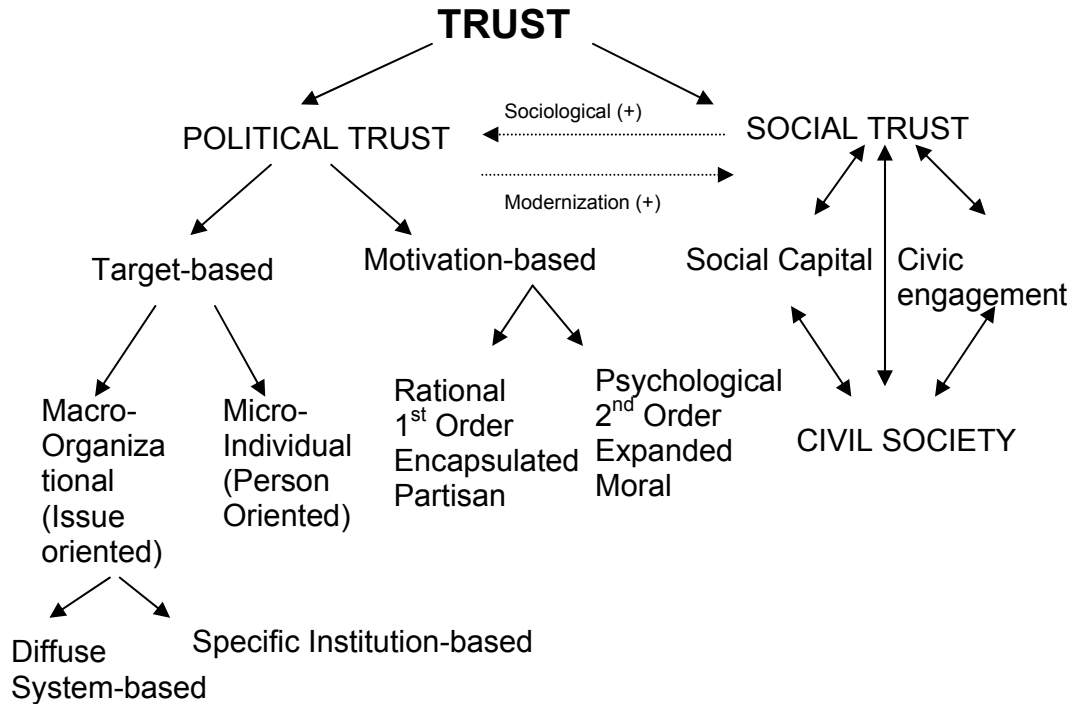
effectiveness of post-crisis reforms does not include an adequate scrutiny of the underlying governmental deficiencies. Instead, it focuses on effective economic policy-making, particularly if the crisis involves financial and fiscal problems, as it almost always does. According to Gallo, Stegman and Steagall (2006), however, in addition to political leaders' effective management of economic policy, the political situation and the rebuilding of the political structure are also crucial post-crisis variables that political and social leaders need to heed. A political structure characterized by corruption, fragmented power and lack of consensus hampers the making of credible economic policies. Consequently, trust issues become embedded, directly or indirectly, in every action taken by leaders in crisis and post-crisis countries.

In crisis and post-crisis countries, strategic bargaining among the elite is the first and most important undertaking for achieving the much-yearned peace and stability. As such, effective mediation styles, such as facilitation, formulation, and manipulation of issues, are important parameters for purposes of crisis abatement (Beardsley, Quinn, Biswas and Wilkenfeld 2006). Yet, even the processes of strategic bargaining involve the variable of trust in the background. Groups of elite interacting with each other with the aim of forming new institutions start building interpersonal trust. They institute sweeping policy changes, they reform the legal framework, and they restructure the sociopolitical models in post-crisis contexts. While the forming of new institutions is relatively easier, their effective functioning and the legitimacy they enjoy are harder to achieve. The building of trust, therefore, must become an implicit part of every project of constitution-making and institution-building from the very beginning.⁷

In addition to the unique case of the crisis and post-crisis countries, different perspectives on the relationship between social trust and political trust emerge from the experiences of the developed and the developing world. While increased civic engagement brings enhanced social and political working trust in the industrialized world, Brehm and Rahn (1997) find a negative relationship between civic engagement and political trust in the developing world. Newton (1999), on the other hand, finds an insignificant one. Espinal and Hartlyn (2006) demonstrate that in the case of the Dominican Republic, increased civic engagement decreases political trust since it exposes citizens to the illegitimate and corrupt practices of government institutions on a daily basis. Hazan (2006) arrives at the same conclusion with respect to the case of Morocco. Harutyunyan (2006) directs our attention to the important caveat of social polarization in his account of Armenia, where deficits of social and political trust go hand-in-hand with low scores of democracy.

The versatility of associations between social and political trust in different countries, regions and time periods brings the following conclusion: A certain degree of social distrust may generate increased political involvement on the part of some people, under some circumstances, and with respect to some kinds of political activities only. Ergo, a country-based institutionalist perspective fares better in investigating the complex nexus between social and political trust (Levi and Stoker 2000). At the same time, "high dissatisfaction with democracy and extremely low levels of trust almost unequivocally go together" (Norris 1999, 228-33). This implies that while it is healthy for citizens to suspect that their political representatives might not act in line with the wishes of their constituencies, prolonged periods of social and political distrust on the part of the majority of the population can produce deleterious consequences for governments and governance.

⁷ See Cherry (2006) for an account of how perceptions and trust have proved crucial in the case of Korea following the 1997 financial crisis.



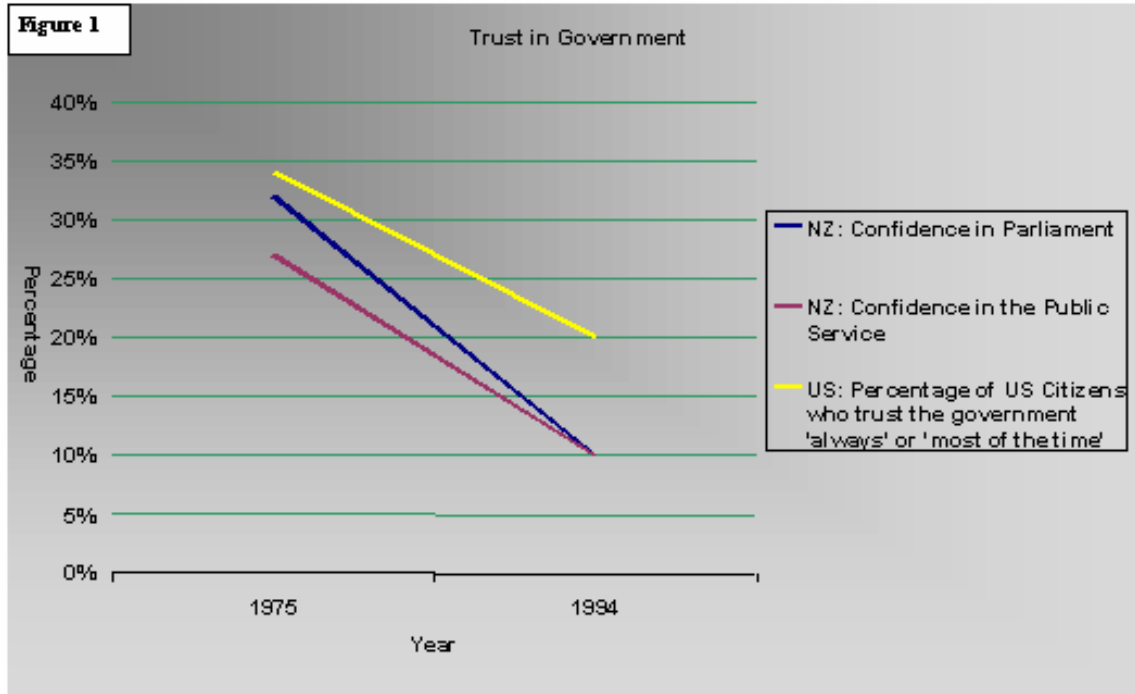
2. DETERMINANTS OF TRUST: Why is trust important and how can governments prevent the decline of trust?

- **Survey Results on Levels and Pattern of Trust:**

Since the mid-1960s, public trust in government and political institutions has been decreasing in all of the advanced industrialized democracies.⁸ Although the pattern and the pace of the decrease are dissimilar across countries, the downward trend is ubiquitous. Except for the Netherlands, which actually shows increased trust in the government from the 1970s until the mid-1990s, all of the other advanced industrialized democracies recorded a decline in the level of trust their respective governments have enjoyed. Austrians pointed to the collapse of collectivist consensus as the main culprit of declining trust in government. Canadians blamed the continuing tensions on nationalism and separatism in the country. Germans attributed their malaise to the strains of unification, while the Japanese condemned the consecutive political scandals and the long economic recession of the 1990s (Dalton 2005). Even the Swedes and the Norwegians, generally associated with high degree of trust in politics, became distrustful of their political institutions in the 1990s (Christensen and Laegrid 2003). The following figure shows the pattern of falling trust in New Zealand and the United States and constitutes a good prototype of the trend in the industrialized world:⁹

⁸ Dalton and Wattenberg (2000) documented in an earlier work that trust in political parties is also eroding in industrialized democracies. Public confidence in parliaments has similarly dwindled in the recent decade (Dalton 2004, chapter 2).

⁹ For more, see <http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?docid=4549&pageno=3>

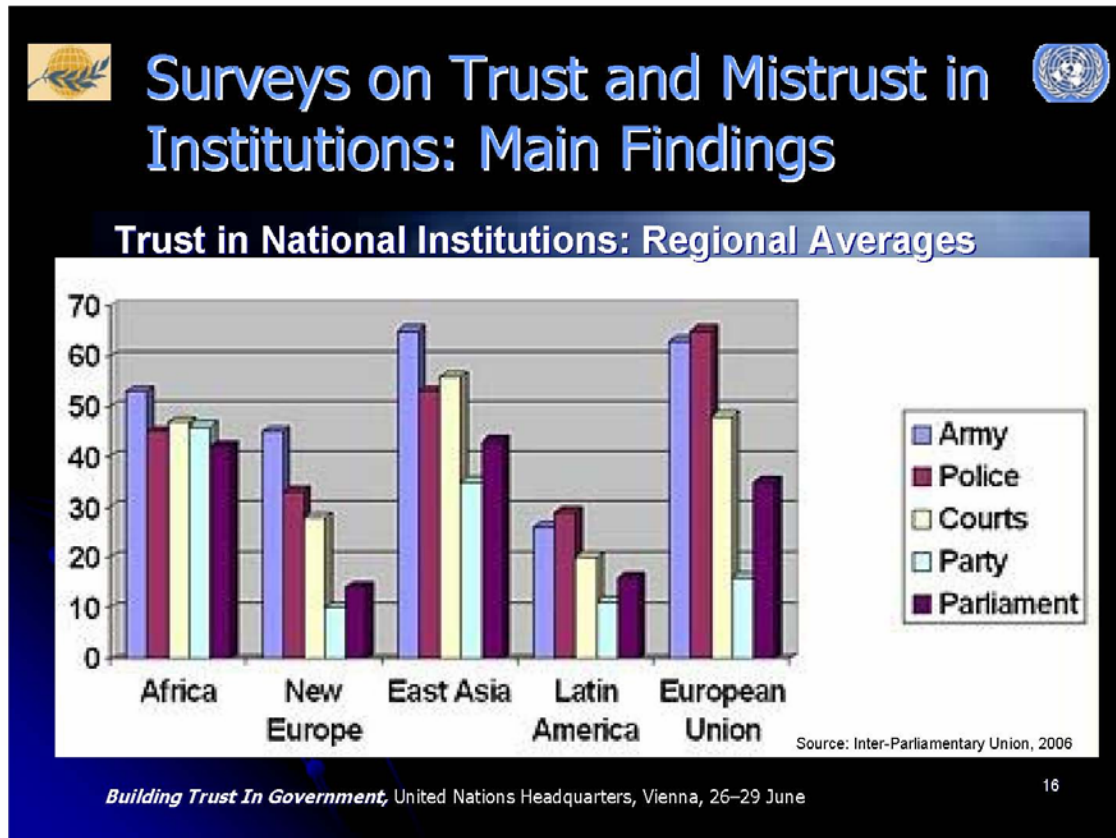


Data come from the relevant New Zealand Official Yearbooks and United States National Election Surveys. For more, please see Bok (1997) for the US analysis and Barnes and Gill (2000) for the NZ analysis.

There is a myriad of surveys undertaken by governmental and nongovernmental organizations in order to measure levels of trust in the developed world. The World Economic Forum, the Eurobarometer, the Asia Barometer, Latinobarometro, Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) Accenture, MORI, BBC and Gallup International, United Nations Online Network in Public Administration and Finance (UNPAN), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Transparency International and many other national and international organizations have conducted surveys confirming the decline in trust in various parts of the world.¹⁰ These surveys have found that there is a consistent and ubiquitous decline of trust in a range of political institutions since January 2004.

¹⁰ For more information on these surveys, please see Cheema (2006).

Figure 2: Multi-Regional Comparison of Trust in Institutions:



Global dissatisfaction with the government was found to be 65% in Western Europe, 73% in Eastern and Central Europe, 60% in North America, 61% in Africa, 65% in Asia Pacific and 69% in Latin America in 2005 (BBC, Gallup International, 2005). The above graph shows that the picture has not changed significantly in 2006. According to the graph, trust levels have rarely gone above fifty percent a year later. While trust in institutions seems to be higher in East Asia and the European Union, it plummets when it comes to Latin America. While trust in the institutions of the European Union is high, trust in the institutions of the enlarged European Union is not. It should be noted that while this graph is important in terms of a multi-regional comparison of degree of trust in various institutions, it depicts one point in time in history, i.e., 2006. Dalton (2005) finds in his time-series analysis of the levels of trust in different countries of the world that trust in political institutions and political leaders are consistently declining except in the case of the Netherlands.¹¹ Citizens of the developed world think that their deputies do not care about the needs of their respective constituencies or the public good. Politicians as a group are perceived as less trustworthy over time in various countries of the developed world. In Austria, Britain, Finland, Norway and Sweden people think more and more that all that politicians care about are votes. In Canada, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, New Zealand and

¹¹ A separate and individual case-study analysis of the Netherlands is indispensable in order to understand the possible causes of this deviation. It is interesting, however, to note that the Netherlands was also the country where the highest performance and improvement in e-government took place in the 1990s (Accenture 2006, 36).

Australia, people think that the representatives are losing touch with, and do not care about, the public. This cross-regional trend of falling trust in government institutions and representatives pertains to the time period ranging from the 1970s to the mid-1990s. Why is that the case and why should this be seen as a problem?

- **Why is trust declining and why should we care?**

Some of the symptoms of this so-called “democratic malaise” of declining of trust in advanced industrialized democracies (Tanguay 1999, 325-26) are the declining voter turnout (Gray and Caul 2000, Eagles 1999), youth disinterested in politics (Adsett 2003) and decreasing levels of civic involvement (Saul 1995, Putnam 2000). While symptoms do not constitute explanations for the declining trust, many factors can be cited as potential reasons behind it. Periods of poor economic performance and citizens’ perception that the government is incapable of dealing with the current fiscal and financial challenges are one (Mansbridge 1997, Newton and Norris 2000). The political economy literature is on consensus that higher levels of trust are associated with wealthier areas. Reciprocally, lower degrees of trust go hand in hand with poorer areas (Leigh 2006). People trust more governments that can bring about economic growth, create jobs, provide access to education and deliver services in an easy and transparent manner (Fiorina 1978, Mackuen, Erikson and Stimson 1992). Nye (1997) argues that citizens’ negative evaluation of the national economy and their negative perceptions of their governments’ ability to respond to the economic challenges engender even more distrust in the age of globalization. Competitive pressures and economic dislocations of globalization, growing economic inequality and increasing numbers of marginalized people in both the developed and the developing world have indeed fueled the loss of political trust in governments’ capability and willingness to act in a timely and adequate manner (Alesina and Wacziarg 2000).

Economic causes are not the only propelling forces of the decline in trust worldwide. Political and social parameters are also at play. Consecutive political scandals, rampant corruption and the sometimes overrated focus of the media on these issues have also contributed their fair share to the decline of trust in government institutions and political leaders. While Espinal and Hartlyn (2006) maintain that security and corruption are much more important for trust in government in the developing world as opposed to the industrialized countries, political performance on issues of security and corruption are associated with increasing trust ubiquitously (Lipset and Schneider 1987, Mishler and Rose 1997, 2001, Turner and Martz 1997).

Corruption arises as one of the most important political factors contributing to the decline of levels of trust in the government in both the developed and the developing world.¹² Job (2005) finds that if individuals perceive corruption in politics, then their trust in local institutions is adversely affected. Since trust in local government institutions is the strongest predictor of trust in remote political institutions, such as the national Congress and/or the Presidency, corruption becomes an important indirect determinant of political trust.¹³ Survey results also show that

¹² Corruption is a concept that is as complex and hard to define as is the notion of trust. Political corruption refers to the misuse of public office for private gain. The variants of political corruption can range from minor patronage to do and return favors to institutionalized bribery and kleptocracy, i.e., rule by thieves. Corruption, in all of its variants, is one of the greatest obstacles to social and economic development, and to political legitimacy. For more, see World Bank, Anti-Corruption Program (<http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/governance/pubs.html>).

¹³ The finding that trust placed in local representatives and institutions is generally higher compared to national institutions is also context-dependent. Botan and Taylor (2005) show that in the case of Bosnia the

corruption constitutes the strongest predictor of trust placed in remote political institutions directly. Corruption, therefore, is critical for trust in both the local and national political leaders and institutions. Literature investigating the dyad of trust and corruption establishes that citizens everywhere are watchful of the lack of honesty and unethical behavior in their respective governments. Therefore, it becomes almost axiomatic to say that any government that wants to build or reinforce trust needs, first and foremost, to work towards eradicating corruption.¹⁴

There are two important caveats about the relationship of trust and corruption with respect to the legitimacy of the political systems and good governance. One is that it is not enough for the political leaders and institutions to fight corruption: They should also avoid appearing corrupt (Warren 2006). The second caveat concerning the link between trust and corruption is that people might trust their government even if there is some degree of perceived and/or real corruption. This occurs when social capital is strong and people are trustful of each other and strangers in general (Job 2005). In both cases, however, establishing trust requires an open society where citizens are able to debate and question government policies, and can have a sense of making a difference in decision-making processes.

Appearance of corruption is an important issue in political trust. If a political official is honest, but appears as corrupt, he/she would be considered corrupt. Prophylactic laws, or *appearance regulations*, which have emerged and developed since the 1960s, have made the appearance of corruption an offense in itself, punishable by censure or loss of position, even when the appearance cannot be traced to an underlying improper act. Such laws focus primarily on finances, and put limits on the amounts and sources of campaign contributions, honoraria and gifts. In such matters, “officials are liable not just for their behavior but also for how their conduct appears to the public” (Warren 2006, 3).

In addition to and apart from appearance regulations, *appearance standards* have also transpired as the “informal norms of ensuring a relationship of accountability between citizens and their political representatives” (Hellman 2001, Thompson 1995, 125-26). Appearance standards have placed an extra burden on political leaders in ensuring transparency and rules of conduct that will be perceived as honest and trustful by the communities and the society at large. Easy access to information, tools of e-governance, efficient delivery of services, face-to-face contact and creative and efficient ways of dealing with issues of distrust by converting them into issues of trust are some of the tools used by political leaders to avoid appearances of corruption (Torres, Pina and Acerete 2006; Warren 2006).¹⁵

There is a slight difference on the burden placed on political leaders versus public servants in regulating the appearances of corruption. According to Warren (2006), obligations and duties of the political representatives are less specific and more conflictual in nature than those of civil servants and the judiciary. The political nature of the office of political delegates makes them automatically prone to charges of corruption. In other words, since political representatives have

opposite is true: Bosnians trust their local officials the least. This anomaly is explained by the behavior of these officials prior to and during the civil war.

¹⁴ There is an extensive literature on the theoretical and empirical issues associated with corruption. Some of the most straightforward tools of combating corruption are ensuring freedom of press, transparency and gender equality (Kaufman 2005) as well as maintaining economic growth (Kaufman 2004, Leigh 2006).

¹⁵ Political leaders have at times criticized the appearance regulations and standards on corruption for the reason that they empowered their critics, who might themselves be corrupt. Nevertheless, such rules and norms have been efficient in giving the image of a transparent and clean government (Morgan and Reynolds 1997).

a duty to maintain communication with their specific constituents, conditions of trust cannot be taken for granted. This makes political officials more prone to be perceived as corrupt officials serving the interests of a few powerful interests. Conversely, civil servants are less prone to be perceived as corrupt because the idea of public trust implies that citizens accord their trust to civil servants for the representation of the public interest in settled areas of administration. As a matter of fact, “suspicions of corruption surround national parliaments much more so than the executive and the judiciary” (Warren 2006, 4). Both the political representatives and civil servants, however, must avoid acting in a way that gives rise to a reasonable belief of wrongdoing. “When they fail to do so, they do not merely appear to do wrong; they do wrong” (Hellman 2001, 668).

The second caveat about the relationship between corruption and political trust is the existence and degree of social capital present in the society. This also refers to the group of social factors that affect the outcome of political trust in the government. Accordingly, social and demographic factors, such as the level of literacy and education, gender and age are important determinants of social and political trust (Christensen and Laegreid 2003), albeit not ubiquitously. Espinal and Hartlyn (2006), for instance, find that in the developing world, age has a nonlinear impact on political trust: older generations, who experienced authoritarian institutions, tend to be more tolerant of corrupt but democratic governments. In the developing world, middle-income groups are structurally most likely to be frustrated and distrustful of governments (Lozano 2002). This is the case because the poor enter into clientelistic relations with the state and the wealthy achieve privileged access to state power, this arrangement leaving the dwindling middle class more and more isolated, hence distrustful. These results are in sharp contrast with the survey results coming from the industrialized world where sociodemographic characteristics of societies are normally negatively associated with political trust. Political trust, in other words, decreases as one gets older and/or his/her socioeconomic status rises in advanced industrialized countries (Inglehart 1997).

Along with descriptive sociodemographic variables such as age and income level, the holistic concepts of social capital and civic engagement are also important social factors influencing the degree of political trust in the government. Veenstra (2002), for instance, finds that participation in civil society is significantly related to social but weakly related to political trust in the context of Canada. He explains this dichotomy by referring to the type and nature of civic engagement. He clarifies that superficial civil society participation in the form of paying annual fees in networks of association does not teach people about trust. He recommends instead meaningful dialogue and regular face-to-face involvement in cooperative civil society organizations. Job (2005), on the other hand, finds a direct relation between social capital defined in sociological terms, and political trust in the Australian case. She concludes that if people are trusting of their familiar circle and their close community, they will extend their trust to their local and national representatives and government, even when the latter do poorly at times.

Social capital and corruption are thus also closely linked with each other, as each is related to political trust. Catterberg and Moreno (2006) use data from the World Values Survey and the European Values Survey to develop a multivariate model of political trust. They find that political trust is generally hindered by corruption as well as political radicalism and postmaterialism.¹⁶ Kim (2005) maintains that the influence of corruption was so high in the case of South Korea that at one point, increased participation in civil society started fostering political distrust, instead of

¹⁶ Postmaterialism refers to the surge of needs and concerns of groups of population in the developed world about non-material and non-security issues, such as environmentalism, social equality and liberty. In a recent work, Inglehart and Welzel (2005) have related postmaterialism and its component of mass liberty aspirations to democratization.

political trust. Vidmalm (2005) shows that in the case of India, social capital has played an important role for resisting corruption at the aggregate level, but has failed to do so at the individual level.¹⁷ Finally, Stulhofer (2004) maintains that corruption has negatively affected social capital in the case of Croatia.

Although the context-specific nature of political trust is irrefutable, one important convergence emerges across cases with respect to social and political trust in the era of globalization. That is the changed expectations of citizens vis-à-vis their governments and their political representatives. This refers to the possible emergence of a new civic culture with emphasis on new ethical and practical concerns. The new civic culture cherishes trust for itself and not as a means to other ends. The new civic culture cares more about moral or second-order trust than partisan or first-order trust: it demands sincerity and truthfulness in the words and deeds of representatives (Warren 2006, 7). The new civic culture puts more emphasis on relational trust than on rational trust (Job 2005). It wants to be able to monitor government performance much more closely than before (Torres, Pina and Acerete 2006). The apparent emergence of the new civic culture worldwide, but particularly in the developed world, bring Krahn and Harrison (2006) to argue that governments today would be better off applying programs and policies that enhance trust in government directly, such as reforms towards rendering politics more transparent and dispersing the power of political decision-making to foster accountability, rather than proposing reforms of economic efficiency or neopopulist solutions like recalls or referenda that promote trust indirectly.

Why all of a sudden do citizens put more emphasis on ethical and psychological norms than they focus on the partisan and rational attributes of political trust? What is driving societies to value second-order trust more than the first-order trust? To put it shortly, why is there a sudden preference of morality over capability? The answer to these questions lies in the forces of globalization facing the governments of today, more so than the individual institutional characteristics of countries. Decline in trust is happening across countries with diverse institutional structures, historical legacies and cultural underpinnings. Although the attributes and the relationship of social and political trust are country-specific, the possible explanations for, as well as the potential solutions to the decline of trust in government, might very well be grounded in the new requirements imposed by globalization (Dalton 2005).

3. CAUSAL LINKS BETWEEN TRUST AND GOVERNANCE IN THE GLOBAL AGE: How can trust help build good and effective governance?

Globalization is a complex concept that refers to a series of social, political, economic and technological changes spurred by increasing interaction and integration among people, companies and governments of the world.¹⁸ Globalization can be categorized as economic, political, social and technological globalization. *Economic globalization* refers to the increased volume and speed of trade and cross-border investments by multinational companies as well as individual investors. It includes important issues such as income inequality, marginalization and informal economy. *Political globalization* refers to the increased interaction of political systems and the common valorization of democratic regimes. It includes the broad topic of governance and effective institution-building. *Social globalization* is about the rapidly increasing civil society

¹⁷ At the individual level, the capacity to distinguish between public and private sectors is important for rejecting the use of bribes to public sector employees, according to Vidmalm (2005).

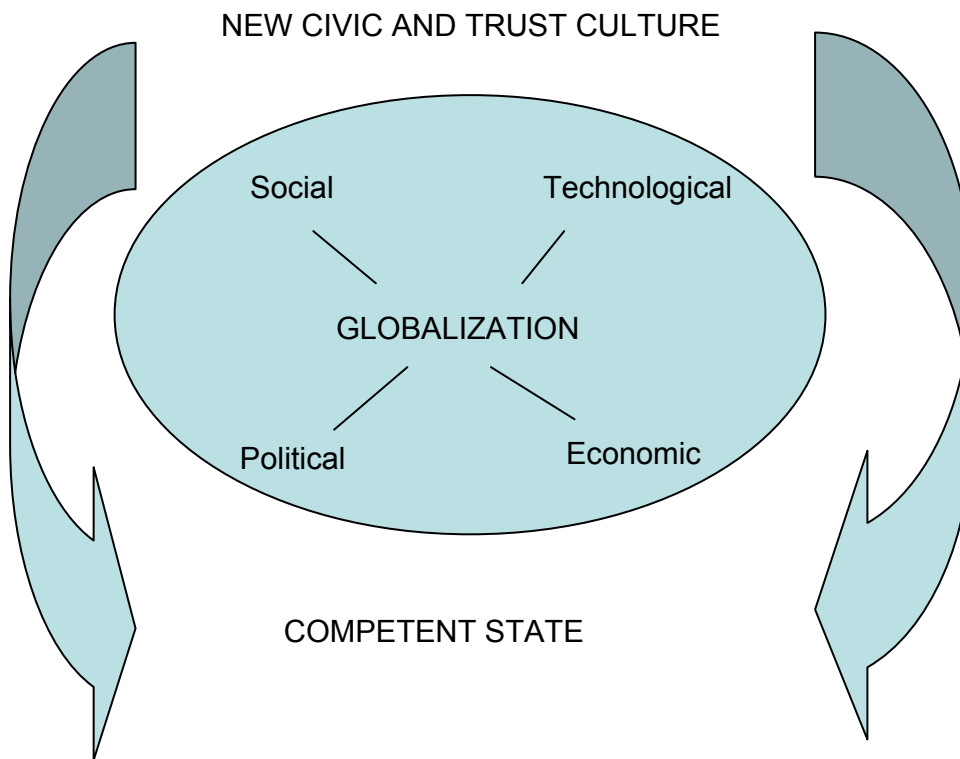
¹⁸ Friedman (2002) suggests that globalization is also a cultural and an intellectual phenomenon referring to the flow of ideas and symbols across borders (17).

organizations and their growing interconnectedness in both national and international grounds. It concerns the universal freedoms of speech, association, and the like. Finally, *technological globalization* concerns the rapid spread of technological innovations in business, government and civil society settings along with the consequent surge of information available to all of the parties concerned. It involves the topics of e-government, e-business, e-participation, and the broader theme of e-democracy.

Globalization has led to a redefinition of the functions and the role of the state. State now has to be a strategic planner instead of a provider of goods and services. It has to create and preserve an “even playing field for private enterprise and individual initiative instead of managing the field” (Bertucci and Alberti 2003, 23). The new state also has to pursue fiscal conservatism and create wealth by offering a propitious economic environment for foreign and domestic capital. The new state has to adopt the core values of integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity while being fully proficient in communications, technology and economic competition. The new state must also be endowed with political legitimacy and accountability. While the new state should be ferocious when it comes to capturing markets and attracting investments, it should also care about softer variables such as norms, values, rules and symbols. The new state has to be a “competent state” (Cheema 2005, 152).¹⁹ Trust is an essential ingredient in the building of a competent state (Lewicki and Tomlinson 2003). The competent state, by definition, strives to foment and maintain what can be called a *trust culture* (Sztompka 1999). A trust culture is where citizens feel that they have a more or less equal and potential chance of making a difference in the political decision-making. This is where good governance comes in as the indispensable corollary of the trust culture.

¹⁹ The twenty-nine OECD countries have adopted, as part of the initiative of the New Public Management Reforms (NPM) in the public sector, the following core values: impartiality, legality, integrity, transparency, efficiency, equality, responsibility and justice, all directly related to the creation and preservation of public trust in government and its institutions (Puma 2000).

Figure 3: The Emergence of Trust Culture:



Governance can be defined as the specific ways in which a society organizes itself in order to make decisions, mediate differences and exercise legal rights. The three main actors of governance are the state, civil society and the private sector. In this tripartite division of labor, *state* creates an enabling political, economic and legal environment; *civil society* facilitates the political and social interaction, and *private sector* generates jobs, goods and services (UNDP 1997a). Good governance is simply the harmonious interaction of these three actors. More broadly, good governance describes an open and efficient way of conducting public affairs, managing public resources, and guaranteeing the realization of human rights. Good governance accomplishes these goals in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard to rule of law.²⁰ Good governance is synonymous with democratic and effective governance because it is participatory, transparent and accountable (UNDP 1997b).

Trust, both in its social and political forms, is the sine qua non of good governance. Good governance and trust feed into each other: trust breeds good governance, and vice-versa. Hetherington (2005) refers to political trust as the main motor of good governance. A high level of trust in government and political incumbents benefits all of the citizens, especially minorities and people who are at a relative disadvantage in socioeconomic and/or political terms. The three main causal mechanisms that operate between trust and good governance are: (1) the social-civic causal mechanism (SC), (2) the economic-efficiency causal mechanism (EE), and finally; (3) the political-legitimacy causal mechanism (PL). While these three links between trust and good

²⁰ Rule of law implies that government authority must be exercised in accordance with the written laws and in an equal manner to every citizen, regardless of any given differences, such as gender, social and economic or political status. For more, see Linz and Stepan (1997, 18-20).

governance are nowhere exclusionary, they provide us with good analytical tools to digest and simplify the otherwise utterly complex phenomenon of globalization and its ramifications.

While democratic governance breeds trust, trust is a prerequisite for democratic governance in the first place. In order for public administration to function smoothly and effectively, it must rely on public support, i.e., public trust (Schlesinger 2001). Democratic governance cannot come to fruition in a society where there is a dearth of social trust. The social-civic (SC) link between trust and good governance involves principally the building and maintaining of a vibrant civil society. In a society where people distrust each other and choose not to engage in meaningful activities in networks of societal associations, there is a high likelihood of having low political legitimacy accorded to the government and its representatives. The formation and maintenance of successful and effective partnership between the government and other institutions depend on social trust as well as a strong civil society in constant interaction with the government and the private sector (Jones 2006). A strong civil society mediates effectively between the citizenry and the government. As such, it constitutes an important arena of representation and aggregation of interests.

The positive impact of civil society participation on good governance can easily be destroyed by the variable of corruption. The negative effects of corruption are undeniable when it comes to good governance: corruption saps social trust, and constrains the development of local and national economies, with deleterious consequences for sustainable political, economic and social development. The South African case has clearly demonstrated the complexity and the importance of fighting corruption in order to promote good governance. Insufficient coordination of anti-corruption work within the South African public service and among the various sectors of society constitutes one of the main challenges facing the South African government today (Pillay, 2004). The case of Morocco, where a Truth and Reconciliation Commission has pushed for political reforms to fight corruption is also quintessential in demonstrating the importance of an effective coordination between the political and social realms in building trust towards good governance (Hazan 2006).

One innovative way to promote trust through fighting corruption is the e-government. Computer-based interactions can potentially reach those citizens who would otherwise be reluctant to express or listen to different viewpoints (Redburn and Buss 2004, 163). The enhanced technological tools at the disposition of countries today can be used to devise virtual models of participation where citizens can interact and share opinions freely and openly on the Internet. Enhanced computer technology can also allow citizens to contact their political representatives more easily, and hold them accountable for their deeds. E-government, as such, also forces many holders of public officialdom to post regular and detailed information pieces about their performances on the Internet. This, in turn, contributes to increased transparency and accountability. E-participation and e-government, therefore, do not only decrease information asymmetry between the governors and the governed, but it also enhances transparency by inviting greater citizen participation and oversight of policy affairs (Kalu 2006).

Increasing social and political trust through the implementation of sound economic policies is also crucial for good and effective governance. “A competent state needs to provide for open, efficient, and competitive markets” (Rondinelli 2005, 33). States need to create the institutional structure and the credibility for market economies to function effectively. Like the process of building trust, building of institutions with the objective of economic competitiveness takes time. Both processes, however, feed into each other: increasing social and political trust facilitate the process of economic restructuring, and sound economic policy-making and institution-building, in turn, enhances social and political trust. The political science literature on economic-

development concludes that while economic growth is a necessary condition for good governance, it is not a sufficient one: sound economic policy-making increases political trust for only a short-period of time after which citizens ask for more substantial political and social reforms, such as an equitable society and accountable institutions. At the same, however, economic stress and poor governance almost unequivocally go together (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub and Limongi 1997).

Increasing trust via effective economic policy-making brings good governance only if the economic-efficiency (EE) link takes into account the social variable. In other words, governments, in applying policies that increase competitiveness, have to take into account the problems of social inequality and marginalization associated with globalization. A competent state can increase political and social trust as well as economic efficiency only by implementing safety nets and social programs, which target the poorest and the unskilled. There is an ongoing debate between those scholars who argue that economic globalization has strengthened the welfare state (Moon and Yang 2002) and those who maintain that it had actually destroyed it (Faux and Mishel 2000). Either way, the cross-cutting attributes of economic and social realms in building trust towards good and effective governance can hardly be ignored.

Building political trust towards good governance, by definition, implies the political-legitimacy (PL) link between trust and good governance. Legitimacy embodies the consent that citizens accord to the ruling government and/or state institutions. If citizens think that a government rightfully holds and exercises power, then that government enjoys political legitimacy. Among the major determinants of legitimacy are social trust, economic effectiveness and good political governance along with democratic rights (Gilley 2006). Legitimacy is readily achieved if citizens trust in the government and their representatives. As such, political trust leads to good governance by contributing to the building of political legitimacy. Political legitimacy, in turn, further stimulates and extends political trust, thereby contributing to the democratization of governance.

One way to promote trust through the strengthening of political legitimacy is to bring communities closer to their governments and their governments to them. Local governance and decentralization emerge as the perfect tools of doing so. Local governance means that members of local communities take responsibility and action for their future. Good local governance requires the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders, such as the local community members, schools, police force and local businesses in tackling the problems at hand. Good local governance requires members of the community to watch out for each other and to launch initiatives such as keeping kids off the streets, taking care of the elderly and organizing community events to foster trust (Bovaird and Loeffler 2005). Decentralization can buttress local governance by bringing local government officials closer to the community, and vice-versa. Decentralization refers to the restructuring of authority so that local governments are given more responsibilities and power. Decentralization, as such, and coupled with local governance, can promote partnership between the governors and the governed. Partnership, in turn, is about sharing power, responsibility and achievement. As such, it is an essential ingredient in sound governance (Farazmand 2004).

What decentralization and local governance do at the local level can be accomplished by free, fair and regular elections and efficient parliamentary processes at the national level. Elections and parliamentary processes endowed with these characteristics are particularly important for the building of trust and good governance. Without regular, free and fair elections, it would be quite impossible to talk about good governance. Elections confer legitimacy and sustain political legitimacy because they symbolize the overall choice of the public. Elections also contribute to the building of trust and good governance by allowing for direct participation and a possibility of

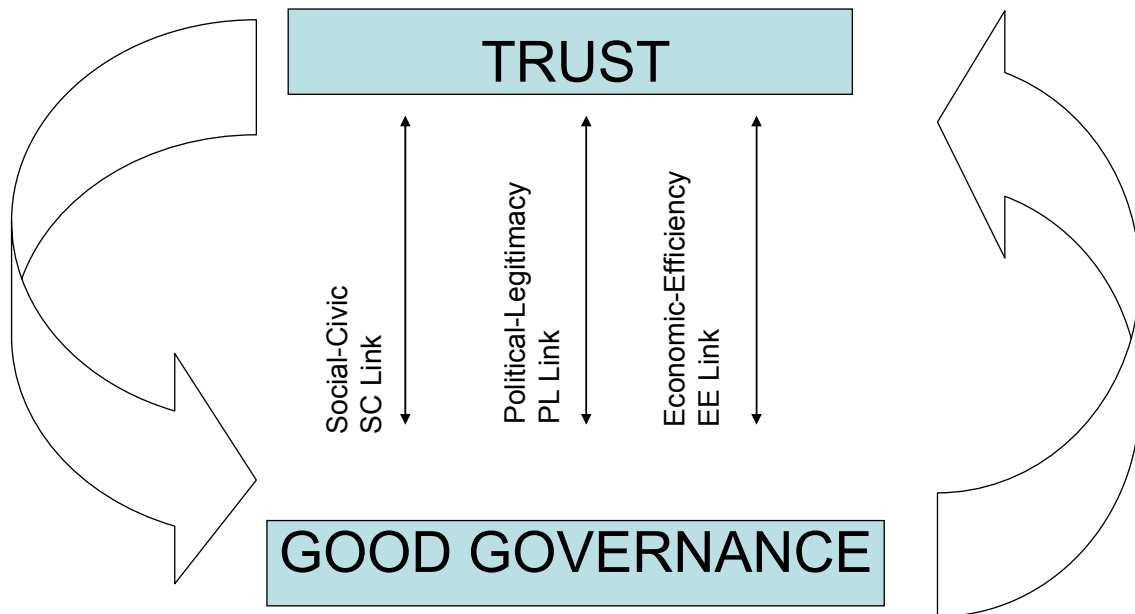
being heard by individual citizens (Cheema 2005, 25). On the other hand, elections per se are not sufficient for trust and good governance to come about. There are many political systems where relatively fair, free and regular elections take place in the absence of legitimate parliamentary processes. Levitsky and Way (2002) call these political systems as “competitive authoritarian regimes” rather than democracies. Competitive authoritarian regimes are systems where elections take place without the efficient and democratic working of institutions.

Transparent and efficient parliamentary processes must complement fair, free and regular elections in order for trust to spread in social and political relations. Legitimate parliamentary processes refer to the democratic functioning of parliaments. In cases where incumbents consistently sidestep the parliament in decision-making, one cannot talk about the meaningful representation of the public interest. By the same token, in political systems where hostile parliaments repeatedly block any policy-making attempt by the executive power, trust is hampered. A harmonious and cooperative relationship between the parliament and the executive is therefore necessary for the building of trust as is the perception of the citizenry vis-à-vis the effective functioning and legitimacy of the parliament.

An independent judiciary is another pillar of trust in societies. The judiciary, as the guardian of all the established laws, has a fundamental role in the establishment and preservation of the rule of law. The idea of rule of law implies that any exercise of public power must be backed by stable laws made public and applied in equal manner to all of the citizens. The rule of law, therefore, constitutes the perfect barrier against the arbitrary use of power (Finn 2004). In societies where the judiciary is perceived to be corrupt and inefficient, rule of law is impaired, and as a result, distrust reigns. In such contexts, citizens might resort to violent and/or unlawful means in order to resolve their problems with each other and/or with the governing institutions. Crime might soar as result of these activities with deleterious consequences for the stability of the overall political system.

Rule of law, an independent judiciary, free, fair and regular elections, legitimate parliamentary processes, a healthy civil society, fighting corruption and appearances of corruption, local governance and decentralization, and finally, e-governance all contribute to the enhanced transparency and accountability of the political system. Transparency and accountability are the principal requisites of both trust and good governance. There can be no trust or good governance devoid of transparent and accountable underpinnings. In order for any political action to foster trust, and ultimately promote good governance, it has to be transparent, i.e., open, and based on the principle that the architects can be held responsible for their action, ergo the principle of accountability. Despite the universal conditions of transparency and accountability for fostering trust and promoting good governance, trust and governance stay context-dependent phenomena. Correspondingly, a behavior that generates trust in one society might do the exact opposite in another. Trust can vary according to *zeitgeist* or fashions: during certain periods, trust in government is taken for granted, at other times the opposite is true (Czarniawska and Sevón 1996). Trust may vary according to the external political forces or based on the internal features of the system. Finally, a minimal degree of healthy distrust of citizens in their representatives might work as an efficient check to actually promote and sustain trust. The above analysis shows that while the theoretical and empirical importance of trust for good governance is clear, how political leaders can create and preserve trust is not. The 7th Global Forum on Reinventing the Government provides a perfect ground for political leaders and civil servants to review this complex concept as well as the emerging issues associated with it.

Figure 4: Links between Trust and Good Governance:



4. CONCLUDING REMARKS: The 7th Global Forum on Reinventing the Government

The relationship between trust and good governance is circular: While trust in government and its representatives foment good governance, good governance in turn engenders and strengthens trust in all of its variants. A close examination of the theoretical underpinnings and empirical applications of the notion of social and political trust with respect to good governance shows that political leaders can forge and keep trust by implementing the following strategies:

- Showing genuine concern for the public good by adhering to consistency between their words and deeds. This is the so-called MORAL TRUST with emphasis on ethics and morality.
- Striving to represent the interests of their constituencies effectively, albeit with the reiterated objective of serving the public good. This is the so-called ECONOMIC TRUST with emphasis on economic efficiency and partisanship.
- Implementing political reforms that will increase political trust directly and social trust indirectly, such as decentralization and innovation in public management. This is the so-called POLITICAL TRUST with emphasis on political legitimacy. Avoiding corruption and scandals is the sine qua non of maintaining political trust. Corruption and perceptions of corruption damage trust in ways that may not be fully reparable for long periods of time to come.

- Introducing social reforms that will strengthen civil society representation in tandem with political reforms. This is the so-called SOCIAL TRUST with emphasis on the catalyzing effects of social capital.
- Adopting technological innovations to make government more efficient, inclusive and accessible to the citizenry, such as e-government and e-participation. This is the so-called TECHNOLOGICAL TRUST with emphasis on technological democratization.

In applying these general strategies, political leaders must understand that building trust takes time, and a series of repeated games need to take place between the citizenry and the government before trust can flourish. Individuals, in other words, are more likely to trust one another after having interacted for several times together rather than on a first one-shot basis (Ostrom and Walker 2003). Good politicians, bureaucrats and citizens learn how to behave appropriately and react intuitively with time, and through interactions with the different subsets of society that they are representing (Christensen and Laegreid 2003). Politicians, therefore, need to have resolve and patience in applying the above strategies in fomenting trust and preserving it.

The 7th Global Forum on Reinventing the Government will cover all of the topics above in more depth. It will start with the overall definitional terms and concepts in the first plenary session “Citizen Expectations and Trust in the State,” where the new needs and wants of today’s societies and the different responses of states will be covered. The second plenary session on “Building Trust through Transparent Governance and Access to Information,” will clarify the main topics associated with governance. It will shed light on the conditions of achieving good governance through open and transparent decision-making processes. The third plenary session “Civil Society Engagement and Participation” will cover the complex relationship between social and political trust, while presenting the diverse strategies of building trust in various institutional and societal settings. The fifth plenary session “Elections, Parliaments and Citizen Trust” will focus on political trust towards both the regime and its specific institutions. The sixth plenary session “Building Trust through Public-Private Partnerships” will include the different modes of coalition-building between the government and business sectors in order to forge and expand trust towards good governance. Finally, the seventh plenary session “Governance Challenges in Crisis and Post-Crisis Countries” will dwell on the specific cases of divided societies and the unique challenges associated with building trust in such contexts.

While the plenary sessions will provide a broad overview of the key issues associated with trust in government and good governance, workshops will provide ample opportunity for political leaders, public servants, and civil society and private sector representatives to examine the different tools and methodologies available for strengthening trust towards sound governance, and thus, the completion of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).²¹ The first workshop “Restoring Trust in Government through Innovation” will focus on various strategies of reforming the public administration towards making it more efficient and responsive to citizens’ needs. Institutional reforms, human resource development, mobilization of financial resources and information technology will constitute some of the themes covered in this first workshop.

²¹ These are eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. For more, see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

The second workshop “Managing Knowledge to Build Trust in Government” will specifically dwell on the information and communication technologies (ICTs) to increase participation, accelerate economic growth, and reduce poverty. An effective e-government can bring greater transparency and reduce corruption, thereby contributing to the strengthening of trust. A knowledge-intensive economy can also introduce innovative ways to combat poverty and improve the quality of life. Technology and knowledge can be used in specific sectors, such as health care, for training and research purposes. This workshop will thus focus on different ways of realizing the full potential of knowledge, innovation and technology systems towards promoting trust and good governance.²²

The third workshop on “Decentralization and Local Governance” will allow the participants to review different strategies of decentralization and devolution of power. Local governments act more in accordance with the needs of local communities. As such, they are the kernels of social and political trust. In order for local governments to serve the needs of their communities, decentralization is essential. There are, however, different types and ways of decentralizing, all of which might not be suitable for every kind of social and institutional setting. This workshop will provide essential information for local leaders to govern effectively, national leaders contemplating decentralization, and civil society and private sector representatives, who always accompany the process of capacity building.²³

The fourth workshop “Improving the Quality of the Electoral and Parliamentary Process” will dwell on the institutional reforms such as the different types of electoral systems and effective and transparent parliamentary processes to foster trust. Free and fair elections, parliamentary oversight of the Executive, and freedom of speech and press will be some of the topics covered in this workshop. The independence and effectiveness of the judiciary system, political participation and representation, and the overall establishment of checks and balances will also be among the topics to be reviewed by the participants.

The fifth workshop “Building Trust through Civic Engagement” will be particularly interesting for those who would like to understand the importance and the impact of social capital and civil society for building trust. This workshop will discuss some of the effective ways for local and national governments to introduce policies that aim to support civic engagement and fight marginalization. Various techniques of developing and reinforcing social trust, diverse participatory mechanisms and strategies of coalition-building with different societal sectors in open and transparent ways will be some of the topics covered in this workshop.

The sixth workshop “Reinvention with Integrity: Using Global Convention on Anti-corruption” will tackle the crucial issue of corruption as the main determinant of political trust. “Accountability is the pillar of democracy and good governance” (Cheema 2003, 99). Corruption, by poisoning accountability and hampering transparency and integrity, hurts political trust. When political corruption in a specific institution or a group of institutions becomes systemic, the relationship between state and society is damaged. Corruption, as such, can bring about the downfall of political regimes and irreparable polarization within societies. This workshop will discuss the innovative ways of dealing with corruption towards maintaining trust in government.

Finally, the seventh workshop “Governance Challenges in Crisis and Post-Crisis Countries” will examine the unique variables of divided societies and governments facing, or having recently faced, serious social, political and economic challenges. Countries that have undergone natural,

²² For more, please see Sisk (2003).

²³ For more, please see Kauzya (2003).

social, political or economic disasters have very different dynamics than either the established democracies or democracies in the process of consolidation. They are in a state of flux. Conflict prevention, management and resolution strategies for political leaders and civil society representatives will be discussed in this workshop.

Citizens' trust in government is a complex mix of ideologies, experiences, stereotypes and images, comprising but not limited to the specific aspects of public sector organization and functioning. A comparative approach across-countries and over-time is the only sound way to study trust and its relation to governance. This is exactly what the 7th Global Forum on Reinventing the Government will allow participants to do: share their cross-cutting experiences in a multicultural setting, and compare and contrast the actual and planned institutional innovations towards the creation and strengthening of trust in government. Low government trust creates a climate in which it is difficult for political leaders to succeed (Hetherington 1998). The 7th Global Forum on Reinventing the Government will help leaders to get familiarized with the emerging issues of trust towards good governance in a global world.

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