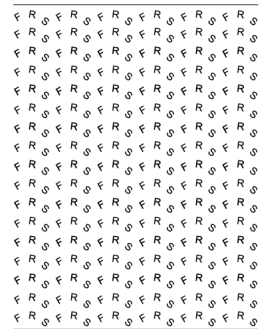

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RESILIENT
SYSTEMS

Strengthening Social Resilience – The Importance of Trust

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1 Introduction: Building up Social Resilience

Throughout the recent decades, major paradigm shifts have rapidly outpaced countries' bandwidth to effectively manage societal pressures and insecurity. Populations have been struggling to grapple with economic headwinds, the climate crisis and environmental extremes, increased urbanisation and population density, increased migration, and rapid technological change (*Inequality in a rapidly changing world: world social report*, 2020, p. 9). In this context, societies worldwide have trended towards polarisation and fragmentation: the generational, income and education gaps are widening (Berghammer & Adserà, 2022; Buheji, 2019) and political and ideological polarisation and extremism are simultaneously on the rise (McNeil-Willson et al., 2019; Watkin et al., 2022; Zeller & Vidra, 2022).

The existing climate of overwhelming contextual pressures and societal polarisation poses a great threat to the social resilience of societies, i.e., their capacity to “withstand external shocks to their social infrastructure” either in the form of “climactic extremes”, environmental hazards and pests or “social, economic and political upheaval” (Adger, 2000, p. 361). In line with the broader concept of resilience, social resilience refers to the social and interpersonal aspects of how communities or nations safeguard their well-being and undergo positive adaptation and transformation in the face of societal disruption and disorder (Copeland et al., 2020; Folke, 2016; Hall & Lamont, 2013; Herrman et al., 2011; Maguire & Hagan, 2007, p. 16). Being a complex and multifaceted concept, social resilience is primarily measured in terms of multiple indicators (Copeland et al., 2020; Cutter, 2016). Those commonly identified in the literature include the sense of belonging (Norris et al., 2008), community involvement or citizen participation (Norris et al., 2008; Saja et al., 2019), shared values or norms (Maguire & Hagan, 2007; Saja et al., 2019), social networks (Saja et al., 2019), social capital (Cutter, 2016), social cohesion (Norris et al., 2008; Saja et al., 2019), and effective communication (Norris et al., 2008; Saja et al., 2019).

The past years of societal polarisation have been detrimental to these very elements of connection, solidarity, mutual commitment and cooperation among members of society (Blanco & Rosales, 2020; *Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World*, 2021). Hence, societies across the world are facing straining capacities of social resilience required for recovery and rebounding from crises, which hampers their ability to face the ongoing bevy of societal challenges (*Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World*, 2021). The imperative of building up social resilience remains as salient as ever. There is an urgent need to repair weakened social fabrics and rejuvenise societies which have already been bogged down by past adversities.

This paper is an inquiry into possible entry points for societies working towards the goal of building up and promoting social resilience. It posits that functioning social contracts and compacts – which are tacit social agreements between citizens and the government and amongst the population itself - can help societies to reinforce shared social expectations. Social contracts and compacts also indicate obligations for governments and citizens as well as outline basic assurances for living in the respective society, thereby enhancing a population's collective capacity, which is relevant for withstanding shocks and difficulties in the face of crises. This paper also outlines that social trust seems to be an important prerequisite for the

smooth functioning of social contracts and compacts. Social trust helps to encourage citizens' participation and cooperation despite the natural unknowns related to future payoffs of such social agreements. Due to social trust's role in galvanising action amid this uncertainty, social trust has to be seen as a fundamental ingredient for well-functioning social contracts and compacts and hence an imperative for social resilience.

This paper outlines salient factors that may enhance or weaken social trust on both the individual and the collective level. These factors are key for dedicated activities to build and promote well-functioning social contracts and compacts and hence to foster social resilience.

2 Social Contracts and Compacts

2.1 The Promise of Social Contracts and Compacts for Social Resilience

The improvement and maintenance of social contracts and compacts present a promising mechanism for enhancing social resilience. Social contracts and compacts that are well-functioning and perceived as legitimate by the public may have positive implications for major indicators of social resilience, such as collective participation and social cohesion.

Of the two terms “social compact” and “social contract”, the latter is the slightly more common phrase used within philosophy and political theory. Dating back to the 1600s from the writings of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, and subsequently developed further by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 1700s, social contract theory primarily concerns theoretical understandings of human nature, the inception of organized society, state authority and state legitimacy (Boucher & Kelly, 2003; Laskar, 2013). While there exist different interpretations of social contract theory, they broadly share the same basic structure of a thought experiment for how a hypothetical proto-society emerges into a society (Vanberg, 1994). In the state of nature, prior to the formation of organised society, individuals are free and equal. In the name of mutual protection of their safety, property and other self-interests, these individuals unite into a community and agree to confer their freedoms, rights and powers to a state authority in exchange for these collective interests (Ellis, 2014; Laskar, 2013; Morris, 1998). Social contract theory hence historically served as a conceptual framework for outlining how the legitimacy of a political authority and a political system hinges on “the consent of the governed” and the fulfilment of this implicit agreement (Freeman, 2012; Vanberg, 1994, p. 337).

More recently, the term has spread beyond the field of political philosophy. The “social contract” has since gained a more prominent role within practical political discourse (Vanberg, 1994) and the use of the concept has proliferated across the spheres of academia, business and policymaking as a tool for making sense of functioning state-society dynamics (Burnyeat & Sheild Johansson, 2022). The “social contract” increasingly alludes to a social agreement with actual or specific qualities, rather than the abstract social contract referred to by political philosophers. It is hence in contemporary times understood as “a more or less tacit agreement” between the modern state and the people, encompassing the underlying terms and conditions that govern how they relate to and behave towards one another within society (Ellis, 2014, p.

3490). A social contract outlines the moral and political rights, benefits and obligations of individuals within a society, as well as the state's obligations to the people and the basis of the legitimacy of its authority (Bërdufi & Dushi, 2015; Morris, 1998). It typically involves a form of a mutually beneficial exchange – citizens agree to follow state authority and direction, adopting prescriptive behaviours in exchange for “a minimum package of social conditions” (Ellis, 2014, p. 3490).

The substance of a social agreement – i.e., the specific obligations and payoffs of both the people and authorities involved in the exchange - can vary depending on the national context. While the dominant obligation expected from citizens is usually the recognition of state legitimacy, it can also include other prescribed behaviours such as military service, paying taxes, civil democratic engagement, consensus-seeking, deference, industriousness, and enterprise, depending on the national ideology and cultural identity within the country in question (Loewe et al., 2021). In turn, there would be various payoffs that citizens may expect to receive and that states are obliged to deliver. These may include protection-based items (e.g. physical security against internal threats, rule of law, and collective security against external threats), provision-based items (e.g. prosperity, adequate standards of living, infrastructure, social services, economic opportunities), or participation-based items (e.g. freedoms of participation & association, access to political decision making) (Loewe et al., 2021). Again in this list, the salient deliverables for state legitimacy are highly relative according to the respective national context (Loewe et al., 2021).

The term “social compact” is conventionally used to refer to the very same concept, and hence the two terms are employed interchangeably within the literature (Chroust, 1946; Gough, 1938; Irving, 2002), sometimes even by the same writer (e.g. Jean-Jacques Rousseau). However, some thinkers do note a distinction between the two terms: social compacts can more explicitly connote a horizontal type of social agreement, involving a shared consensus about the terms of citizens' interactions with and obligations to one another, in the interest of collective benefit (Zack, 2018). In other words, the “social contract” implies an agreement between citizens and the government, while the “social compact” also includes the notion of a social agreement for organizing and coordinating a broad society of diverse citizens (Fenton, 1891, p. 5).

The substantive elements of horizontal social agreements – i.e. the specific forms of social arrangements, norms and expectations defining how citizens or groups of citizens “interact with each other politically, morally and economically” (Carrillo-Rodriguez, 2012, p. 1), as well as the obligations and payoffs mutually exchanged - also vary depending on context. For example, there may exist a social compact between different generations of citizens: the working generation contributes with their productivity to the economy while in the workforce, whereas the retired generation reaps benefits from pension schemes and pivots towards contributing to homemaking responsibilities (Lim, 2017). On a more general level, social compacts may also concern broader objectives of nation-building and social cohesion (Barolsky, 2016).

2.2 How Social Contracts and Compacts Matter for Resilience

By serving as blueprints for the expected behaviours and payoffs that govern intersociety relations, well-functioning and well-accepted social contracts and compacts provide some

basic sense of certainty, security and fairness with regard to how one can expect to live within a specific society (Shafik, 2021). From a broader philosophical standpoint, functioning social contracts and compacts can be seen as crucial for social resilience: a society's ability to cope with vulnerabilities in an unpredictable, hazardous reality would be greatly bolstered if citizens, regardless of negative externalities, are able to retain some baseline sense of security and justice. This could be derived from having a guaranteed claim to a "minimum package of social conditions" via social contracts and social compacts (Ellis, 2014, p. 3490; Vrasti & Michelsen, 2017).

On a more specific level, well-functioning social contracts and compacts may also serve as lubricants for collective and reciprocal contributing behaviour in a society (Vlerick, 2019), and hence play important roles in bolstering the resilience capacities of societies. Aligned with the framework of game theory, thinkers have posited that ideal-type social contracts and compacts help to fulfil the promise of fair and mutual reciprocity, proving to citizens the personal as well as the mutual benefits and payoffs of cooperation. This would then increase citizens' psychological willingness to cooperate and commit to the system (Skyrms, 2003; Vlerick, 2019).

Functioning social contracts/compacts allow for collective action in practice - there is a common pooling and absorbing of costs and risks, a sharing of burdens and rewards across society, and sanctions against free-riding. Universally adequate and fairly distributed rewards and payoffs also serve as effective stimuli and incentives for contributive behaviour (Shafik, 2018). Lastly, social sanctions ensure that "freeloading" behaviour or the risk of being made a "sucker" is kept to a minimum (Vlerick, 2019). When all parties are understood to be upholding their sides of the agreement and bargain, citizens' belief in the promised rewards of collective action is reinforced. Hence, when people trust that their cooperative and contributive behaviour will not be in vain, they are more likely to invest in collective efforts and make societal contributions (D'Agostino et al., 2021). In this sense, the maintenance of social contracts and compacts enable communities to exercise the habit of collective action, accumulating a pool of other-regarding, participatory capacities to be drawn on in times of crises.

On the other hand, social contracts and compacts that are perceived as unfair, illegitimate or non-functioning would manifest in negative consequences for the stability of a society. While some citizens may choose to leave the social contract via emigration (Laurinavičius & Laurinavičius, 2017; Nyabola, 2021), other citizens who remain in the country may adopt behaviours that are oppositional rather than conducive to the stability of the prevailing order (Nyabola, 2021). Well-documented examples are the two phenomena of growing populism and religious extremism worldwide.

Disillusioned citizens are no longer convinced that engaging in productive and entrepreneurial behaviours, in tandem with trade liberalization policies, will be rewarded with economic growth, socio-economic mobility and welfare gains (Colantone et al., 2021; Colgan & Keohane, 2017). Significant subsections of populations claim that they have not experienced these desired payoffs, assigning blame to governments' neglect to ensure inclusive growth and effective redistribution. They also emphasize governments' failure to address unequal barriers to entry for achieving the types of "productivity" that are likely to be economically competitive and rewarded within the current knowledge economies (Colgan & Keohane, 2017; Cruddas, 2022; Frotman, 2018; Lind, 2017; Taylor, 2016). This loss of faith in the social contract typically

results in sharp withdrawals of support for mainstream parties associated with the “establishment”. Disillusioned segments of society may make sharp swings towards support for ultranationalist and populist parties as well as anti-immigration and protectionist policies, in a stand against the existing liberal international order, thereby heightening political deadlock and destabilisation (Colantone et al., 2021; Colgan & Keohane, 2017).

The phenomenon of religious fundamentalism and extremism is another example of the detrimental symptoms of failed social contracts (El-Badawy et al., 2019). In countries that face high levels of violent extremism, there is often a loss of trust in the government’s ability to govern and deliver payoffs to the public, owing to longstanding failures to provide basic services and security to the people. With the conventional social contracts hence having been long broken and discarded, disillusioned segments of society may be likely to turn towards competing “social compacts” that offer an alternative path to their desired rewards, and which promise a better “way of life”. Narratives of religious fundamentalism can be essentially seen as varieties of social contracts that offer political-religious promises of “a utopian escape from underemployment and social stasis while prophesizing a predestined victory as God’s proxies on earth” (El-Badawy et al., 2019, p. 9). Citizens’ self-recruitment and compliance with the edicts of extremist groups may then have destructive and destabilising effects on countries around the world.

Another key resilience-related outcome of the functioning of social contracts and compacts could be the creation of foundations for social cohesion (Abrahams, 2016). Social contracts and compacts define the prescribed social behaviours and obligations through which citizens relate to the authorities and each other. The collective interests and values which undergird these obligations are implicitly legitimized when the contract or compact is operating smoothly. The collective fulfilment of the prescribed civic duties suggests there is a functioning public consensus regarding the values and terms of the social agreement and societal arrangements. Hence, functioning social contracts and compacts are platforms for establishing an ideological common ground that forms the basis for social cohesion, such as the “sense of fair play” (Reich, 1998).

Social cohesion is likely put into jeopardy when citizens fundamentally disagree about the legitimacy of social contracts and compacts (as well as their underlying values) by which all citizens are bound. We posit that societies in which citizens have vastly different experiences of the social contract and compact may be vulnerable to polarized public opinions regarding the fairness of existing social agreements and social arrangements. In circumstances where there is a marked disparity in payoffs, some citizens who have seen fewer rewards may perceive the fundamental terms of the cooperation-payoff exchange in social contracts to be unfair; those with fewer starting resources and opportunities may feel that the yardsticks for sufficient cooperation are not universally achievable by all. This may result in resentment towards better-off citizens who are perceived to be reaping disproportionate rewards based on their more favourable socio-economic position within existing social arrangements (Bussolo et al., 2018), and who are assumed to be benefiting and perpetuating a “rigged” system (Taylor, 2016, p. 10). On the other hand, citizens with positive experiences of the social agreements may retain faith that the existing exchange of cooperation and payoffs is adequately fair and just. Hence, lower or non-compliance by the disaffected may spark resentment among the compliant beneficiaries, as this protest behaviour may be perceived to be detrimental to collective action and the continued yield of payoffs (Rhodes & Mény, 1998). In addition, some

of these compliant beneficiaries may also perceive that deprived citizens who receive extra needs-based assistance and benefits from the government are unfairly bypassing the cooperation-payoff bargain, as they ostensibly have not earned these rewards through compliance (Corning, 2011). This assumption that other citizens are engaging in free-riding or parasitical behaviour may spark resentment among the compliant beneficiaries of the social contract.

Hence, malfunctioning social contracts and compacts can have adverse effects on citizens' relationships with one another and social cohesion in general. Citizens may coalesce into separate camps based on their differing stances and actions regarding obligations within social contracts, and begin to view the other side through an adversarial lens. Citizens may begin to see the other side's behaviour as harmful to one's self-interest, or even as oppositional to their personal concept of fairness and justice. When the public is thus fragmented in their conceptions of an ideal-type contract and the attendant values and principles around which society should be arranged, the common ground for social cohesion hence falls away (Bussolo et al., 2018) and social resilience is weakened.

2.3 Safeguarding Social Contracts and Compacts

Having detailed the importance of functioning social contracts and compacts, we turn to the question: how does a society maintain its social contracts and compacts? In the next section, we analyse the salience of trust in the functioning of social contracts or compacts, which has often been cited as a crucial element for the functioning of social contracts or compacts (Kidd et al., 2020; Laurinavičius & Laurinavičius, 2017; Sibun, 2022). The importance of the ingredient trust seems to be founded on its role as a prerequisite for participation and cooperation when payoffs are not guaranteed in a social exchange.

To understand the mechanism behind the relationship between social contracts and compacts on the one side and trust on the other side, this paper conceptualizes contracts and compacts through the lens of citizens' investment and participation. As a general feature of social contracts, citizens invest in and comply with prevailing social systems, laws, policies, civic responsibilities and norms of behaviour that uphold the existing order, trusting that they will receive desired payoffs in exchange for this compliance (D'Agostino et al., 2021; Freeman, 2012). Government authorities are supposed to be custodians of the system: they should justify citizens' compliance with laws and norms of behaviour by successfully conducting large-scale management and delivery of social, economic or political outcomes, as well as the distribution of the penalties and rewards owed to non-compliant and compliant citizens respectively (D'Agostino et al., 2021; Freeman, 2012).

Within social agreements, citizens' participation is a primary ingredient or "input" factor for the generation of collective rewards, as citizen compliance and cooperation are the requisite resources which authorities act on in their planning and coordination of manpower in order to bring about desired large-scale socio-economic outcomes. In other words, governments' ability to effectively and consistently perform their coordinating role relies on citizens playing their generative role, by demonstrating high levels of compliance and cooperation (Hillson, 2021; Loewe et al., 2021). Governments that are working with a cooperative and receptive citizenry can more reliably engineer prosperity and security and therefore be better able to fulfil their

end of the tacit bargain, thereby maintaining a “virtuous cycle” of contribution and payoff within the social contract (Hillson, 2021).

As a horizontal extension of the Social Contract, this paper posits that the Social Compact involves the same elements of compliance and payoffs, with the added element of collective action. Social compacts outline that citizens do not only comply in a vacuum or a one-on-one transaction with the government; they also have agreements with one another with regard to mutual compliance. The creation of optimum conditions for macro payoffs (such as economic growth, pension schemes and robust welfare assistance) appears dependent on the input factor of the compliance of citizens (e.g. in the form of work productivity, the contribution of taxes, etc.). Each citizen hence bears some responsibility for the collective payoffs achieved. Citizens rely on others to comply and are relied on to comply in turn for the achievement of the collective good (Nyabola, 2021).

As citizen cooperation is essentially an “input” factor within the contribution-payoff cycle characterizing the social contract, it naturally precedes the delivery of future results and rewards. Hence as the payoffs of compliance are by nature uncertain and not guaranteed (Skyrms, 2008), social trust is the likely prerequisite bridging factor for enabling cooperation amid uncertainty in a “leap of faith” (Kidd et al., 2020; Sibun, 2022).

3 Social Trust

3.1 What is Social Trust?

The concept of ‘social trust’ resides as a distinct concept within the broader umbrella of ‘trust’ in general. The concept of trust can be defined as “an actor’s belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, and at best, that they will act in his interests” (Hardin, 2002) - a characteristic relating to a dyadic relationship between a trustor and a trustee, involving some deliberations of risks and benefits based on each actors’ specific characteristics as well as on features of uncertainty (Blöbaum, 2021; Welch, 2013). The most basic form of trust occurs at interpersonal levels: the individual is the unit of analysis as the “haver” of trust (Blöbaum, 2021) and trust often occurs “between familiars”, i.e., individuals that know details about each other (Welch, 2013, p. 43). Trust may hence be highly personalized and specific to the individual trustee and context.

Social trust on the other hand alludes to a broader concept, involving larger-scale trust on the level of community and society. It firstly covers a broader range of trust relations in society, spanning from familiar individuals, groups and communities to abstract strangers and collectives within wider society, as well as to institutions and the representative agents within them (Welch, 2013). Most importantly, social trust is situated within society as a whole and is heavily informed by the social roles and the social positioning of individuals and groups (Tuler et al., 2017; Welch, 2013). The elements of risk, uncertainty and trade-offs also feature within the concept of social trust, but here they exist on the level of complex socio-political-technical systems (Tuler et al., 2017). This is summed up in Welch’s definition of social trust: a “mutually

shared expectation (...) that people will manifest sensible and, when needed, reciprocally beneficial behaviour in their interactions with others” (Welch et al., 2005, p. 457).

Social trust can be divided along its two component dimensions of horizontal and vertical trust, which relate to different “trustee” and “trustor” groups. Horizontal social trust is a broad umbrella category referring to trust between citizens in a society, specifically within and also across citizen communities and in-groups, which are not demarcated by an official, formal power gradient. Horizontal trust comprises of further subtypes of trust: particularized trust between individuals that share a common social identity or membership within an in-group (Draude et al., 2018; Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009; Newton et al., 2018; Schilke et al., 2021), as well as generalized trust that occurs between unknown others, involving strangers and unknown persons, abstracted individuals from different social circles and communities (Schilke et al., 2021; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Vertical social trust, on the other hand, refers to trust between citizens and formal institutions and systems, or relationships that are defined by an institutionalized power/authority gradient. Often also referred to as “political trust”, it encompasses trust in the legislature, executive, and political parties as well as in neutral and nonpartisan state institutions such as the civil service, courts/judiciary, or the police (Newton et al., 2018; Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; Wong et al., 2011). Political trust involves assessments of a government as a whole, which includes local government and federal or state government, as well as political incumbents and institutions (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2019; Hetherington, 1998, p. 791).

Horizontal-type social trust is conventionally measured using some variation of the Rosenberg Generalized Trust Question, which was popularised by Morris Rosenberg in the 1950s (Uslaner, 2018): “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” It is the most frequently used measurement tool deployed in surveys across the social science, as seen in the American General Social Survey (GSS), the World Values Survey (WVS), and the American National Election Studies (ANES) (Lundmark et al., 2016; Robbins, 2019; Sturgis & Smith, 2010). Answers are typically given according to a dichotomous scale with binary potential responses between “You can’t be too careful” and “Most people can be trusted” (Lundmark et al., 2016; Sturgis & Smith, 2010). However, there has also been the use of several-point scales for the measurement of trust attitudes along continuums, based on the idea that an increased number of scale points produces a more valid and detailed measurement of trust attitudes (Freitag & Bauer, 2013; Lundmark et al., 2016). Other recent studies have also proposed slight modifications to the Rosenberg trust question (Lundmark et al., 2016), as well as to other measurement tools in pursuit of more detailed results regarding the circumstances and domains to which generalized trust applies (Freitag & Bauer, 2013; Robbins, 2019).

Similar to the measurement of horizontal social trust, survey questions are also the primary method for measuring vertical (political) trust. One of the most frequently used instruments for measuring political trust is the American National Election Studies (ANES) ‘trust in government’ questions, first developed in the early 1960s (Hetherington, 1998; Marien, 2017; Seyd, 2014). The questions account for criteria involving the integrity and capability of government authorities, taking “the government” as a single general entity (Marien, 2017; Seyd, 2014). The instrument includes either a binary or three-point answering scale, depending on the concrete question. Apart from the ANES question set, other common alternative measures of political trust are those that account for a multidimensional understanding of political trust, hereby

measuring specific forms of political trust in different branches of government authority (see the question sets used in the European Social Survey and Worlds Values Survey) (Marien, 2017; Ruelens et al., 2018; van der Meer & Ouattara, 2019; Zmerli & Newton, 2008). Studies have typically found it salient to separately measure different types of trust relating to different political institutions - such as trust in political incumbents vis-à-vis nonpartisan state institutions such as courts, police and the civil service, as well as political incumbents vis-à-vis opposition parties. These measurements form either an additive index of trust or an average trust score (Schiffman et al., 2010; Schneider, 2017). Another question in the literature on the methodology for measuring political trust is the measurement equivalence: It is unclear whether respondents in different countries and under different political regime types understand and relate to the concept of trust in similar ways, and how any divergences in interpretation may affect the measurements' usefulness for meaningful cross-country comparisons of political trust levels (Marien, 2017; Schneider, 2017).

3.2 Trust and Social Contracts and Compacts

Trust as a general prerequisite for social contracts and compacts can be broken down into several more specific forms of trust involving various dimensions of society. Adapted from Rothstein's (2018) summary of the types of trust that are required for making "leaps of faith" in tax compliance, we present three potential salient areas of trust necessary for the maintenance of social contracts (Rothstein, 2018).

Firstly, trust in government and civil service to uphold their side of the contract may be a primary driver of cooperation. Vertical trust – trust between citizens and political authorities - bolsters the belief that the government works in the interests of the citizens, instead of engaging in corrupt and self-serving behaviour (Citrin & Stoker, 2018; Jäckle et al., 2022; Levi & Stoker, 2000; Newton et al., 2018). Therefore, political trust is a significant ingredient for perceptions that authorities are reasonably committed to fulfilling the social agreement with citizens. In addition, citizens' perceptions that one's perspective is effectively represented within the political system are also a component of political trust (Anderson & LoTempio, 2002; Ulbig, 2008). Political trust may lower the barriers to cooperation, as common identification with the authorities likely reduces the degree of divergence between personal will and state prescriptions that must be bridged for compliance to occur. In addition, high political trust involves confidence that institutions have the ability to "even out negative consequences of one-sided compliance", hence alleviating fears of the free-rider problem (Citrin & Stoker, 2018; van Deth, 2017, p. 213).

Secondly, besides vertical trust of citizens in their leaders, horizontal social trust – i.e., trust between citizens in society – would be crucial for compliance and commitment to a social contract or compact. High trust between citizens mitigates the collective action problem of "one-sided compliance"; greater social trust encourages individuals to perceive that most other citizens also abide by the system and that there exists a high level of collective action in society, so that compliant behaviour and potentially related efforts will not be in vain (Jäckle et al., 2022; van Deth, 2017). In other words, citizens are more likely to comply with social contracts and compacts when they are convinced that most others are not unfairly "gaming the system" and reaping disproportionate benefits at their expense (Paz-Fuchs, 2011). In addition, high levels

of horizontal trust encourage a greater identification and concern for the public interest and hence foster stronger compliance and other-regarding behaviours (Goldstein & Wiedemann, 2022; Liu & Stolle, 2017; Zmerli & Newton, 2008). The build-up and promotion of trust among citizens as well as between citizens and government would hence be an imperative for encouraging the public to comply and buy into social contracts and compacts.

Lastly, political and social trust that the structure of the social contract itself is fair may also be a prerequisite for compliance with social contracts. Trust in the compliance-payoff mechanism is likely based on citizens' tangible personal experiences of socio-economic-political outcomes, as well as the personal achievement of payoffs. A sizeable segment of the literature has identified a "winners-losers hypothesis" for explaining social trust, where individuals with experiences of socio-economic success and security are more likely to trust the prevailing social and political arrangements that have previously benefited them (Kouvo, 2011; Newton, 2001; Newton et al., 2018; Schoon et al., 2010). Hence, having prior personal experience in receiving desired payoffs may encourage individuals to trust that current macro contexts and social contracts and compacts indeed reward compliant behaviour. Citizens trust that rewards are largely achievable, which thereby begets their continued compliance with prevailing systems.

On the other hand, citizens with experiences of lower socio-economic status and marginalisation are more likely to have lower levels of overall political and social trust (de Vroome et al., 2013; Kouvo, 2011; Newton et al., 2018). They might be less likely to expect payoffs from compliance within existing societal arrangements, owing to the lack of personal experience. When citizens are not convinced that they can feasibly achieve (future) rewards and payoffs by complying with the existing socio-political arrangements, this may increase feelings of distrust in the social agreement and the perception of a "rigged system". This disillusionment contributes to the feeling that one has little to no investment or stake in upholding a social contract, thereby dampening citizens' willingness to comply and cooperate. Hence, to ensure continued trust in social contracts and especially the cooperation-payoff cycle, it might be important to periodically adapt social contracts and compacts to account for the evolution of demographic and societal contexts, towards facilitating the continued fulfilment of the compliance-payoff exchange for all.

Over the past decades, major paradigm shifts have occurred within wider social contexts – for many developed countries, this is characterized by maturing economies, digital transformation, ageing populations and increasing immigration (Taylor, 2016). Hence the yardsticks for citizen compliance as well as citizens' expectations of payoffs – two key elements involved in social contract and compact agreements – also undergo marked changes (Carrillo-Rodriguez, 2012). Prior arrangements of social contracts and compacts are likely based on outdated conceptions of the compliance-payoff exchange, hence a re-understanding of the terms of the contract/compact is necessary for facilitating governments' and citizens' tasks of fulfilling their respective responsibilities. This may entail re-understandings of the economic contributions and rewards in the age of digital transformation (Appelbaum, 2012; Levy & Kochan, 2012; Ortega et al., 2019; Reich, 1998; Taylor, 2016; Wistow, 2022), the re-imagining of the intergenerational social compact amid climate change and ageing populations (Galston & Salam, 2016)(Manyika et al., 2020), and the clarification of the ambiguous role of immigrants within countries' social contracts (Bean et al., 1997; Weinstein, 2002). Hence, there is an imperative to redefine terms of the social contract to ensure that its basic promise remains fulfilled and that it benefits all parties. This goes towards ensuring that citizens still trust in the promise of social contracts and compacts, preventing losses of social trust related to broken

promises or unrealistic expectations, and promoting greater trust among society members based on a better understanding of each other's "inputs" into the country's social contract.

3.3 Improving Social Trust: Which are Relevant Factors?

As social trust appears to be fundamental for upholding social fabrics and facilitating cooperation, exploring ways to increase levels of social trust within societies is hence highly important for the goal of improving social resilience. A bulk of the existing literature on social trust has largely centred around testing potential factors that either enhance or prevent social trust, in its horizontal and vertical forms. The current scholarship on social trust can be categorized further in terms of two distinct ways of conceptualizing social trust: either as a personal property belonging to individuals or as a shared property belonging to societies and communities (Newton et al., 2018). From these conceptualizations stem two different categories of approaches to identify measures to increase social trust. These approaches will be described in the following.

On the one side, the understanding of social trust as a quality belonging to an individual trustor takes the individual as the key unit of the analysis, which lends itself to bottom-up approaches for analysing causal factors or impacts of social trust. Bottom-up approaches focus on factors that work on the level of the individual and affect personal trust levels, which can be aggregated to find these factors' impact on the average trust levels of the wider society. Individual-level factors include social qualities, characteristics, group membership, relationship ties, and behaviours of single individuals, as well as their idiosyncratic personal experiences and perceptions of wider societal structures and qualities. All these have particularized effects on personal trust levels. Within the category of bottom-up approaches, we find personality-based approaches which typically understand social trust as an unchanging personality trait of individuals acquired during childhood socialisation or inherited by genetics (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Newton et al., 2018; Tamilina, 2018). Social interaction-based approaches posit that an individual's capacity for social trust (usually understood as generalised trust) is an outcome of the frequency, degree, and quality of one's social interaction, such as membership in voluntary associations and civic organisations, contributing to social support activities, or engaging in other informal social interactions (Aldrich & Meyer, 2014; Delhey & Newton, 2003; Putnam, 1993; Stolle, 2002). Furthermore, approaches that focus on individuals' social demographics, positioning and experiences theorize that individuals' trust levels are impacted by their particular status in society, demographic attributes, identities and group memberships, as well as attendant social experiences acquired through life (Delhey & Newton, 2003). Social trust levels are assumed to be dynamic and affected by one's ongoing personal experiences with others, which are highly affected by one's status within society contingent on key demographic attributes like age, gender, race etc (Glanville & Paxton, 2007; Kwon, 2019; Newton, 2001; Newton et al., 2018; Stolle, 2002; Van Lange, 2015; Welch et al., 2005).

Alternatively, social trust can be understood as a "collective resource" belonging to entire communities and societies. Social trust is then assumed as being formed within social relationships between people or groups across society (Kramer, 2018; Newton, 2001; Welch et al., 2005). With the society as a whole, treated as the key unit of analysis, this conception of social trust lends itself to top-down approaches for examining causal factors and impacts of social trust. Such structural or societal-level approaches theorize that macro-level societal or national characteristics and trends (such as national history, living standards, levels of fairness

and equality, governance systems, ethnic composition or geography) create socio-political contexts that affect trust levels across broad swathes of society, from the national level to social groups and single individuals. In other words, structural factors have a rainmaking effect on trust levels across all levels of society by predisposing citizens to either trust or distrust, resulting in specific country-level effects (Delhey & Newton, 2003; Kwon, 2019; Newton et al., 2018; Newton & Zmerli, 2011). This includes institutional explanations suggesting that social trust within a society is affected, stimulated or triggered respectively by broader institutional arrangements and capacities, particularly in the government (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009; Rothstein & Stolle, 2008; Tamilina, 2018). Cultural explanations on the other hand suggest that shared cultural orientations, values and norms within a society regulate perceptions of government performance and attendant social trust levels within a society (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Wong et al., 2011). Community explanations suggest that the macro characteristics of communities and neighbourhoods within a society (rural-urban location, city size, community safety, demographic makeup, and general community satisfaction) may affect levels of social trust (Delhey & Newton, 2003).

The following sections will elaborate in further detail on the most prominent and commonly discussed factors influencing social trust that have emerged from a wider literature review on the topic (please refer to Appendix 1 for more details on the review's methodology).

3.3.1 Factors Enhancing or Preventing Horizontal Social Trust

We start by outlining the recurring individual-level factors of horizontal trust, commonly referred to as “social trust” or “generalised social trust”. Later on, this chapter will explore the structural factors of social trust.

Among the approaches to identifying individual-level factors of social trust, the “winners-losers hypothesis” stands out as an overarching theory for predicting personal trust. It posits that personal propensities to trust are informed by individuals’ social demographics and characteristics, their experiences and relationships within the social-political environment, as well as the degree of risk and security that characterizes their situation in life (Newton et al., 2018). Individuals with characteristic markers of socioeconomic success or advantage are more likely to report higher levels of particularized and generalized social trust, as they have reason to trust “social arrangements that have served them well” (Newton et al., 2018). The respective personal attributes include high socio-economic status, high income and wealth, advanced education, good health, high job satisfaction, or membership in the majority or the winning side of political party competition (Newton, 2001; Newton et al., 2018).

While not always explicitly referring to the “winners-losers hypothesis”, many studies have independently yielded findings that are consistent with the theory. Cross-sectional studies for instance found that higher individual income and purchasing power strongly predict higher levels of social trust (Gereke et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2021). Unemployment (Azzollini, 2023) and having a “labour market outsider” status (i.e. experiences of poor working conditions, atypical employment or unemployment) are associated with lower levels of generalised social trust (Kevins, 2019). Brandt et al. (2015) suggest that socioeconomic class may translate into social experiences that are either conducive or unconducive to social trust: people with high socio-economic status often have greater resources at their disposal that afford them the bandwidth to take on risks including trusting other people. Conversely, individuals with less status or advantages chronically face resource insecurity and threats to their social value, which may predispose them to be more psychologically defensive and distrustful (Brandt et al.,

2015). Hence, changes in social status and resource security might affect individuals' trust levels. Longitudinal studies have found that experiences of decline in income-based socio-economic status (Brandt et al., 2015) as well as unemployment experiences and decreases in satisfaction with income (Azzollini, 2023; Mewes et al., 2021) result in a subsequent decline in individuals' social trust levels.

Similar trends can be seen in studies on trust levels of individuals with marginal social positions in terms of ethnicity or citizenship. Studies find that individuals of ethnic minorities have lower levels of social trust than those in the majority, which is significantly influenced by higher levels of perceived ethnic discrimination and lower social satisfaction (Hooghe et al., 2008; Ziller & Heizmann, 2020). Other studies report that new immigrants have lower levels of social trust compared to native citizens (de Vroome et al., 2013; Dinesen & Hooghe, 2010), a phenomenon which has been attributed to either experiences of discrimination and exclusion, or the persistence of low trust levels stemming from experiences in immigrants' home countries.

Similarly, having attained a higher education level is found to be associated with increased social trust. Multiple studies show that the attainment of advanced education is among the factors closely related to the propensity for social trust (Freitag, 2003; Hooghe et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2011; Kim & Kim, 2021). It is argued that higher education's attendant impacts on one's occupational prestige and financial situation account for this association (Hooghe et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2011).

An interaction-based approach features prominently in the literature relating to causal factors of social trust. In this approach, a major topic is the role of diverse social networks in heterogeneous contexts. Some studies have identified that people who reside in ethnically heterogeneous contexts have lower levels of trust towards their local communities. Deflated trust levels are particularly seen in native citizens with negative perceptions towards dissimilarity - in line with a "conflict theory" of diversity (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2018; Wallman Lundåsen & Wollebæk, 2013). However, other studies inspired by a "contact hypothesis" of diversity suggest that the relationship between diversity and generalized social trust may partially depend on whether individuals experience diversity in the form of segregated or integrated social networks (Alecú, 2021; Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2018). According to the contact hypothesis, diversity can have a positive effect on social trust by reducing the propensity of stereotyping and suspicion towards ethnic outgroups if individuals have inclusive social ties and experience high sociability with individuals from outgroups within a heterogeneous society (Alecú, 2021; Douds & Wu, 2017; Hooghe, 2007; Marshall & Stolle, 2004). Conversely, maintaining exclusive and segregated personal networks despite living in diverse contexts would not see the same learning effects (Hooghe, 2007; Ziller & Spörlein, 2020). Hence, individuals with diverse social networks and more experience in interacting with others from different backgrounds may be less likely to prejudge and viewpoints of difference with suspicion. Having greater inter-group interactions and networks therefore may improve one's experience of living in ethnically diverse contexts, resulting in a non-detrimental or even positive effect on one's social trust levels.

Personal experiences and perceptions of institutions and structural conditions of society have also been found to affect social trust levels. Minority citizens' perceptions that institutional fairness is shown to their ethnic group increase their social trust in general. Personal experiences of treatment by institutions seem to be barometers for inferring information about the wider status and respect shown by society to their group (Dierckx et al., 2021). Experiences favouring a decline of social trust include lower levels of living conditions and order in one's

neighbourhood (de Vroome et al., 2013; Intravia et al., 2016), as well as negative perceptions of institutional performance (Freitag, 2003; Murtin et al., 2018).

Within the literature exploring the structural, macro-level factors enhancing or preventing horizontal social trust, many contributions explore how aggregate social trust levels of countries are impacted by the different forms of fractionalisation in society. Societal fractionalisation may refer to disparities in income, ethnic identity, political/ideological/religious affiliation, or other similar forms of heterogeneity within the population. Bjørnskov (2008) theorises that the amount of fractionalisation on the societal level affects the average degree of social distance between individuals within society, which then influences the level of aggregate social trust. Societies with either more spread-out distributions or wider dispersion of socio-economic, ethnic, lingual, religious, or political groups, would see a higher degree of average social distance between individuals. The average individual's sense of common identification would hence only extend to smaller sections of the general population. Conversely, greater levels of social similarities and commonalities across the population would better enable populations to - on average - identify and understand the motives of a greater proportion of (similarly situated) unknown others (Bjørnskov, 2008), resulting in a higher aggregate level of social trust.

While a majority of the respective studies focusing on these areas do not explicitly refer to the concept of "societal fractionalisation", they are linked by the shared hypothesis that social disidentification and difference lead to lower levels of aggregate horizontal trust. Multiple cross-national studies corroborate that high levels of national income inequality have adverse effects on levels of aggregate social trust (Bjørnskov, 2008; Fairbrother & Martin, 2013; Hadler et al., 2020; Hooghe et al., 2008; Uslaner, 2003; You, 2012). Yet, the current literature has been split with regard to the effects of ethnic fractionalisation on countries' average social trust levels. Parts of the literature find that ethnic and linguistic fractionalisation are negatively associated with trust (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2015, 2018; Olivera, 2015), while others find no significant association at the aggregate level (Bjørnskov, 2008; Hooghe et al., 2008; You, 2012). Other studies qualify the relationship between ethnic diversity and social trust using the aforementioned 'contact hypothesis': they posit that the management of diversity, rather than the diversity level itself, has a significant effect on aggregate social trust. Diversity accompanied by integration and high and frequent inter-group contact would not result in negative effects related to social trust (Kokkonen et al., 2014). It seems as if the effectiveness of integration policies and programs could influence the level of inter-group levels of suspicion and trust (Tatarko & Jurcik, 2021; Zimdars & Tampubolon, 2012).

Some studies explore the relationship between social trust levels and religious or ideological diversity within a society. With regard to religious diversity, the findings suggest that greater levels of religious fragmentation have negative effects on social trust. Fox et al. (2022) find that societies with state religions have higher levels of social trust due to their common belief systems and religious homogeneity (Fox et al., 2022). Olson & Li (2015) find that diverse and highly religious societies display lower levels of social trust than less diverse and less religious societies. They posit that the intensity of citizens' religious beliefs, as well as historical understandings of religious identity and interreligious relations in a country matter for aggregate social trust. Similarly, political polarisation and fragmentation are found to result in lower levels of social trust (Olson & Li, 2015). More recently, ideological "culture wars" between globalist and nationalist worldviews seem to have also resulted in increased mistrust towards institutions and generalized mistrust towards other citizens (Wyleżalek, 2021).

Another prominent thread within the literature on social trust studies covers the association between government quality and performance on the one side and average social trust on the other side. Multiple studies have shown that the efficacy and quality of government institutions are significant predictors of aggregate levels of social trust, although there is variation in terms of which elements constitute institutional quality and performance. Government performance is defined by some studies in terms of ethics-related metrics such as government impartiality or neutrality of the government, independence of the judiciary system, and low corruption levels (Charron & Rothstein, 2014; Herreros & Criado, 2008; Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Richey, 2009). These studies focus on how social trust is affected by the ethical and moral standing of governments and their personnel. The conduct of public officials serves as a symbolic benchmark or heuristic for the public to determine whether citizens can be trusted in general, as reflections of the respective society. Higher levels of corrupt, discriminatory or unfair behaviours of public officials have been found to correspond to significantly lower generalised social trust (Charron & Rothstein, 2014; Richey, 2009; Rothstein & Eek, 2009). Another definition of performance relates to metrics such as the protection of property rights, the implementation of rules of law, the reliability and efficiency of public service provision, or the effective management of crises situations (Charron & Rothstein, 2014; Herreros & Criado, 2008; Newton & Zmerli, 2011; Ziller & Andreß, 2021). Effective government institutions' higher enforcement capabilities are identified as the mechanism behind a positive influence on social trust. Effective government institutions provide stronger guarantees that uncooperative or exploitative actions would be sanctioned, thereby reducing uncertainty about collective behaviour. Such arrangements may hence serve as a form of social insurance, increasing citizens' adherence to private agreements and their willingness to engage in collective action, thereby contributing to higher social trust within society (Ziller & Andreß, 2021).

Socio-economic structures involving some degree of social protection were also found to be relevant for promoting higher levels of social trust. Berggren & Jordahl (2006) find that the greater presence of core institutions contributes to a higher average social trust within a country. In particular, a country's average score of generalised trust was found to be significantly affected by the strength of its legal structure and security of property rights. The regulatory elements of free market economies seem to shore up economic actors' confidence in the reliability and fairness of the system as well as in the effective enforcement of rules and contracts (Berggren & Jordahl, 2006). Studies looking at the impact of a welfare state system similarly find that a greater degree of welfare state development (involving state interventions and spending for citizens' social benefits) has a positive impact on a country's average social trust levels. The potential reason seems to be the reduction of social insecurity and risk (Tamilina, 2009).

3.3.2 Factors Enhancing or Preventing Vertical Trust

Having outlined commonly cited factors influencing horizontal social trust, this section now focuses on both the individual- and structural-level factors influencing vertical trust, i.e. political trust between authorities and populations.

A prime focus area of the literature on individual-level factors for vertical trust is on citizens' perceptions or experiences of the quality of institutions and government leaders in their country. Perceived government quality is mostly understood in terms of the competence of institutions and leaders in performing core functions as well as the ethics or values involved, such as integrity, fairness or impartiality grounding their operations and processes (Kim, 2005;

Kwon, 2019). Personal perceptions of political responsiveness – the notion that institutions are responsive to their demands and work to the benefit all people, as opposed to being “run by big interests looking out for themselves” - were found to be important and significant predictors of institutional trust (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006, p. 42; Hetherington, 1998; Murtin et al., 2018; Torcal, 2014). Citizens’ perceptions of government reliability – perceptions, for instance, that the government will provide adequate support in the context of a natural disaster, as well as levels of satisfaction with government provision of public services – seem to be significant determinants of political trust (Murtin et al., 2018). Perceptions of political representation - whether one’s ideology or perspective is effectively represented in the political system – have also been found to be a causal factor for personal political trust. Political trust appears to be higher for citizens whose preferred candidate in a presidential race wins an electoral contest and is elected into office than for other citizens (Anderson & LoTempio, 2002; Mauk, 2022; Shineman, 2018). This suggests that having one’s political position and preferences reflected by the political system positively affects personal political trust.

Some studies find that citizens’ levels of political trust are positively affected by their evaluations of performance in terms of positive policy outcomes, such as the delivery of public services like education, healthcare (Ellinas & Lamprianou, 2014), national economic conditions (Ellinas & Lamprianou, 2014; Lee & Yi, 2018), development, policies for addressing poverty (Ellinas & Lamprianou, 2014), inflation, social welfare, or national immigration policy (Chen, 2017; Lee et al., 2020; Lipps & Schraff, 2021; McLaren, 2012; Wang, 2016). Mishler & Rose (2001) aptly summarise that “the effects of macro-political and economic performance on trust are indirect and mediated at the micro level by an individual’s value-laden perceptions” (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p. 55). Citizens’ political and institutional trust seems to be shaped not just by their evaluations of government performance in terms of political or economic policy outcomes, but also by the extent to which government policies align with personal policy preferences (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005) and the degree to which political actors align with citizens’ expectations of good conduct (Seyd, 2014).

Studies on how individuals’ evaluation of ethics and values of government institutions and leaders affect social trust formation make up a substantial section of the trust-related literature. Perceptions of institutional impartiality, integrity, and procedural fairness significantly impact on the levels of political trust (Grimes, 2006; Murtin et al., 2018; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005). Perceived corruption in institutions and of political leaders is identified as having a particularly negative effect on individuals’ political trust levels (Lee & Yi, 2018; Murtin et al., 2018). Some studies find that perceptions of corruption negatively impact political trust regardless of the evaluation of government performance (Torcal, 2014; Wang, 2016). Wang’s analysis of three East Asian countries finds that levels of trust are negatively affected by perceived corruption, even in the face of good government performance, leading him to posit that people “place more emphasis on ethics and probity in government” than competence (Wang, 2016, p. 229).

Besides the role of political perceptions and evaluations, also individual demographic qualities and traits seem to matter for political trust. The findings mostly align with the above-mentioned “winners-losers” hypothesis or relate to the individuals’ expectations-reality gap and attendant levels of disappointment. The social attributes found to positively affect political trust include home ownership (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005), individual well-being (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006), high occupational status (Schoon et al., 2010), high levels of education (Kouvo, 2011; Schoon et al., 2010), strong civic national identity and national pride (Berg & Hjerm, 2010; Breidahl & Gustavsson, 2022), as well as democratic attitudes (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006) and beliefs in personal political efficacy (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005). The individual social attributes that were

found to negatively impact political trust include a low socio-economic background (Schoon et al., 2010), unemployment (Kouvo, 2011), poor health (Mattila & Rapeli, 2018), immigrant status (de Vroome et al., 2013), belonging to a discriminated group (Kouvo, 2011), having a strong ethnic national identity and pride (Berg & Hjerm, 2010), political radicalism (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006) and a strong belief in post-materialist values (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Ugur-Cinar et al., 2020).

With regards to structural-level factors impacts on political or vertical trust, the existing literature is dominated by the study of institutional quality and the quality of government policy outcomes, measured in terms of fixed metrics rather than perceptions. This is in parallel to the findings outlined in the previous section on individual-level political trust. The literature finds that political trust is impacted by the degree of government competency and efficiency, which is usually informed by the national performance outcomes in the economic or political spheres. Economic performance – which comprises of general economic conditions including economic growth, unemployment rates, inflation, deficits, etc. – has been found by multiple studies to be relevant for individual or aggregate levels of political trust (Drakos et al., 2019; Hetherington, 1998; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Van Erkel & Van Der Meer, 2016; Wong et al., 2011). Successful economic outcomes are often seen to reflect at least partially the quality of government decision-making and judgement; hence they are often considered as a barometer for general confidence and trust in government. However, some studies do not find a direct relationship between macroeconomic performance and measures on the one side and vertical trust on the other side.

In addition to the economic aspect, the quality of the performance of governments and institutions in general is also found to influence average or aggregate levels of vertical trust. Studies find that a key source of vertical trust is the perception of adequate government performance, comprising of outcomes of governance, such as levels of poverty and unemployment, educational opportunities, national unity, the protection of rights and freedoms, etc. (Godefroidt et al., 2017; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Wong et al., 2011). With regard to the ethics underlying government operations, the literature finds that the prevalence of corruption or unfairness within the political culture negatively affects the aggregate levels of trust in governments (Hooghe et al., 2012; Mishler & Rose, 2001; van der Meer, 2017; Wong et al., 2011).

Another aspect of institutional performance on which political trust hinges is the level of societal fractionalization or fragmentation in society. Studies have found that public trust in political institutions can be negatively affected by high levels of economic, political, and ethnic fragmentation within a society. Related to political trust, societal fragmentation can be understood more as a reflection or outcome of the quality of government policy and management, rather than in terms of its alienating effects as outlined in section 3.4.1. Current literature finds that higher levels of income inequality in society have depressive effects on political trust (Lee & Yi, 2018; Lipps & Schraff, 2021; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005; Zmerli & Castillo, 2015). Multiple explanations for this relationship have been posited. Some studies suggest that higher levels of income inequality increase the public's concerns about fairness and justice in society, and trigger discontent based on assumptions that the government lacks commitment or competency to oversee fair redistribution in society. High income inequality – when seen as a reflection of inadequate or unsatisfactory governance – may hence result in lower levels of trust and confidence in government institutions (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005; Zmerli & Castillo, 2015). Other studies suggest that economic inequality results in a wider economic distance between the rich and the poor in society, as well as an attendant disparity of core economic

interests and values. This would then cause an impediment to institutional performance, as governments would be hamstrung to accommodate the interests and demands of both ends of the economic spectrum with regard to the dilemma of redistribution, thereby leading to a lowered political trust from all sides (Lipps & Schraff, 2021; Rahn & Rudolph, 2005).

In a similar vein, some studies have explored whether fractionalization due to high ethnic diversity and immigration produces negative effects on vertical trust. McLaren (2017) finds that discontent and discomfort with high levels of ethnic diversity may result in increased public suspicion towards political elites and government institutions, whose policies are perceived to be resulting in the byproducts of increased migration and diversity. To some citizens, high ethnic diversity may be perceived as a negative outcome of government policy decisions and hence dampen political trust (McLaren, 2017). Other studies mostly confirm the negative association between ethnic diversity and political trust (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005; Scheidegger & Staerklé, 2011; Van Assche et al., 2018), but many qualify that the association is dependent on contextual and individual-level mediating variables. McLaren (2017) for instance, finds that diversity and migration negatively affect political trust, especially for citizens who understand national identity as being based on fixed ascriptive variables (such as birth country). Diversity can have a more positive effect on political trust if one's perceptions of national identity are essentially based on voluntary self-identification and active participation (McLaren, 2017). Negative effects of diversity on political trust were found to be significant mostly for citizens with uncertain financial situations, a perceived lack of power in influencing political decisions (Scheidegger & Staerklé, 2011) or those with right-wing attitudes (Van Assche et al., 2018).

A few studies find that high political or ideological polarisation has negative effects on vertical trust (Theiss-Morse et al., 2015; Uslaner, 2015). When we observe a high degree of political polarisation, government representatives in law-making bodies appear to be less willing and able to bridge ideological distances due to the risk of alienating their constituents (Theiss-Morse et al., 2015; Uslaner, 2015). This impedes the chances of compromise and policy consensus, hereby hampering government efficiency and effectiveness due to gridlocks within government, slowing down decision-making processes and reducing vertical political trust (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005; Uslaner, 2015). Also, high political polarisation or fractionalisation sees the public opinion distributed across a wide spectrum of values. Government policy decisions, tending to reflect the interests of the average voter, would then appeal to only small proportions of the population, leading to lower levels of satisfaction and overall political trust (Rahn & Rudolph, 2005).

A subsection of studies explores how the structures of macro socio-political and economic systems affect political trust. These studies find that a developed welfare-state setup has positive effects on political trust: welfare states with universal social assistance policies significantly mediate the negative effects of unemployment and income inequality on political trust (Kouvo, 2011; Tamilina, 2009). Furthermore, universal social assistance policies often allow for more self-direction and autonomy and involve less government means-testing and control. This may provide the basis for reciprocal trust between the government and citizens in society (Betkó et al., 2022). Interestingly, Bauer & Fatke (2014) find that while the availability of direct democracy rights mostly enhances political trust by giving citizens control and oversight over political authorities, the frequent use of direct democracy rights sometimes initiates distrust in authorities. They argue that the polity may perceive that "direct democratic processes are obviously necessary to correct (government authorities') actions" (Bauer & Fatke, 2014).

3.4 Social Trust: Super Ingredient for Social Resilience?

Having outlined that social trust is an essential factor for citizens' contributive efforts and cooperation under uncertainty, we can begin to reimagine the conventional understanding of social trust vis-a-vis social resilience. While social trust is typically understood as a recurring sub-indicator of social resilience, usually outlined as a component quality of single indicators, such as social cohesion (Saja et al., 2019) or collective efficacy (Norris et al., 2008), social trust is likely to play a diffuse role in the overall task of social resilience. On the one hand, one could argue that social trust is a prerequisite for any form of citizens' input, involvement and investments in society and that citizens' continued activities and participation are the necessary raw material for societies' ability to continue functioning in the face of shocks and disruption (Copeland et al., 2020; Folke, 2016; Herrman et al., 2011). Social trust would hence form the basis of societies' resilience capacities. On the other hand, social resilience indicators themselves can essentially be understood as different variations of citizens' inputs and investments, be it the sense of belonging to a community, community involvement or effective communication. In this sense, increasing social trust would be key to overcoming the collective action problems that may affect social resilience in general.

In the previous sections, we identified key factors that might trigger higher levels of social and political trust, based on an extended review of the respective literature. Summing up, the following seven factors seem to be of special importance for improving horizontal and vertical trust.

Structural-level factors

- High government quality and performance
- Institutional structures conducive to social protection
- Adequate management of societal fractionalisation

Individual-level factors

- High integration and contact with outgroup others in diverse contexts
- Demographic markers of socio-economic privilege or prestige
- Satisfactory treatment by and/or positive experiences of institutions
- Positive perceptions of governments' responsiveness, representativeness, ethics and performance

Although many studies have already been undertaken to identify key drivers to fortify social and political trust, there seems to be still a certain need for more studies investigating the causal cycle characterising trust. So far, many studies find that positive catalysts for trust relate to the fulfilment of the desired socio-political-economic payoffs and outcomes, but adopt rather short-term lenses. In this type of study, (dis)trust typically takes the form of either a virtuous cycle of contribution and positive outcomes (Kouvo, 2011) or a vicious cycle of non-cooperation and inefficacy (Exadaktylos & Zahariadis, 2014; Lehtonen & De Carlo, 2019), similar to the compliance-payoff cycle within social contracts and compacts. Yet, it seems recommendable to study the potential trust-cycle mechanism more through longitudinal studies. Such studies on fulfilled promises over a longer time period might enable us to better understand the basic effects underlying the formation of horizontal and vertical trust irrespective of smaller outcome deviations during specific times.

Furthermore and in the light of the substantial role individual-level trust factors play in contributing to idiosyncratic personal trust levels, it might also be useful to identify the various citizens' trust profiles or trust archetypes that exist as part of diverse populations. In general, the creation of citizens' social archetypes involves differentiating the common patterns or "configurations of values" and behaviours of citizens to outline the endogenous heterogeneity within cultures and national contexts (Midgley et al., 2019; Venaik & Midgley, 2015, p. 1052). This diversity of perspectives and the ways how citizens and governments deal with it seems to be relevant for understanding the potential breaking of social contracts, loss of trust and also decreases in social resilience. Hence, the generation of trust archetypes as a special form of social archetypes might be of interest for understanding the landscape of trust perceptions in society.

The creation of citizens' social archetypes and specifically of trust archetypes - outlining the unique perspectives, needs, and concerns of different subgroups of citizens - generally helps to ground the formulation of discrete and context-aware policies for addressing different narratives of distrust and disillusionment or – even better – of trust and cohesion. The creation of such archetypes would likely involve building on existing literature and taking into account individual-level factors affecting personal horizontal and vertical trust levels and trusting behaviours, like citizens' levels of education (Freitag, 2003; Hooghe et al., 2012; Kim & Kim, 2021), levels of income (Brandt et al., 2015; Newton et al., 2018), etc. Pinpointing the archetypes of citizens that are more trusting on average and showing which citizen archetypes may require extrinsic motivation or adequate incentives for increasing their trust levels, societies would be better equipped in creating targeted measures and policies for all types of citizens. This would help to promote trust between citizens and between citizens and their governments, reduce conflicts among the population in a more specific and personalised manner (Beugelsdijk et al., 2022) and increase the overall resilience of populations.

4 Singapore's experience with promoting trust and social resilience

4.1 Evolution of "Social Compacts" and "Social Contracts" in Singapore

Like an increasing number of countries worldwide, Singapore has been making steps towards strengthening its social compact and boosting the trust levels of the population. The government has in particular endorsed and utilised the term "social compact" over the past two decades. The term was introduced into the national discourse at the turn of the century by then Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong in his 2001 National Day Rally Speech. Defining it as "an understanding among all Singaporeans, and between the Government and people", Goh outlined the need for a "new social compact" to "ensure that we stay a cohesive nation even as economic competition intensifies and the income gap widens" (Goh, 2001). It has since been widely used within local academia (Abdullah, 2022; Barr & Skrbiš, 2008; Koh & Ling, 2002; Mathews & Lim, 2019; Peng, 2019; Rahim, 2015; Tan, 2015, 2021; Vasu, 2014), the media ("Moving to strengthen the social compact," 2022) and in official communications by the government and civil service institutions (Yacob, 2023; Yeoh, 2007) as well as by the incumbent party ("2022 roundup: Forward Singapore, for a stronger social compact," 2022; "S'pore's social compact is actually easy to understand," 2022; Shanmugaratnam, 2020). As

in Goh's speech, Singapore's social compact typically refers to the phenomenon of a social agreement: the reciprocal exchange of rights and obligations between the public and the government, usually pertaining to the delivery of a certain level of economic and living standards (Abdullah, 2022).

On the other hand, the government has rarely formally adopted the term "social contract" within its official narrative, communication or policy making. The term has instead been applied mainly by international media and authors to describe state-society dynamics in the country (Burton, 2006). Singapore's social contract is typically understood to be an implicit agreement between the Singaporean public and the ruling People Action Party: citizens acquiesce to the party's continued governance and the attendant limitation of civil liberties, in exchange for "economic prosperity under a competent, non-corrupt regime based on meritocracy" (Chin, 2016, p. 142). This "social contract" phenomenon is not exclusively identified with the Singaporean context. It has also been broadly explored in relation to other Asian societies, where electoral support for longstanding incumbents hinges on the delivery of good governance and acceptable standards of living (Yap, 2005). Commentaries about uncertainties regarding the social contract in Singapore date back to 2006, when the achievement of payoffs for citizens was put into question, due to tougher economic conditions worldwide and growing income inequalities (Burton, 2006). More recently, Yeoh et al. (2016) argued that Singapore faces a "social contract trilemma": the task of balancing the delivery of three "unavoidable and irresistible social demands": "economic competitiveness, adequate social protection, and sufficient democratic development" (Yeoh et al., 2016, p. 74). Yeoh argued that while Singapore has historically placed an emphasis on market competition, it comes short of fulfilling the latter two of the three requirements for a social contract. It seems possible that in the absence of a stable social contract, "social cohesion needed for national identity becomes precarious...political legitimacy and its vital twin—trust in governance institutions and policy—tend to become weak and dysfunctional" (Yeoh et al., 2016, p. 81).

Discussions relating to the "social compact" usually have a focus on the socio-economic sphere, typically leaving out the additional aspect of civil liberties associated with a "social contract". However, the social compact goes slightly further than the social contract in another sense, as it often involves the rebuilding of social cohesion and the update of "the social core and character of Singapore society" (Keong et al., 2012). Common elements of the social compact include encouraging "compassion" in the national psyche, strengthening social cohesion and shared identity, as well as bridging divides in society which were exacerbated by stark competition and inequality. Hence, the Singaporean usage of the term "social compact" seems to encompass both the concept of the social contract (the agreement between citizens and government), as well as the social agreement amongst citizenry involving their mutual duties and obligations, as well as the norms of other-regardingness.

While the concept of Singapore's social compact had been sporadically discussed over the past two decades, its salience came into sharp focus since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, as societies worldwide grappled with the significant strain on its social fabric wrought by the crisis. Hence, the years since 2020 have seen a steady leadup to the launch of large-scale government campaigns centred around the social compact. The first signs of this initiative emerged in October 2020, when the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) produced an online information sheet on Singapore's Social Compact (*Singapore's Social Compact*, 2019; *Singapore's Social Compact: a quick introduction*, 2020), defining it as "an implicit agreement between the Government and the people on the roles and responsibilities each plays". It outlined the government's role within the social compact as creating "conditions

for growth and opportunity” and providing “targeted support for the low-income, vulnerable and those with specific needs by investing in various domains”, such as education, employment, healthcare, housing, retirement, social and community assistance.

The MSF document and its emphasis on social support schemes clearly foregrounds the government-society dynamic of the social compact, which involves the conventional reciprocal agreement behind political trust and gives the key focus to the less privileged and most vulnerable society members. The social compact was officially announced as a major item on the government’s agenda in February 2022, during Finance Minister Lawrence Wong’s 2022 Budget statement, outlining the past year’s economic performance amid the pandemic and explaining plans for government spending in the coming year. The speech included a section on how to “Renew and Strengthen our Social Compact”, outlining government plans to update social security architecture amid the pandemic strain. He specifically pointed to social support policies pertaining to lower-wage workers, retirement adequacy, social service delivery, housing, childcare, healthcare, and disability inclusion (Wong, 2022a).

4.2 Singapore’s Social Compact Project

In June 2022, the social compact had been cemented as a long-term, whole-of-government top priority under the helm of Mr Wong, who had in the four-month interim been promoted to Deputy Prime Minister after having been selected as the leader of the ruling party’s fourth-generation team and effective successor to the current Prime Minister. Wong launched the Forward Singapore exercise, a year-long campaign to “refresh and update” Singapore social compact. In his speech given at the launch, Wong acknowledged that Singapore’s advanced-stage economic context has yielded social fault lines grounded in the public’s discontent with the high levels of socio-economic competition in society and its attendant stresses. He also mentioned the disillusionment with the increasingly inegalitarian practical outcomes of meritocracy – such as, for example, depressed social mobility - in Singapore. Deputy Prime Minister Wong outlined the need for a renewed social compact, comprehensively defined as “a shared understanding of how all of us in society relate to one another...that is deemed fair by all segments of society” and “an expression of our shared values and norms, and determines the roles and responsibilities of the Government, the community, businesses, and individuals in society.” (Wong, 2022b). Social cohesion is clearly the foremost desired outcome of the Forward Singapore project to renew the country’s social compact. Wong explicitly outlined the core objectives at the launch of the campaign: preventing citizens from feeling “estranged from society” and from the sense of alienation that “the system is not on their side”; healing social division, resentment and polarisation, and increasing social capital and trust across society and in government (Wong, 2022b).

Although the details and policy implications of the Forward Singapore project have not yet been made public, the project appears to be (in its current iteration thus far) focusing on improving structural conditions for social trust and a cohesive social compact. Forward Singapore addresses six segments of the social structure that are seen as current areas of pressure and insecurity for citizens: economy and jobs, education and lifelong learning, health and social support, home and living environment, environmental and fiscal sustainability, and the Singapore identity. It seems likely that the new policies will be centred around counteracting common feelings of unfairness and suspicion among the public. For example, the task of alleviating the pressures of competition and rising inequality in the job market and the

educational system will likely be addressed through the creation of wider opportunities for mobility, the expansion of the definition of educational success to account for a diverse range of abilities, and the reinforcement of the robustness and quality of meritocracy in actuality. In addition, the addressing of social, economic and existential insecurities may involve policies directed to augment the basic standard of living (including housing, healthcare, and standards of living environment). It may also result in urgent actions on climate change as well as increasing and expanding the provision of social support to the most vulnerable citizens.

With reference to the sixth segment - “The Singapore Identity” - it seems probable that the campaign will also involve responding to common individual-level narratives and feelings of unfairness, distrust and suspicion among the public which hamper social cohesion. This paper posits that one possible strategy could involve understanding and acknowledging the diversity of the various worldviews and identities of disillusioned and distrusting citizens within the population. This could be achieved by making use of archetypes for understanding various (dis)trustor profiles and perspectives. A thorough understanding of discrete citizen archetypes and trust profiles may inform the rollout of measures that make sure that more citizens feel represented and perceive that their grievances are understood by the state. In addition, archetypes may also inform the various communication and policy strategies for compassionately responding to these distrusting narratives, and enable the rollout of targeted rather than blanket responses.

5 The Way Forward & Next Steps

“Social resilience” has often been conceptualised as a composite of various social resilience indicators, providing a broad understanding of the complex and multifaceted mechanisms behind societies’ ability to endure and react to shocks. This paper has provided a complementary perspective on social resilience, adopting a zoomed-in analysis of social trust as a subfactor of social resilience, with the goal of deriving practical implications and policy formulations.

Based on the existing literature, we have theorised a streamlined, multi-stage approach for understanding social resilience, linking the concepts of social trust with social compacts and contracts as prerequisites for positive outcomes of social resilience. A society’s level of social resilience - i.e. its capacity for collective and cooperative behaviours in spite of uncertainty and calamity – can be heavily influenced and impacted by the effectiveness of its social contracts or compacts. Social contracts or contracts can simultaneously serve as a social “safety valve” and as a “binding agent” in society. In turn, the investments in and cooperation with social agreements depend on social trust, which plays a key role in bridging actors’ uncertainties about future payoffs and enabling cooperative actions.

So far, our approach essentially serves as a starting point for future research on this topic. Further scholarship and the closing of several scientific gaps are required before the ideas presented in this paper can evolve into a systematic processual framework for improving a country’s social resilience levels.

Strengthening social trust is of paramount importance for increased social resilience. Hence, there is a need for clarity regarding the nature of trust. Longitudinal studies investigating the long-term, dialectical relationship between trust levels and changes in policies or structural

conditions appear useful. It would be essential to find out more about how trust levels gradually or rapidly rise or fall in response to changes in framework conditions, on trust factors with comparatively strong effects on general trust levels, etc. Such knowledge helps inform the prioritisation of different strategies for promoting trust.

The creation and use of social trust archetypes have been proposed in the previous sections for visualising and responding to diverse trust profiles of citizens. More research would be required with regard to the methodology involved in generating social trust archetypes. Hereby, an important point would be to show how individual-level factors - such as personality and dispositions, identity and narratives, attitudes and perceptions, and life experiences - may be relevant for deriving meaningful groups of (dis)trusting citizens.

Further research should also focus on empirical approaches to study the effects of social contracts or compacts. As social contracts and compacts are by nature implicit and rather “nebulous” phenomena, The existing literature within this subfield remains focused largely on theory rather than empirical testing. A promising area for further research would be to test hypotheses such as those discussed in this paper. Relevant questions would, for instance, relate to how social contracts or compacts affect social stability, social cohesion, or collective actions. A first step might involve making tangible or explicit the concept of social contracts and compacts, as well as operationalising the degree to which social contracts or compacts are considered “well-functioning”. This may be done by contrasting “expected contributions” and “expected payoffs” of citizens and governments, as well as by identifying “actual contributions” and “actual payoffs” observed.

Another salient research topic would refer to the relationship between the levels of social trust and other commonly cited social resilience indicators, such as social networks or community involvement. Research in this area might help confirm the role of social trust as a basic ingredient for multiple forms of actions and contributive behaviours that matter for social resilience.

Furthermore, an enhancement of the quality of data on social trust and social contracts or compacts seems imperative. Samples that are representative with respect to population demographic variables may nevertheless have an overrepresentation of population segments that have high levels of trust in establishment-coded initiatives and proactively communicate and participate in discussions and feedback collections on citizen-to-citizen or citizen-government trust narratives. Hence, the possibility of bias in the respective findings cannot be excluded. Studies may not always reach individuals with lower levels of engagement and/or trust, which may hamper the formulation of their respective social trust archetypes as well as hamstring analyses of the functioning of social contracts and compacts. Future research should essentially explore the salient trust factors impacting individuals with lower levels of trust, who may be less active and comfortable with participating in feedback exercises and dialogue, in order to identify best practices for earning a baseline level of these citizens’ trust for engagement in dialogues. In addition, it is also imperative to explore methods for enabling candid and critical discussions for an unbiased collection of trust viewpoints and narratives.

With regards to the Singapore context, the Forward Singapore project has been an attempt to explicitly define and fulfil the terms of the country’s updated social compact. Hence, future research may leverage on it as a “test case” for conducting longitudinal studies on the

functioning of the contribution-payoff cycle in Singapore over time, by studying the effects of the rollout of the project's related policies. Specifically, this may entail observing the changes to trust levels across the time periods before and after the project's rollout. It may also be salient to start with research on Singapore's social trust archetypes to understand the multiplicity of trust profiles and narratives existent in the country. The previously outlined points about the need for obtaining representative citizens' feedback and the respective data are also relevant to the Singapore context.

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7 Appendices

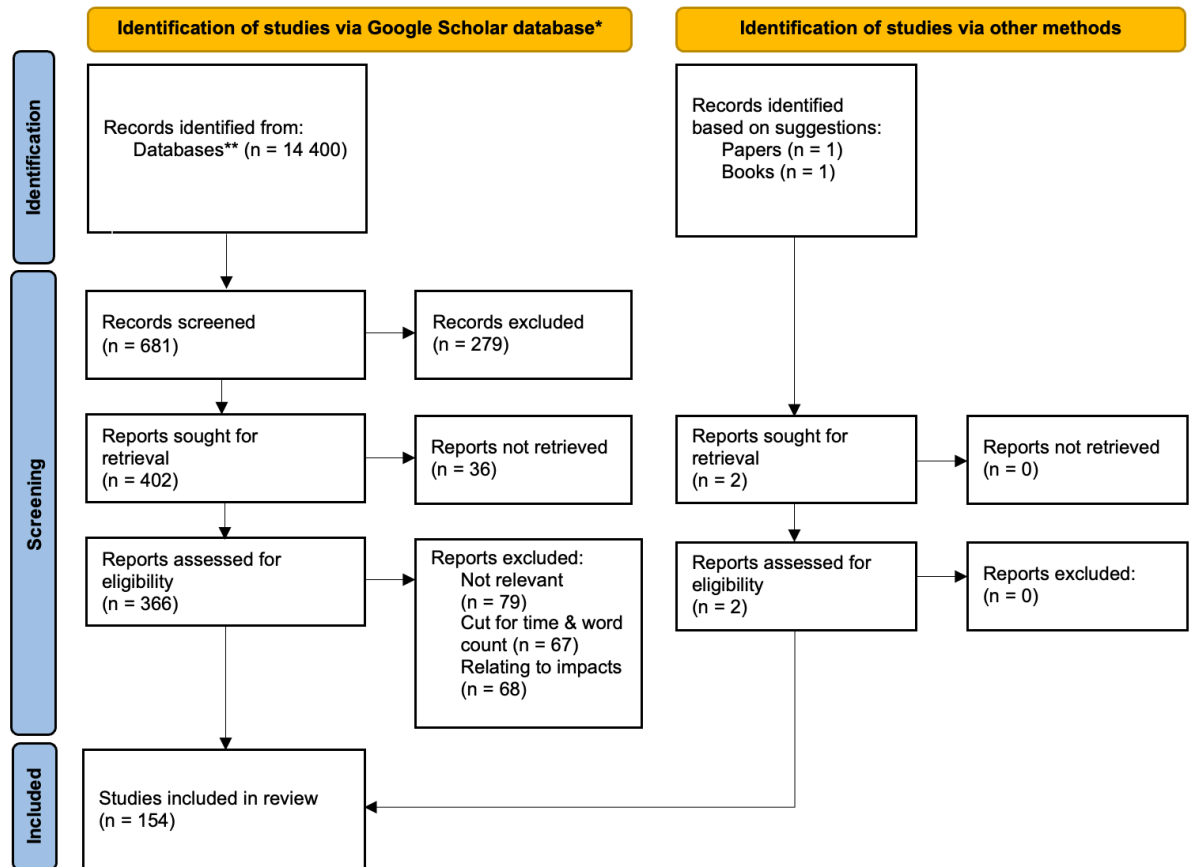
7.1 Appendix 1

The literature review in section 3.4 on social trust factors uses the updated PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) 2020 methodology to guide the selection and identification of the relevant literature. The goal was to achieve maximum comprehensiveness, accuracy and transparency (Page et al., 2021). The literature contained in this review was retrieved and collected from Google Scholar, which is considered a database for the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram (Rethlefsen & Page, 2022). Based on preliminary research, a list of salient key search terms was identified for covering the topic of social trust in its horizontal and vertical variations. Apart from the terms “social trust”, “horizontal trust” and “vertical trust” explicitly outlined in the research scope, the list of search keywords included synonyms and near-synonyms (such as “trust in society” or “community trust”), as well as common key phrases used within the subject literature that refer to similar or related concepts, such as “political trust” or “generalized trust”. The electronic search was conducted in November 2022, and duplicate or unrelated sources were filtered out of the final selection for review. The details of the search process are mapped in Figure 1.

Due to the broad objective characteristic of a literature review, the exclusion criteria applied in our selection process were not as stringent as those seen in systematic reviews. In detail, the exclusion criteria we used were as follows:

- Articles that did not relate to broader domestic social cohesion or social resilience within societies or communities. In this vein, articles relating to the fields of computing, healthcare, business/organization management, international relations and education were excluded.

Figure 1: PRISMA flowchart outlining screening process of studies for review



*Adapted from Page et al. (2020)

** The full keyword search list was as follows: "social trust" OR "horizontal trust" OR "vertical trust" OR "community trust" OR "societ* trust" OR "trust in society" OR "political trust" OR "government* trust" OR "institution* trust" OR "particularised OR particularized trust" OR "generalised OR generalized trust" OR "social compact trust" OR "social contract trust". The truncation symbol (*) has been utilized to search words with different suffixes attached to the word root (e.g. society and societal)

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