

Trust in local government – service satisfaction, culture, and demography

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Introduction.

Trust in government is a multifaceted and challenging concept. In indirect democracies, people delegate their sovereignty to political-administrative institutions and actors through the “parliamentary chain” (Olsen 1992). This delegation is based on trust that this mandate will be handled in an appropriate way. However, the public should also have a “healthy distrust” and skepticism toward this matter (Christensen and Lægreid 2005). The institutional manifestation of this balance between trust and distrust takes shape in parliamentary scrutiny committees, auditor generals, and Ombudsmen, and is labeled “horizontal accountability” by the media in more modern language (Schillemans 2008).

Easton (1965) made a seminal distinction between diffuse and specific support for the political-administrative system. Diffuse support refers to the more long-term general and systemic factors of legitimacy and trust accorded to the system, whether directed toward institutions or roles/actors, while specific support focuses more on specific experiences with the government and its services (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003). There is a dynamic relationship between diffuse and specific support and legitimacy or trust. A system with high diffuse support indicates high “slack” in the system (Cyert and March 1963), which can work as a buffer to crises and challenges toward legitimacy in general. On the contrary, low specific support will often make it difficult for the political-administrative leadership to build up a broad support basis among citizens.

The focus of this article is trust in local government in two rather different political-administrative systems: Japan and Norway. Variations in trust in government may be explained by many factors. One is the more instrumental or performance-oriented factor, i.e., the actual working of the political-administrative system, such as citizens' evaluations of the services that they receive (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003). Another set of factors can be labeled political-cultural factors, encompassing more general views of democracy, ideological and

party-political attitudes, and engagement in political activities. A third group comprises individual demographic factors like gender, age, and education (Christensen and Læg Reid 2009).

The main research questions approached in this article are the following:

- Does citizens' trust in local governments have a general character, or is it differentiated between political and administrative institutions and actors?
- What are the major similarities and differences in trust in local governments in Japan and Norway?
- What is the overall relative importance of satisfaction with public services, political-cultural factors, and demography in explaining variations in trust in local governments, and do Japan and Norway have different profiles in these respects?

The article begins by outlining some major features of the political-administrative systems in Japan and Norway, particularly on the local level, followed by theoretical elaborations including a set of hypotheses. Then method and main results are described, followed by an analysis and conclusion.

National contexts.

To understand Japanese local governments in an Asian context, the first characteristic to consider is that Asian politicians prefer management reform to political reform. This makes New Public Management (NPM) reforms more relevant (Koike 2013), partly because their impact is mainly on the administration rather than politics. The second characteristic is the relationship between politicians, civil servants, and citizens (political nexus triad) as conceptualized by Moon and Ingraham (1997). Many Asian nations occupy an administration-dominant or administration-led position in the triad (Cheung 2005). Japan basically fit this profile until the 1990s, when politicians began to increase their influence on the central level. On the local level, however, the mayor is still seen as part of the dominating administrative branch (Muramatsu 2011).

Concerning government structure, Japan has a two-tier local government system classified into 47 prefectures and 1,718 municipalities. Municipalities consist of cities, towns, and villages, all of which are subject to the central government's legislation. The Constitution clarifies the basic "principle of local autonomy" in terms of both residents and entities. It provides for the establishment of the legislative assembly as well as the direct public election

of assembly members and heads of local governments. It also confers administrative power on local governments as well as the right to exercise autonomous legislative power within the scope of the law. Local governments account for around 60 percent of government expenditure and 25 percent of GDP overall. The average voter turnout in the 2015 local elections of governors was 47 percent, ranging from as high as 59 percent to as low as 39 percent (MIC 2017). Local governments provide basic services for residents such as schools, waste disposal, fire brigades, health and welfare services, urban planning, and infrastructure. Approximately two-thirds of public services are provided by local governments in Japan. Community-based associations or community service organizations (CSOs) called *chonaikai* play a major role in providing local government services, while the participation rate has recently decreased. CSOs are a co-production institution in Japanese local governments.

Norway is a unitary parliamentary state with a multi-party system that often produces minority coalition governments; it undergoes more central political volatility than Japan. The central government is seen as strong relative to lower levels, relatively stronger than in Japan, and is steered by sectoral ministries/agencies that extend down to the regional/local level and through county governors (Christensen 2003). However, Norway also has an important tradition of local self-government. All of the approximately 360-370 local authorities have their own elected democratic bodies with wide competencies. These elected bodies are mostly based on a proportional consensus principle, i.e., parties are represented according to their relative strengths in elections, while the parliamentarian principle of “winner takes all” is only used in a few big cities. Diverse policies are mostly decided at the central level but are adapted to local contexts and implemented by local governments (Christensen, Fimreite, and Lægreid 2007). Local governments represent a major part of the public sector in terms of the number of employees and the volume of financial resources. The relationship between the central government and local governments is a mixture of national control and standardization, political decentralization based on the principle of local autonomy, and administrative decentralization based on the principle of delegated authority.

Norway differs from Japan in a number of other ways. At the local level, political reform is much more typical than management reform (Askim 2007). Local governments are dominated more by politicians than bureaucratic actors. Norwegian local government is overall less oriented toward NPM reforms (Knutsson et al. 2017). More people participate in local elections in Norway than in Japan. Voter turnout was 64.5 percent in the 2011 municipal elections and 60 percent in 2015. Norwegian municipalities are overall much smaller than those of Japan, which has implications for citizens’ proximity to their local governments, for local

information, for reform resources, and for citizens' local political activities. Norway has a wide variety of local associations that influence local politics through a kind of corporate network (Wollebæk and Selle 2008), but these do not play the major role that CSOs play in Japan. Norway scores much higher than Japan both on interpersonal trust and on trust in government (Christensen and Lægreid 2005).

Theoretical elaborations.

Easton's (1965) concept of support for the political-administrative system can be seen as a proxy for trust in government. Trust is a central dimension of diffuse or general support and consists of several interrelated elements (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003). First, citizens may have general ideological reasons for supporting or trusting the government: they may believe in or support collective goals/interests (March and Olsen 1989) or they may have an ideological, party-political, or activity-based leaning that leads them to trust the system. Second, citizens may trust their government based on long-term structural legitimacy factors; they may trust the way in which the formal structure, rules, and roles of the political-administrative system are set up and work over a long period of time. They may trust the actions of political and administrative leaders or the competence of experts in the civil service.

Specific support or trust may include two main elements: process and output (Easton 1965). Process-related factors are short-term assessments citizens make related to public decision-making processes: which participants from the government are included, how problems and solutions are dealt with, the levels of competency of politicians and civil servants, the participation of affected actors and parties, etc. Output-related aspects deal with the instrumental, short-term question of "who gets what," which is more closely related to NPM, while the process-orientation is more Weberian and "Old Public Administration" in nature, or in its newer version of post-NPM (Christensen and Lægreid 2007).

Combining diffuse and specific support or trust may create different dynamics. First, in an ideal scenario, the political-administrative system will score high on both diffuse and specific support, which may mean that these two aspects reinforce each other. This may imply that long-term trust in institutions and actors is reflected in the system's short-term excellent activities and performance. Second, scoring high on diffuse support but low on specific trust may imply that the system is resilient, i.e., the overall standing and trust in the system and its actors is so strong that even short-term failures or problems do not influence this trust. Cyert and March (1963) would label this state as having high "slack." Third, scoring high on specific

support or trust and low on diffuse support may mean that, for ideological or other reasons, people are skeptical toward the system as such, but have more positive experience with its more specific services, which may lead to more diffuse support over time. Fourth, scoring low on both diffuse and specific support may indicate a deep legitimacy crisis in a political system.

Trust in government may have both institutional and individual aspects, and the basis for the trust could be ideological, performance-related, or symbolic. People may trust both the institutions and their leaders, which is the case in Norway (Christensen and Lægveid 2005). Alternatively, they may trust the institutions but not the leaders, trust leaders and not institutions, or distrust both. Institutionally based trust is often more related to diffuse support, while leader-related trust often is closer to specific support.

Satisfaction with public services may be broadly based, generalized, and encompass most services, leading to trust in government (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003). Alternatively, it may be more varied and selective. As previously stated, this satisfaction may be process- or output-oriented. Citizens may be satisfied with availability, information, friendliness, expertise, effectiveness, or efficiency. A general and supportive perception services for citizens may result from diffuse support, experience with a multitude of services, or selective experiences that are seen as typical of good standards (Kumlin 2002; Rothstein and Steinmo 2002). On the contrary, experiences with specific unsatisfactory processes or outputs may lead to distrust. The relationship between satisfaction with services and trust is complicated because it is relative: perception of the services varies according to what and how much citizens need (Aberbach and Rockman 2000). These patterns of ranking of needs and services and their relative trust base is often connected to structural and cultural factors that vary between countries (Pollitt 2002). Services are organized in different ways in different countries and citizens' care for services is culturally relative; tax services are a prominent example. These features also change over time. As Fountain (2001) has shown, the balance or tension between the roles of citizens or consumers, the latter inspired by NPM, is also crucial for developing trust in governments.

Our focus is on trust in local governments, which may have some general features compared to trust in the central government but also varies with the diverse organization of systems and cultural attitudes among countries. Frederickson (1997) formulates the "paradox of distance," whereby people trust politicians and civil servants who are close to them because they have good experiences with them, while they think that the ones further away are lazy, dishonest, and incompetent. This is common in many Western countries. However, this paradox may be reversed, that is, it may be easier to trust institutions, actors, and services that

are far away than those that are close. This mechanism can be seen in China, for example, where trust in central governments is higher than in local governments (Ma and Christensen 2018). Proximity may more easily reveal incompetence and the unfair allocation of public goods, or create stigma, as shown in a seminal study of social services in Norway (Løchen and Martinsen 1962).

Research design – variables and expectations.

Three sets of independent variables – *general service satisfaction*, *political-cultural factors*, and *demographic factors* are used to explain variations in the dependent variable, trust in local governments (cf. Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003; cf. Christensen and Læg Reid 2005).

First, we assume that the user/consumer role and government performance is significant for trust in local governments (cf. Fountain 2001). We use a *generalized satisfaction variable*, rather than multiple differentiated variables, to refer to specific services. This gives an overall impression of satisfaction, which is realistic if citizens have relatively consistent views about services locally, on whatever basis they have formed their experiences and perceptions. The disadvantage is that citizens may have varied perceptions and experiences with the services whether or not they have been involved with them, so this aggregation may be problematic. Overall, we expect that scoring high on generalized satisfaction with local services will enhance trust in local governments.

The next set of independent variables, the *political-cultural* elements, consist of four variables: political attitudes, size of municipality, length of residency, and activity in the local community. These variables are expected to be primarily connected to diffuse support or general trust. It is expected that people who are oriented toward or participating in political-administrative processes over a certain period of time will have more trust in the government than those who are disengaged, because engagement may further political-cultural integration through accepting and internalizing collective norms and values and furthering knowledge about the government (Krasner 1988; March and Olsen 1989).

More specifically, traditionally *political attitudes*, reflected in a Left-Right political continuum, would indicate a difference in attitudes toward public authorities. One would thus expect that people who are more left-leaning would have more trust in local governments than those that are right-leaning. This can typically be explained by two factors: left-leaning people overall have more positive and supportive attitudes toward the government, and they are overrepresented in public jobs (Christensen and Læg Reid 2005).

The size of a municipality (Size) may also influence trust in its government. Robust research findings show that people living in smaller municipalities are more politically active in different ways than people in larger municipalities (van Houwelingen 2017). Overall, proximity may also lead to a greater feeling of social and cultural integration. Citizens may also tend to be more skeptical toward local political processes in larger municipalities because of less proximity, more complexity, and potential managerial problems. Based on these propositions, we expect that people living in smaller municipalities will trust their local governments more.

Length of residency in a municipality (Residency) refers both to the period of one's life during which their basic attitudes are formed and to life experience – in this case, citizens' trust in local governments (cf. Christensen and Læg Reid 2009). Based primarily on generational differences, one would expect people who have lived in a municipality for a longer time to trust local authorities more because of longer exposure, more knowledge, and greater integration.

Activity in municipality relates to one's degree of activity in a municipality and often indicates high social capital (Putnam 2000). Overall, one would expect more active people to score higher on trust than people that are more passive because activity fosters knowledge and a feeling of influence in political-administrative processes.

The third set of independent variables refers to individual demographic factors. We expect that women will score higher on trust in local government than men because women are overall more often employed or involved in diverse public jobs. *Age* may also be of significance; older people have experienced the development of the public sector over time, including the welfare state, while young people have more experience with a public sector that is decreasing or blended with the private sector (Christensen and Læg Reid 2005). The expectation is that older people will have more trust in government because they will tend to have more collective attitudes based on their long-term experiences.

People with *higher education levels* will typically have a better background for understanding local public policy and activities, i.e., they will have more complex models of thought. This higher level of knowledge about the political-administrative system may lead to greater trust in the government (Van de Walle and Bouckert 2003). *Type of occupation* may also be significant for trust. We expect that people working in the public sector will generally have more positive attitudes toward the public sector and therefore trust the public sector more. This could of course depend on whether the civil service is experiencing negative external pressure or cutback management (Kettl 2017). The “public service motivation literature” also

seems to indicate that internal working conditions that are seen as negative may undermine the motivations of public employees (Moynihan and Pandey 2007).

The last independent variable is *country*. What similarities and differences can we expect between Japan and Norway? Overall, Norway has a larger public sector than Japan (OECD 2015). On the local level, citizens' activities, knowledge, and involvement are stronger in Norway, so we expect overall that people in Norway will have more trust in local governments than those in Japan.

Table 1. Expectations regarding variation in trust in local government.

Independent variables	Expectation of generalized trust	Differentiated expectations in trust – relatively more trust in:
Satisfaction with public services	The more satisfied, the more trust	Bureaucrats and non-leaders
Left-Right political continuum	People leaning left will have more trust	Politicians and leaders
Size of municipality	Citizens of relatively smaller municipalities will have more trust	Bureaucrats and non-leaders
Length of residency	The longer one's residency, the higher their trust	No differentiation
Activity in local community	The more activity, the higher the trust	Politicians and leaders
Gender	Women will score higher on trust	Bureaucrats and non-leaders
Age	Older people will score higher on trust	No differentiation
Education	People with higher education levels will have most trust	No difference regarding political/administrative leaders
Occupation	People working in the public sector will have most trust	Bureaucrats and non-leaders
Country	People from Norway will score higher on trust than people from Japan	Bureaucrats than politicians in Japan, while the opposite is expected to be the case in Norway.

We focus both on generalized trust, encompassing both trust in political-administrative institutions, actors and activities, and on whether the trust is differentiated. Differentiated trust relates to political leaders, ordinary local politicians (councilors), and bureaucrats in the municipal administration, which are combined in two variables: the political/administrative divide and the leader/non-leader distinction.

Examining the independent variables, we expect a differentiated picture. Since satisfaction is often connected to contact with street-level public employees, we expect that people scoring high on satisfaction will relatively trust bureaucrats and non-leaders more. This will probably also be the case for citizens in smaller municipalities, women, and people

working in the public sector. A different profile – relatively more trust in politicians and leaders – is expected for people leaning left politically, and with high political activity locally. Length of residency and age, two rather close variables, lead to no differentiated expectations, because these variables may both relate to knowledge and proximity to political leaders, but also increase practical experience with bureaucrats and local services. Concerning education, we expect that higher education levels make it easier to contact and trust leaders, while the trust of highly educated individuals is probably not influenced by the political/administrative divide. Based on a difference in political-administrative culture, we expect that people in Japan will have relatively more trust in bureaucrats than politicians, while the opposite is expected in Norway.

Data and methods.

As part of a study of the characteristics and changes of local governments in Japan and Norway, internet-based surveys of 3,100 Japanese citizens and 1,030 Norwegians were conducted in March 2015 and February 2016, respectively. A survey company was contracted to deliver a sample in both countries that was representative in terms of gender, age, income, and education. Respondents included both men and women in the age groups 20+, 30+, 40+, 50+, and 60+, with 310 persons for each subgroup in Japan and 103 in Norway. The Japanese and Norwegian surveys consisted of 27 and 20 items, respectively, including background information on the respondents. Respondents were asked a number of questions regarding their perceptions of values and practices in local government policy and management using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The main dependent variable in this study, *generalized trust*, is based on the following question – “To what extent do you trust your local government/municipalities and its leaders?” The question had three sub-questions on local political leaders, councilors/ordinary politicians, and bureaucrats in local administrative units, respectively. There were five response categories on a Likert scale from “trust very much” to “do not trust at all.” Generalized trust (Trust 1¹) is based on an additive index of the three sub-questions. In addition, it used two measures on differentiated trust – Trust 2², which is a variable that contrasts trust in politicians (political

¹ T1=(evaluations of trust in head of government (political leader), councilors and bureaucrats)/3.

² T2=(evaluations of trust in political leader and councilors)/2 – evaluation of trust in bureaucrats.

leaders and councilors) with trust in bureaucrats, and Trust 3³, also a variable contrasting trust in leaders with trust in non-leaders (councilors and bureaucrats).

Among the independent variables, satisfaction with public services (S) is based on the question, “To what extent are you satisfied with the services provided by the local government/municipality?” using the generalized category of “general policy/services.” The answers were on a five-point Likert scale from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied.”

The four independent variables in the political-cultural category were the following: *Left-Right political continuum* (P) based on the question “When we define our political standpoint, we often use the left (liberal) and right (conservative) terminology. On a scale from 1 (left) to 10 (right), how would you define your political ideology?” *Size of municipality* (N) was measured on a seven-point scale from 1 (below 1,000 inhabitants) to 7 (above 500,000). *Length of residency* (L) was measured on a scale from 1 (less than one year) to 5 (more than 20 years). *Activity in local community* was an additive index based on the general question “How active are you in your own community?,” with four sub-questions related to “having several friends in the neighborhood to talk with” (C1), “voted in recent local government elections” (C2), and “member of local neighborhood association” (C3).

The four independent demographic variables were *gender* (G), *age* (A) (from 1, 19 and under to 7, over 70 years), *education* (E) (from 1, secondary school graduate, to 4, university graduate), and *occupation* (O) (dichotomous variable with public servants/employees versus all others). The country factor was coded in a dummy variable (Japan=1, Norway=0).

Main results

Overview of trust measures.

Table 2 shows the scores on the three dependent trust variables for Japan and Norway. Concerning generalized trust (T1), Norway scores higher than Japan. Japanese citizens trust administrations more than politicians, while the opposite is the case for Norway. Regarding the leader/non-leader distinction, there is no difference between the countries.

³ T3=evaluation of trust in political leader – (evaluations of trust on councilors and bureaucrats)/2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the dependent trust variables in Japan and Norway.

Variable	Country	Mean	SD	Min	Max
T1	Japan	2.840	0.694	1	5
	Norway	3.028	0.822	1	5
T2	Japan	-0.053	0.508	-3	3
	Norway	0.116	0.632	-3	3.5
T3	Japan	0.134	0.566	-3	4
	Norway	0.138	0.612	-2.5	3

Tables A1 and A2 in the appendix show the correlations among the three dependent variables. The pattern is the same for both countries, but the correlations are stronger for Norway. The strongest positive correlations are between T2 and T3, meaning the political/administrative distinction variable and the leader/non-leader variable. However, the generalized trust variable (T1) also correlates positively with T2 and T3.

Overview of the independent variables.

Tables A3 and A4 in the appendix give an overview of the independent variables. These tables show that the satisfaction with local services was slightly higher in Japan than in Norway. Somewhat surprisingly, Norwegian citizens leaned slightly more toward the right politically than Japanese citizens. The Japanese respondents lived in larger municipalities than the Norwegians and had lived there slightly longer on average. Concerning local activities, Norwegians had significantly more friends in the community to talk to than the Japanese, which must reflect size. The Norwegians had voted much more than the Japanese in local elections, while the Japanese were members of a local neighborhood association far more often, i.e., there was a typical cultural difference between respondents from the two countries. The Japanese respondents had slightly higher education levels than the Norwegians. Concerning occupation, the Norwegians were more often employed as public servants/employees, reflecting the different size of the public sector.

Main result of the regression analysis.

Table 3 presents the regression results for the pooled data from Japan and Norway.⁴ The main result is that satisfaction with local services is strongly positively correlated with general trust in the government. Comparing the results for each country in Tables A5 and A6 in the appendix, we see that this correlation is stronger in Norway than in Japan. Overall, there is also a positive correlation between service satisfaction and trust in leaders/non-leaders, even though this correlation is rather weak. However, looking at the difference between the countries, this correlation only holds up for Norway. For T2, the trust related to the politics/administration divide, the results point in different directions, since the results for Norway show a positive significant correlation, while there is a negative correlation for Japan, in line with the frequency results showing relative more trust for politicians in Norway and more trust for the administration in Japan, as expected.

Table 3. Regression for Pooled Data of Japan and Norway

Variable	T1 – general trust	T2 – political/ administrative trust	T3 – leaders/non- leaders trust
Satisfaction	0.549***	0.015	0.049***
Political belief	0.000	-0.011*	-0.006
Number of residents	-0.020**	-0.004	0.000
Length of residency	-0.016+	-0.012	-0.008
C1	0.016	0.001	0.022
C2	0.086***	-0.014	0.029
C3	0.085***	0.005	0.039+
Gender	-0.034+	-0.013	0.049**
Age	0.002	-0.007	0.011
Education	0.001	-0.022*	-0.013
Occupation	0.030	-0.212***	-0.042
Country	-0.195***	-0.175***	-0.003
Const.	1.405***	0.314***	-0.021
N	3895	3895	3895
Adjusted R ²	0.311	0.025	0.007
F	147.389	9.476	3.238

⁴ The number of respondents in the samples for Japan and Norway differ (the total numbers are 3,006 and 1,030, respectively). When we controlled for the same number (random sampling for Japan from 3,006 to 1,030), the results were generally the same as those in Table 3.

P	0.000	0.000	0.000
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+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Concerning political beliefs, the Left-Right political dimension, the only significant overall result was that respondents that are politically left-leaning had a slightly greater tendency to trust politicians than the administration. When this is differentiated by country, this only holds up for Japan. On the other hand, we find contrasting tendencies in the correlations of political attitudes or beliefs and general trust in municipalities. In Norway, as expected, people with more liberal or left-leaning beliefs are more likely to show more trust in the local government, i.e., the coefficient is negative. By contrast, political attitudes in Japan show a positive and significant effect of political attitudes on trust, meaning right-leaning people have more generalized trust in local governments.

Consistent with these expectations, we find an overall negative and significant relation between size of municipality (N) and trust in the government, but only for general trust. This relationship is, however, only significant for Norway when differentiated. Concerning length of residency, people scoring high are slightly less likely to trust governments in general, but this correlation only holds up for Japan.

Two of the local activities variables show rather weak positive correlations, that is, people voting in local elections or who are members of a community association have more generalized trust in the system. This is the case for both countries concerning voting, but only for Japan for membership in a community organization, which is rather typical for Japanese society.

Turning to demographic variables, gender shows a somewhat divided general picture. Women have slightly more trust in government overall while men have more trust in leaders. However, the results for the countries show that women's general trust in local government is only the case for Japan, not for Norway, which was not expected. In both Japan and Norway, the expectation that males would have more trust in the municipality's political leaders than females was held.

Second, age has no significant correlations with either of the three dependent variables, but differentiating between the countries gives a more complex picture. Elderly people in Japan are more likely to trust in the government in general (T1), while the opposite is the case for Norway. Older people in Japan are less likely to trust in politicians than the administration (T2), while people in Norway are more likely to trust leaders than non-leaders.

The education factor does not show an overall positive and significant effect with general trust (T1), and this holds up when differentiating between Japan and Norway, which is surprising. Overall, people with high education levels trust politicians less than administrations, but this holds up only for Japan. In addition, people with higher education levels are less likely to trust leaders than non-leaders (T3), while we do not find any significant association between education and T2 or T3 in Norway.

Finally, we find a negative and significant association between occupation and T2 in both nations, meaning that people with low education levels have less trust in politicians than administrations. This is the case for both Japan and Norway.

In addition, the analysis using pooled data of Japanese and Norwegian people suggests that national factors such as culture and historical background have a significant effect on T1 and T2. As expected, Norwegian people generally have more trust in local governments than Japanese owing to the negative and significant coefficient for country factor (see Table 3). Similarly, the negative and significant coefficient in the regression for T2 shows that Japanese people place more trust in administrations or bureaucrats than politicians compared to Norwegian people. The results are consistent with our expectations regarding the influence of the country factor.

Table 4. Expectations and main results.

Independent variables	Expectations of generalized trust	Expectations of differentiated trust – relatively more trust in:
Satisfaction with public services	The more satisfied, the more trust Yes, clearly	Bureaucrats and non-leaders Yes, for bureaucrats in Japan, more trust for politicians and leaders in Norway
Left-Right political continuum	People leaning left will have more trust Yes for Norway, no for Japan	Politicians and leaders No
Size of municipality	Citizens of relatively smaller municipalities will have more trust Yes, for Norway	Bureaucrats and non-leaders No
Length of residency	The longer one’s residency, the higher their trust No, the opposite for Japan	No differentiation Yes
Activity in local community	The more activity, the higher the trust Yes, more for Japan	Politicians and leaders No
Gender	Women will score higher on trust Slight tendency for Japan	Bureaucrats and non-leaders Yes, women scoring lower for non-leaders
Age	Older people will score higher on trust Yes for Japan, no for Norway	No differentiation Yes
Education	People with highest education will have most trust No	No difference regarding political/administrative leaders No, more trust in administration and non-leaders in Japan
Occupation	People working in the public sector will have most trust No	Bureaucrats and non-leaders Yes, for bureaucrats in both Countries
Country	People from Norway will score higher on trust than people from Japan Yes	Relatively more trust in bureaucrats than politicians in Japan, while the opposite is expected to be the case in Norway. Yes

Note: Results that differ from expectations are marked with bold.

Three observations can be made regarding Table 4, which compares the expectations and main results. First, the expectations related to satisfaction with services and three of the four cultural variables show results as expected for generalized trust, even though there is some variety between the countries. Few of the demographic variables show the expected results. Second, expectations related to the two variables of differentiated trust show expected results for satisfaction in Japan, fulfill only one of the expectations for the cultural variables, but show expected results for most of the demographic variables. Third, the results show quite a

differentiated pattern for Japan and Norway concerning generalized trust, reflecting expected differences in political and cultural features.

Discussion.

As summarized above, the results are generally consistent with the expectations for generalized trust when it comes to service satisfaction. Service satisfaction can be seen as both part of the diffuse support and specific support in Easton's (1965) terms, or their dynamic relationship. In both countries that were studied, people are both satisfied with the services and score relatively high on trust, so a high level of diffuse support or generalized trust may lead to strong specific support related to public services, or the other way around.

However, we find some important differences in determining trust in Japan and Norway. Satisfaction with local services for Norwegian people shows significant relations with greater trust in politicians than non-politicians and leaders than non-leaders, while Japanese people are less likely to trust in politicians and more likely to trust bureaucrats. This differentiated trust might be caused by differentiated evaluations of politicians and leaders in each society (Christensen, Yamamoto, and Aoyagi 2018). Norway in Northern Europe, with its large welfare state, has a high trust culture where people are both satisfied with public services and willing to pay higher taxes, which are closely connected (Christensen 2003). Politicians and leaders are highly respected and trusted, which leads to a higher voting rate than in Japan. By contrast, Japanese politics is more volatile and people trust bureaucrats more than politicians, which causes a lower voting rate (OECD 2017; Kettl 2017).

Second, political-cultural attitudes or beliefs, represented by four independent variables, have an overall effect on generalized trust, but show a differentiated pattern for Japan and Norway, mostly as expected. Conservative people in Japan are more likely to trust in local governments inconsistently with the expectations, while liberal people in Norway are more likely to trust in local governments as expected. This unexpected figure in Japan could be explained by the political character of local governments. The majority of mayors and councilors in municipalities have been conservative independents that are affiliated with no national party since the 1960s (Horiuchi 2009).⁵ The national government has consistently been controlled by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a conservative party, except for few years after the second world war. Local politics are also influenced by the LDP and the national

⁵ According to MIC (2018), 99.7% of mayors and 70.6% of councilors were independent in 2017.

government whose policy is highly oriented toward that of a welfare society (Samuels 1983) and connected to local governments through funding and guidance. The LDP has maintained full-scope policy for the people including employees or workers; it is the source for the maintenance of power. Supporters of dominant politicians with conservative beliefs are more likely to trust in the local government.

The development in Norway is different from that of Japan, as a background for the result that left-leaning people place greater trust in the government. Overall, the left-right divide is more historically significant, with the left parties, mainly the Labor Party, most often being in power both nationally and locally (Christensen 2003). This party has been seen as guaranteeing a large welfare state and has been more reluctant to launch new public reforms in an era of New Public Management. In contrast, right-leaning parties are seen as underscoring more individual choice (Christensen and Lægveid 2007).

Third, size has historically been considered important in democracies, as pointed out in a seminal study by Dahl and Tufte (1973), because proximity to political-administrative processes is easier in smaller political-geographical units, often leading to greater political engagement. This may explain why Norwegian respondents, belonging to smaller municipalities than those in Japan, express more trust in local governments.

Fourth, the correlations between voting and involvement in community activities and trust show both similarities and differences between Japan and Norway. The similarities relate to the lack of the effect of the social integration question (C1) (cf. Putnam 2000) and the effect of voting behavior on generalized trust. Regarding the differences, the relevance of voting is broader in Norway and relates to trust in politicians and leaders (Christensen 2003). This is consistent with a broader and more political leader-related version of democracy. On the other hand, participation in local neighborhood associations for Japanese citizens shows a positive and significant relationship with both generalized trust and trust in leaders. This shows a rather typical traditional cultural feature of Japan (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994; Tanaka 2001); this indicates that trust another institutional basis in Japan than in Norway.

Fifth, many studies have indicated that younger people are more likely to trust in and be satisfied with the public sector than older generations (Mayne and Hakhverdian 2017). This is the case with generalized trust for Norway, but not for Japan, which may be caused by more leeway for influence on young people in a less traditional society than Japan. Distrust by older Norwegians is, however, consistent with previous research (cf. Dalton 2005:146). It is also interesting that older people in Japan trust bureaucrats relatively more, while older people in Norway trust leaders relatively more.

Sixth, a surprising result is that people with higher education levels do not score highest on generalized trust. This may be caused by the fact that higher education also potentially gives more insight, especially in local governments with high proximity, and therefore also generates more criticism toward the dealings of authorities (Ma and Christensen 2018). The fact that people with higher education levels trust bureaucrats relatively more in both countries may be an effect of bureaucrats being the stable element that people are in touch with and that higher educated people may focus on professional competence.

Seventh, it is somewhat surprising that people working in the public sector do not have more generalized trust in local governments. This could be caused by skepticism about politicians; public employees in Japan and Norway are less likely to trust politicians than non-politicians. This shows that local government officials have similar preferences for the public administration. This may indicate that one's occupation status as a public servant has a more dominant impact on determining trust in local governments than one's national culture or system. A methodological point here is that government employment can take shape in many professions, i.e., many different positions and tasks, which makes it more difficult to generalize.

Finally, there are clear differences between the countries, as expected. People from Norway trust local governments more than people in Japan, and their trust is differentiated; Norwegians trust politicians because of a more vibrant local political scene, while Japanese trust bureaucrats in a more depoliticized local government. This shows the importance of different national cultural profiles (cf. Selznick 1957).

Conclusion.

Using survey data for citizens in Japan and Norway, we examined whether citizens of each country would hold different concepts of trust in local governments, the primary factors in determining trust, and whether the national factor would have a significant impact on trust (cf. Christensen, Yamamoto, and Aoyagi 2018). The analyses show that citizens of each country might hold different types of trust. The most stable and robust measure is generalized trust, while the other two concepts measured are the relative or differentiated trust between politicians and non-politicians, and that between leaders and non-leaders. The most influential factor correlated with trust is by far satisfaction with public services from the local government in both countries, as expected (cf. Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003).

Compared with demographics, political-cultural factors were the primary driver of generalized trust, while demographic factors played a more important role concerning trust in

the local government related to the differentiated types of trust. Therefore, the determining factor of trust differs by the type of trust. The country or national factor has a significant effect on the difference of trust in the local government. The larger differences lie in the effect of political beliefs or attitudes. Conservative people are more likely to trust the local government in Japan, while in Norway the influence of political beliefs is the reverse because the Left-Right dimension holds more overall importance (Christensen 2003).

Japanese people trust local governments more as they age, while by contrast, Norwegian people are less trustful as they age. This reversed figure of political beliefs might be caused by the experience effect related to the affiliation of the party in power over time. The unexpected fact that elder people in Norway had less trust in the local government than younger people may be caused by a more politicized local scene in Norway, more cynicism among older people with experience, and more diverse and local engagement by young people.

The finding that satisfaction with services is the major determinant of generalized trust may be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, it may suggest that performance is important for citizens, but since it relates to generalized trust, it may be symptomatic of the more general systemic functioning of the local government, and in that respect is closer to Easton's (1965) diffuse support concept. The other two major results could support the latter explanation. First, the political-cultural factors deal with collectively directed local activities and proximity, which have little differentiating effects on the other two trust measures, so this may be related to cultural integration in the community (cf. Krasner 1988). Second, the demographic factors, covering individual features, have more explanatory power on the two differentiated trust concepts but less to offer concerning generalized trust.

The limitations of our approach are related to the cross-sectional analysis, and the explanatory power of the two differentiated trust variables should be improved. Future work should define or refine the alternative measures on the relative trust in politicians and non-politicians and leaders and non-leaders. It would be meaningful to explore these causal relationships using SEM (structural equation model) and panel data.

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Appendix

Table A1. Correlations among Different Trust Measures in Japan

	T1	T2	T3
T1	1		
T2	0.048**	1	
T3	0.043*	0.559**	1

Table A2. Correlation among Different Trust Measures in Norway

	T1	T2	T3
T1	1		
T2	0.191**	1	
T3	0.204**	0.707**	1

Table A3. Descriptive Statistics for All Variables in Japan

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Satisfaction	3.13	0.674	1	5
Political belief	5.51	1.821	1	10
Number of residents	5.67	1.166	1	7
Length of residency	3.81	1.319	1	5
C1	0.45	0.497	0	1
C2	0.49	0.500	0	1
C3	0.55	0.498	0	1
Gender	0.50	0.500	0	1
Age	4.00	1.414	2	6
Education	3.07	0.912	1	4
Occupation	0.04	0.186	0	1

Table A4. Descriptive Statistics in Norway

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Satisfaction	3.08	0.843	1	5
Political belief	5.65	2.429	1	10
Number of residents	4.54	1.502	1	7
Length of residency	3.88	1.335	1	5
C1	0.69	0.463	0	1
C2	0.76	0.428	0	1
C3	0.21	0.404	0	1
Gender	0.50	0.500	0	1
Age	4.00	1.415	2	6
Education	2.93	1.049	1	4
Occupation	0.11	0.313	0	1

Table A5. Relationships between Trust and Satisfaction, Political-cultural, and Demographic Factors in Japan

Variable	T1 (General trust)	T2 (Political trust -administrative trust)	T3 (Trust in leaders- trust in non-leaders)
Satisfaction	0.508(0.490)***	-0.034(-0.045)*	0.018(0.022)
Political belief	0.019(0.051)**	-0.008(-0.030)+	-0.003(-0.011)
Number of residents	-0.014(-0.024)	0.003(0.006)	0.012(0.024)
Length of residency	-0.019(-0.035)*	-0.007(-0.017)	-0.005(-0.011)
C1	0.023(0.016)	0.018(0.018)	0.029(0.026)
C2	0.091(0.065)***	-0.031(-0.031)	0.018(0.016)
C3	0.069(0.049)**	0.005(0.005)	0.049(0.043)*
Gender	-0.044(-0.032)+	-0.015(-0.015)	0.048(0.043)*
Age	0.016(0.032)+	-0.015(-0.042)+	0.003(0.009)
Education	0.005(0.006)	-0.024(-0.043)*	-0.021(-0.034)+
Occupation	0.035(0.009)	-0.266(-0.097)***	-0.048(-0.016)
Const	1.147***	0.262**	0.027
N	3006	3006	3006
Adjusted R ²	0.261	0.017	0.003
F	97.535	5.774	1.825
P	0.000	0.000	0.045

+p<0.1, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001, Parentheses show standardized coefficients.

Table A6. Relationships between Trust and Satisfaction, Political-cultural, and Demographic Factors in Norway

Variable	T1	T2	T3
Satisfaction	0.622(0.628)***	0.118(0.154)***	0.112(0.154)***
Political belief	-0.032(-0.095)**	-0.012(-0.048)	-0.010(-0.039)
Number of residents	-0.034(-0.062)*	-0.015(-0.036)	-0.023(-0.057)+
Length of residency	0.003(0.005)	-0.025(-0.052)	-0.014(-0.032)
C1	0.032(0.017)	-0.069(-0.049)	-0.005(-0.004)
C2	0.091(0.046)+	0.092(0.059)+	0.100(0.068)+
C3	0.076(0.037)	0.036(0.023)	0.017(0.012)
Gender	0.023(0.014)	0.014(0.011)	0.070(0.057)+
Age	-0.039(-0.067)*	0.023(0.050)	0.027(0.063)+
Education	0.008(0.010)	-0.010(-0.016)	0.014(0.024)
Occupation	0.013(0.005)	-0.139(-0.066)*	-0.024(-0.012)
Const	1.455***	-0.104	-0.260+
N	888	888	888
Adjusted R ²	0.424	0.032	0.032
F	60.483	3.659	3.643
P	0.000	0.000	0.000

+p<0.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001, Parentheses show standardized coefficients.