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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL ATTITUDES IN POST-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

PhD thesis

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Anotācija

Pētnieki nereti pauduši bažas par politisko atsvešinātību postkomunisma valstīs, norādot, ka uzlabojumi iedzīvotāju politiskajās attieksmēs notiek lēni vai pat to nav (Howard, 2003, Mishler & Rose 2001, Lagerspetz, 2009). Vairumā postkomunisma valstu cilvēki neuzticas ne viens otram, ne politiskajām institūcijām, un šādas valsts un pilsoņu attiecības ir uzskatāmas par disfunkcionālām (Woolcock & Narayan 2000). Balstoties uz sociālā kapitāla teoriju, institucinālajām un kultūras teorijām, un izmantojot kvantitatīvu mikro līmeņa analīzi (strukturālo vienādojumu modelēšanu un oriģinālu kohortu analīzes tehniku) promocijas darbs piedāvā ieskatu valsts un pilsoņu attiecībās postkomunisma valstīs, kā arī mehānismos, kas nosaka to attīstību vai noturību.

Atslēgas vārdi: politiskā atsvešinātība, postkommunisma valstis, kohortu analīze, politiskā socializācija, uzticēšanās, sociālais kapitāls, iemācītā bezpalīdzība

Abstract

Often concerns are raised about the political disenchantment and the lack of notable improvements in political attitudes among the citizens of post-communist countries (Howard, 2003, Mishler & Rose 2001, Lagerspetz, 2009). In most of these countries people distrust both each other and the political authority, and such conflicting state-society relations can be considered 'dysfunctional' (Woolcock & Narayan 2000). Building on the social capital theory, institutional and cultural theories and by using quantitative micro-level analysis (structural equation modelling and an original technique of cohort analysis) this PhD thesis offers an insight into the state-society relations in post-communist countries, as well as mechanisms behind the evolution or persistence of these attitudes.

Keywords: political alienation, post-communist countries, cohort analysis, political socialization, trust, social capital, learned helplessness

Contents

Abbreviations

BISS Baltic Institute of Social Sciences

CEE Central and Eastern Europe

CID Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy

EU European Union

EVS European Values Survey

ISSP The International Social Survey Program

NGO non-governmental organization

PCA Principal Component Analysis

SEM Structural Equation Model

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WVS World Values Survey

WWII World War II

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Introduction

"It is necessary to create inclusive society, one that forges partnerships between governments, firms, and civil society rather than pitting them against one another" (Woolcock, 2000, 35).

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the proclamation of independence or overthrow of communist-led regimes in many post-communist countries. Despite the fact that most of these countries are now listed by Freedom House as consolidated democracies, even recent studies [1] show that they are still characterized by scepticism and a low confidence in political authorities, low levels of political efficacy and associational membership. Distrust between people and disenchantment from politics, characteristic for the former regime, is still widespread, and people are reluctant to take advantage of the liberties and opportunities provided by democracy. If political values and current political behaviour can be considered important indicators of the level and type of democracy a given society has achieved (Badescu, 2006), it becomes clear that there are still serious problems that need to be addressed. According to Juris Rozenvalds (2007), the biggest challenges in Latvia are related to increasing the political activity of citizens, the democratization of political culture and development of socio-economic pre-conditions for democracy. In fact, many scholars (Howard, 2003 ; Rose & Shin, 2001, among others) have raised concerns over the political disenchantment and the lack of notable improvements in political attitudes among the citizens of post-communist countries, especially in the former Soviet bloc. Yet, the reasons behind this are still not fully understood.

Unfortunately most previous research on the mechanisms of the development of political attitudes, social capital (trust and participation) and state-society relations have

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[1]Howard, 2003 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007 ; Makarovič, Ivancič, & Podmenik, 2007 ; Badescu & Neller, 2007 ; Mishler & Rose, 1998 ; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Zmerli, Newton, Montero, & Ramón, 2007 ; Adam, 2007, among others

so far concentrated only on advanced industrial societies or mature democracies.[2]. At the same time, it is clear that in post-communist countries not just the political and economical situation is very different, but also people seem to behave and perceive things differently (e.g., Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2008 ; Howard, 2003 ; Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Makarovič et al., 2007). Accordingly, theories established on the basis of advanced Western democracies can provide very different, and even contradictory predictions (Mishler & Rose, 2001).

So far only a few good studies about the dynamics of political attitudes in post-communist societies after the fall of communist-led regimes have been conducted [3]. One of the reasons is the limited availability of comparable time-series data, that is not nearly as good as for the other European countries [4]. Most post-communist countries have only been included in three VWS or EVS waves, which is not enough to make any convincing claims about the dynamics of political attitudes or social capital. There are, as noted by Frane Adam (2007), some national case-studies, including several in Latvia. [5] And there are a few recent investigations dedicated specifically to Eastern Europe, sush as: (1) "Creating Social Trust: Problems of Post-Socialist Transition" (Kornai et.al.(Eds.), 2004), (2) "Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe" (Klingemann et.al.(Eds.), 2006), (3) "Democratization" (Haerpfer et.al.(Eds.), 2009). However, they do not allow us to conduct cross-national or over-time comparisons. When attempting to analyse the dynamics of associational membership in post-communist countries, Marc Morje Howard Howard (2003) concluded that due to several methodological and political reasons it is not easy. There is a lack of time series data, and comparisons from the VWS are not really reliable due to several methodological inconsistencies between waves (Howard, 2003, 71-2). Rasma Karklina and Brigita Zepa (2001) gathered information about political participation in Latvia during the years 1987-2001, however they only analyse indicators

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[2]Some exceptions are Mishler & Rose, 2001, 2005 ; Howard, 2003 ; Paldam & Svendsen, 2000.

[3]Among studies that have analysed political attitudes and behaviour in post-communist countries one should mention Howard, 2003 ; Mishler & Rose, 2001, 1997 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007 ; Makarovič et al., 2007 ; Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Lagerspetz, 2009.

[4]Although Frane Adam (2007) argues that even at the European level there is insufficient data. There have been only a few cross-time studies of social capital indicators: trust and participation, and they primarily use EVS or VWS data.

[5]Dreifelds, 1996 ; Plakans, 1997 ; Zepa, 1999 ; BISS, 2001, 2005 ; Karklins & Zepa, 2001 ; Menshikov, 2001 ; Vilka, Strupiss, Strode, O., & Simane, 2004 ; Koroleva & Rungule, 2006 ; Jansone & Vilka, 2007 ; Miezaine & Sīmane, 2005 ; Pabriks & Purs, 2001 ; Golubeva & Reinholde, 2007 ; Rozenvalds, 2007 ; Ījabs, I., 2007, among others.

of participation. Still, surveys that are available suggest that the changes in political attitudes and behaviour in post-communist countries have not happened as successfully as expected.

The focus of the study

In order to better understand political behaviour we must first examine its roots. This is why political attitudes, particularly those related to relationships between the society and its political system, are placed in the center of this study. More precisely, I mainly focus on attitudes describing the vertical linkages between the state and civil society, particularly, *political alienation of citizens*: (1) internal efficacy (the perceived political capability of citizens); 2 external efficacy (the perceived responsiveness of the political system); (3) perceived political competence, and (4) confidence in political authorities. I assume that state-society relations, and the development of civil society, are based on three fundamental aspects: political trust, efficacy and participation. In addition, I posit that it is important to analyse the levels of social capital too, as they indicate potential atomization and social disintegration of the society that can also deter people from engaging in collective action.

One could argue that it would have been better to focus primarily on actual political participation rather than attitudes, however the modes of participation have changed dramatically, making an analysis of the dynamics of participation extremely difficult and prone to misleading results. My approach captures more general political dispositions.

The theoretical perspective

Political scientists usually try to explain political attitudes and behaviour from two broad perspectives: (1) the cultural perspective, and (2) the institutional perspective (Mishler & Rose, 2001, 2005, also Letki, 2006 ; Denters, Gabriel, & Torcal, 2007). Similarly, the social capital literature speaks about two approaches to explaining the sources of social capital (reflected in trust, participation in associations and civic activism in general): society-centered approach and institution-centered approach (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003, but see also Howard, 2003). In table 1 I have merged and summarized these approaches in a

theoretical framework that this thesis builds on [6].

The *cultural approach* emphasizes the role of collective experiences of a nation, its traditions and history. It considers political views and behaviours to be heavily influenced by the political culture in which one was brought up. The beliefs of people and the way they choose to behave are seen largely as a result of early-life socialization. Both individual and collective experiences, such as persistence of a repressive regime, matter. In this sense, the values and habits of individuals can be seen as 'path-dependent' and resistant to change. This approach has been very popular among researchers of post-communist countries. From the point of view of cultural theories the disenchantment of citizens from politics and their civic passivity is a legacy of the communist regime. It is believed to have undermined interpersonal trust, discouraged any out-systemic initiatives and created a very specific type of political culture characterized by political apathy, skepticism and distrust towards authorities (Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Fields, 2003 ; Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993 ; Howard, 2003 ; Inglehart, 2006, 1997, 1999 ; Sztompka, 1998 ; Ījabs, I., 2007).

From the perspective of *social capital* theories civic incompetence and passivity is a result of inadequate transmission of democratic norms, skills and values trough family, school, workplace and voluntary associations (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Pateman, 1975 ; Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2008 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Stolle & Rochon, 1999 ; Uslaner, 2008). And lack of social trust is believed to be hugely responsible for the low citizen involvement in political life, and voluntary groups and associations. The social capital theories assume that by interacting with each other, people learn to trust others, reciprocate, acquire self-confidence, belief in the responsiveness of the political system, and all kinds of civic values. These values are then projected onto institutions and

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[6]Mishler and Rose (2001) distinguish also micro-institutional approach, arguing that for a specific individual also the individual experiences and preferences, such as, for example, the incumbency factor or the position of the government regarding the policies that are especially important for the specific individual can influence their political attitudes (see also Denters et al., 2007). For instance, if a government introduces policies that favour pensioners, is will improve the political attitudes of this age group. Young people, on the other hand, might feel alienated as a result of this. It is inevitable that the interests of some groups will be represented better — some will have their favourite party in the government and some not, therefore the change in polices does not necessarily lead to general improvements in political attitudes among all population. As I am not interested in group-level differences, this approach is not relevant to my needs and is not discussed further here.

Table 1: **Theoretical approaches to explaining political attitudes**

The approach	Main assumptions	Impact of institutions
The cultural (path dependency) approach	• Values and beliefs internalized early in life are resistant to change • Political attitudes and behaviour are a product of past experiences • Thus, they are often "irrational"	Low
The social capital (society-centered) approach	• Civic attitudes develop in interaction with other people • Trust, efficacy and civic competence developed in associations and groups further reinforce participation and civic activism • Trust developed in small groups is 'projected' to larger groups and institutions	Medium
The institutional (institution-centered) approach	• Political attitudes and behaviour are a rational response to people's present experience, and reflect their judgement based on this experience • Political attitudes and responses reflect the quality of institutions ('performance hypothesis')	High

result in better informed, more engaged, efficacious, politically active and democratically responsible citizens. This is is essentially a "bottom-up" approach, and the role of the

public institutions in facilitating social trust and participation is seen as limited.

Even though the cultural approach and the social capital approach are similar, distinguishing between them is very important for policy recommendations, as it shows whether particular political attitudes is something that can be influenced relatively easily, or it will take a generation (as suggested by, for example, Eric Uslaner, 2003, Marc Morje Howard, 2003, and Ronald Inglehart, 1999) to achieve a significant change.

From the *institutional* perspective political attitudes are politically endogenous — people build their opinions and expectations on the basis of of their prior experiences and their interpretation of these experiences. For example, the lack of confidence in institutions is thought to reflect the dissatisfaction of citizens with the institutional output of political authorities, and their perceived corruption. However, the assumptions of institutional theories stretch farther than confidence in institutions. The perceptions of internal and external efficacy are also believed to be based on individuals previous experience in dealing with institutions (Madsen, 1987 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Stolle, 1998 ; Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004). The *institutional approach* promotes the 'top-down' development of political attitudes and behaviour, and holds that institutions have a big role in promoting cooperative values and behaviour among the society. The current performance of institutions, i.e., whether they promote growth, avoid corruption, are effective in enforcing laws, as well as whether they prove to be responsive and trustworthy, affects the norms and values that will dominate in the society: the dispositions, expectations and perceptions of people regarding other people, themselves and their role as citizens.

The three approaches discussed above do not contradict each other.[7] They all assume that individuals develop certain values and attitudes in everyday interactions with each other and/or institutions, and that these attitudes are linked to experience at some point (Mishler & Rose, 2001). What they disagree on is — how big is the role of institutions. If political attitudes are mostly a 'bottom-up' phenomenon there is still something that can be done 'from above', yet the opportunities are limited and the mechanisms will be different. If it is indeed the case that early-life socialization and the culture in which an individual has been brought up determines to a notable degree his or her political attitudes, there is not much we can do about it. If, however, the legacy of

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[7]I certainly do not want to promote any kind of 'determinism' here, and I agree wholeheartedly with Inglehart (1997) that economic determinism, cultural determinism and political determinism are all oversimplified.

the past is not the ultimate answer to our problems, the disenchantment of people from politics should not be seen as 'normal' and we should be looking seriously for ways to improve the situation.

Recent studies have demonstrated that both institutions and horizontal interactions matter, suggesting that the approaches are rather complimentary (see, for example, Woolcock, 2000 ; Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2008 ; Howard, 2003 ; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Moreover, Norman Uphoff (1992) and other representatives of the synergy view in the social capital literature argue that 'top-down' efforts may be necessary to introduce, sustain and institutionalize 'bottom-up' development. This is in essence what the synergy view in the social capital literature is about. Still, it is also clear that in different historical and cultural contexts the relative importance of the sources of political attitudes and social capital and, accordingly, the preferred strategies to facilitate it, might be very different.

Research problem

When trying to explain political alienation in post-communist countries, some scholars point to the initial inexperience and poor performance of the new authorities and note that disappointment was intensified because of high, yet unjustified expectations held by citizens, causing the so called 'post-honeymoon' effect (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002 ; Howard, 2003 ; Koroleva & Rungule, 2006). Most accounts, however, see political alienation, a lack of confidence in political authorities, and the weakness of civil society as part of the communist heritage (Jowitt, 1992 ; Sztompka, 1998 ; Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Uslaner, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Howard, 2003 ; Inglehart, 2006). The communist regime is blamed for creating a "Soviet mentality" (Linz & Stepan, 1996), and a very specific kind of political culture, one which is characterized by political apathy, low self-efficacy, a passive acceptance of government decisions, disengagement from the political realm, an inability to make proper use of new opportunities, scepticism, and distrust of authorities.

The communist legacy argument has often served as a comfortable excuse for the inability of politicians to reduce the scepticism and political apathy of citizens (as in the "Homo Sovieticus" argument put forward by Józef Tischner and others). Intuitively one would of course expect that the cultural perspective has much more relevance in post-communist countries than in Western countries. However, there is surprisingly little empirical research subjecting these rather general claims to detailed testing. Political

socialization researchers have found that political attitudes vary a good deal in their stability over time and in their "intrinsic resistance to change" (Sears 1983: 83). According to Sears (1983), attitudes have different affective strength running from an "enduring" or "symbolic" predisposition to a "nonattitudes" (Sears, 1983, 83). *Which* attitudes can be considered symbolic is in itself a broad research topic that has received considerable attention in socialization research. Some political attitudes or orientations have been found to be more resistant to change than the others, and also the pattern of their internalization (the impressionable years) can differ. Early life socialization is important for basic political orientations or what Sears (1975) calls the most ego-related or 'symbolic' attitudes in adulthood, such as party-identification, racial attitudes, liberal/conservative self-designation, and others [8]. Yet, as Niemi and Hepburn (1995) conclude, some, or possibly much, of early learning has been shown to be of limited consequence to later adult political behaviour (see, for example, the study by Alwin and Krosnick, 1991).

At the time of the fall of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, political socialization research was discredited, often stigmatized on the basis of its early assumptions, and neglected by many political scientists (see Conover, 1991) [9] As a result, post-communist studies developed somewhat in parallel, without duly incorporating, or moreover building on the important findings from socialization research. Moreover, insights from political socialization research have also been hardly integrated into the social capital literature, receiving surprisingly little attention in this field of research (Stolle & Hooghe, 2004).

Political scientists usually draw their conclusions about the communist legacy from macro-level differences between the cluster of post-communist countries and other countries (Inglehart, 2006). Others analyse the number of years a democracy has been in existence (McAllister, 1999 ; Inglehart, 2006 ; Zepa, 1999) or add post-communism as a

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[8]Among the best known studies one can mention Kent Jennings and Gregory Markus (1984) Socialization Panel Study (1965, 1973 and 1982) and Duane Alwin and John Krosnick (1991) study on the basis of the National Election Study (NES) panel data from 1950 to 1970 about the party-identification, Searing et.al. (1976) "The Primacy Principle: Attitude Change and Political Socialization", as well as Converse's "Dynamics of party support" (Converse, 1976) and the recent massive IEA Civic Education Study of adolescents in 29 countries (see Torney-Purta, 2004)

[9]The many problems with early political socialization research have been well documented (Searing, Schwartz, & Lind, 1973 ; Wright, 1975 ; Sears, 1990 ; Conover, 1991 ; Hepburn, 1995 ; Niemi & Hepburn, 1995 ; Sigel, 1995 ; Sapiro, 2004 ; Bennett, 2007, among others) and do not need to be repeated here.

proxy in country level regression analysis (Howard, 2003). Yet, in my view, the macro-level approach is somewhat problematic. Even though low levels of trust and civic participation are indeed common for most post-communist countries (Howard, 2003), there can be a number of reasons for that, besides path-dependency of the political culture. All of these countries were economically immature in comparison to western democracies; all experienced painful structural reforms; all had to establish new, democratic institutions. Similar circumstances, and not socialization in a certain political culture, might have created a similarity in attitudes.

Recently some researchers (e.g., Howard, 2003 ; Makarovič et al., 2007) have used qualitative social research methods (in-depth interviews) to uncover the communist legacy. Even though this methodological approach certainly has a lot of benefits, the specifics of the method means that it is not possible to quantify or effectively compare the obtained results. It is also not possible to argue about the strength or significance of the influence of the previous political culture.

A more convincing result regarding the importance of the cultural legacy of the communist regime could be obtained at the *micro level*. However, the few quantitative studies which imply micro-level analysis actually sow doubts regarding the cultural inheritance of at least some of the political attitudes traditionally associated with the legacy of the communist regime, for example, confidence in institutions. In socialization studies political trust has long been considered to be less stable and enduring than many other attitudes and orientations, yet there might be considerable variation in the persistence of different types of political trust (Searing et.al. 1976). Analysing post-communist countries, William Mishler and Richard Rose found "little evidence in the data that citizens in post-communist societies have been socialized into an overarching national culture that determines political distrust" (Mishler & Rose, 2001, 297). They rejected the macro-cultural explanations on the basis of finding more variation in political trust within countries than across them.[10] Similar conclusions were reached by Bas Denters et. al. (2007), who found that confidence in institutions could be better explained by political

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[10]Their assumption was that for the macro cultural explanation to be right, taking into account the homogenizing tendencies of national traditions, the within-country variations would be smaller that across-country variations. Yet the countries they studied are very similar (all post-communist e.g., Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia), so the results are not surprising, and can not be taken as a conclusive evidence.

factors than by socio-cultural variables.[11] On the other hand, Gabriel Badescu (2006) *did* find support for the cultural perspective, his study showing that the communist era has effectively diminished differences in political attitudes and behaviour between two very distinct regions of Romania.[12] Also, according to other studies, in second-wave democracies Italy (Rose & Shin, 2001), Spain (Torcal & Montero, 1999), and Portugal, Spain and Greece (Camões & Mendes, 2002) generations matter for political trust. The most recent cohort studies in post-communist countries deal with diffuse support for the new political system (e.g., satisfaction with the way democracy works), finding a very small, yet significant cohort effect (Neundorf, 2010 ; Mishler & Rose, 2007, 2002 ; Loewenberg, Mishler, & Rose, 2010).

The development of *political competence* has mostly been studied by developmental psychologists, who focus on the importance of the political environment, family, school and media in the acquisition of political knowledge or civic skills. Yet they rarely try to track their persistence throughout the lifetime. Among the exceptions one can mention Jennings (1996) study that finds that *factual* political knowledge is indeed learnt and stabilizes in the early stages of mid-life. Civic skills, according to Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995), are also most likely acquired during adolescence and early adulthood. The *subjective* political competence is considered part of diffuse support (Easton & Dennis, 1967), that is one of the basic political orientations, and as such should also demonstrate a considerable stability throughout lifetime. It is not as clear though whether interest in politics and general political involvement are as persistent as other political attitudes (Sears, 1990).

Evidence regarding *political efficacy* is mixed. On one hand, efficacy is considered "a relatively deep attribute of individuals' political psychology" (Searing, Wright, & Rabinowitz, 1976, 91), and some research has shown that it demonstrates considerable stability during the life-span until the age of around 55 when it declines (Campbell, Gurin, & W.E., 1971 ; Searing et al., 1976). On the other, Gerald Wright (1975), found that the sense of political efficacy changes significantly over time, drawing a conclusion that people

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[11]However, the data they use is not longitudinal, and not even repeated cross-section data — it is a single survey. Therefore it can not be considered a solid measure of the importance of the political *culture* in which a person has been socialized.

[12]One was under the reign of Habsburgs, the other — Ottoman empire; one is dominated by Roman and Greek Catholics, other — Orthodox.

can be re-socialized by subsequent events. In contrast with many political scientists and sociologists, Sears (1983) argues that attitudes related to political efficacy, political trust and alienation are the least 'symbolic', that is, they are formed later in life, and change in response to the political reality. The reason why the evidence for the persistence of efficacy through lifetime has not been consistent might have to do with the fact that there are different types of efficacy. Considering the implications of attribution, we might expect the internal efficacy (that refers to respondent himself) to be more persistent than the external efficacy (that refers to responsiveness of public officials and the government) (see Langton, 1984 ; Searing et al., 1976).

A wide range of social and political values, attitudes and behaviours have been linked to communist legacies, and many authors have done an excellent job in describing them in great detail (Jowitt, 1992 ; Sztompka, 1998 ; Howard, 2003, among others). This thesis, however, will mainly focus on the relationships between citizens and the state. Besides basic political value orientations, this is where post-communist researchers usually expect the legacy of the communism to manifest itself the most. Moreover, as the literature analysis reveals, the cultural embeddedness of political attitudes describing the relations between the citizens and the state, has been a subject to more speculations that real empirical research.

So far most studies about the acquisition and persistence of political attitudes have been conducted in the United States or other advanced industrial democracies, primarily Western Europe (Sears & Levy, 2003 ; Sapiro, 2004) (some exceptions are the studies by Finkel, Hunphries, & Opp, 2001 ; Schuman & Corning, 2000 ; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Yet, there is evidence of a considerable cultural variation in both the process of socialization, and the 'symbolism' of attitudes (Sapiro, 2004 ; Westholm & Niemi, 1992).

Considering how repressive the communist regimes were and how long they lasted, post-communist countries provide almost an ideal setting for testing cultural theories. There are few places in the world where we would expect to find a stronger, more distinct effect of the cultural inheritance of the previously regime than in post-communist countries.[13]. If the attitudes related to political alienation are intrinsically resistant to change and, accordingly, have potential for path dependency, we should observe distinct generational differences.

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[13]Other interesting examples would be, for example, Spain or some of the South-American countries that have experienced harsh dictatorship.

Previous studies focusing on institutions and their role in the development of civil society usually analyse the efficiency of direct government intervention in the voluntary sector — financial support for NGO's, tax exemptions and other potentially stimulating policies for the formation of voluntary associations. Studies about repressive regimes concentrate on the opposite — the suppression of free speech, repressions against dissidents, etc. A lot less research has been done on the socializing role of government actions, policies and communication with citizens, and the psychological mechanisms underlying this specific kind of "political socialization". In my opinion, the socialization aspect of state-society relations has been grossly overlooked in previous literature. Only recently some studies have begun to appear (e.g., Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004).

Usually researchers analyse the direct relations between particular indicators (social and political trust, trust and participation, etc.). However, if we put together what is known from previous studies, we end up with a complex model of direct and indirect linkages between different political attitudes and behaviour (Figure 1). If all them hold, we can conclude that the better the political authorities perform, the more people will trust them, the more trusting and efficacious they will feel and the more likely they will be to take part in democratic processes. Active citizen's engagement in political processes are, in turn, expected to have a positive reverse effect on the governance and, especially, its accountability (Herreros, 2004 ; Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Newton, 1999 ; Teorell, Torcal, & Montero, 2007 ; Putnam et al., 1993 ; Knack, 2002 ; Welzel, Inglehart, & Deutsch, 2005). Thus, a government that performs satisfactory should create a virtuous circle of high confidence, high efficacy and trust, substantial civic participation and better policy outcomes.

Recently there have been a few studies exploring a similar virtuous circle, mainly in the context of reciprocal relations between trust, associational membership and democratic political participation (Zmerli et.al.,2007; Hererros, 2004).[14] However, as said be-

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[14]In addition to democracy and good government, Zmerli et al. (2007) also stress the importance of social attitudes. Mutuality, reciprocity, and trust facilitate community involvement, especially membership in voluntary associations and clubs, which, in turn, are linked to civic engagement and democratic political participation. They, in turn, help to build the social and political institutions necessary for democratic and effective government (Zmerli et al., 2007, 61). Herreros (2004) too emphasizes the need to support associations, where the trust and reciprocity norms can develop, thus fuelling the virtuous
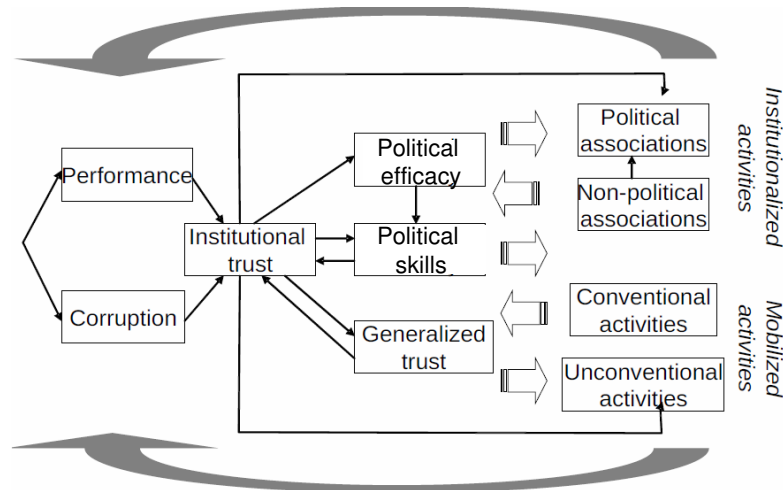
Figure 1: **The 'virtuos circle' of political attitudes and behaviour**

fore, almost all previous research on the formation of political attitudes has been concerned with advanced industrial democracies. If we think about post-communist countries, it becomes clear that it is wrong and short-sighted to only focus on the 'virtuous circle' and the positive long-term effects of good governance. The real question one should ask is what happens if the performance of authorities is continuously poor and unsatisfactory? Following the previous logic, there is a risk of getting trapped in a 'vicious circle', and reach an other kind of equilibrium characterized by poor institutional performance, low trust and efficacy and week civil society. The forming of a vicious circle might seem somewhat counter-intuitive, for it implies that, the worse a government performs, the less responsive it is to citizen's demands, the less likely citizens are to engage in any political activity, that is, to try to do something about it. However, such circle would correspond to the cognitive mechanisms of "learned helplessness" that are well known in social psychology. Applied to political realm this theory would mean that continuously poor performance and unresponsiveness of the government institutions in a long run can alienate citizens from the state and politics and create a politically "helpless society".

Both Sonja Zmerli et al. (2007) and Francisco Herreros (2004) only concentrate on some of the indicators I am interested in. With regards to the study of Zmerli et.al. (2007)

circle. He also provides an example, based on two Italian cities, how social capital can trigger a virtuous circle for the creation of more social capital.

I think that SEM would have been better suited for uncovering the complex network of relations. Herreros (2004) does use SEM, but his analysis is only based on the sample of advanced industrial democracies (EU 15, except for Luxemburg and Greece). As social interactions are deeply embedded in institutional and cultural settings that are highly variable between countries and regions (Stolle & Rochon, 1999 ; Stolle, 2003), we might expect different results for post-Soviet countries like Latvia.

In the social capital literature there has been a lot of discussion regarding these assumptions and ongoing debate about whether there is or is not a more or less significant and consistent positive correlation between generalized trust and confidence in institutions, and there are also disagreements about the direction of linkages. Some (e.g., Brehm & Rahn, 1997) believe they lead from political trust to social trust, while others (e.g., Schyns & Nuus, 2007) hold the opposite view. Moreover, a growing number of studies reveal that the role of civic participation and associational membership in developing trust and democratic attitudes is most likely overstated (see Keefer & Knack, 1997 ; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Armigeon, 2007). Despite huge amount of studies trying to find evidence for the so called 'Putnam's hypothesis', researchers have failed to find a strong, systematic connection between participation and trust at the micro level.[15] Gabriel Badescu and Katja Neller (2007) argue that in post-communist countries the connection between trust and participation is even weeker than in other countries. Studies in this field continue.

Research aims, tasks and hypotheses

The overall goal of the thesis is to bring to the further attention the importance and potential of the mutually supportive state-society relations. It offers an insight into the character and dynamics of political attitudes and the state-society relations in post-communist countries, and aims to explain the mechanisms behind the development of these relations. In order to do so, it tests separately the previously discussed assumptions of institutional, cultural and social capital theories. This work also hopes to contribute to the understanding of the roots of social capital, thus enabling researchers to make better policy

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[15]See, for example, Hooghe and Stolle 2003, Zmerli et.al. 2007, Denters et.al.2007, Morales and Geurts 2007, Newton 2002, for post-communist countries Letki 2004, Mishler and Rose 2005, but for critique and positive findings – Hererros, 2004.

recommendations.

In the empirical part of the thesis I have set following tasks:

1. to gather information on the dynamics of indicators related to political alienation and state-society relations (political trust, participation, efficacy, generalized trust) in post-communist countries by combining different comparative and local surveys;

2. by using the method of factor analysis, to calculate the indicators characterizing political alienation;

3. to use the indicators for constructing empirical models characterizing political alienation and state-society relations;

4. to compare indicators of state-society relations among different countries, in order to find out if there is a certain pattern concerning post-communist countries;

5. to find out whether there are or are not consistent generational differences in political attitudes, i.e., if we can say that political alienation is, at least to a certain extent, an inheritance of the communist regime;

6. to test if the performance of institutions has an impact on political alienation, and if the vicious circle of negative top-down political socialization exists [16];

7. to find out whether participation has an impact on generalized trust and democratic attitudes (including political efficacy).

In general, the task of the theoretical part is to offer the overview and analysis of the literature related to the issues of interest. The first chapter of the thesis provides an overview of what is known from previous studies about the political alienation in post-communist and other countries. Further, mainly based on political socialization theories, it explores two competing approaches — 'persistence view' and the 'life-long openness view' — that serve as theoretical arguments for or against the path-dependency of certain culture, as well as the mechanisms behind socialization in a certain political culture. The second chapter contains a detailed analysis of the basic indicators of state-society relations: political trust, efficacy and participation. In addition, it also provides

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[16]By top-down political socialization I mean the internalization of certain values, attitudes or beliefs through observing the communication and behaviour of political authorities, with media, and public institutions themselves serving as the principal socialization agents

an insight into the "learned helplessness" theories and their potential applicability to political behaviour. The third chapter is mainly dedicated to the analysis of assumptions of social capital theories, and their relevance for the analysis of state-society relations and political participation.

The literature review is followed by the methodology part, where I describe in more detail the data this study is based on, as well as advantages and potential drawbacks of the applied statistical methods.

The empirical part of the thesis also consists of three related chapters all trying to capture the sources of political alienation and the potential of institutions to boost of hinder the development of civil society. In the fifth chapter I am analysing the state-society relations and their dynamics in post-communist countries, based on two theoretical frameworks. In the sixth chapter I am looking for micro-level evidence of the cultural embeddedness of political attitudes, and in the seventh chapter I am testing the relevance of institutional and social capital theories. Accordingly, the hypotheses are also structured on the basis of which particular theories they refer to (and in which chapter they are tested).

With regards to state-society relations, I formulate the following hypotheses:

H1 First, I hypothesize that post-communist countries are characterized by the state of "conflict"'between citizens and the state, that is, by low bridging social capital and lack of confidence in political authorities. Thus, the relations between citizens and the state should not be complimentary but rather substitution, and such a state would be considered dysfunctional;

H2 I assert that people in post-communist countries feel alienated from politics — they do not trust political authorities, nor their own ability to challenge them — while allegiant attitudes should mostly be found among citizens of advanced Western democracies;

H3 Considering the generational change and positive economic developments, I expect to find overall improvements in political attitudes in post-communist countries. I hypothesize that political alienation in most post-communist countries has decreased.

Basing on the assumptions of cultural theories, I formulate the following hypotheses:

H4 First, I expect political attitudes to be related to age. In post-communist countries, the relationship should be negative – the longer a person lived under the communist rule, the more distorted perceptions we expect to see (see Inglehart, 2006);

H5 As a consequence of similar political history characterized by the reign of a communist party, I expect to find a similar pattern of answers in all post-communist countries, and that it would be different from Western democracies that did not experience such a repressive regime;

H6 The pattern of 'post-communism' should be characterized by: a) improvements in political attitudes among youth whose basic political socialization took place in an already free, democratic country (see Neundorf, 2010); and b) worsening political attitudes among people who lived through the harshest, most repressive years of a regime (1940s and 1950s) during their formative years.

Basing on the assumptions of institutional theories, I formulate the following hypotheses:

H7 First, I expect to find a) that there is no *direct* link between confidence in institutions and participation, and b) that the impact is mediated through (1) a sense of political efficacy; (2) sense of one's political competence and (3) interpersonal trust.

H8 I hypothesize that unsatisfactory performance of political authorities reduces political efficacy, decrease citizen's self-confidence in political matters, and spreads distrust throughout the society, thus alienating citizens from politics and discouraging all kinds of political participation. More specifically, I assert that the 'vicious circle' of negative political socialization specified in Figure 1 can not be rejected.

H9 Finally, if the role of voluntary associations in facilitating civic attitudes and behaviour is indeed overstated, we should find no link from participation in voluntary associations to interpersonal trust and political efficacy.

The thesis ends with conclusions, where I discuss the results with regards to the initial hypotheses, and the practical and scientific importance of the findings. The main argument of this thesis is that while most established democracies are characterized by allegiant attitudes towards political authority, citizens of post-communist countries feel

alienated from politics. And the reason for that is not as much the legacy of communism, as the unsatisfactory performance of contemporary political institutions.

Data and methods

For describing the state-society relations I am using a slightly adapted Jeffery Paige's (1971) political alienation model, that distinguishes two dimensions: institutional trust and efficacy. Trust here relates to both trust in political authorities and perceived corruption of the officials, and efficacy combines internal efficacy (information, knowledge and understanding of politics) and external efficacy (perceived responsiveness of the political system). The advantage of this model is that it simultaneously includes satisfaction with the political authorities and perceived capability to challenge them. Thus, in a way, it shows how legitimate the current political system is. In addition, I also offer a separate analysis of each of the dimensions of efficacy. Another theoretical framework I apply is Michael Woolcock's and Deepa Narayan's (2000) model of state-society relations. These models are based on the The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) waves of 1996 and 2006 "The Role of Government".

For testing the assumptions of the cultural theories and uncovering the generational effect, I use the method of cohort analysis. The use if this method seems obvious, if we consider the arguments made by Inglehart (1997) about the generational replacement as the most likely source of change. Cohort analysis seeks to detect three different effects that explain attitudinal change or stability: a cohort (or generational) effect, a period (or time) effect and an age (or life-cycle) effect. The cohort effect occurs when a sizeable number of people are exposed to similar, significant social forces and/or live through similar, significant social events during their formative years (Sears, 1990 ; Sztompka, 1998 ; Mason & Wolfinger, 2001 ; Gimpel, Lay, & Schuknecht, 2003). The generation is expected to carry the impact of this "event" through the life-cycle.[17] The prevalence of the age

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[17]It must be said though that different individuals *within* cohorts might be socialized differently (depending on their education, sex, position in the society, political views, individual experiences, etc. (Loewenberg et al., 2010 ; Sapiro, 2004 ; Torney-Purta, 2004)). Cohort analysis, as noted by Sears (1983: 89) "can yield information only about the stability of a particular cohort's aggregate distribution of opinions, not about stability within individuals". However, it is sufficient for testing the post-communist legacy hypothesis, for the cultural impact should be observable in the society as a whole, reflecting in certain cohorts.

(or life-cycle) effect means that political views simply change with age or that people tend to have particular dispositions at certain stages of life, while period (time) effect reflects general changes of attitudes among the population, reflecting contextual effects. Instead of relying on existing techniques, I develop an original cohort analysis technique for two-wave studies that also allows for simple graphic visualization of life-cycle and cohort effects. Cohort analysis is based on data from the ISSP "Role of Government" waves of 1996 and 2006. The ten year gap between the waves is large enough to spot a distinctive 'generation' in the data, but not so large that the distinctiveness of a generation could fade (Jennings, 1987). In fact, 9 to 11 years is the most commonly used length of a generation in the literature, unless they are grouped in longer generations (see, e.g., Mishler & Rose, 2007). In order to determine whether a particular effect is characteristic only of post-communist countries, and might therefore be tied with the communist past, or is part of a general social psychological mechanism, besides six post-communist countries: Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Latvia and Russia, I also included in my analysis four other European countries (France, Sweden, Norway, Great Britain) and three democracies outside Europe (United States, Australia, New Zealand).

One of the most appropriate methods for analysing complex models such as the 'vicious circle' that links relations between different political attitudes and participation, is structural equation modelling (SEM). Structural equation models, also called simultaneous equation models, are multivariate regression models. Variables in a SEM may influence one-another reciprocally, either directly or through other variables as intermediaries. Linking previously studied relations between different political attitudes and behaviour into a single model would help to better understand the psychological and social mechanisms that lie behind the political behaviour of citizens. The SEM is based on ISSP waves of 2006 and 2007. The study was performed for Latvia and not some other country, for it is one of the three countries where these two ISSP waves were administered together. Each of the survey waves contained some information that was necessary for the analysis.

Practical and scientific importance of the thesis

Relations between the state and civil society is one of the central issues in the field of political sociology. During the last two decades there has been a resurgence of debates

about the functioning of democracy and relations between the state and civil society in general. The interest has been triggered by accounts of growing political disenchantment, declining engagement of citizens in democratic processes and declining public support for authorities in most of the developed world (Dalton, 2004 ; Stoker, 2008). Even though most of the studies dealing with changing political attitudes have been concerned with advanced industrial countries, political disenchantment and alienation is an even more serious problem in the new post-communist democracies. This PhD thesis is an important contribution to a better understanding of the specifics of the political culture of post-communist countries. Instead of speculations and assumptions it provides empirical, statistically strong micro-level analysis that tries to explain how the political attitudes are formed, and what is responsible for the widespread political alienation in post-communist countries. The main conclusion of this study is the following:

> *While most established democracies are characterized by allegiant attitudes towards political authority, citizens of post-communist countries feel alienated. The reason for that is not as much the legacy of communist regime, as the unsatisfactory performance of contemporary political institutions, that has alienated citizens from politics.*

The significance of the the thesis lies in both empirical innovation and contributions to theory. My study follows a line of recent papers that have challenged the widely held view that political alienation in post-communist countries largely a communist heritage. The results suggest that the legacy of the past is not responsible for the low confidence in political authorities, the negative perception of their responsiveness, or the perceived lack of self-efficacy of citizens today.

At the same time, I do find a unique and surprisingly similar generational effect in all post communist countries with regards to perceived political competence (interest and understanding of politics), while in other western democracies political competence simply increases with age. The data suggest that an environment that hinders or discourages the acquisition of political competence during the most impressionable years of adolescence and early adulthood can result in generations of incompetent, disengaged citizenry. Moreover, an alarming finding is that the post-communist transformation has been almost as harmful to the political competence of citizens as the most repressive periods of the communist regime. So far researchers have overlooked or gravely underestimated the

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detrimental effects of post-communist transitions. The culture of political disengagement continued to be cultivated even after the fall of communist regimes, and with the exception of Czech Republic, there is no young, more politically competent generation in sight. This is something we must understand and address to ensure the success of democratic development in Central and Eastern Europe.

This study also contributes to political socialization theories by helping to better explain some of the problematic issues, such as: 1) which political views or attitudes can or can not be considered "symbolic", that is, learned early in life and persistent throughout the life-cycle; 2) what ages correspond to the "maximum period of change" when these attitudes are mostly formed; 3) what factors might facilitate or discourage acquiring political competence, etc. [18]

Some of the conclusion from this study is important for social capital theories. The results show that the positive role of participation in generating trust and democratic attitudes is overstated, at least in case of Latvia. It corresponds to a growing number of studies questioning the basic assumptions of social capital theory, mainly, the communitarian view.

This thesis also contains an interesting innovation. Taking a truly interdisciplinary approach, I borrow the concept of "learned helplessness" well known in social psychology, and test its adequacy at the group level, with regards to political attitudes and behaviour. This has never been done before, even though such tests have been suggested (Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1995). A Structural Equation Model on the example of Latvia demonstrates that the learned helplessness mechanism can indeed be successfully applied to the political realm, and I also show that a vicious circle of "top-down" political socialization is indeed a real possibility. The three main psychological mechanisms by which the authorities can influence political activism and facilitate or hinder the development of civil society are – through the impact of their policies and communication on citizen's (1) sense of political efficacy; (2) sense of one's political competence and (3) interpersonal trust. Poor performance and unresponsiveness of political authorities, if experienced for a long period of time, can conceivably create a politically "helpless society". I hope that this study will provoke further debates about "top-down" political socialization, leading to a better understanding of the psychological and social mechanisms that lie behind the

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[18]In this thesis I examine the results in the context of the histories of the respective counties, which might help to better understand what particular events might be responsible for these attitudes.

political behaviour of citizens. 'Top–down" socialization is a relatively new but promising field of studies — just a few good studies have been dealing with this topic so far. Even though my study is based on the example of Latvia, the learned helplessness model can probably be applied to analysing political disenchantment of citizen's of advanced Western democracies too.

As part of my thesis, I introduce an original cohort analysis technique for two-waves studies, allowing for simple graphical visualization of life-cycle and cohort effects. It is my hope that, after additional tests and improvements, this technique could become an effective and simple-to-use tool for further studies of this type. Search for "generation effects" or legacies of some kind is quite popular in many fields and about many subjects (such as trust, participation, religiosity, etc.), therefore I think such a new technique might be interesting to a lot of researchers.

1 Political alienation and the communist legacy

1.1 The specifics and homogeneity of post-communist countries

Not many people expected the post-communist transition to be as long and difficult as it turned out to be. The difficulties faced by the post-communist countries [1], according to Richard Rose and Doh Shin (2001), were primarily related to the fact that they were "democratizing backwards", that is, the democratic institutions were put in place before establishing the rule of law and civil society which they rely on. The first years of democratic transition clearly demonstrated that introducing civil and political rights and establishing democratic institutions does not immediately create active and responsible citizens. Moreover, it does not automatically generate pro-social attitudes, cooperation and trust (Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2008 ; Torcal & Montero, 1999 ; Zepa, 1999 ; Inglehart, 2006). As the economic conditions worsened and social tensions grew, a number of social scientists even raised concerns about the risk of falling into authoritarianism (Rose & Shin, 2001).

For the new democracies, and post-communist countries in particular, disenchantment from politics and low self-perceived political efficacy are still very serious problems. Rose and Mishler (2001) are probably right when they argue that at the beginning of the transition disappointment with the performance of political authorities was almost inevitable. There was a lack of professionals in politics, as the new authorities had little

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[1]By "post-communist countries" I mean countries in CEE that experienced communist-led governments in the 20th century — not just the former members of the Soviet block, but also Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Slovenia, (former) Czechoslovakia and others.

experience and understanding of democratic governing. Obviously they could not match the performance of institutions in the established democracies. In addition, right away they had to deal with massive expectations and massive crisis (Titma & Rammer, 2006 ; Sztompka, 1995). Blatant corruption at all levels of the government combined with individual economic hardship further contributed to frustration and decreasing confidence in institutions. Finally, the disaffection with politics and politicians was intensified by unjustified expectations, causing the so called 'post-honeymoon' effect (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002 ; Howard, 2003 ; Koroleva & Rungule, 2006).[2]

At the same time, it would be reasonable to expect to see much higher confidence rates in political authorities after more than a decade of a democratically elected government. Unfortunately, the majority of data published so far point to the lack of significant and systematic positive changes. Just like in the established democracies, in the new democracies from 1990–1991 till 1999–2001 (WVS data) citizen's confidence in political institutions declined, and in the Baltic States the decline was the most dramatic -– by 43–55 per cent (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006). Rose et Shin (2001) found that many citizens in post-communist countries are in fact skeptical about the extent to which their new democratic government is more responsive to their wishes than the old undemocratic regime. [3]

It must be said though that popular disenchantment from politics is not limited to post-communist countries alone; it is also common among citizens of the established democracies (Stoker, 2008 ; Dalton, 2004). Various studies show that during the last decades in most of the developed world the engagement of citizens in democratic processes and the public support for political authorities has declined.[4] Citizens are getting

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[2]The political process of transition in Latvia, the sentiments of pre- and post-communist transformation in Latvia, as well as both political and economic reasons for post-communist disaffection are analysed in more detail in (Plakans, 1997).

[3]Some studies suggest that the lack of trust might be mutual. When analysing the consultation and cooperation processes with the society in Latvia, Dace Jansone and Inga Vilka (2007) found among the leaders of municipalities a widespread distrust towards citizen involvement in decision-making and a belief that most decision should be evaluated by experts. Other surveys too seem to show that neither the public nor the representatives of the state and local government believe in the efficiency of active forms of public influence such as NGOs and initiative groups (Menshikov, 2001).

[4]Russell Dalton has gathered so far the most comprehensive time-series data about advanced industrial democracies on political attitudes and participation, and concludes that there is a general erosion in support for politicians and government in most advanced industrial democracies, and that citizens have

increasingly disinterested, sceptical, distrustful, cynical and alienated from politics (e.g., Norris, 1999 ; Dalton, 2004). This is one of the reasons why some scholars have been speaking of the crisis of democracy (Crozier, Huntington, Watanuki, & Trilateral, 1975). Disenchantment from politics is also blamed for the universal decline in party membership (Stoker, 2008 ; Mair, 1995).

The levels of associational membership in post-communist countries still remain well below those of other European countries. Moreover, WVS data shows that from 1990-1991 to 1999-2001 the participation rates — both the index of participation and the number of people who are members of at least one organization — in post-communist countries significantly decreased, except for Slovakia and Slovenia (where it increased), and the Czech Republic and Belarus (where it did not change much) (Adam, 2007). As with political trust, the decrease was the most dramatic in the Baltic states. The involvement in unpaid work in voluntary organizations in post-communist countries decreased as well. [5] [6]

The results of various studies based on different data sources demonstrate that even after twenty years of democratization post-communist countries still form a distinct cluster characterized by low political trust and efficacy, and low levels of organizational membership. The WVS data suggests that in comparison to Western and Northern European countries, people in CEE countries also have much less trust in each other and are much less interested in politics (see also Letki & Evans, 2005). Yet, the most striking differences between post-communist countries and the established Western democracies have been observed when comparing the level of civic engagement. Matej Makarovič et al. (2007) concluded, on the basis of cluster analysis of indicators of socio-political participation in the EVS, that most post-communist countries, except for Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovakia and Slovenia, can be classified as 'passive democracies'. The level of

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become disenchanted with the democratic processes. At the same time, most people remain committed to the democratic ideal.

[5]One of the exceptions is East Germany, and Kriesi (2007) argues that it might be because the external support allowed the new associations to institutionalize relatively rapidly, and to catch up with the rest of the German associational world.

[6]A rather conflicting account is provided by Teorell et.al. (2007) who argue that when the democracy matures the level of participation rises. However, their conclusion is based on the correlation between non-electoral participation and the age of democracy for 13 countries included in CID, that turns out to be 0.94. As there are only 13 data points an little variation, such approach is not justified.

civic engagement is specially low in the Baltic countries and Eastern European countries (Fuchs & Klingemann, 2006 ; Koroleva & Rungule, 2006). Researchers analysing organisational involvement on CID data (Badescu & Neller, 2007 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007), also found systematic cross-national differences between Western and Eastern Europe, and concluded that post-communist countries Moldova, Romania and Russia show a high degree of similarity between them. People in all these countries were much less engaged in all kinds of associations and activities: membership, donations, voluntary work. In his book *"The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe"* Marc Morjé Howard (2003) found, on the basis of the regression analysis, that prior communist experience is associated with .87 decrease in the predicted number of organizational memberships per person in each country.

Mikko Lagerspetz (2009) in his recent paper *"Still Citizen vs. State? Post-communist prospects for democracy in Europe"* analysed political attitudes and behaviour on the basis of the ISSP 2004 data. He concluded that citizens of post-communist countries continue to distrust institutions, and participation, both conventional and unconventional, is comparatively very low. State is considered "somebody's else's business, not mine". Similar conclusions were reached by Brigita Zepa (1999) with regards to the Baltic countries. She argues that there are very weak vertical bonds which could promote the relationship between the masses and the political elite, and one can observe distinct political alienation. "The state is perceived as something distant and abstract beyond the will and control of individuals. "(Zepa, 1999, 32). Marc Morje Howard (2003) makes a gloomy observation that the new democratic institutions are neither rooted in, nor actively supported by the population. At the same time, he concludes that the democracy in post-communist countries is neither thriving nor on the verge of collapse, it is somehow 'muddling through'. According to Rose and Shin (2001), many of the post-communist countries have became incomplete 'broken-back' democracies, falling into the low-level equilibrium trap, where the poor performance and low trustworthiness of elites are matched by mass scepticism, disenchantment from politics, low civic efficacy and expectations.

Considering the similarities in political attitudes and behaviour among the citizens of post-communist countries, there is a reason to agree (although with a healthy degree of scepticism) with Howard (2003) that the category of 'post-communism' still has not

lost its relevance. It remains a crucial factor for explaining participation in associations, other forms of political activism, and political trust. Post-communist countries have also be shown to be culturally close (Fuchs & Klingemann, 2006 ; Inglehart, 2006). [7] Still, we should also be aware of the fact that there are some important differences between post-communist countries with regards to their history and culture. And, as demonstrated by Natalia Letki (2004) on the basis of a survey called *"Emerging Forms of Political Representation and Participation in Eastern Europe"*, the levels of civic engagement also vary. In 1993-94 some post-communist countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria) demonstrated levels of civic engagement (discussion about politics, partisanship, party membership) comparable to established democracies, while in some others (in Eastern Europe) the levels of civic engagement were very low.

1.2 Previous research on the dynamics of political attitudes

Considering the limited availability of longer comparative time-series data for post-communist countries, it is probably too early to make strong claims about the dynamics of confidence in institutions and civic engagement in these countries. Due to few observations, fluctuations in people's attitudes, statistical errors, differences in sample designs and question wording means that any research aimed at measuring the dynamics of political attitudes and behaviour is prone to misleading results. One should be particularly cautious about the analysis of dynamics starting from 1990-1991. The negative changes observed in the WVS data might have something to do with the fact that the wave of 1990-1991 captured a rather atypical, overly optimistic historical period of time in post-communist countries. According to Ilze Koroleva and Ritma Rungule (2006), right before and after the restoration of national independence in 1991, people felt united with the government and the parliament as they had a common goal — the establishment of an independent and wealthy state. Afterwards corruption and economic problems alienated people from the political elite and politics in general.

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[7]The ex-communist societies of central and eastern Europe all rank high on the traditional/secular–rational dimension (toward the secular pole), but low on the survival/self-expression dimension (falling near the survival-oriented pole).

Social scientists analysing participation in post-communist countries have come to conclusion that three different historical phases can be distinguished (Karklins & Zepa, 2001):

1. the *mobilization* phase (1988 – 1991) which was characterized by a "boom" of participation, and extensive mass activism aimed at restoring independence. People were especially eager to participate since this was the first opportunity for them to freely voice their political opinions. Levels of participation remained high until 1991, when the real reforms began (see also Koroleva & Rungule, 2006).

2. the *normalizing* phase (1992 – 98) when the level of activity dropped significantly. Some associate it with the so called "post-honeymoon" effect that followed the overthrow of the communist regime (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002) and negative developments in social and economic spheres related to the fast pace of the transition. Political action was replaced by passivity and political apathy (Koroleva & Rungule, 2006 ; Titma & Rammer, 2006);

3. the *stabilization* phase (1999 – ...) when participation rates are increasing again, but their character is changing. Rasma Karklina and Brigita Zepa note that "next to conventional political participation one notes increasing protests, referendum initiatives, and corrupt ways of gaining influence" (Karklins & Zepa, 2001, 334).

Even though the decline in political activism after regaining independence could indeed partly be interpreted as "normalization", the fall has been too steep and the recovery way too slow. Thus, as noted by Zepa (1999), we should also look for other causes for the decline in political participation.

In an overview of studies about political participation in Latvia Supule (2005) concluded that currently one can observe an increase of disenchantment with conventional political participation in Latvia, and people are seeking alternative ways to influence politics. Zinta Miezaine and Māra Sīmane (2005) compared data from three different national-level surveys in 1998, 2003 and 2004, and found that, although few inhabitants of Latvia had joined political organizations, and participation rates in labour unions were decreasing, the non-political, social participation rates (in religious, sports or cultural

organizations or groups) from 1998 till 2004 increased. [8] Another study of theirs based on SKDS data (2007) shows that from 2005 till 2007 participation in political parties and voluntary organizations decreased. People were especially reluctant to join organizations concerned with political goals (political parties, environment protection, social assistance, health protection, human rights). These trends of decreasing conventional and increasing unconventional activism, as well as declining participation rates in political organizations and raising – in non-political groups and associations correspond to what is observed in the established democracies too.[9] It demonstrates that there is a universal change in the structure and types of participation.

It is important to note that the creation of and participation in NGO's in Latvia is not hindered by inappropriate laws (Zepa, 1999 ; Vilka et al., 2004 ; Menshikov, 2001 ; Miezaine & Sīmane, 2005 ; Jansone & Vilka, 2007). However, as noted by Vilka et al. (2004), there is a lack of practical regulations that would make cooperation between the state institutions and society effective. Up to now, only a very small proportion of inhabitants and NGOs are involved in policy development with the government or local authorities.

Among others, Ivars Ijabs (2007) noted that trust in political institutions in Latvia is extremely low even in comparison to other CEE countries, and that only one fifth of citizens realize the importance of politics on their lives. One of the surveys uncovering the slow and unsatisfactory development of civil society is the study by BISS "Pilsoniskās sabiedrības veidošanās Latvijas lielākajās pilsētās un etniski neviendabīgajos rajonos Latvijā" published in 2005 by BISS (2005). According to this survey, interest in politics has not changed significantly during the last five years, and majority of people are still very passive and do not participate in any political activities. An other BISS survey (2001) reveals that people in Latvia have low self-appraisal: three fourths of inhabitants of Latvia considered that 'most people are better informed about politics and government than I am', leading to a conclusion that low self-assessment of political competence hinders political participation and weakens belief in one's ability to influence political processes.

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[8]It has to noted though that the sample characteristics of these surveys differ, thus the comparison can not be considered very reliable.

[9]Citizens in established democracies are signing petitions, joining citizen interest groups and engaging in unconventional forms of political action more often (Dalton, 2004).

In fact, about two thirds of the inhabitants of Latvia do not believe that they could do anything to change the decision taken by the government or even influence the decisions made at the municipality level (Supule, 2005). There is a widespread belief among people in Latvia that the policy is determined by few influential groups, and that the interests of all people are rarely taken into account. Moreover, the majority believe that there is nothing they can do if the government or municipality makes decisions that are against the interests of citizens (BISS, 2005). The lack of belief in the responsiveness of political authorities was also demonstrated by the recent Human Development Report in Latvia. The survey showed that about 83% of inhabitants of Latvia do not believe that any initiative they take can influence the views of the policy-makers (Menshikov, 2001). The political alienation is also reflected in the fact that in Latvia people do not believe that they have have the same kind of democracy as in Western Europe (91.5 per cent as of 1999, ISSP), and 67 per cent do not relate themselves or feel close to any of the parties (ISSP 2006). Democratic theory assumes that political alienation and political distrust can be easily remedied through party competition and electoral replacement. However, if people do not see any difference between parties (40 per cent in Latvia in 1999 ISSP) the sense of alienation will persist.

Although people complain about the government, they do not engage in politics and abstain from active participation themselves. Recently Latvia was among those post-communist countries that were severely affected by the current financial crisis (what journalists labelled "HELL" – Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia). The following cuts in wages and social benefits further aggravated the dissatisfaction with political authorities. In such circumstances one would expect a lot of people engaging in unconventional or mobilized political activities, such as strikes, demonstrations, or signing petitions. In fact, the fear of civic unrest was the main reason why some economists were sceptical about the prospects of successfully implementing the policies necessary for internal deflation. The history has proven them wrong, and what some call "the experiment" turned out better than most expected. Why the deep discontent of citizens did not erupt in a broad civic unrest anticipated by both foreign and local experts? How to explain the passive acceptance of decreasing living standards, especially in the light of strikes and massive demonstrations in Spain, Greece, United Kingdom and other countries? And why the civil society institutions (trade unions, civic rights groups etc.) that could help

mobilizing and organizing people are not developing as successfully as expected in post-communist countries? These are just some of the questions this thesis attempts to shed some light on.

1.3 Understanding the peculiarities of post-communist politics

In post-communist countries strengthening the civil society is specially important, yet at the same time the conditions for its emergence are pretty tough. Under the communist regime, most people in Latvia were members of at least one organization (usually, labour union). However, majority of these organizations were state-regulated, and they collapsed together with the regime. It means that people might have inherited a certain scepticism regarding any kind of formal participation. Lack of confidence in political authorities could also theoretically be influenced by the past events (Rothstein, 2004). Marc Morje Howard, on the basis of in-depth interviews conducted in Eastern Germany and Russia, concludes that three most important factors that account for low participation and trust in post-communist Europe: (1) the legacy of mistrust of formal organizations; (2) the persistence of informal private networks as a substitute for, or alternative to, formal and public organizations and (3) the disappointment with the new democratic and capitalist systems of today (Howard, 2003, 30). Still, the surveys conducted by Mishler and Rose suggest that the top-down approach or the institutional approach should not be disregarded either (Mishler & Rose, 1998, 2001). If it was just for the 'political culture' or 'civic virtues', trust should have increased yet it hasn't.

The theoretical model introduced earlier characterized the three main groups of factors potentially responsible for political alienation in post-communist countries, and they will be analysed in the following chapters. However, besides them, there might be some important factors characteristic specifically for post-communist countries. For example, when trying to understand the patterns of participation in post-communist countries, we must also remember that voluntary associations in these counties are qualitatively different from those in the established Western democracies (see Morales & Geurts, 2007). In all post-communist countries there were frequent attempts to facilitate the emergence of civil society 'from above'. Voluntary associations were often initiated, supported or

even created by the governments or other external sponsors. Howard believes that the 'top-down' approach to creation of associations is still very popular, and what he calls 'neo-liberal dogmatism' continues to dominate, ignoring the communist legacy and the specific political culture of the new post-communist democracies (Howard, 2003). The state, international donors and organizations, often provided (and still provide) funding for NGO's and different society groups for achievement of certain goals (culture, charity, education etc.) (for more detailed analysis see Font, Geurts, Maloney, & Berton, 2007 ; Kriesi, 2007). In this respect Hanspeter Kriesi (2007) studied six cities across Europe, and found that approximately a quarter of organizations are wholly dependent on members financially, and roughly the same proportion rely solely on external sources. Accordingly, the donors policy strongly affects the type, form, scope and style of organizations (Selle, 1999 ; Font et al., 2007), and the issues they deal with depend rather on what might be appealing to the donors that what's necessary for the society. Scholars have also found that these organizations are often led by some sort of local elites who become skilled at writing grant proposals, but such organizations are usually short-lived, once the external funding dries up (Fukuyama, 2001). Although any civic activity should probably be seen as a good thing, it's difficult to call it a 'civil society', at least in a traditional sense of the word, or, as Maloney and Rossteuscher say, to label the effort as non-state or voluntary (Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007, 279).

An other reason why alienation of citizens from politics might be especially widespread in post-Soviet countries, is the fact that after regaining independence a significant proportion of the population consisted, and still consists, of people of other ethnic origin (mostly Russian), e.g., people from other Soviet Republics who immigrated during the period of occupation. From all the Republics, in Latvia this proportion was the highest. One might expect these people to feel less attached to the country, less engaged in its affairs and less confident in the government institutions. Moreover, one might expect that the disenchantment was further intensified by the experiences of transition. However, Mikk Titma and Andu Rammer (2006) argue that the transition to Estonian independence did not alienate ethnic Russians. Only later, disappointed the change in their position, they started to identify more with Europe and the World, not their local community and Estonia. Similar patterns are described for other post-communist central and eastern Europe countries, including Latvia (Titma & Rammer, 2006). At the same time, surveys

conducted in Latvia clearly show that people of other nationalities and non-citizens of Latvia are indeed slightly less involved in NGOs than ethnic Latvians, and less interested in politics in general (BISS, 2005 ; Vilka et al., 2004 ; Supule, 2005). Citizens participate in different political activities more than non-citizens: they sign petitions more often (26% to 5%), persuade someone to vote (9% to 3%), meet wit political authorities, etc. (BISS, 2001). However, trust in institutions in Latvia does not differ between ethnicity groups. One can conclude that at least in Latvia the large number of non-citizens[10] who do not have the right to vote in parliamentary and local elections, to participate in a referendum, or to be a founder or a member of political parties contributes to low rates of political participation in the country.

There have been several studies in Latvia, both quantitative and qualitative, trying to understand why more people do not join voluntary associations, and what hinders political participation in general. Brigita Zepa (1999) found that among the factors that have a negative effect on the political participation in Latvia, are:

1. lowered self-assessment of one's own political awareness;

2. dissatisfaction with the results of political activities;

3. low level of political trust;

4. deficit of positive expectations in regard to the result of participation.

Similar conclusions were reached by Vladimirs Menshikov (2001), who argues that political participation can be facilitated by several factors: (1) Motivation for participation (drives); (2) Support of institutions and like-minded persons; (3) Knowledge and ability to participate.

An other factor distinguishing CEE countries from other Western democracies and potentially having an effect on the differences in participation rates, is the differences in living standards. The income levels of people in post-communist countries are comparatively low, and it makes it necessary to devote more attention to activities which can render financial gains. "The low standard of living prevents people from public activities, since they are engaged in providing for their primary needs" (Zepa, 1999, 54).

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[10] By 2005 20.8% of inhabitants of Latvia were non-citizens (Supule, 2005).

1.4   Mechanisms behind socialization in a certain political culture

Most scholars who write about post-communist countries tend to explain the absence of the expected positive changes in political attitudes among the citizens by the cultural legacy of the Communist regime (see, for example, Inglehart (2006), Sztompka (1998). It is considered to be one of the reasons for low organizational membership and distrust in institutions in post-communist countries (Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Uslaner, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Sztompka, 1998)). According to Zepa (1999), even the youngest generation, the socialization of which proceeded during the period of independent Latvia, was indirectly influenced by the Soviet experience. The most significant socialization agents family and school contained quite a lot of Soviet "heritage", which one can not get get rid of right when the regime is changed (Zepa, 1999, 5).

Authors representing the cultural view (Inglehart, 1997, 1999, 2006 ; Sztompka, 1998, among others) emphasize the crycial role of the early life socialization in developing civic attitudes and behavior. For example, Uslaner (2002) argues that the predisposition to trust or distrust others depends on the image of the surrounding society that parents communicate to their children. Ronald Inglehart (1997) argues that human behaviour is heavily influenced by the culture [11] in which one has been socialized. Cultural norms are usually internalized very firmly at an early age, and are resistant to change. In this regard social scientists speak about the 'path dependency' of a culture.

One of the first to stress the importance of cultural inheritance in political realm was Robert Putnam (1993) who argued that the political cultures of northern and southern Italy have been reproducing themselves continuously since the Middle Ages. About the same time Pietr Sztompka (1995) — one of the most well known proponents of the legacy of communism — introduced his thesis about the 'culture of mistrust' in post-communist societies of Eastern Europe. Following the arguments of Dahrendorf (1990) about the slow pace of cultural change, Sztompka argues that cultural "habits of the heart" show surprising inertia and resilience. He blames communism for the low efficacy

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[11]In these essays I am using a fairly simple definition of 'culture', offered by Inglehart: "A culture is a subjective aspect of a society's institutions: the beliefs, values, knowledge, and skills that have been internalized by the people of a given society, complimenting their external systems of coercion and exchange." (Inglehart, 1997, 15)

levels in post-communist countries, arguing that it has left lasting heritage of "trained incapacity", the inability to make proper use of new institutional and personal opportunities" (Sztompka, 1998, 20) — a syndrome he calls *"civilizational incompetence"* (Sztompka, 1998). Mariano Torcal and Ramon Montero (1999) talk about the entrenched cultural heritage of distrust transmitted from generation to generation in Spain. The same line of arguments is continued more recently by Richard Rose and Doh Chull Shin (2001), Eric Uslaner (2003) and Bo Rothstein (2004). They consider both low organizational membership and distrust in institutions, at least partly, a legacy of previous regimes.

The proponents of cultural theories assume that incomplete democracies will persist over a long time because the norms of elite, mass political culture and values of individuals do not change fast (Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Inglehart, 2006 ; Uslaner, 2003). The second-wave democracies of Italy (Rose & Shin, 2001) and Spain (Torcal & Montero, 1999) are good examples for that. Cultural approach argues that in previously authoritarian political cultures such as the post-Communist societies of Eastern and Central Europe there is an inherent predisposition to distrust (Uslaner, 2003). There are several reasons why in such conditions it is difficult to earn their trust. There is a *confirmation bias* in how people perceive and interpret the information they receive. People have a tendency to look for information that confirms their views and ignore or disregard anything that may be a counter-example of their view (Luhmann, 1979). "Trust itself affects the evidence we are looking for. While it is never that difficult to find evidence of untrustworthy behaviour, it is virtually impossible to prove its positive mirror image" (Luhmann, 1979, c.f., Gambetta, 2000). Another problem well known in psychology is the *cognitive inertia*. If people have ambiguous or incomplete information (which is usually the case), they interpret it in line with their preconceptions. Such interpretations will serve to reinforce those preconceptions (Good, 1988). Several social scientists have noted that the reputation for honesty may be acquired slowly (Dasgupta, 1988), but at the same time it is easy to lose the it (Luhmann, 1988). The idea is best summarized by Diego Gambetta:

> "Doubt is far more insidious than certainty, and distrust may become the source of its own evidence. Deep distrust is very difficult to invalidate through experience, for either it prevents people from engaging in the appropriate kind of social experiment or, worse, it leads to behaviour which bolsters the validity of distrust itself. < . . . > Only accident or a third party may set up the right

kind of 'experiment' to prove distrust unfolded. < ... > If behaviour spreads through learning and imitation, then sustained distrust can only lead to further distrust" (Gambetta, 2000, 234).

The assumptions of cultural theories are largely based on findings from developmental psychology, particularly political socialization research. Numerous studies have analysed the importance of family, school, peers and media on the formation of views and attitudes of adolescents and young adults, and concluded that the lesions that are absorbed in politically stimulating home or school environment that promotes openness and discussion, create citizens who are motivated to take part, who are more politically interested and informed (some of the previous studies are described in, for example, (Sears, 1990) or Gimpel et al. (2003). Thus, it is clear that the specific structural context and social environment in which children are raised impacts on the political attitudes and values that they develop (Gimpel et al., 2003 ; Torney-Purta, 2004). This impact is mediated through socialization agents, especially family and school, but also community and the media,in the process of *political socialization* [12]. Socialization agents are also believed to play an important role in developing a relationship with the government and political leaders (Gimpel et al., 2003 ; Uslaner, 2002). What is still very much debated is how resistant or open to change the attitudes internalized early in life actually are.

The debate has mostly revolved around two theoretical concepts (Sears & Valentino, 1997 ; Sears, 1990):

1. the "lifelong openness view", according to which basic political attitudes are always equally susceptible to change at all ages or

2. the "persistence view", that holds that basic attitudes are acquired early and are relatively immune to change in later years. Thus, adult attitudes are anachronistic, psychologically biased, an may be an obstacle to "rational" decision making.

These two views can be seen as opposites with a continuum between them (Sears, 1990), for human cognitive systems are neither completely open nor completely inert. Psy-

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[12]The term was coined by Herbert Hyman in his seminal book 'Political socialization' (Hyman, 1959). In essence, political socialization is a process of acquisition and internalization of political norms, orientations and modes of behaviour — it must not be confused with human development, acquisition of knowledge and skills, civic education or simply *learning*. More information about the different approaches and definitions of political socialization can be found in Sigel (1995).

chologists believe that people construct certain "schemas of representation" — cognitive structures which organize previously acquired information and impact on remembering and retrieving it for problem solving (Torney-Purta, 1990, 1995). In later stages of life, the schema is constantly modified or restructured, based on the experience of the individual. At the same time, as discussed earlier, the way people learn, construct and reconstruct their cognitive structures implies in itself a certain path dependency.

A similar argument was voiced by William Misher and Richard Rose (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 1998). According to their 'life-long learning model', early political attitudes are continuously updated and adjusted as initial beliefs are contradicted, tempered or reinforced by more recent experiences (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001). Even though this model describes the mechanisms of learning, it does not consider the fact that there are different political attitudes and their 'symbolism', ego-relatedness or potential for path-dependency may differ. It does not suggest whether early political socialization has any noticeable impact on adults political views with regards to certain issues, and it does not deal with the process or the circumstances of socialization.

The persistence view can be summarized in two related hypotheses (Sears, 1990):

1. The "theory of the impressionable years", according to which any dispositions are especially vulnerable at an early age – the period from late adolescence until early adulthood.

2. The "ageing stability" thesis, which implies that a period of rapid change is followed by a period of stabilization. It does not mean that attitudes cease to change completely, for political socialization, like any learning, is a lifelong process (Ichilov, 1990 ; Sigel, 1995 ; Niemi & Hepburn, 1995 ; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001). Attitudes and behaviour *do* change in response to the political environment throughout life.

It is very difficult to determine age limits as to when the impressionable years begin and end (if we may say so at all), as it may depend on the issue under consideration and may vary in different cultures and countries. "The period of maximum change" of political views, according to Niemi and Hepburn (1995), is approximately between the ages of fourteen and twenty five:

Individuals probably experience more change in their political views between the ages of about fourteen and twenty-five than at any point later in their

lives (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995, 9) .

Children under the age of 14 find many political concepts either overly complicated or they are not interested in them. In fact, one of the mistakes of early political socialization research was to place too much emphasis on the importance of political socialization of young children (for critique, see Sears, 1990 ; Sigel, 1995 ; Niemi & Hepburn, 1995 ; Hepburn, 1995). According to Piaget's (2002) developmental theory children enter the last, forth stage of development — the formal operations stage — between the ages of 11 and 15. They are already more conscious of the consequences of certain actions, able to reason consequentially and logically, and draw conclusions based on available information. By late adolescence young people already have adult-like capabilities. Torney-Purta, 2004 finds that at the age of 14 adolescents are already members of the political culture, able to understand fundamental democratic ideals and processes. According to Sears et Levy (2003) and Armigeon (2007) the impressionable years last up to one's late 20s. In post-communist countries too the impact of historical events seems to be greatest when they occur in adolescence and young adulthood (Schuman & Corning, 2000). It does not mean, however, that the cognitive system is equally open to political socialization during all of this period. Some believe that the high school years are especially important, for the students are "old enough to understand a good deal about politics but young enough to have had little in the way of relevant public experiences" (Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). Armigeon (2007), however, assumes that the most intense period of socialization ends only when a person reaches 30 years of age.

It is generally acknowledged that it is more difficult to change an adult's cognitive system. This is the reason why the culture can have a certain path dependency and why, according to Inglehart, the central elements of culture are "more likely to change through intergenerational population replacement than by the conversion of already socialized adults" (Inglehart, 1997, 15). According to Darendorf (1990), this may even take several generations. With regards to post-communist countries, Sztompka argues that

> "as long as the majority of the population consists of people whose young, for-
> mative years, and therefore crucial socializing experiences, fell under the rule
> of the communist regime and the period of peripheral status, one can expect
> the continuing vitality of bloc culture and traditionalist themes. This explains
> how ... communism haunts these societies from the grave." (Sztompka, 1998,

21).

The literature analysis reveals that we should be careful *not to generalize* the conclusions about one type of political attitudes or orientations to an other type of attitudes. Some of them have been proven to be more resistant to change than the others, and also the pattern of their internalization (the impressionable years) may differ a lot. According to Sears (1990), the most resistant of all are the *"symbolic attitudes"* such as party identification and reactions to political candidates. Also symbolic and ego-related are ideological, racial and certain moral attitudes (Sears, 1990, 1983). They are acquired early in life, have strong affective components, little informational content, and remain relatively stable during adulthood. Attitudes concerning political efficacy and alienation are considered by Sears (1983) to be the least symbolic. Such attitudes are presumed to be formed later in life, and change in a response to the objective political reality. Thus, if Sears is right, we should not see much stability in these attitudes among certain age-cohorts.

The impressionable years and ageing stability hypotheses have gained much support in previous studies (Sears, 1990). Unfortunately, we see that they are often taken for granted, and wrongly "over-generalized" to attitudes and behaviour where they do not apply. It is true that there is quite convincing evidence that early-life socialization is important with regards to highly symbolic attitudes, such as party identification [13]. However, when Alwin and Krosnick (1991) analysed other, less symbolic political attitudes, they found only week support for these hypotheses. Even if we presume that the "symbolic" character of attitudes and their "ego-relatedness" explains which of them are likely to persist through the life time, it is in itself a research question. Moreover, the attitudes that are symbolic in one country, might be less inspiring in an other.

As both — cultural and institutional theories assume that trust is learned and linked to experience at some point, William Misher and Richard Rose have proposed a 'life-long learning model' (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 1998) according to which "contemporary trust in political institutions is a product of past political trust as modified by more recent performance experiences" (Mishler & Rose, 2001, 38). So the different perspectives in the

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[13]Among the best known studies one can mention Kent Jennings and Gregory Markus (1984) Socialization Panel Study (1965, 1973 and 1982) and Duane Alwin and Jon Krosnick (1991) study on the basis of the National Election Study (NES) panel data from 1950 to 1970 about the party-identification, as well as Converse's "Dynamics of party support" (Converse, 1976).

model, in fact, argue whether the feelings of trust are mostly based on rational, contemporary experiences or on past experiences, internalized norms and values. The model seems to be very promising and relevant to political analysis. However, the relevance of the model to the social capital in general (and especially structural social capital) is not known. There is still much uncertainty about the linkages between interpersonal and institutional trust.

2 Indicators of complementarity between citizens and the state

2.1 Civil society and political participation

2.1.1 Modes of participation

The term 'civil society' was used as early as the eighteenth century, but the ideas can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. I will not try here to discuss all the different meanings that have been attributed to 'civil society' thought the course of time. Nowadays the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics defines civil society as: "the set of intermediate associations which are neither the state nor the (extended) family; civil society therefore includes voluntary associations and firms and other corporate bodies" (c.f., Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007). This definition is very broad and encompasses a multitude of different actors, including even business enterprises. Following William Maloney and Sigried Rossteuscher (2007), in this thesis I am consciously avoiding analysing firms and other market entities among other institutions of civil society. The main reason for that is that involvement in firms (or, simply speaking, working) in most cases can not be considered voluntary, at least to the extent that involvement in other institutions can. The main purpose of the economic and business activities is profit-making.

According to Howard (2003), civil society has come to be seen as one of the main ingredients of the success of advanced Western democracies, and it has been a popular subject among scholars analysing the process of democratization in post-communist countries. At the beginning of the 90-ies 'civil society' (or, more precisely, its weakness) became almost a synonym to what is wrong with the post-communist countries, and development of civil society was perceived to be critical to democratisation and 'successful

transition' (Morales & Geurts, 2007). At the same time, survey after survey revealed that the communist regime had destroyed the very basis for developing a vibrant civil society, and developed a very specific kind of political culture[1], one which is characterized by political apathy, low self-efficacy, a passive acceptance of government decisions, disengagement from the political realm, scepticism, and distrust of political institutions (Jowitt, 1992 ; Sztompka, 1998 ; Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Uslaner, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Howard, 2003 ; Inglehart, 2006). A part of the political culture is the civic culture, defined by Gabriel Almond and Nie Verba as

> "the ways in which political elites make decisions, their norms and attitudes, as well as the norms and attitudes of the ordinary citizen, his relation to government and to his fellow citizens."(Almond & Verba, 1989, 3)

During the communist regime, political institutions became severely discredited in the eyes of the population, therefore dishonest behaviour towards them was often seen not only as acceptable but even praiseworthy (Rothstein, 2004). A mixture of political culture of the past and democratic institutions of today facilitated establishing of "a qualitatively different relationship between citizens and the state than in the old European democracies" (Howard, 2003, 164). A characteristic feature of the culture of post-communism, according to Mikko Lagerspetz (2009), is the 'citizen vs.state' mentality. The fact that it is not compatible with the democratic culture of today may even lead to a specific internal 'culture clash' which, according to Sztompka, is

> "the main secret of our constant surprises: the disappointments and frustrations with the processes of port-communist transformation" (Sztompka, 1998, 21).

Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves argues that a flourishing civil society is not always considered a necessary condition for democratic consolidation, however in the long run the relationship between civil society and the state can be decisive in determining the success of democratic development (Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2008, 85). Participatory political system requires a political culture consistent with it (Almond & Verba, 1989). The institutional

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[1]Political culture refers to "the specifically political orientation —- attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system, and it is a set of orientations toward a special set of social objects and processes" (Almond & Verba, 1989, 12).

order of democracy (kratos) can function only if there is a corresponding community (demos) (Fuchs & Klingemann, 2006).

At the core of the civil society social scientists usually place voluntary associations, especially those with idealistic and altruistic goals. Many of them emphasize the network of NGO's or other politically oriented organizations as crucial democratic agents — the central means of mediation between the individual and the social and political system (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Putnam, 2000 ; Siisiainen, 1999). However, the institutions of civil society are very different: these are activist groups, local community organizations, cultural groups, sports clubs, trade unions, religious organizations, environmental groups and other associations. According to Howard (2003) we should be careful not to confuse civil society with social movements. Social movements generally consist of some combination of both spontaneous mobilization and loose organization, but to be considered a part of civil society they have to become more or less formally organized and consistent. Also, usually we consider as civil society only those groups who act in a legally accepted way, not, for instance, mafia of ku-klux-klan.

Putnam sees civil society as the result or expression of social capital of the community, and he speaks about them almost as if they were synonymous (Putnam, 2002, 9–10). Yet for most social scientists social capital is a much broader and more general category for it encompasses all types of relationships between people, not just public activities in a democratic setting. In my view, civil society can be seen as a part of the the so called *'structural social capital'* characterizing the involvement in networks. Besides the structural dimension, social capital has the *'cognitive'* dimension relating to norms, values and attitudes of people (such as mutual trust and reciprocity.).[2]

If we talk about modes of institutionalized participation, it must be noted that political scientists distinguish between (1) political and (2) non-political or leisure voluntary organizations (Almond & Verba, 1989). Moreover, some (e.g., Armigeon, 2007) split the former in political organisations (e.g.parties and human rights groups) and interest groups (e.g.pensioners' and employers' organisations). Politically oriented organizations represent the interests of their members relatively to other groups or political institutions of the state. Most associations are, however, non-political — they are purely social, do not have any political goal nor do they try to become a political power. The political organi-

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[2]For more detailed analysis see chapter "State-society relations in social capital theory".

zations are more concerned with their external functions, and non-political organizations are important mostly for their internal, socializing role. Similarly, Stephen Knack and Philip Keefer (1997) distinguish between the so called "Olsonian groups" and "Putnamesque groups", the last being rent-seeking organizations with redistributive goals (trade unions, political parties, professional associations) and the second – least likely to have such goals but involving social interactions that can build trust and cooperative habits.

Some authors (e.g., Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007 ; Lelieveldt, Astudillo, & Stevenson, 2007) argue that it is common to emphasize the beneficial role of political actors and new social movements for democracy, but scholars often unfairly exclude or ignore the largest segment of civil society actors — associations concerned with leisure pursuits. Any kind of participation provides opportunities to build networks, learn new skills, gain information and political competence, at the same time building trust and cooperative habits. Thus, membership in both types of organizations can also increase individual's potential for political involvement and activity (Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Putnam, 2000). Putnam claims that a vibrant civil society facilitates and encourages a vibrant political society, and the same line of arguments that social involvement increases the propensity for political involvement is defended by Morten Olson (1971) and other authors (see Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007). According to Klaus Armigeon (2007), the theory speaks of several possible reasons: (1) organisations impart skills, values and attitudes favourable to participation in democratic politics. (2) if a citizen feels attached to a societal segment, he or she can be represented by an organisation focused on that segment. (3) the individual characteristics that favour organizational involvement also promote participation in politics, for example, education, income etc. (Armigeon, 2007, 360). In the CID data he finds evidence for the last two.

In addition, the literature suggests that even non-political associations can become a political actor when the need arises (Putnam, 2000 ; Lelieveldt & Caiani, 2007). Acording to Herman Lelieveldt and Manuela Caiani (2007) there can be several reasons for non-political groups to make political contacts: 1) because some minor issue has an impact on their activities; 2) to influence policy-making; 3) because of some policy-dependence, etc. Moreover, Lelieveldt et.al. (2007) stress that while some organizations have political goals, for most of organizations these are clearly a by-product of what are essentially non-political activities. In my view, it is important to differentiate between these types

of organizations, as they have different effect on trust and cooperative attitudes, specially on political trust and political interest (Keefer & Knack, 1997 ; Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Stolle & Rochon, 1998).

Another way how to look at associations is, whether they are mostly concerned with private or public good. Public-good associations are, according to Herreros (2004) trade unions, political parties, local community action, third world development, the environment, peace movements, animal rights. Private goods associations – education, arts, music or cultural activities, religious or church, professional associations, youth work, sports and recreation etc.

One can also distinguish formal and informal associations (Putnam, 2002). Formal associations are formally organized, with some membership requirements, duties, regular meetings (like parents' organizations or labour unions), and informal associations are those that do not have any formal agreement, such as people who attend a certain event or place. If we look at the goals of voluntary associations, there are inward-looking and outward looking groups. Inward-looking groups are primarily promoting the material, social and political interests of their members, while others are concerned with public goods (charities, Red Cross etc.) (Putnam, 2002).

There are also other ways how people can engage in politics besides institutionalized activities, e.g., becoming members of community organizations, NGO's, trade unions, professional associations, environmental or other groups or voting. They can also engage in mobilized political actions, either individually (boycotting, writing to the representative) or joining a collective initiative (demonstration, strike, signing petitions etc.). Mitchell Seligson (1980) suggests that it is necessary to analyze both institutionalized and mobilized modes of participation, especially in studies which try to link participation to political trust and efficacy.

The literature also distinguishes between two types of political activities: conventional and unconventional. Conventional political participation is within the normative limits and basically reinforces the status quo, while unconventional political behaviour can be broadly defined as disruptive of the normal functioning of the government, openly challenging political authorities, frequently outside of sanctioned channels, or even violently (Kim, 2005 ; Teorell et al., 2007). Yet there can be also legal unconventional modes of political participation (Billiet & Cambré, 1999), like attending lawful demon-

strations, signing petitions and the boycott of producers for ethical reasons. Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether the action can be considered unconventional for, as noted by Teorell et al. (2007), it depends on the cultural context, and can change with time. Combining both modes of participation, Edward Muller (1977) distinguished four political action-types.:

1. withdrawal (participate in neither institutionalized nor mobilized activities),

2. confirmatory participation (institutional participation unaccompanied by mobilized activities),

3. pragmatic mobilized activism (exhibit institutionalized participation, and who also become involved in mobilized modes) and

4. non-conformative opposition (involved in mobilized activity to the exclusion of institutionalized modes).

2.1.2 Why participation matters

The positive role of civic participation is not seen in the literature as straight-forward as it seems — there have been serious theoretical discussions, especially after the WWII, whether broad civic engagement is indeed important and desirable. The idea that broad civic participation is not necessary originates in Joseph Alois Schumpeter's (1992) model of democracy. He saw politics in resemblance with the operation of economic markets. Politicians compete for votes similarly as producers compete for the money of buyers, and this should guarantee the accountability of governors. Following him, a group of theorists started what can be called an 'electoral determinism' (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, & McPhee, 1954 ; Dahl, 1956 ; Sartori, 1987). According to them, democracy is just a political method in which voting has the single, most important role. All other kinds of participation were considered unnecessary (Berelson et al., 1954), harmful or even dangerous for the stability of democracy (Dahl, 1956 ; Sartori, 1987). However, these theories disregarded some of the fundamental problems of the democratic regimes of our time — the widespread existence of unfair, not free, rigged or managed elections, the power of lobbies, advertisement and public relations, and the lack of representation of the interests of certain society groups. Interestingly, Rose and Shin (2001) discovered that of the fifty-three countries placed in the bottom half of Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, twenty-three hold more or less free elections.

The second half of the XX century saw a certain renaissance of the theory of participatory democracy (for example, Almond & Verba, 1963 ; Pateman, 1975 ; Held, 1987), however, nowadays it has a little different flavour than in the classical works of, for instance, Jean-Jacque Rousseau or John Stuart Mill (see Pateman, 1975). It has lost its naive idealism and also acknowledges some of the important drawbacks, limitations and challenges related to civic participation. An interesting analysis of different views on the importance of participation and preferred type of citizen engagement in politics is performed by Martin van Deth (1997). According to the nature of peoples involvement in politics, he distinguishes four types of democratic citizenship: (1) a type based on strong authorities and decision-making; (2) a liberal-representative type; (3) a participatory type; (4) a unitary type. There are also other models proposed, for example by (Offe, 2006).

The reasons why civic participation is acknowledged to be crucial for democracy are related to what is usually described as (1) internal effects and (2) external effects of voluntary associations (Selle, 1999 ; Newton, 1999 ; Putnam et al., 1993 ; Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007). Following Putnam (1993), a special attention has been drawn to the role of voluntary associations in developing civic attitudes and civic culture. Organizations are believed to socialize their members into a democratic culture, teaching them trust and cooperation, instilling in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity, and public-spiritnedness (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Putnam, 1995a, 2000 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Herreros, 2004). Participation in voluntary associations also provides practical training in political skills (such as oral presentation, negotiating, bargaining, accommodation etc.) and democratic procedures, and has a positive effects on the psychological qualities of an individual regarding his civic responsibilities and capabilities (such as political efficacy and interest in politics) (Olson, 1971 ; Pateman, 1975 ; Putnam et al., 1993 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007 ; Zepa, 1999). Participation also has an integrative function as it teaches, solidarity, reciprocity, tolerance, mutual respect, trust, respect for justice, the rights of others and other civic virtues that allow for more effective cooperation. Individual gains a greater sense of belonging to the society; this makes him understand that consideration of the public interest (not merely his immediate selfish interests) can be beneficial. In general, these ideas stretch back to classical Greek philosophers and theorists of participatory democracy such as John Stuart Mill and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Pateman, 1975). Broadly speaking, according to this approach, social capital can be considered a

by-product of participation.

However, the importance of the internal role of associations has recently been seriously challenged. First, voluntary associations are just one of the places where one can internalize certain values and attitudes and learn certain modes of behaviour. An individual spends much more time at home with his family, in school or workplace, and their socializing role is certainly more important. Therefore several scholars (e.g., Coleman, 1990 ; Almond & Verba, 1963 ; Putnam, 1995a, 2002 ; Uslaner, 2003) have stressed the need to also consider the influence of family and/or workplace on the development of civic attitudes. Moreover, Welzel et.al. (2005) have recently suggested that elite-challenging mass action is linked with even greater civic benefits, than is membership in voluntary associations, and can be also considered an indication of social capital. On the basis of a literature review, Dietlind Stolle (Stolle, 2003) reached a conclusion that the social and political consequences of various types of social interaction are not very well researched yet.

The assumption of the strong relationship between trust and participation is one of the cornerstones of the classical social capital theory, and forms the basis of the so-called 'Putnam's thesis'. Yet, a growing number of studies reveal that the role of civic participation and associational membership in developing trust and democratic attitudes is most likely overstated (Keefer & Knack, 1997 ; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Armigeon, 2007). Zmerli et.al (2007) concluded on the basis of their study that even though in the previous literature there is some evidence of an association between trust and membership in voluntary organizations, it is in fact week and patchy, signifficant in some countries but not in others, among some social groups but not among others, and for some sorts of organizations but not others. Moreover, some studies have even found a negative relationship between interpersonal trust and political participation (Kase, 1999). One of the exceptions, however, is the study of Francisco Herreros (2004). Using the sample of EU 15 (except for Luxemburg and Greece) and the method of SEM, he claimed that membership in public and private-good associations is signifficantly and positively related to social trust. Also an experimental survey performed by John Ermish and Diego Gambetta (2010) in Great Britain concluded that people who are active in associations were more trusting, because they had higher expectations regarding reciprocity of others. Nevertheless, up to now, despite huge amount of studies trying to find evidence for the

so called 'Putnam's hypothesis', most researchers have failed to find a strong, systematic connection between participation and trust at the micro level [3]. Moreover, Zmerli et.al (2007) and Badescu and Neller (2007) found that in post-communist countries the connection between face-to-face interaction in different types of organizations or different forms of associational involvement and social trust, is even less than in other countries. In no former communist society was the effect of trust significant and positive (Badescu & Neller, 2007). Similar conclusions with regards to post-communist countries were also reached by Letki (2004), Mishler and Rose (2005). Stolle (2001) argues that participation in an organization can reinforce particularised trust in people like themselves who join the organization, but not generalised trust in different social type. It must be noted though that at the macro (or aggregate) level the correlation between trust and participation in associations is amazingly robust, nevertheless it can be spurious, i.e., driven by some other factors. Moreover, researchers have found that in the VWS data trust and participation show different trends (Adam, 2007 ; Fuchs & Klingemann, 2006). As noted by Bo Rothstein (2004) for a causal connection to be considered extant, one needs to prove that it holds at the micro level.

Second, scientists still argue about the causal direction of linkages. Many of them point to the fact that people 'self-select' in voluntary associations. Therefore it is more likely that they join them *because* they trust others, rather than the other way round (Newton, 1999 ; Torcal & Montero, 1999 ; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Armigeon, 2007). Due to the fact that it is difficult to organize a proper research design that would allow to test this hypothesis, the problem of endogeneity is still unsolved.

Even though participatory democracy theory and communitarian view literally almost always (as far as I have noticed) assume that the internal effect from the involvement in different associations is going to be positive: more trust, more efficacy etc. Nevertheless, the reality of associational life often falls short of the expectations of their members, thus also the opposite can happen.

The external function of voluntary associations refers to their traditional function of being intermediate democratic structures between citizens and the political system and political institutions, and is therefore the main reason why they should be seen as key ingredients of a democratic political culture (Dalton & Wattenberg, 2002 ; Hooghe

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[3]See, for example, Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Denters et al., 2007 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007 ; Newton, 1999 ; Uslaner, 2002 ; Stolle, 2001 ; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Whiteley, 1999.

& Stolle, 2003 ; Newton, 1999). These organizations result in a pluralistic polity, such as interest groups, countervailing powers etc., and they aggregate and articulate their members interests, thus allowing them to be more efficient in reaching their goals and influencing government policy (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Howard, 2003 among others). The importance of aggregation of individual interests was best described by Almond and Verba (1989). They note that "every individual demand cannot be met, or the result will be chaos. If the government is to be responsive to the demands of the ordinary man, these demands must be aggregated, and the aggregation of interests implies cooperation among men" (Almond & Verba, 1989, 153). Teorell et.al. (2007) note that not just organizational membership but all kinds of political participation — be it voting, party activity, or protest behaviour -– channel citizens demands to the decision-makers.

However, also this function of voluntary associations has recently been challenged. First, speaking about voluntary associations as crucial democratic agents, several scholars have argued that associations and the skills and networks acquired in them do not necessarily aid the democracy. Maloney and Rossteuscher (2007) argue that many associations during the Weimar Republic did not contribute to democratic development, and in fact paved the way for the success of National Socialism.

Secondly, speaking about the representation of interests, Per Selle (1999) argues that nowadays they are no longer the prototypical voluntary organizations described by Robert Putnam. No just the type of the civic groups has changed but also the character of membership in these groups. Hardly any organization nowadays relies on large number of members. Many of them allow little room for individual participation (Almond & Verba, 1989) and are often looking for new members/ supporters without ever expecting them to become active (Selle, 1999).

An increasing tendency for the organizations — citizen lobby groups, professional associations, labour unions and other —- is to become professionalized, to rely on professional organizers and experts (Selle, 1999 ; Skocpol, 1999a). Most of the other members, who form the 'biggest mass' of the organization are in many cases just the so called 'check-book' members, that participate with their money but not with their time, and are offered little in terms of depth of analysis or understanding of the issues at stake by these organizations. People who are members of organizations do not necessarily spend a lot of time working in them or for them; on the other hand, to take part in the activities

organized by different associations one does not need to be a member. Morales and Geurts (2007) concluded that asking about membership only usually underestimates the degree to which citizens are involved in associations. Moreover, contrary to expectations, CID data revealed that in all 13 surveyed countries citizens actively involved in associations outnumber those passively involved (Morales & Geurts, 2007).

As noted by Zmerli et.al. (2007), membership is only one measure of voluntary activity, and other activities, such as participating in voluntary activity, or doing voluntary work in associations, can possibly be even more productive to trust. One of the most detailed analysis of participation is performed by the researchers in the CID project. The project covers 27 associational types and for each of them it gives information about several types of involvement: membership, participation in activities, donations and voluntary work (see Morales & Geurts, 2007). In this respect one can mention Jeffrey Berry (1993) who distinguish between two critical elements — breadth and depth of participation. Breadth refers to whether all members of the community are given an opportunity to participate. Depth, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which those who choose to participate have the opportunity to do so (c.f., Maloney & Rossteutscher, 2007).

Peter Mair (1995) analyses the dynamics of party membership and party types, and concludes that mass parties so characteristic for the first-wave democracies, are the past, and the parties which are developing in southern and eastern Europe tend to be characterized by loose organizational structures, small if not non-existent memberships, and an absence of any pronounced ties to the civil society. Webb et.al. (2002) argue that the reliance of parties on professional campaigners and organizers, has led them to treating citizens as passive observers who only need to be mobilized at the time of elections to support the party. Already for more than a decade both scientists and journalists have been talking about 'the decline of party' (for more details see Mair, 1995). There are different opinions on how to evaluate the changes in organizations, but many scholars (Kaase & Barnes, 1979 ; Inglehart, 1990 ; Stoker, 2008, among others) believe that we need to find other, more creative ways how to engage people in democratic processes directly. Mancur Olson (1982) argued that, for the organizations of collective action (at least for large groups) to emerge, it may take a very long time, but once established they are usually very stable.

It is widely acknowledged that by engaging in politics and participating in demo-

cratic processes individuals form the true basis of democratic society. According to Inglehart: "Mass mobilization is a prerequisite for the contemporary version of democracy" (Inglehart, 1997, 169). However, nowadays it is also acknowledged that participation in free elections is certainly not a sufficient condition for democratization (Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Stoker, 2008 ; Almond & Verba, 1989).

The benefits from participation in them are certainly not limited to democratic processes of a society alone. For example, membership in voluntary associations can help to build useful personal networks, in these associations people can learn different skills, develop trust and reciprocity norms and, finally, they also provide psychological benefits. As noted by Robert Putnam, one of the most cited social capital theorists, "The characteristics of civil society affect the health of our democracies, our communities and ourselves" (Putnam, 2000, 6). Membership in all kinds of voluntary associations can also be seen as a remedy against atomization and social disintegration characteristic for mass societies (Weber, 1910 ; Van Deth, 1997 ; Newton, 1999). In this respect, according to Rose and Shin (2001) civil society is also one of the characteristics of a modern democratic state.

Another external function of voluntary associations, which is related to the previous one, is that participation serves as a 'defence mechanism', providing means and tools for the people to protect themselves against a potentially intrusive state. Broad membership in associations and civic groups can ensure responsiveness of the elites to citizens' wishes and demands (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Howard, 2003 ; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). The responsiveness arises not because citizens are actively making demands, but in order to keep them from becoming active (Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Putnam, 2000). "If decision makers expect citizens to hold them politically accountable, they are more inclined to temper their worst impulses rather than face public protests" (Putnam, 2000, 346). When people are unite, informed and confident, and organize in bigger groups and associations, they become a power that one should reckon with. Uncooperative and completely individualistic influence attempts can only lead to dysfunctional results (Almond & Verba, 1989, 153). The leaders of the Soviet Union understood it probably better than anyone, thus methodically suppressing all kinds of non-systemic activities that could potentially become dangerous for the regime, effectively bringing the voluntary associations under the leadership and control of the communist party and atomizing the society by

creating distrust between people.

As discussed earlier, some of the classical assumptions regarding the positive role of associational involvement have recently been challenged. However, a good summary of why participation in NGO's is still considered important is provided by Zepa (1999, 6–8), and the reasons are:

1. Participation in non-governmental organizations and controlling the state power;

2. Non-governmental organizations as the agent of participation;

3. Non-governmental organizations as providers of such services which are not rendered by the state or the market;

4. Participation in non-governmental organizations and social and political integration;

5. Participation in non-governmental organizations as guarantor of pluralism;

6. Non-governmental organizations as an instrument for mobilization of the political interests and demands of society;

7. The influence of the involvement in NGOs on the economy, justice and culture of the state.

2.2   Political trust

2.2.1   Different meanings of political trust

In the political realm, the relations between society and political institutions or the political system are usually expressed in the measure of political trust, institutional trust or trust in institutions, and its opposite, political alienation or disenchantment from politics. Following the reasoning of Niklas Luhmann, scientists (e.g., Zmerli et al., 2007) recently prefer to use the word 'confidence' rather than 'trust' in political institutions. According to Luhmann (1988), 'confidence' is a more precise description as we do not choose to take 'the risk' — most of the time (except elections) the government is just there and we accept it as such. The lack of trust, he argues, simply withdraws activities; the lack of confidence, on the other hand, will lead to feelings of alienation.

Social scientists are sometimes inconsistent and careless in their use of terms 'political trust' or 'institutional trust', not always explaining what exactly they mean, and

to whom it actually refers. A popular classification developed by David Easton (1965) distinguishes three specific political objects: (1) the political community, (2) the regime (including democratic institutions, principles, norms and procedures), and (3) political authorities (individuals who currently hold positions of political authorities). He also delineates two types of citizen orientation: diffuse support and specific support. Specific support refers to satisfaction with institutional outcomes of the political authorities. It captures attitudes toward an institution based on the fulfilment of demands for particular policies or actions (Easton, 1965). If citizens are satisfied with the policy decisions and the activities of public officials meet their demands and wants, specific trust increases. Diffuse support, on the other hand, is defined as a deep-seated suite of attitudes towards politics and the operation of a political system (Easton, 1965). Diffuse support typically is more stable than specific support. Following Eastons work, nowadays the literature usually distinguishes at least between trust in political institutions, and trust in particular political authorities. Trust in political community is usually left out of the analysis. Damarys Canache and Michael Kulishek (1998) argue that in unstable political contexts, such as Venezuela, the conceptualization of political support must include (1) people's evaluations of current government (authorities), (2) of the operating rules and institutions (countries political system), and (3) democracy. There is also evidence that if dissatisfaction with authorities continues for a long period of time, it can become generalized and affect evaluations of the regime and political community as well (Stoker, 2008 ; Dalton, 2004).

Even if we talk only about the specific support, we have to specify whether we mean trust only in the 'regime institutions' — parliament, parties, police, courts, civil service, military and other public institutions — or both public and private institutions (such as mass media, churches etc.). Denters et al. (2007) distinguish between:

1. actors in a representative party-democracy (political parties and politicians)

2. institutions in a liberal democracy (parliament (legislative power) and the cabinet (executive power)

3. institutions of the *Rechtstaat* (the civil service, the courts and police).

According to their study, people usually have the least confidence in political parties and politicians, and it is especially the case in the new democracies: East Germany, Portugal,

Spain, Romania, Moldova and Russia (Denters et al., 2007).

Dalton (2004) argues that public opinion surveys often overlap between levels. For example, it is not clear, if the general 'trust in government' measures support for the incumbents or for the regime. As William Mishler and Richard Rose (2001) have found, trust or distrust in institutions tends to be generalized across institutions. Similar conclusion were made by Zmerli et.al.(2007) and Denters et.al. (2007) who, on the basis of CID data, conclude that there is very high correlation between confidence in different institutions, thus there is essentially one single dimension of political confidence. Accordingly, we may assume that all the indicators of political support should, at least to a certain extent, correlate with each other.

2.2.2 Why political trust matters

In the social capital theory, trust is considered to be important for cooperation, and cooperation — necessary for establishing civil society at the grass-roots level. Francis Fukuyama (1996) argues that without trust cooperation becomes expensive and vague. Since politics is also a social exchange (Dalton, 2004, 159), in a similar way these principles can be attributed also to state-society relations. At this point Robert Putnam (2000) and many others clearly keep social trust distinct from trust in institutions and political authorities. However, with the introduction of 'linking social capital' and synergy view the theoretical discourse is changing. And there are, in fact, a lot of research findings that support the said claim. I will mention here just a few examples of the benefits provided by the complimentary state-society relations.

Stephen Knack and Philip Keefer (1997) remind that most people are conditional cooperators who act cooperatively only when they have high expectations that others will reciprocate. Thus, just like in interpersonal relations at the horizontal level, institutional trust contributes to cooperative, moral behaviour, thus decreasing 'transaction costs' (Fukuyama, 1996, 2001 ; Dalton, 2004 ; Herreros, 2004), leading to effective functioning of formal institutions and furthermore increasing prosperity. For instance, it makes no sense to pay taxes if you think that the tax authorities are discriminating against you or are heavily corrupt (Rothstein & Stolle, 2003). It makes even less sense if you do not believe that others are contributing their fair share (Hardin, 1993 ; Uslaner, 1999). Assuming that a corrupt state will not fairly distribute the payments of the public, it is simply rational to keep as much money as you can to yourself. It has been proven that institutional

trust reduces cheating with taxes (Rose & Shin, 2001), decreases corruption (Uslaner, 1999 ; Rose & Shin, 2001), improves government accountability (Knack, 2002 ; Pietrzyk-Reeves, 2008) and enhances voluntary compliance with the government directives, rules, norms and laws in general. Scepticism and distrust in political authorities may create an environment in which dishonest behaviour with respect to the state becomes tolerated among the society (see also Knack, 2002). Trust is especially important for democratic regimes since the government cannot rely on coercion to the same extent as in other regimes, and should rely on the legitimacy of the system and the voluntary compliance of the public (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Dalton, 2004 ; Newton, 1999 ; Inglehart, 1997). If there is no trust in state-society relations, government spends more money on enforcing laws, loses money through corruption and other crimes, and spends more time and money explaining their decisions to the public and assuring voters that their interests are being represented.

Secondly, complementarity between citizens and the institutions of the state can provide informational benefits. It enhances sharing of information, input of ideas from the civil society groups, feedback about the efficiency of (and need for) certain policies (Pateman, 1975), and ideas for innovations (Knack, 2002). There is a lot of empirical evidence (Putnam, 2000 ; Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Knack, 2002, among others) that where citizens demonstrate a greater sense of civic responsibility and participate in democratic processes more actively, governments perform better. The informational benefits of complimentary state-society relations is specially important nowadays where the social and economical processes are getting increasingly complex. The most successful policies are those that are based on involving respective society groups in the process of discussion. As Garry Stoker says, in a true democracy: "Expressing your interest or opinion is only the start of a more general challenge in politics – that of communication" (Stoker, 2008, 188).

Third, in democratic regimes, institutional trust is a guarantee of political and economic stability. If citizens do not trust the parties in the parliament, they try to 'vote them out' of the office, and it results in high electoral volatility [4]. As the study of

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[4]There is a long list of surveys discussing the electoral behaviour, what determines it and what are its consequences (just for the post-Communist countries see Tavits, 2005 ; Innes, 2002 ; Fidrmuc, 2000 ; Tucker, 2002 ; Rose & Munro, 2003. Almost all of these studies come from the field of political science, so I will not go into more details here

Richard Rose (1995) shows, this has been the case in the post-communist new democracies. Confidence in institutions is also important for getting people to accept and comply with the government decisions. This aspect has a particular importance during economic turmoil, like the one Latvia is going through at the moment. The process of internal deflation involves a lot of unpopular decisions. In such cases securing peace and stability requires that the citizens have sufficient trust in economic and political authorities to accept temporary economic straits in return for the promise of better conditions in some uncertain future (see Catterberg & Moreno, 2006)). One can expect more unrest and destruction, if the government is unsuccessful in inflicting the society's confidence and trust in their policies.

Forth, even if there were no direct economic benefits, institutional trust is an indicator of the legitimacy of power relations. Taking into account that in democracies, political authorities are intended to represent the will of the people, legitimacy is a critical issue (Dalton, 2004 ; Seligman, 1997) and specially so for new regimes (Mishler & Rose, 2001). A loss of legitimacy leads to avoiding obligations and civic responsibilities, lowering participation rates in the social and political processes and, finally, cause a crisis of democracy.

There is strong evidence that political trust is important for political participation. Many studies have revealed a quite consistent and robust correlation between confidence in political authorities and conventional political participation (Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Schyns & Nuus, 2007 ; Dalton, 2004 ; Mishler & Rose, 2005), meaning that if confidence in political institutions is low, people are less likely to follow politics, vote or join associations. Yet, some others (Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Denters et al., 2007) who analyzed only direct effects have found no correlation between confidence in institutions and participation in voluntary associations. A few scholars (e.g., Dalton, 2004) argue that it might also be that the lack of confidence in authorities stimulates attempts to vote the incumbents out of office and to take other actions to change the course of government, however, there is not much empirical evidence that would correspond with such claims. Some others (Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Denters et al., 2007) have found no correlation between confidence in institutions and participation in voluntary associations., however, they only analysed the direct effects. Most research has so far concluded that those who feel supportive are more likely to participate in conventional political activities,

and the those who are disappointed and unsatisfied with the authorities will participate less.

There have been a lot of studies analysing the link between institutional trust and unconventional political activity. Most of them have come to the conclusion that if citizens do not support the authorities, they will engage in mobilized unconventional (or maybe even illegal) activities (Muller & Jukam, 1977 ; Muller, 1979 ; Dalton, 2004 ; Norris, 1999).[5] This conclusion is extremely important for the democratic theory. People who are unsatisfied with the functioning of democracy or performance of their authorities, are expected to voice their concerns. Yet, some scholars (e.g. Craig & Maggiotto, 2009 ; Seligson, 1980) argue that low political support produces unconventional behaviour only when it is combined with other attitudes, such as political efficacy.

In addition, the strength or weakness of the government as such is providing impulses to the society that are either positive or negative incentives for forming of cooperative networks. Many scholars have noted (e.g., Rose, 1999 ; Rose & Shin, 2001 ; Shlapentokh, 1989 ; Ledeneva, 1998) that sometimes networks are built and informal organizations flourish in response against the state, to compensate for its organizational failures or weaknesses. A good example is the Soviet Union, where people created what Richard Rose calls an 'hour-glass' society (Rose & Shin, 2001) in which individuals insulated themselves from distrusted formal organizations, instead valuing and developing their own informal networks of friends and family. There are scholars (Habermas, 1984 ; Fukuyama, 2001, among others) who believe that the government should stay away from the civil society so that it does not discourage the spirit of moral obligation and personal responsibility and the spontaneous ability of people to work with one other. These theories have been repeatedly challenged since, with the other scholars (see Skocpol, 1999b) arguing that, on the contrary, civil society thrives to the extent that the state actively encourages it. There are still different opinions and, thus, very different policies regarding building social trust and facilitating the development of civil society.

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[5]Somewhat different reactions are expected in case if citizens' attachments toward their political system is fragile. Then it is also likely that citizens will withdraw from political action at all (Canache & Kulisheck, 1998).

2.2.3 Sources of political trust

The theories offered for explanation of the origins of political trust in particular are best summarized by Richard Rose and William Misher (2001). They distinguish between two theoretical traditions which try to explain the origins of institutional trust: 1) cultural theories and 2) institutional theories. The literature on political support, for example, Dalton (2007), sometimes distinguishes two types of attitudes regarding institutions: evaluative dimension and affective dimension, which are somewhat similar to those proposed by Mishler and Rose. The affective aspect of political support involves affective orientations of psychological dispositions that are not fully captured by exchange theories of political support. These 'affective orientations' might be socialized early in life or generalized from other experiences. As I have developed my own classification of theories (see Introduction), I will not discuss here the specifics of Mishler and Rose's model, but rather explore what is known from previous studies.

While many issues are still contested, most scientists agree that there is a lot of evidence proving the so called 'performance thesis', stating that trust depends on the evaluations of the performance of these institutions that confidence in political authorities depends on their perceived performance. Indeed, we know from sociological theories that people build their opinions and expectations on the basis of of their prior experiences and their interpretation of these experiences. Thus, confidence in authorities depends on what people know about their actions and decisions. If the government does not live up to the expectations, trust decreases. If citizens are satisfied with the institutional output, see politicians as honest and responsive, the feelings of confidence will evolve (Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Mishler & Rose, 2001, for post-communist countries — Mishler & Rose, 2001, 2005). Researchers have found that it is especially important how successful the institutions are in dealing with such matters as promoting growth, governing effectively, and, especially in new or transitional regimes, avoiding corruption. But of course, these factors are often closely related.[6] The reputation, Partha Dasgupta (1988) argues, has to be earned. It is only

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[6]Other potentially important aspects mentioned in the literature are evaluations of the trend in personal as well as national income (Borre, 2000 ; Zepa, 2001), inequality (Uslaner, 2003), growth of social estrangement and social isolation (Dalton, 2004 ; Stoker, 2008), post-modernization and decreasing respect for authorities (Inglehart, 1997), incumbency factor (Mishler & Rose, 2001), ethnic tensions and polarization of society (Knack & Keefer, 1995). Still, they can be attributed, to a significant degree, to

natural to expect trust and trustworthiness to be positively correlated. "This is why we like to distinguish 'trusting someone' from 'trusting someone blindly', and think the latter to be ill-advised." (Dasgupta, 1988, 50-1). Confidence in authorities can also be affected by negative information in the mass media; the inability of the government to explain a decision to the people and to guarantee transparency (Stoker, 2008 ; Russell, 2005).

The so-called *'performance hypothesis'* is well rooted in political science literature (see, for example, Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Mishler & Rose, 2001 ; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006, but for critique Dalton, 2004.). In fact, there is so much evidence on the influence of performance and perceived corruption on the institutional trust, that it allows Catterberg and Moreno to conclude that "performance seems an inherent element of political trust" (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006, 46). Russell Dalton, on the other hand, argues that the currently available data do not provide a strong evidence for policy performance hypothesis at the aggregate level (Dalton, 2004, 65-70, 113). As an argument, he points to the fact that the rise in political negativity in advanced industrial democracies is not matched by public perceptions of national economic performance (Dalton, 2004, 124). Some other social scientists (Uslaner, 2003 ; Levi, 1996, among others) have questioned the causality of the linkages, arguing that it is trust that leads to better institutions (or distrust that leads to worse performance of institutions).

Arthur Miller and Ola Listaugh argue that low levels of political confidence are not so much related to the government's objective achievements, as to the gap between actual performance and citizen's expectations (Miller & Listaugh, 1999, 212). Recently several scientists have introduced the hypothesis that decreasing rates of confidence in political institutions may be a result of an increasingly sophisticated and demanding citizenry, the 'critical citizens', who are dissatisfied because the institutions fall short of their high democratic ideals (Inglehart, 1997 ; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002 ; Warren, 1999 ; Mishler & Rose, 1997 ; Dalton, 2004). In this respect, a little scepticism and criticism is normal and healthy for democracy, yet too much cynicism and scepticism can threaten the democratic process (Dalton, 2007). Ronald Inglehart (1997) sees declining trust in government as a part of a broader erosion of respect for authorities that is linked with processes of modernization and postmodernization. With regards to post-communist countries it is argued that dissatisfaction arose as a result of unjustified expectations after

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the previously distinguished perspectives.

establishing independence, causing the so called 'post-honeymoon' effect (Howard, 2003 ; Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). There is some evidence that this might be true. For example, Russell Dalton found that in Germany, Italy and Japan political support grew in post-war decades as democracy established itself, then the trend shifted and citizens in those countries became more cynical of the government (Dalton, 2007) [7]. Similarly in Latvia from 1992, the period of political activity was followed by a period of political apathy and depression (Koroleva & Rungule, 2006). Also the distrust is fuelled by the fractional loss of autonomy to European Union, that restricts the options available to local authorities (Mair, 1995).

In short, from the institutional perspective, confidence in political institutions is politically endogenous and based on rational evaluations of the performance of the contemporary political institutions (Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004). It is rather seen as an outcome of the relations and interactions, a certain indicator of the quality of institutions.

From the social capital perspective, however, confidence in political institutions is perceived to be politically exogenous. Several scholars have argued that for the most part confidence in institutions is just an extension of interpersonal trust, a reflection and projection of social trust e.g., an outcome of the relations and interactions between individuals (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Almond & Verba, 1963 ; Inglehart, 1999 ; Schyns & Nuus, 2007 ; Fukuyama, 1996). It is expected that the cooperative, democratic values and attitudes that people learn in cooperation with others later "spill up" to the political sphere, thus creating conditions for a better governance and more successful politics. This approach has been so fundamental for the social capital theory that Marc Morjé Howard (2003) too calls it 'the social-capital approach'.

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[7]Also, Dalton mentions that sudden shocks like 9/11 or Golf war conflict in 1991, can sharply reverse the trend, making people rally around their government again. However, sooner or later politics generally returns to "normal" (Dalton, 2004, 52).

2.3 Political efficacy

2.3.1 Dimensions of political efficacy

The term 'political efficacy' originates in political science. It was first introduced in 1954 by Angus Campbell et al., and described "the feeling that an individual political action does have, or can have an impact upon the political process" (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1952, 187). The inverse of political efficacy was supposed to be powerlessness, as well as ignorance of existing political arrangements. Political efficacy was profoundly established in political analysis following Almond and Verba's seminal work "Civic Culture" (Almond & Verba, 1963) where they argued that efficacy is deeply rooted in the principles of democracy and significantly influences the quality of government. The crucial importance of efficacy for democracy was also emphasized by Douglas Madsen (1978). According to him, in a democracy the individuals assessment of whether or not he and his fellow citizens have any influence in politics becomes in effect an assessment of whether or not a definitive feature of the regime is intact (Madsen, 1978). Considering the tremendous impact of efficacy on the state of the civil society, it such should be considered one of the crucil elements of the state-society relations. Unfortunately, in most social capital studies it has been disregarded [8].

Social scientists (Paige, 1971 ; Balch, 1974 ; Bandura, 1977 ; Madsen, 1987 ; Sullivan & Riedel, 2001 ; Kim, 2005 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007) usually refer to two different categories of political efficacy:

1. External efficacy that describes the perceived responsiveness of the government;

2. Internal efficacy that is a perceived self-efficacy and represents a sense of being capable of acting effectively in the political realm, an optimistic view of one's own political capabilities.

Edward Muller, one of the first to analyse political efficacy, also adds a third dimension. According to him (Muller, 1970), efficacy involves: (1) a general belief that government is

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[8]In social capital theory there are references to the so called 'empowerment' which, in short, means whether a person feels that he has a control over what is happening to him, can he influence the ongoing events, can he do the same as others, does he feel valuable (see, for example, Franke, 2005 ; Bullen & Onyx, 2000). Empowerment is something that gives rise to action —- whether it is starting a new business, taking part in a demonstration, involving in voluntary work etc. We talk about empowerment in relation with different spheres of life: roughly speaking, the economic, political and social sphere.

responsive to citizen influence; (2) skills necessary for effective political behavior; and (3) a psychological disposition or feeling of confidence in one's personal ability to influence salient government decisions.

Internal and external efficacies have quite different behavioural and emotional implications, and combine to create different psychological reactions (Bandura, 1977). Inefficacy in general, as summarized by In Chul Kim, is "the attitude which perceives both the individual and the system to be inefficacious in reducing the gap between them"(Kim, 2005, 57). Francis Lee (2006) proposes to consider collective efficacy — a citizen's belief in the capabilities of the public as a collective actor to achieve social and political outcomes — as a third dimension of efficacy. A citizen who believes he can work cooperatively with others, if he wants to engage in political activity, has a quite different perspective on politics from the individual who thinks of himself as a lone political actor (Almond & Verba, 1989).

2.3.2   The role of efficacy in enhancing civic engagement

Engagement in all kinds of political activities takes time and resources, therefore people evaluate potential consequences related to their actions, before doing anything (Coleman, 1990). If they believe that they are likely to gain some benefits as a result of their actions and that these will improve their living standards, they are more likely to participate. Most civic activities are oriented towards the political system. If people do not believe in the responsiveness of political authorities or their own capability to have a real impact on political processes, they will probably choose not to waste their time, at least on activities oriented towards the political system (for empirical evidence see Dalton, 2004 ; Armigeon, 2007. From such perspective, efficacy can be seen as an indicator of what Almond and Verba (1989) call the reserve of influence or 'influential potential' of citizens.[9]. As noted by David Wittman (1989), people's behaviour is guided by rational expectations regarding the potential outcomes of their actions, and the actions of other political actors. If people are confident that their actions can bring meaningful change, they will act if there is a need. If they feel they can not influence policy processes, they will not try to (for empirical evidence see Dalton, 2004 ; Armigeon, 2007). Moreover,

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[9]Almond and Verba (1989) also introduce the hypothesis that in ordinary times citizens are relatively uninterested in what the decision makers do, however, if an issue becomes prominent, their demands increase. When things return to normal, the importance of politics falls again (Almond & Verba, 1989).

according to Klaus Armigeon (2007), the effect of efficacy is less pronounced in eastern than in the western societies. "Irresponsible and closed policy-making makes for a passive society with low self-esteem." (Menshikov, 2001, 78). This is one of the reasons why it is important to also included the concept of 'political efficacy' when analysing state-society relations.

A number of studies have demonstrated the importance of political efficacy for political participation (voting and other time-based tasks) (Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Verba et al., 1995, among others). Efficacy is needed both for unconventional activities, and for effective conventional political participation and involvement in civic associations. It affects both the extent and character of participation. People who feel efficacious politically are much more likely to become actively involved in politics – to follow politics, to discuss politics, to be more active partisans and to be more engaged in political activities (see, for example, Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Stolle & Rochon, 1999 ; Dalton, 2004 ; Verba et al., 1995 ; Armigeon, 2007). At the same time, as noted by Morales and Geurts (2007), the effects of efficacy and other political orientations on *organizational involvement* are seldom debated or analysed. Most studies concentrate on the opposite link – the effects of participation in organizations on political attitudes and orientations, and regard political efficacy, among other civic skills and attitudes, as a potential consequence (internal effect) of organizational involvement (Pateman, 1975 ; Putnam, 2002 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007). However, as noted by Morales and Geurts (2007), the other causual directions also seem plausible.

In line with the above discussed arguments, Albert Bandura (1977) offered a model, combining both types of efficacy. He argued that:

1. when positive internal efficacy combines with the positive judgement of the environment, the result is assure, opportune action.

2. When internal efficacy combines with negative judgements of the environment, the result is protest or milieu change, possibly accompanied by a sense of grievance.

3. when internal efficacy combines with positive judgements of the environment the result is self-devaluation and despondency,

4. when internal efficacy combines with negative judgements of the environment the result is simple apathy

2.3.3 Sources of political efficacy

Perceived efficacy is a product of social learning; it is based on individuals' previous experience (Bandura, 1977). Dealing with institutions is a direct test of self-efficacy and responsiveness of these institutions. If people have been unsuccessful in trying to influence government policies and, as a result, have lost their confidence in political authorities, there is a risk that efficacy will decrease too (see Madsen, 1987 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Stolle, 1998). According to Albert Bandura (1977) four sources of information are important for the social learning of self-efficacy: (1) one's own performance attainments; (2) vicarious experience of others' performances; (3) verbal persuasion and (4) one's own psychological states. The first is the most influential of the four. On the example of India, Madsen (1987) concluded that success significantly enhances the feeling of self-efficacy but not the view of the government. Failure changes self-efficacy very little but changes the perception of government responsiveness dramatically.

Several scientists have noted the impact of institutional trust on the subjective sense of efficacy (e.g., Iyengar, 1980 ; Mishler & Rose, 2005). The correlation between efficacy and political trust was also demonstrated in Latvia Zepa (2001)."Trust strengthens citizens' beliefs that government is responsive and encourages citizens to express their demands via participation in activities from voting to joining organizations" (Mishler & Rose, 2005, 1054). If people lose trust in political authorities and the political system, there is a risk that efficacy will decrease too. With time people may become sceptical, cynical, and disinterested in politics, and choose to abstain from any kind of political participation. As said before, if people do not believe in the responsiveness of political authorities or their own capability to have a real impact on political processes, they will probably choose not to waste their time, at least on activities oriented towards the political system.

2.3.4 Learned helplessness

The discussion about the importance of the sense of efficacy for political action mirrors somewhat the discussion among psychologists about the cognitive mechanisms of the the so-called "learned helplessness".

The basic idea of the learned helplessness theory is that noncontingency leads to performance deficits. Individuals exposed to uncontrollable events learn that events are independent of their own behaviour, and it has a debilitating effect on their future perfor-

mance. Development of an expectation of future uncontrollability results in a reduction of the incentive for coping (Overmier, 2002).

> "Helplessness is present when a group or person or animal displays inappropriate passivity; failing through lack of mental or behavioural action to meet the demands of a situation in which effective coping is possible" (Peterson et al., 1995, 229).

It is hard to say sometimes whether the passivity is 'inappropriate'. We can, however, assume that the massive distrust in authorities observed in survey data (e.g., Eurobarometer 2009) is an indication that in Latvia people saw that there are other solutions possible or reforms needed besides the budget consolidations measures taken by the government. Thus, their passivity in accepting these measures can be considered at least surprising.

The reformulated learned helplessness theory (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978) concentrates on the cognitive processes mediating uncontrollability and passive behaviour. It suggests that the *causal attribution* that subjects make for failure influences subsequent expectancies for control, which in turn are the direct antecedents of performance (Mikulincer, 1986).[10] The most commonly used distinction is between internal and external causes. The internal attributions are considered much more damaging to one's self-esteem and having more serious consequences for the future performance (Simkin, Lederer, & Seligman, 1983 ; Mikulincer, 1986). In line with these findings, one could hypothesize that the loss of internal efficacy (that refers to respondent himself) is more detrimental to participation than the loss of external efficacy (that refers to responsiveness of public officials and the government).

Helplessness is predicted to be particularly prevalent when the attributions about one's failure are global and stable (e.g., "I lack ability"). To the degree that failure is viewed in specific terms (e.g., "This response does not work") or due to unstable factors (e.g., "I am tired"), helplessness effects are expected to be attenuated (Donovan & Leavitt, 1985, 594). This was demonstrated in, for example, Mikulincer's (1986) experiments. On the other hand, one of the few non-experimental, survey-based studies testing the learned

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[10]So far the learned helplessness model has been successfully applied when analysing, for example, depression, academic achievement, and problems related to Asian Americans and Black Americans Peterson et al. (1995). But "the domain of learned helplessness continues to expand as new issues are recruited into the analysis" (Overmier, 2002: 6).

helplessness theory – the study of dormitory conditions by Baum et Gatchel (1981) – found that attributions to personal factors were closely associated with an initial reactance phase, while less purposive behaviour (the withdrawal response) was more likely to occur when attributions were more external. "After diagnosing the game as uncontrollable, [the students] changed their response to reflect adaptation: If the game is not controllable, why try?" (Baum & Gatchel, 1981, 1088). Results of Mikulincer's (1986) experiments too underscore expectation of uncontrollability as the most important determinant of helplessness. Such expectations may impair performance by reducing performance-related incentives, but and also by producing a negative cognitive set (Maier & Seligman, 1976).

Due to the fact that internal attributions of failure are psychologically much more damaging to an individual, people typically try to attribute negative experiences such as the lack of control over what the politicians do to external causes. Accordingly, we should expect the distrust in political authorities to reflect more heavily on evaluations of external efficacy. They, on the other hand, should with time spill over to evaluations of oneself.

Studies show that to learn helplessness one needs time. When one first encounters uncontrollable events he can be expected to experience reactance, i.e., try even harder to solve the problem. As his experience with uncontrollability continues, eventually his reactance motivation dissipates, and he becomes helpless (Wortman & Brehm, 1975). In Latvia, as in many other other post-Soviet counties, the performance and responsiveness of government has constantly been rated very low (e.g. ISSP 1996, 2006, Koroleva & Rungule, 2006), meaning that electoral replacement as a mechanism of ensuring respon- siveness does not always work. Even though the governments change, distrust in political authorities continues. It justifies the search for helplessness effects with regards to politi- cal passivity. Passivity can be expected not just with regards to conventional activities, but also unconventional activities. Research has shown that animals made helpless by uncontrollable events become less aggressive, and there is some evidence that it might be the case for humans too (Peterson et al., 1995).

One might argue that the citizens of post-communist counties have been "immu- nized" against helplessness, as they have a very clear positive experience of controllability — overthrowing the communist regime. However, it is not clear how people interpret this event and the following process of transition (as their success of failure) and to what

they attribute it. Even if they see this experience as proof of their personal capability, research has shown that both helplessness and the positive effects from experiencing controllability wane with time (Young & Allin, 1986). Moreover, Peterson et al. (1995) argue that helplessness develops more readily when the tasks involved are not important to the individual. Most people unfortunately find politics not that important.

To date, most of the helplessness experimental literature involves single subjects, however there are few instances when leaned helplessness theory has been tested also at the group level. In an experiment that involved joint action by two subjects, Simkin et al. (1983) found that learned helplessness can indeed be produced in groups. When an individual acting in concert with another finds that their actions have no effect, each forms an expectation that future concerted responses with that other person will be ineffective. Consequently, this lowers the probability that joint action will be initiated. Interestingly, they found that group performance was unaffected by individual helplessness pretreatment, and that individual performance was unaffected by group helplessness treatment. The authors conclude that individuals form expectations about the ineffectiveness of their joint responses, as well as about their individual responses. Accordingly, groups can be made helpless, however the mechanisms are more complex. Individual helplessness need not generalize to group performance and the collective helplessness need not generalize to individual performance (Peterson et al., 1995).

2.4   A model of political alienation

The relations between citizens and political institutions are usually summarized through the concept of political support (confidence in institutions), and its opposite, political alienation (political disenchantment or disengagement from politics).[11] Most of the literature refers to political alienation as a combination of (1) a lack of confidence in political institutions and (2) a feeling of political inefficacy (Kim, 2005). 'Confidence' is related

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[11]After the 80-s social scientists, with some exceptions (Kim, 2005 ; Borre, 2000 ; Shea, 2003), prefer to speak about political disenchantment, estrangement, disengagement from politics, political scepticism, distrust and inefficacy, avoiding the term 'alienation'. Possibly, one of the the reasons is that 'alienation' is a concept strongly associated with the theory of Karl Marx which quite different from most of the arguments discussed nowadays. However, it can still be considered an appropriate term, because, as Kim (2005) puts it, alienation is "the estrangement of a human being (subject) from the state (object)".

to the output process of politics, and usually reflects the feeling that the government is acting in the interests of people. 'Efficacy', in contrast, is related to the input process, and is usually referred to as a belief that an individual action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process (Campbell et al., 1952, 187). Whether we call it alienation or use a different word, the theory is pretty clear about the fact that these two dimensions form the basis of state-society relations, affect both the character and the extent of participation and thus facilitate or hinder the development of civil society (see, for example, Almond & Verba, 1989). They are necessary to ensure successful cooperation between citizens and the state (Paige, 1971 ; Kim, 2005).

Some researchers prefer to speak of political cynicism instead of alienation which is "an individuals attitude, consisting of a conviction of the incompetence and immorality of politicians, political institutions and/or the political system as a whole" (Schyns & Nuus, 2007, 126). However, political cynicism, unlike political alienation, does not say anything about the estrangement of the individual from the political process. Cynics may be involved in politics, whereas estranged people are, by definition, not (Schyns & Nuus, 2007). Thus, cynicism may be seen essentially as the 'trust' dimension of political alienation, just more intense and antagonistic. In fact, Peggy Shyns and Margreet Nuus (2007) use trust in institutions as a proxy for political cynicism in their study. Alienation is a broader concept, therefore I consider it more appropriate for describing relations between the state and civil society.

The first to develop a specific hypothesis about the role of both trust and efficacy in participation was William Gamson (1968). A little later Jeffery Paige (1971) introduced his theoretical model (Figure 2.1). Paige argued that both trust and efficacy[12] are essential conditions for a successful cooperation between citizens and the state. He combined trust and efficacy in a theoretical model, deriving four distinct political attitudes:

1. active supports of the existing governmental structure (high efficacy, high trust),

2. dissident attitudes (high efficacy, low trust),

3. subordinate attitudes (low efficacy, high trust) and

4. alienated attitudes (low efficacy and low trust).

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[12]Efficacy to Paige means the belief that a meaningful change can be drawn from individual activity.

To avoid the trust contamination problem of efficacy with political trust [13], Paige excluded 'responsiveness' (or external efficacy) from his model. He proposed using information about politics as a surrogate for the standard efficacy items of skills and feelings of confidence. Yet Mitchell Seligson (1980) argued that possession of information does not necessarily indicate that individual feels he can influence government decisions. He proposed a scale for the measurement of efficacy that taps both the (1) political skills, (2) information and (3) feeling of confidence. Otherwise, his model of political attitudes is very similar to that of Jeffery Paige. Combining trust and efficacy, Seligson (1980) distinguishes four groups:

1. allegiant activists,

2. allegiant apathetics,

3. alienated apathetics and

4. alienated activists.

There have been different attempts to define the dimensions of political alienation (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Bowler & Donovan, 2002), yet most of the literature defines political alienation as a combination of (1) distrust in political institutions and (2) feeling of political inefficacy. 'Trust' is related to the output process of politics (Almond & Verba, 1989), and usually reflects the feeling that the government is acting in the interests of people. 'Efficacy', in contrast, is related to the input process, and is usually referred to as a belief that an individual action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political processes (Kim, 2005). In general, alienation reflects a breakdown in individual sense of attachment to the government and to the political system or process. In DiRenzo's words (DiRenzo, 1990, 31) "The alienated person is an individual who is said to be in society but not of it" and he cannot be expected to manifest any significant degree of citizenship.

Many surveys have shown that institutional trust and efficacy vary significantly between different society groups. Which society groups are the most alienated has a particular importance if we are to understand the character of political alienation. As pointed out by Dalton, if dissatisfaction has increased among lower-income individuals,

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[13]If people trust their government, they are more likely to believe they can influence it. Thus, the perception of responsiveness is a reflection of trust in institutions.
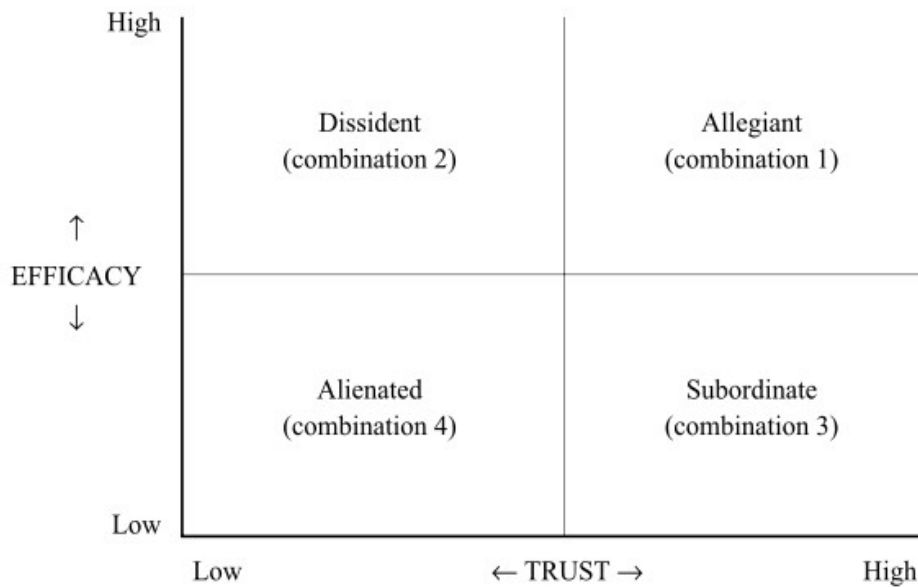
Figure 2.1: **Paige's model of political allienation**

it could signal that individuals at the margins of society are increasingly alienated from the political system (Dalton, 2004, 230), and this might be a sign of the crisis of late capitalism predicted by Habermas (c.f., Bobbio & Bellamy, 1987). Other scholars suggest that it is the rising cohort of young, better-educated, post-materialist citizens who are dissatisfied with how the democracy works, and are pressing for the expansion of the democratic process (Inglehart, 1990, 1997 ; Dalton, 2004).

3 State-society relations in social capital theory

3.1   Brief historical insight

The relations between state and civil society can be analysed from several perspectives. They have been in the centre of attention of the classics of participatory democracy theory (Mills, Rousseau), and their core assumptions have been further adopted by the civil society theorists (de Tocquille, Almond and Verba and others). In the second half of the last century the relationships between state and civil society were one of the main issues of interest, highlighted in works of Jeffery Paige (1971), Gabriel Almond and Nie Verba (1963), Mitchell Seligson (1980), Carole Pateman (1975), George Balch (1974) and many others. Recently social scientists are making rather successful attempts to analyse the civil society and state-society relations from the perspective of the social capital theory. The social capital approach is in its essence a sociological approach, and as such sees the issue of civil society and state-society relations in a broader context —- with regard to norms, values, attitudes and relations currently persisting in a society. As approaches to social capital are often qualitatively different or even contradicting, I will say a few words about the social capital theory, its history and most popular concepts. Finally, I will explain the approach I am using in my thesis.

If we look up in history, the idea that there is something in the relations of people that is influencing the overall performance of a state is not new. The importance of civic virtues was stressed already by the classical Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. They talked about the importance of civic virtues (such as wisdom and honour) and people dedicating themselves to the prosperous functioning of the political community. The relationships between the state and its citizens were later extensively analysed by

political philosophers of the Enlightenment: John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and others. However, the most influential for the social capital theory (and Robert Putnam in particular) has been Alexis de Tocqueville. In his book "Democracy in America", published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840, he talks about the 'habits of the heart' — treating others as fellow citizens rather than strangers, competitors or enemies, and he also notes the importance of trust. In line with traditional political tradition, he thought that association, the coming together of people for common purpose, would bind Americans to an idea of nation larger than selfish desires. What we now call 'social capital' for de Tocqueville was a 'bottom-up' phenomenon. He believed that people learn democratic values and civic virtues of moderation, cooperation, trust and reciprocity at the grassroots level, by participating in formal and informal voluntary associations (Tocqueville, 1966). Tocqueville was also the first to argue that the trust generated in voluntary associations is later generalized, so that it covers both interpersonal trust and trust in politicians. Similarly as many others at that time (for example, John Locke and Antonio Gramshi) de Tocquille distinguished between political society and civil society.

More than a century later, in 1963, Almond and Verba introduced their classic book "Civic culture" in which they argued that the performance of democratic government depends on 'civic culture' — the ways in which political elites make decisions, their norms and attitudes, as well as the norms and attitudes of the ordinary citizen, his relation to government and to his fellow citizens. Almond and Verba represent a long line of research that sees state-society relations in the light of civil society.

The industrial revolution caused major changes in the organization of production, agriculture and manufacturing and created conditions for the spread of industrial capitalism. It sparked another stream of studies that took a broader view on human values, attitudes and relations, analysing their importance not just the functioning of democracy but also the economic performance of the country and modern development in general. In 1904 Max Weber introduced his thesis about the importance of the ethics of Protestantism in the successful development of industrial capitalism. He assumed that culture (and religion in particular) forms the basis of everything, thus contributing to the development of the so called "cultural determinism" which looks for the reasons for differences in development in the culture. Similar assumptions are expressed in the Modernization theory, which stresses that the problem of some countries is the traditional way of think-

ing and acting. People would have to change their thinking, values and attitudes for these countries to become successful. Also this theory is widely criticized for not taking into account the economic factors, political situation, education, inequality etc., the fact that there must be something in the society that has value (Burt 2000: 36) and can influence its development is by now widely acknowledged.

Robert Putnam (1993) introduced the notion of social capital into the analysis of the functioning of democracy and good governance. His ideas have a lot in common with participatory democratic theory. Putnam believes that local civic associations are 'schools of democracy', where in interactions with each other individuals learn to trust and respect each other, gain confidence and skills to cooperate for a common goal. In "Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy" (Putnam, 1993) he defines social capital as "the aspects of social organization such as networks, norms and trust, which improve the productive potential of a society" (Putnam, 1993). Civic engagement for him is the key to generating social capital which then encourages cooperation, strengthens social relations and at the end improves economic performance of enterprises and effectiveness of government. Putnam (2000) suggests that social trust and associational involvement reinforce each other, thus creating a virtuous circle. He argues (Putnam, 2000) that the difficulties faced by the political system nowadays are largely a result of the lack of social capital — civic networks, mutual trust and shared obligations in the society. Similarly as de Tocqueville, Putnam sees the plurality of cross-cutting voluntary associations as the main precondition for a stable democracy (Siisiainen, 2003). The importance of social capital in producing a dense civil society is stressed also by Fukuyama (2001). He argues that "in the political sphere social capital promotes the kind of associational life which is necessary for the success of limited government and modern democracy" (Fukuyama, 2001).

Besides traditional forms of capital —- the physical, natural and human capital, probably one of the most important contributors to the success of a society is its social capital — norms and networks that enable people to act collectively (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Due to the attention form the World Bank and following Putnam's revealing findings about the decrease of social capital in the United States (Putnam 1993, 1995), the concept of social capital has been rapidly gaining popularity among theoreticians as well as practicians in international organizations and local governments. Study after study

in all over the world have shown how social capital can improve economic performance by increasing the coordination of actions, reducing opportunistic behaviour, reducing transaction costs, empowering local networks, providing informal insurance and improving the overall effectiveness of the use of other forms of capital.

While many scholars were exposing the impact of social capital on different aspects of development (e.g., Keefer & Knack, 1997), another stream of research was dealing with the definition issues. Unfortunately, even now, 30 years after Bourdieu and Coleman first introduced their analysis of social capital, there is still no single consensus among theoreticians, and the concept continues to develop both theoretically and empirically (Franke, 2005).

The term "social capital" is mostly used in relation to social networks and relations. However, the approaches to social capital are qualitatively different and often contradicting. The misunderstandings are mainly caused by how do we look at the social capital: as an individual or public good (for further analysis see Portes, 1998, 2000). Catherine Murray (2005) speaks about the differences between methodological individualism and methodological holism perspectives on social capital.

Social scientists who prefer methodological individualism see social capital as a an individual resource owned by individuals or firms that originates from his/her involvement in social networks or communities of association, including those which are built for the purpose of drawing some (usually material or informational) benefits from them (Bourdieu, 1986 ; Lin, 2001 ; Burt, 2000 ; Dasgupta, 1988 ; Paldam & Svendsen, 2000 ; Paldam, 2000). Pierre Bourdieu defines social capital as: "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition — or in other words, to membership in a group", and argues that:

> "the volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent depends on the size
> of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume
> of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by
> each of those to whom he is connected" (Bourdieu, 1986, 51).

In this respect voluntary associations, trade unions, political parties, secret societies (cf. the freemasons) etc. are also considered modern examples of embodiments of social capital (Siisiainen, 2003). The economic, social and symbolic "profit" that follows

from belonging to the association facilitates the growth of solidarity citessiisiainen.1999, siisiainen.2003. Overall, the social capital at the individual level might be understood as 1) ties which give an access to resources; 2) the amount and quality of the resources themselves which individual has access to through those ties. Sometimes the third aspect is added as well: 3) the use and mobilization of those resources. Methodological individualism is a standard approach within economic literature (particularly transactional economics) on social capital.

According to the holistic perspective, social capital is a collective good — a property of social structures and social relations that help to facilitate social action and to get things done (Coleman, 1990). As Christian Grootaert (1998) has famously said, it is the 'glue' that holds societies together. The essence of social capital is seen in informal values and norms, relations and attitudes which facilitate social interaction and lead to better economic, political and social performance of a society (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Coleman, 1990 ; Fukuyama, 1996, 2001 ; Grootaert, 1998). This approach originates in political science and sociology but is also developed within the theory of social economics.

In fact, the 'individual' and 'collective' level social capital are not so incompatible. Both of them are embedded in the relations with others, are supposed to provide some benefits to an individual, both require trust and networks. What really differs is the mechanism how the benefits from social capital are gained and what guarantees are there that the investments or 'credit-slips' as James Coleman (1990) calls it, will be repaid. At the 'collective' level social capital is dis-personified, that is, the benefits for the individual arise not from his personal ties but from his involvement in a larger group or network, through the reciprocity norms and shared values of the society. For an extended discussion about these issues see Alejandro Portes's "Two Meanings of Social Capital" (Portes, 2000) and also Francisco Herreros (2004). In fact, Herreros sees social capital as 'obligations' of reciprocity and information, both derived from membership of social networks (Herreros, 2004, 9).

In line with these arguments, Putnam states that the benefits of social capital arise not just for particular individuals but to a group as a whole — as less crime and corruption and better governance. This approach allows to speak about stocks of social capital of nations and communities, and about structural effects which can be gained by improving and facilitating social capital. However, in line with Bourdieu's arguments,

James De Filippis (2001) argues that it is wrong to analyse social capital at the national or community level at all, that there is no such thing as social capital of a nation or community, and a community cannot possess anything. There are different groups and networks in the society, the attachment to them as well as the benefits derived from them might be different (economic, social, informational etc.). Just one of those networks consists of the inhabitants of a country. I think de Filippis is right in sense that it is not correct to speak about the social capital of a society or country in general — as networks themselves, social capital certainly stretches across the borders of groups, communities and countries. However, generalized trust, building extended networks, engaging in community life and participating in all kinds of voluntary associations might certainly improve the economic and political performance of a country. They characterize the sociability and social capability of people, the ability of social actors and institutions to form alliances and cooperate, improving also the access to different resources and information.

3.2 Importance of social capital in collective action problems

Unlike some of the classical philosophers who appealed to high morality and believed that individuals must act in a moral way despite the circumstances (Imanuel Kant, for example), nowadays many social scientists, not just economists, prefer the rational choice approach that sees individuals as rational and self-interested. Moreover, Bernard Williams (1988) insists that it is wrong to perceive acting out of self-interests and even selfishness as immoral. Nevertheless, there are also some significant limitations of the rational choice theory pointed out by its critiques. First, the assumption that people must have all the information about the expected outcomes of their actions, almost never holds in real life. Second, experiments have shown that people have certain 'cognitive inertia', thus, not always are they considering all the benefits and disadvantages of the choice, and acting in the most appropriate way. Third, the experiments in behavioural economics have also proven that people not always act like homo economicus, i.e., as a result of pure rational reasoning and self-interest, even when they are aware of that. It means that there is something else that leads to contributing to the provision of public goods of various kinds, and solves collective action problems — like norms, internal (e.g., guilt) and external (e.g.,

shame and ostracism) sanctions, values etc. (see Coleman, 1990). Anyway, it would be ridiculous to assume that what an individual does, does not depended on circumstances and that his actions and beliefs are irrational. No animal behaves in the same way irrespective of conditions, and nor, of course, do humans (Bateson, 1988). Herreros (2004) along with transaction cost economists, is advocating the idea of bonded rationality. "Although people in some cases have limited information, far from perfect computational capacity, and poorly founded beliefs, decisions to cooperate can be explained in terms of benefits, expectations and potential costs" (Herreros, 2004, 3). Acknowledging that people may have certain rational self-interest in cooperation is important, if we are to understand how social capital works.

From a rational choice perspective, if we look at social capital as a collective good, it means that one person's consumption of the 'good' does not reduce the amount available to anyone else, and the individuals belonging to the group can not be excluded from consuming the good once it has been provided, even if they did not contribute to it's provision in the first place (Whiteley, 1999). It means that there is a 'collective action problem' in creating social capital. Social capital at the macro level can be considered a 'public good', and as such it has two properties (1) the difficulty of excluding individuals from benefiting from it; and (2) the non-substractability of the benefits consumed by one individual from those available to others (Herreros, 2004). Therefore individuals will always have an incentive to free-ride on the efforts of others (for further analysis see Herreros, 2004). As Mancur Olson (1982) notes, it is not rational from the point of view of a self-interested individual to vote or engage in any kind of collective civic action. The difference one person can make in a big group seems very small, yet at the same time the activist will get only a small part of the benefits arising from his action to the collective. Therefore it is rational to conclude that it does not pay off (Olson, 1982). Trust is necessary for people to engage in collective action (and most political action can be considered "collective") or join voluntary associations (Uslaner & Brown, 2005). Civic norms (social pressure and social rewards), besides coercion, can help to overcome the collective action problem (Olson, 1982 ; Keefer & Knack, 1997). Perpetual ties to the community can create a belief that free-riding does not pay, and it makes it even rational to invest in a 'public good' as at the end cooperation will make everyone better-off.

Collective action problem is often modelled by a trust game (David, 1990) or

prisoner's dilemma game in game theory (see Whiteley, 1999). In the prisoner's dilemma game, each actor gains immediate pay-offs by taking advantage of the trust of others; the dilemma is that if all actors do this, trust is destroyed and social interaction made very much more difficult. Each would be better off if they trusted each other, but when faced with the prospect of being taken advantage of, they are rational not to trust others in the first place. In this situation, the system will find an equilibrium in which it is difficult or impossible to build trust, and social capital will be minimal. As the theory sees individuals as rational actors, it argues that to obtain mutual solidarity, the long-term net benefits of staying in the group have to be higher than the short term net benefits of deviation (Axelrod, 1984). There are also several other important conclusions.

1. It is important to have a positive cooperative disposition, for somebody has to take the 'risk' and make the first move toward cooperation (Gambetta, 2000).

2. Duration of relations matter, since the dominant strategy in a one-shot game is always non-cooperation [1]. It would be best to have uncertainty about when the game ends, since if this is known with certainty, non-cooperation again becomes the dominant strategy. The presence of opportunistic behaviour will be less frequent if the relationship is likely to endure (Herreros, 2004).

3. Cooperators should be in a position to punish defectors, without unduly pushing themselves; if defection can not be credibly punished then cooperation will tend to break down (Whiteley, 1999).

4. It would be best to have no memory, to forget that past defections may be repeated in subsequent moves (Gambetta, 2000).

Trusting people are more likely to have a positive predisposition, engage in co-operative behaviour, develop community ties and to work towards cooperative outcomes (Gambetta, 2000). It can also be seen I light of Dasgupta's argument that "People invest resources for the purpose of building a reputation for honesty" (Dasgupta, 1988, 70) that will pay-off in later interactions.

Eric Uslaner argues that, besides the strategic view, trust can be viewed as a moral value. "Moralistic trust", as he labels it, is a "moral commandment to treat people *as*

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[1]Thus, in the political context the stability of institutions is important (see also Coleman, 1990).

if they were trustworthy" (Uslaner, 2008, 103) (emphasis in original). It is based on a general belief in the goodwill of other people, and in shared moral values. This type of world-view is usually internalized at an early age, in family.

Moral philosopher Bernard Williams (1988) argues that in a modern state people are motivated to cooperate by some version or degree of each these four types of motivation:

1. an egoistic macro-motivation (for example, cooperation in fear of the sanctions);

2. non-egoistic macro-motivation (moral or ethical dispositions);

3. a non-egoistic micro-motivation (friendly relations);

4. egoistic micro-motivation.

The social capital, then, could be attributed to both types of non-egoistic motives. For example, there have been several studies now showing that our actions depend also on the belief about the actions and beliefs of others. We reflect on how our behaviour is going to be perceived in the society, how will our actions correspond to what others believe is right or what others would do themselves. If enough people believe in certain motives they become institutionalized and change the behaviour of people, regardless of their initial dispositions.

There is also a neo-Darwinian explanation of the origins of cooperative behaviour. The first version of explanation is that in the past the aided individuals were relatives, thus cooperation is like parental care and has evolved for similar reasons. The second is that the cooperative behaviour generated characteristics in a collection of individuals that, under special conditions, favoured such groups over those that did not cooperate so effectively. Finally, cooperating individuals jointly benefited even though they were not related; the cooperative behaviour has evolved because those who did it were more likely to survive as individuals and reproduce than those who did not. The three evolutionary explanations are not mutually exclusive (Bateson, 1988).

3.3   Bonding, bridging and linking social capital

Putnam is, without doubt, one of the most influential social capital theorists, yet his views have also been widely criticized or even proven wrong (see, for example, (e.g., DeFilippis,

2001). For instance, Putnam neglects the problem of non-organized interests in the society and also the internal power relations of voluntary associations. Nevertheless, the most serious and fundamental flaw from all is that in his early works he disregards the selfish motives and conflicting interests of the (members of the) voluntary associations and thus sees them as inherently good, that more is better, and that its presence always has a positive effect on a community welfare (see Siisiainen, 2003). The internal and external power relations and selfish interests were acknowledged by, for example, Pierre Bourdie and Max Weber. Currently the broad discussions on the possible negative externalities of the social capital has led to Putnam himself agreeing that social capital is not always good, and that one can not say that the more of it the better (Putnam, 2002, 9). Putnam, same as many other social capital theorists, does not pay enough attention to the fact that people have certain self-interests regarding cooperation. Yet many scholars have argued that people need to see the benefits from their cooperation to be interested to invest in a "common" good (DeFilippis, 2001 ; Bourdieu, 1986 ; Olson, 1982). And even when individuals share common interests that allow them to act as a network, those networks can not be extended to everyone in the society and they are not constant. The same ties which provide benefits for some people might limit the access to resources to others (Portes, 1998, also Putnam, 2002). Speaking about voluntary associations, people, first of all, joint them with a certain goal. These organizations have their own self-interests, and it is only naturally for them to some extent also act in a self-interested or group-interested manner (Olson, 1982). In fact, the protection of the interests of group members (not just traditionally mentioned mafia and ku-klux-clan, but all kinds of groups) can result in corruption, nepotism, criminal behaviour, irrational and irrelevant economic decisions and therefore generate large negative externalities for the society, including the loss of generalized trust, solidarity, decreased participation etc. (Rose, 1999 ; Portes, 1998 ; Olson, 1982 ; Fukuyama, 2001, among others). Social scientists (e.g., Fukuyama, 2001 ; Putnam, 2002) usually refer to these effects as 'negative externalities' of social capital. However we perceive it — as negative externalities of just as a logical and normal aspect of group affiliation — it is obvious that social capital at the individual level might even undermine the social capital at the collective level. Also Bo Rothstein (2004) notes that the logic of many associations (religions-, political-, ethnic-, gender-based etc.) is partially based on the logic of separation, that is, establishing mistrust between competing

associations or networks. Thus "on the conceptual level it has been proven impossible to find a working distinction between the kind of associations that produce social trust and those who produce the opposite" (Rothstein, 2004, 13).
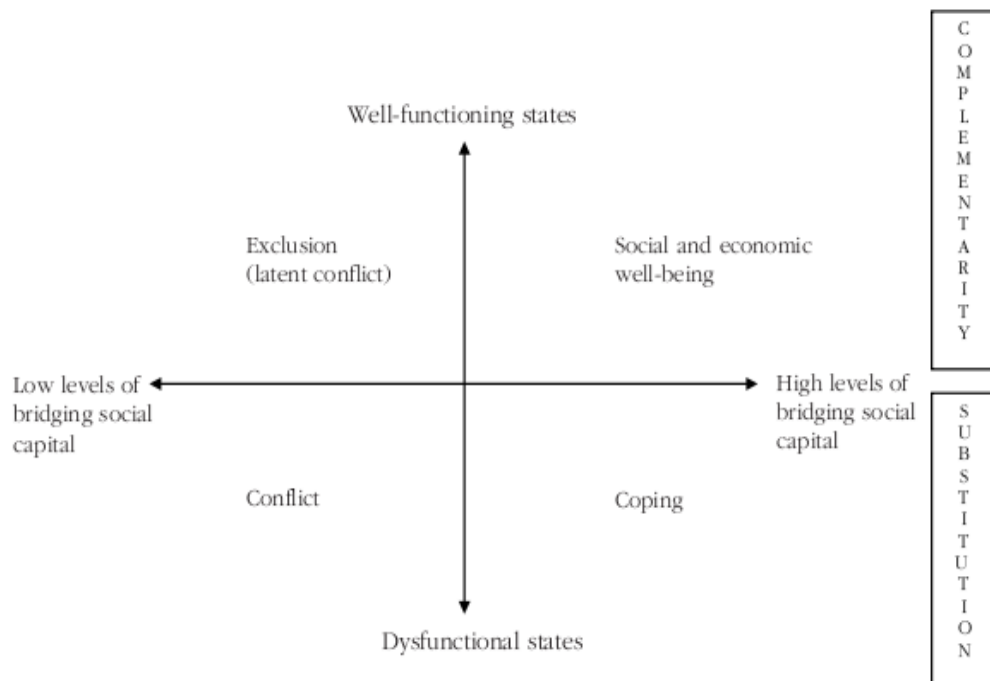
For these reasons it is assumed that there are different types of social capital: bonding and bridging social capital. Putnam in his later work "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and revival of American Community" defines bonding social capital as reciprocity within the group and bridging social capital as solidarity in wider society (Putnam, 2000, 196-303). Bonding capital can be interpreted as strong ties whereas bridging capital as weak ties (Granovetter, 1985). In different situations one form of capital may become more essential as the other. Bonding social capital is good for 'getting by' in life; bridging social capital is good for 'getting ahead' in life (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). There are both complementary and conflicting relationships between bonding and bridging social capital and, as concluded by Michael Woolcock and Deepa Narayan (2000) these are the different combinations of bonding and bridging social capital that are responsible for the range of outcomes. It is not just a large number of different groups and institutions (high density) and strong ties within them that matters, but also the cross — membership and overlapping relations of individuals and groups.

Some authors (e.g., Evans, 1996 ; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000 ; Fox, 1996 ; Pretty & Smith, 2004) distinguish also linking social capital as a separate form. It is different from bonding and bridging social capital, because it has to do with relations of hierarchy between different positions of power. Linking social capital connects civic groups to institutions and enhances vertical integration. It characterizes the ability of groups to engage vertically with external agencies, either to influence their policies or to draw resources, ideas and information (Pretty & Smith, 2004). Herreros argues that hierarchical organization as such generates distrust in two ways: by information assimentries and by power assimentries (Herreros, 2004, 38). Members of horizontal associations are more likely to trust their co-members that members of vertical ones. According to Putnam, in a vertical relation opportunistic behaviour is even more likely by both the patron (exploitation) and the client (shrinking) (Putnam et al., 1993, 173-5).

The idea of linking social capital is very important, nevertheless I would argue that currently there is too much emphasis on the fact that these are hierarchical relations between institutions and citizens, where citizens are mostly the ones levering something

from these institutions (see, for example, Woolcock, 2000).

Deepa Narayan and Michael Woolcock (2000) integrate the core ideas of bridging social capital and good governance into the analysis of state-society relations (Figure 3.1). They differentiate whether the state-people relations are complimentary or substitution and according to that conclude how well-functioning or dysfunctional the state is. The challenge, they argue, is to transform situations where a community social capital substitutes for weak, hostile, or indifferent formal institutions into ones in which both realms complement one another.

Well-functioning states

Exclusion
(latent conflict)

Social and economic
well-being

Low levels of
bridging social
capital

High levels of
bridging social
capital

COMPLEMENTARITY

Conflict

Coping

SUBSTITUTION

Dysfunctional states

Note: Complementarity refers to the optimal interaction of government and markets in civil society; substitution is the replacement by informal organizations (families, networks, and so on) of services ordinarily provided by governments and institutions.

Figure 3.1: **Relationship between bridging social capital and governance**

The notions of bonding, bridging and linking social capital are very useful theoretically, however, if we try to capture them in surveys, there are certain methodological problems. Bridging and bonding social capital are theoretical constructs that are very difficult to measure in real life. The same can be said with regards to the linking social capital. Anyone occupies some kind of position in a society, yet what is a 'higher' position and who has more 'power' is often determined by the specific situation or just impossible to tell.

Although it is methodologically impossible to clearly distinguish where the bounding social capital ends and bridging begins, we can assume that informal relations with one's primary groups (family and closest friends) indicate the bounding social capital, while bridging social capital is at least partly captured by an individual's formal associative ties.

There are disagreements about how these types of networks are related. Fukuyama, for example, believes that in many cultures "there is something of a trade-off between the strength of family ties and the strength of non-kinship bounds" (Fukuyama, 1996, 91). If people are embedded in relatively closed informal networks, it might be difficult for them to generate a more open network of exchange among relative strangers (Cook, Rice, & Gerbasi, 2004), or if someone has strong associative ties that might obviate the need for other kinds of social relationships (Pitchler & Wallace, 2007). Also Portes (1998) warns that private networks can often compensate or even replace associative ties, and Howard (2003) makes a similar argument in reference to post-communist countries. However, Florian Pitchler and Claire Wallace (2007) have found in their analysis of 27 European countries, that the relationship between what they call "formal" and "informal social capital" is not so straight-forward. They argue that there are different "social capital regimes" — ones that are high on both forms of social capital (complementarity) and others where informal social capital substitutes for formal social capital (substitution).

Informal networks of cooperation and reciprocity are particularly valuable for their members, when formal institutional agreements are failing to provide the necessary support, and the economical as well as the social spheres are poorly organized (Rose, 1999 ; Letki & Evans, 2005). It is commonly assumed that precisely for these reasons the use of informal networks became so crucial and widespread in Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) during the Communist times. As Coleman (1990) says, the less people need each other and call for each others help, the less social capital is generated. On the other hand, some of the recent studies seem to be challenging this view. Instead of 'crowding out', the welfare state supports and encourages the development of social capital (Pitchler & Wallace, 2007 ; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Letki and Evans (2005) reconcile these conflicting approaches by suggesting that trust, reciprocity and cooperation should be endogenised, and that the relationship between them and institutional quality is curvilinear.

Acknowledging the inconsistency and contradictions in definitions and approaches

to social capital, several authors have recently tried to classify the different approaches to social capital. According to Martin Paldam (2000), there is the rational choice approach which is more economic — one focuses on individual strategies; the network approach, which is more sociological — one focuses on civic associations; the institutional approach, which is more political science related focuses on institutions of social capital. In principle, the same kind of categories were distinguished by Woolcock and Narayan (2000), with the addition of the synergy view. The synergy view tries not only to notice the differences but also the similarities and potential complementaries of these approaches. It acknowledges that states, firms, and communities alone do not possess the resources needed to promote broad-based, sustainable development; complementarity and partnerships forged both within and across these different sectors are required. The state's role in facilitating positive developmental outcomes is the most important and problematic, as the state is the ultimate provider of public goods and the final arbiter and enforcer of the rule of law, property rights, freedom of speech and association. Woolcock (1998) shows a range of possible development outcomes depending on different types and combinations of community capacity and state function. Among the advantages of this approach one can mention also that, if social capital research is often focusing only on horizontal relations, this approach equally acknowledges the vertical linkages and the relations between actors at different positions of power. Contrary to the communitarian perspective (Putnam, for instance), the synergy view also recognizes both the positive and negative outcomes that social capital can generate. In this respect Margaret Levi (1996) distinguished between "social" versus "antisocial" capital.

It is not my intention here to argue about the definition issues, moreover, to cause further confusion by introducing my personal one. I also won't try to prove or reject any of the theoretical interpretations, but rather to use them as basis for my empirical research. The synergy view seems to be the most appropriate for my needs, for I looked at social capital in relation to the public, where individuals benefit from the broader involvement in the society. I would agree with Woolcock's position that "social capital refers to the norms and networks that facilitate collective action" (Woolcock, 2000, 25). Similar definition was recently offered by Putnam. He defines social capital as "social networks and the norms of reciprocity associated with them" (Putnam, 2002, 3).

Apart from what has been said by Woolcock on the synergy view, I would argue

that social actors that take part in these interactions are not only individuals, but also groups and organizations. It is possible to be associated/ to have relations with institutions, to cooperate with institutions, to have trust in them and not in somebody in particular who is working for them. Thus disregarding the state-society relations just a 'special case' of the bonding social capital, insisting that individuals engage vertically with the individuals in the positions of power, and disregarding that these individuals are, in fact, just representing a particular organization (see Woolcock, 2000) does not seem to correspond well to the very idea of 'synergy'. Peter Evans (1996), one of the primary contributors to synergy view, believes that synergy between government and citizen action is based on complementarity and embeddedness — complementarity refers to mutually supportive relations between public and private actors and is exemplified in legal frameworks, and embeddedness — to the nature and extent of the ties connecting citizens and public officials. The distinguishing aspect of the definition offered by Woolcock is that it is quite broad. It merges the 'macro' or 'micro' level and effectively gets rid of the necessity to strictly differentiate between the 'collective' or 'individual' level social capital (see Portes, 2000), thus it does not require the assumption that individuals should somehow act without considering their own personal gains and needs. At the same time we should not forget that individuals will treat one group of people differently than the other, and will be more likely to cooperate with some than with the others (Fukuyama, 2001 ; Portes, 2000). In fact, the so called 'bonded solidarity' (see Portes, 1998) is often achieved at the expense of suspicion, contempt or even demonization of another group or groups, as, for example, in case of 'Russophobia' in Latvia at the beginning of the 90-ies. The 'radius of trust' that Fukuyama (2001) talks about can be limited to just the closes group of friends or family, or be more inclusive and stretch across wider group of people.

3.4   Social networks in post-communist countries

During the last few decades the use and meaning of interpersonal networks has received particularly close attention in the context of post-communist CEE (Letki, 2009 ; Letki & Evans, 2005 ; Howard, 2003 ; Ledeneva, 1998 ; Paldam & Svendsen, 2000 ; Rose-Ackerman, 2001, among others). The main conclusions point to the role of social networks as a means of compensating for the shortages and inefficiencies of formal institutions.

One of the key legacies of communism, according to Jowitt (1992), is the conflict

between the "public" and the "private":

> "Most communist citizens developed a cautious relationship to public and
> formal activities. Private relations, in contrast, became even more vibrant
> and meaningful, since people could only speak openly in front of others they
> knew and trusted, and also because connections took on an important role in
> the shortage economy, where people had to rely on their family, friends, and
> acquaintances in order to get things done, rather than going through official
> channels" (Jowitt, 1992, 36).

Jowitt's argument was further developed in works of Ledeneva (1998), Rose (1999), Howard (2003). The situation in post-communist CEE is best characterized by Cook et al. (2004) who conclude that networks "filled the void left by institutions". They became the primary source of access to services and valuable information. On the basis of in-depth interviews Ledeneva (1998) concluded that blat and exchange of favours within a tight personal network became the key element of informal reciprocity mechanism in post-communist Russia. Unlike in Western countries, asking somebody for help and using contacts to get something done was natural and completely acceptable, and turning to your acquaintances first, instead of institutions, developed into a strong habit.

The fall of communism created an environment characterized by high uncertainty, institutional weakness and unpredictability (Rose-Ackerman, 2001 ; Letki & Evans, 2005 ; Howard, 2003 ; Rose, 1999), combined with rapid economic polarisation of social groups. While uncertainty imposes commitment formation in order to reduce exchange risks, it simultaneously reduces the overall level of exchange in networks. Under high levels of uncertainty, actors tend to invest less heavily in their exchange relations (Cook et al., 2004, 198), as the returns are not guaranteed. Accordingly, they do less favours to each other, especially to those who are not part of their "affective network".

The general "weakness of civil society" in post-communist Europe has been linked to both the lack of trust in official institutions, as well as to the strength of informal ties that allow to achieve ends without wasting resources on collective action and shared goods (Howard, 2003, see also Paldam & Svendsen, 2000 ; Rose, 1999). According to Jowitt, social fragmentation led people — elites and ordinary citizens alike — to think primarily in terms of narrow individual self-interest, rather than about the larger public good (c.f., Howard, 2006). Post-communist legacy of general distrust and relying on

informal networks, and unwillingness to get involved in "civic", i.e. public good oriented, activities represented by voluntary organisations, has been frequently cited as one of the main obstacles against consolidating democracy in the region (Putnam et al., 1993).

3.5   Measurement and indicators of social capital

Authors who prefer the individual level approach usually analyse the structure of networks: interpersonal relations among individuals, considering the width, homogeneity and tightness of the networks as well as resources embedded in those networks and their mobilization. For example, how many people one knows personally, how different they are, how tight the relations are, how often one meets them etc. All those indicators characterize the benefits networks provide to individuals through their personal networks. Including such indicators in the analysis won't provide the necessary answers. Moreover, it can lead to misleading conclusions.

There are many examples of how social capital is being operationalized and measured in general surveys and comparative projects who analyse it at the collective level. However, in general, there are still definitely major problems in the empirical validation of the concept (for a discussion see, for example, Franke, 2005). The problems arise not just from the fact that there is no consensus regarding the definition and essence of the phenomenon. Most surveys have significant drawbacks which arise from an unclear focus and the lack of reliable indicators. Broadly speaking, there are two different approaches to measurement of social capital:

1. Most researchers try to investigate just a few aspects of social capital (most often – generalized trust and associational membership), claiming it is social capital (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Keefer & Knack, 1997, among others). The recent World Bank report "Where is the Wealth of Nations?" (Hamilton, 2006) includes social capital in the analysis, basing it on just one indicator: generalized trust. Of course, there are certain core indicators; however there is no evidence that those indicators (for example, trust or participation) reflect all the essence and complexity of social capital. Nowadays it has been argued that social capital includes many more aspects like, tolerance, openness, learning, innovation, responsibility, empowerment and many others that should be also taken on board in analysis. Using this

approach, many aspects, which might potentially be very important, are left behind.

2. Some researchers are grouping variables into complex dimensions (Letki & Evans, 2005 ; Letki, 2006 ; Bullen & Onyx, 2000 ; Narayan & Cassidy, 2001, among others. This approach might seem more reliable but by grouping variables some significant information might be lost as well. In addition, such approach still leaves doubts about how appropriate with regards to social capital these dimensions are.

One of the attempts to propose aggregate measures and complex indicators was made by Paul Bullen and Jeny Onix (2000). They propose six indicators: participation in networks; reciprocity; trust; compliance with social norms; working for common good; empowerment. The World Bank Social Capital Implementation Framework applies five indicators: groups and networks; trust and solidarity; collective action and cooperation; social cohesion and inclusion; information and communication. Sandra Franke (2005) argues that many researches have a quite common set of indicators such as: trust, civic engagement, voluntary activities, participation, giving, compliance with rules and obligations. Putnam in his essay "Bowling alone" (1995a) used indicators such as: 1) political involvement, 2) civic engagement, 3) political engagement, 4) religious involvement, 5) unions and professional associations, 6) informal social incorporation, 7) voluntarism and philanthropy, 8) trust, fairness and reciprocity. Deepa Narayan and Michael Cassidy (2001) analyse 9 social capital dimensions: engagement in informal groups, subjective feeling of wealth, political engagement, everyday sociality, involvement in the community life, ties with neighbours, ties with family members, trust and norms of justice, criminality and feeling of security. According to Coleman (1990) forms of social capital are 1) obligations and expectations; 2) informational potential; 3) norms and effective sanctions; 4) authorities relations; 5) appropriable social organization and 6) intentional organization. Sandra Franke (2005) has stressed the necessity to measure the empowerment, others suggest to measure inner norms and rules of a community, especially norms related to cultural and ethical dimensions of relationships with other members of a group. In many cases there is a strong emphasis on trust and solidarity, tolerance, social inclusion and a feeling of belonging to the group.

The approach used to measure social capital is based not just on the theoretical approach used (as discussed before) but on the current interests of the organization or the researcher as well. For example, the World Bank, developing the SOCAT instrument,

was most interested in social capital as one of the types of capital – how it influences the development potential and in particular, the effectiveness of the World Bank's development programs. The UNDP Social Capital Initiative, on contrary, was most interested in developed countries and was seeking to find out how social capital influences the quality of life, human capital, health, integration of immigrants etc. It perceived social capital as an indicator of wealth. The Public Research Institute of Canada assumes that it is precisely what should be done: "Social capital should be measured basing on integrated and strategically conceptual framework in relation with the issues of public interests" (Franke, 2005, 7). Francis Fukuyama goes as far as asserting that none of the indicators of social capital is neither measurable nor provable and that the best we can do is to try to determine it qualitatively, subjectively (Fukuyama, 2001). As it might seem useful, it opens up opportunities for political manipulations. Of course, there is hardly one "best" way of measuring social capital but it does not mean that it is impossible to estimate social capital and analyse its importance in the development of a country and effective the functioning of democracy. Moreover, it does not mean that social capital is not important. While the core of social capital has not yet been disclosed, we can analyse the relational aspects that we know are beneficial for the society.

From the literature analysis it follows hat most the social capital studies at the collective level include *norms and values* (reciprocity, tolerance, compliance to norms and laws). Other aspects are related to *practices* (participation, engagement, cooperation etc.), and *relations* (trust, solidarity, cohesion). In recent years in development studies there is an increasing attention to the *attitudes and perceptions*, like the perceptions of people regarding their own responsibility and capability: empowerment, attitude towards democracy and readiness to involve actively in the social life and take advantages of the free market economy, as theoretical arguments and also a practical approach to development processes (Figure 3.2). These concepts presume that social actors are empowered and enabled to take up solutions of their problems as well as that they are able to set innovative development targets and solutions. Unfortunately, not often are these indicators discussed in connection with social capital, and I believe they could and should get more attention from researchers of social capital in the future. As we know, social and political actions of all kinds are mediated through attitudes (Eysenck, 1999). Clearly, trust is important for cooperation, but so is the knowledge, willingness and ability of

people to actively engage and take advantage of the provided opportunities. Not only trust in people matters, but also the trust in the meaningfulness and positive outcome of the cooperation. For example, if the society is in a state of depression – when the people are unhappy, unsatisfied with their life and do not feel they can do something about it, they will be less likely to participate in many activities, help others etc. (Bullen & Onyx, 2000). Also openness to changes is good for "building bridges" across communities and groups of people, it facilitates learning, expressing and spreading of new ideas, risk-taking, adopting new ways of action, being more creative and trying new things. People can be generally nice, have good relationships, care about each other and the country, but if they are not ready to act actively and take the chances, to participate in the building of their own future, it can hinder both economic development and the functioning of democracy.
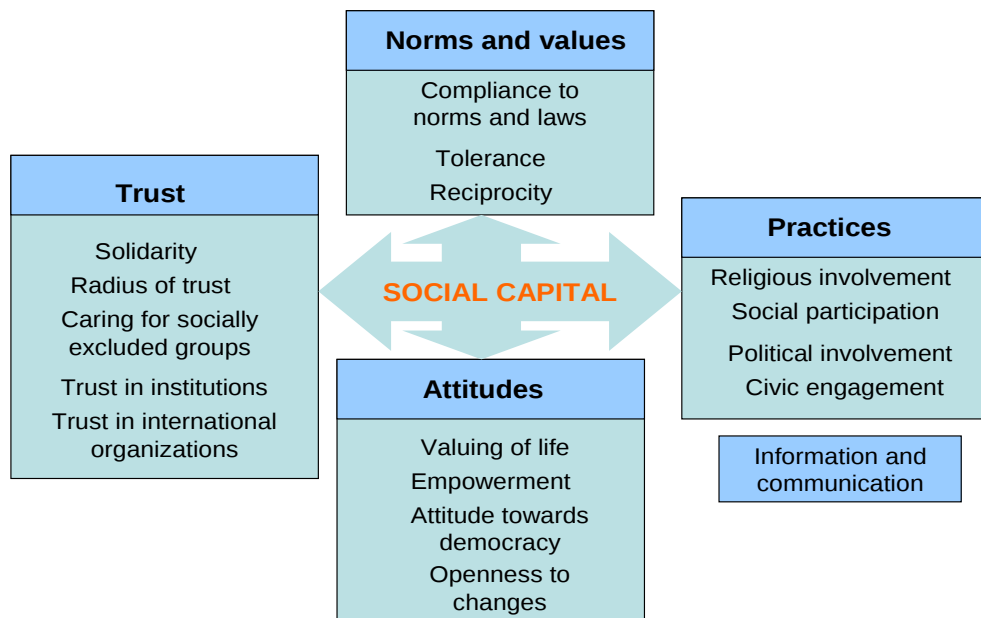
Figure 3.2: **The dimensions of social capital**

There is uncertainty in the literature regarding which are the sources of social capital and which — its outcomes (an obvious example being trust). Putnam (1993) puts trust, networks and civic society at the heart of civil society, yet Fukuyama (1996) suggests that all of them are epiphenomenal — a result of social capital but do not constitute it. Another inconvenience can be observed in discussions about what social capital is and what it does (as, for instance, in the case of compliance to norms). Partly the problem here is related to whether we analyse social capital as norms, values, perceptions and attitudes (what is in the peoples heads) or actions, participation, networks, etc. (what are they

actually doing). According to recent studies, attitudes significantly and substantially predict future behaviour (Inglehart, 1997, 51-2). Thus, in reality, one should correspond to the other.

From the definition that "social capital refers to the norms and networks that facilitate collective action" (Woolcock, 2000, 25) it follows that social capital is multidimensional. It has its structural elements that describe the cooperative networks to which an individual belongs (membership in organizations, associations, networks) as well as cognitive elements which basically describe the cooperative predisposition of the individual (attitudes, norms, values, reciprocity, trust) (Krishna & Uphoff, 1999 ; Stolle, 2003). Some other scholars differentiate 'networks' and 'norms' or 'the quantitative' or 'the qualitative' aspects of social capital (Rothstein, 2004). To make matters easier, in the following chapters I will refer to 'structural social capital' and 'cognitive social capital'.

The most commonly used social capital indicators, in particular, when talking about the 'bridging social capital' are the generalized trust (representing cognitive social capital) and membership in voluntary organizations (representing structural social capital). However, Welzel et.al. (2005) argue that besides membership in voluntary associations we should not neglect other forms of community involvement, such as participation in elite-challenging actions.

Associational membership and network participation as major social capital indicators have their roots in the works of Putnam, while generalized trust has been established as mainstream indicator partly due to extensive use in World Values Surveys that allow to assess and compare the levels of social capital in different countries. In most cros-national surveys it is usually measured on the basis of one question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" However, recently some scientists (e.g., Zmerli et al., 2007) have questioned whether it can be considered appropriate for measuring generalized (or particularized) trust.

A number of studies (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Fukuyama, 1996 ; Knack, 2002 ; Keefer & Knack, 1997, among others) have come to a conclusion that trust and civic cooperation, the main indicators of social capital, are clearly associated with stronger economic performance. With regards to political performance they have been identified as related to democracy and democratic stability (Almond & Verba, 1963 ; Inglehart,

1997 ; Putnam et al., 1993). Generalized trust is known to have a significant impact on various participatory attitudes and behavior.

Generalized trust as an indicator of social capital only makes sense if we look at social capital at the collective level, as discussed before. The fact that you care about people and trust somebody does not give you personally any advantages, rather makes you more vulnerable to fraud and other crimes and increases your expenses; the fact that you are trusted and cared about does. The relations are not always both-sided and there are always 'free-riders'. As Herreros (2004) puts it, it is easy to see a community characterised by high levels of social trust as community of "suckers" who are easily to exploit. However, there are several reasons why trust matters.

First, we can not really say that trust is necessary for cooperation. There are different situations that require different level of trust, depending on perceived risks, available enforcement mechanisms, motivation and goals etc. (Gambetta, 2000 ; Ermish & Gambetta, 2010). For example, the trust that we have in someone doing X does not necessarily extend to trust in that same person doing Y. (Ermish & Gambetta, 2010, 4). In many cases cooperation can be ensued through coercion or threats, however, such strategy is not without costs. A lot of resources are to be spent on monitoring and enforcing cooperation, and it is never possible to control everything. Thus cooperation without trust becomes both expensive and inefficient. It is easier, more efficient and less costly to do business with someone you trust, for it reduces the need to monitor compliance or develop enforcement mechanisms (Fukuyama, 1996 ; Arrow, 1972 ; Herreros, 2004). Reciprocity involves even more 'risk' than formal arrangements, thus taking those risks in a society requires trust in others (Luhmann, 1988). Society in which those trustful attitudes and norms prevail, serves in itself as a guarantee that the reciprocity will be repaid – if not from the person that gets the help, than from the other members of society. In a way, one could look at it as a multi-player prisoners dilemma, just a more complicated version. However, as mentioned by Fukuyama (2001) cooperative norms can develop not just directly from experience, but also arise as a byproduct of religion, tradition etc.

Trust is considered crucial for human behaviour (Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Dasgupta, 1988). For example, people will only have the confidence to contribute to provision of collective goods, if they trust others to also pay their share (Gambetta, 2000 ; Uslaner, 1999 ; Howard, 2003). For example, one has to believe that he would not be the only

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'fool' to waste their time in voluntary organizations, demonstrations, risk their jobs in strikes, or to not gain from dishonest actions.

How honest and trustworthy one will act also depends on what honesty we expect from others (Dasgupta, 1988). Thus, in an indirect way, trust is also a measure of moral behaviour, that is, obeying rules and laws. This assumption, however, has been questioned by Ermish and Gambetta (2010). According to Putnam, someone who displays social trust will do favors for unknown people without expecting something immediately in return, hoping that they or another unknown person will reciprocate in the future (Putnam, 2000).

The main criticism with regards to the 'generalized trust' measure, is that it is not clear which 'people' respondents have in mind (e.g., Keefer & Knack, 1997). In my view, it would be wrong to imagine generalized trust as trust in some average person one meets, for example, on the street. When people meet they immediately classify each other according to number of social categories (Good, 1988). Any kind of additional information, for example, about persons' demographics (like, a Turk, a women, a foreigner, a black person, a student etc.) automatically generates different level of trust. Thus, the trust is 'generalized' more to some than others. As Uslaner puts it: "We won't trust 'most people'"(Uslaner, 1999, 216). For this reason the cleavages in the society, social cohesion and the bridging solidarity should be measured too. Unfortunately, as noted by Fukuyama (2001) there is no accepted method for measuring the internal cohesiveness of groups.

Finally, it would be more useful to look at generalized trust as an indicator of confident expectations that most others will have benign intentions and act cooperatively in prisoner's dilemma contexts (Keefer & Knack, 1997 ; Gambetta, 2000). Nowadays trust usually describes having a confidence or faith in others, and being able to rely upon them. Russell Hardin defines it in a little broader terms. According to him, trust exists when A believes B will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, at worst, and will try to act in his interest and protect him, at best" (Hardin, 1999, 24). Zmerli et.al (2007) argue that "I trust people when I think they will keep their word, and not mug, cheat, harm, lie to me, and exploit me. To trust means risking my interests in the hands of others" (Zmerli et al., 2007, 38). The decision to trust or not to trust, according to Herreros (2004) is rational. If you trust, it is because you think that other people are trustworthy.

Thus, Herreros (2004) argues, you can not simply decide to trust somebody to reduce social uncertainty. Trust is an expectation, not a decision. Partha Dasgupta (1988) uses the word 'trust' in the sense of correct expectations about the actions of other people that have a bearing on one's own choice of action when that action must be chosen before one can monitor the actions of those others. Also Herreros defines social trust as "trust in unknown people, that is, in people about whom we do not have any information about their trustworthiness" (Herreros, 2004, 13).

Besides generalized trust (which is essentially an abstract construct) the literature on social capital also talks about specific trust in some specific people one knows personally. There is 'thick' trust between members of the same tribe, and 'thin' trust between members of the same voluntary associations and community organizations (Mitzal, 1996). I have not looked at these other measures of trust here in this thesis, for I did not have this type of data, nor did I consider them useful for my needs [2].

In political realm we are talking about institutional or political trust. In contemporary societies political trust might be even more important than interpersonal trust, as in highly individualized societies citizens tend to rely on institutions rather than collectivities. However, several authors have pointed to the fact that interpersonal or social trust is different from political trust (Putnam, 1995b ; Newton, 1999 ; Uslaner, 2002). According to Zmerli et.al.,

> "confidence in an institution entails the belief that it will not act in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner that is harmful to our interests or the nation's, but will treat us, and other citizens, equally, fairly and justly" (Zmerli et al., 2007, 41).

Participation in associations can be considered the structural indicator of the existence of stocks of social capital (Morales & Geurts, 2007). The 'structural' part of social capital which directly relates to associational membership, is usually analyzed by political scientists just from the perspective of political participation. On contrary, in social capital theory, participation in political parties, organizations and political actions is often analysed just as one of the forms of voluntary activities – among organizations

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[2]The specific trust measures would had been more appropriate if I had used, for example, the name generator or network analysis at the micro level

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such as religious groups, women's groups, professional associations etc.[3] Many surveys during the past decades have demonstrated how social capital can improve the economic performance. Yet, there is still much uncertainty about the contribution of social capital to the political performance of a democratic society. Putnam and other communitarians (Etzioni, 1993 ; Burtt, 1993, among others) have promoted the positive role of social capital in establishing vibrant civil society and improving the performance of democratic institutions, however the evidence is not always clear and, as discussed before, is often disputed.

Also, the importance and use of social capital has been proved to vary from country to country (and even from community to community), influenced by both historical and social pretext. What is essential in one country could have considerably less effect or be not adequate in another. The other difficulty in social capital studies arises from the fact that it is very difficult to separate the effects of social capital from the effects of different side-factors (economical, institutional, political, social etc.). In fact, they are often complimentary. Social capital can not be effectively used for problem solving if there is a shortage of other forms of capitals: economic, human, financial, and natural. And vice versa —- social capital best unfolds its potential if there exist synergies between different capitals (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). The context, in which the development of the post-communist countries began after the collapse of the Soviet Union and other communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe, was similar. Natural, physical and human resources were similar, all of the countries encountered the necessity to adjust to the new conditions and faced the same problems: a crisis of values, political transformations, economical crisis, privatization, depletion of human capital etc. However, the economic performance of post-communist countries still has been visibly different. The Czech Republic and Slovenia have become very successful, the Baltic States started noticeable recover only recently, after joining European Union, while for most people in Ukraine, for instance, the standard of living is still worse than during the Soviet regime. There are differences even within the Baltic States — in Latvia the transition was very painful, while Estonia recovered relatively quickly. The analysis of social capital with regards to the functioning of democracy and the institutions of civil society, may explain some of the differences.

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[3]One of the examples is Putnam's instrument which measures the density of voluntary associations in the society.

3.6 'Top–down' and 'bottom–up' explanations of the creation of social capital

Acknowledging the importance of social capital, many authors have tried to measure and compare its levels between communities or countries. However, it does not mean much if there is still much uncertainty about the sources of social capital. How can it be built or destroyed? What can or should be the role of the government and other public and private institutions? These issues bear a particular importance with regard to the policy recommendations. Unfortunately, as noted by Dietlind Stolle (2003), until recently they have all but been neglected and ask for further investigation. The theories offered for explanation of the origins of social capital are best summarized by Marc Hooghe and Dietlind Stolle (2003), and they classify them into two broad groups: (1) the society-centred and (2) the institution-cented approach. As I offer here (see Introduction) my own classification of theories, I will not go into more detail about their classification, but structure the previous findings into the new scheme.

Interpersonal trust is shown to be positively related to trust in institutions (Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Schyns & Nuus, 2007 ; Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Denters et al., 2007 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Badescu & Neller, 2005, for post-communist countries – Catterberg & Moreno, 2006. There are, however, disagreements and an ongoing debate between scientists about the direction of linkages. Some (e.g., Brehm & Rahn, 1997) believe they lead from political trust to social trust, while others (e.g., Schyns & Nuus, 2007) hold the opposite view.

From the social capital perspective, trust is learned in everyday interactions with people: in family, school, workplace, sports clubs, community groups, civic associations etc. people get to know each other better, learn to trust each other and reciprocate, acquire self-confidence, responsiveness and other civic values. These values then are projected onto the institutions and result in better informed, more engaged, efficacious, politically active and democratically responsible citizens (Putnam et al., 1993 ; Putnam, 2000 ; Uslaner, 2002 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Herreros, 2004 ; Pateman, 1975 ; Morales & Geurts, 2007). According to Uslaner (2002), trusting citizens foster good government, for they endorse stronger standards of moral behaviour. The role of the public institutions in the development of social capital, on the other hand, is limited. This perspective is supported by findings from the field of psychology that says that attitudes and habits are both

"learned modifications of the nervous system" (Eysenck 1999:265). It also corresponds to findings of game theory and evolutionary approach (Gambetta, 2000) that says that trust and cooperative attitudes develop when we get to know each other better.

Scholars representing the institutional view argue that institutions have a very important role in facilitating the creation of social trust, and that institutional trust 'tickles down' to interpersonal trust, rather than the other way around (Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Uslaner, 2002 ; Rothstein, 2004 ; Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Stolle, 2003 ; Badescu & Neller, 2005 ; Denters et al., 2007 ; Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Levi, 1996). Among others, Mishler and Rose (2005) have recently shown on the basis of SEM that interpersonal trust has no effect on trust in institutions in Russia. The relations go the other way around – from institutional to interpersonal trust.

The role of political institutions in promoting civil society and civic attitudes has been discussed by political scientists long ago, already by John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. Yet the adoption of these ideas into the field of social capital has happened only recently, with the rise of the institutional approach in social capital theory. Until recently, the role of the state in the creation and maintenance of social capital has been neglected and, as noted by Herreros (2004: 72), there are more references to the role of the state in undermining social capital than statements to the contrary. In general, the supporters of institutional approach argue that social capital is a dependent variable that can be influenced 'from above'. Political institutions can influence generalized values such as trust and reciprocity, and the vitality of community networks and civil society is largely a product of the political, legal, and institutional environment (Levi, 1996 ; Rothstein, 2004, among others). "When people feel that their governments treat them fairly, they will also believe that their fellow citizens are trustworthy" (Uslaner, 2002, 219). From this perspective, governments, institutions and policies are shaping the very capacity of citizens to form cooperative networks and develop cooperative attitudes (North, 1990 ; Skocpol, 1999b ; Keefer & Knack, 1997 ; Gambetta, 2000 ; Levi, 1996 ; Tarrow, 1996). Even Putnam (2002) in his latest works acknowledges that the state can encourage or discourage the formation of social capital. Some authors (e.g., Gibson, 2001 ; Howard, 2003) stress that under communism the repressive istitutions of the state played a crucial role in destroying trust. The weakness of the institutional approach, as noted by Michael Woolcock and Deepa Narayan (2000) is that it lacks a microeconomic component. Another

problem is that it is not clear how exactly the influence proceeds. According to the literature, there may be several mechanisms.

First mechanism is the influence by the policies of the government, for example, promoting growth and education, reducing poverty and inequality, securing property rights and public safety, creating favourable conditions for emergence of voluntary organizations etc. (Uslaner, 2003 ; Woolcock, 2000 ; Keefer & Knack, 1997 ; Putnam, 2002 ; Fukuyama, 2001 ; Herreros, 2004). This might also be the reason why people tend to participate more in associations in countries with larger Welfare States (Herreros, 2004). Font et.al (2007) have specifically analysed how the governments may foster and encourage voluntary activity through tax incentives and special legal provisions. They can also provide direct financial support, give them grants, subsidies, tax breaks etc. This, according to Herreros (2004) is a direct state action in favour of participation in associations. However, also an indirect action is possible – the institutionalization of certain associations. Maloney and Rossteuscher (2007), for example, mention patronage of groups and the contracting out of certain service functions as an important instrument how to encourage greater citizen participation. Most of the empirical research so far has focused on this aspect of creating social capital, as it seems easy to use the findings for practical policy recommendations. However, some scholars believe that the impact of the government's actions stretches far outside the pure policy-related issues.

The second mechanism concerns the trust in the efficiency of the government with regards to enforcing the contracts, ensuring that people observe the law, and protecting the rights of citizens. If an individual believes that the government is fair and effective in enforcing contracts, and are confident that those who do not play by the rules will be punished, it increases his trust in other people, and he will expect them to comply with the rules (Dasgupta, 1988 ; Gambetta, 2000 ; Rothstein, 2001 ; Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Herreros, 2004), state sanctions (positive or negative) help to solve the collective action problem, balancing the gains and losses from non-cooperation. According to Partha Dasgupta (1988), the threat of punishment must be credible (else the threat is no threat) therefore the enforcement agency must itself be trustworthy. Corruption is probably the best indicator of the efficiency of the state in enforcing contracts, thus, not surprisingly, Herreros (2004) found that in 12 countries he surveyed it is one of the determinants of social trust.

The third mechanism concerns the socializing role of institutions. By setting a personal example, the government sends signals to citizens about what kind of 'game' is being played in the society, what kind of attitudes and behaviour is rewarded and expected in this society (Levi, 1998). Unfortunately, there is not much literature yet on this socializing aspect of the government performance, and Putnam (2002) believes that it is one of the questions that have been under-researched. Only recently some studies have begun to appear (Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein & Stolle, 2003 ; Rothstein, 2004). On the example of Sweden, Stolle discovers that people make inferences about their system experiences and extend them to everyone else living under the same system — those who have experienced the effects of the dishonesty of politicians, institutional unfairness and unresponsiveness, transfer those experiences and views to people who are not personally known. Similar logics is promoted by Rothstein (2004) who considers corruption of the authorities as a main source of social distrust. According to him, in order to act in a society where corruption, bribery and various forms of nepotism is systematic, citizens must also begin to take part in bribery, corruption and nepotism, even though they may consider it morally wrong (Rothstein, 2004). Thus, they will contribute to further loss of trust among people and a special type of political and administrative culture. From this perspective, reducing corruption can produce more interpersonal trust. This view is challenged by Uslaner and Badescu who argue that "there is sporadic (at best) evidence that corruption by elites in former communist countries may lead to less trust in others" (Badescu & Neller, 2005, 33). According to them, there is even *less evidence* that petty corruption — payments or "gifts" to service providers – leads people to lose faith in their fellow citizens [4]. These authors favour the opposite link, arguing that "strong legal systems *depend upon trust*; they do not produce it" (Badescu & Neller, 2005, 37). Trusting people are endorsing stronger standards of moral behaviour (Uslaner, 1999). Using VWS 1996 data, they come to a surprising conclusion that the correlation between trust and corruption are strongest when corruption is lowest. If there is a lot of corruption, people do not make a link between corruption (the domain of elites) and trust in people (Badescu & Neller, 2005). In Romania, for example, according to VWS, there is no correlation between generalized trust and perception of corruption.

On other hand, the character of political system also influences the behaviours

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[4]Badescu et Neller (2005) distinguish between small-scale and large-scale corruption.

and experiences of citizens directly, thus the connection might run through the political institutions influencing the behaviour of people first, which leads to re-evaluation of interpersonal relations and trust (Rothstein & Stolle, 2003). If citizens feel that they are not treated fairly and respectfully by the authorities and politicians, their self-esteem will be negatively influenced, which in turn shapes how they deal with strangers and other people who are not known (Tyler, 2006) and this, in turn, will lower the trust within the society.

Nevertheless, a number of scientists have recently argued that the correlation between interpersonal and political confidence is, in fact, often week and insignificant (Newton, 1999 ; Kase, 1999 ; Uslaner, 2003 ; Zmerli et al., 2007, for post-communist countries – Mishler & Rose, 2001, 2005 ; Letki, 2004). Among others, Zmerli et al. (2007) argue that strangely only week and patchy associations between social trust and political confidence have been uncovered at the individual level by the survey research.

At the same time an increasing number of studies have questioned if there is any significant link between interpersonal and institutional trust (Newton, 1999 ; Uslaner, 2003; for post-communist countries — Mishler & Rose, 2001). Some other studies (Brehm & Rahn, 1997 ; Schyns & Nuus, 2007 ; Zmerli, 2004 ; Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Denters et al., 2007, among others), however, argue that the positive correlation is substantial. This concusion is strongly supported by CID data. Denters et.al (2007) found that social trust is relevant for explaining political and institutional confidence, even after controls for other relevant variables. Similarly, Zmerli et.al (2007) found that social trust, along with satisfaction with democracy, are the strongest predictors of confidence in institutions in all 13 surveyed countries. They argue that the reason why previous research has not shown a consistently strong association between social trust and political confidence at the individual level seems to be a combination of poor indicators and short rating scales. Also cross-national empirical results, based on data of ESS 2003 confirm the strong and consistent relationship between social trust and political confidence at the individual level in 21 European countries (Zmerli, 2004). Rothstein (2004) has provided further evidence by proving that in Sweden personal experiences of selective, needs-testing welfare institutions undermine interpersonal trust, while experiences of universal institutions tend to increase it, thus trust depends on perception of how fair is the treatment by officials. Also Uslaner and Badescu (2004) came to similar conclusions regarding Romania. Finally,

Gabriela Catterberg and Alejandro Moreno (2005) found that in former Soviet republics political trust is influenced by social capital (interpersonal trust).

The conflicting accounts suggest that Valerie Braithwaite (1998) is right, and we indeed need to try to understand the causal mechanisms between interpersonal trust, collective action, civil society and trust in government institutions better.

4 Methodology

4.1 Cohort analysis

If we consider the arguments made by Inglehart (1997) about intergenerational replacement as the main source of change, an obvious choice for exploring the effects of cultural inheritance of political attitudes is cohort analysis.

> "Cultural theory implies that a culture cannot be changed overnight. If basic cultural change does occur, it will take place more readily among younger groups (where it does not need to overcome the resistance of inconsistent early learning) than among older ones, resulting in intergenerational differences (Inglehart 1997:19)."

The method seeks to explain a dependent variable (the outcome) through exploitation of differences between cohorts (in my case — birth cohorts), as well as differences across two other temporal dimensions: 'age' (time since system entry) and 'period' (times when an outcome is measured) (Mason & Wolfinger, 2001). Thus, it seeks to detect three different effects that explain attitudinal change or stability: a cohort (or generation) effect, a period effect and a life cycle (or age) effect. The *cohort (generational) effect* occurs when a sizable number of people in their formative years (late adolescence and early adulthood) are exposed to similar, significant social forces, live through similar, significant social events during their formative years (Sears, 1990 ; Sztompka, 1998 ; Camões & Mendes, 2002 ; Gimpel et al., 2003). The generation is expected to carry the impact of this event through the life cycle. The prevalence of the cohort effect means that some attitudes reflect consistent and enduring generational differences and are hardly changed by specific political events. The prevalence of the *age (life-cycle) effect* would mean that the political skills simply change with age or that people tend to have particular dispositions

at certain life stages [1]

Mathematically, knowledge of results of any two of age, period, and cohort effects determines the result of the third, i.e., each is completely defined in terms of the other two (Mason & Wolfinger, 2001). This dependency can be expressed as

$$\text{Cohort} = \text{Period} - \text{Age}$$

The major problem and the main basis for critique of cohort analysis is that the linear dependency of the three dimensions always creates the so called *"identification problem"*, making distinguishing between the effects very difficult.[2] Different methods that try to explore the relations between the three dimensions and the observed, dependent variable have been proposed (see Mason & Wolfinger, 2001 ; Glenn, 2005). An other critique is the fact that the analysis tracks the aggregate attitudes of an entire birth cohort, thus, we can not really speak about the stability of attitudes of *individuals* (Sears, 1990).

Different methods that try to explore the relations between the three dimensions and the observed, dependent variable are proposed in the literature. The simplest of them is the *nominal approach*, where a simple cross-table of the dependent variable by age group and survey year is made. Age groups are formed, to include the same number of years, as in the intervals between survey years (For a survey, where each wave comes after 5 years, five year age groups are appropriate). Then percentages (or scores) of the dependent variable by rows, columns, and diagonals, are examined for patterns that would point to the prevalence of one or more of these three effects. However, a visual inspection of diagonals can not be taken as definite evidence for a cohort effect. First, it lacks any statistical proof. Second, even if it looks that there is no cohort effect, it might be obscured by effects of age and period. Nowadays researchers often prefer the Mason, Mason, Winsborough and Poole (MMWP) method. However, as with the nominal method, grouping of the 'age' variable immediately implies strong assumptions about the structure of the data[3], and can obscure some of the effects. Moreover, this method is

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[1]For example, youth is more tended to radicalism and older people — to conservatism (Sears, 1990).

[2]For more detailed analysis of advantages and problems of cohort analysis and other methods used to assess the persistence of attitudes see Sears, 1990 ; Converse, 1976.

[3]In case a graphical examination is preferred to a table, the breadth of the time interval that defines membership in a particular cohort is usually determined by analytic considerations and the nature of the phenomenon under study (Mason & Wolfinger, 2001).

not the best for my needs, as it is it suited for surveys with more survey waves than just two. The same problems refer to the use of multilevel regressions with clustered data that have recently been gaining popularity (see Neundorf, 2010 ; Mishler & Rose, 2007, among others). The distinction between generations is relatively arbitrary, and moreover — different grouping may yield different results. A promising approach, according to William Mason and Nicholas Wolfinger (2001), is the hierarchical Bayes approach. The model includes both age, period, and cohort, as well as interactions between these dimensions. However, it looks for linear relations between age, cohort, period and measured variables, whereas I expect the relations to be non-linear. On the basis of Generalized Additive Modeling Neundorf (2010) finds that with regards to attitudes towards democracy the effect is indeed non-linear. Therefore, my analysis is based on an original cohort analysis technique that was developed specifically for this study.

As we see, cohort analysis has been quite popular in political socialization research, although it usually takes a very simplistic form. It was also used by Torcal and Montero (1999) in their analysis of the entrenched cultural heritage of distrust transmitted from generation to generation in Spain. There have been some recent developments in the techniques of cohort analysis (Glenn, 2005), however to this day there is no single best solution. Moreover, the classical solutions usually require longer time series. I would like to contribute to the debate by developing an original, statistically strong and simple-to-use cohort analysis model for two-waves studies. It is my hope that it can serve as an effective and simple-to-use tool for further studies in the field.

Estimating age effects

Within a single wave of study both cohort and age effects would manifest as gradual changes in attitude depending on the age of respondents. Therefore, so as not to confuse the matters, I will further refer to age effect as "life-cycle effect". Also, there is usually no reason to assume that the relation of a parameter to age should be linear. Therefore, some form of nonparametric regression seems to be most appropriate to recover the relationship of a parameter to age.

The data I used is in ordinal scale, with possible answer values ranging from 1 to 5. Although I performed a principal component analysis and combined more than one question per factor, the scale was still too 'coarse' to allow for statistical inference on a nonparametric regression model. To overcome this difficulty, I first calculated the weighted

averages of answers over the ages of respondents. I then used local linear regression to construct a smooth estimate of the parameter-age relationship. Although I typically had only just over 10 observations for any given age, the distribution of the residuals was reasonably close to normal. For choosing smoothing parameter α I relied on the assumption of smoothly changing attitudes. In practice, I found $\alpha = 0.40$ to give the most reasonable estimates.[4] Overall, the particular choice of the smoothing parameter does not have a great effect on the conclusions drawn.

We needed some way of telling whether the relationships indicated by local linear regression were not only due to variance in the data. I estimated this by the amount of variance in the average parameter values by year that was explained by the regression. I used a version of a coefficient of determination, which in essence is analogous to the R^2 of linear regression. I simply define:

$$R^2 = \frac{\text{Explained sum of squares}}{\text{Total sum of squares}}.$$

It must be noted, however, that this kind of coefficient can be used only as a guide. I assumed models with values of R^2 of at least about 0.30 to be satisfactory for my analysis. There are really two possible explanations of a low R^2 value. Either the variance in the data is very high, or the regression line is very flat. Either way, lower R^2 values render the relationships less likely to yield good results.

To be able to compare two or more graphs of this estimator, I had to consider the effects of chance that affected my results. To judge whether a difference in graphs was statistically significant, I constructed simultaneous confidence bands for the estimators. For given confidence level $0 \leqslant \alpha \leqslant 1$ these bands represent the area around the estimated value that *fully* contains the real mean of the interest parameter at a given age with probability α. More formally, for a smooth estimate of a parameter of interest $\mu(a)$, where a is the age of a respondent, the simultaneous confidence bands are bounding functions of the form $\varphi_1(a) < \mu(a) < \varphi_2(a)$, such that for a given confidence level α

$$P(\forall a : \varphi_1(a) \leqslant \mu(a) \leqslant \varphi_2(a)) = \alpha,$$

where $P(A)$ represents the probability of event A. To compare two graphs we simply have to construct simultaneous confidence bands for one of the graphs and if there is

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[4]While it could be argued that we should have used an automatic selection process (say, cross validation scores) for finding the optimal smoothing parameter, in my case an understanding of the underlying dynamics should be a better guide (see Beck & Jackman, 1998 for elaboration).

some interval on the other graph that is outside the confidence bands of the first, we can conclude that the graphs are different for confidence level α. Practically, I provided confidence bands for both graphs as illustrated (Wasserman, 2007 ; Loader, 1999).

Disentangling cohort, age and period effects

The following section is written with two wave data in mind. If one has data gathered in more than two waves, some slight modifications to the proposed methods are necessary. Since the data available to me is a two wave study, I will not discuss the necessary modifications in this thesis.

We needed to determine whether there were age and/or cohort effects in the data and which effects caused which changes in attitude. While the first part of the question is easily answered – if we find that age has an effect on a parameter, we have to conclude that there is at least either an age or a cohort effect. The real problem is to tell them apart. This is obviously impossible if we only have a single wave of data. If we have two or more waves of data, on the other hand, we also have to consider the period effect, since the overall attitudes might have changed in the time between the studies.

I assumed that both cohort and life-cycle effects were smooth functions dependent on the age and year of birth of a respondent. I also assumed that the total observed effect of the life-cycle, the cohort and the period on parameter E , could be explained within the additive model:

$$E(p, a, c) = F_P(p) + F_A(a) + F_C(c), \tag{4.1}$$

where p is the year of the survey wave (the period), a is the age of the respondent and c is the year of birth of the respondent (the cohort). The functions F_A and F_C are assumed to be smooth and representative of the life-cycle and cohort effects, respectively. F_P is a function representing the period effect.

Since I had only two waves of study, I could rewrite (4.1) for the waves as dependent only on the age of the respondent. If the waves are performed in the years y_1 and y_2, respectively, I denote $p_1 = F_P(y_1)$ and $p_2 = F_P(y_2)$. If we also denote $f_A(a) = F_A(a)$ and $f_C(a) = F_C(y_1 - a)$, then we can express the effects on parameter E in the waves as:

$$e_1(a) = p_1 + f_A(a) + f_C(a)$$

$$e_2(a) = p_2 + f_A(a) + f_C(a - d),$$

where $d = y_2 - y_1$ is the number of years between the waves. Obviously, $e_1(a) =$

$E(y_1, a, y_1 - a)$ and $e_2(a) = E(y_2, a, y_2 - a)$.

In my thesis I am less interested in the period effect $p_2 - p_1$ and more in recovering the life-cycle and cohort effect functions f_A and f_C.

To recover these functions from the model, I used an approach similar to that used by David McKenzie (2006). My approach differs from McKenzie's in that I used smooth estimators of the life-cycle effect functions and, therefore, could reconstruct f_A and f_C from just two study waves.

We can calculate smooth estimates of functions $e_1(a)$ and $e_2(a)$ from the data using nonparametric regression. Also note, that we can express

$$e_1(a) - e_2(a) = p_1 - p_2 + f_C(a) - f_C(a - d)$$

$$e_2(a) - e_1(a - d) = p_2 - p_1 + f_A(a) - f_A(a - d).$$

If we can estimate the period effect $p_2 - p_1$, it is obvious from the above that, given $f_A(a)$ and $f_C(a)$, we can recover $f_A(a + kd)$ and $f_C(a + kd)$, where a is some age, k is an integer and d is the number of years between the waves.

To recover the values of f_A and f_C for every integer age I assume $f_A(a_0) = f_C(a_0) = 0$, where a_0 is the youngest observed age. Also, I 'enforced' my assumption of the smoothness of f_A and f_C by minimizing the sums

$$S_A = \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} (f_A(a_0 + i) - f_A(a_0 + i + 1))^2$$

$$S_C = \sum_{i=0}^{n-2} (f_C(a_0 + i) - f_C(a_0 + i + 1))^2,$$

where n is the total number of ages observed. This is enough to recover $f_A(a)$ and $f_C(a)$ for every integer age a.

As for the essentially unknown $p_2 - p_1$, a common sense approach is most suitable for its estimation. The choice of $p_2 - p_1$ is really equivalent to the assumption of the equality of two age or cohort groups in the MMWP method. In my study, I assumed that the period effect was the difference of the wave means of a parameter, unless there were specific reasons to adjust it[5]. If we assume $f_A(a_1) = f_A(a_2)$ for ages a_1 and a_2, then the period effect $p_2 - p_1$ can be calculated. The same is true for an assumption

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[5]For example, if the oldest generations had especially positive attitudes, in the next survey the mean answer might seem lower just because this generation is not present in the sample any more. In this case, expressing the period effect as the difference between the means of the two survey waves would underes-

using f_C. Using my method, the influence of different assumed period effects on the recovered life-cycle and cohort effects can be also explored graphically. Finally, if any of the recovered functions f_A or f_C are non-linear, the corresponding effect can be considered demonstrated, since no choice of $p_2 - p_1$ can reduce a non-linear effect.

Of course, there could be some truly linear effects or combinations of both life-cycle and cohort effects, that can not be illuminated by my (or any) method. Also, several interpretations of the same coefficients are sometimes possible, so historical or other aspects should be considered alongside the regression analysis. The proposed method is not in any way a one-stop solution to the age-cohort effect discrimination problem, but rather a new and enlightening way to look at data, that I hope can at least help make cohort/age discrimination a bit more transparent and straight-forward.

As for the linearity of the age or cohort effects — I feel this should be less of a problem in praxis, because most of age-related trends tend to slow down with increasing age, giving a somewhat curved shape to even the most linearly appearing relationships. And while these slight non-linearities can be almost invisible to the eye, they should become readily exposed when the regression part of the method used. The effects were calculated using the statistical package R.

4.2 Structural equation modelling

One of the most appropriate methods for analysing complex models such as the 'vicious circle' that links relations between different political attitudes and participation, is structural equation modelling (SEM). Structural equation models, also called simultaneous equation models, are multivariate regression models. Variables in a SEM may influence one-another reciprocally, either directly or through other variables as intermediaries. The focus of SEM is not as much on particular hypothesis testing, that is, on uncovering particular relationships between the variables, as on testing whether the overall web of relationships adequately describes the data. More specifically, analysing the relations between the indicators in a simultaneous equation model tests the plausibility of the described vicious circle. In addition, such analysis would uncover whether the separate links

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timate the general changes of attitudes. Due to these considerations I had to make slight adjustments to Polish (by 0,02 points) and French (by 0,035) data. In every other country, the period effect is simply estimated as the difference between means.

specified on the basis of the literature (and shown in the theoretical model in Figure1) are significant.

A specific feature of SEM is that it melds factor analysis and path analysis into one comprehensive methodology. Usually a structural equation model consists of two parts: (1) the measurement part, which links observed variables to latent variables via a confirmatory factor model, and (2) the structural part, linking latent variables to each other via systems of simultaneous equations (Kaplan, 2008). In my case I expected to include in the analysis up to 30 observed variables and up to 10 latent variables. Therefore, to reduce the complexity of the model, it was decided to separate the measurement and structural part. First the factor analysis was used to extract the latent variables and then, in the second step, these variables were included in a path analytic model relating endogenous variables to exogenous variables and one to another. The model was estimated by the ADF (asymptotically distribution-free) method (see Fox, 2002), and was calculated using SPSS Amos 7.0.

Despite the popularity of structural equation models nowadays, there are also some limitations to this method. Although structural equations are meant to represent causal relationships between the variables in the model, such interpretation for SEM is no less problematic than for other kinds of regression models (Fox 2002). The causal interpretations can only be based upon theoretical knowledge. It is also important to note that the model I specify is non-recursive – it includes a feedback loop between two endogenous variables – and as such it has some limitations. It is difficult to interpret the results of root mean square residuals in non-recursive models. In other words, it is not possible to say what proportion of a specific endogenous variable is explained by all the other variables in the model.

4.3   Data sources

For characterizing state-society relations in post-communist countries I use data from different international comparative surveys, such as World Values Survey (WVS), The International Social Survey Program (ISSP), "Consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe", as well as other surveys. The theoretical model is, however, based on the *The International Social Survey Program* (ISSP) waves of 1996 and 2006 "*The Role of Government*" that included questions thought to measure several dimensions of the

perceived role of the government.[6] I see it an important advantage that the data for first wave of the ISSP survey was gathered only in the year 1996. The fieldwork of the WVS took place in post-communist countries during a very unstable and atypical time. The first waves of the survey after the overthrow of the Communist regime reflect very well the so called "post-honeymoon" effect. As we have limited data points, I might have gotten a skewed picture if I used earlier data. Another advantage of using the ISSP data instead of, for example, Richard Rose's New Baltic Barometer, is that besides a number of post-communist countries ISSP also covers other countries in and outside Europe. It allows for comparisons between the groups of counties, in order to determine whether a particular effect is characteristic only of post-communist countries, and might therefore be tied with the communist past, or it is part of a general trend.

ISSP 1996 and 2006 data is also used for the analysis of the cultural embeddedness of political attitudes based on *cohort analysis*. A crucially requirement for studies that use cohort analysis and are not based on longitudinal data, is that the studied population remains approximately "closed"'[7] (Glenn, 2005). During the first years of regaining independence there was a big wave of emigration from Latvia (mostly of ethnic Russians), thus, the use of earlier data could have created a false appearance of change or, probably, lack of change when it has occurred. Moreover, the ten year gap between the waves is large enough to spot a distinctive 'generation' in the data,[8] but not so large that the distinctiveness of a generation could fade (see Jennings, 1987).

Nineteen countries participated in both waves of the survey (Appendix A.1), among them six post-communist countries — Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Latvia and Russia. It was also possible to distinguish East Germany.[9] Besides the six post-communist countries, I also included in my analysis four other European countries:

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[6]The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is a continuous program of cross-national collaboration running annual surveys on topics important for the social sciences

[7]There is little movement in and out of the country, except through birth and death, or ageing, if an age-delineated sub-population, such as as ages 15-65, is used.

[8]A generation is not formed in a few years time. Usually it is perceived that a generation is formed from late adolescence until early adulthood, which is about ten years.

[9]However, it was decided not to include East Germany in the cohort analysis. East Germany could, probably, be expected to be similar to other post-communist countries in 1996, yet it had a very different and, many would argue, easier way to democratization, which might lead to a different pattern in 2006 that would not be comparable with other countries. Also, the number of respondents in 2006 in East Germany was quite small.

France, Sweden, Norway, Great Britain, and three democracies outside Europe: United States, Australia, New Zealand.[10]

Apart from the communist past, the selected post-communist countries are quite different – they were ruled by different communist regimes, and each of them has a very distinctive history of democracy, regime change, repressions, uprisings and liberations (Makarovič et al., 2007 ; Mishler & Rose, 2002). In fact, the different progress of civil society development is sometimes attributed to these historical differences. Czech Republic (that had already experienced a well-developed democracy before World War II), along with Slovakia and Croatia, usually stand out in surveys as the most politically 'active' post-communist countries, showing similarities to established Western democracies. On the other hand, in Eastern European countries, especially Baltic states (that experienced only a short period of democracy between being included in the Russian Empire and, afterwards, USSR), the civil society seems to be the weakest (Fuchs & Klingemann, 2006 ; Koroleva & Rungule, 2006).

Similar methodology was used in all countries. ISSP questionnaires were administered as face-to-face interviews or in self-completion format, with response rates varying greatly by country. With some exceptions, the survey covered inhabitants of a country up to 18 years old without the upper age cut-off. Usually the multi-stage stratified sampling technique was used. Dates of fielding for the 2006 module range from 2006 to 2008, and for the 1996 module — from 1995 to 1997. However, most of the countries (13 of 19) collected the information during, respectively, 2006 or 1996. As the year of study influenced the observed age of respondent, the data was recorded, when necessary, so as to reflect the age of the respondent in 1996 and 2006. Most of the countries applied subsequent weights or post-stratification to correct for errors of selection or response bias, so I have used weighted data in my calculations.[11] In total, 29801 interviews are included in the data set used for the analysis of the cohort effect — 9392 from post communist countries and 20409 from other countries.

[10]It would have been beneficial to compare results with Southern European countries (Spain, Greece, Portugal) or with Latin American countries, however, such data was not available in ISSP.

[11]The only exception here is Hungary. The reason for that is that the middle-aged people were over-represented in the sample of 1996, and they have been given disproportionate high weight. As I am specifically analysing the answers *by the age* of people, such age-dependent weights may skew the data distorting the differences between years. Some other countries have used age in calculating weights too, but nowhere else it is the single main indicator for calculating weights.

The *SEM* is based on data from The International Social Survey Program's (ISSP) waves of 2006 "The Role of Government" and 2007 "Leisure and Sports". The analysis was performed for Latvia, and not some other country, because it was one of the few countries (besides Israel and Slovenia) where both of these waves were administered together. Each of the survey waves contained some information that was necessary for the analysis. Most of the indicators (government performance, corruption, social capital, political interest, trust and efficacy) were drawn from the 2006 wave, while the 2007 wave contained information about the engagement in voluntary associations.

The data was gathered in face-to-face interviews, and the survey covered inhabitants of Latvia 18 – 74 years of age. The fieldwork was conducted in May and June of 2007. Original questions included in the analysis are shown in Appendix A.4, but full questionnaires as well as more information about the sampling, data collection, translation of the questionnaire, survey question coverage, response and outcome figures and the data are available at the survey web-page. Initial data set contained 1069 interviews, however only about a half of respondents had answered to all questions needed for the analysis [12]. The final structural equation model (SEM) is based on 578 cases.

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[12]The most missing values were observed in questions about corruption: "Politicians involved in corruption" (10,1%) and "Public officials involved in corruption" (11,2%), meaning that people might be hesitant to answer those questions while not being sure about it. On the other hand, replacing these questions in my analysis by direct measure of corruption "Public officials wanted bribe" would not be a good solution either. 78 per cent have not been asked for a bribe ever, and the answer depends significantly on the top-bottom placement of the respondent in the society (p¡0,0001), probably reflecting how often she gets into the situations where she is likely to be asked for a bribe. As I am more interested in perceptions of corruption rather than actual encounters with corruption, this question was not included in the analysis.

5 Dynamics of state-society relations in post-communist countries

Often concerns are raised about the political disenchantment and the lack of notable improvements in political attitudes among the citizens of post-communist countries. This chapter aims to describe the character of state-society relations in post-communist countries, as well as its dynamics from 1996 till 2006, by using the newest International Social Survey Program (ISSP) data, as well as other data, and to draw a theoretical model illustrating these relations.

5.1   Indicators of political alienation

In the ISSP survey seven factors, measured in an ordinal 5-point scale, were meant to characterize political interest, trust and efficacy (A.4). First, exploratory factor analysis was used to to test whether the available indicators indeed fall into the pre-assumed factors. As the main objective was to reduce the complexity in the data and get a clear and distinct structure of factors, rather than to find the best factor model for a certain set of variables, the method of Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with orthogonal factor rotation model, based on Varimax criterion (see Kaplan, 2008) was preferred.[1].

Initially, the analysis was performed on a set of these seven variables for post-communist countries. In four iterations the PCA extracted three factors with Eigenvalues larger than 1, which explained 65 per cent variance in the data. One of the extracted factors described, in essence, *the skills* necessary for effective political action. It included V44 ("How interested would you say you personally are in politics"), along with V47

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[1]The basic idea behind the Varimax criterion is that after the rotation, the resultant loadings on a factor should be either large or small relative to original loadings, to achieve a simple and clear structure representation of factors.

("I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country') and V48 ("I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am"). However, the Crombach's Alpha was not very good – 0.61. Further analysis revealed that V44 and V47, e.g., interest and understanding of political issues are strongly and consistently correlated in all post-communist countries, while the correlation between these indicators and the question about how well the respondent is informed about politics in comparison with others (V48) was week — 0,22) [2]. The factor loading of V48 was also comparatively small. Excluding this parameter allowed to improve the Crombach's Alpha to 0,66.

An other factor was initially formed by V46 ("The average citizen has considerable influence on politics") and V45 ("People like me don't have any say about what the government does"). However, there were several problems with this factor. First, V46 loaded significantly also on the factor characterizing confidence in political authorities. Second, the correlation between V46 and V45 was, in fact, week (-0.25), and the Crombach's Alpha (0.4) showed that these questions do not really form a single dimension. The reason for that might be that V46 is a general assessment of the *responsiveness of the government* to citizens influence, while V45 is rather a perceived *self-efficacy*, confidence in one's personal ability to influence government decisions [3]. Therefore it was decided to keep those questions as two separate factors.

The last dimension described *the confidence in political authorities*. It consted of V49 ("People we elect as MPs try to keep the promises they have made during the elections") and V50 ("Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country").

The factor analysis was recalculated, excluding V48, and imposing a four-factor solution. The final factors that account for 84 per cent of variation in the data, are:

1. Confidence in political authorities – trust in the efforts of parliamentary members to keep promises, and confidence in the good intentions of civil servants [V49 and V50]. These indicators seem to measure the support for specific individuals currently

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[2]The result might have something to do with the formulation of the question in the questionnaire. The fact that a person does not believe that other people are better informed than him/her, does not mean that he believes that he/she is well informed. Probably, if the question would have been asked differently, we could get different results.

[3]Unfortunately, because of a translation error, V45 can not be used for the 1996 wave of Latvian and Russian data.

holding positions of political power (Easton, 1965). However, as shown by previous studies, trust or distrust in institutions tends to be generalized across institutions — confidence in one institution is likely to be repeated in all others (Mishler & Rose, 2001 ; Zmerli et al., 2007 ; Denters et al., 2007).

2. Political competence – how interested and knowledgeable people are about politics [V44 and V47].[4] It is not surprising that interest in politics also falls into this category of competence. The fact that civic skills are part of a larger package including motivation or interest is suggested by many scholars (Verba et al., 1995, among others). Even though the item clearly measures subjective competence, political interests is known to be a good predictor of factual political knowledge (Jennings, 1996). Political interest and understanding can also be considered indicators of political involvement.

3. Responsiveness of government officials – a general belief that the average citizen can influence politics [V46]. It is somewhat correlated with confidence in political authorities.

4. Self-efficacy – "people like me have no say in what the government does" [V45]. A psychological disposition or feeling of confidence in one's ability to influence government decisions. The sense of self-efficacy is also related to the responsiveness of the government.

The last three factors mirror the dimensions of political efficacy described by Edward Muller (1970). According to him, political efficacy involves three dimensions: (2) skills necessary for effective political behavior; (1) a general belief that government is responsive to citizen influence; and (3) a psychological disposition or feeling of confidence in one's personal ability to influence salient government decisions Muller (1970). Efficacy and confidence in political institutions, on the other hand, are commonly considered as two basic dimensions of political alienation (Kim, 2005).

None of the factors was represented by more than two items in the questionnaire, therefore the factor scores were calculated simply as an average between the corresponding

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[4]Initially V48 was also considered in this factor, but based on relatively low factor loading, weak correlation with the other two questions, and Crombach's Alpha, it was decided to exclude it. Statistical tables are available on request.

items, and expressed in the scale from one to five, where more positive value means a more "positive" or more optimistic answer. As all three aspects of political efficacy are necessary to facilitate effective political action, they were combined (by assigning an equal weight to each of them) to create a single efficacy measure [5]

5.2   Political alienation in post-communist countries

It is not surprising that in post-communist countries both political efficacy and confidence in political authorities in 1996 was much lower than in our 'benchmark' democracies. After liberation from the communist regime, most of these countries suffered severe economic crisis. Political disenchantment was common, many felt disappointed with the new system and frustrated with the slow pace of improvements. The following years brought many positive social and economic changes. The living conditions are much better now than they were ten years ago. In accordance with the 'performance hypothesis', we would expect the confidence in authorities to increase as well.

In Table 5.1 we see that in *some* countries the confidence in political authorities has indeed increased, and they are effectively closing the gap between them and established democracies (Hungary, Slovenia, East-Germany), yet in some it remained unchanged (Russia, Latvia) or even decreased (Poland, Czech Republic). There does not seem to be a common trend there. Even though the analysis of the dynamics of confidence in authorities in different age groups indicates very small improvements (see Appendix A.2, they are not statistically significant at 0,05 level. In general, we can not say that people in post-communist countries now have higher confidence in their political authorities than in 1996. It is difficult to interpret the observed levels of stability in this case, because the line in Figure A.2 is almost straight. Theoretically, the stability of attitudes could reflect either very strong resistance to change or simply a lack of pressure for change (Sears, 1990). However, the rather different dynamics of confidence in authorities between countries (see Table 5.1) suggests that it largely depends on the performance of incumbents, which has been quite different. People in post-communist countries indeed have less confidence in their political authorities than people in the established democracies,

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[5]Correlation between these dimensions is quite small: 0,2 between self-efficacy and skills, 0,17 between responsiveness and skills and 0,36 between responsiveness and self-efficacy. It shows that 'efficacy' is clearly not a one-dimensional, homogeneous parameter.

however, in comparison to other political attitudes, the difference is not that big (see Figure 5.1).

Table 5.1: **Dynamics of political attitudes (mean)**

Year	Confidence	Efficacy	Responsiveness	Self-efficacy	Competence
Hungary					
1996	2.22	2.16	1.93	1.91	2.61
2006	2.45	2.25	1.98	2.06	2.70
Sig.	***	**	***	***	***
Czech Republic					
1996	2.42	2.32	2.06	1.94	2.97
2006	2.33	2.36	2.08	2.15	2.84
Sig.	⋆			***	***
Slovenia					
1996	2.50	2.24	2.03	1.80	1.89
2006	2.67	2.33	2.17	2.07	2.74
Sig.	***	**	***	⋆	***
Latvia					
1996	2.30	—	2.61		2.78
2006	2.38	2.33	2.27	1.86	2.82
Sig.	⋆	—	***		
Poland					
1996	2.45	2.47	2.38	1.91	3.08
2006	2.24	2.40	2.28	2.01	2.90
Sig.	***	⋆	⋆	⋆	***
Russia					
1996	2.11	—	2.01	—	2.59
2006	2.06	2.22	2.21	1.81	2.64
Sig.		—	***		
East Germany					
1996	2.34	2.33	2.18	1.88	2.95

Year	Confidence	Efficacy	Responsiveness	Self-efficacy	Competence
2006	2.47	2.36	2.11	1.87	3.07
Sig.	⋆				⋆
Post-communist countries					
1996	2.32	2.29	2.17	1.89	2.81
2006	2.33	2.34	2.17	2.05	2.79
Sig.		⋆⋆⋆		⋆⋆⋆	
Other countries					
1996	2.63	2.83	2.60	2.69	3.16
2006	2.65	2.89	2.64	2.80	3.21
Sig.	⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆

Mean values in the scale from 1 to 5.

The difference is significant at 0.001⋆⋆⋆ level; at 0.01⋆⋆ level; at 0.05⋆ level

A closer analysis of the dimensions of political efficacy (Table 5.1, Figure 5.1) reveals that in post-communist countries citizens are much less interested in politics than citizens of other democracies, and often do not have a good understanding of the important issues facing their country. They are also much more sceptical with regards to the responsiveness of their government. But the biggest difference between citizens of post-communist and other countries is the lack of self efficacy —- belief that people like themselves are capable of influencing government decisions. It is what people who have lived under Communist regime lack the most.

As people in post-communist countries now have increasingly more opportunities to get involved in the political process in their country or community, we would expect to see improvements in internal and external political efficacy and political competence. Indeed, in the course of time, people in post-communist countries have become more confident that they can have a say about what the government does. Czech Republic has seen the most improvements, while in Latvia self-efficacy in still very low. Increasing self-efficacy is the main reason behind the overall positive changes in the levels of efficacy.[6] Meanwhile, the gap between the self-efficacy of people in post-communist and other democracies still remains huge.

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[6]For self-efficacy and total efficacy Latvia and Russia are not included among other post-communist countries, because of previously mentioned questionnaire problems.
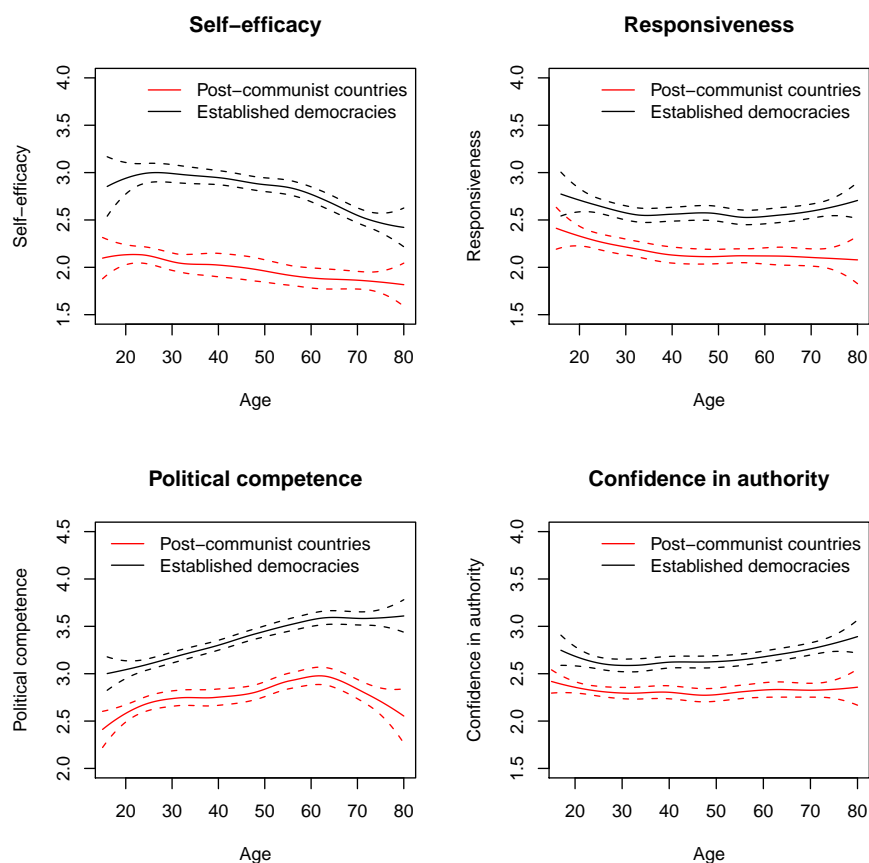
Figure 5.1: **Political attitudes in post-communist and other countries (with 95% confidence bands)**

Dynamics of political attitudes in different age cohorts is shown in Appendix A.3. In general, as people age they become less confident in the ability of people like themselves to influence what the government does (Figure 5.1). This is true for both post-communist countries and other established democracies. Thus, we can not say that the inheritance of the Communist regime has made old people feel less confident that they can influence the government.

Also, in many post-communist countries (Hungary, Slovenia, East-Germany and Russia) citizens now see their governments as more responsive than before. Poland and Latvia, where the perceived responsiveness has decreased, are the ones who had the highest scores in 1996, thus, we probably should not call it 'a negative trend', but rather 'normalization' after a period dominated by election campaigns in these countries.[7]

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[7]The field work in Poland was carried out in 1997 — the year of parliamentary elections. Similarly, in Latvia the dates of field work coincided with the election of a new parliament. This might be the reason

There is no general trend, however, with regards to confidence in political authorities. In 1996 the best political competence was observed in Poland and Czech Republic, but until 2006 they had significantly decreased. In Slovenia and Hungary, on the other hand, they increased. As the political and economic situation stabilized, post-communist countries became more similar to each other with regards to interest and understanding of politics. As we see, the dynamics of perceived political competence has been quite different, and in post-communist countries on average, it has not improved. Unfortunately, the gap between the citizens of post-communist countries and other developed countries still remains huge (significant at a 0.001 per cent confidence level) (see Figure 5.1).

To describe the state-society relations in different countries, I am using a slightly adapted Paige's model, distinguishing two dimensions: confidence in authorities and political efficacy (see Figure 2.1). The results are presented in Figure 5.2.

All in all, we can definitely say that alienated attitudes (low confidence in institutions and low levels of efficacy) are especially characteristic for citizens of post-communist countries (see Figure 5.2). None of the other surveyed countries have efficacy levels as low as those of post-communist countries, and all but a few have more confidence in their political authorities. Interestingly, citizens of Spain, Portugal, Chile and Taiwan — other countries that had recently experienced totalitarian regimes —- are also quite alienated. Citizens of most of the established, "first wave" democracies, on the other hand, are characterized by allegiant attitudes — they rely on their governments, but will actively engage in politics and challenge them, when necessary. The most politically efficient people among surveyed countries can be found in Venezuela. Also political efficacy is very high in Japan and France, where, considering the disaffection of citizens with the authorities, the society can be considered to bear dissident attitudes [8].

Slovenia, Hungary and East-Germany can be said to have made the most overall progress during the past ten years in reducing alienation of citizens: all the political attitudes have improved, thus, supporting a trend of convergence with advanced democracies (Table 5.2). Not much progress with regards to political alienation is observed in the Czech Republic and Poland (were the situation was comparatively good in 1996), and

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for overly high optimism with regards to the responsiveness of the authorities in 1996. Still, in Latvia, for instance, despite the increasing wages and improving living conditions, the disaffection of people resulted in protests in November of 2007 where one of the demands was a more responsive government.

[8] Similar conclusions can be drawn with regards to Dominican Republic, Republic of Korea and Israel.
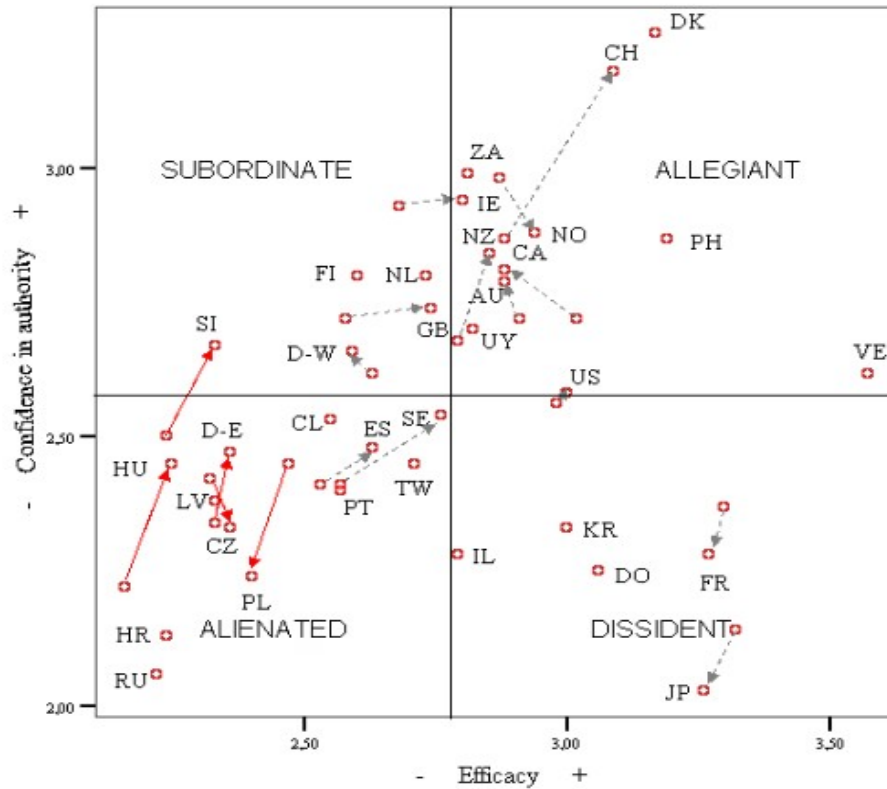
Figure 5.2: **Theoretical model of state-society relations**

Note: The arrows reflect the dynamics from the 1996 till 2006. Country names coded according to ISO 3166-1.

Latvia.

Another way to look at political alienation is by calculating the percentage of people in each country that belong to each of the sub-groups, i.e., have alienated, dissident, subordinate or allegiant attitudes. Table 5.2 summarizes the results. We see that in percentage terms the number of alienated citizens in post-communist countries from 1996 to 2006 has decreased from 54 to 49 percent. From all post communist countries the most alienated citizens are found in Russia (62 per cent), followed by Latvia, Poland and the Czech Republic (52-53 per cent). None of the established democracies has as many alienated people as post-communist countries [9]. The most people with dissident attitudes can be found in Poland (18 per cent). From all post-communist countries the number of alienated people has decreased the most in Hungary — from 58 to 45 per cent, while in Poland it has even increased by 5 percent.

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[9]Spain is the closest with 38 per cent.

Table 5.2: **Attitudinal groups in post-communist and other countries (% from all inhabitants)**

	Alienated		Dissident		Subordinate		Allegiant	
	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
Hungary	58	45	14	13	22	28	7	14
Czech Republic	54	53	10	15	22	17	14	14
Slovenia	50	43	10	9	29	31	11	17
Poland	49	54	15	18	19	16	17	12
Russia		62		14		15		10
Latvia		53		15		21		11
East-Germany	54	47	13	12	20	26	13	14
West-Germany	35	36	20	13	22	24	24	27
Australia	27	27	22	20	19	20	32	34
Great Britain	37	33	14	15	27	24	22	29
United States	27	27	30	29	13	13	30	31
Ireland	30	26	11	15	26	26	33	33
Norway	21	26	15	17	23	17	41	39
Sweden	47	33	15	20	16	17	21	29
New Zealand	34	28	18	17	21	21	27	34
Canada	22	26	26	17	17	21	36	36
Japan	19	21	52	54	6	5	23	21
Spain	44	38	20	23	18	18	17	21
France	15	19	49	48	7	4	29	28
Switzerland	22	11	21	15	19	20	38	55
Post-communist	54	49	12	14	22	23	12	14
Other countries	30	28	23	24	18	17	29	31

Note: Percentages are calculated, based on Paige's theoretical model, taking into account the mean values for trust (2,55) and efficacy (2,70) among 19 countries that participated in both waves of the study

To find out in which groups political alienation is more widespread, I used a logistic regression analysis with "alienated" as the dependent variable. In addition to the basic demographic variables, I also included country dummies (not shown) in order to account for country-specific effects not captured by other variables. Age is included in the model as a number of dummies instead of a continuous variable, because I expect the relations to be nonlinear. The results (Table 5.3) show that both age and education are significant predictors of political alienation. Like other researchers, we also find a significant negative effect of education on political alienation. It means that increasing the overall level of education of the population can help to reduce political disenchantment of citizens, facilitating a more engaged and active civil society. In comparison to younger people, those

who are over 55 years old are less likely to be politically alienated, and the alienation is even less widespread in older groups. Still, not all the young people are equally alienated: in comparison to other groups students are one of the least alienated. I also find that in the overall equation predicting political alienation one of the strongest effects is the effect of left-right political orientation. Having no party preference is associated with a significant increase in political alienation. It shows that formation of a party-attachment is important for overcoming the sense of political alienation. If people do not feel close to any parties, they obviously do not feel represented, and might lose interest in politics, become cynical and politically passive. An important determinant of political alienation is also the number of people in the household, with larger households being less politically alienated. Sex does not matter for political alienation: both women and men are similarly alienated from politics. One must mention though that all the demographic and country variables explain only 9 per cent of the variation in political alienation.

As discussed in previous chapters, most studies analysing the link between institutional trust and conventional political activities (such as voting or participating in voluntary associations) have discovered that citizens who trust institutions are more likely to take part in such activities, but those who are disappointed and unsatisfied with the authorities will participate less (Dalton, 2004 ; Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Schyns & Nuus, 2007 ; Brehm & Rahn, 1997), instead engaging in mobilized unconventional activities (Muller & Jukam, 1977 ; Dalton, 2004 ; Norris, 1999).

Analysis performed in the course of this study as well as other studies (e.g., Catterberg & Moreno, 2006 ; Howard, 2003 ; Rose & Shin, 2001) show that trust in institutions in post-communist (and especially post-Soviet) countries is very low. Thus, we should not be surprised by low participation rates in conventional political activities. Yet, we would expect to see a lot of people engaging in unconventional or mobilized political activities, such as strikes, demonstrations, or signing petitions. Nevertheless, data from the World Values Survey 1999/2000 shows that this is not the case. In Latvia and many other post-Soviet countries, the confidence in government is very low, nonetheless civil engagement — both conventional and unconventional — remains surprisingly low too.

Contrary to what was expected, correlation between different kinds of political participation (attending demonstrations, joining strikes, signing petitions, occupying buildings or joining a party) and confidence in institutions (the parliament)[10] both at the micro

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[10]Here I have decided to show only trust in parliament, however, surveys show that trust or distrust

Table 5.3: **Logistic regression of alienation on demographic characteristics**

	B	S.E.	Sig.
Sex (men=1)	-0.02	(0.03)	
Education (years)	-0.04	(0.00)	***
Household size	-0.04	(0.01)	***
Age (reference: 45-54)			
<25	-0.02	(0.06)	
25-34	0.00	(0.05)	
35-44	0.00	(0.05)	
55-64	-0.14	(0.05)	**
65-74	-0.26	(0.06)	***
75+	-0.59	(0.08)	***
Employment status (reference: other)			
Full time employment	0.00	(0.09)	
Part-time employment	0.08	(0.1)	
Student	-0.41	(0.14)	**
Economically inactive	0.11	(0.09)	
Left-right orientation (reference: other)			
Left	-0.27	(0.05)	***
Center	-0.14	(0.05)	**
Right	-0.19	(0.05)	***
No party, no preference	0.29	(0.05)	***
Constant	-1.69	(0.16)	***

-2log likelihood - 27896.06, Observations - 24301, Nagelkerke R Square - 0.09

Note: ISSP 1996 and 2006 data. The table shows unstandardised coefficients (B) and robust standard errors (SE). ⋆⋆⋆P < 0.001; ⋆⋆P < 0.01; ⋆P < 0.05.

and, in particular, macro level is week. Demonstrations, for example, are most widespread in Greece, France and Belgium, and even countries where the number of people who do not trust the parliament is very low, such as Sweden, Denmark and Netherlands (see Figure 5.3. In most post-communist countries —- Russia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Czech Republic and Moldova —- more that 25 per cent of the population do not trust the parliament at all, yet the number of people who have attended demonstrations is lower. In United States, Great Britain, Canada and Sweden people are especially active in writing petitions.

Unofficial strikes are most common in Sweden, Denmark, USA and France, and not, for example, Russia, Romania, Ukraine, Turkey, Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina,

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often overlaps between levels (Dalton, 2004) and institutions (Mishler & Rose, 2001 ; Zmerli et al., 2007), thus there is essentially one single dimension of political trust (Denters et al., 2007).
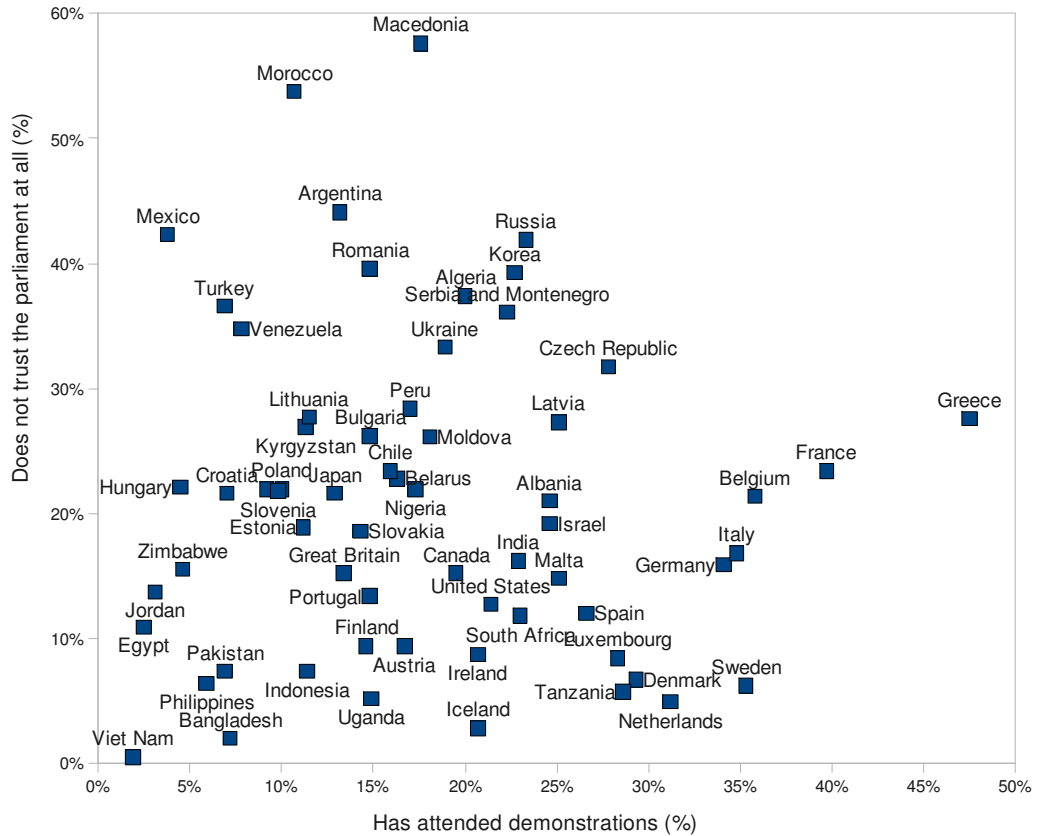
Figure 5.3: **Distrust in parliament and joining demonstrations**

Note: Based on WVS 1999/2000 data

where more than one third of citizens do not trust the parliament at all (see Figure 5.4). In countries like Greece, France, Nigeria or Uganda more that 40 per cent of respondents had participated in illegal occupying of buildings, but it practically never happens in countries like Latvia, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary, Turkey or Romania (see Appendix A.6).

Similarly, data from the 2001 survey "Consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe" that concentrated specifically on post-communist countries shows that citizens who do not trust the national government and the parliament are least likely to vote, to attend a political meeting, to be members of a party or movement. They are also less likely to discuss politics with others, to contact politicians and to be members of local associations (see Table 5.4 and Table 5.5).

Thus, we can conclude that, although many people in post-communist (and especially post-Soviet) countries complain about the government, they do not engage in
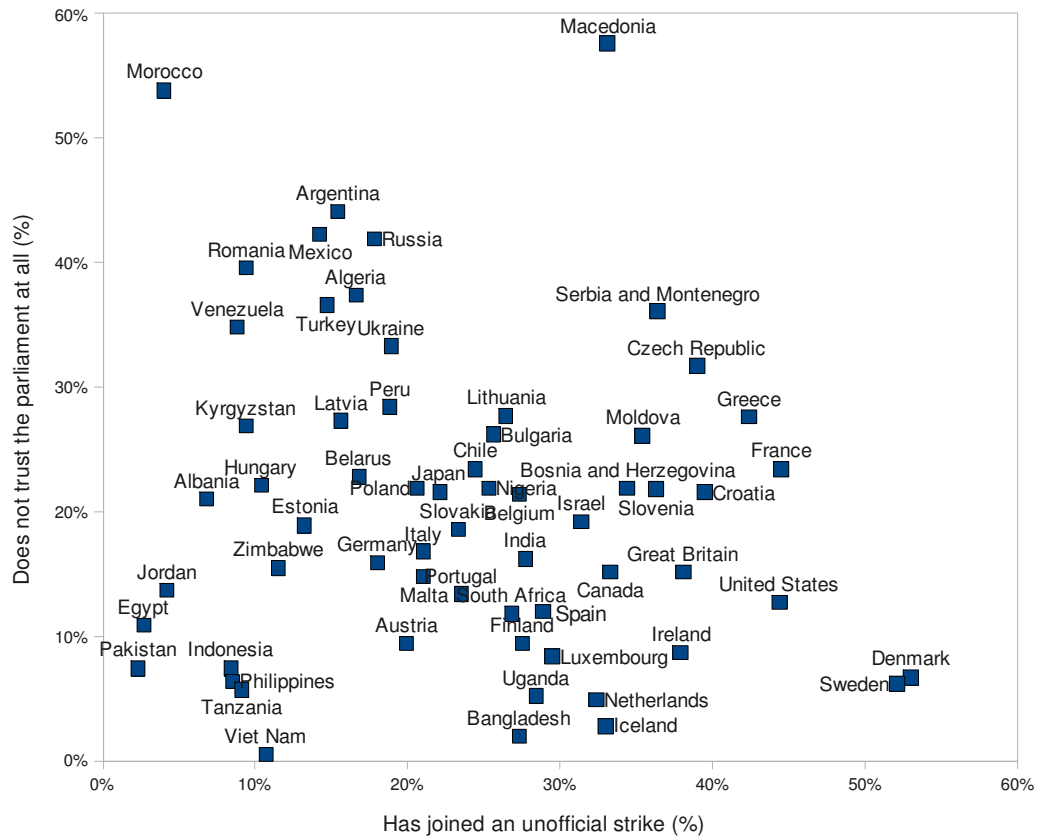
Figure 5.4: **Distrust in parliament and joining unofficial strikes**

Note: Based on WVS 1999/2000 data

politics and abstain from active participation themselves. In Muller's (1977) terms this is called 'withdrawal" behavior, and is a sign of political alienation.

5.3   Social capital and state-society relations

An other model that can be used to characterize state-society relations is the Michael Woolcock's and Deepa Narayan's (2000) model of state-society relations (Figure 3.1). In this chapter I have taken advantage of the newest ISSP data to draw such a model for countries included in the 2006 survey. The model proposed by Woolcock and Narayan (2000) is based on two dimensions: 1) the quality of governance (or, in other words, good governance) and 2) the level of bridging social capital. The authors do not specify the indicators for measuring these two dimensions.

Table 5.4: **Confidence in the national government and political activity**

		Trust: national government			
		Totally	To a certain point	Little	Not at all
		Col. %	Col. %	Col. %	Col. %
Discuss politics	Often	23	21	16	18
	Sometimes	29	36	36	30
	Seldom	29	30	34	34
	Never	19	13	14	18
Contact politicians	Often	2	3	2	2
	Sometimes	7	7	6	5
	Seldom	14	16	15	13
	Never	76	74	76	81
Vote in last parliamentary election	Yes	84	83	75	70
Member: movement	Yes	3	4	2	1
Member: political paty	Yes	9	7	5	5
Member: local association	Yes	7	8	6	4

Source of data: "Consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe" wave 1 (1990-1992) and 2 (1997-2001)

In ISSP 2006 there are two questions which seem like a good proxy for bridging social capital: *"There are only a few people I can trust completely"* and *"If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you"*. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that these two indicators represent one dimension. The correlation between them is 0,54, and Crombach's Alpha — 0,7, which shows high reliability level.

It is much more difficult to find adequate indicators of the quality of governance. In this study I have decided to use the "confidence in institutions" that was calculated previously (see chapter "Indicators of political alienation"). As stated previously, trust (or confidence) is considered important for cooperation at different levels, and for several reasons is said to be closely related to the quality of governance (see chapter "Why political trust matters"). I am not arguing that it correctly reflects the quality of government; it

		Trust: parliament			
		Totally	To a certain point	Little	Not at all
		Col. %	Col. %	Col. %	Col. %
Discuss politics	Often	24	22	18	16
	Sometimes	29	36	37	31
	Seldom	28	30	32	34
	Never	19	12	12	18
Contact politicians	Often	3	3	2	2
	Sometimes	7	8	7	5
	Seldom	14	18	16	12
	Never	75	72	75	82
Vote in last parliamentary election	Yes	86	84	76	69
Member: movement	Yes	4	4	3	1
Member: political paty	Yes	8	7	6	4
Member: local association	Yes	8	8	6	4

Source of data: "Consolidation of democracy in Central and Eastern Europe" wave 1 (1990-1992) and 2 (1997-2001)

probably does not.[11] But it shows something probably even more important — the vertical ties between citizens and the institutions of the state or the cognitive part of the linking social capital.

The new dimensions are denoted as:

1. Bridging social capital and

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[11]Even though confidence in institutions can to a certain degree be considered an indicator of their quality, it is not a very precise indicator. It is demonstrated by the study of Iveta Reinholde and Marija Golubeva (2007). They found that in general, the political processes in state institutions have become more transparent and more efficient in last years, and the society now has more opportunities to follow the processes of political decision-making. Nevertheless, it does not immediately reflect in the perceptions of the society. Jansone et Vilka (2007) also stress that unfortunately citizens are not always informed about all the possibilities, and about the process of governance in general.

2. Confidence in authorities.

Interestingly, the correlation between these two dimensions, although statistically significant (Sig.<0,001), is very week — 0,13. Results of the country analysis are shown in Figure 5.5.
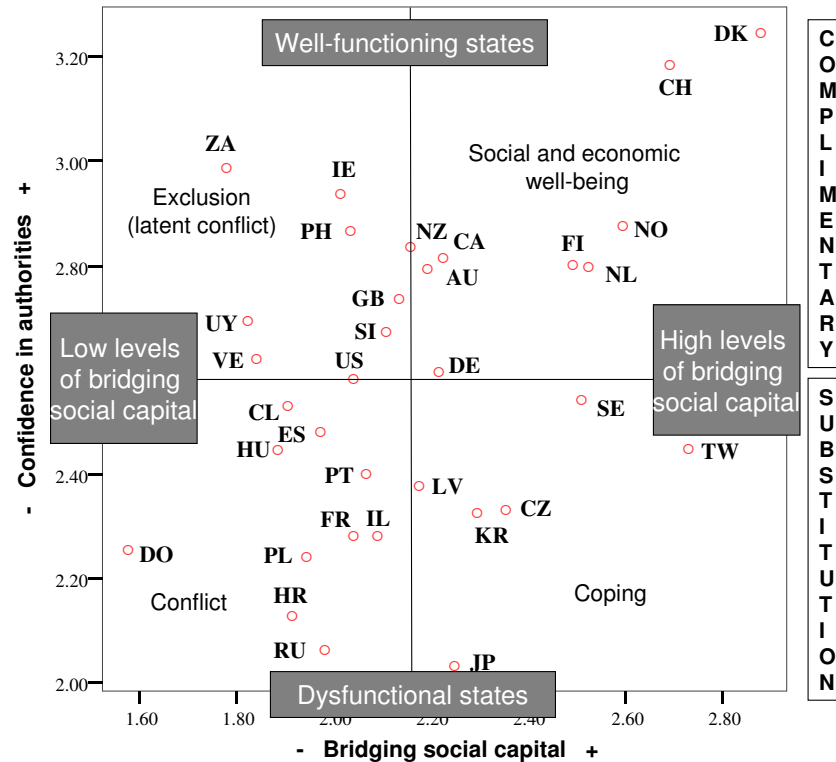

Figure 5.5: **Model of state-society relations**

Note: Based on Woolcock et Narayan (2000). Source of data: ISSP 2006

First of all, we can see that most post-communist countries (Russia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland) are located in the sector 'Conflict'. People in these countries rely neither on their government or civil servants, nor on other people. In other words, they distrust both each other and authorities. According to Woolcock and Narayan (2000) such circumstances provide a fruitful ground for conflicts, violence, war or anarchy. There is a high risk of social exclusion, crime and discrimination in such societies. Besides the previously mentioned post-communist countries, also Dominican Republic, Chile, Spain, Portugal, France and Israel have this type of state-society relations.

In countries where the authorities of the state are strong and trustworthy, they may ensure social order, promote cooperation, build bridges and and prevent conflicts

from arising. A typical example is South Africa, but among such countries we find also Philipines, Ireland, Urugway and Venezuela (see Figure 5.5). Despite the seemingly stable state of affairs, beneath there is a latent conflict. At any given moment when some groups will start to feel excluded from politics or discriminated against, and will have the resources for uprising, conflicts my escalate.

Latvia and Czech Republic are somewhat different. The levels of bridging social capital are a little bit higher here than in other post-communist countries. As the performance of authorities has often disappointed, their citizens have retreated in coping strategies. According to Woolcock and Narayan:

> "Often, when citizens are deprived of services and benefits, informal networks substitute for the failed state and form the basis of coping strategies (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, 238)."

This is also the case for countries in Asia: Japan, Taiwan and Korea. Basically, social capital in these countries substitutes for weak, hostile, or indifferent state institutions. Knowingly or not, the networks might also be built with this purpose (see section "Social networks in post-communist countries").

Among the countries where there is complementarity between state and society, where the civil society and authorities work together to achieve better results, and where, as a result, there is peace and well-being, one can mention Denmark and Switzerland, followed by Norway, Netherlands and Finland.

There is little data about the dynamics of social capital and related indicators in post-communist countries. Probably the best time-series data are available from the World Values survey. Still, just 14 of all post-communist countries have participated in at least three waves of WVS [12]. It is difficult to draw conclusions about tendencies from such low number of repeated cross–sectional data. Moreover, the data show that there are few countries were more or less clear tendencies can be detected (Table 5.6). From the data it seems that in post-communist countries at the beginning of 90-ties people trusted each other more [13] than they do nowadays. If we look at past ten years (similarly as we did with respect to political alienation) we see that there is no general trend. In

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[12]Five of them have participated in 4 waves.

[13]Generalized trust was measured with the question *"Do you believe most people can be trusted, or can't you be too careful in dealing with people?"*.

Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine the number of respondents who trust people in general has decreased, but in Russia, Poland, Slovenia and and Romania it has not changed or even has slightly increased. The main conclusion, therefore, is that we need more data (and probably, better indicators than the traditional "G-trust" question) before we can actually assess the dynamics of social capital in post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Table 5.6: **Dynamics of generalized trust in post-communist countries (WVS data)**

Country	1990-1993	1995-1998	1999-2001	2005-2007
Belarus	25.5	24.1	41.9	
Bulgaria	30.4	28.6	26.9	22.2
Czech Republic	30.2	28.5	23.9	
Estonia	27.6	21.5	22.8	
Hungary	24.6	22.7	21.8	
Latvia	19.0	24.7	17.1	
Lithuania	30.8	21.9	24.9	
Moldova		22.2	14.7	17.9
Poland	29.2	17.9	18.9	19.0
Romania	16.1	18.7	10.1	20.3
Russian Federation	37.5	23.9	23.7	26.2
Slovakia	23.0	27.0	15.7	
Slovenia	17.4	15.5	21.7	18.1
Ukraine		31.0	27.2	27.5

Note: numbers in the table reflect the percentage of respondents who agree that "most people can be trusted".

6 Cultural Embeddedness of Political Attitudes in Post-Communist Countries

Now that we know that some of the political attitudes in post-communist countries are not improving (political competence, confidence in authorities) while others are not improving as fast as one would probably expect (responsiveness), I will look whether this can, at least to a certain extent, be explained by path-dependency — the inheritance of the previous political system. If it is indeed the case, I expect to find a cohort effect in my data with regards to these attitudes. Accordingly, the main focus in this chapter will be on cultural explanations of the formation of political attitudes and behaviour.

6.1   How age impacts political attitudes

If the communist legacy is responsible for unsatisfactory improvements in state-society relations in post-communist countries we should expect to find a cohort (or generational) effect in the data. Similarly, the life-cycle (or age) effect should manifest as a gradual change in attitudes depending on the age of the respondent. If, however, age is not related to the measured variable, we have to conclude that none of the effects can be detected in the data.[1] Table 6.1 summarizes the R^2's from the local linear regression for all post-communist and other countries. It shows to what extent the variation in certain attitudes can be explained by the age of respondent.

The first observation is that in Western democracies political attitudes are more

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[1]It is, of course, theoretically possible that life-cycle, cohort and period effects overlap and somehow cancel each other out, thus making it impossible to uncover them.

dependent on age than in post-communist countries (Badescu & Neller, 2007 came to a similar conclusion regarding organizational involvement). Second, the findings for different attitudes are different.

The perceived *responsiveness of political authorities* is not related to age in any of the countries, or at least such relation is not observed in the data. On average, age explains only 15 per cent of variation in the data. Thus, it seams that the lack of improvements regarding the perceived responsiveness of authorities in post-communist countries might rather be a result of slow and, sometimes, not particularly successful process of institutionalization of democratic, participatory practices in the daily work of the state institutions.

Confidence in political authorities is related to age in some western democracies[2], yet in most post-communist countries (with the exception of Latvia and Russia) the impact of age on confidence in political authorities is very small.[3] Thus, in the context of the applied method, it does not seem to be justifiable to perform any further statistical analysis to uncover the possible cohort or life-cycle effect. This result also means that the data does not support claims by some other researchers that the slow progress made by post-communist countries with regards to confidence in political authorities and perceptions of their responsiveness is a result of the cultural legacy of the communist regime.

Although my cohort analysis study does not include any measures of actual *participation*, there is evidence from other surveys that participation too is *not* related to age in post-communist countries. Badescu and Neller (2007), on the basis of CID data, concluded that the effect of age on organizational involvement is significant in majority of the surveyed European countries, however, in post-Soviet countries the effect is week or there is no effect (Badescu & Neller, 2007). According to my data, in Western democracies age has relatively more impact on political attitudes in general.

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[2]In France and Australia confidence increases with age. In France people aged 30-40 have the least confidence in political authority. In Australia people over 60 have the most confidence. This might be related to specific policies and how beneficial they have been for particular age groups. In this case micro-institutional theories could provide a better explanation.

[3]In post-communist countries age explains on average only about 20 per cent of the variation in the data. Interestingly, Mendes and Camoes (2002) found on the basis of logit regressions that in Portugal, Spain and Greece generation/ regime *did* matter for political trust, while in old democracies age rather than regime was important for the trust in government.

Impact of age on different political attitudes (R^2)

Country	Confidence		Resp.		Self-efficacy		Competence	
	1996	**2006**	**1996**	**2006**	**1996**	**2006**	**1996**	**2006**
Post-communist countries								
Hungary	0.22	0.16	0.02	0.09	0.23	0.10	0.44	0.45
Czech Republic	0.12	0.17	0.00	0.11	0.18	0.32	0.47	0.19
Slovenia	0.08	0.22	0.20	0.09	0.17	0.23	0.34	0.24
Poland	0.16	0.16	0.20	0.33	0.36	0.36	0.38	0.39
Russia	0.28	0.35	0.15	0.14		0.20	0.37	0.30
Latvia	0.31	0.20	0.27	0.15		0.32	0.43	0.32
Established democracies								
Norway	0.33	0.15	0.17	0.23	0.55	0.53	0.35	0.56
Sweden	0.21	0.24	0.10	0.11	0.41	0.41	0.58	0.44
Great Britain	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.15	0.31	0.25	0.61	0.44
France	0.39	0.62	0.23	0.30	0.34	0.37	0.38	0.54
Australia	0.64	0.35	0.11	0.11	0.23	0.41	0.68	0.75
New Zealand	0.28	0.18	0.05	0.23	0.45	0.34	0.54	0.70
United States	0.13	0.17	0.23	0.18	0.15	0.13	0.37	0.15
Groups of countries								
Post-communist countries	0.23	0.14	0.22	0.30	0.46	0.48	0.64	0.56
Established democracies	0.62	0.71	0.37	0.41	0.62	0.76	0.80	0.89

Perceived self-efficacy, i.e., the confidence in ones own capability to influence what the government does, in many established democracies (Sweden, Norway, France, New Zealand) is related to age (Table 6.1). Older individuals typically feel less capable to in-

fluence what the government does than younger people (Figure 5.1). In post-communist countries there is a similar, but less distinct trend (the average R^2 in post-communist countries is 0.25). The fact that the pattern of answers is very similar to western democracies suggests that it reflects a life-cycle effect, rather than communist heritage. Moreover, self-efficacy post-communist countries has significantly increased, thus, even if there is some "legacy of the Communist regime" it obviously is not powerful enough to hold back these positive developments.

The only parameter strongly related to age across all countries and years, and having a different pattern of answers in post-communist countries than in western democracies is *'political competence'*. Age explains at least one third of variation in almost all post-communist countries in both 1996 and 2006 (on average 36 per cent), and even more in western democracies. On average in Western democracies age explains roughly a half of the variation in political skills. The R^2's are impressive for groups of countries too: age explains about 60 per cent of variation in 'political competence' in post-communist countries and at least 80 per cent in the remaining countries. Considering the lack of improvements in political competence in post-communist countries, and the fact that age is a good predictor of political competence, it makes sense to look further for the evidence of the generational effect.

Grouping of countries may increases the variance in the data, causing a decrease in the R^2. Thus, the change in the R^2 when adding or subtracting countries is in itself an indicator of how similar or different the countries are. If the R^2 drops only a little bit, it means that by adding the additional data, the variance is not significantly increased. This, in turn, means that the pattern of answers to this particular question is not very different. On the other hand, if the drop is big, we can conclude that the pattern of answers is quite different. I tried to experiment with grouping, by adding different countries to each other, and the results confirmed that post-communist countries are indeed more similar to each other than they are to any other country. Adding any other country resulted in much bigger drop in R^2. It allows to conclude that post-communist countries indeed form a distinct cluster characterized by a similar structure of political skills among different age groups [4]. An other result that points to the distinctiveness of post-communist countries

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[4]An other conclusion is that there is no statistical ground to distinguish between democracies in Europe and democracies outside Europe. The pattern of answers in Australia and New Zealand is, for instance, more similar to Norway and France than to United States. Adding non-European democracies

is that there still is a huge gap between post-communist countries and other 'bencmark' democracies with regards to perceived responsiveness of the government, and especially with regards to self-efficacy and political competence (see Figure 5.1 and Table 5.1).

6.2   Distinguishing age and cohort effects

In the previous section I have shown that the only indicator consistently related to age and having a different pattern of answers in post-communist countries than in Western democracies, is 'political competence' (interest and understanding of political issues). In this section I will only analyse this parameter and try to understand whether it is better explained by the age of respondent (age or life-cycle effect) or the year of birth (cohort effect). The prevalence of the cohort effect would support the assumptions of the cultural theories according to which the political skills reflect consistent and enduring generational differences.

To understand whether perceived political competence (interest and understanding of political issues) is better explained by the age of respondents (life-cycle effect) or the year of their birth (cohort effect), thus reflecting consistent and enduring generational differences, I first performed a graphic analysis. There are three lines in the Figure 6.1. One of the lines indicates the answers given by people of a certain age in 2006, the other — answers given by people of certain age in 1996. The third line (1996+10), as in the nominal approach, is drawn to allow for a comparison of answers given in 1996 and 2006 by people born in the same year. Simply speaking, comparing the line of 2006 to the lines of 1996 and 1996+10 allows us to see whether there is more similarity between the answers given by people of the same age at the time of the interviews or people who were born in the same year. This allows us to examine the age, cohort and period effects in much the same way as done in the nominal method. Because this method is graphical and the smooth curves show much more detail then the table of the nominal method, I think think it can give a better feel of the relationships in the data./footnoteOf course, as is with the nominal method, this method also only really works with obviously non-linear data, and best of all if the graphs have 'humps' (as in some of the graphs in figure 6.2, for example). This method also allows us to graphically judge in which areas which of age or cohort effects are prevalent.

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to European democracies does not decrease the R^2, for the age explains political skills even better there.
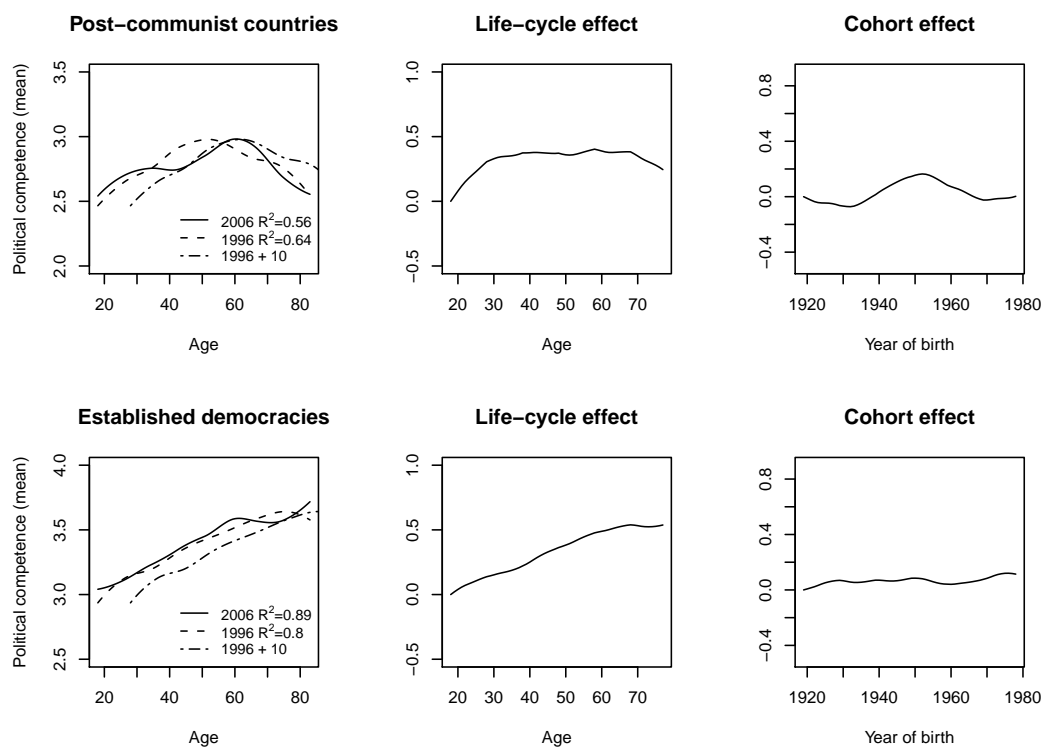
Figure 6.1: **Political skills in post-communist and other countries: life-cycle and cohort effect**

The two additional graphs show the statistically disentangled effects of age (life-cycle effect) and year of birth (cohort effect) in nominal terms.[5] The local linear regression was applied to determine the statistical significance of life-cycle and cohort effects. The coefficients of determination (R^2) in Table 6.2 indicate the descriptive accuracy of the model, i.e., how well the sum of the recovered time, life-cycle and cohort effects fit the data.[6]

In Figures 6.2 and 6.3 we can see the structure of answers in each post-communist country. They are quite similar to each other, and at the same time notably different from established democracies (Appendix A.1). In western democracies political competence develops almost linearly with age: people become more interested in politics and

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[5]The total effect of a parameter depending on the age can be expressed as a sum of these effects and a period effect that depends only on the survey wave.

[6]For example, time, life-cycle and cohort effects combined explain political skills better in Latvia and Hungary than in Russia and Poland. It implies that in Russia and Poland there have been some changes in the structure of the data from 1996 to 2006, that can not be attributed to either of these effects.

understand political issues better as they grow older.[7] This finding is not surprising, for it corresponds with the findings from previous studies (see Galston, 2001: 219). In post-communist countries political competence develops with age too, however there is a characteristic decrease in political competence among people aged 60 or older (Figure 6.1). This result contradicts the argument made by Inglehart ten years ago on the basis of VWS data, that the younger (and better-educated) birth cohorts show higher rates of political interest, political discussion, and so forth than their elders (Inglehart, 1997). On contrary, with the age the interest and understanding of politics increases. [8]

A graphical examination can not be considered a strong enough evidence for making conclusions about the prevalence of cohort- or life-cycle effect, therefore I am using non-parametric linear regression to study the relative life-cycle and cohort effects (see section "The method of cohort analysis" in the chapter "Methodology"). The results are summarized in the Table 6.2. The statistical analysis confirms that in post-communist countries one can observe both life-cycle and cohort effect, and that they are statistically significant at the 0.001 confidence level. Moreover, the cohort effect is very strong (statistically significant at the 0.001 level) in all post-communist countries, except for Slovenia, where the significance level is 0.1. Life-cycle effect too is very strong (significant at 0.001 level of significance) in all post-communist countries, except for Poland, where the significance level is 0,1 (Table 6.2). The cohort effect is larger than the life-cycle effect in all post-communist countries and, except for Slovenia. And even there the cohort effect is still significant at the 0.05 level, which means that at least to a certain degree it also matters.

The life-cycle effect manifests itself mostly at a young age (Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3). Both in post-communist countries and established democracies (Nordic countries, France and the United States) perceived political competence increase rapidly until 28 years of age. It corresponds to political socialization theories, mainly, the 'impressionable years' and 'aging stability' theses (see Niemi & Hepburn, 1995). I also find that, in many

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[7]In all Western democracies age has a significant impact on political skills at the 0.001 confidence level, and in most of them (Norway, Sweden, France and Australia) age explained political skills better than cohort (Table 6.2).

[8]The fact that he discovered such relation might be a result of different pattern of answers in other countries or regions in the world. But it might also be that Inglehart, in fact, described the older cohort which has, at least in post-communist countries, lower political skills. This cohort should have been more evident at the beginning of 1990s
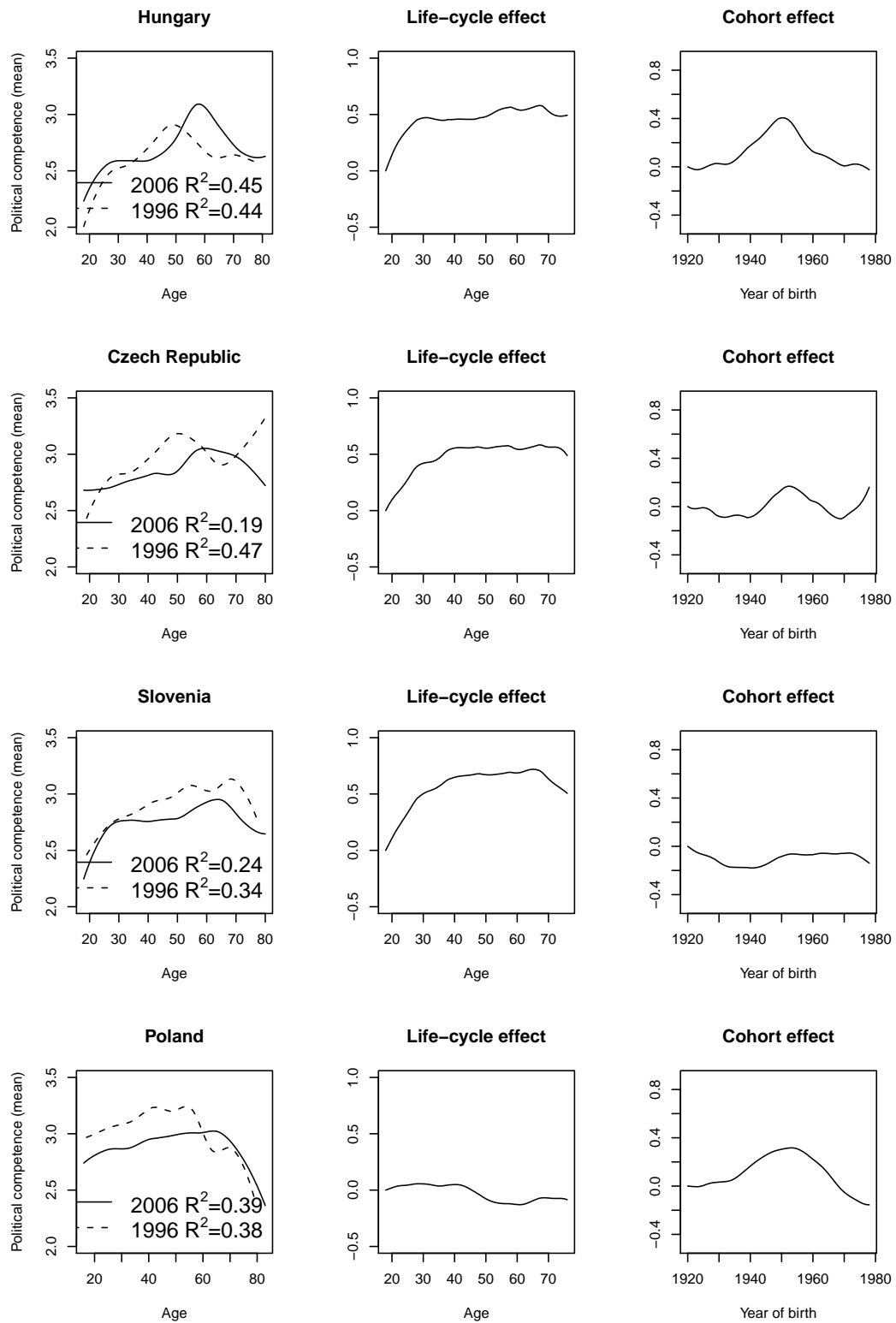
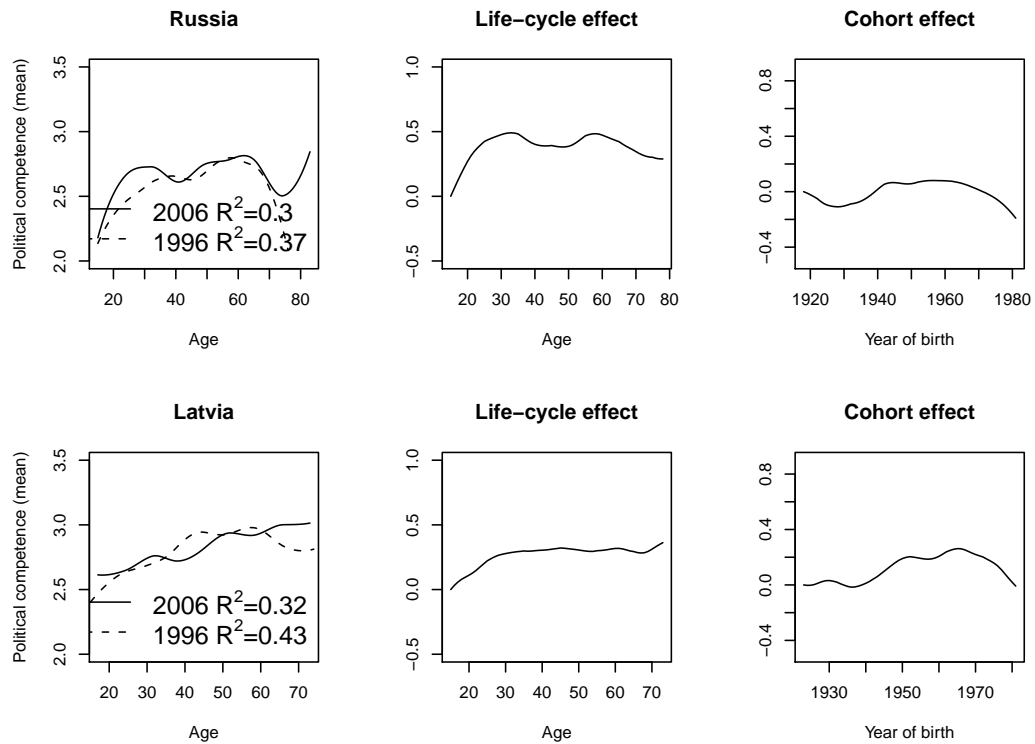*Figure 6.2:* **Political competence in post-communist countries: life-cycle and cohort effects**

Figure 6.3: **Political competence in post-Soviet countries: life-cycle and cohort effects**

countries, perceived political competence decreases slightly after a person reaches 68 (or in Russia and France, 60) years of age.

6.3 Explaining the cohort effect

Before we begin analyzing the cohort effect in more detail, we need to consider that certain cohorts in post-communist countries might stand out not due to repressive regimes' detrimental effects on civic attitudes, but simply due to problems with the attainment of education during certain periods of history.[9] To test this, we must control for education. The solution I applied resembles the one used by Robert Putnam in his paper "Tuning In, Tuning Out: The Strange Disappearance of Social Capital in America" (Putnam, 1995b). I divided the reported years of schooling in three groups: 1) up to 10 years; 2) 11-12 years; 3) 13 years or more. The answers of each age group were weighted according to the average proportion of people with a certain level of education in this group and in the

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[9]Several studies (e.g, Hadjar & Schlapbach, 2009), have shown that education has a robust effect on political interest.

Country	Explained variance	Regression coefficients		
	R^2	**Time**	**Age**	**Cohort**
Post-communist countries				
Hungary	0.56	.	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Czech Republic	0.36	⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Slovenia	0.32	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆
Poland	0.24	⋆⋆⋆	⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Latvia	0.43		⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Russia	0.29		⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Established democracies				
Norway	0.42	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Sweden	0.48	.	⋆⋆⋆	
France	0.38		⋆⋆⋆	
Australia	0.67		⋆⋆⋆	⋆
New Zealand	0.58	⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Great Britain	0.53	⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
United States	0.28		⋆⋆⋆	⋆
Groups of countries				
Post-communist countries	0.61		⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆⋆
Established democracies	0.88	⋆	⋆⋆⋆	⋆⋆

Significant at 0.001⋆⋆⋆ level; at 0.01⋆⋆ level; at 0.05⋆ level

sample in general.

The fact that the R^2's describing the accuracy of the model slightly decrease (Table 6.3), indicates that education plays a certain role. Insufficient education, in fact, is the reason why in post-communist countries, unlike in Western democracies, political

Table 6.3: **Effect of age and year of birth on political competence (education controlled)**

Country	Explained variance R^2	Time	Age	Year
Post-communist countries				
Hungary	0.52	.	***	***
Czech Republic	0.33	***	***	***
Slovenia	0.29	***	***	.
Poland	0.18	***		**
Latvia	0.35		*	***
Russia	0.19		***	**
Groups of countries				
Post-communist countries	0.49		***	***
Established democracies	0.87	*	***	

Significant at 0.001*** level; at 0.01** level; at 0.05* level

competence does not increase after 28 years of age (it does when we control for education (see Appendix A.8). However, controlling for education did not dismiss the previously observed effects. The cohort effect in all post-communist countries still remained significant. In other western democracies, the cohort effect was less significant and disappeared when controlled for education (Table 6.3). It means that the observed generational differences are mainly due to differences in education attainment. Only in Great Britain, New Zealand (significance level 0,001), Norway and the United States (significance level 0.05) we also observe at least some cohort effect,[10] but the pattern is very different (Appendix

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[10]However, one must mention that in the United States even the combined effects of age, time and cohort explain only 28 per cent of the variance. The structure of answers from 1996 to 2006 has changed very much. Partly this might be due to important changes in the political environment in the United States, which might have changed the interest and perceived understanding of politics.

A.1).

There are two ways of explaining the distinct cohort curve in the graphs of post-communist countries. Firstly, one can analyse where the line dips, and assume that decreasing political competence results from the receipt of negative impulses during the most impressionable years of political socialization, which discouraged political involvement. According to cultural theories, people who live under repressive regimes tend to become alienated from politics, both for fear of punishment or prosecution, and because of a conviction that political action is meaningless. Indeed, if we look at the graphs (Figures 6.1, 6.2), in post-communist countries there is a characteristic drop in perceived political competence between those born before 1950. The "survivor generation", as (2007) label them, experienced war or its immediate aftermath, including the repressions of the consolidation period of the communist regime. The older they are (the more of those periods they experienced) the less interested and knowledgeable about politics they are.

Another way to look at the data is to analyse when the curve peaks, assuming that there are positive experiences, such as the increase of civil liberties or a period of massive mobilization or civic activism, that fuelled the political interest and involvement of citizens (Marwell, Aiken, & Demerath, 1987 ; Sears & Levy, 2003 ; Andolina, Jenkins, Zukin, & Keeter, 2003 ; Jennings & Stoker, 2004 ; Putnam, 2000). Obviously, during the most impressionable years of political socialization people are likely to experience both positive and negative impulses. A combination of these determines the overall beliefs and attitudes a person develops. This "total effect" is what can be seen in the graphs, sometimes making it difficult to interpret results.

In order to better understand what particular events might be responsible for the formation of certain cohorts I examine the results in the context of the histories of the respective counties. The interpretation of the graphical results is based on the theory of impressionable years. When there is an unexpected change in attitudes starting from certain birth cohorts, I simply look at what happened in their respective countries at the time of their most impressionable years of adolescence and young adulthood.

Of all the regimes in CEE, Hungary underwent the sharpest set of changes (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Not surprisingly, Hungary has the largest cohort effect. After experiencing one of the most totalitarian and intense periods of Stalinism in Eastern Europe, from 1948 to 1953, Hungary underwent a reform period that led to the 1956 Hungarian

Revolution. The revolution was suppressed by massive military intervention by the Soviet Union. Repressive practices — attacks on revolutionaries, the imprisonment and killing of political opponents, the executions of rebellious intellectuals — were widespread throughout all of the 1950s, including the first years of the Kádár era (1956-1988). The period of massive and cruel reprisals lasted until the spring of 1959 (Békés, Byrne, & Rainer, 2002). Negative changes in Hungarian self-perceived political competence begin with the cohort born before 1949 (Figure 6.2). These people experienced a period of massive repression during at least some of their most impressionable years. Political competence is worst among the cohort born before 1932. All of their "impressionable years" were spent under a very hostile, repressive regime. Moreover, they experienced war during at least some of their formative years. The increase of perceived political competence among those who were born later suggests the positive effect of the mobilization that lead to the Hungarian Revolution and/or the following years of state-society consensus under Kádár. His "goulash communism" was relatively tolerant, open, and, at least until the 1980s, relatively successful (Linz & Stepan, 1996).

Czechoslovakia (that included Czech Republic) was the only country in Eastern Europe to experience uninterrupted democracy from its independence in 1918 until 1938. After a 1948 communist coup, Czechoslovaks became subject to extensive repression. The dogmatic Czechoslovakian Stalinism continued intact even after Stalin's death in 1953 (Linz & Stepan, 1996), as the KSC leadership ignored the Khrushchev thaw. The regime was highly repressive during the 1950s, highlighted by several public trials, the suppression of the writers' rebellion in 1956 and the condemnation of student demonstrations in Prague. In 1968 Slovak leader Alexander Dubček began a cautious effort at reform that rapidly emerged as the peaceful Prague Spring. But Soviet tanks soon crushed it, beginning a stagnant era of Brezhnev doctrine under the leadership of Gustav Husak. Linz et Stepan (1996) call 1968 to 1989 Czechoslovakia a frozen, post-totalitarian by decay regime.

As we see from the Figure 6.2, in Czech Republic perceived political competence begins to decrease with the cohort born around 1949 and earlier. These people were at least 11 years of age when the 1960s began, when the regime had become less repressive. Perceived political competence is worst among the oldest generations, whose basic political socialization took place during the most repressive years of the regime or during the

war. Political skills begin increasing with the cohort born after 1940, i.e., among those who experienced the first attempts at reform leading to Prague Spring in 1968, and the following years of stability and economic growth, during their "most impressionable years".

Yougoslavia (which included Slovenia) was ruled by Tito, who was a popular leader among his own people. Although he distanced himself from Stalin, the first decade after the formation of Yugoslavia in 1945 was characterized by repression — first against German WWII cooperators, and then against political enemies who held pro-Soviet views.[11] From Figure 6.2 we can see that the decrease in perceived political competence begins with the cohort born in 1946 or earlier. As evidenced, repressions against political opposition left a mark on their future political competence. Nevertheless, the regime was never as repressive as in the countries of Eastern bloc, and this is probably the reason why the cohort effect is comparatively weak in Slovenia.

Of all the analysed countries, Poland has the richest history of uprisings and resistance to communist rule. In 1949-1953, the totalitarian tendencies in Poland were strongest, but later the regime was closer to authoritarian than totalitarian (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Therefore it is not surprising that, according to ISSP data, perceived political competence in Poland was higher than that of other analysed post-communist countries. The effects of de-Stalinization were very visible in Poland and included the release of political prisoners, increased freedom of press, etc. (Osa, 2003). The year 1956, when struggles between Stalinists and Gomułka-supporting reformers peaked, was characterized by both growing civic activism and protest and increased repression of it. The peak of the protest movement was a huge riot which ensued when a demonstration of striking workers was broken up in Poznań in June 1956, which was only suppressed with the help of the military (Osa, 2003). The protests finally resulted in the shift from the mini-Stalinism of Bolesław Bierut, to the relative tolerance and Polish nationalism of Gomułka (1956-1970). Repressions briefly increased again in 1957-58 when Gomułka moved to crash social dissent to consolidate his regime (Osa, 2003). As we see in Figure 6.2, political competence begins to decrease sharply among the cohort born in 1945 or earlier. These people were already at least 11 years old in 1956 when the new government, led by Gomułka, became somewhat more liberal, meaning that at least some of

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[11]The secret prison and labor camp on the Croatian island of Goli Otok was used for incarcerating political prisoners until 1956.

their 'impressionable years' were spent under a very hostile regime. The most politically competent generation is the generation born around 1945-1955 which did not have this negative experience during its formative years. Interestingly, this generation accounts for the students who were the driving force behind the 1968-1969 wave of protests related to the party's attempts to hinder Great Novena celebrations, and activities dedicated to the 10 year anniversary of the 1956 events. "They were too young to have experienced Stalinist terror; they did not fear the authorities" (Osa, 2003, 93). The oppression of workers' protests in 1970 was the last time political sanctions exceeded, or "contained", political protest (Osa, 2003). To deal with the massive protests and contain the growing wave of opposition led by the Solidarity movement, on December 31, 1981, General Jaruzelski announced that Poland was under martial law. Despite that, in 1988-89, the regime crumbled and Poland became the first country of east Europe to begin transition.

An interest in and understanding of politics is especially low among the cohort born before 1932. These people experienced the events that followed the 1939 division of Poland by the German-Soviet Pact during their formative years – this included the deportation of the Polish Army into the Soviet Union, deliberate destruction of much of Polish intelligentsia, mass murder in Katyń, and the civil war of 1945-47 (Linz & Stepan, 1996). At the time when the regime became more open and tolerant, their basic political socialization had already been completed. As we see from the Figure 6.2, the political skills of those born after 1932 begin to increase, reflecting the positive effect of de-Stalinization. Even though by the early 1960s Gomułka had withdrawn many of the reforms and liberties that had been enacted in 1956 (including freedom of press), and violently suppressed demonstrations in 1958-59 (Osa, 2003), the period of public trials ended massive reprisals.

In the Soviet Union the political situation under Stalin was harshest – characterized by mass imprisonments and persecution, forced collectivization and mass deportations to labor camps. "The Stalinist system relied on fear and coercive administrative structures, such as the secret police, army, central bureaucratic system, state censorship offices, and Communist Party organs." (Osa, 2003). The environment started changing after Stalin's death in 1953. The de-Stalinization reforms initiated by Khrushchev, Malikov and Molotov involved leadership changes, economic reforms, and the reorientation of state-society relations. Gulag populations were reduced, former political prisoners were

released, the surveillance of Soviet society was relaxed, and the overall level of repression in society decreased somewhat (Osa, 2003). De-Stalinization gathered pace in 1956 after Khrushchev's "secret speech" at the 20th Party Congress, in which he denounced Stalin's crimes, was leaked to the public.

For the people in Russia, in contrast to CEE countries, communism lasted seventy-five years, during much of which totalitarian practices were predominant (Linz & Stepan, 1996). Not surprisingly, according to ISSP data, the self-perceived political competence of Russian citizens is currently the worst among all analysed countries. The decrease in perceived political competence begins with the cohort born before 1943 (Figure 6.3). These people were already adolescent when Stalin died and de-Stalinization began, so at least some of their most impressionable years were spent under his totalitarian rule. As in other countries, the political competence is relatively low among the oldest cohorts. A gradual increase in political skills starts among people born after 1928. Their political socialization was not completed by the time de-Stalinization began, and experiencing these processes during their formative years might have had a positive impact on their future political competence.

Latvia was invaded by Soviet troops and annexed in June 1940, followed by Nazi occupation in 1941 -1944, after which it was re-annexed by the USSR. The cohort pattern in Latvia is similar to that of Russia - the least politically competent generation consists of people born before 1940 who experienced Stalin's regime during at least some of their formative years. However, more so than in Russia, in Latvia we can clearly observe the positive effects of Khrushchev's Thaw. The political competence of people who were born after 1940 and whose political socialization took place after the death of Stalin, during the time of Khrushchev's Thaw, increased. The increase stops with the cohort born after 1952. These people were too young, to remember Khrushchev's Thaw, and their basic political socialization took place during Brezhnev years, during which time the environment had become more hostile once again.

The above described cohort effects were rather expected, as they show that spending formative, most impressionable years under a repressive regime, or during war, can leave a distinct mark on the political competence of citizens. However, I was surprised to find that in virtually all post-communist countries perceived political competence among younger cohorts decreased. In both Latvia and Russia, interest and an understanding of

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politics starts to decrease with the cohort born after about 1968. This "transitional generation" was raised and educated under the Communist rule, and they were adolescents or young adults, with their political competence still in the process of formation, when the system collapsed. "They were trying to form their own identity during a time when society as a whole was searching for a new identity, a time when a dominant theme was the negation and rejection of the existing social system" (Macek et al., 1998, 549). Even though this generation did experience the popular opposition and the fall of the Communist regime during their most impressionable years — something that should have had a positive influence on its political competence – it seemed that there were even stronger negative counter-impulses that discouraged future political involvement.

> "The social and economic transformations occurring in Eastern/Central Europe are a source of pride and joy for many of the citizens of those countries. However, they are not the unfailingly positive experience that many Western commentators might suggest." (Macek et al., 1998, 558)

Indeed, the period of transition was not especially conductive to learning political competence (see Macek et al., 1998 ; Linz & Stepan, 1996). After the system collapsed, the party system was so fragmented and unstable that people started losing track of what was going on and turned away from politics. In Russia, conflicts between the president and the parliament resulted in a constitutional crisis in 1993, when Yeltsin unilaterally dissolved the parliament (Linz & Stepan, 1996). All post-communist countries experienced negative GDP growth during the first years of transition. Radical liberal reforms and liberal propaganda made people think about their own economic success as the main dimension that defines them, and identify oneself predominantly through one's economic position with few references to social or political interests. [12] Social and economic struggles, the discourse of occupation and decolonization led to increasing ethnic tensions in Latvia, alienating the Russian speaking minority.[13] In total, the chaotic political life, characterized by the fragmentation of the party system, conflicted between different regime institutions and empty rhetoric from incompetent and self-centered politicians, in combi-

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[12]There is literature that shows that, for example, in Poland people turned to small business instead of getting involved in civil society (Ekiert & Kubik, 2001)

[13]The process of political transition in Latvia from historical perspective was profoundly analyzed in a book "Latvia in Transition" by Juris Dreifelds (1996) and also "The challenge of change"'by Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs (2001).

nation with personal economic struggles and being more concerned with improving one's living conditions than politics is probably the reason why even under the new, democratic regime they did not become more interested in politics and develop better political competence. This result supports Inglehart's (?) argument about the importance of physical and economic safety during the formative years.

The same pattern can be observed in other post-communist countries – Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland – however the change is sharper, and starts about a decade earlier. Most likely, such an early decrease is related to the measures taken by Communists to get the situation under control once more, including Soviet military intervention and "normalization" in Czechoslovakia or martial law in Poland. On the other hand, it is also clear that none of these countries avoided mistakes typical of the period of transition. Both Václav Havel, the hero of the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, and Lech Wałęsa, the leader of the Solidarity movement in Poland, had an actively anti-political and anti-institutional style (Linz & Stepan, 1996). "The overall atmosphere of dissident life in frozen post-totalitarian Czechoslovakia did not generate much attention to formal institutional matters" (Linz & Stepan, 1996). In Poland Solidarity dissolved in several small parties, and people were frustrated that, as a result of the Round Table Pact, Communists still had a lot of influence on political processes until 1991, when the first free elections to both houses were held. According to Ulram et Plasser (2003) study, as early as 1991 system change had failed to fulfil the hopes of roughly 2/3 of East-Central European citizens, leading to widespread disappointment and disillusionment. Considering the conflicting impulses people received, it is hard to tell the total effect on citizens' political competences. From my data it seems the total effect of this period on the perceived political competence of cohorts, whose formative years coincided with it, was negative, however an additional qualitative analysis could provide more insight and help interpret the results better.

Besides the detrimental effects of the process of transition, there might be an alternative explanation. A number of recent books and articles have documented a decrease in political interest and traditional political engagement of younger generations, and it seems to be common in many Western societies (see Jennings & Stoker, 2004 ; Sears & Levy, 2003 ; Galston, 2001 ; Broek, 1999 ; Jennings, 2007).

"Contemporary young people show unusually low levels of political engage-

ment, in political information, newspaper reading, political interest, and voting turnout" (Sears & Levy, 2003, 35).

The generation born in late 1970's sometimes labelled "DotNets" (Bennett, 2007 ; Andolina et al., 2003) or Generation X (Jennings & Stoker, 2004) show the least interest in conventional politics. The reasons behind the decline of political interest and engagement among youth are still not well understood. Some blame the rise of television (Putnam, 2000), others argue that youth are distracted by various kinds of transitions, still others – the decline in extracurricular involvement and 'applied' civic training in high school, but the most plausible explanation, according to Highton & Wolfinger, 2001, seems to be pure learning through the experience with the political system. The recent IEA Civic Education Study shows that the profile of young people's beliefs about civic engagement is changing — conventional political activities such as joining a political party or participating in discussing political issues as an adult are not very well regarded (Torney-Purta, 2004).

Surprisingly, the cohort born after 1960 is not more politically skilled than the cohort born before 1940, which experienced the harshest years of the totalitarian regime.[14] Yet, the decrease in political competence is slowing down or, as in Czech Republic, even reversing.[15] I currently have only data about people born before 1980, and it is possible that cohorts who did not experience a communist regime and a chaotic period of transition will perceive themselves as more politically competent.

Interestingly, if we look at the graph showing the pattern of answers in other democracies (see Figure 6.1), in the 1996 data we can also observe a decrease in political skills among older people, born before 1934.[16] This might be related to the events surrounding the WWII. In the data of 2006 this pattern is not detectable any more, for most of these people are not in the graph any more. In post-communist countries the slope is still very visible because the events that formed it took place for a decade or more after

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[14]This result contradicts the argument made by Inglehart (1997), that younger (and better-educated) birth cohorts show higher rates of political interest, political discussion, and so forth than their elders.

[15]Czech Republic already was a relatively advanced country economically. Moreover, the government refrained from implementing the most dramatic changes in the economic and social sphere, as a result avoiding (or at least delaying) the initial "shock" (Macek et al., 1998). As a result, compared to other countries in Czech Republic adolescents were the least cynical about economic changes of the 1990's (Macek et al., 1998).

[16]This pattern is not characteristic for Australia and New Zealand

the WWII had already finished.

7 Learned political helplessness and the 'vicious circle' of political socialization in Latvia

This chapter focuses mainly on institutional explanations of the formation of political attitudes and behaviour. On the example of Latvia (ISSP 2006), I argue that there are three psychological mechanisms by which government institutions can facilitate or hinder the development of civil society — through the impact of their performance on (1) the feelings of political efficacy and (2) interpersonal trust. On the basis of ISSP 2006-2007 data, I construct a Structural Equation Model showing that as a result of continuously poor performance and unresponsiveness of government institutions, a society can fall in the 'vicious circle' of political socialization, leading to disenchantment from politics and a weakness of civil society. In addition, this chapter also tests some of the assumptions of the social capital theory.

7.1 Dimensions of political attitudes and behaviour

First, exploratory factor analysis (Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with orthogonal factor rotation model, based on Varimax criterion) was used to create the latent variables to be included in the SEM. Initially, the analysis was performed on a set of 29 variables. As a result of statistical considerations, seven variables were excluded from further analysis.[1]

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[1] For instance, the loadings of V35 and V36 (about the government being successful in providing health care and living standards for old and sick) had split between a factor characterizing the performance of the government and the factor characterizing trust in the government. As there were parameters better characterizing those dimensions, these variables were excluded from the analysis. Also excluded was V58 (about the fair treatment of people like the respondent), as its loadings on the respective factor

The PCA based on the 22 remaining variables in six iterations extracted eight factors accounting for 68 per cent of the variation in the data (see Appendix A.5). Confirmatory factor analysis (maximum likelihood with promax rotation) was used to calculate the final factor scores (see Appendix A.5). Three factors characterize the institutional output:

- "Performance" [PERF] — perceived performance of the government with respect to controlling crime, dealing with threats to security, fighting unemployment and protecting environment [2];

- "Corruption" [CORR] — perceived corruption of politicians and public officials;

- "Trust in political authorities" [I-TRUST] — trust in MP's efforts to keep promises, and trust in civil servants. We can treat these items as describing confidence in political institutions in general, for research has shown that in post-communist countries trust for political institutions is essentially unidimensional, i.e., people do not distinguish among political institutions (Mishler & Rose, 2005).

Attribution is captured by two factors:

- "Political competence" [COMP] — how much confidence people have in their political competence, i.e., how interested and knowing they are about politics. From the perspective of learned helplessness theory these items describe potential internal causal attributions related to one's personal characteristics, and they are global rather than specific (not knowing and interested in politics in general, not some particular issues);

- "Responsiveness" [RESP] — average citizen's influence in politics and people like me have no say. This factor combines the classical internal and external efficacy measures, describing the perceived capability of citizen's to influence politics. From the

were quite low (below 0,6) and V59, V60 and V61 (the perception of corruption) seem to characterize "Corruption" better. Also excluded was the question "Most people are better informed about politics than I am". Contrary to expectations, the correlation between this question and interest and understanding of politics was weak (-0,3), the factor loading was comparatively low, and excluding this parameter significantly improved the Crombach's Alpha

[2]It is important to note that the government respondents describe is the same government that held power at the time when the financial crisis began. Thus, the passivity can not be explained by a change in incumbents, that would make expressing anger and dissatisfaction less meaningful.

perspective of the learned helplessness theory it shows the perceived responsiveness of the system, and seem to describe primarily external global causal attributions.

And partly also by:

- "Generalized trust" [G-TRUST] — trust in people in general. Considering the importance of trust for collective action, it also indicates collective efficacy. Research on learned group helplessness has found that in case of collective action, besides themselves and the unresponsive "system", individuals also tend to attribute failure to other group members (Simkin et al., 1983), and these feelings are reflected in low trust in them.

Finally, the actual behaviour is measured by two factors:

- "Unconventional activities" [UNCON] — approval of public protest meetings, demonstrations and anti-government strikes; [3].

- "Participation in associations" [ASSOC] — frequency of participation in interest groups, non-political voluntary associations such as sports or cultural associations, church or religious organizations, community-service or civic association/group, and political parties or organisations.

In the next step these latent variables were included in the general structural equation model. The relations and lack of relations between the variables (or restriction on the model) were set according to the theory (as shown in Figure 1), and were discussed briefly in the introduction.

There are some differences between the final SEM (Figure 7.1) and the theoretical model (Figure 1). Initially the analysis was meant to cover four types of participation: 1) conventional participation; 2) unconventional participation; 3) participation in political voluntary associations and 4) participation in non-political voluntary associations, Unfortunately, there were no reliable measures of conventional participation available in the

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[3]The questionnaire did not contain direct questions about the frequency of engagement in such activities, however these items can be considered an acceptable proxy. ISSP 1996 included questions about whether one has participated or would participate in unconventional activities, and their approval, and comparing them allows to conclude that they essentially measure the same dimension. In factor analysis approval of mobilized political actions and the expressed readiness to participate in them load on one dimension that explains 63% of the variation in the data. Crombach's Alpha is 0.85, and Spearman's correlation coefficient 0.5.

Latvian data. [4] Secondly, participation in political and non-political associations was so highly correlated that treating them as separate factors was not justified. Based on the results of factor analysis they were merged together. This move is theoretically justified, for membership in both types of organizations can increase individual's potential for political involvement and activity (Almond & Verba, 1989 ; Putnam, 2000). Moreover, as noted earlier, the literature suggests that even non-political associations can become a political actor when the need arises (Putnam, 2000 ; Lelieveldt & Caiani, 2007). The only other important difference from the theoretical model is that in the SEM the feedback loops from participation to performance and corruption were not specified. The reason for that is that individual level survey data (such as ISSP) can not uncover the existence or non-existence of such link. The most I could do is to discover whether people who participate in different political activities *see* the government as less corrupt and performing better. Therefore for this argument I shall rely on previous surveys (see section "Political trust"). The model also includes measurement errors for endogenous and exogenous variables and allows for covariance among measurement errors E3 and E1 , and covariance between "Performance" and "Corruption" (see Figure 7.1).

The model is estimated by the ADF (asymptotically distribution-free) method, and was calculated using SPSS Amos 7.0.

7.2   A model of top-down political socialization

The initial model (not shown here) proved to be not very good, so it was respecified by eliminating the links that turned out to be not significantly different from "0" even at the 90 per cent level ($p > 0.1$).

Some of such false links that had to be eliminated from the model were links leading from participation in voluntary associations to generalized trust and political competence. In Latvia trust and civic skills do not emerge as a result of participation in voluntary associations. Even if some people indeed become more trusting and politically competent, some others might also become disappointed and lose trust and grow disaffected with

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[4]"Vote last election" could have been used as a proxy, however in Latvia a considerable number of inhabitants are not citizens of the country and are not eligible to vote. As a result 8,2 per cent did not answer the question. It means that the pattern of data loss here is not random, but systematic. Due to a high risk of systematic error, this question was not included in the analysis.

politics. The fact that my model does not provide support for the classical assumptions of social capital theory is actually not surprising. As mentioned before, a growing number of studies have recently revealed that the role of civic participation and associational membership in developing trust and democratic attitudes is often overstated (seeKeefer & Knack, 1997 ; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003 ; Armigeon, 2007, among others).

The model shows that distrust in political authorities discourages participation in voluntary associations, however, I do not find a direct relation between the confidence in institutions and unconventional political action. People who are dissatisfied with the actions of their leaders will not necessarily show support for mobilized unconventional activities. Accordingly, this initially hypothesized link had to be eliminated.

Besides deleting the insignificant links, AMOS modification indices suggested including an additional link: a direct link from performance of political authorities to generalized trust, that allowed to significantly improve the model fit.

The final respecified model is shown in Figure 7.1. According to the chi-square, BIC and other statistical indicators (see Kaplan, 2008), it proved to be significantly better than the initial model. Chi-square statistics for the model is very satisfactory (chi-square=12,7 with 13 degrees of freedom), and the p-value of 0,468 suggests that the model can not be rejected. Figure 7.1 also shows the basic goodness-of-fit estimators.

The goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) that measure the descriptive adequacy of the model allow to conclude that the model fits the data very well. The same conclusion can be drawn from RMSEA (root mean-squared error approximation), which is an estimate of fit of the model relative to a saturated model in the population. The fact that it is almost zero, indicates a very good fit of the model. And, finally, the NFI (normal fit index) of .94 means that the overall fit of the tested model is 94% better than that of an independence model (where the variables are assumed to be uncorrelated with each other), based on the sample data. It is also important to note that the model is non-recursive – it includes a feedback loop between two endogenous variables – and as such it has some limitations. It is difficult to interpret the results of root mean square residuals in non-recursive models. In other words, it is not possible to say what proportion of a specific endogenous variable is explained by all the other variables in the model.[5] Nevertheless, the good fit of the model allows to conclude

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[5]In order to test the robustness of the results, I also calculated a recursive model without the two feedback loops (see Appendix A.7). The model fit indices suggested that this model is slightly worse than

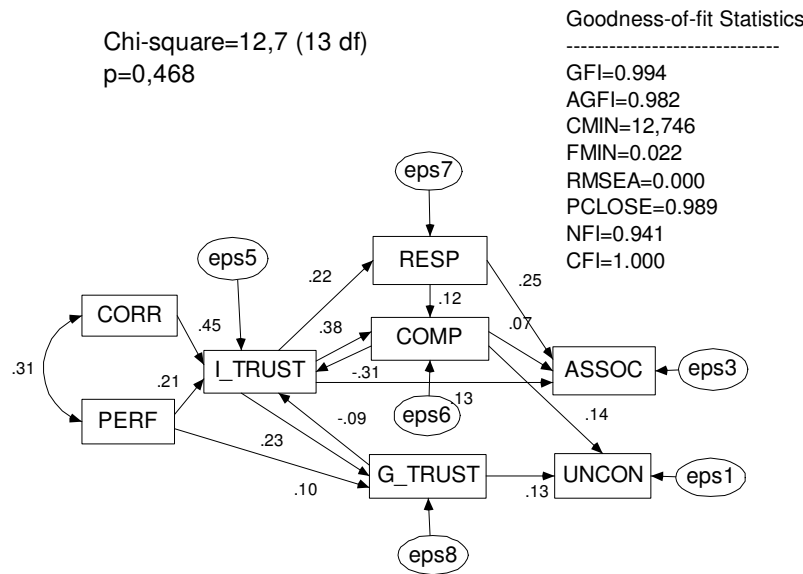that the vicious circle is indeed a real possibility that should be taken into account.

Figure 7.1: **Results of the SEM (standartized estimates)**

I find a particulary strong evidence for the so-called "performance hypothesis". Trust in political authorities is explained to a large extent by the perceived corruption (alfa=.45) and evaluations of their performance (alfa=.21) (Table **??**). The covariance between these two indicators is also significant. This leads to a rather commonsensical conclusion that if the political authorities seem corrupt, and people find their performance unsatisfactory, trust in them will decrease. This corresponds to assumptions of institutional theories.

The upper part of the model reveals that there is a significant link (alfa=.22) between institutional trust and their perceived responsiveness. Those who do not trust their political authorities, tend to see them as unresponsive, and do not expect to be listened to, even if they expressed their dissatisfaction. Distrust in political authorities also has a substantial negative effect on citizen's perceived political competence. If people are disappointed with political authorities, they are likely to become disenchanted from politics – lose interest and stop following politics, and less capable of understanding the problems facing the country. The standardized coefficient linking institutional trust to

the non-recursive model, but it also can not be rejected (chi-square 26.5 (15df), p=0.033, RMSEA=0.037, GFI=0.987, NFI=877).

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
I_TRUST	<---	PERF	.213	.047	4.573	***
I_TRUST	<---	CORR	.450	.044	10.327	***
G_TRUST	<---	PERF	.101	.053	1.895	.058
UNCON	<---	G_TRUST	.131	.042	3.108	.002
UNCON	<---	COMP	.137	.039	3.501	***
ASSOC	<---	COMP	.071	.036	1.951	.051
ASSOC	<---	RESP	.237	.044	5.421	***
ASSOC	<---	I_TRUST	.122	.045	2.690	.007
RESP	<---	I_TRUST	.225	.044	5.077	***
COMP	<---	I_TRUST	.381	.099	3.848	***
G_TRUST	<---	I_TRUST	.236	.094	2.512	.012
SKILLS	<---	RESP	.118	.046	2.573	.010
I_TRUST	<---	COMP	-.302	.091	-3.302	***
I_TRUST	<---	G_TRUST	-.087	.085	-1.021	.307
PERF	<-->	CORR	.305	.043	7.180	***

Note: The estimates reflect the strength of relation between the two variables. S.E. is the approximate standard error, C.R. – critical ratio (the parameter estimate divided by an estimate of its standard error), P – the level of significance for regression weight(tests of the null that the regression coefficient is zero).

Figure 7.2: **The unstandardised estimates and related statistics**

political competence is .38, plus there is small indirect effect that goes through responsiveness (.22*.12/100=.026) which makes a total effect of about .41. The mechanisms behind the described relations can be different, and they are discussed in more detail in the theoretical part of the thesis.

In addition, performance of political authorities has both a direct and indirect impact (mediated by trust in political authorities) on how much trust people will have in their fellow citizens in general. This result is in line with some previous research (e.g., Muller and Seligson 1994) showing that week institutional performance can spread general distrust throughout society. It also provides further support for the argument that trust in institutions 'tickles down' and facilitates interpersonal trust among people in general. At the same time, just like Mishler and Rose (2005), I do not find that generalized trust (or distrust) 'spills up' to institutions (p=.307). It means that trust or distrust in political authorities is essentially endogenous.

Perceived responsiveness of the political authorities has a moderately strong effect

(alfa=.25) on participation in voluntary associations. It means that if people believe that the average citizen does not have any influence on politics they will be less likely to engage in any social or political groups. At the same time, responsiveness does not have an impact on unconventional participation. Again, it shows that the unresponsiveness of the government does not allow to form clear expectations regarding whether to expect unconventional mobilized activities or not. On one hand, obviously, there is disappointment and dissatisfaction with the authorities, but on the other, most activities that are oriented towards the political system (such as demonstrations, strikes, etc.), be it conventional or unconventional, still require open ears in the government to have an effect. I people believe that their actions will make no impact anyway, they might perceive engaging in any such activities as a waste of time. Moreover, if the learned helplessness theory can be applied to political processes, continuous unresponsiveness of the government and the perceived lack of control over political processes can create a negative mindset and expectations that there is nothing one can do, thus leading to inappropriate political passivity in general.

Perceived political competence, that characterizes respondent's political interest and understanding, has a significant yet not very strong impact on both types of political participation analysed in this study. The more interested and knowing people are about politics, the more likely they will participate in voluntary associations (trade unions, parties, cultural groups, civic associations etc.), and also engage in unconventional political activities. If people don't care and/or don't understand politics, the participation rates will be low. These findings correspond to the theory that says that confidence in personal abilities can motivate civic participation. It is also in line with the learned helplessness theory that emphasizes the potentially detrimental effects of negative global internal attributions (such as personal competence) for subsequent behaviour.

Even though generalized trust is not related to participation in voluntary associations in Latvia, trust has a small (alfa=.13) effect on support for unconventional activities. This conclusion is easy to understand from the perspective of collective action and the group efficacy thesis. People need to have trust in others, and have confidence that they are also going to contribute to the common good, otherwise they are less likely to contribute anything themselves.

Although I do not find a direct link between institutional trust and unconventional

activities, there is an indirect effect which leads through perceived political competence and generalized trust. It means that the reaction of people in the case of institutional distrust is mediated by their perceived efficacy (political competence and the perceived responsiveness of the political authorities) and generalized trust. Nevertheless, this indirect effect is week (smaller than .10). This is probably why the relations between distrust in institutions and unconventional activities are sometimes found to be inconsistent or insignificant. If for some other reasons not included in the model people develop high perceived political competence (interest and understanding of politics), it can 'outweight' the lack of generalized trust and still initiate unconventional activities.

8 Conclusions

8.1 State-society relations in post-communist countries

The most recent statistical data from the ISSP indicate that post-communist countries, even after twenty years of democratization still form a distinct cluster characterized by low political trust and efficacy. By using a modified Paige's theoretical model I have shown that, as stated in H2, while citizens in most established democracies bear allegiant attitudes, citizens of post-communist countries feel alienated.

During the past ten years the political alienation/ disenchantment of people from politics in most post-communist countries has slightly decreased, as people have become more confident in their capability to influence government decisions, and (at least in some countries) perceive their government as more responsive to citizen's needs.[1] The improvements are small and they are happening slowly, nonetheless, they should not be overlooked. They show that people feel that they are slowly gaining more influence on politics, becoming part of the political decision-making process rather than being just passive political subjects. The dynamics of self-perceived political competence and confidence in political authorities has been very different, and in post-communist countries on average, these attitudes have not improved. People still so not have much understanding and interests in political processes, and see their politicians as untrustworthy. Thus, H3 is not supported by the data.

Slovenia, Hungary and East-Germany can be said to have made the most overall progress during the past ten years in reducing alienation of citizens — all political attitudes have improved, thus, supporting a trend of convergence with the advanced democracies.

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[1]A notable exception is Latvia, where perceived responsiveness of the government from 1996 to 2006 significantly decreased.

Not much progress with regards to political alienation can be observed in the Czech Republic and Poland (were the situation was comparatively good in 1996), and Latvia. Thus, this study also shows that we should not over-generalize when speaking of the dynamics of political attitudes in post-communist countries. Despite similarities in the past, the current political climate and the performance of incumbents differs from country to country.

The WVS data about the dynamics of generalized trust (the mostly used common proxy for social capital) show that in general, at the beginning of 90-ties there was more generalized trust among citizens of post-communist countries than there is nowadays. If we look at past ten years (similarly as we did with respect to political alienation) we see that there is no general trend.

According to the Michael Woolcock's and Deepa Narayan's (2000) model of state-society relations most post-communist countries that were included in my analysis (Russia, Hungary, Poland, Croatia) are characterized by low trust in both each other and the political authorities. Such circumstances provide a fruitful ground for social exclusion, crime and discrimination and increases the risk of conflicts, violence, war or anarchy. This result corresponds to H1. However, in Latvia and Czech Republic the levels of bridging social capital are slightly higher than in other post-communist countries. As the performance of authorities has fallen well short of expectations, citizens have retreated in *coping strategies*. They are building and using private networks to overcome difficulties and succeed both economically and socially. This type of countries, where social capital basically substitutes for weak, hostile, or indifferent institutions, can be considered *"dysfunctional"*.

Currently the most alarming is the situation in Russia, where the citizens are most alienated, there is little social capital and the risk of conflicts is high. Also one should mention Latvia: the political alienation there is a little bit less widespread, but improvements are negligible. Still, the existing bridging social capital can be effectively used to promote development and overcome current economic crisis.

8.2   Cultural embeddedness of political attitudes

In my thesis I have conducted a micro-level analysis of the cultural embededness of political attitudes, related to political alienation. The results provide little support for

the assumption that political culture of the past is responsible for the political alienation (confidence in political authorities, perception of their responsiveness, as well as perceived self-efficacy) in post-communist countries today.[2] Contrary to H4, these attitudes are not systematically related to age, which supports the "life-time-openness view". It seams that Sears is right, and attitudes related to political alienation are indeed one of the least 'symbolic'. The popular claim that the legacy of communism is responsible for the widespread political alienation in post-communist countries seems to be largely unfounded.

The fact that political alienation can not be found to be inherited from the previous regime is rather encouraging. It also means that institutional explanations deserve far more attention that they get with regards to post-communist countries. Contemporary institutions can be considered more significant in causing scepticism and distrust toward authorities. It must be said though, that these institutions themselves (if not their formal structures, then the informal practices that prevail within them) can be linked to communist and pre-communist legacies. In any case, the performance of institutions in post-communist countries has obviously fallen short of the expectations. By working more efficiently, avoiding corruption, ensuring the transparency of decisions and involving different social groups in democratic process in their communities, political authorities can significantly decrease the political disenchantment of citizens.

The only indicator consistently related to age in all analysed countries is *perceived political competence*, i.e., the interest and understanding of politics. With this regard my findings support the "persistence view" and in particular, the impressionable years and ageing stability hypotheses. It seems that for learning political skills necessary for effective political action, the childhood years matter title. The *conscious* years of adolescence or early adulthood have the most impact on future political competence of an individual. The "period of maximum change", according to my data, is approximately between the ages of 11 and 28. [3] If no distractions interrupt acquisition of political skills, they will continue developing with age throughout the whole life of an individual, just somewhat

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[2]An important consideration that has to be taken into account in this type of surveys is the time lag between events thought to have had a lasting impact on attitudes, and the time of the survey. According to the literature, the cohort effect can fade with time, as individuals adjust their cognitive schemes to the new reality. It is possible that we would have found at least some path-dependency if we had looked for it sooner after these events took place.

[3]These numbers are drawn visually from the graph, so they can only be considered approximate. The range might also be from about 10-14 to about 26-29 years of age.

slower. In addition, my data allow to conclude that political skills will develop in line with this pattern even under a non-democratic, Communist-led regime, even though they will be worse. Unfortunately, in post-communist countries we can not observe any additional increase in political skills after the age of 28, the reason being comparatively lower education level among older generations.

As suggested in H5, there is a similar and unique pattern of answers regarding political competence in all post-communist countries. In western democracies perceived political competence increases almost linearly with age, while in post-communist countries we observe a clear decline in perceived political competence among older people. Statistical analysis based on local linear regression confirms that what we see is not a matter of life-cycle (ageing) – it demonstrates distinct attitudes of certain birth cohorts. People who lived through the harshest, most repressive and violent years of a communist regime (1940s to 1950s) during their formative years tend to think they have less political competence. It seems that the traumatizing experiences they went through as adolescents or young adults have discouraged political engagement and hindered the learning of necessary political competence, this effect persisting through their lifetime. The most politically competent generation at the moment in post-communist countries is (contrary to H4) the cohort born around 1950 — people who are currently about 60 years old. Following Mishler et Rose (2007) one can call this generation the "normal generation". The political socialization of this cohort took place when the communist-led governments had firmly established themselves, become more 'humane', the situation had stabilized and economies were experiencing certain growth.

A surprising finding is that, contrary to H6, there are no improvements in political attitudes among younger cohorts in post-communist countries. In fact, with the exception of Latvia, the perceived political competence of the cohort born after 1960 is about as low as that of the cohort born before 1940. The "transitional generation" born during the last few decades of communist rule, was adolescent or young adult, probably just finishing school or university, when the communist system fell apart. Political socialization took place during hard economic conditions and dramatic social and political change, and it seems to have discouraged or distracted acquiring political competence. One can conclude that, besides political oppression, some other factors can be equally detrimental to acquiring political competence, such as economic hardship, economic or social insecurity,

or disappointment with political processes in general.[4].

Twenty years have passed since communist parties in Central and Eastern Europe lost their power. Nevertheless, there is no reason to expect the political competence of citizens of post-communist countries to improve so soon. The last years of the Communist regime and the hard process of transition has left a negative mark even on people who are currently middle-aged. Moreover, with the exception of Czech Republic, there is no young, more politically efficient generation in sight. The culture of political disengagement continued to be cultivated even after the fall of communist regimes, and this is something we must understand and address to ensure the success of democratic development in Central and Eastern Europe. Future studies on political socialization are needed to better understand the declining political engagement among younger generations in both East in West, as well as to assess the potential problems on the road to democracy in formerly repressive regimes.

8.3 Learned political helplessness and the vicious circle of top-down political socialization

Using Structural Equation Modelling on the example of Latvia (ISSP 2006, 2007) I find that, as stated in hypothesis H7b, there are three main psychological mechanisms by which the performance of political authorities can influence political activism and facilitate or hinder the development of civil society — through its impact on (1) the sense of political efficacy; (2) perceived political competence; and (3) interpersonal trust.

Overall, the analysis clearly shows that the 'vicious circle' — starting from the poor performance and unresponsiveness of political authorities, and leading to disenchantment from politics and a weakness of civil society — is indeed a real possibility. The data strongly supports the 'performance hypothesis' — low institutional trust is largely a result of high perceived corruption and dissatisfaction with the performance of the authorities. Untrustworthiness of political authorities, on the other hand, decreases the sense of external political efficacy: people stop seeing their governments as responsive to

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[4]Analysis of the reasons behind the decreasing political competence among younger generations are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study. This study is only testing the legacy argument, without analysing what else might be responsible for popular attitudes.

citizen's needs and demands and stop believing that they can have any say in what the government does. In addition (and partly as a result of the perceived unresponsiveness of the authorities), people lose the sense of internal political efficacy — become disenchanted from politics and lose confidence in their own political competence. These effects lead to them abstaining from institutionalized conventional political activities. Whether people will show support for unconventional political activities depends on their sense of internal political efficacy and their trust in each other. Unfortunately, these attitudes are themselves negatively influenced by the lack of trust in political institutions, largely resulting from their poor performance and corruption.[5]

One can conclude that poor institutional performance and the loss of trust in political authorities has a negative effect on people's perceptions of politics, of themselves and of each other, discouraging further political engagement. The theoretical model specified in Figure 1 can not be rejected, thus supporting H8. Accordingly, I would argue that the concept of "learned helplessness" at the group level can be applied also in the field of politics. There is a risk of falling into a self sustaining vicious circle that might not be easy to break.

From the rational choice perspective, the analysis demonstrates that there are two kinds of Nash equilibria of political participation that can be reached: the high or 'civic', and the low or the 'uncivic' equilibrium. From the point of view of rational choice theories (e.g.(Wittman, 1989)), both of them are, in essence, rational expectation traps. Both the political leaders and the masses have certain expectations about the behaviour of others, and about what can be gained or lost if certain course of action is taken. If the masses do not feel that they are listened to, and do not expect any benefits from participation, they will choose to abstain. If politicians see the masses as passive and unable to hold them accountable, poor decisions and corruption will tend to persist. The negative equilibrium can be considered a sign of a democratic failure. Because there is a certain inertia in people's perceptions and expectations, creating a 'learning lag', this Nash trap might be hard to get out of. Apart from fighting corruption and restoring the trust in political authorities, raising the education level of the population might probably be one of the

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[5]Even though there are no direct links from distrust in political authorities and the belief of their unresponsiveness to unconventional political activities, there *is* a week but significant direct link from confidence in authorities to conventional political activities. Thus, we must conclude that H7a is not fully supported by the data.

best available solutions to increase the political activity of citizens and overcome political helplessness.

In the case of Latvia, unsatisfactory performance of political authorities facilitates alienation of the people from politics and loss of both their sense of political efficacy as well as of their personal political competence, having an additional detrimental effect on interpersonal trust and, thus, leading to decreased participation in all kinds of groups and actions — both conventional and unconventional. This reflects the mechanisms described in the learned helplessness theory. However, other types of studies, preferably on the basis of longitudinal surveys or time-series data, are needed to uncover to what extent helplessness actually *has* been learnt. Unfortunately, it seems that the negative "top-down" political socialization characterized by low approval and responsiveness of political authorities still continues, leading one to expect low efficacy and activity levels of citizen's in the future. Accordingly, there is little reason to believe that the frustration and dissatisfaction will somehow accumulate to the point of an actual revolt. If it will happen, it will most likely be because of severe economic problems or some unexpected exogenous push factors.

The results of this study also allow to conclude that the role of voluntary associations in facilitating development of social capital and civic attitudes might indeed be overstated, at least in the case of Latvia. Participation in voluntary associations does not increase interpersonal trust and political competence, and this result corresponds to H9. Apart from fighting corruption and restoring confidence in political authorities, raising the education level of the population might probably be one of the best available solutions to increase the political activity of citizens and overcome political helplessness.

8.4   Discussion

This study has shown that the role of historical legacy with regards to political alienation is negligible. Even though there is some truth in cultural theories, post-communist researchers should be careful not to make the same mistake as the first-wave political socialization researchers, and not to generalize when speaking about the legacy of communist regime. The results of this study demonstrate that the legacy argument is true for some political dispositions (political competence), but might not be true for others.

The hypotheses about the cultural inheritance of low self-efficacy, distrust in politi-

cal authorities and their responsiveness to citizens' demands in post-communist countries, were not supported by the data. Thus, contrary to the claims of some well known scholars, I do not find any evidence in the data that would point to the cultural inheritance of political alienation. At the same time, this study revealed a unique and surprisingly similar cohort effect in all post-communist countries, that reflects consistent and enduring generational differences in *perceived political competence.* People who experienced war or lived through the harshest, most repressive and violent years of a communist regime during their formative years tend to think they have less political competence. Thus, probably one of the main conclusions of my study is that repressive regimes that hinder or discourage learning of political skills during the most impressionable years of adolescence and early adulthood (which, according to my study, are approximately between the ages of 11 to 28), can be expected to manifest in generations of incompetent, disengaged citizenry. Moreover, the study has also shown that it is too simplistic to look at the communist regime as one homogeneous period of time. For example, although Stalin and Khruschev both were leaders of the same regime, their approach was quite different, thus, the consequences of that regime will differ too.

Political competence is extremely low also among the "transitional generation" born during the last few decades of communist rule. Their political socialization took place during hard economic conditions and dramatic social and political change, and it seems to have discouraged or distracted acquiring political competence. This result suggests that it is not just the history of repressions and liberations that matter for acquiring political competence, but also the socio-economic conditions and the general political atmosphere in the country. So far, researchers have overlooked or gravely underestimated the detrimental effects of post-communist transitions for the political attitudes of citizens of these countries, mainly looking to explain political apathy and disenchantment with the legacy of the communist regime.

Political socialization theories have received a lot of criticism during the past few decades and have been shown to be wrong on several points. Nowadays, however, these theories have reassessed their basic assumptions and are becoming popular among political scientists once more. This study compliments the discussions by helping to better explain some of the problematic issues, such as — which attitudes can or can not be considered "symbolic", when is the "maximum period of change", etc. Further studies are needed to

disclose which attitudes are learned early in life and persistent throughout the life-cycle.

An important conclusion from the study is related to the so called "Putnam thesis". A growing number of studies have recently questioned the basic assumptions of social capital theory, mainly, the communitarian view. The results of this study provide further evidence that the positive role of participation in generating trust and democratic attitudes is overstated, at least in case of Latvia. One of the reasons for that might be that associations in post-communist countries are known to be different from associations in mature democracies. As some authors have noted (e.g., Font et al., 2007 ; Kriesi, 2007 ; Selle, 1999), they are often crafted "from above", and heavily depend on external sponsors who provide funding for achievement of specific goals. The donors policy strongly affects the type, form, scope and style of organizations, thus probably allowing less space for individual initiative. It must be said though that I have only analysed a limited set of potential benefits from participation, mainly those related to civil society and the functioning of democracy. It is possible that some associations indeed facilitate cooperation, and povide all kinds of other benefits (information, practical skills, economic benefits etc.) not discussed in this study (but see, for example, Tisenkopfs, Lace, & Mierina, 2008).

As said before, the weakness of civil society, political disenchantment and distrust in political authorities among citizens in post-communist countries is often routinely attributed to communist heritage. By lessening prejudices about the cultural embeddedness of certain attitudes, this study invites to critically analyse current processes more, besides looking for explanations in the past. Institutional explanations deserve far more attention than they usually get with regards to post-communist countries. The results obtained in course of this thesis point to the importance of the state institutions, and the need to carefully plan and reconsider the communication with the society. "Top – down" political socialization is among the factors responsible for current political mood and political activity (or rather lack of activity) of the society. SEM indicates that, whether political authorities promote growth, avoid corruption, are effective in enforcing laws, and whether they prove to be responsive and trustworthy, affects the norms and values that dominate in the society — the dispositions, expectations and perceptions of people regarding other people, themselves and their role as citizens. More studies about this type of political socialization are needed.

In this PhD thesis I have attempted to analyse these processes from the perspective

of learned helplessness theory, demonstrating that the learned helplessness mechanism can be successfully applied to the political realm. I have also shown that a vicious circle of "top-down" political socialization is indeed a real possibility. At the same time, this study probably raises even more questions than it answers. One of such crucial questions is, — for how long has the government to perform badly and be unresponsive for a "helpless society" to be created. If a government starts to perform really badly *suddenly*, in what is otherwise a positive environment, a vicious circle will surely not be created — we should expect reactance. Learning processes are long. According to the theory, it takes continuous, unsuccessful attempts at influencing a situation to learn helplessness.[6] In addition, it is not clear what type of stimulus it takes to create feelings of powerlessness in the political realm and how it can be overcome. There is also a more general question about what leads to unconventional political activism. Can dissatisfaction accumulate leading to something like a "critical mass" of dissatisfaction, or is it a one-way, down-the-hill, road? In the future it would be necessary to broaden the analysis by including the indicators from the attribution theory, i.e., by analyzing how people explain the lack of success, how they rationalize the situation.

According to learned helplessness theory, it is important in what people see the cause of their powerlessness. This process of attribution is strongly influenced by culture. In some countries people tend to attribute their failures to external causes, in others — primarily to themselves. Accordingly, they might react in different ways. Internal attributions of failure are psychologically much more damaging to an individual. Therefore, people typically try to attribute negative experiences such as the lack of control over what the politicians do to external causes. In case of an authoritarian or totalitarian regime it is much easier to do than in case of a democratically elected government. Thus, theoretically, the unresponsiveness of political authorities in democratic regimes can have even more debilitating psychological effects in the long term, for it facilitates internal attributions.

As part of the thesis, a new, visually nice and statistically strong technique of the cohort analysis has been developed. Still, in order to become a reliable tool of analysis for other researchers dealing with the generation vs. life-cycle effect, I have to do more

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[6]Moreover, research has shown that, unlike animals, humans do not even have to directly experience uncontrollable events in order to become helpless; They can acquire helplessness vicariously by observing others (Peterson et al., 1995).

testing to validate the method and to see how well it actually works. I would also like to expand the application of the method to more than two waves. Such a new technique might be interesting to a lot of researchers.

The results of the thesis with regards to specifics of political attitudes in post-communist countries and their dynamics correspond to conclusions reached by other researchers. The changes in post-communist countries are happening slowly, sporadically and they are not very convincing. Moreover, with regards to political alienation, these countries still form a more or less homogeneous cluster. There are some small positive changes, however. People are slowly starting to feel more able to influence politics. These are important changes, so they should not be overlooked. If the quality of governance would increase and corruption decrease, attitudes and behaviour of citizens would change after some time and the problem of "weakness of civil society", so characteristic for post-communist countries, could be overcome.

9 Acknowledgements

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A Tables and figures

Table A.1: **Countries covered in both ISSP survey years: 1996 and 2006**

| Country	Sample size 2006	Time of fieldwork 2006	Sample size 1996	Time of fieldwork 1996
Post-communist countries				
Hungary	1010	01/2006	1500	1996
Poland	1293	02/*2008*	1183	*1997*
Slovenia	1003	10/2006–11/2006	1004	*1995*
Czech Republic	1201	10/2006–11/2006	1100	1996
Latvia	1069	05/*2007*–06/*2007*	1505	1996
Russia	2407	01/*2007*	1691	*1997*
Other comparable countries in Europe				
Sweden	1194	02/2006-04/2006	1238	1996
Norway	1330	09/2006-11/2006	1344	1996
Germany	1643	03/2006-08/2006	3470	1996
France	1824	09/2006-12/2006	1312	*1997*
Spain	2517	01/*2007*-03/*2007*	2494	1996
Great Britain	930	06/2006-11/2006	989	1996
Switzerland	1003	02/*2007*-08/*2007*	2518	*1998*
Ireland	1001	10/*2005*-02/2006	994	1996
Other comparable countries outside Europe				
Japan	1231	11/2006	1249	1996
New Zealand	1263	08/2006-10/2006	1198	1997
Australia	2781	07/2007-10/2007	2151	1996
Canada	933	03/2006-10/2006	1182	1996
USA	1518	03/2006-08/2006	1332	1996
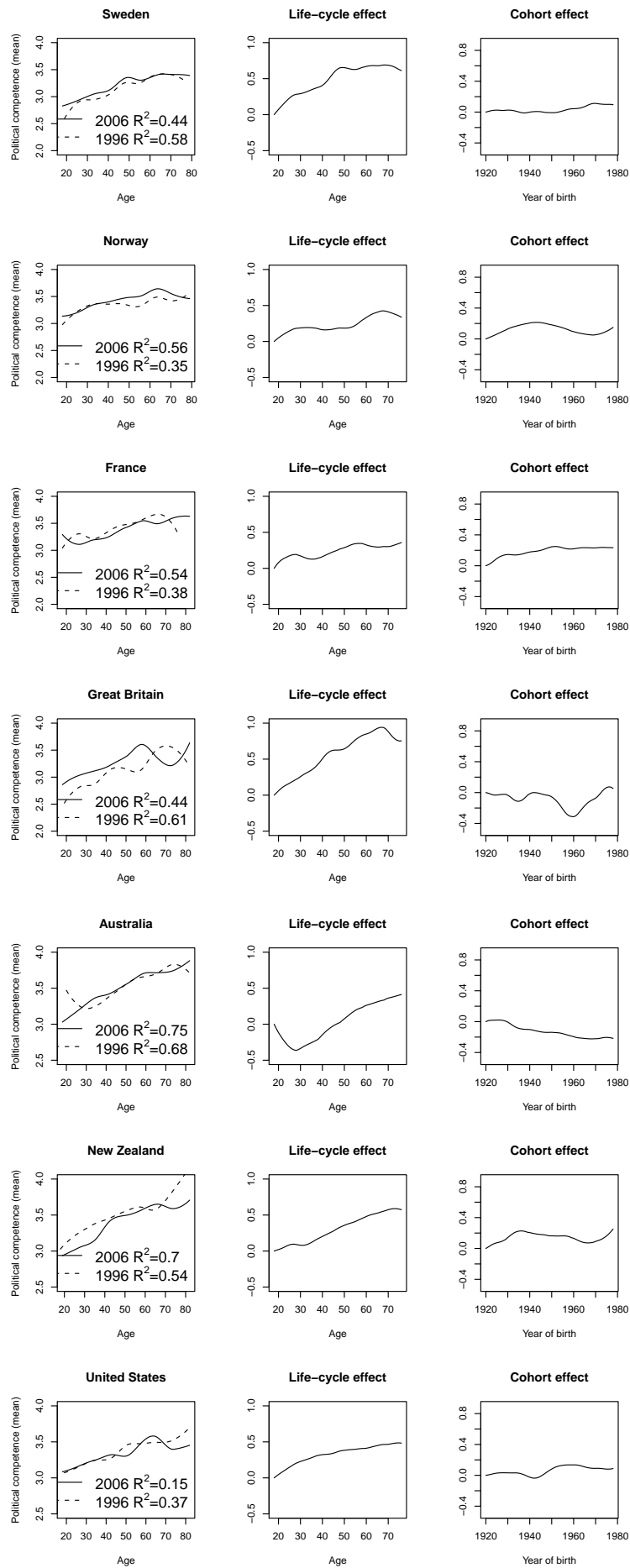
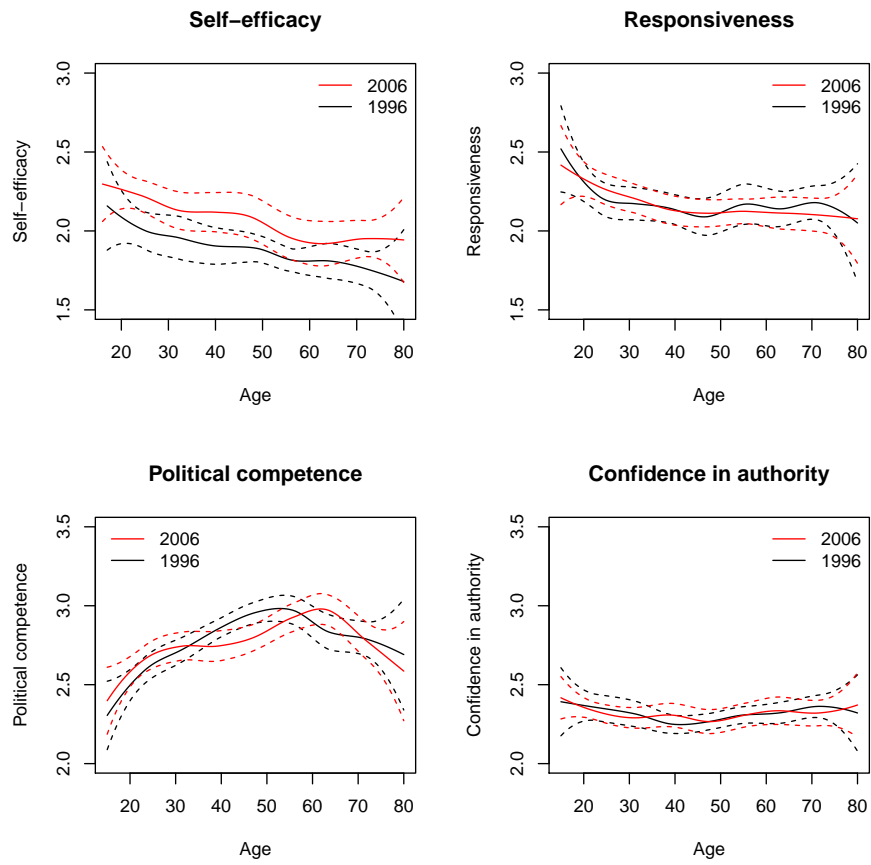*Figure A.1:* **Political skills in established democracies**

Figure A.2: **Dynamics of political attitudes in different age groups in post-communist countries**

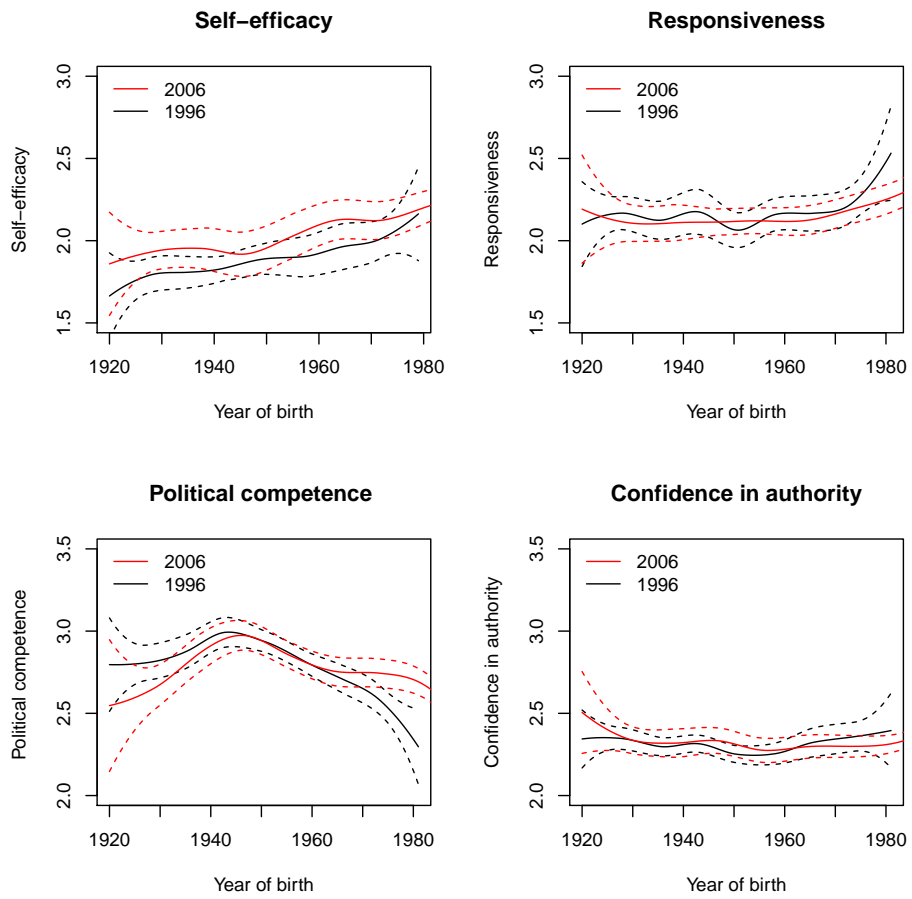*Figure A.3:* **Dynamics of political attitudes in different cohorts in post-communist countries**

Var.	Questions	Scale
Political interest, trust and efficacy		
V44	How interested would you say you personally are in politics? *Please tick one box on each line to show how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:*	Ordinal 1–5 + "Can't choose"
V45	a) People like me don't have any say about what the government does	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V46	b) The average citizen has considerable influence in politics	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V47	c) I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important issues facing our country	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V48	d) I think most people are better informed about politics than I am	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V49	e) People we elect as Mps try to keep the promises they made during the election	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V50	f) Most civil servants can be trusted to do what's best for the country	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
Civil liberties		
	Please show which you think should be allowed and which should not be allowed:	
V5	Organizing public meetings to protest against the government	Ordinal 1–4 + C.c.
V6	Organizing protest marches and demonstrations	Ordinal 1–4 + C.c.
V7	Organizing a nationwide strike of all workers against the government	Ordinal 1–4 + C.c.
Government performance		
	How successful do you think the government is nowadays in each of the following areas?	
V35	a) Providing health care for the sick?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V36	b) Providing a decent standard of living for the old?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V37	c) Dealing with threats to country's security?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V38	d) Controlling crime?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V39	e) Fighting unemployment?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V40	f) Protecting the environment?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
Social capital		
14a (2007)	Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	Ordinal 1–4+ C.c.
	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements	
V54	There are only a few people I can trust completely	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V55	If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
Corruption		
V60	In your opinion, about how many politicians in your country are involved in corruption?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
V61	In your opinion, about how many public officials in your country are involved in corruption?	Ordinal 1–5 + C.c.
Social and political participation		
13 (2007)	In the last 12 months, how often have you participated in the activities of one of the following associations or groups?	
	a) A sports association/group	Ordinal 1–5
	b) A cultural association/group	Ordinal 1–5
	c) A church or other religious organization	Ordinal 1–5
	d) A community-service or civic association/group	Ordinal 1–5
	e) A political party or organization	Ordinal 1–5

Figure A.4: **Variables used in analysis**

		PERF	UNCON	PART	G_TRUST	CORR	COMP	L_TRUST	EFFI
1	Government successful: controlling crime	0.78							
2	Government successful: fighting unemployment	0.77							
3	Government successful: dealing with threats to security	0.74							
4	Government successful: protecting environment	0.70							
5	Public protest meetings		0.89						
6	Protest demonstrations		0.91						
7	National anti-government strike		0.82						
8	Participation: A cultural association/group			0.76					
9	Participation: A church or religious organisation			0.55					
10	Participation: A community-service or civic association/group			0.75					
11	Participation: A political party or organisation			0.69					
12	People will take advantage				0.80				
13	Only few people to trust				0.76				
14	Trust in people or careful in dealing with people				0.76				
15	How much interested in politics						0.86		
16	Good understanding political issues						0.79		
17	MPs try to keep promises							0.85	
18	Trust in civil servants					0.36		0.71	
19	Public officials involved in corruption					0.87			
20	Politicians involved in corruption					0.82			
21	Average citizen: influence in politics								0.85
22	People like me have no say about what gov. does								0.56

Figure A.5: **Results of the factor analysis**

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations. Source: ISSP 2006-2007 Latvia.
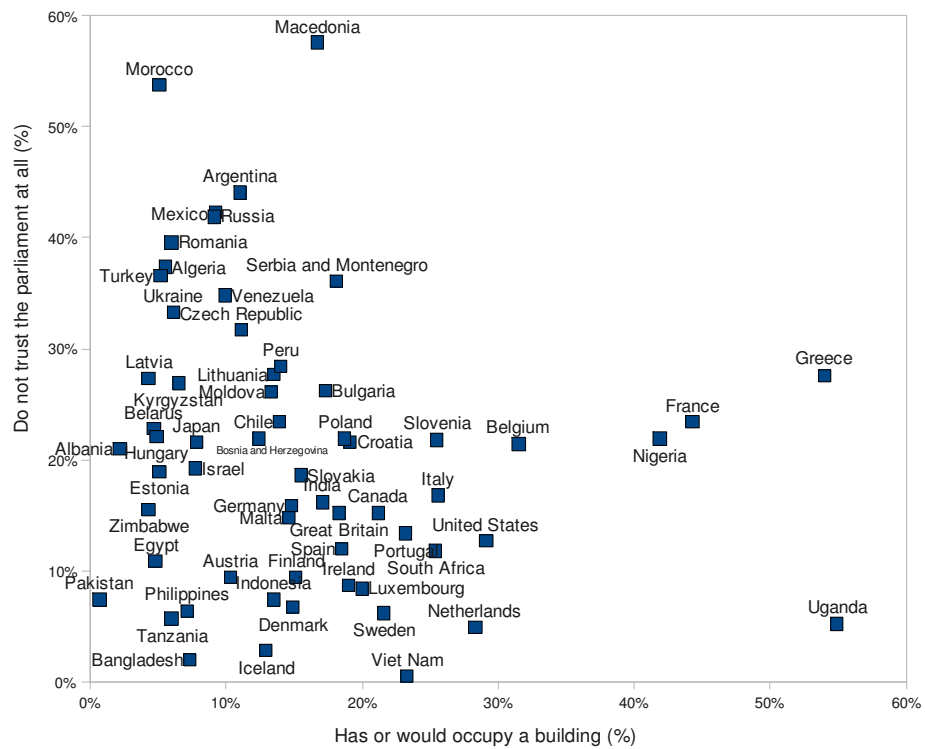
Figure A.6: **Distrust in parliament and occupying buildings**
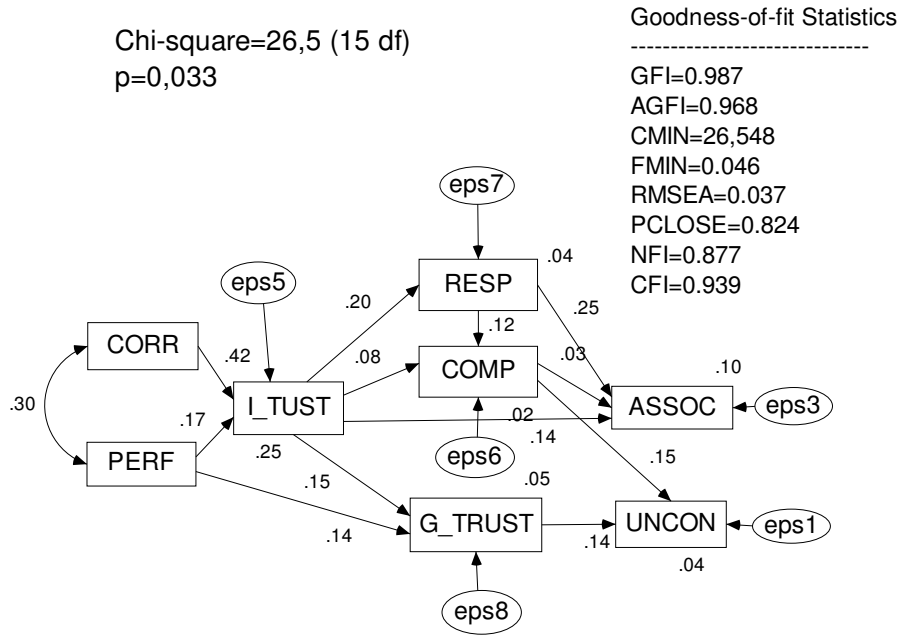
Note: Based on WVS 1999/2000 data

Chi-square=26,5 (15 df)
p=0,033

Goodness-of-fit Statistics

GFI=0.987
AGFI=0.968
CMIN=26,548
FMIN=0.046
RMSEA=0.037
PCLOSE=0.824
NFI=0.877
CFI=0.939

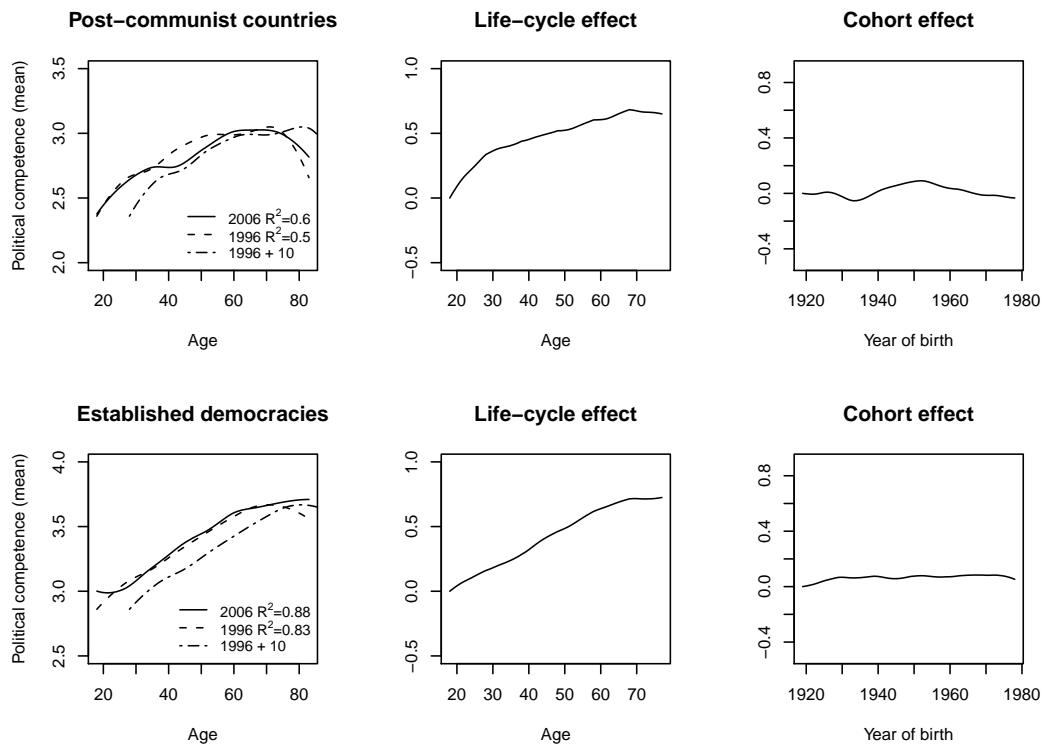*Figure A.7:* **Results of the SEM (recursice model)**

Figure A.8: **Political competence in post-communist and established democracies (education controlled)**