BUILDING SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRUST: THE ROLE OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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1. Introduction

At the inaugural International Conference on Engaging Communities held in Brisbane, Australia in August 2005, Robert Putnam set the audience a task: to come up with new ways for people to engage in their communities. An active civic community is essential to Putnam's idea of social capital, which he defines as social networks and associated norms of reciprocity and trust (Putnam 2000b). Putnam is urging people to 'get engaged' because his social capital work in both Italy and the United States has highlighted two important points: those communities where civic engagement is low are less trusting, less cooperative and less economically successful; and that with a decline in civic engagement has come a decline in trust.

Putnam is not the only social theorist who is concerned about declining trust. Declining social trust (trust in strangers) and political trust (trust in government and its organizations) has been highlighted in most western democracies (for example Bean 1999; Misztal 1996; Newton 1999; Papadakis 1999; Putnam 2000b; Uslaner 2002; Warhurst 2004; Warren 1999; Worthington 2001; Wuthnow 1998). In Australia, some maintain there is no evidence of a decline in trust in political institutions (Worthington 2001), whereas others show a sharp decline in trust in both government and non government organizations in Australia (Papadakis 1999; Warhurst 2004).

My focus is on the trust aspect of social capital, and how trust is developed. Trust is conceptualized here as an attitude

'toward something', rather than 'a state of somebody', in the way that Thomas and Znaniecki understood an attitude as: "…a predisposition to act in relation to some social object" (Coser 1977:512). In this paper, trust is an attitude which people have toward other people, groups, roles, or organizations, and which underpins social relationships. Building attitudes of trust towards government and its organizations is important because it creates effective government and makes democracy work (Putnam 1993), creates economic prosperity (Fukuyama 1995), and encourages voluntary compliance with government regulation (Ayres and Braithwaite 1992; Braithwaite 1995; 1998; 2003; Braithwaite et al. 1994; Tyler 1984; 2001; 2004). However, how trust is developed is not well understood.

In this paper I will examine the role of civic engagement in the development of social trust (trust in strangers), and the development of political trust (trust in government and its organizations) in the Australian context. I argue that trust is a multi dimensional concept with political trust comprising both rational and relational perspectives. If there is a relational component to political trust, then it is feasible also to test the impact of civic engagement on the creation of political trust.

First, I will briefly review the literature on social capital and trust, from which five hypotheses are developed. I will then describe the method used to collect data and the results of my analyses. The research question being explored in this paper is if social and political trust are declining, how are they developed? I will examine this in two ways: first, by comparing Putnam's civic engagement thesis with that of the early sociologists and psychologists that social trust is formed in the family and in one's close personal circle; and second, by testing whether social trust generalizes to political trust or whether political trust is based on rational evaluation of performance. I will then describe and discuss the findings, and conclude with some implications for the building of trust.

2. Competing theoretical perspectives on trust and social capital

Essential to social capital is the building of social relationships which allow people to work together to produce positive outcomes for individuals and for communities. However, social capital can have negative outcomes (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Putnam 2004; Woolcock 1998). Putnam advocates the building of these relationships through civic engagement and associational membership as espoused in the Tocquevillean perspective (Farr 2004; Maloney, Smith and Stoker 2000; Putnam 1993). In Putnam's view, people's engagement in their community not only builds trust in strangers and social cooperation, it encourages effective government which builds political trust (Rothstein and Stolle 2002).

Putnam's conception of social capital sits within the recent move towards a humanistic or relational view of action using socio-psychological and cultural explanations such as "rules, values, [and] norms" (Sztompka 1999:2). Thus, trust can also be seen as an orientation towards society, or an attitude towards others based on moral obligation (Coser 1977; Misztal 1996; Sztompka 1999; Tyler and Kramer 1996; Uslaner 2002).

However, Putnam draws the line in extending the causal link from trust in strangers to trust in government. He maintains that social trust and political trust are theoretically different (Putnam 2004; Putnam 2000b:137), perhaps indicating his acceptance of the view that political trust is based on rational evaluation of performance. The utilitarian perspective of trust is common, especially where government is concerned. Political trust is regarded as a 'rational response' to government and assumes that to trust presupposes consideration of information and an assessment of risk,

resulting in a strategic or calculative decision in terms of one's self-interest (for example Coleman 1988; Gambetta 2000; Hardin 2002; Luhmann 2000; Yamagishi 2001). This perspective applies to both social and political trust where people, and government and its organizations, are evaluated on the basis of their past performance or expectations of their future performance.

Criticisms of social capital resulted in a reconceptualized theory in the late 1990s to distinguish three types of social capital: bonding; bridging; and linking (Narayan 1999; Stone 2003; Szreter and Woolcock 2004; Woolcock 1998; Woolcock 2001; Woolcock and Narayan 2000). This advance in social capital theory differentiates the types of social relationships people have: relationships with those close to them who share a similar social identity; with those unlike them but with equal social status; and with those unlike them where there are social status and power differences (Szreter and Woolcock 2004).

Putnam's concern is with the decline in 'bridging' social capital (Szreter and Woolcock 2004) because fewer people civically engage. The result is that we trust less, cooperate less and 'get by' by relying on those who are like us (Putnam 1993; 2000b). Alternatively, bridging or reaching out to others unlike us through civic engagement and associational membership builds trust in strangers, greater cooperation and we 'get ahead' (Putnam 1993; Putnam 2004; Putnam 2000b; Stone 2003).

However, not all agree that civic engagement builds trust (Claibourn and Martin 2000; Stolle 2001). Stolle (2001) found no empirical connection between membership of associations and generalized attitudes of trust or reciprocity. Instead, it is trusting people who self-select into associations (Rothstein and Stolle 2002; Stolle 2001).

3. Hypotheses and research design

The first issue arising from the literature is with the development of social trust. From the socio-psychological/cultural perspective, people's socialization experiences create an attitude of trust in strangers; those people unlike us with whom we are unfamiliar but who we see as social equals. However, the problem arises with the timing of the socialization. Do people's experiences as infants and young children in the family and their close personal circle influence them to trust others or not? Alternatively, does the later experience of joining with others in voluntary and social associations create attitudes of generalized trust?

I suggest that a foundation of trust is crucial to both bridging and linking, and that this foundation has its basis in the family, that is, in the bonding aspect of social capital. While it sounds plausible that trust may be an outcome of civic engagement, I argue that for this to occur there must a foundation of trust learned in our close and intimate circle (Cooley 1956; Erikson 1950; Parsons 1955). That is, we learn to trust, or not to trust others, from those we bond with. It is these lessons which determine whether we bond in a way that allows us to 'get by', or whether our bonding teaches us to trust others outside our intimate circle to the extent that we can reach out to others to bridge and link and thus, 'get ahead' (Putnam 2004; Stone 2003).

Two alternative hypotheses are suggested: that social trust develops through our socialization experiences of civic engagement and associational membership; and that social trust develops from our socialization experiences with our family and close personal circle.

The second problem that this paper examines is the development of political trust. The dominant view is from the rational choice perspective. However, if trust is multi

dimensional, there is no reason why a socio-psychological/cultural perspective can not be examined in this context. Thinking more broadly of social capital in terms of bridging and linking suggests that engagement in social networks with those who are unlike us will build trust and cooperation not only with social equals but with those where there is a status or power difference, such as those in government – provided there is a foundation of trust. Again, there are two hypotheses: first, that trust generalizes from strangers to those institutions less familiar to us, such as government, its organizations, and systems; and second, that we trust government and its organizations based on our evaluations of their performance. A third hypothesis will test the multi dimensional view: social and political trust develop from our socialization experiences together with our evaluation of government performance.

Figure 1 below outlines a conceptual model which incorporates both the relational and rational perspectives.
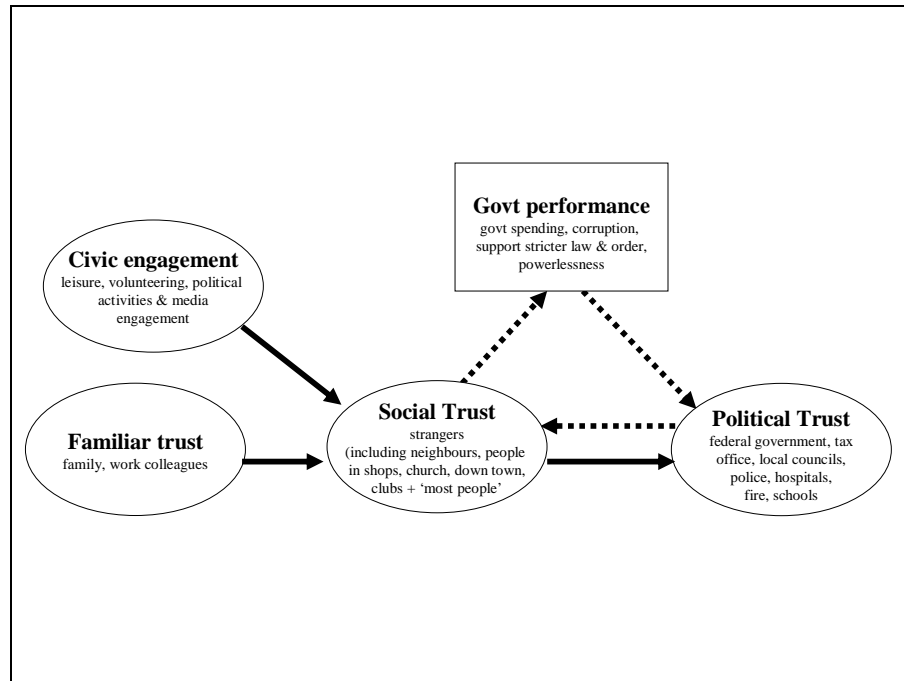
Figure 1: Conceptual model: a multi dimensional view of trust development

This suggests a research design that includes measures of civic engagement, trust, and government performance (see Appendix 1 for the concepts and measures).

Civic engagement

Using the activities which Putnam (2000a; 1993; 2000b) highlighted as a guide, I identified four dimensions of civic engagement: leisure activity, volunteering activity, political activity, and engagement with the media (see Appendix 2). Voting in elections and referenda is compulsory in Australia, so these factors were excluded from political activity. The four dimensions were grouped theoretically on the basis of Putnam's work in Italy and the United States.

Thirty-four items were rated by respondents in terms of how often they actually engaged in the behavior. The emphasis was on behavior, as opposed to what they would like to do or try to do. The aim was to assess diversity of participation rather than a measure of predisposition to social engagement or a measure of social well-being (see Braithwaite et al. 1992). Indices of civic engagement were constructed by counting the number of activities participated in within each of the four dimensions. To form the indices, the items were dichotomized to obtain a measure of regular civic engagement where respondents had to participate in the activity "monthly, weekly or daily" versus "never and sometimes".

Trust

The commonly used survey question measuring social trust asks: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people". This measure has been criticized methodologically on the grounds that single item measures can not account for measurement error; it may be measuring the trustworthiness of the respondent rather than how much they trust others; possible respondent confusion about the meaning of the response options; and lack of context (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Hughes, Bellamy and Black 1999; Leigh 2004; Mishler and Rose 1998; Paxton 1999; Uslaner 2002). Nevertheless, most people use it for comparative purposes as it is commonly used in major surveys, such as the World Values Survey and the Eurobarometer survey (Helliwell and Putnam 2004; Uslaner 2002).

Even though it seems more likely that trust is a multi dimensional concept (Braithwaite 1998; Tyler and Kramer 1996), few surveys measure both social and political trust (Newton 1999). Therefore, I asked about people's trust in seventeen different groups of people and organizations. A

principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation divided these seventeen variables into four types of trust: (a) social trust; (b) political trust in organizations remote from us; (c) political trust in government organizations providing services at local level; and (d) familiar trust. 56% of the variance was accounted for. (See Appendix 3 for the factor analysis results, the items making up the scales, and the descriptive statistics for each scale.)

The factor analysis produced several interesting results. Political trust was divided into two distinct dimensions: organizations people know and hear about but with which they are less likely to have direct contact (such as the federal government, local councils, the tax office, and the media); and those organizations which provide services to the community, and with which people are more likely to have direct contact (such as schools, hospitals, police and fire stations). While it was thought that Australians would feel familiar with their neighbors and consider them as friends, it is not a surprise that neighbors are thought of as strangers (see also Uslaner 2002). People no longer live in the same neighborhood for most of their lives as was once the case. There was only one double loading: co-workers loaded with both the social trust and the familiar trust scales. This is not surprising as we know some co-workers well and others not as well. As the loading with the social trust scale was low, the item was retained and left as part of the familiar trust scale. The single item social trust variable was not aligned with any of the four groups of trust.

The relationship between the four trust dimensions found above and the commonly used single item measure of social trust is examined using Pearson's product-moment correlations (see Table 1 below). These correlations confirm that the different types of trust are significantly and positively related, and that related concepts are being measured but not the same concepts. As the Cronbach alpha levels (see

Appendix 3) are higher for each scale than the inter-correlation coefficients, there is support for the use of these scales as separate measures of trust.

Table 1: Intercorrelations between trust dimensions and single social trust item

Trust measures	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Familiar trust	-				
2. Social trust (single item)	.351**	-			
3. Social trust (multi item)	.527**	.399**	-		
4. Political trust (local)	.333**	.269**	.494**	-	
5. Political trust (remote)	.254**	.242**	.405**	.470**	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Government performance

According to rational theories of trust, people's evaluation of government performance in providing public goods affects their trust in government (Hetherington 2001; Kent Jennings 1998; Putnam 1993; Tyler 1997). Evaluation includes both the quantity and quality of performance (Bouckaert and Van de Walle 2003; Dean, Keenan and Kenney 1980; Hetherington 2001). Four measures were used to infer public perceptions of government performance: satisfaction with spending of public money (Putnam 1993); citizen support for giving government more power to enforce law and order (Putnam 1993); citizen perceptions of honesty or corruption in politics (Putnam 1993; Scholz and Lubell 1998); and people's feelings of powerlessness within the democracy (Putnam 1993; Scholz and Lubell 1998).

4. Method

To answer the questions raised it would be best to collect longitudinal data. However, that type of data are not

available, so the strategy was to ask people directly for the trust they have in different people and organizations, as well as for the frequency of their engagement in a range of activities.

Data were collected using the 'Community Participation and Citizenship' Survey (Job 2000), a self-completion survey with a standardized questionnaire. The sampling method, which was randomized from the electoral rolls of the two most populous Australian states of New South Wales and Victoria, selected 1,999 people. Prospective respondents received an explanatory letter one week before posting the survey package to their home address. The survey was mailed to respondents during the period August to December 2000. The survey package contained a covering letter, the survey, and a reply-paid envelope. Respondents were not offered any incentives for completion. The 16-page questionnaire comprised 58 questions with 183 variables. Space was given at the end of the survey for respondents to write further comments, which 14% did. Non respondents received two reminder cards. A total of 837 useable responses were received. When adjusted for persons who had moved or who were deceased the response rate was 43%.

Representativeness was tested using the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001 national census results. The sample did not differ significantly from the population on the distribution of males and females. Respondents less than 34 years of age were slightly under-represented in the sample. There was a small over-representation of those with higher education levels and of those whose occupations favor writing. These trends were similar to those encountered in other survey procedures conducted at this time (Mearns and Braithwaite 2001). The survey sample was considered to be sufficiently representative of the general population to test structural relationships. This was done with statistical tests comprising correlational analysis and multivariate regression.

5. Findings

Building social trust

Examination of Putnam's civic engagement thesis

Analysis began in SPSS version 11 with two tests of Putnam's social capital thesis that associational membership and involvement in civic activities creates social trust. The first test used the single item measure of social trust, and the second used the multi item measure of social trust of those in your town, your neighborhood, church and clubs. The four measures of civic engagement (activities involving leisure, volunteering, politics and media interest) were used to predict social trust using ordinary least squares multiple regression analysis.

The results for the single item social trust variable in Table 2 below showed that only engagement in personal activities had a significant positive relationship with social trust. This partly agrees with Putnam's findings, but there is no effect for volunteering, which Putnam maintains is the most important factor in building social trust. This is a very poor model with only 4% of the variance being predicted, meaning that 96% of the variation in social trust is not accounted for.

When the single social trust item was replaced with the multi item social trust variable, the most significant relationship was between volunteering and social trust. There was also a weak relationship with personal activities. These results are in accordance with Putnam's predictions. However, this again was a poor model with only 5% of the variance being predicted. These tests suggest some association between

civic engagement and social trust, but this is not the main part of the story of how trust develops.

Table 2: Testing Putnam's social capital thesis

	Single item social trust variable		Multi item social trust variable	
Predictors	r	β	r	β
Civic Engagement				
Regular engagement in personal activities	.189**	.155***	.160**	.101**
Regular engagement in volunteering activities	.108**	.040 ns	.202**	.164***
Regular engagement in political activities	.130**	.073 ns	.100**	.024 ns
Regular engagement with the media	.053 ns	.040 ns	.057 ns	.049 ns
Adjusted R²	.040		.049	

$p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$
Note: ns means not significant at the .05 level.
β = standardized regression coefficients
r = bivariate correlations

Is there an explanation for the poor civic engagement results? Generally, the survey respondents do not civically engage to any great extent in personal, volunteering or political activities. Their major engagement is with the news: 90% of respondents regularly listened to the news on the radio and 89% regularly watched the news on television. Written comments in the back of the survey implied that people would like to be more engaged in their communities and gave reasons for lack of involvement, including study pressures, work pressures, old age and poor health. As one respondent said, "Section A made me feel like a couch potato but in fact I work so hard that my spare time has no room for the activities you itemized". Others detailed their activities, which can be broadly summarized as volunteering,

charity work, and personal development and interest. Those who were retired seemed particularly keen to let it be known that they were active in their communities.

Nevertheless, the indices used in the regression above are measures of the total number of activities a person engaged in regularly. Even regular engagement did not predict social trust.

Comparison of Putnam's thesis with a basic socialization model

Table 3: Comparison of Putnam's thesis with a basic socialization model

Predictors	Multi item social trust variable	
	r	β
Trust		
Familiar Trust	.527**	.506***
(trust in family, boss and co-workers)		
Civic Engagement		
Regular engagement in personal activities	.160**	.032 ns
Regular engagement in volunteering activities	.202**	.123**
Regular engagement in political activities	.100*	-.001 ns
Regular engagement with the media	.057 ns	.062 ns
Adjusted R^2	.293	

*$p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$*
Note: ns means not significant at the .05 level.
β = standardized regression coefficients
r = bivariate correlations

Next I compared the civic engagement variables with the thesis of early social theorists that social trust is built from trust in one's circle of personal acquaintances and intimates. I continued to use the multi item social trust variable, and excluded the single item social trust variable.

In Table 3 above the only relationship between civic engagement and social trust is with regular engagement in volunteering activities, as Putnam maintains. Strongly predicting social trust is trust in one's close personal circle. The introduction of trust has improved the model, with 29% of the variance now predicted.

Generalizing social trust to government institutions

Next I tested the hypothesis that social trust can generalize to government institutions or organizations. In accordance with the results of the factor analysis, I differentiated between trust in institutions providing services at the local level (local political trust), and trust in remote political institutions (remote political trust).

The results in the left column of Table 4 below show that social trust was the strongest predictor of trust in local service institutions – that is, in fire stations, police, schools and hospitals. It is also interesting that trust in one's personal circle remains a significant, although weak, predictor of trust in local service institutions. Regular engagement with the media is weakly significant.

Turning to the right-hand column in Table 4 below, the strongest predictor of trust in the remote political institutions was trust in local service institutions. Nearly as strong a predictor was social trust, with trust in one's personal circle dropping out. Now, civic engagement has nothing to do with trust in government organizations.

These results indicate social trust does generalize to government and its organizations. It appears that relational factors have quite a bit to do with the development and maintenance of trust in government institutions. Trust starts in the family and one's personal circle, and ripples out to encompass strangers, service organizations at local level and then more remote political organizations.

Table 4: Generalizing social trust to government institutions

Predictors	Political trust (local)		Political trust (remote)	
	r	β	r	β
Trust				
Familiar Trust (trust in family, boss and co-workers)	.333**	.113*	.254**	.024 ns
Social Trust (trust in strangers)	.494**	.442***	.405**	.213***
Political Trust (Trust in local service institutions)	-	-	.470**	.351***
Civic Engagement				
Regular engagement in personal activities	.043 ns	-.038 ns	.073*	.025 ns
Regular engagement in volunteering activity	.066 ns	-.021 ns	.086*	.023 ns
Regular engagement in political activity	.023 ns	-.024 ns	-.004 ns	-.053 ns
Regular engagement with the media	.101**	.081*	.098**	.055 ns
Adjusted R^2	.251		.256	

$p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$
Note: ns means not significant at the .05 level.
β = standardized regression coefficients
r = bivariate correlations

Both models in Table 4 are good ones. However, with less than 30% of the variance predicted, there remains the possibility that there are other factors predicting trust in government organizations.

Adding a rational perspective to the development of political trust

The final model, shown in Table 5 below, retains trust and civic engagement, and adds variables which evaluate government performance.

Trust in local service institutions

The most significant predictor of trust in local service institutions (see Table 5 below) is social trust. These government organizations are a visible part of the local community which many people would interact with on a regular basis. It is not surprising that being trusting of strangers would extend to those strangers who work in local service organizations. The positive and significant result for familiar trust supports the argument that the trust we learn from those close to us ripples beyond them to include strangers in our community, including those in government organizations. The significant positive relationship between support for stricter law and order and trust in local service institutions indicates that people trust the police to deliver security to them. Positive evaluation of government spending in meeting their needs builds trust in government organizations which deliver services at the local level. Even so, the significant negative result for corruption in politics indicates that people retain a healthy skepticism of government. If individuals perceive corruption in politics, their trust in local institutions is adversely affected.

There is no effect for any of the civic engagement variables.

The model is a good one with 30% of the variance explained. These results suggest that people who trust both those in their close personal circle and those they do not know, and who positively evaluate government performance in meeting their needs will have greater trust in local service institutions. However, their trust is reduced by an awareness of corruption in politics.

Trust in remote political institutions

The factors which predict trust in the more remote political institutions are in the column on the right of Table 5. With 45% of the variance predicted, the remote political trust model is strong. The highly significant major predictor is corruption. Perceptions of corruption in politics decrease people's trust in government. People's feelings about the behavior of politicians are demonstrated by the comments of one respondent who wrote:

> I am concerned that Govt listens unduly to, and is guided by, the extremely wealthy … and the single issue lobby groups … I feel the general public is treated via the old Mushroom rule – 'kept in the dark and fed on bullshit'. Thus the general public wavers between anger and apathy, because we never know the truth. We *try* to elect good people, and trust them to operate with integrity. I'm afraid it's often not the case.

This comment also supports the significant result for feelings of powerlessness: people's perceptions that government neither listens to them nor cares about them, and tries to exploit them is associated with lower trust in remote political institutions. These results strongly suggest that people are watchful of

corrupt behavior in government, and that the way they are treated by government does matter to them.

The significant negative results for corruption and powerlessness may provide an explanation for the decline of trust in politicians, government and its organizations.

Table 5: Creation of trust in government and its institutions

Predictors	Political trust (local)		Political trust (remote)	
	r	β	r	β
Trust				
Familiar trust	.333**	.112*	.254**	-.026 ns
Social trust	.494**	.366***	.405**	.118**
Political trust (local)	-	-	.470**	.241***
Civic engagement				
Regularly engage in personal activities	.043 ns	-.037 ns	.073*	-.019 ns
Regularly engage in volunteering activities	.066 ns	-.027ns	.086*	-.009ns
Regularly engage in political activities	.023 ns	-.013 ns	-.002	-.047 ns
Regularly engage with the media	.101**	.045 ns	.098**	.008 ns
Government performance				
Wise government spending	.250**	.112**	.409***	.146***
Support for stricter law and order	.122**	.164***	-.007	.060 ns
Feelings of powerlessness	-.214**	.001 ns	-.415***	-.125**
Perceptions of corruption in politics	-.318**	-.150**	-.569***	-.348***
Adjusted R^2	.300		.451	

*$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$
Note: ns means not significant at the .05 level
β = standardized regression coefficients
r = bivariate correlations

The positive relationship between trust and government spending confirms that people's trust is built through rational evaluation of government performance in wisely spending taxes to provide services which benefit them. These findings indicate people's awareness of both the quantity and, particularly, the quality of the performance of those in government institutions.

Even though rational factors figure strongly in Table 5 above, relational factors clearly play just as prominent a part in building trust in remote political institutions. This is evidenced by the strong positive result for people's trust in their local service organizations, as well as trust in strangers. The interesting result here is that the strength of the trusting attitude people have towards strangers and local service institutions continues to ripple through to political institutions despite perceptions of unethical and uncaring behavior. That is, negative evaluation of government performance does not destroy the attitudes of trust people have in government and its organizations.

Again, the results for civic engagement and remote political institutions are non-significant.

The results of the regression analyses above indicate that both evaluation of government performance and social trust have a significant impact on political trust.

Discussion and implications for the building of trust/social capital in Australia

These findings support the argument that trust is a multi dimensional concept, comprising both relational and rational factors. A multi dimensional view of trust echoes the dimensions of a reconceptualized social capital, highlighting

bonding, bridging and linking. While social capital acknowledges different types of social relationships, these results highlight that attitudes of trust ripple out to build and support these social relationships.

There is only very weak support for the idea that civic engagement and associational membership creates social trust. This support is not strong compared with the effect for socialization within one's family and close personal circle. The main explanation for the creation of social trust is that we learn to trust through our bonding experiences with those close to us, such as family and workplace colleagues. The way we are socialized by our parents and families, then in our close relationships, determines whether we develop trusting attitudes towards those we do not know.

The socialization argument is further supported by the results for the development of political trust. If we trust strangers of an equal social status, we will have trusting attitudes towards those with differing social status and power. Once created, trust continues to ripple out to all those we interact with. Trust in government organizations providing services at the local level builds trust in organizations which are remote and political. Interestingly, familiar trust remained significant for trust in organizations which provide services at the local level.

While social relationships clearly matter, there was also support for the rational argument in the development of trust in government and its organizations. Support for stricter law and order indicates people's trust in the police to enforce the law. Evaluation that government spending is wise and meets their needs encourages people to trust government and its organizations. These rational calculations of self interest combine with a foundation of trusting attitudes to build trust in these organizations. Civic engagement has no effect.

From a rational perspective, the most interesting results are those for corruption and powerlessness. Perceptions of corruption negatively affected trust in organizations at the local level and at the remote political level, indicating to these organizations that people take note of how they perform. Perceptions of corruption are an evaluation of the ethical behavior of politicians and government officials, rather than a measure of people's attitudes towards abstract systems. It measures the attitudes citizens have towards the personal motives or intentions of politicians. Perceptions of corruption reduce the level of trust people have in their government and in government organizations. This does not mean that people do not trust, or have confidence, in the political system, or in the structures of government. The results in the regression tables speak for themselves. People's perceptions of corruption, or lack of honesty, in politics reduce their trust in the incumbents, but their trust in the system of government remains strong. This reduction in trust is a healthy attribute in a democracy, reminding government that people are watching them.

However, while people are aware of corruption, or lack of honesty, they do not feel they can do much about it where remote government organizations are concerned. People perceive government does not care about them, and does not listen to them. It is interesting that this is not the result for trust in government organizations at the local level, possibly because people feel they have some access to these organizations, and that they are listened to. This suggests a breakdown in linking social capital – people perceive that the unequal power dynamic prevents them from accessing and being heard by the powerful and remote. It is perhaps this dynamic which is partly responsible for both declining trust and declining civic engagement.

Rational and relational factors co-exist in creating trust in government. While rational factors, such as evaluation of

government performance, do play a role in creating political trust, the main story is that the basis of our trust is relational. Foundational to our interactions with strangers and government are the trusting attitudes we develop through socialization experiences in our family and close personal circle. These findings support the idea that trust is a multi dimensional concept, in the same way that social capital is multi dimensional.

Trust ripples from family to government, mediated by our trust in strangers. Civic engagement is not what builds trust.

These findings have implications for building trust and for increasing civic engagement. Government can help to build both social and political trust, and engage people in their communities, by encouraging and supporting safe and secure family and workplace environments which are responsive to people's needs. In what other ways might civic engagement be increased? By listening to citizens and showing they care about them, and by treating them as partners in democracy, governments can increase citizen participation in society and reduce their feelings of powerlessness.

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Appendix 1: Concepts and measures

Summary of variables used in this study (Number of items, Means, Standard Deviation (SD), and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients) (N = 837)

Construct	Concept Name	No of Items	Mean	SD	Alpha	Score items
Trust	Familiar trust	3	3.24	.57	.69	1 = trust not at all
	Social trust (multi)	5	2.70	.57	.81	4 = trust a lot
	Political trust (local)	4	3.22	.51	.69	
	Political trust (remote)	5	2.36	.56	.78	
	Social trust (single)	1	3.88	1.59	-	1 = you can't be too careful 7 = most people can be trusted
Civic Engagement	Personal exposure	10	4.35	2.02	-	1-5 (count of how many activities done sometimes, monthly, weekly, daily)
	Volunteer exposure	9	1.48	1.75	-	
	Political exposure	7	2.00	1.67	-	
	Media exposure	5	3.87	1.22	-	

	Personal regular	10	2.56	1.67	-	1-5 (count of how many activities done monthly, weekly, daily)
	Volunteer regular	9	.53	.90	-	
	Political regular	7	.88	1.01	-	
	Media regular	5	3.87	1.22	-	
Government Performance	Government spending	4	2.721	.657	.50	1 = strongly disagree 5 = strongly agree
	Corruption	2	3.95	1.268	.78	1 = honest 7 = corrupt
	Powerlessness	6	3.29	.782	.84	1 = strongly disagree 5 = strongly agree
	Stricter law and order	4	3.72	.687	.74	1 = strongly disagree 5 = strongly agree

Appendix 2: Civic engagement items

Activity index	Items in index
Personal/Leisure activity	Taking continuing or adult education classes Exercising or working out Attending a self-help group Attending clubs or associations Attending church or religious services Participating in special interest groups Participating in organised sporting activities Playing cards or board games with a usual group of friends Using a computer for personal e-mail, on-line discussions, chat groups Children participating in sports teams or sporting activities Children participating in music or dance lessons Children participating in art and craft activities Children participating in other activities
Political activity	Attending a town council meeting or public hearing Calling or sending a letter to an elected official Joining or contributing money to an organization in support of a cause Participating in union activities Joining with co-workers to solve a workplace problem Participating in professional or industry association activities Contacting local council members
Volunteering activity	Volunteering for church or religious group Volunteering for a political organization

	Volunteering for a school or tutoring program
	Volunteering for environmental organizations
	Volunteering for child or youth development programs
	Volunteering for arts or cultural organizations
	Volunteering for a hospital, health or counselling organization
	Volunteering for a local government, neighbourhood, civic or community group
	Volunteering for an organization to help the poor, elderly or homeless
Engagement with the media	Regularly watching the news on television
	Watched the news or a news program on television yesterday
	Regularly reading any daily newspaper or newspapers
	Read a daily newspaper yesterday
	Listening to the news on the radio

Appendix 3: Factor analysis of trust measures

The trust measures: results of a principal components factor analysis and varimax rotation of trust variables, and descriptive statistics

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Trust Scale	Social	Political (remote)	Political (local)	Familiar
	$M = 2.70$; $SD = .57$; $alpha = .81$	$M = 2.36$; $SD = .56$; $alpha = .78$	$M = 3.22$; $SD = .51$; $alpha = .69$	$M = 3.24$; $SD = .57$; $alpha = .69$
People encountered downtown	.852			
People in stores where you shop	.807			
People in same clubs or activities	.623			
People in neighborhood	.609			
People in church	.422			
Newspapers		.839		
Television news channels		.780		
Federal government		.621		
Local council		.598		
Tax Office		.577		
Fire stations			.815	
Police stations			.733	
Hospitals			.549	

Public schools			.532	
Boss or supervisor				.757
Immediate family				.700
People you work with	.409			.700
Most people can be trusted	-	-	-	-
%variance	16%	15%	12%	12%
Total variance	56%			