

The Development of Political trust

A multilevel analysis of cross-curtain differences in State-citizen relationships



Master thesis in comparative politics, September 2011

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Abstract

This analysis is based on a multidimensional view on political trust, aiming to explore whether there are significant differences in the causal effects of political trust between Western and Eastern Europe. Using the classic theoretical division between cultural and institutional theories, I hypothesize that the large differences in political development during the 19th century has resulted in different causal relationships across the old iron curtain. The thesis investigates effects on both institutional trust and support for democratic values. To explore these multiple dimensions of trust, I employ a multilevel statistical design. By using interaction effects, I investigate whether causal relationships differ in strength or direction dependent on which side of the old iron curtain you live. Is the east-west division still present and relevant?

The most obvious pattern the analyses provide is that there indeed is a divide, and that many interactions prove significant. However, all effects are weaker in the Eastern European countries, in contrast to the hypothesized effects. Thus, it seems, the theories of political trust tested in a western industrialized context by theorists such as Kenneth Newton, Russell Dalton and Robert Putnam seem less applicable in a post-communist context. This thesis is thus a call for new, more refined theories that can explain the lack of political trust in Eastern Europe.

Takk til

Denne masteroppgaven har blitt til som følge av en glødende interesse og engasjement for temaene sosial kapital, sivilsamfunnet og tillit, en interesse som første gang ble tent høsten 2008 da jeg tok faget SAMPOL 212, med Lars Svåsand og Per Selle. Interessen for emnet ble ytterligere forsterket gjennom faget SAMPOL 322 med nevnte Selle og Kristin Strømsnes.

Jeg vil takke Rökkansenteret for å ta meg under sine vinger gjennom deres studentstipendordning, som har sikret meg kontor plass på Rökkansenteret og kontakt med et forskningsmiljø som har gitt meg gode faglige tilbakemeldinger og et interessant innblikk i akademia. Spesielt vil jeg takke Kristin Strømsnes for god veiledning i løpet av skrivingen, og Dag Arne Christensen for tilbakemeldinger og tips inn flernivåanalyse, et felt som før masteroppgaven fremsto for meg som fullstendig gresk.

I tillegg til disse vil jeg takke mine medstudenter på Ullaløftet, Kunnskapsrommet, Trivselsrommet og Rökkansenteret for stimulerende faglige diskusjoner, uvurderlig assistanse gjennom korrekturlesing, samt hyggelige sosiale avbrekk de gangene oppgaven truet med å gå ut over min mentale tilstand. Konkret takk for tilbakemeldinger går til Magnus Aamo Holte, Ida Jacobsen, Adrian Kjær, Vegard Vibe og Elisabeth Frøysland Pedersen. En ekstra takk til Kjartan Oppedal, som har holdt meg med selskap på Ullaløftet gjennom en lang måned høsten 2011.

For hva det er verdt vil jeg dedikere denne oppgaven til mine bestefedre Svein Sagafos og Bjørn Meyer Herdlevær, som begge gikk bort i løpet av mine to første mastersemestre. De var alltid oppmuntrende med tanke på mitt fagfelt politikken, og jeg har hatt mange interessante diskusjoner med dem begge gjennom årenes løp.

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1. Introduction

For a government to rule “by the people, of the people, for the people”, it depends on a solid fundament of citizen approval. The global democratic development has brought with it the need of a trusting and supporting populace. State authority has developed from being a result of might and power to being totally dependent on legitimacy. This legitimacy stems from the citizens. However, the latest decades has brought a shift in state-citizen relationships. Indeed, Russell Dalton claims, “By almost any measure, public confidence and trust in, and support for, politicians, political parties, and political institutions has eroded over the past generation” (Dalton 2004:191).

At the same time, inexperienced democratic regimes of the third wave are struggling to gain the support and confidence of their population. The new democratic institutions have only to a limited extent managed to satisfy the high expectations of a population starving for liberty and prosperity. As democracy is spreading, less people trust the very institutions that exist to represent them, and many existing democratic regimes are struggling to increase support – or even keeping their current levels. Globally, the democratic ocean is widening. But at the same time, it seems, it is becoming shallower.

This thesis sets out to investigate whether these trends are related. Is the development of political trust explained by the same factors in newly established democracies as in the classical western democracies? Earlier research on political trust has to a large degree focused on the *direct* effect of the post-communist legacy on today’s levels of political trust¹, or totally disregarded the new democracies and focused solely on industrialized democratic regimes. This thesis will rather investigate whether and to which degree the different levels of political trust are caused by similar or different factors across the Iron Curtain. Are the causal mechanisms and determinants of political trust affected by the political history? Is not only the diagnosis, but also the medicine, influenced by the past? With these questions as a background, I present the main theoretical question to be answered in this thesis:

¹ Exceptions include Catterberg and Moreno (2005), testing for differences in effects in several different geographical areas all around the globe, including both Western and Eastern Europe.

Can political trust be explained by the same factors in Eastern and Western Europe?

Implicit in this research question is the question about what causes political trust, and of whether and to what degree Europe can be regarded as a coherent, unitary size. This thesis sets out to explain the differences in political trust through analyzing contextual and individual factors. Is the low trust in new democracies explained by a lack of something that exists in the relatively high-trust industrialized modern democracies of Western Europe? Is there a general wonder-medicine for restoring political trust? Or are political trust and its explanatory factors hinged on the regional or national context?

1.1. Expanding the playing-field – is the iron-curtain still present?

East is east and West is west and never the twain shall meet.

Rudyard Kipling – “The Ballad of East and West”.

Is this view, in its time applied to England versus India, applicable in today’s Europe? Has the iron curtain been removed completely from the scene of European politics, or is it too heavy to lift? The research question may seem almost anachronistic. With the cold war, the Berlin wall and the Soviet Union well behind us, surely it must be time to look forward and not lose ourselves in old geopolitical divisions? Or is it still empirically viable to distinguish between Eastern European Countries (EEC) and Western European Countries (WEC) in political science?

The question is still asked throughout the literature. Collective terms such as “post-communist countries” are heavily used as geographical divisions and explanatory factors on several fields of political science² - including political trust. When one tries to uncover causal relations stemming from deep historical sources, twenty years may prove to be not such a long time. As will be elaborated shortly, there are theoretical, as well as empirical reasons to examine whether there still exists an iron curtain in the development of political trust.

Extending the field of research using existing concepts may posit analytical dangers. Concepts do not necessarily travel perfectly across contexts, and a theory with convincing results in one

² A quick search on post-communist countries on Jstor.org provided first-page results within fields such as democratization, economic development, nationalism, civic engagement and voting patterns.

area may prove to be difficult to apply in another. By stretching theoretical concepts across large distances and between different contexts one may run the danger of stretching the concepts to the degree that they lose their meaning (Sartori 1970:1034). According to Giovanni Sartori, the risk of concept stretching is always present as the political world is always expanding to new fields (Sartori 1970:1034). This is also the case with the mass transition of authoritarian regimes with the fall of the Berlin wall and the Soviet Union in the late 80's/early 90's. The point of this analysis is thus to examine how well existing theories of trust can be transferred across Europe – twenty years after the third democratic wave swept over the continent.

Europe, and the historical East-West-division, constitutes a suitable background for a thesis on the subject. Europe consists of two areas of internally quite similar political development. Of course, there are significant differences within both the Eastern and the Western bloc, but the areas are coherent on a couple of important fields:

The Western-European countries went through a relatively stable democratic development. They also underwent long periods of industrialization and economic modernization, leading to liberal market economies, facilitating individual freedom and opportunities. The Eastern-European countries, on the other hand, are characterized by long periods of authoritarian regimes, a flat, state-planned economic structure over many decades, as well as an abrupt, hasty and short period of democratic transition in the late 80s/early 90s. Thus, the thesis suggests a path-dependent perspective to the generation and sustainability of political trust.

Apart from these historical reasons, limiting the analysis to Europe also has statistical benefits. Using Europe as the area of research gives more control of the variables. Using cases from other parts of the world such as Africa, Latin-America or Asia, while theoretically relevant, would demand many other variables and too much work for a master thesis where resources are limited both in time and maximum number of pages.

1.2. Examining trends of trust

The apparent political de-alignment of the citizens of established democratic countries has been the subject of much research. The trend is evident in a large number of fields – most notably, perhaps, in the ever declining party participation and election turnout (see for

example Dalton 2000 and Putnam 2002) but also in the field of political trust. The interest in the phenomenon really took hold in the 1960's when political scientists started to notice a drop in civil engagement in political matters. Following the release of important works such as "A system analysis of political life" by David Easton (1965), the trend was initially researched mainly in the United States. It seems that, though fueled by controversial phenomena such as the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal, the decrease in confidence had more complex reasons, and did not rebound when these political issues had dwindled from citizen minds (Levi, Stoker 2000:480-481).

This trend was accompanied by the second reverse wave of democratization in which multiple young democracies in Latin America, Asia and Africa were toppled by military coups, giving rise to pessimistic views describing a global anti-democratic trend in new as well as established democracies (Norris 1999:3-4).

Apart from the United States, scientists have reported similar development in other western countries during the second half of the 19th century. Country-specific studies of for example Sweden (Holmberg 1999) and the United Kingdom (Hall 2002:51) as well as non-European industrialized democracies such as Australia (Cox 2002:345-350), and large cross-national studies (like Dalton 2004) show signs of decreasing trust in political institutions between the 60's and the 90's. There is, however, not general consensus about the recent trends of trust. Not everybody agrees with the statement of Dalton quoted earlier in the introduction. As development over time is often measured on a country-by-country basis with nation-based surveys, the results are not always easily comparable. Whereas the trends in the United States is generally agreed upon, Kenneth Newton finds in a cross-country descriptive analysis that the numbers are unclear when it comes to Europe, and that it is difficult to pinpoint an actual "trend" (Newton 1999 in Levi, Stoker 2000:481). Thus, the varying numbers for the WEC may indicate not a general pattern but rather periodical fluctuations in countries where the political trust have reached a natural level.

In the other main region of analysis, the Eastern European Countries (EEC), the picture is generally bleaker. When the Berlin Wall fell, and the countries of Eastern Europe almost simultaneously entered swift democratic transitions, it opened a whole new geographical field for democratic research. Post-communist Europe became an area of democratic trial and development. However, the democratic experiences in Eastern Europe have been mixed, and

support for the democratic regime has in many countries remained thin (examples on this in the theory-section). While the countries have succeeded in establishing traditional democratic institutions, they have only to a varying degree succeeded in “making democracy work” (Putnam 1993) – creating a substantial, and not only institutional, democracy. While to a certain degree succeeding in becoming *electoral* democracies, many have failed in consolidating as *liberal* democracies. Between 1990-1991 and 1995-1996, according to Catterberg and Moreno (2005), trust in parliament in several Eastern European countries, from being relatively high, dropped significantly in just a short period of time. They compare this to the “post-honeymoon” phenomenon observed after American presidential elections, where presidential approval often drops radically a short while after the election (Catterberg, Moreno 2005:1). Similarly, after the initially high hopes of democratic governance in the transitional countries of Eastern Europe in the early 90’s, trust in parliament radically dropped. By the start of the 90’s citizen trust in parliament (measured by the percentage of the population answering they had “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of trust in parliament) was 48 per cent in Eastern Europe, and 43 per cent in the established democracies of Western Europe. Five years later, the eastern mean had dropped to 27 per cent; with the western levels remaining fairly stable (Catterberg, Moreno 2005:36-39). Similar trends have been noted by Mishler and Rose (2001) who note that, using survey data from 1998-1999, the mean percentage of citizens who trusted their parliaments, courts and police in ten post-communist countries were merely 21, 28 and 28, respectively. Hutcheson and Korosteleva notes that in a 2004-survey among former Eastern Bloc countries there were no countries in which a majority were satisfied with the democratic performance of their country (Hutcheson, Korosteleva 2006:4). Obviously the political institutions of the new democracies of the east have been struggling in gaining citizen confidence.

However, as will be thoroughly discussed throughout this thesis, an important distinction is the system vs. non-system-dimension. Political disaffection is only negative, Levi and Stoker state, if it is focused on the political system, not the particular incumbents (2000:480). Trust and support in democracy as the best and most desirable form of government is stable and rising in the same areas where institutional trust is dropping. (Norris 1999a:10). Both in western and eastern Europe, democratic values are held high in regard and are seemingly not affected by the trends of decreasing trust in institutions just described. Thus, the pessimistic views of the future of democracy seem, perhaps, not to be supported by evidence.

The thesis seeks to explore whether the differences in political history has led to differences in how political trust, both in political institutions and in democratic principles, is generated. While numerous inquiries on the field has found that yes, a communist past has a negative effect on today's levels of political trust, I want to investigate whether this impact is merely a remnant of political past, or whether this past has contributed to different trust-related causal connections in the present day.

1.3 Justification of the thesis – why is political trust important?

Why should we care about a possible drop in political trust? Does a change in citizen view of their leaders have any consequences for society? Scientists disagree, and some (Miller in Levi, Stoker 1999) have even described political trust as an “independent variable in search of a dependent variable” – we know it is important for *something*, but not exactly what. The causal lines are still unclear, and trust in general is seen as both independent and dependent variables. However, potential consequences of political trust and distrust presented and tested by theorists include changes in political participation (Levi, Stoker 2000:501), compliance with the law (Levi, Stoker 2000:501, Marien, Hooghe 2011), regime stability (Norris 1999c:257) and more. The list of factors potentially influenced by political trust is extensive, underscoring the need for research of the field.

This is *not* the analysis to end all analyses – an exhaustive investigation to locate *all* explanatory variables explaining why some people in some countries trust their political regime, while others in other countries do not. Statistical analyses on political trust have been done before, and will need to be done again to ever refine and develop our understanding of the field. A test of all possible explanatory factors regarding political trust is not within the scope of this thesis. Neither is this analysis a disregard of earlier results. Political trust is a debated and slippery concept that is difficult to measure, and the direction of the causal arrows is not easy to pinpoint. Social science research is, in the words of Robert Putnam, like solving a “murder on the Orient Express”, with a multiple set of motives and causes (in Dalton 2005:193). Contributing to existing sets of theories and thus increasing the common knowledge on the field is essential to social science (King, Keohane and Verba 1994:15-17). The study is designed to contribute to a more holistic picture of the development of political trust – bringing the theories together and testing them in different environments. Thus, the main objective of this thesis is not to make a general theory about what generates political

trust. It is rather to explore how well the causal hypotheses presented by theorists in the field can be transferred between different contexts. In this way, by answering important real-world questions while contributing to an ever-expanding field of political science, this thesis will exercise “doubly engaged social science” (Skocpol 2003).

1.4. The structure of the thesis

The thesis will follow a comprehensive, orthodox plan. In the next chapter I will explain my conceptualization of political trust and the theories that try to explain it, producing a functional definition of my dependent variables. I will also discuss the two broad categories of independent variables that will be used in the analysis. I will then present my hypotheses for the research, elaborating on how the variables may have different causal effects on each side of the iron curtain. In chapter 3 I will choose and explain my statistical design, my choice of data-sources, and the quantitative operationalizations of my variables. I will also elaborate on some of the methodological difficulties one risks meeting when analyzing multilayered survey-data. The thesis will employ a relatively complex multilevel design to encapsulate the multidimensional nature of political trust. Then, in chapter 4, I will through multiple steps conduct my analysis, followed by a thorough interpretation of the results. The chapter will include descriptive statistics on all variables, as well as a thorough review of the hypotheses presented in chapter 2. Finally, in the concluding chapter, I will sum up the results and place them in an empirical context, as well as present the prospects for further research laid out by this thesis.

2. Theories of Trust

Trust, in all its incarnations, is a large and heavily debated field of political science, and drawing a full-scale detailed map of the concept is way beyond the scope of this project. The concept is utilized in economy, philosophy, sociology, psychology, law and multiple other fields (Levi, Braithwaite 1998:2), and can be deconstructed and analyzed to the tiniest detail. As this thesis mainly focuses on political trust, I concentrate on large-scale relations and political implications. I will thus make a simplified typology of the concept, designed to focus on the most relevant fields for this particular scientific inquiry, and suitable for the purposes of this thesis.

I will begin this chapter by giving a brief definition of trust, and explain how the concept is transferred to the political arena. Then I will present my conceptualization of the dependent variable – political trust. After that, I will present the theories that constitute the basis for the explanatory factors, and their accompanying hypotheses which will be tested in the analysis. I will end the chapter by presenting a summary of the hypotheses, leading on to the method-section of the thesis.

2.1. Making trust political - drawing a map of the conceptual quagmire

2.1.1. Tracing trust and legitimacy in Europe

Perhaps *the* most central aspect of political science is the relationship between the ruler and the ruled – between the master and his subjects. What is the role of the ruler? What are the responsibilities? And how does the ruler legitimize his position as an authority in the eyes of the citizens? Knowing the development of state-citizen relationships is crucial for understanding the development of political systems, laws, welfare state and numerous other aspects of day-to-day political life.

With basis in Weber's classic conceptualization of state authority, the relationship of command and obedience have in the modern democratic states moved from being based on power-claims based on self-interest to being based on "legitimate order" - that is, the rationale for accepting a leader lies in legitimate rule-based authority. In Weber's terms, the democratic states have moved from traditional authority to legal-rational authority (Matheson 1987).

Accompanying this development in authority and legitimacy is the concept of political trust. Whereas Weber's conceptualization is regime-centered – based on the rulers' *claim* of legitimacy (Matheson 1987:206) – the concept of political trust emphasizes citizen assessments. The transfer to legal-rational democratic authority implies a shift towards a dependency of citizen approval (Matheson 1987:203). To be able to approve a political body as your legitimate master, an amount of trust in that body is essential. Indeed, Mark Warren claims, distrust in authority has been a driving force in the development of the modern liberal democracy (Warren 1999:1).

Of course, political legitimacy also hinges on other factors, - one can trust an institution but be skeptical to ways in which it fulfills its purpose (for examples, see Taylor-Gooby 2006:4). Nevertheless, political trust remains a basic and integral part of the concept of legitimacy (Gloppen 2000:18) - a component without which legal authority is contested.

To get an idea of the concept it could be wise to begin with the basic mechanisms of trust. This is not necessarily an easy task – T. K. Das and Bing-Sheng Teng identified through the literature more than thirty different conceptualizations of trust (Das, Teng 2004:88-93). Thankfully, however, in an endeavor to map the common ground between the different definitions they go on to present three different constructs describing different parts of trust. These are *subjective trust* – trust as a perception; *trust antecedents* – the factors leading to subjective trust; and *behavioral trust* – the actions resulting from subjective trust (Das, Teng 2004). Knowing these different elements of basic trust, and how they are interrelated, enables us to more effectively explore political trust. Such a framework is useful for the sort of analyses conducted in this thesis, as it makes no assumptions about the kinds of considerations that lie behind the judgments of trust – it is totally up to the respondent to decide (Levi, Stoker 2000:499). This in contrast to other approaches that emphasize instrumental assessments of trustworthiness based on demands or self-interest.

Trust is a “tripartite relationship” - X trusts Y to do Z (Blackburn 1998:30). Additionally, a person must have a *reason* to grant his or her trust (Levi 1998:78). Trusting someone or something to act in your interest is a risk, and a trusting individual will need to believe that the risk is not too big. If the risk is considered too heavy, then no trust is given. The risk-based view of trust is further elaborated by Das and Teng who mirror risk and trust – individual propensity to trust is balanced against the assessed risk associated with the

transaction (Das, Teng 2004: 96-97). Political trust implies citizen belief in that the political system – any part of it – will fulfill its purpose. This framework also clearly shows a conceptual difference between interpersonal trust and political trust. One cannot define a simple general concept of trust that encompasses all spheres of society – social trust is one concept, political trust another (Newton 2002:2). The risk of trusting a fellow citizen is not the same as the risk of trusting a political regime – whereas you can step in and out of social relations, unless you want to become an outlaw you don't really have a choice but to sign the social contract handed to you by your political rulers. If the distrust is directed towards the incumbents there exists the possibility to vote them out of office, but if the distrust is pointed at the systemic level one can really only withdraw one's approval for the political system, decreasing the legitimacy. In this sense one can say that the behavioral trust is removed – you are bound by laws and taxes whether or not you trust the political regime – and all that remain of Das and Teng's conceptualizations is the subjective trust and the trust antecedents. The main objective is thus to pinpoint the antecedents for the subjective political trust.

Hence, returning to the basic tripartite conception of political trust, some questions crucial to this analysis may be proposed:

- What is Y? When we direct our trust or distrust towards the regime – who do we really direct our trust or distrust towards? How can the dependent variable be operationalized, to allow comprehensive analysis of the concept? What are the targets of political trust?
- Why do we decide to trust or distrust Y? Why do citizens enter this uneven relationship with the idea that the regime will actually fulfill their part of the bargain? Or, in more analytical terms, how are the independent variables operationalized? What are the antecedents of political trust?

The rest of the theory-chapter will try to answer these questions, setting us up before the analysis.

The theoretical framework for this thesis is based upon a dichotomization of European trust-development. According to Stein Rokkan, in the established democracies of Western Europe, the democratization evolved through incorporating the population in the decision-making processes in exchange for their submission to the functional and territorial sovereignty of the

state (Rokkan 1987:354-356). Thus, from ruling its subjects through coercion and force, the state has become dependent on citizen cooperation to be allowed to rule. According to Max Weber, the modernization and industrialization of western societies led to a change in values from traditional religious and communal values to achievement and motivation, accompanied by the economic growth and the change from traditional to rational-legal authority (in Inglehart 1998:237-238). From basing its trustworthiness on its ability to keep the citizens safe, the state evolved into a bureaucratic behemoth, responsible for an ever increasing part of citizens' lives. With the evolution of democracy, the political regimes and their legitimacy have become increasingly dependent on the support and trust of its citizens – the state-citizen relationships have become more complex and interdependent, making trust more important to ensure stable relations and transactions (Warren 1999:3).

Moving eastwards, the countries on the other side of the iron curtain present a contrast to this view. With a long history of totalitarian communist rule, Eastern European state institutions were “feared rather than legitimate” (Uslaner, Badescu 2004:2). Due to their repressive nature, these institutions did not gain citizen trust, nor did they depend on it. Communist rule was characterized by “nepotism, corruption, shortages of goods, and inability to provide for the citizens”. (Dimitrova-Grajzl, Simon 2010:206). Often one-party systems without general elections, socialist and communist political regimes were not dependent on citizen trust in order to exercise authority. Authority was based on might rather than plight, and legitimacy was not an issue. As the Eastern European countries in just a couple of years went through a sudden mass transition to democracy, the democratic institution, dependent on citizen trust, did not go through the same controlled development as in their WEC counterparts. This is a potential problem in new democracies, as trust is lacking due to the existence of recent untrustworthy regimes. And if, as is often the case, the new institutional seats are held by the same people that held power-positions in the old regime (Hardin 1998:17)³, then democracy is off to a rough start considering their ability to build citizen support.

Does, then, the establishment of the Soviet Union in the early 1900's, the following split of Europe into two hard blocs of countries, and subsequently the sudden massive release of new democracies in the early nineties represent a *critical juncture* in the development of adherence

³ Examples on this in the former communist countries are many. The former Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze, for example, was a prominent Soviet Party-figure in Soviet Georgia, and his post-communist reign was characterized by allegations of corruption and fraud.

to authority and the development of political trust? Having examined the theoretical role of political trust, as well as a historical background for the possible differences between EEC and WEC, it is time to explain the concrete analytical concepts used in the analysis.

2.2. A quick comment to clear conceptual confusion

Before we embark on the journey through the treacherous waters of trust-related theories, the choice of words should be clarified. The theory is ambiguous on this field, clouding the research and reducing the usefulness of earlier analyses. Political trust, political support (Norris 1998, Easton 1965/1975), political confidence (Denters, Gabriel, Torcal 2007) and political capital (Newton 2002) have been used to describe the presence or absence of citizen belief in the incumbents and institutions as legitimate representatives of the people. These concepts are often used interchangeably (McAllister 1998:190), and they have been analyzed using the same quantitative indicators. This suggests that the concepts are interchangeable, and one is picked before another mainly because of certain connotations associated with each of them.

Although the terms political support and trust often refer to the same concept, some theorists distinguish between the two terms. While trust as described above is a general attitude towards, or perception of, someone or something, the term political support suggests an emphasis on behavior, such as “action or advocacy” (Easton 1975). Behavior, however, implies attitudes, and is thus dependent on a certain level of confidence or trust. One cannot support someone or something without a basic suspicion that your object of support works to satisfy your basic needs and wishes. Thus, support implies, and depends on, trust. This enables me to incorporate the literature on political support in this thesis about political trust. For the purposes of this thesis, the main term will be political trust. For esthetic reasons, confidence and support will be used on some occasions.

2.3. A scale of political trust – knowing your dependent variable

The first question presented above was “who is Y”? What is the object of political trust – what do we direct our trust towards? Can we, in Dalton’s terms, “distrust the President while still respecting the office of the presidency” (Dalton 2005:57)? The apparent dissonance between trust in political institutions and trust in democratic values certainly seem to point in that direction. But how does one conceptually distinguish between these two types of trust?

To start with one of the most prominent theorists within the field of political trust and support, it seems appropriate to introduce two very useful concepts encompassing both trust antecedents and trust targets: diffuse and specific support. These concepts were introduced by David Easton (1965), in his influential work “A System Analysis of Political Life”. By specific support, he refers to support directed at the specific political actors or institutions of the political regime. Specific support is directed towards authorities – human or institutional – who are “responsible for the day-to-day actions taken in the name of the political regime (Easton 1975:437). Specific support usually stems from evaluations about whether their demands are perceived to have been met, and from assessment of general political performance (Easton 1975:438).

By diffuse support, he refers to the general support to the political system or community, the confidence that the regime is based upon satisfactory standards and rules. This is less concrete than specific support – it is directed towards what an object *represents*, not what it *does* (Easton 1975:444). Thus, in our case, it refers to the democratic principles behind the political institutions, not the institutions per se. Diffuse support is according to Easton generated primarily by childhood and adult socialization, but also from continuous experience of political performance (Easton 1975:445-446).

To effectively analyze political trust, the target of the trust thus must be defined (Norris 1999:1). Political trust is not a mono-dimensional attitude towards a vaguely defined “political system”. Different concrete parts of the system are deemed trustworthy to different degrees. I will start by drawing a distinction between support in the political community, support in the political regime, and support in the political authorities, following David Easton’s (1965, 1975) conceptualization of political support. Support in the political community regards your patriotic attachment to the nation, looking past institutional structures and specific political actors. Research on this field has investigated concepts such as social alienation, protest movements, nationalism and integration. Support in political authorities, or political actors (Norris 1999a:12) taps the specific assessment of the current regime and particular leaders. Research on this field often focuses on specific traits in politicians that generate votes, and specific (rational or non-rational) behavior among voters

Support in the political regime, which is the most interesting type of support for the purposes of this thesis, regards the support in the lasting governing structures of a country, beyond the specific incumbents at a given time (Norris 1999a:9). Support in the political regime, Easton states, is not divided; citizens do not “pick and choose” which parts of the regime they support and trust and which they do not.

Pippa Norris, in her book “critical citizens” (1999) disagrees on the coherence and indivisibility in support for the political regime, and elaborates on Easton’s distinction. Presenting no less than *five* different targets of political support, she differentiates between trust in the political community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors (Norris 1999a:10). Thus, Norris splits support for the political regime into three distinct parts. This conceptualization, Norris states, is empirical as well as theoretical. Analyses indicate that citizens are aware of the different levels of support, and have distinct opinions on different levels (Norris 1999a:9). These five targets of trust may exist to different degrees within a country, and an individual may have confidence in the principle of democracy while not trusting the current sitting regime. Similarly, the different concepts of trust may be developing in different directions regardless of each other.

Earlier research on political trust has produced varying, often contradicting results, Norris states, because the target of research has been different (Norris 1999:9). Thus, to analyze reasons for political trust one needs to be aware of the distinctions, and carefully pick the level of research. In this thesis, the objective is to test both ends of the continuum – specific as well as diffuse support. However, due to the scope of the thesis, both in terms of space, time and resources (data), a test of five different types of political trust is not possible. Therefore, the objects of inquiry will be items number 2 and 4 on Norris’ scale of trust-indicators: Regime principles - that is whether you support democratic principles or not; and regime institutions - whether you trust the political institutions within your own political regime. Hence, the two dependent variables of this master thesis will be *trust in democratic institutions*, from now on referred to as *institutional trust*, and *trust in democratic values*, from now on referred to as *democratic trust*. When the term political trust is used, it refers to both the types conceptualized above.

The differentiation between different objects of trust and support is interesting when considering the difference between young and old democracies. In old, established

democracies, the population will have no experience with other regime-types. Therefore, theoretically, support in the regime will be higher, as there are no viable alternatives, and the democracy has been truly established in the population's minds as "the only game in town". In newly democratized countries, on the other hand, the memory of previous regimes may linger in the back of the citizens' minds, and the new regime will have to satisfy the high expectations of the democracy-starved population. Additionally, institutional trust may contribute to a reservoir of democratic trust. This means that, theoretically, recently democratized countries will have less robust democratic trust, as democratic government has not been in power long enough to prove the virtues of this strange new form of political regime.

Using these two indicators of political trust is both theoretically and methodologically well-suited for this thesis. Firstly, they are interrelated but sufficiently distinct so that they may have developed in different directions caused by different explanatory factors. Secondly, they are not limited to a single government, in contrast to measure number 5, political actors. This makes the data more robust when conducting an analysis based on a single point of time (as in this case). Thirdly, as will be described in the data-chapter, both these indicators are measurable using existing surveys. As all of the countries in the survey are, at least institutionally, democratic, questions regarding democratic institutions and democratic values should be comparable across borders. And, perhaps most importantly, using these different types of political trust enables us to distinguish between different potential causes and effects of a rise or a decline. Again returning to the systemic/non-systemic dimension presented in the introduction, knowing which parts of political trust is affected enables us to better assess the reasons, seriousness and consequences.

2.3.1 Wait, which institutions?

The statistical specifics of how these concepts are measured are explained in chapter 3, on data operationalizations. However, as one of the dependent variables of this thesis is *political institutions*, it is necessary to be more precise about the selection of *which* institutions to include in our analysis. Even though citizens may distinguish between different objects of trust within the political regime, their assessment of different political institutions is often highly correlated (Lægreid, Christensen 2002:506, Bouckaert, Van de Walle 2001:12). Therefore, to not get lost in a long discussion in trust in different institutions (certainly an interesting question for further research) the institutional trust-variable in this thesis will be an additive index consisting of trust in multiple political institutions.

This variable is operationalized in many different ways throughout the literature, seemingly based on both the availability of indicators and on personal preferences. Institutions included in additive indices include the parliament, the legal system, the government, the military, the police, the state bureaucracy, the civil service, political parties etc. However, for the purposes of this thesis, not all of these apply. The military, for example, while used by others (Norris 1999b:222) is an institution with very different political roles from society to society, making them very different to compare analytically across the iron curtain. The civil service and state bureaucratic institutions, on the other hand, are deemed too non-authoritarian compared to the main direction of this thesis, which is to investigate the authority- and legitimacy-related institutions. Political trust was above described as an approval of the state's legal authority. Therefore, this thesis aims specifically on testing the institutions that represent the legal authority of the state. The Index of Institutional Trust used in this thesis will consist of trust in parliament (the lawmakers), trust in the legal system (the independent symbol of justice) and trust in the police (the everyday physical manifestation of the law). All these need the approval and trust of citizens to maximize legitimate authority. An index consisting of these three institutions effectively catches the states' legal exercise of power over the citizens.

2.4. What generates political trust? A conceptual framework of causal theories

Having sketched out a theoretical conceptualization of political trust, as well as possible political targets of that trust, the central question still remains: What generates political trust? Why is political trust lower in some countries, and higher in other? And why does it seem that trust in democracy and trust in institutions is developing in different, if not opposing, directions? What are the reasons that some citizens in some countries regard political institutions and democratic principles as trustworthy, and others don't? The questions are not new, of course, and neither is the attempt to conceptualize the possible sources into comprehensive categories. As described above, there has been conducted quite a few analyses on the subject of political trust, each framing trust and its determinants differently (Dalton 2005 and Norris 1998 nicely summarize different theoretical approaches to the phenomenon). I will below try to elaborate on the different clusters of potential explanatory factors in the development of political trust.

In addition to the *targets* of political trust, two *antecedents* of trust can also be derived from Easton's twin concepts. Specific support was largely generated from direct experience and assessment, while diffuse support was generated also by childhood and adult socialization (Easton 1975:437-446). These two large groups of determinants can be traced through large parts of the literature until today, under a variety of different names. One group, categorized under names like "instrumental" (Dalton 1998), "endogenous" (Letki, Evans 2005) or "institutional" (Mishler, Rose 2001), concerns political trust as a result of government performance – economic or political. The trust thus stem from within the system. These theories assume that political trust is influenced by the political structure of a country, and the performance of the institutions - "deliberative consideration of evidence" (Taylor-Gooby 2006:9). Declining or rising political trust is a direct result of political decisions, designs and performances. Good governance and well-functioning institutions leads to higher political trust. This category thus assesses trust as an *ex-post*-phenomenon, assigned to those who deserve it based on knowledge of their earlier deeds. This category is closely related to the concept of specific support.

The other cluster of theories is given names such as “affective” (Dalton 1998), “exogenous” or “cultural” (Mishler, Rose 2001). According to these theories, trust and support in the regime and its institutions are created and maintained based on factors outside the political system - deeply rooted in the minds of the people. These attitudes are based on “affective beliefs [involving] an acceptance or identification with an entity” (Dalton 1999:58). Whereas trust in the rational-evaluative sense is closely linked to trustworthiness of the object (Nannestad 2008:415), this is not necessarily the case in this paradigm. Rather than being a result of calculation, granting an object your trust is the result of a “general outlook on human nature” – removing trustworthiness from the equation (Uslaner 2002 in Nannestad 2008:415). Trust in this sense goes beyond rationality; Taylor-Gooby describes assigning trust as a “leap of faith” (2006:11), a necessary mental exercise in uncertain situations. This category implies assessing political trust *ex-ante*, basing trust on personal experiences of socialization, and is closely related to what Das and Teng refers to as *trust propensity* (Das, Teng 2004:97) and Easton’s diffuse support.

Naming these concepts is not an easy task, as the above-mentioned terms (similarly to the term “trust”) all carry certain connotations when being used scientifically. Describing them “exogenous” and “endogenous” implies that they stem from different sources respectively outside or inside the political system (Mishler, Rose 2001). Investigating the sources of these independent variables is, however, way beyond the scope of this thesis, and theorists have hinted that there might indeed be endogenous reasons for the variables assumed to be exogenous. The same logic applies to “bottom-up” or “top-down”-approaches (Letki, Evans 2005). Using the terms “rational” versus “affective” is similarly imprecise. The word affective has certain emotional implications, and stapling the category as “non-rational” should be avoided as some theorists will describe these approaches as merely different kinds of rationality (Janoski 1998:87, Torcal, Montero 2006). “Cultural”, however, captures the inherent socialization-aspect and also connects the term to the idea of a “political culture”, which is a relevant connection as will be elaborated below. Similarly, using the term “institutional” catches the idea of these variables as good or bad government politic outputs. Thus, these two terms – institutional theories and cultural theories – will be used to refer to

each of the two broad categories of theoretical approaches to the explanatory factors of political trust. This is in line with Mishler and Rose's use of the terms (2004)⁴.

An advantage of using these terms is that they do not imply incompatibility. Even as multiple theorists pit these theories against each other, the views, though theoretically separate, are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Torcal, Montero 2006:337). When testing these variables, one should be aware that the cause of declining or lacking political trust may be, and probably will be, a mixture of different variables on different levels. It is thus preferable to view the different categories as additive and complementary rather than as alternatives. Evaluative citizens are not necessarily unaffected by their cultural background and socialization, and inherited norms may be combined with rational calculations of trustworthiness before trust is granted. The main task of this thesis is to investigate the relative salience of these approaches across Europe, and subsequently try to explain these differences in salience.

Knowing and recognizing the differences between these views is important. Not only theoretically, but also empirically, as knowing the sources of political trust is essential to in turn know how to turn the decline. The strategies must be aligned to the nature of the problem, and struggling regimes must know where to focus their attention. This will be more thoroughly elaborated in the analysis and the conclusive remarks.

2.4.1. Multilevel structure

Mishler and Rose (2001) further divide the cultural and institutional theories into macro- and micro-level theories, to pinpoint whether the variation is most significant on the aggregate level – between countries, or the individual level – within countries. This approach is intriguing, as there are theoretical differences connected to the distinction regarding which level the causal relations are most present. In addition to the theoretical differences, this thesis will test on which level these differences are located. On the individual level, the institutional theories concern each citizen's individual perception and experience of government performance. These are often connected to the citizens' social status, position and personal well-being. On a country-level, the variables emphasize the “aggregate performance of

⁴ This, however, creates a certain conceptual confusion, as this thesis using the term “institutional” when talking about both antecedents and targets of political trust. Thus, when referring to “institutional trust”, the thesis will be referring to the target, while when referring to “institutional theories” or “institutional variables”, the thesis will be referring to the antecedent.

institutions in such matters as promoting growth, governing effectively and avoiding corruption” (Mishler, Rose 2001, 32). Macro-cultural theories concern how homogenous national culture and values creates the foundation for the amount of political trust and support in a country, whereas micro-cultural theories put more emphasis on within-country differences of culture.

The analytical consequences of a multilevel approach will be elaborated in the method-chapter.

Using the conceptualizations described above, I will now elaborate on different theories belonging to each category, presenting the variables that will represent each theoretical view in the statistical analysis. Throughout the next part I will present the hypotheses regarding geographical differences regarding these theories, ending in a comprehensive table presenting all hypotheses tested in the thesis.

2.5. Institutional theories

This group consists of different variables within the political sphere that may or may not influence the trust and confidence in the political system and its institutions. Contrary to the cultural theories, the institutional perspective presents a relatively hopeful view (Mishler, Rose 2001). If political structures and governmental performance is the most decisive factor in creating political trust, then the tide of distrust can be turned more easily than if the lack of trust was to be caused by deep historical cultural roots.

These theories are generally less controversial and debated through the literature. There is a general agreement among theorists that state structures and performance has a certain impact on how citizens view their representatives, and many articles are written taking this account of political trust for granted. And, where the cultural hypotheses point in both directions and are quite complex, the institutional hypotheses are relatively immediate and straightforward.

Trusting an institution or politician is different from trusting a person you know (Hardin 1999). When considering a personal acquaintance trustworthy or not, you have your own personal experiences to rely on. In a political institution or incumbent, however, you must draw conclusions about trustworthiness based on secondary sources. The most logical way to

evaluate trustworthiness of politicians and institutions is thus to assess whether they are producing results that benefit the society and you personally (Hardin 1999:39). Is the political system fulfilling its role? In this sense, political trust may work as a barometer for the performance of a political regime - an indicator of good or poor performance. If trust is high, the regime can be said to fulfill its duties. Low trust, however, means that the regime has not won the confidence and support of its citizens. These perspectives view the citizens as rational evaluators of their rulers, in contrast to the cultural theories that view trust as stemming from social bonds and interaction (Braithwaite 1998:46), reducing the relative magnitude of calculated evaluations.

2.5.1. Economic Output

As logical the idea of rational evaluation as a background for political trust is, the question remains as to how this evaluation is done – what types of performance constitutes the basis for citizen assessment. The most minimal measurement of the performance of political regimes is the economic output (Mishler, Rose 2001:36). The general state of the economy is reflected by the availability of jobs, the wages, and welfare. By assessing the economic state of affairs, both on the personal and the societal level, an individual will make knowledge-based decisions about the trustworthiness of the regime. Russell Dalton elaborates on the distinction between perceptive measurements and objective measurements, and finds a stronger correlation on variables measuring economic satisfaction than actual economic performance (Dalton 2004:63-64).

Ian McAllister (1998) finds a stronger relationship between economic satisfaction and democratic confidence in the Czechoslovakia than in the United States, and suggests that this may be caused by a weaker buffer of diffuse support as a consequence of shorter democratic history. Following the train of thought established earlier, the population of new democracies will more often blame poor economic performance on the state institutions, whilst in established democracy the trust in the democratic regime is more robust (McAllister 1999:203). In times of hardship and trial, the new regimes' citizen trust in institution may suffer, and this in turn may affect the diffuse trust in democracy. Meanwhile, similar conditions in established democracy may lead to some decline in specific trust, but the population will have experienced earlier fluctuations, and know that the democratic regime is

not necessarily to blame for global economic trends. The same logic should work the other way, as good performance should leave a deeper impact on the political trust in EEC than in WEC.

This logic works, theoretically, on both micro and macro-level. Through the expansion of mass media the recent years, the populace is more informed than ever on the general condition of society (McAllister 1999:196). Therefore, they should be able to make their own judgments about the overall quality of governance – and thus decide whether the political institutions are trustworthy or not. And the direct economic consequences of good or bad governance on the individual's economic conditions are likely to affect that individual's assessments of the political institutions. Thus, this analysis will include variables on both country- and individual level regarding economic governmental output.

h1: Economic Performance will have a positive impact on political trust.

h1a: These effects will be stronger in the EEC.

2.5.2. Inequality

A common feature of the communist countries (inherent in the communist ideology) was the relative equality of status and income⁵. The sudden change of economic structure led to some increase in inequality, as crafty entrepreneurs managed to take advantage of the new liberal market economy and gain vast fortunes in short time. Others, however, suffered under the lack of state-guaranteed employment and equality in salaries. This led, according to Eric Uslaner and Gabriel Badescu, to a general feeling among the population that it was “impossible to get rich honestly” (Uslaner, Badescu 2004, 7). Rising income inequality led to “jealousy, mistrust and a loss of confidence in public institutions” (Uslaner, Badescu 2004:6). Trust is easier under equal circumstances – high economic inequality may contribute to skepticism.

The effect of income inequality on political trust is assumed to be stronger in the new democracies of Eastern Europe for several reasons. One reason is, as explained above, the limited democratic experience – poor political output is immediately blamed on the system.

⁵The gini-index of former and current communist countries is lower than that of western democracies, indicating higher degree of equality (Uslaner, Badescu 2004:3).

Additionally, the recent history of high economic equality may give this variable even higher relative magnitude in these countries. When a period of equal distribution of money is followed by a transition to an economy open to private initiative and Darwinist winner-takes-all entrepreneurship, the impact of unequal distribution may seem relatively stronger.

h2: Income inequality will have a negative effect on political trust.

h2a: The effect will be stronger in the EEC.

2.5.3. Political Performance

When analyzing countries worldwide, Pippa Norris found that certain contextual factors had an impact on the institutional trust of the citizens (1999b). Not surprisingly, the conditions of the civil and political liberties in a country had a significant effect. Being a part of a liberal, generally emancipated and responsive society stimulates positive assessments of the regime. This should, theoretically, have similar effects all over Europe. In Western Europe, however, all regimes are largely liberalized, reducing the relative value of the variable. In Eastern Europe this variable should however have stronger prominence. The rights and liberties have evolved differently across borders and may help to explain differences in political trust within the region.

h3: The state of political and civil liberties in a country has a positive effect on political trust.

h3a: This effect is more prominent in EEC.

Another feature of government performance, closely connected to the concept of trust, is corruption. When assessing trustworthiness, the target's honesty is of high importance. Thus corruption is suspected to have an impact on whether or not citizens trust political institutions as this gives a certain picture about the moral fabric of the political system of a country. As democracy is designed for the people to willingly grant the incumbents the power to take political decisions for them, the honesty of politicians is necessary to effectively administer this power. State corruption represents a breach of the social contract between state and citizens, causing citizen disapproval. The connection is researched by Uslaner and Badescu (2004) who find a strong connection between state corruption and political confidence in Romania. Again, this effect is hypothesized to be stronger in the EEC, as government dishonesty should have more salient effects on political trust in regimes without long democratic experience.

h4: State corruption has a negative impact on political trust

h4a: This impact is stronger in EEC

Norris also drew a connection between direct support in the specific political regime (similar to Easton's "trust in political authorities") and more general support in political institutions. The logic is this: People that experience that the politicians they voted for are winning, will have large trust in the regime than others. These "winners" will feel closer to the sitting regime, and will therefore be more trusting and supportive. Simply put, Norris writes that when we experience that the party we support is elected to power and allowed to rule, we will more strongly feel that the regime adheres to our wishes, and we will more strongly acknowledge its democratic value, increasing our general political trust (Norris 1998:219).

On the individual level, being a part of the winning team is hypothesized to be important in all democracies. However, in established democracies, numerous overturns of incumbents have ensured that people will trust the democracy to function even though your candidate does not always win. In new democracies, however, where parties are ephemeral and person-based, and overturns of regimes has been few, the negative effect of being on the losing side is hypothesized to be stronger. To tackle that your vote is (perhaps repeatedly) turned down requires certain amounts of general democratic support. Conversely, experiencing that your vote is heard, and that your preferred party is in power may translate into a belief that the democratic system is working, thus increasing political trust.

h5: Being a "winner" has a positive effect on political trust.

h5a: This effect is stronger in the EEC.

2.6. Cultural Theories

These theories hypothesize that political trust is shaped by factors originating outside the political system, as described above. These are less rational and knowledge-based, more affective reasons. The reasons for trusting political institutions or political principles lie not only in rational judgments of trustworthiness, but also in the social norms and bonds established early in life. (Nannestad 2008:414). The trust "transcends information" and flows from deeper social sources (Braithwaite 1998:46). This conception of political trust have more negative implications than the institutional theories (Mishler, Rose 2001), as the concepts

emphasized here – interpersonal trust, social capital, and value change – are notoriously slow-moving and harder to change.

In the empirical research, trust is a slippery concept, with poorly defined causal arrows and operationalizations. Especially regarding cultural theories, the direction of the effects, or whether there are effects at all, is highly debated. This leads to both substantial and statistical difficulties, with overly ambitious and complicated models, often more likely to further confuse the field than to clear matters. Thus, while recognising the disagreement and perpetually on-going discourse, I take a clear stand in this thesis and place political trust as a dependent variable. The theoretical reasons for this are clearly stated during this chapter, and a statistical model to explore other possible causal directions is way outside the scope of this thesis. Cultural theories are also more vague than institutional theories, and the effects are for the purposes of this thesis somewhat simplified below, to not over-complicate the causal hypotheses and to keep the theory-chapter coherent.

2.6.1. Interpersonal trust, Political culture, Civil Society and Social Capital

Again using the words of Das and Teng, trust propensity regards one's "general view of the level of uncertainty in relationships around oneself" (Das, Teng 2005:109). The basic idea of the cultural theories is that this general view is transferred from the personal sphere to the political sphere. This is an extension of the "hierarchy of trust" (Mishler, Rose 2005:2) presented earlier. If you are aligned to trust other individuals, this trust then "spills over" into the political sphere. The spill-over mechanism refers to how traits, attitudes and motivations are carried over between different spheres of life (Elster 1998:54). Even if interpersonal trust and political trust is not the same concept, the interpersonal trust constitutes exactly the trust propensity Das and Teng describe. In this conceptualization of political trust, the perceived risk is regulated based on personal inclinations of trust.

h6: Interpersonal trust has a positive effect on political trust, by "spilling over" into the political sphere.

Mishler and Rose, having analyzed the role of social trust in Eastern European societies, suggest that the distance between the state and the public during the decades of repression has severed the theoretical relationship between interpersonal trust and political trust. Eastern

European societies may still be characterized to a larger degree as civil society 2. This thread is further spun by Natalia Letki and Geoffrey Evans, who state that while the link between social trust and favorable democratic conditions may well exist in “northern industrial cases”, the link in Eastern and Central European cases is nonexistent or even negative (Letki, Evans 2005:523). Interpersonal trust remained “the basis for their contractual relationships” (Letki Evans 2005:524) with the political sphere removed from the equation. In this sense interpersonal trust may in these societies contribute to a higher degree of suspicion and distrust towards institutions of power, as while bonding the citizens together, it further entrenches the people against the state.

Bo Rothstein claims that there is no theoretical causal link between social trust and trust in the institutions of law and order – the court of justice and the police (the very institutions that will be tested in this thesis) (Rothstein 2002:322). As described, this thesis hypothesizes that there might indeed be, but the theoretical maze of trust-theories forces us to take several precautions. Kenneth Newton, having tested this relationship through several analyses, also criticizes this supposed relationship between social and political trust. He finds no “close relationship between social and political trust, between social trust and political behavior, or between activity in voluntary associations and political attitudes of trust and confidence.” “Social capital”, he continues, “is not necessarily related to political capital and political capital seems not to be dependent on social capital” (Newton 1999:185-186). He does, however, find a relationship on the aggregate level, suggesting that the societal dimension of trust is more important than the individual, interpersonal dimension.

This leaves us with a couple of hypothesis regarding the effects of interpersonal trust.

h6a: The effect is stronger in WEC than EEC.

h6b: Interpersonal trust has no effect on political trust.

Interpersonal trust will be tested on both micro and macro level, in tune with the theories of Kenneth Newton. If it is indeed so that interpersonal trust works mainly on the aggregate level, this should be revealed through our analysis.

2.6.1.1. The role of the civil society

The described transfer of trust from the private to the political sphere takes place within a *civic culture*. In a thriving civic culture, Mishler and Rose elaborate, the radius of trust includes the political sphere, as individuals are able to expand their trust from particular personal relations to impersonal relations beyond the immediate surroundings (2005:5). The idea of a civic culture covering society and constituting a basis for democratic development and interpersonal trust is not a new one. The idea of an active and integrated citizenry is an important part of Alexis de Tocqueville's odyssey through America, where he attributed the high American levels of "civicness" to their involvement in local organizational activity; this engagement again spilling over to a general interest and attitude towards politics and democracy (Skocpol 2002:103-104).

Closely related to the concept of civic culture is the *civil society*. Whereas the civic culture is the air of social and political interaction stimulating trust and political participation, the civil society is the terrain allowing this to take place. Defining this terrain is not an easy task – many have tried, leading to widespread disagreement on the topic. However, to make things a little easier one can start by using the most common denominator – the voluntary organizations, "invariably included in every definition" (Wollebæk, Selle 2009:58). Using such a minimal definition of civil society is useful as it allows the concept to travel well between contexts, making it a useful indicator for this analysis.

Social networks through voluntary associations also form the ground stone in the theoretically popular concept "social capital", made mainstream by Robert Putnam in the early 90's. "Palermo may represent the future of Moscow", Putnam famously remarked (1993:183), referring to how the poor institutional performance of southern Italy could be reflected in the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe, due to the hierarchical institutional structure and lack of civic engagement and voluntary organization. The northern regions were characterized by higher levels of social capital, resulting in a well-functioning civic culture. Southern regions, however, had lower levels. Putnam emphasizes the *hierarchical structure* of southern politics versus the *horizontal structure* of the northern regions. The structure of the state-

citizen relationship is important in the generation of citizen trust in the political system. According to Putnam, social capital refers to “features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam 1993, 167). Social capital is both an individual and a societal feature. On the individual level, social capital increases trust in democratic ideals and increases political and civil participation. On the society-level, a high national level of trust and citizen participation is supposed to increase institutional performance and economic growth and reduce crime and corruption (Rothstein, Uslaner 2005, 42). Putnam later used the term in his article (and book) “Bowling Alone”, in which he diagnosed a decrease in social capital in the American society and analyzed how this is leading to a decline in political interest and engagement. To turn this tide of disengagement one has to stimulate interpersonal contact and civic engagement in voluntary organizations, such as bird-watching clubs and bowling associations (Putnam 2000). According to Putnam, these organizations generate the civic culture facilitating the political trust. These voluntary organizations are the very same that Wollebæk and Selle use in their definition of the civil society.

Robert Putnam here emphasizes the indirect effect of voluntary associations – the “by-products” (Wollebæk, Selle 2009:61). This is a continuation of Tocqueville’s (1968 in Wollebæk, Selle 2002:43) dichotomization of the effects of voluntary organizations. As well as being the infrastructure between the individual and the state, they function as “schools of democracy” (Offe, Fuchs 2002:234). Hence:

h7: Participation in voluntary organizations has a positive effect on political trust.

However, the positive, apolitical view on civil society emphasized by Putnam is challenged by many. As theories of civil society started to flourish in the United States, the view of the state was often a negative one. Drawing data and experiences from the oppressive, totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe, a large state was considered an evil, with civil society the righteous enemy, the defender of popular rights (Trägårdh 2008:579-580). Civil Society became in this view an arena for social interaction without state intervention. China’s recent disallowing of the term “civil society” from the media is not without reason (Hågensen 2011) – it is a popular strategy for authoritarian regimes to suppress arenas where individuals may interact without being observed by the watchful eye of the state.

Michael Foley and Bob Edwards conceptualize these conflicting views through their terms “civil society 1” and “civil society 2”. Whereas civil society 1 concerns the apolitical processes of face-to-face socialization described above, civil society 2 concerns how civil society functions as a sphere of resistance to a tyrannical regime (Foley, Edwards 1996:39).

In this sense, the theories of civil society and social capital may represent a fundamental difference between Western European democracies and Eastern European post-communist societies. The civil society has in the liberal western democracies been able to develop relatively freely, protected by the rights and freedoms ensured in a liberal democracy, resulting in a positive, mutually reinforcing state-citizen relationship. State-policy on civil society in communist Eastern Europe was, on the other hand, repressive in nature, and hindered associational life on grassroot-level⁶. Civil Society has had different conditions for growth, and the development of a political culture may have been affected as a result. As Foley and Edwards state: “There is no reason in principle why the “counterweight” of civil society should not become a burden to a democratic as well as an authoritarian state” (Foley, Edwards 1996:38). Even though there has been a democratic transition, the relationship between the state and the civil society may still be struggling.

Voluntary organizations are not necessarily an entirely coherent concept. In his cross-country analysis on social capital, Dag Wollebæk distinguishes between the horizontal, a-political “Putnam Groups” where the democratic effect of face-to-face interaction are emphasized, and the politically oriented “Olson Groups” which emphasizes the direct contact between civil society and the political sphere (Wollebæk 2009:230). Additionally, due to their often hierarchical structure (Dowley, Silver 2002:508, Putnam 1993), religious organizations are categorized as a third group, with potentially different effects (Wollebæk 2009:230). By grouping the voluntary organizations one can uncover in more detail the effects of voluntary organizations across the iron curtain.

The difference between EEC and WEC civil society-development leads us to the following hypothesis:

h7a: Voluntary organizations has a stronger effect in WEC

⁶ This is, of course, a simplification of the civil society-discourse. For a broader discussion about civil society in EEC, see for example Kopecky and Mudde 2003.

2.6.2. A change of values? The shift from modernism to postmodernism

The perspectives described above discuss trust or distrust as a product of socialization – about *lifetime learning of trust* (Mishler, Rose 2001:37). However, the existence of political trust or lack thereof may, rather than being a result of civic disengagement and decrease in social capital, be a product of changing times and changing values. According to Ronald Inglehart, the world is experiencing “deep-rooted changes in world views” (Inglehart 2000:215), fundamentally changing the way the political system is regarded. With the shift from traditional to legal-rational authority described earlier followed a change of mentality, from “religious and communal values” to a worldview of “rationalistic morality” (Inglehart 1999:237-238). This process, Inglehart comments, is not linear. Somewhere along the way of economic modernization, the values shift again (Inglehart 1999:239) – towards *postmodern*, or *postmaterial*, values.

When economic development expanded, and welfare models were improved in western societies, individuals experienced new levels of economic security. This enabled them to climb the hierarchy of needs and pursue other demands. The Post-modern shift represents a shift towards the pursuit of individual goals and the maximizing of individual well-being (Inglehart 1999:239). The mindsets of the citizens transfer from material values to post-material values. And to accompany this shift comes an increasing distrust of authoritarian figures. The shift from emphasis on survival towards emphasis on self-fulfillment has led to a decreased deference to authority. With increased economic safety, resources can now be spent on more thorough scrutiny of political authorities; “When people no longer worry about their survival, they do not need to cling unquestionably to the authorities they hope will ensure their survival” (Catterberg, Moreno 2005:32) The population of post-modern societies put more emphasis on the democratic values of liberty, equality and rights of property. The traditional socialist leviathan suffers, as a large bureaucratic state is regarded a violation of these rights. From being a provider of economic security, the state is now an intruder in the personal sphere. The post-material shift is accompanied by an increasing distrust in hierarchical institutions, similar to the ones constituting our first dependent variable – political institutions (Inglehart 1998:243). Thus, according to the theory of postmodernism, the decrease of institutional trust is not necessarily a loss for the principles of democracy. Democratic values are given higher salience as hierarchical institutions (such as the ones being subject to research in this thesis) are treated with more suspicion.

The hypothesis derived from Inglehart's work is somewhat complicated, as it assumes opposite effects on institutional and democratic trust, respectively. Post-material values will, according to the postmodernist theory, increase support for the democratic principles, at the same time reducing trust in political authorities.

h8a: Postmaterialism has a negative effect on institutional trust-indicators

h8b: Postmaterialism has a positive effect on support for democratic ideals

The postmodernism-hypotheses thus defy the idea described above that political trust "travels upwards", from the specific targets towards the more diffuse. Trust is thus not spilling over in the hierarchy, but simultaneously distributed differently to different parts of the political system.

The level of post-modern values is proportional to the level of socio-economic modernization in a country (Inglehart 2000:221). Thus, hypothetically, political trust in western developed democracies will be more strongly affected by value change, as citizens of these countries, due to the ever-improving socioeconomic conditions have turned their priorities towards more freedom and less hierarchical authority (Dalton 2006). This parallels Inglehart's theories, and gives us the following regional hypothesis:

h8c: Both these effects are more pronounced in established democracies.

2.7. Main hypotheses and chapter summary

Thus, we end up with two conceptually different clusters of variables as described in table 2.1., with accompanying hypotheses for analysis. With these in mind, it is time to formulate the two main hypotheses of this master thesis – the hypotheses which will provide the answers to the research question.

A general pattern of the government performance-hypothesis is that they should have a larger impact in EEC, due to the countries' fragile trust and lengthy experience with authoritarian regimes. By reviewing the trends of trust presented in the introduction by looking at them through the frames of the theories discussed above, one can make some main hypotheses. We

see again that the trust in parliament in the EEC dropped quickly between 1991 (shortly after the transition) to 1995, suggesting, as Catterberg and Moreno puts it, a “post-honeymoon”-effect. New democratic regimes are fragile in many ways, and will need to perform quickly to meet the high hopes of a citizenry tired of years of underperformance and democratic deficits. In the WEC, however, we are not as likely to see such an effect. The steady democratic development and long democratic history is suspected to have led to an “intuitive understanding of how democracy works” (Lægneid, Christensen 2005:23), reducing the impact of short-term experience related to specific actors. For the WEC regimes, thus, it is hypothetically more problematic to pinpoint poor performance as a cause for the general de-alignment across borders. Conversely, as described in to the different sets of variables, the cultural theories should here have a stronger impact, due to a more developed civic culture. Hence, the first main hypothesis concerns the difference between two main groups of independent variables, and the geographical comparative dimension of this thesis:

H1: Political variables will have a larger relative impact in EEC, while cultural variables will be more important in WEC, where the democratic institutions have proven their worth.

This hypothesis, though not tested to an extensive degree, has been presented earlier. Mishler and Rose (2005) found that government performance in Russia had a larger impact on institutional assessment than cultural variables, but stated that cultural influences may play a larger role in “older, more established democratic regimes” (21). Similarly, as we saw above, McAllister(1999) hypothesized that societies of short democratic experience would be harder affected by economic dissatisfaction than established democracies.

Please note that I am certainly not implying here that while Eastern Europe is inhabited by emotionless, cool rationally evaluating “homo economicus”, Western Europe is sprawling with affective, emotional citizens driven purely by animal spirits. Both sets of theories are hypothesized to have an effect in both regions. However, based on the described historical development and differences in democratic history, the theories of government performance should have a relatively larger impact in young democracies where the population demand concrete favorable output from the democratic regime. Cultural theories, on the other hand, should have a larger impact in established, liberal democracies, where a political culture, civil society and democratic values have had favorable growth conditions.

Whereas the first main hypothesis mainly (but not exclusively) focuses on the “specific” dimension of political trust, the second hypothesis in particular concerns the distinction between the different types of political trust this thesis aims to test. All hypotheses above (except the postmaterialism-related ones) deal with similar effects on institutional and democratic trust. The variables having a positive effect on citizen confidence in political institutions may also be expected to contribute, to a certain degree, to higher trust in democracy.

As the communist regimes of Eastern Europe were not dependent on trust to function, one can suspect the reservoirs of diffuse democratic trust to be shallow. Hence, variables that affect the somewhat more fluctuating specific institutional trust, will to a larger degree also affect trust and support in democratic values in EEC, as these democracies have yet to accumulate stable levels of diffuse trust. In this sense trust moves upwards on Norris’ scale of political trust. Continuous distrust in specific actors and institutions leaves a print of distrust in the system behind these actors and institutions. Hypothetically the trust travels faster in new democracies than in old ones.

H2: The effects on trust in democratic values (diffuse trust) will generally be stronger in EEC than in WEC.

Note that this effect is direct as well as indirect. Because of this the analysis will, in addition to testing the same explanatory variables on both dependent variables, test the effect of institutional trust on democratic trust, to specifically test how and whether trust travels differently between the different levels on the scale of political trust.

Adding these main hypotheses to the ones presented earlier in this chapter gives the following reference table of theories and hypotheses:

Table 2.1 - hypotheses.

Theories:	Hypotheses:
Main hypotheses:	<p>H1: Institutional variables will have larger impact in EEC, whereas cultural variables will have a stronger effect in WEC.</p> <p>H2: The effect on democratic trust will be stronger in EEC.</p>
Institutional variables:	<p>h1: Economic Performance will have a positive impact on political trust.</p> <p>h1a: These effects will be stronger in the EEC.</p> <p>h2: Income inequality will have a negative effect on political trust.</p> <p>h2a: The effect will be stronger in the EEC.</p> <p>h3: The state of political and civil liberties in a country has a positive effect on political trust.</p> <p>h3a: This effect is more prominent in EEC.</p> <p>h4: State corruption has a negative impact on political trust</p> <p>h4a: This impact is stronger in EEC</p> <p>h5: Being a “winner” has a positive effect on political trust.</p> <p>h5a: This effect is stronger in the EEC.</p>
Cultural variables.	<p>h6: Interpersonal trust has a positive effect on political trust, by “spilling over” into the political sphere.</p> <p>h6a: This effect is stronger in WEC than EEC.</p> <p>h6b: Interpersonal trust has no effect on political trust.</p> <p>h7: Participation in voluntary organizations has a positive effect on political trust.</p> <p>h7a: Voluntary organizations has a stronger effect in WEC</p> <p>h8a: Postmaterialism has a negative effect on institutional trust-indicators</p> <p>h8b: Postmaterialism has a positive effect on support for democratic ideals</p> <p>h8c: Both these effects are more pronounced in established democracies.</p>

This chapter has explicitly laid out the theoretical foundation of the thesis. It has briefly placed the concept of political trust in two different political contexts. It has presented the dependent variables as two different kinds of political trust. And it has defined the theoretical backgrounds for the independent variables. Having established a theoretical framework and analyzable hypotheses, how does one concretely approach the research question? To clarify this, the next chapter will outline the methodical design of the thesis.

3. Method and Data – a multi-dimensional approach

The following chapter will draw the methodological structure of this thesis, and explain why a multilevel design is well-suited for explaining differences in political trust. I will discuss both the substantial and statistical benefits of multilevel analysis, in the process explaining the concrete procedures of my method of choice (keeping the technical details as few as possible). Then, I will describe the data-set and selection of countries, before I finally select and explain the most fitting indicators for the different variables explained above.

3.1. Why a quantitative approach?

“To have mastered ‘theory’ and ‘method’ is to have become a conscious thinker” (Mills 1959 in Sartori 1970:1033). When laying the methodological design for a master thesis, it is important to thoroughly analyze the research question, and find the most suitable method of analysis. One of the most central elements is to align your methods to the ontology – to the way the world is actually put together. Not every method is applicable in every context. Using the wrong method at a given research question may produce useless results, as the models may not be a proper representation of reality (Hall 2003). Thus, to be a conscious thinker one has to properly analyze the theoretical and empirical circumstances in order to choose an appropriate method. An important question to consider is that of qualitative versus quantitative method. Is the research question best answered through broad, large-N comparative analyses or by concentrating on a few or a single case? The question of qualitative versus quantitative method is often simplified to a question of depth versus breadth. By sacrificing the opportunity of in-depth, thorough research of a small number of cases, the statistical analysis can investigate a large number of cases, and thus find larger patterns that can infer relationships outside the specific area of research. Whereas qualitative analyses may zoom in on the small scale relationships between societal factors, statistical models may test these effects on a larger scale (King, Keohane, Verba 1994:4). As this thesis endeavors to compile and compare different views on political trust, the quantitative method is a viable choice.

Peter Hall goes a long way in implying that ontology has “outrun” methodology, and that standard regression analyses are unfit to describe and explain the world (Hall 2003:398) He

states, using traditional modernization theories as an example, that one should not use simple standard regressions without paying attention to complex interactions and factors being influenced by context (Hall 2003:398). More advanced and specialized quantitative techniques may however to a better degree reflect ontology. One should not necessarily reject quantitative method on the grounds that it is imprecise or unaligned to reality, one just needs to explore and refine our analytical tools. This thesis is an attempt to uncover these interactions and contextually different causal relationships Hall emphasizes.

The main reason for the choice of quantitative method for this particular problem is the global, general nature of the phenomenon under researching. As we have seen, decreasing political trust is a fact in numerous established democracies, and levels of trust have also been disappointingly low in new democracies. Therefore, it is interesting to look at the phenomenon through a broad analysis, as there are reasons to believe that there are common causal relationships across borders. At the same time caution is needed not to draw hasty conclusion about a pan-European or global model of explaining political trust. Nuances and details may be hidden under the surface, underlining our need for a model that takes these factors in regard.

3.2. Multilevel analysis and why it is appropriate

The essence of comparative method is to uncover relationships through analyzing multiple cases/units/observations against each other. This study is inherently comparative, as the research question explicitly sets two different geographical regions up against each other. Moreover, as thoroughly described in the theory-chapter, the thesis is actually comparative across three dimensions: 1. The geographical-contextual dimension – are there differences in the generation of trust across the great east-west divide? 2. Level of measurement – are differences of political trust caused by individual or contextual factors? 3. The forms of political trust – what is the effect of the independent variables on democratic and institutional trust, respectively? Thus, to be aligned with the proposed ontology – this multidimensional conception of trust – the quantitative design must be able to include all these aspects.

I argue that political trust can be explained by both individual factors and factors on the country level, and that causal relationships may differ based on the regional historical context. This thesis includes hypotheses on both micro and macro level – hence we need an analytical

method that allows us to measure the effect of both state-level factors that vary across borders and individual factors that vary between citizens of those countries. Multilevel analysis enables us to do just that. The technique has in recent years been widely used when studying schools, consisting of pupils nested into classes (de Leeuw, Meijer 2008:2). However, as the world consists of individuals nested into geographical units of administration (states), assuming state-structures affect individual attributes (as I do), the technique is also well-suited for the globally oriented comparative social scientist. The ability to combine country-level and individual variables enables us to test the hypothesis about aggregate effects and individual effects in the same model.

The fundamental question of this thesis is whether the causal relationships that affect the level of political trust are different in Eastern and Western Europe. One advantage with multilevel analysis is that it allows the measurement of effects of independent variables on the individual level to be mediated by factors on country-level (Strabac 2007:191). As we shall see, being able to model the iron curtain as a mediating factor on the individual causal effects is very useful, and captures the geographical dimension of the thesis nicely.

Additionally, multilevel analysis addresses some statistical issues associated with ordinary monolevel analyses. Multilevel analysis sorts the variables on the individual level to vary between the individuals in a particular country, while the country level variables compares between country means. Using traditional one-level statistical techniques on multilevel data, like cross-national survey-data, may lead to several statistical issues (clustering, nonconstant variance, underestimated standard errors (Dalton, Anderson 2011:25)). The fact that individuals are clustered in countries with potentially influential characteristics violates the assumption of independence between observations (Hox 2010:4-5). Recognizing the multilevel structure of the data and the possible differences in variance across borders, and weaving them into the statistical design, may remedy these problems.

The democratic/institutional trust-dimension is taken care of by conducting a separate multilevel analysis on each dependent variable, using similar explanatory variables on each one. In this way, I can measure not only different across-country and between-individuals effects, but also where what kinds of political trust are more or less affected by different explanatory factors.

In sum the methodological design allows for effective comparisons across levels of measurement, across a possibly interesting geographical area and between different types of political trust. However, an inherent problem of measuring and analyzing attitudes through survey data is the difficulties related to conducting time-series/panel analyses. Even if the surveys are held by regular intervals, the respondents are rarely the same (especially in large N cross-country surveys as in this case), and panel-analyses are thus impossible on the individual level. And due to the relatively low number of countries, and the large differences in participating countries, aggregate panel analyses are also difficult. This omission of the time-dimension challenges one of the criteria in the classical definition of causality by David Hume (in Skog 2007:23-24) However, trust being such a theoretically slow-moving, hard-to-change aspect of society (Rothstein and Uslaner have coined trust as a “sticky” phenomenon” (2005:65)), an analysis executed at a single point in time should be a viable choice to capture important causal relations. The theoretical foundation for the causal directions is also thoroughly explained in the theory-chapter, so the lacking time-dimension should not be a big obstacle for this analysis.

3.3. The multilevel model

3.3.1. Conducting and interpreting a multilevel regression analysis

Multilevel models are known under several names, such as “random coefficient model”, “variance component model” and “hierarchical linear model” (Hox 2010:11). The common concept is the hierarchical structure of data, allowing splitting of variance into between- and within-parts. This allows us to include variables on two analytical levels in one model. I will now lay out the structure of my analysis. Level 1 below refers to the individuals and level 2 the countries. The step-wise procedure explained below is useful when conducting multilevel analysis, as the number of parameters is very high compared to the standard OLS-regression (Hox 2010:54-56). This complicates the analysis. Therefore, it is practical to keep the number of variables down by weeding out the insignificant variables as you go.

The first model is a model without any independent variables, except the *intercept*-term. The model is therefore called an *intercept-only*-model, or, due to its lack of independent variables, an *empty* model (Ma, Lingling, Kelly 2008, Strabac 2007, Hox 2010).

$$Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j} + e_{ij} \quad (1)$$

The empty model consists of the regression intercept γ_{00} , in addition to residuals on both individual (e_{ij}) and country level (u_{0j}) (Hox 2010:56). The empty model works as a reference for the rest of the models. The perhaps most important piece of information in the empty model, is the amount of variance within and between countries, respectively. By measuring the country-level variance as a proportion of the total variance, one can estimate how much of the total variance of the dependent variable in the population is a result of individual factors, and how much is a result of country-factors (Hox 2010:56) (Ma, Lingling, Kelly 2008:65). This estimate is called the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) (Strabac 2007:181). For a multilevel analysis to be viable there should exist some variance on level 2 - the ICC is thus a nifty tool for evaluating the usefulness of a multilevel analytical design. This model thus serves as a reference for the more complex models (O'Connell, MacCoach 2008:65). Knowing the variance in the dependent variable allows us to have a larger to control the evolution of the model, by sorting out the variables not adding to its explanatory power.

When we insert the independent variables on both levels into this empty model, we get the basic multilevel model:

$$Y_{ij} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{p0}X_{pij} + \gamma_{0q}Z_{qj} + u_{0j} + e_{ij} \quad (2)$$

This model includes, and measures the effect of the independent variables on both level 1 and level 2. The X_{pij} are the p explanatory variables at the individual level (individual i in country j), while the Z_{qj} are the q explanatory variables at the group level (country j) (Hox 2010:57). The next step is usually to include varying regression coefficients across country borders, so-called *random slopes* (Hox 2010:57-58, Strabac 2007:188). However, as the theoretical argument of this thesis concentrates primarily in difference between two large regions and less on the internal difference of these regions, this step will not be prioritized. Additionally, the limited degrees of freedom caused by our relatively few units on level two restrict the number of parameters one can include while still keeping the model statistically solvent. The theoretically relevant geographical distinction in the thesis is the one between western and

⁷ There are many different notations of equations throughout the literature. The one used in this thesis similar to the one used in Hox (2010).

eastern Europe, hence the focus will not lie on uncovering other regional differences. By removing the varying regression slopes (random effects) from the model, the multilevel model becomes more similar to the ordinary monolevel model.

If the analysis contains conditional hypotheses, Brambor, Clark and Golder claim, then the analysis should include interactions (2006:64). This analysis specifically sets out to investigate the potential conditional effects of the west/east divide, and to find this difference the models will thus include interaction terms. The next step in the analysis will therefore be to include interaction terms, using the West-East Europe divide as a variable in combination with other explanatory variables.

The most used type of interaction in a multilevel model is a cross-level interaction with a random effect on the lowest level (Bauer, Curran 2005:387). Interactions can, however, be made with fixed effects as well (Bauer, Curran 2005:387), as is the case here. These are constructed by multiplying a variable on one level with a variable on the other. This measures the effect of a variable under the influence of another variable, in our case whether or not the individual lives in a western or eastern-European country. Confirming or rejecting our main geographical hypothesis will depend on the significance of these interactions.

The analysis will be done using the statistical package Stata, a powerful tool for conducting complex analyses with large data-sets. There are other programs dedicated specifically towards multilevel modeling, but Stata was considered sufficient for the purposes of this thesis.

Both the linear and the logistic model (logistic regression explained below in part 3.3.2) use maximum likelihood estimation to (Hox 2010 41, 114) “produce estimates for the population parameters that maximize the probability (...) of observing the data that are actually observed” (Hox 2010:40). Through multiple complicated iterations Stata computes the best possible estimates for the given model, resulting in a likelihood value. The multilevel model does not provide an R^2 like the ordinary least square (OLS) model (Strabac 2007:187) As explained the ICC enables us to compare the variance between level 1 and level 2 as the model evolves. The above-mentioned likelihood also provides us with a measurement called

*deviance*⁸, indicating how well the model fits the data. The deviance is then used to test different nested models – that is, two models where “a specific model can be derived from a more general model” by removing variables (Hox 2010:16). By performing a *Likelihood-ratio* test, or LR-test, one can determine whether the more complicated model is a better fit than the smaller model. A significant LR-test means that the added variables contribute to a better model fit. The LR-tests will be provided in the empty model (against a standard regression), when the individual variables are added (against the empty model), as well as where the country-level variables are added (against the individual model). In this way the different models of the analysis can be compared in terms of how well they explain the variance of political trust, even without an R^2 .

3.3.2. A short note on logistic analysis

One of the dependent variables in the analysis is a dummy-variable, consisting only of the values 1 and 0. Having dichotomous dependent variable has analytical consequences. The non-normal distribution of errors and lack of continuity and linearity requires a logistic multilevel regression (Hox 2010:112). Where ordinary linear regressions estimate the change in y when x changes by 1, a logistic regression is trying to maximize the likelihood that x and y appear together (Eikemo/Clausen 2007:83). This likelihood approaches, but never quite reaches 0% and 100%, resulting in an S-curved logistic regression line (Skog 2007:354)

Whereas traditional coefficients are displayed as change in the value of the dependent variable, in a logistic regression the coefficients are displayed as odds-ratios, where a ratio above 1 indicates a positive effect (an increase in probability). Similarly, a ratio between 1 and 0 indicates a reduction in probability, i.e. a negative effect. The odds ratios are the antilogarithm of the beta coefficients (Eikemo, Clausen 2007:91), and are given directly by Stata by applying the OR-option when conducting the analyses. By using the formula $100*(\text{odds ratio}-1)$, the odds ratios are recalculated into “percentage change in odds/probability” (Eikemo, Clausen 2007:92). In this way one may interpret effects on the second dependent variable – democratic trust.

⁸ Calculated as $-2*\ln(\text{likelihood})$.

3.3.3. Possible problems

Having as few units of analysis on level 2 as is the case here has puts severe restrictions on the available amount of independent variables, due to few degrees of freedom. This is not an exact science, but according to Snijders and Bosker (1999 in Strabac 2007:176), having between 10 and 100 units on level two may cause statistical issues. The data-set was chosen partly due to its relatively high number of available European countries, but the number of units on macro-level is, nevertheless, not especially high, and limits the possibilities of the analysis. Therefore, while I can easily cram in as many variables as I like on the individual level, I may have to reduce variables on country-level for my analysis to produce statistically useful results. These precautions will be taken in the analysis.

The large difference in number of units on the different levels of analysis may also cause difficulties when interpreting significance. With thousands of units (individuals) on level one, even small and negligible effects on the dependent variable may seem statistically significant (low p-values) (Midtbø 2007:95), leading an inattentive researcher to give those effect higher salience than they actually deserve. It is important not only to look at the statistical significance, but also the substantial significance – whether the actual impact of the variable is strong enough to pay attention to – by actively comparing the strength of the causal effects. Even though an effect is statistically significant, it might be substantially negligible.

3.4. Data and Operationalizations

3.4.1. The sources of data

The scope and boundaries of the master thesis prohibits me from conducting my own surveys, leaving the thesis' destiny entirely in the hands of external data-sources. However, the amount and extent of databanks that measures individual motivations and feelings have increased during the last decades, expanding the areas of research available for quantitatively oriented social scientists. As the concept of trust and civil society has gained a larger role in political science, so have questions about the concept received a place in large, cross-national surveys. This provides a large reservoir of potential sources of data for the thesis. An ambitious research design, as the one drawn above, requires an extensive data-set. Survey questions that function as potent indicators of all of our variables, both the dependent and the independent

ones are necessary, as well as respondents from a wide array of European states, from both sides of the iron curtain.

The available sources of data include the World Value Survey, the Eurobarometer, the European social Survey and the European Values study. All these contain useful variables and have been extended throughout the years to include new cultural theories and measures to keep up with the trends of social science. The selection of countries, however, varies to some degree between the datasets. The Eurobarometer excludes itself by only including EU countries, of which there are historically few eastern European. The World Values Survey, while having a large number of countries worldwide, includes only 20 European countries in the latest survey (2005-2008). European Social Survey, though focusing on Europe, similarly include only 28 European countries (excluding Turkey and Israel), too few for this analysis.

Based on the available indicators and the amount of included countries, I have therefore chosen the European Values Study (EVS) as my dataset for this analysis. The European Values Study is published every ninth year, starting in the early 80's. The latest survey, from 2007-2008, endeavors to find "further insights" of cultural and social change (EVS 2011a). It also features a larger number of countries than ever before, including among others the new countries of the Balkan region. Today, the data-set includes practically every European country, making it a natural choice for a cross-European analysis.

When using data collected by others, careful considerations when selecting the variable indicators are required. To maximize the validity of our measurements there has to be congruence between what we are measuring and what we think we are measuring (King, Keohane, Verba 1994:25) Firstly, I have to interpret what the survey makers intended with the question. Secondly, I have to assume that the respondents interpret the questions the same way as the survey-makers, the other respondents, and I do. The questions may have to be adjusted to a certain geographical context as concepts may have different interpretations across national borders. European values survey takes this into account, having routines for uncovering translational problems and adjust their wording to cultural peculiarities (EVS 2011b). Additionally, respondents may for some reason *lie* or in other ways provide unreliable information, reducing the validity of the data. This is a danger especially under repressive governments, where individuals may put themselves in danger by answering on certain questions (King, Keohane, Verba 1994:25). However, Eastern European democracies have

come a long way when it comes to openness and the questions asked are relatively uncontroversial, so there should be little reason for the respondents to hide the truth. As for data reliability, that is the trustworthiness of the data-collection procedures (King, Keohane, Verba 1994:25-26), the individual data is collected using methods of randomizing and sufficiently large selections to ensure representability (EVS2011b). There is little reason to doubt the methods of collection, and the data is deemed reliable for the purposes of this thesis.

On the national level data has been collected from numerous data banks, including the Freedom House website and the World Bank. All national data collected is from 2007, to ensure that the different variables are applicable in the same model. To not break Hume's criteria of asymmetry and locality (that cause and effect should happen close to each other in space and time, but not at exactly the same time (Skog 2007:23-24)), the data should be recorded during as short time as possible, and the dependent variable cannot predate the explanatory variables.

3.4.2. The selection of countries

As described in the introduction, the selection of the iron curtain as a means of comparison may seem somewhat arbitrary, considering the increasing convergence between east and west the last 20 years. Additionally, the internal coherence of the east and west region may be questioned. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the distinction is still relevant, considering the age of the different democracies and the hypothesized causal relations. Our main hypothesis concerns the differences in effect between a recent, abrupt transition from an oppressive regime and a regime with a long democratic history. Thus, the selection of countries should reflect this difference.

The so-called "third wave of democratization", includes the mass of quick democratic transitions in Europe in the early nineties with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and departure from socialist regimes. The countries that are included in this group is the Czech republic, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Croatia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Albania, and Macedonia. On WEC, the thesis includes every country (of some size) that experienced a "natural" democratic development through the late 19th-early 20th century. According to Stein Rokkan (Flora, Kuhnle, Urwin 1999) the following Western European Countries experienced a steady democratic

development that ended with the so-called “freezing” of party-systems in the 1920-1930’s: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, Switzerland, Austria, United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy. These countries can therefore be regarded as “established” democracies, and will constitute the Western European category.

In addition to the countries described above, I include the countries Spain, Portugal and Greece in the group of WEC, even though all of them can be included in the “third wave”, having experienced democratic transitions during the 70’s. This is based on both statistical and theoretical considerations. Neither of the countries can be regarded as having been a part of the eastern bloc during the 19th century, and all of them were integrated in the Western European society and economic structure by their quick inclusion into the European Union in the 80’s. It should thus not be controversial to include them in the group of western European countries. This gives us a selection of 35 countries, 17 in Eastern Europe and 18 in Western Europe. As mentioned, this is relatively few level 2-units, but with a limited number of parameters in the models, the analysis should be statistically robust.

3.4.3. Operationalizations

3.4.3.1. Dependent variables – Institutional and democratic political trust.

Since this thesis tries to test both institutional and democratic trust, I will need quantitative indicators on both types. The EVS contains numerous variables where respondents are asked about their confidence in more or less political institutions. Additive indices consisting of trust in multiple political institutions is much used in studies such as this, and is considered a satisfactory measure on institutional trust. Exact question wording on this and all other variables can be found in the appendix.

As explained in the theory-chapter, the index of **institutional trust** will consist of trust in the legal system, the parliament and the police. The different indicators ask the respondent to rate their trust in different political institutions from 1 to 4, where 1 indicates very high trust while 4 indicates very low trust. After adding the scores, I subtract 2 from the sum, and reverse the scale, making a scale ranging from 1 (low general institutional confidence) to 10 (high general institutional confidence). The reversing is done for measurement purposes only, and has no substantial effect on the results. It’s intuitive that high trust should be represented by a high

number, and low trust by a correspondingly low number. The Cronbach's Alpha, measuring the consistency of the indicators constituting an index (Skog 2007:97) is 0.738, which is deemed sufficient (Pennings, Keman and Kleinnijenhuis suggest a minimum of 0.67 (2006:75)).

There are some considerations to be done when measuring political trust. As described, the concept of trustworthiness should be separated from the concept of trust, since reasons for trusting lies not only in assessing trustworthiness. Other inquiries have included subjective evaluations of institutional performance as their definition of political trust and trustworthiness, and therefore their dependent variable (Levi, Stoker 2000:497-498). However, as this thesis treats institutional trust as simply whether the respondents put his or her confidence in said institutions, regardless of antecedents, the indicators described above are regarded as optimal.

On the other dependent variable, **democratic trust**, the EVS includes two particular questions regarding support for democracy. One of the questions regards whether democracy is a "good" form of government, and the other whether the respondent agrees or disagrees on whether democracy is the "best" form of government. The country means for each question is very similar. For this thesis the first indicator is chosen – does the respondent consider democracy to be a "good" form of government? For the purposes of the analysis, it is regarded better that the respondent is given the opportunity to give his or her own assessment of democracy, rather than merely agreeing or disagreeing in an already formulated statement.

The questions are asked giving a 4-item scale, ranging from 1 meaning that respondents thinks fondly about democracy to 4 meaning that the respondent does not think democracy is a good form of government. The answers are recoded into a dichotomous variable, where 1 represents a positive assessment, and 0 represents a negative assessment.

3.4.3.2. Independent variables - the individual level

To measure government performance on the individual level, I include a variable on household income, in Euros, adjusted for Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) (for easier comparisons across countries). The **centered household income** variable measures household

income centered round the national mean, to further standardise income across borders. Centering the effects round the country mean enables us to see the income relatively compared to the income within the country. Assessing income across borders is often meaningless (even when adjusted for PPP), as being poor is different in a land of relatively rich citizens than in a land of equally poor citizens. In this sense, centering the income variable round the country mean enables us to somewhat catch the equality-variable on the individual level.

Another individual indicator of economic performance is **unemployment**. For this variable, the EVS include a variable concerning the job-situation of the respondent, asking what job-situation the respondent is currently in. If the respondent answered with alternative 8, unemployed, he is coded as 1; all other answers is coded as 0.

Sadly, the EVS data-set does not include individual perceptive measures of corruption. This is negative, as citizen assessments of government honesty is a potentially strong theoretical determinant of trust in institutions, as explained earlier. Neither does the survey include questions about the respondents' subjective views on, or expectations of government performance. The thesis thus has to rely solely on the objective individual measures just described. Citizen satisfaction in government performance is regularly highlighted as an important correlate of political support (see for example Dalton 2004:63-64), and being unable to catch this factor is a loss.

For the **winner/loser**-variable, I compare the parties in government in the respondent's country with what the respondent says he would vote. If the individual would have voted for a party currently in power, he is considered a "winner", and given value 1. A "loser" is given value 0. This is not optimal, as what a person *would* vote is often not the same as the person actually *voted*. However, one can argue that being discontent with the current government is an equally good measure of being a "loser" as having voted for a losing party last election. In this sense, this variable taps a concept previously found by quantitative analyses to be highly related to political trust: Identifying with the parties in power (Norris 1999b:220). In a parliamentary system, the coding is straightforward – either your party is in government, or it isn't (supporting parties are not taken into consideration). In a presidential/semi-presidential system one must check for co-habitation, which was not the case in any of the countries at the time of measuring.

Interpersonal trust is usually measured by the question “Do you feel that, generally, people are to be trusted or you can’t be too careful?”. The respondent answers either “1” representing trust or “2” representing distrust. The variable is recoded into a 1/0-dummy for analytical purposes. The question has been criticized by some (Smith 1996 in Uslaner 1999:126), however it is deemed suitable for this analysis. It does not imply any trust antecedents, and catches both the respondents’ idea of the trustworthiness in society, and the existence of the “norms of reciprocity” emphasized by Putnam as an integral part of social capital. The interpersonal trust-variable is also aggregated to the country-level **aggregate interpersonal trust**-variable, to catch whether living in a high- or low-trust society has an impact. The variable is generated by taking the country mean levels of interpersonal trust, and multiplying it by ten to get easier interpretable coefficients.

Participation in **voluntary associations** is coded as whether the respondent works voluntarily for a certain type of organization, where a 1 means that the individual does voluntary work and a 0 means that he/she doesn’t. As described in the theory, there are different types of organizations, with potentially different effects on political trust. The “Putnam Groups” – horizontal, non-political groups with emphasis on social interaction – are coded as whether the individual works voluntarily for a cultural activity, a local community action, a sports/recreation-association or a youth organization. Similarly, the “Olson Groups” – politically oriented organizations – are coded as whether or not the respondent works unpaid for a political party or a labor/trade union. The third category, religious organizations, is simply coded as whether the respondent answered yes or no to the question of whether or not he/she works at a religious organization.

Post-materialist attitudes have traditionally been measured by presenting respondents four possible targets of state policy, and telling the respondents to range them according to what they think should have the highest priority. Among these are two traditionally “materialist” targets, and two post-materialist. Dependent on how they range the policies, the respondents are placed in categories “materialist”, “post-materialist” or “mixed”. The indicators are: 1. maintaining order in the nation, 2. giving people more say in important government decisions, 3. fighting rising prices, 4. protecting freedom of speech (GESIS 2011). Alternative one and three indicate materialist view, while two and four indicate postmaterialist views⁹. For the

⁹ There are certain similarities in measurement between especially indicator 1 and 4, and institutional and democratic trust, respectively. This may contribute to inflate their causal effects in the hypothesized directions.

purposes of this thesis, the variable has been recoded into a dichotomous variable, with every individual coded as a post-materialist given the value “1”, while the rest is given value “0”. Additionally, I have made a second dummy by coding the purely non-post-materialist (who ranks the two materialist policies highest) as 1 and the rest as 0, to check whether the most important factor is having materialist or post-materialist values. In this way we can catch if the effect lies not in being post-materialist, but rather *not* being materialist or vice versa. The mixed-category will thus serve as the reference category.

3.4.3.3. Control Variables

To control for individual factors that have the potential to distort results if left unattended, I also include control variables. These are less connected to the theory (though not uninteresting), but their inclusion is statistically important to ensure that other variables are not given too much significance, and are thus increasing the accuracy of the analysis. To account for such factors, I include the control variables age, education, gender, and ethnic background.

Age is indeed of some theoretical interest. As the new generation of Eastern Europeans grow up, the memories of past undemocratic times fade and democracy is regarded the “natural” set of government. Thus, we may hypothesize that younger citizens will have a somewhat higher tolerance for poor democratic performance, and government performance therefore have a weaker effect among these citizens – making it important to control for these differences. Dimitrova-Grajzl and Simon, who analyses political trust among young people of the CEE today emphasize that the growing generation of post-communist Europe have not experienced the communist period and may thus be less affected, if not unaffected, by its legacy (Dimitrova-Grajzl, Simon 2010:207) . No question in the survey asks specifically about age; age is therefore calculated by subtracting year of birth from 2008 (the year of the survey). Being a continuous variable, the age-variable is centered to make a value of zero meaningful. Unlike the income-variable, however, age is centered round the grand European mean, as there is no reason for making age a relative concept.

The **educational level** of individuals has an impact on largely every aspect of their lives, and greatly affects their views, attitudes and motivations. Robert Putnam describes educated people as “trustees and joiners”, being more inclined to join voluntary associations and thus have an extended field of trust (Putnam 1995:6). The data-set is not very cooperative on this

point, offering no year-based educational survey-questions. The questions regarding education have very uneven number-scales from 1-6, where 1 represents hardly any formal education and 6 represents the highest level of tertiary education. For analytical purposes the variable is recoded into a dummy, where 1 means that the respondent has tertiary education, while a 0 means he has not.

The direct effect of **gender** on trust is not much researched, leaving few ideas of possible directions of influence. However, the indirect effects of gender are always present, as differences of opportunities and rights are manifested through every phase of their lives. These differences should thus be controlled for. The dummy-variable is coded with male as 1 and female as 0.

The analysis will include a **country origin-variable**. An important, albeit in this thesis largely untouched, dimension of social capital is that of *bridging* versus *bonding* social capital. Whereas bridging social capital seeks to overcome interpersonal boundaries, bonding social capital strengthens these boundaries while increasing the within-group solidarity. (Putnam 2002:11) Having an ethnically segmented society may lead thus to suspicion of “outsiders”, decreasing citizen alignment to trust. Additionally, many Eastern European countries (and to an increasing degree Western European) are experiencing a rise in right-wing attitudes, and parties expressing such attitudes are getting an increasing number of seats in parliament. This may affect minorities’ trust in the political system. This variable is coded as the respondent answer to whether he/she is a native citizen of the country in which the survey was held. “1” if he/she is a native citizen, “0” if not. The survey-question does not, however, differentiate between different parts of the world regarding origin.

3.4.3.4. Independent variables – country-level

Government performance will in this thesis be measured by the Human Development Index on macro-level. This index neatly combines level of economic development, education and longevity in a single number. As explained, this analysis suffers somewhat from a low number of level 2-units, reducing the number of available control variables on country-level, so such indexes are very welcome, as they reduce the number of necessary control-variables. This variable catches economy, as well as social policies in the form of health and education - all central measures of policy output (McAllister 1999). The HDI-index goes from 0 to 1, and is recoded here to go from 0-10 (multiplied with 10) for easier interpretation of coefficients.

While a good measurement of a regime's level of socioeconomic development accumulated over a longer period of time, the HDI index may be a sub-optimal indicator of short-term regime performance. To catch this aspect, the analysis includes measures of economic growth over the last 5 years. If the country has managed to maintain a steady economic growth, this should hypothetically be visible for citizens, improving their view of the political system. Economic growth is coded as the mean percentage growth in GDP of every year from 2003 to 2008.

Equality is measured by the GINI coefficient, which is a scale ranging from 0 to 1. 0 here means complete equality – perfectly distributed income among population – while a 1 means complete inequality – one person receives all income. Simply spoken, the GINI coefficient is calculated as the difference between absolute proportionality between population and income and the actual distribution of income. A larger number means a larger discrepancy.

Corruption is an elusive concept to capture quantitatively, being inherently withdrawn from public view. However, the international NGO Transparency International works to illuminate such activity, and publishes a yearly report on public corruption, “drawing on different expert and business surveys” (Transparency International 2011). This includes the “Corruption Perception Index, ranging the countries of the world according to the *perceived* levels of corruption in the state sector. This captures the large-scale political corruption Uslaner and Badescu highlighted as important factors in Romania. The scale ranges from 1 (highly corrupt) to 10 (highly clean). The Corruption Perception Index has received some critique for their methods (see for example Galtung 2005), but is regarded as fitting for the purposes of this thesis due to its regularity and broad scope in terms of included countries.

Political and civil rights is coded using the Freedom House's global index. Freedom House publishes a yearly global report – the *Freedom in the World* report - assessing the democratic quality of the countries of the world, assigning them scores on both political liberties and civil rights. The index is based on worldwide “survey ratings and narrative reports” and is supported by country-specific articles elaborating on the reasons for the given ratings. Freedom House differs from some other scales of democracy (such as e.g. the Polity IV index) in that it emphasizes the liberties-aspect of democracy rather than the institutional aspect. Countries are given scores from 1-7 on both political and civil rights, where. In the

analysis, the scores are combined to an additive 2-14-scale. 1 is subtracted, resulting in a 1-13 scale, and the scale is reversed so that liberal countries are given high scores, for easier interpretation of coefficients.

3.4.3.5. The interaction terms

In addition to the variables mentioned above, and crucial for answering the research question, are the interaction terms. These are made by multiplying the Western/Eastern European dummy with the different independent variables. The Western/Eastern dummy encompasses the contextual differences across the iron curtain – including the differences in democratic experience and the many decades of planned versus market economies. The interaction terms can indicate how these experiences have possibly contributed to the independent variables having different effects. When using non-random slopes, only the intercept varies between countries – the coefficients remain the same. By including interaction terms we get two coefficients: one for east and one for west.

Using a dichotomous mediating factor, as is the case here, is perhaps the simplest form of interaction effects (Brambor, Clark, Golder 2005:64). It directly addresses the differences in effect when including the mediating factor as compared to excluding it. To successfully interpret the interactions, one has to look not only at the coefficient of the interaction term, but take into account all variables constituting the interaction. To interpret interactions, Hox states, it helps to write several equations, for different values on one of the independent variables (2010:64). Thus, when interpreting the interaction terms, we generate two new equations, one for Eastern Europe and one (simpler) for Western Europe (Examples of the formulas can be found in Acock 2010:279 and CRMportals.inc 2006:5-9). The western European equation is simple because both the regional dummy and the interaction term has value 0, and is thus removed from the equation. By solving these equations for every interaction, we may find the separate coefficients for Eastern and Western Europe, enabling us to compare causal relationships across the Iron Curtain. Similar formulas are used in the logistic model, but the coefficients are subsequently transformed to odds ratios (by running the antilogarithm on the coefficients, as explained above) for more comprehensive presentation of the effects.

4. Analysis

Having drawn a theoretical and methodological landscape for studying political trust/support, I will now conduct my analysis, and present the result of the regressions. The step-wise progress of the analysis has been presented in the method-chapter, but will be briefly recapitulated during this chapter as the analysis rolls along.

This chapter will consist of five main parts. The first part is a short description of the descriptive data. The second part is the multilevel analysis of institutional trust, including descriptions of interesting effects. The third part is a similar presentation of the democratic trust-analysis, where the institutional trust-variable is included as an explanatory variable. Then the analyses will be reviewed in light of potential analytical difficulties that may occur when conducting multilevel models. Lastly, the hypotheses presented in chapter 2 will be reviewed, to examine how well the theoretical setup is aligned with the empirical results.

4.1. Descriptive statistics - an up-to-date snapshot of political trust

So far, we have hypothesized how WEC and EEC can differ on causal effects on political trust. However, whichever theories you choose to rely on, post-communist societies are expected to hold lower levels of political trust than western democracies (Mishler, Rose 2001:41-42). As described earlier, according to cultural theories, the already low levels of social trust and the weak civil society of the young CEE democracies results in poor or severed state-citizen relationships, hindering the growth of political trust. Similarly, following the institutional theories, the weak economic and political performance of the newly democratized regimes weakens citizen support. Thus, we should expect the levels of political trust to be lower in the CEE today, just as we've seen they were during the 90's.

The following table (4.1) presents each variable with their maximum, minimum and mean values and standard deviations (SD), as well as the number of respondents answering the associated question. This will give some idea about the general distribution of the different phenomena thought to have an effect on political trust. Additionally, to draw a general picture of the two regions, the mean values in respectively EEC and WEC are presented.

Table 4.1 – descriptive statistics

Dependent Variables:	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	N	WEC mean	EEC mean
Institutional Trust	1	10	5.221	2.03	47485	5.858*	4.592*
Democratic Values	0	1	0.887	0.32	46138	0.932*	0.84*
Individual variables							
Post-Materialist	0	1	0.111	0.31	48896	0.161*	0.063*
Materialist	0	1	0.3	0.46	48896	0.231*	0.368*
Interpersonal Trust	0	1	0.326	0.47	49191	0.433*	0.22*
Putnam-group organisations	0	1	0.113	0.32	46871	0.155*	0.079*
Olson-group organisations	0	1	0.038	0.19	46976	0.037*	0.041*
Church-related organisations	0	1	0.051	0.22	48042	0.061*	0.041*
Centered Household Income	-2.86	13.53	2.07	1.15	41578	9.18e-09*	-4.45e-09*
Unemployment	0	1	0.075	0.264	50896	0.514*	0.983*
Winner/Loser	0	1	0.425	0.49	29154	0.443*	0.403*
Education	0	1	0.237	0.42	50757	0.259*	0.214*
Country origin	0	1	0.082	0.28	51142	0.106*	0.059*
Gender (male)	0	1	0.447	0.49	51256	0.461*	0.433*
Age	-33.536	60.464	1.03e-06	17.84	51073	0.748	-0.745
Country-level variables							
Aggregated interpersonal trust	0.11	0.76	0.326	0.17	35	0.433*	0.22*
GINI coefficient	24.7	42.8	31.508	4.67	35	31.06*	31.95*
Corruption perception index	2.3	9.4	5.975	2.21	35	7.774*	4.209*
Human development index	6.2	9.4	0.811	0.068	35	0.865*	0.759*
Eastern Europe	0	1	0.505	0.499	35	---	---
Freedom House	4	13	11.966	1.97	35	12.94*	11.01*
Economic growth	0.371	10.328	4.318	2.677	35	2.089*	6.508*

*=Significant differences between regional means (t-tested). Interaction terms are not included.

When looking at the above table, a problem immediately springs to the eye. There is sincere dropout in the Winner/loser variable (more than 20 000 missing values). The missing data does not, of course, result in too small an N for the analysis. The valid N (individuals with values on all variables) for the whole analysis will drop to approximately 20000 respondents if the Winner/loser-variable is included. However, when analysing missing data, the missing units should be random, not systematic (Skog 2007:77). If there are certain common traits regarding the non-answering individuals of some questions, this may significantly alter the results and make them less trustworthy. Checking the original variable in the EVS, we see that most of the missing data is caused by respondents answering “no” to the question of whether or not they would vote at the next election, making the “which party”-question

irrelevant. Whether or not a person would vote may tell a lot about that person, indicating that the individuals omitted from the analysis by including the Winner/loser-variable may distort the effects of the other variables.

When running the `mvpatterns`-command in STATA, to test whether there are patterns in missing values, shows that indeed the missing values of the Winner/Loser variable correlates more to those of some independent variables than those of others. Additionally, when running the models without the Winner/loser variable *and* without the individuals not responding to that question, we get significantly different results than when removing the Winner/loser-variable while keeping the dropouts. This strongly suggests that the missing data is non-random. The variable will thus be removed from the analysis, as its inclusion might affect the reliability of the results. Removing the Winner/loser-variable raises the valid N on the individual level to more than 33000 respondents, from less than 20000. The other variables have sufficiently high, and similar, N to be kept in the analysis.

Another point, not obvious from the above table, is the complete removal of Italy due to lacking answers by Italians on the questions about voluntary associational work (the Olson-group, Putnam-group and Church-group variables). This dropout, though extremely non-random, is less critical than the Winner/loser-dropouts. Leaving Italy out of the analysis is not critical, as going from 35 to 34 countries has little statistical impact on the already low number of available variables on level 2. Ergo: The analyses will be conducted without the winner/loser variable, and without Italy.

The mean values of the dichotomous variables represent the percentage of respondents answering “1” on the associated question – meaning for example that 7.5 per cent of the respondents in Europe seen as a whole are unemployed. The independent variables of this analysis are largely dichotomous, especially on the individual level. This makes interpretation of coefficients easier, as the same scale (present/not present) is used for almost every independent variable. Where the scale is different, this will be commented upon.

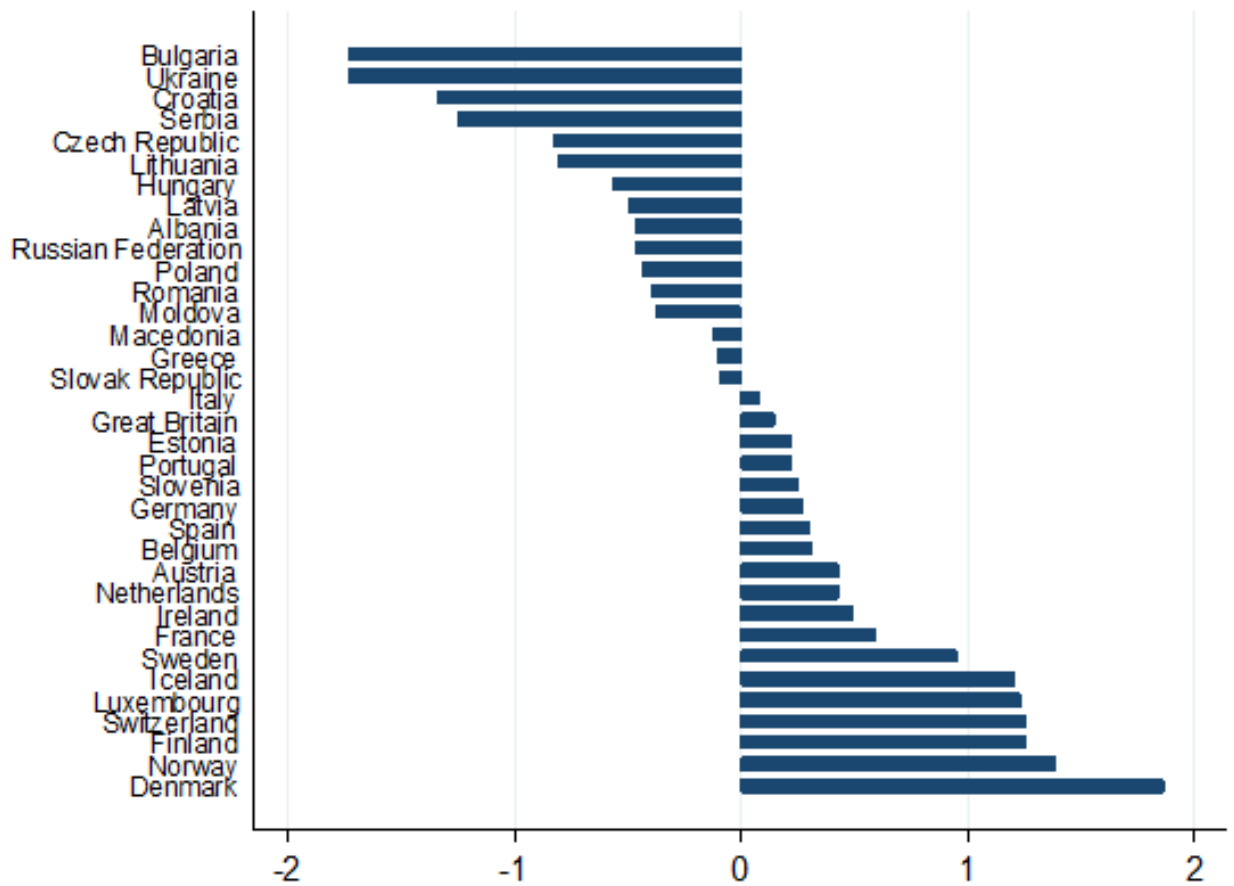
A t-test has been conducted to test for significant differences between eastern and western means. All differences are significant – as expected. Looking at particular variables, we see that both dependent variables have higher means in WEC than in EEC, meaning that there still exist significant differences in how the inhabitants of the regions evaluate their

institutions and political system. The associational variables have somewhat dissimilar mean values. Grassroot organizations are twice as popular in the west as in the east, while church-related organizations are approximately 50% more popular in the west than the east. On the other hand, there is little difference in the involvement in politically oriented organizations, where the EEC citizens in fact are slightly more involved. Reasons for involvement can differ across borders, however. The postmaterialist/materialist differences support the theories of Inglehart. In the economically developing countries of the east, material views are more prominent, as the mass shift in values has not occurred. Other independent variables differ the way we would suspect.

4.2. The determinants of institutional trust

Having looked at the descriptive statistics, it is time to examine the causal relationships. As described, the first analysis will use institutional trust as the dependent variable. Looking at institutional trust country by country, there is a quite clear picture, similar to the numbers seen in the introduction. As we see in the country-by-country numbers in figure 4.1., the Western European countries generally place themselves right of the mean, meaning that their levels of institutional trust are generally higher than the general mean. Eastern European Countries, conversely, place themselves left of the mean, to larger or smaller degrees. The pattern is very consistent - only Slovenia and Estonia of the EEC and Greece of the WEC is, marginally, on the theoretically “wrong” side of the mean.

Fig.4.1 – mean levels of institutional trust



As explained, I will first run a pre-analysis empty model without explanatory variables, for later reference. The table below shows the variance of the dependent variable, institutional trust, split into within-country and between-country variance.

Table 4.2 – Empty model on institutional trust

Empty Model	
Ind. Variance	0.698
Country Variance	3.427
LR-test	5837.98*
ICC	0.16937
Ind. N	33274
Country N	34

Dependent variable: index of institutional trust. *=p<0.01. The LR-test is against an ordinary regression analysis.

The variance will almost always be higher within the countries - that is, between the individuals. The differences between individuals is higher than the difference between countries - there are far more possible influential factors on the individual level than on country-level (Strabac 2007:181). Nevertheless, the ICC of approximately 0.17 shows that there is quite a degree of variance to account for on the national level as well. Nearly 17 percent of the total variance on the dependent variable takes place between countries. The relatively high ICC tells us that a multilevel model is certainly statistically viable in our case. The LR-test is significant, telling us that the multilevel model is preferable to the ordinary regression.

The next step is to include the explanatory variables. This will be done in two steps - first the individual, then the country-level variables. To keep the model as parsimonious as possible, insignificant individual effects will be removed before adding country-level variables. As this first model is without interactions terms, the model measures the effect across Europe as a whole, without paying attention to differences between East and West, to give us a general broad picture of the causal relations.

Due to some issues of multicollinearity (explained in section 4.4), and due to our low number of level 2-units, the country-level variables are tested in separate groups. In model 2 the economic performance-related variables are tested, in model 3 the political performance-related variables are tested, and in model 4 the aggregated interpersonal trust-variable is tested.

Table 4.3 – multilevel model on institutional trust without interaction terms

	Individual Model	2-level model 1	2-level model 2	2-level model 3
Individual level				
Postmaterialism	-0.193* (0.034)	-0.190 (0.033)*	-0.190 (0.033)*	-0.190 (0.034)*
Materialism	0.138* (0.023)	0.138 (0.023)*	0.138 (0.023)*	0.137 (0.023)*
Interpersonal Trust	0.412* (0.023)	0.414 (0.023)*	0.412 (0.023)*	0.412 (0.023)*
Putnam Group	0.135* (0.033)	0.138 (0.033)*	0.137 (0.033)*	0.137 (0.033)*
Olson Group	0.218* (0.052)	0.222 (0.051)*	0.222 (0.051)*	0.221 (0.051)*
Church Organisations	0.281* (0.048)	0.282 (0.048)*	0.282 (0.048)*	0.282 (0.048)*
Income (centered)	0.057* (0.009)	-0.060 (0.009)*	-0.060 (0.009)*	-0.060 (0.009)*
Unemployment	-0.184* (0.040)	-0.186 (0.040)*	-0.186 (0.039)*	-0.186 (0.040)*
Education	0.04 (0.025)	---	---	---
Origin	0.205* (0.039)	0.207 (0.039)*	0.206 (0.039)*	0.208 (0.039)*
Gender (male)	-0.117* (0.023)	-0.118 (0.020)*	-0.118 (0.020)*	-0.118 (0.020)*
Age (centered)	0.006* (0.001)	0.006 (0.001)*	0.006 (0.001)*	0.006 (0.001)*
Intercept	4.828* (0.141)	-1.781	2.254	3.860
Country-level				
GINI		0.000 (0.012)		
Economic Growth		-0.043 (0.074)		
HDI		0.828 (0.163)*		
Corruption			0.366 (0.047)*	
Freedom House Index			-0.124 (0.053)**	
Agg. Int. trust.				0.300 (0.062)*
ICC	0.156	0.098	0.050	0.084
LR-test	745.29*	23.02*	41.33*	17.80*
Individual N	33274	33274	33274	33274
Country-N	34	34	34	34

Dependent Variable: Institutional Trust.

**= sig. 0.05 *= p <0.01, Standard errors in parentheses.

In addition to the regression coefficients and standard errors, the model presents the ICC when including independent variables, as well as LR-test results. As described, the LR-test for the individual model is conducted against the empty model, while the LR-tests for the country-level models are conducted against the individual model. The LR-tests are all significant when including country-variables, further confirming their relevance.

The ICC-level drops by approximately 2 percentage points after we include the individual variables. This is due to between-country differences in individual effects. Such differences may account for some of the country-level variance, however there is still much variance left to be explained by level 2-variables. There obviously are differences between countries within blocs as well as between the blocs, as neither the WEC nor the EEC is homogenous bodies.

The first model, without level 2-variables, presents some interesting results. The *only* statistically insignificant variable in the first model is the education-variable –and is thus removed in the country-level model. The rest of the individual variables are all significant. As described, when interpreting results of an analysis with as many units as is the case here, the traditional ways of viewing statistical significance are not as relevant (Midtbø 2007:95) as the large sample ensures that whatever effects one finds are reliable. As we see from the above table, most of the effects of the individual variables are all significant within the 1 %-level – however, the degree of their influence varies across the variables.

The cultural variables – interpersonal trust, materialism/postmaterialism and group membership – all contribute in the hypothesized direction. Comparing the organizational dummies, participation in the Putnam organizations have the weakest effect on institutional trust, with Olson organizations having almost twice the effect, and church-organization having *more* than double the effect. All the associational variables have positive effects, as suspected, but it seems contributing in apolitical grass-root organizations affects your relationship with authoritarian institutions less than other kinds of voluntary participation. Interpersonal trust has the highest coefficient of all individual variables

Looking at the control variables, we see that being a woman, being born outside the country and having a higher age has a positive direct effect on institutional trust. The direction of the origin-variable is in contrast to the effect suggested in part 3.4.3.3, that it could supposedly be a factor in weakening the civic culture due to breaking down bridging trust-relations while building bonding ones.

4.2.1. Country-level effects

Model 2 through 4 include level 2-variables. As we remember from the method-section, the effects on country levels require a more lenient assessment of significance, as the number of observations is much lower. Neither the economic growth- nor the economic equality-variables are statistically significant. The CPI and HDI-indices, however, both have strong positive effects – countries of high socio-economic development as well as countries of low perceived corruption score well in terms of institutional trust. Both are measured in ten-item scales. However, looking at the descriptive statistics, the CPI-index varies along a larger part of the scale. This somewhat compensates for the weaker causal effect.

The Freedom House index of political and civil rights has a *negative* effect, albeit weak. The variance of this variable is very low in the WEC, so the reason for this effect is to be found in the east. The coefficient might be unproportionately affected by Russia, which scores low at the Freedom House-index (lowest in our sample), but is only moderately low on institutional trust (as can be seen in figure 4.1). The coefficient is, however, not very strong, and is only significant at the 5%-level. The aggregated trust-variable is also positively affecting political trust, lending some support to the theories of Kenneth Newton. However, from these result, interpersonal trust seems to be relevant *both* on the individual and aggregate level.

The ICC drops further when adding the country-level variables (depending on which constellation of country-level variables you choose). Obviously, a large degree of between-country variance can be explained by country-specific factors. The largest drop occurred when including the HDI- and Freedom House-variables.

The coefficients on the individual level don't change much when including level 2-variables, and are therefore not commented upon.

4.2.2. Cross-curtain differences

The models thus far concern only the pan-European effects. To answer the research question, and measure the differences across the iron curtain, the next model will include interaction terms in addition to the ordinary variables. This model will also test the insignificant variables from the pan-European model, as variables insignificant on a large scale may be significant when zooming in on the specific regions. As explained in section 3.4.3.5, the interactions are made by multiplying the explanatory variable with the east/west-dummy. The interaction is then recalculated into western and eastern effects.

Table 4.4 – west/east interaction effects on institutional trust.

	Interaction coefficients	EEC effect	WEC effect
Individual level			
Postmaterialist	-0.014 (0.069)	---	---
Materialist	-0.204 (0.047)*	0.062	0.266
Interpersonal Trust	0.036 (0.046)	---	---
Putnam Organisations	0.067 (0.065)	---	---
Olson Organisations	0.147 (0.102)	---	---
Church Organisations	0.009 (0.095)	---	---
Income (Centered)	-0.040 (0.019)	---	---
Unemployment	0.292 (0.084)*	-0.093	-0.385
Education	-0.359 (0.048)*	-0.131	0.228
Origin	-0.650 (0.078)*	-0.164	0,486
Gender	-0.075 (0.041)	---	---
Age (Centered)	-0.004 (0.001)*	0.004	0.008
Country-level			
GINI	0.011 (0.011)	---	---
Economic Growth	-0.066 (0.122)	---	---
HDI	-0.292 (0.476)	---	---
CPI	-0.041 (0.125)	---	---
Freedoom House	-0.661 (0.516)	---	---
Aggregate trust	-1.779 (1.794)	---	---
Individual N			33274
Country-N			34

Dependent variable: institutional trust. *=p<0.01, Standard errors in parentheses.

As described, the interactions (and the variables behind) can't be interpreted in a traditional way by examining the coefficient separately – one has to take all included variables into account when measuring their effects. I present here the interaction coefficient for each variable, and the respective effect in the EEC and WEC for the significant interactions. The interactions are of course modelled together with the rest of the individual variables. However, these coefficients do not change significantly, neither in strength, direction, nor significance when the interaction terms are included. Therefore, to save space, these are omitted from table 4.3.

As we can see from the above table, only a few of the interactions prove significant – suggesting that many effects from the pan-European model are largely unchanged when controlling for region. However, there are some interesting effects worth commenting. The

postmaterialist-variable showed no significant interaction effect, while the materialist variable had a significant interaction. The effect is weaker in Eastern Europe, partially supporting the hypothesis that value change is a more prominent explanatory factor of political trust in established democracies. The descriptive statistics told us that materialist views were more common in EEC, but seemingly they have less relation with institutional trust in that region. Unemployment, similarly, is almost 4 times weaker as an explanatory factor in Eastern Europe – meaning that being unemployed has an almost non-existing effect on institutional trust in post-communist Europe, quite contrary to proposed hypotheses.

The control-variables had quite interesting interactions, worthy of a comment. Education had an insignificant effect when testing it across the whole of Europe. The interaction is however significant, suggesting that differences in regional effects are hidden when analysing Europe as a whole. Interestingly, as seen in figure 4.3, the effect is strong and positive in WEC, but in fact *negative* in Eastern Europe. The hypothesized positive effect of higher education is thus only applicable to the established democracies. The contrasting effects may also have led to the insignificant effect in the pan-European model. This underscores the usefulness of interactions, as they can uncover effects that are hidden when the interactions are not included. The reason for the difference in effect is unclear, but it may be related to how education increases knowledge about the actual state of affairs in a country, compared to how they should have been. This may have positive impacts in regions with a long history of good political performance, but negative impacts in regions struggling with performance. Putnam's idea of educated citizens as "trustees" (2005:6) seems unsupported in EEC.

While having a relatively strong positive effect in WEC, the effect of country origin is weak and negative in the EEC. Similarly to the education-variable, this peculiarity was not uncovered in the pan-European model. Theoretically this effect is not necessarily illogical. As described, many eastern countries have developed a strong ethnocentric culture and politics. In the WEC, on the other hand, the strong and long-lasting democratic traditions may make quite an impact on respondents born in countries of less impressive democratic history, increasing the respondent's institutional trust. However, as the variable does not account for in which country the respondents are born, we are left to pure speculation about the reasons for the opposing effects.

Age has a significantly weaker effect in the EEC, with only half the impact of the WEC. The effects are, as in the pan-european model, very weak, and do not significantly affect institutional trust.

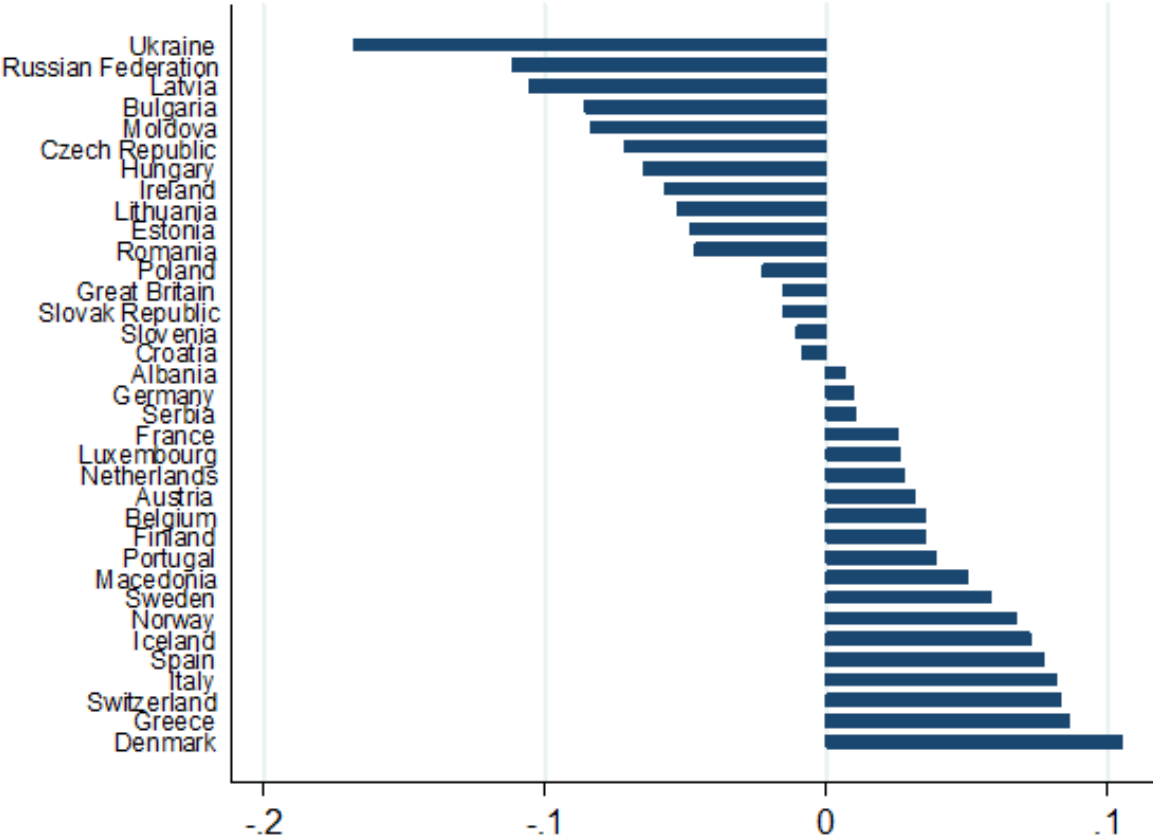
The rest of the variables have insignificant interactions, indicating that the effects do not differ based on whether they take place in WEC or EEC. This is interesting, as it defies the hypothesis about stronger effects of cultural variables in the WEC and institutional variables in the EEC. Neither interpersonal trust nor associational involvement seem to have different effects, and neither does personal income. The country-level variables were all insignificant, further underscoring these notions. However, as will be elaborated in the assumptions-section, for some variables the lack of statistical significance may be related to multicollinearity.

Thus, to quickly summarize the effects on institutional trust, the hypothesized directions of the effects are largely confirmed on the European level. Interpersonal trust, associational involvement as well as materialist/postmaterialist values are potent predictors of political trust, and unemployment and household income also have the hypothesized directions. When testing for differences across the iron curtain, only a few variables provide significant interactions, indicating that the generation of institutional trust follows largely the same rules all across Europe. However, the unemployment-interaction defied the hypothesized effect, while the education- and origin-variables had interesting opposing directions.

4.3 The determinants of democratic values

Having examined the effects on institutional trust, it is time to look at how, or whether at all, this trust is transferred to attitudes towards the system. This section will test the same explanatory factors as the above analysis. However, instead of analyzing their effects on the specific institutional sources of democratic authority, this analysis will measure their effect on democratic values - the diffuse upper section of the scale of political trust described earlier. This analysis will include institutional trust as an *explanatory variable*, to test whether it is true that the effect of institutional trust on democratic values is stronger in newly formed democracies. Controlling for this will also ensure that we only measure the *direct* effect of the other explanatory variables on democratic trust, not the effects going via institutional trust.

Figure 4.2 – mean levels of democratic trust



The same pattern as with institutional trust is found when investigating democratic values across borders. As seen in the descriptive table 4.1 earlier in the chapter, mean levels of democratic trust were app. 10 percentage points lower in the EEC than the WEC. And looking at the above figure 4.2, we see that the western countries are generally placed above the mean levels, and eastern countries below. The only countries breaking this pattern are Macedonia and Serbia above the mean, and Ireland and the Great Britain below.

Like in the case of institutional variables, it is helpful to first run the intercept-only model, for establishing the relative variance.

Table 4.5 – empty model on democratic trust

<u>Empty model</u>	
Ind. Variance	0.457
Country-variance	3.290
LR-test	1005.59*
ICC	0.12205
Ind. N	30956
Country N	34

Dependent variable: Democratic trust. *= $p < 0.01$

Table 4.5. shows that the ICC is lower than the one in the other model – approximately 12%, again underlining the appropriateness of a multilevel model. The LR-test is significant, supporting the usefulness of a multilevel model compared to an ordinary logistic regression.

Moving over to the multilevel model with explanatory variables, table 4.6 presents the results. The models are presented in the same fashion as in table 4.3, with an individual model and three two-level models. As described earlier, the interpretation of effects in a logistic regression is somewhat different from regressions with continuous dependent variables. The results are presented as changes in the probability of a positive result on the dependent variable – i.e. odds-ratios of 1.38 (interpersonal trust) is converted to a 38 percent increase in probability.

Table 4.6 – multilevel model on democratic trust without interaction terms

	Individual model	2-level model 1	2-level model 2	2-level model 3
Individual variables	OR (Prob.increase)			
Institutional trust	1.124* (12.4%)	1.125* (12.5%)	1.125* (12.5%)	1.125* (12.5%)
Postmaterialism	1.498* (49.8%)	1.491 (49.1%)	1.491 (49.1%)	1.493* (49.3%)
Materialism	0.861* (-13.9%)	0.870 (-13%)	0.870 (-13%)	0.869* (-13.1%)
Interpersonal Trust	1.38* (38%)	1.383* (38.3%)	1.383* (38.3%)	1.38* (38%)
Putnam Group	1.184* (18.4%)	1.181 (18.1%)	1.181 (18.1%)	1.183 (18.3%)
Olson Group	1.016 (1.6%)	---	---	---
Church Organisations	1.093 (9.3%)	---	---	---
centered Income	1.095* (9.5%)	1.093* (9.3%)	1.093* (9.3%)	1.092* (9.2%)
Unemployment	0.858 (-14.2%)	---	---	---
Education	1.638* (63.8%)	1.645* (64.5%)	1.645* (64.5%)	1.644* (64.4%)
Origin	1.099 (9.9%)	---	---	---
Gender	1.007 (0.7%)	---	---	---
Age	1.002 (0.2%)	---	---	---
Country-level variables				
GINI		1.012 (1.2%)		
Economic Growth		1.005 (0.5%)		
HDI		1.429 (42.9%)**		
CPI			1.102 (10.2%)	
Freedom House			1.000 (0%)	
Aggregate Trust				2.353 (135%)
ICC	0.094	0.079	0.082	0.089
LR	504.37*	11.34*	10.06*	7.38*
N individual	30956	30956	30956	30956
N Country	34	34	34	34

Dependent variable: Democratic trust. *= $p < 0.01$ **= $p < 0.05$

The table above displays the independent effects on the individual and country-level, arranged the same way as in the institutional trust-model. The only difference is the addition of institutional trust as an independent variable to test how well trust transfers between levels. In the individual model, model 1, ICC drops a few points from the empty model, again suggesting that country-specific individual effects account for some of the between-country variance. Despite this there is still a decent bit of between-country variance left to explain. The LR-test is again significant, confirming the increase of fit ensured by including the individual variables to the empty model.

Far fewer independent effects are significant in the democratic trust-model than in the institutional model. The effect of institutional trust on democratic trust is interesting. The

effect is significant, suggesting that trust indeed travels upwards, from specific trust to diffuse trust. There is thus a link, as suspected, between how individuals trust their specific institutions of authority and how they rate the idea of democracy, meaning that individuals rate democracy partly as a result of their experience of it at home. This is not surprising, and it supports the idea that trust indeed travels upwards through the elements of Norris' scale. The seemingly weaker effect of institutional trust compared to the other variables is caused by the difference in scale – whereas the other variables are dichotomous, we remember that institutional trust is measured on a ten-step scale, meaning that a 1 step increase is a smaller step regarding this variable than others.

Again we see that postmaterialism and materialism have diametrically different, and significant, effects. This time, however, the effects on the dependent variable are turned around– having post-material values increases your probability to view democracy as the best political system. In contrast material views decrease the probability – fully in line with theory.

Interpersonal trust also has a positive direct impact on your democratic values, consistent with the theories of social capital. Of the organizational variables, however, only the Putnam-group had significant impact. This supports the theories of Putnam that apolitical, local voluntary organizational activity positively affects your democratic alignment, being democratic schools. Church-organizations and Olson-organizations have no significant impact on the pan-European scale. The contrast to the institutional model, where the Putnam-groups had the weakest pan-European effects, is clear.

Education, being insignificant as a determinant of institutional trust, has a significant effect on democratic trust. The effect is stronger than all the other dummy variables – again supporting the idea of educated people as “trustees”. The other control variables are all statistically insignificant.

4.3.1. Country-level variables

I take the same precautions for multicollinearity and limited degrees of freedom as in the institutional model, and the country-variables are added in clusters. The only significant variable on country-level is the HDI variable. An increase of 1 (remember that the HDI-variable is multiplied by 10, so an increase of 1 means a real increase of 0.1) leads to almost 43% increase in probability that the respondent appreciates democracy. The effect is as

suspected. The rest of the level 2-variables have insignificant effects. Seemingly, living in a socioeconomically well-performing country is the main pan-European contextual factor influencing individual support of democratic values.

Including country-level variables reduces the ICC further, however not by much. The economic model, model 4, shows the strongest decrease in ICC, which is logical since the only significant country-level variable is in this model. However, there is still much between-country variation that these variables do not account for.

4.3.2. Cross-curtain differences

Table 4.7 – Interaction effects on democratic trust

Individual Level	Odds Ratio	EEC effects	WEC effects
Institutional trust	0,884	1,086 (8.6%)	1,228 (22.8%)
Postmaterialism	0,814	---	---
Materialism	1,152	---	---
Interpersonal Trust	0,641*	1,178 (17.8%)	1,839 (83.9%)
Putnam Group	0,637*	0,971 (-2.9%)	1,523 (52.3%)
Olson Group	0,629**	0,920 (-8%)	1,463 (46.3%)
Church Organisations	0,546*	0,911 (-8.9%)	1,669 (66.9%)
centered Income	0,861*	1,009 (0,9%)	1,171 (17.1%)
Unemployment	1,274	---	---
Education	0,633*	1,444 (44,4%)	2,281 (128.1%)
Origin	0,930	---	---
Gender	0,878	---	---
Age	0,996*	1,001 (0.1%)	1,005 (0.5%)
Country-level			
CPI	1.196	---	---
GINI	0.986	---	---
Growth	0.996	---	---
HDI	1.249	---	---
Freedom House	3.890*	1.008 (0.8%)	0.259 (-74.1%)
Agg. Trust.	1.041	---	---
<hr/>			
Individual N	30956		
Country-N	34		

*=p<0.01, **=p<0.10 Dependent variable: Democratic trust. Probability increase in parentheses.

The final step of this analysis is to examine whether the causal connections to democratic trust differ between Western and Eastern Europe. The above table shows the significant interactions, split into western and eastern effects. The odds ratios are showed, with the

corresponding changes in probability only displayed for the significant interactions. There are several interesting features to notice in the table.

The institutional trust-interaction is significant, however not in the suspected direction. The effect of institutional trust on democratic trust is in fact stronger in western European countries, increasing the probability per unit increase by nearly 3 times as much as in EEC. This suggests that trust does not travel upwards faster in more inexperienced democracies. The theory-chapter suspected a stronger impact in EEC-countries due to the supposedly weaker hold of democratic values among the population – shallower reservoirs of democratic trust. The results do not support this idea.

The interaction effect of interpersonal trust is also statistically significant. The effect of the interaction is weaker than trust without the interaction, indicating that being a trusting person in the EEC has a smaller impact on your democratic alignments than if you lived in the WEC. This supports the first main hypothesis.

The organizational variables are very interesting. EEC and WEC have opposing effects in ALL the interactions, and they are all significant, though the Olson organizations are only significant on the 10% level (p-value 0.051). This gives strong support to the cultural hypothesis that civil society will have a closer and friendlier relationship with the state in societies where the civic culture has developed in harmony with the democratic development. The negative (albeit weak) effects in the EEC are hard to explain. It might be related to the poor growth-conditions of civil society in authoritarian regimes resulting in anti-system attitudes in the organizationally active. However, the effects in the EEC are so weak that we might suspect that the variables are merely insignificant in the region, in any direction.

The income variable, too, has a significantly weaker effect in EEC. This is *not* in line with the hypothesized effect – that institutional variables have a stronger impact in less developed democracies. Seemingly, citizens of the EEC do not blame the democratic system for low income, at least not to a larger degree than they do in the WEC.

The Freedom House-variable has a strongly negative effect in EEC, suggesting a very negative influence on political trust in democratically well-functioning countries. However, the effect is strongly affected by Russia, as mentioned above. As will be further described in

the assumptions section, Russia is such a strong deviant case on this variable that one should take the results with a large pinch of salt. None of the other country-level variables produce significant interaction terms, suggesting that systematic cross-country differences are mainly located on the individual level. However, the same cautions for multicollinearity applies here as in the institutional model.

Control variables origin and gender do not produce significant interaction terms. Education, on the other hand, has a far stronger effect in WEC, where it is a very prominent indicator on democratic trust. This is consistent with the results from the institutional trust-models, strengthening the suggestion that higher education has a stronger relation to political trust in western European countries. However, the effect is quite strong also in Eastern Europe. This is in stark contrast to the negative effect education has on institutional trust in Eastern Europe. In fledgling democracies with struggling institutions, a higher education may provide a more critical view on poor or undemocratic institutional performance, while still encouraging democratic values.

The control variable of age shows a similar effect as in the institutional model. Again, older age proves a stronger direct explanatory factor for democratic trust in the WEC than the EEC. However, the effect is again negligible.

Thus, to again quickly summarize, the interaction terms do not suggest a stronger influence on democratic trust in Eastern Europe. In fact, we see a similarly opposite pattern, as was also the case with institutional trust. The significant interactions, of which there are some, actually suggests that our chosen variables generally has stronger impact in WEC. This is especially surprising with regard to the institutional trust-variable, and the organizational variables. These similar patterns in institutional and democratic trust will be further discussed below, where the hypotheses will be reviewed.

4.4. Analysis assumptions

Some basic assumptions have to be fulfilled for maximizing the reliability of a statistical analysis. The problems of **multicollinearity** have already been mentioned in connection to the country-level variables. Multicollinearity refers to correlation among the independent variables. High collinearity on some variables means that these variables tend to occur at the

same time, making it difficult to assess the relative relevance of the different variables (Skog 2007:287). Even though the variables are theoretically distinct and may have different real effect, being present at largely the same time gives the impression that the causal effects are similar. Multicollinearity inflates the standard errors, increasing the confidence intervals and making it harder to reject the null hypothesis (Pennings, Keman, Kleinnijenhuis 2006:163). This may lead us to overlook hidden relationships. Multicollinearity can be measured by both VIF- and tolerance values. Many operate with a critical VIF-value of ten (meaning a tolerance of 0.10), but the need and/or strictness of such values is debated (O'Brien 2007). Pennings, Keman and Kleinnijehuis state that tolerance "should be slightly larger than the proportion of variance which is probably due to measurement errors" (2006:163). Since this thesis uses many perceptive survey variables, prone to measurement errors, the assessment of tolerance should be conservative rather than liberal.

Multicollinearity represents no problem for the level 1-variables. On country-level, however, some issues are present. The CPI, HDI and aggregated Trust-variables are highly correlated. Corruption is a phenomenon largely associated with lower-developed countries (in Europe at least), where interpersonal trust is low as well. The bivariate correlation between CPI and HDI ($r=0.8583$), and between CPI and aggregated trust ($r=0.7958$) is very high. By analysing the country-level variables in clusters and separating these variables, the problem is not solved, but at least bypassed, as the VIF- and tolerance-values stay safely away from any critical values.

The interaction terms are also heavily affected by multicollinearity. When creating interaction terms by multiplying variables, the resulting term often correlates highly with one or both of the multiplied variables (Pennings, Keman, Kleinnijenhuis 2006:166). Centering variables often helps, but the VIF-values for the CPI and HDI-interactions are still way too high (above 15 for both variables), reducing the applicability of these results. The result of such multicollinearity is, according to Pennings, Keman and Kleinnijenhuis, that "the data [...] are insufficient to distinguish between the autonomous effect of a variable and the part of its effect that results from interplay with other variables" (2006:166). Thus, even though the level 2-interactions are tested one by one, the high correlations between the interaction term and the included variables affect the results. This is a weakness for the analysis, but sadly unavoidable in this case.

A problem with the multilevel model is that statistical tools and simple tests for checking assumptions are harder to find (and sometimes non-existent) in the statistical packages used, including Stata. For some assumptions, this leads us to trust the natural robustness of the ML-estimation and the multilevel model. As described, the multilevel model is a means to remedy the statistical problems associated with clustering of observations, by modelling these clusters as hierarchically nested. The maximum-likelihood-estimation is relatively robust against mild violations of assumptions such as non-normal distribution of residuals, especially in large samples (Hox 2010:40). Thus, explicitly checking these assumptions are not prioritized, as the large number of observations and the normally distributed dependent variable should increase the robustness of the results.

For the logistic model the dependent variable is by definition not normally distributed. For the monolevel logistic model the Hosmer-Lemeshow test is much used for testing goodness-of-fit – how well the model fits the assumption of the s-shaped regression line described in section 3.3.2. Sadly, the HL-test is unavailable in Stata for the commands used to run the multilevel models of this thesis. Thus, a test estimating how well the model fits the s-curve is not conducted, a lack that might challenge the reliability of the analysis.

Regarding outliers, the large sample size on level 1 is an effective precaution against disproportionately influential units. However, with only 34 units on level 2, largely deviant units may strongly affect causal effects (Skog 2007:249). This analysis experienced only one such problem – the case of Russia on the Freedom-House-variable. As can be seen from figure 4.1. and 4.2, Russia has low values on both democratic and institutional trust. However, on the Freedom House-variable, Russia has far lower values than any other country in the analysis, disproportionately affecting the regression lines on this variable¹⁰. The Freedom House-variable produced negative coefficients in the pan-European institutional trust-model and on the EEC-effect on the democratic trust-model. These effects are surely largely caused by the deviant case of Russia, and should be interpreted with caution.

¹⁰ On the reversed 1-13-scale, their value is 4 while the second worst country (Ukraine) has 8.

4.4. Review of hypotheses

Table 4.8 – hypotheses and results

Hypotheses	Results
H1: Institutional variables will have larger impact in EEC, whereas cultural variables will have a stronger effect in WEC. H2: The effect on democratic trust will be stronger in EEC.	Partly supported. Cultural hypotheses have stronger effects in the WEC, but institutional variables do not have stronger effects in the EEC. Not supported. The impact on democratic trust is stronger in the WEC.
h1: Economic Performance will have a positive impact on political trust. h1a: These effects will be stronger in the EEC. h2: Income inequality will have a negative effect on political trust. h2a: The effect will be stronger in the EEC. h3: The state of political and civil liberties in a country has a positive effect on political trust. h3a: This effect is more prominent in EEC. h4: State corruption has a negative impact on political trust h4a: This impact is stronger in EEC h5: Being a “winner” has a positive effect on political trust. h5a: This effect is stronger in the EEC.	Supported Not supported Not supported – no effect N/A Inconclusive – due to statistical weaknesses N/A Partly Supported – only on institutional trust Not Supported Not tested N/A
h6: Interpersonal trust has a positive effect on political trust h6a: This effect is stronger in WEC than EEC. h6b: Interpersonal trust has no effect on political trust. h7: Participation in voluntary organizations has a positive effect on political trust. h7a: Voluntary organizations has a stronger effect in WEC h8a: Postmaterialism has a negative effect on institutional trust- indicators h8b: Postmaterialism has a positive effect on support for democratic ideals h8c: Both these effects are more pronounced in established democracies.	Supported Partly Supported – only on democratic trust Not Supported Supported – despite small negative effect on democratic values in EEC. Partly supported – only on democratic trust Supported Supported Not supported – hardly any difference

Having performed the necessary analyses, it is time to review table 2.1 – our hypotheses. I started with the assumption that, because of a short democratic history and a legacy of state

repression, the causal relationships of political trust in EEC could take a different shape than those in WEC. Taking a look at the numerous hypotheses, a mixed picture emerges.

Generally, there still seems to be different causal effects at play between the east and the west, supporting the use of the iron curtain as an analytical divisive line. Regarding the first main hypothesis, about the relative strength of the two groups of explanatory variables in WEC and EEC, the evidence does not support the hypotheses. While there is a general trend of cultural variables having a stronger effect in the west, the same is the case with the institutional hypotheses. The trend is also more pronounced in the democratic trust- analysis than the institutional trust-analysis (more significant interactions), in contrast to what I suggested in chapter 2.

The results provide few clear patterns, but one is obvious: Significant interaction effects are generally weaker in Eastern Europe, challenging both our main hypothesis. The variables chosen are based on traditional well-known theories, mainly tested on western industrialized societies. The weaker effects in EEC suggests that even other factors are important than the ones I have tested. As described, this study does not aim to explain all of the variance of political trust, neither in the west nor the east. It is however interesting to observe that these variables are more suitable to explain western variance than eastern. Seemingly this thesis might have fallen into the trap of concept-stretching itself. Different theories may be necessary to understand the development of political trust in newly established democracies.

This notion is especially clear when looking at the second hypothesis, which is completely rejected by the results. No variables had stronger effect for EEC on democratic trust. In fact, a lot of interactions were significant, and all of them had a stronger effect for WEC. This is interesting with regard to the institutional trust-variable, as the hypothesis strongly suggested that trust in political institutions would have a larger impact on democratic support in countries with shorter democratic experience. Due to less democratic experience, lack of trust in political institutions should leave a deeper impact on support for democratic values in EEC citizens. This is not the case. Thus, instead of easily concluding that the cultural variables had the expected effects in the WEC whilst the institutional geographical hypotheses could not be confirmed, one is forced to conclude that all the theories used seem more applicable in a WEC context than an EEC-context. The choice of theories should be critically reviewed.

Looking at the variable-specific hypothesis, their pan-European direction is mostly supported by the results. Political trust certainly has many explanatory factors, and it is difficult to point at causal relationships of specific importance. Starting with the cultural theories, interpersonal trust proves an influential factor on both individual and contextual level, in contrast to the claims by the likes of Rothstein and Newton that there is no theoretical causal link between the two types of trust. The types of trust, it seems, are theoretically and empirically separate, but causally connected in at least one direction. Participating in voluntary organizations also contributes positively. However, the differences between EEC and WEC are very interesting here. The effect of participating is the same across Europe on institutional trust, but only in the WEC does participating in voluntary associations contribute to support in democratic values. More pointed research is necessary to fully understand these causal relations, but joining organizations may have different reasons in the East than the West, as suggested in the start of this chapter.

An interesting finding of the analysis is how well-supported the theories of Ronald Inglehart are. Both in Eastern and Western Europe, the effect was clear and significant: Whereas people employing material values are more supportive of political institutions than their post-material counterparts, the post-materialists showed greater support to the democratic ideal than the materialists. This is interesting, and suggests that developing democracies may experience the same shift of values as time goes by and the economic modernization turns towards postmodernization. However, as mentioned in footnote 9 on page 47, the measurement and coding of the postmaterialism-variables may have contributed to the effect.

The institutional theories were also mostly supported. Unemployment, income, corruption perception and socioeconomic governmental performance of the country had the hypothesized direction on institutional trust, whilst corruption and unemployment proved insignificant as predictors of democratic values. The contextual effects of economic growth and GINI-coefficient, however, proved completely insignificant as explanatory factors whichever way one chooses to look at them. One can suspect that these factors are harder to notice in society, and leave less of an impression on citizens. Perhaps by employing a longitudinal design one may catch these effects more easily.

Regarding the level 1/level 2-dimension, country-level variables proved a more potent factor in the institutional model than in the democratic-trust model. Logically, particular contextual features should be more likely to affect specific attitudes towards institutions in your own country than towards a broader concept such as democracy, so this is not necessarily surprising. No interactions (except the Freedom House-effect) proved significant in any models, indicating little differences in contextual effects across the iron curtain. However, the ICC was not reduced to less than 0.5 in the institutional model and 0.8 in the democratic model, indicating that there still is a significant degree of between-country variation caused by other factors than the ones included in this analysis.

The analysis has a few weaknesses. The lack of an individual perceptive view of regime performance is certainly a loss for this analysis, as it leaves us with solely objective measurements of government output. For sure there are differences in individual expectations and satisfaction between citizens with similar income and employment status. Being unable to catch these differences is a weakness. Additionally, having to remove the Winner/Loser-variable from the model is a loss, as controlling for government alignment is theoretically important. All these variables' effects are hypothesized to be stronger in EEC, and their exclusion from the analysis may be one explanation for the overall weaker causal effects in Eastern Europe. Another weakness is the large correlations between certain level 2-variables, resulting in high multicollinearity. As explained in the assumptions-section, this could not be remedied in the interactions-models, leading to less reliable results for the HDI and CPI-variables. These shortcomings might reduce the overall applicability of the results.

4.6. Chapter summary

This analysis has tested the relative relevance and explanatory power of cultural and institutional theories in both a pan-European perspective and adjusted for differences across the iron curtain. The analyses have been performed on two dependent variables, to distinguish between two conceptually separate dimensions of political trust.

What, then, does this mean? Having looked at the antecedents of political trust, what are the consequences? In the next and last chapter, I will take a look at the potential effects of political trust in lieu of recent global events, as well as the potential for future research on the field.

5. Conclusional remarks

5.1. Readdressing the research question

Again, as stressed in the introduction, the intention of this thesis was not to explain “what generates political trust”. This is not achieved, and perhaps never will be, as the reasons for trust are individual and surely include factors beyond both cultural and institutional theoretical approaches, as well as factors well beyond political science. Therefore the quantitative analyses did not result in any “final models” as is often the objective of similar multivariate analyses. The research question rather asked whether it is viable to assume the same mechanisms in the generation of political trust in well-established developed democracies (represented by the Western European Countries) as in new democracies with a historical legacy of authoritarianism (represented by the post-communist transitional democracies of Central and Eastern Europe). To avoid concept-stretching, a broad-scale comparative analysis was deemed useful.

The research question was: *Can political trust be explained by the same factors in Eastern and Western Europe?* The answer to the question has to be a “no”. The causal effects are not similar, some are significant only in WEC, and some effects are opposite across the iron curtain. The analysis underscores the usefulness of separating east from west.

As for the implications of the findings, the results strongly confirm the idea that political trust is not a monodimensional concept. Only two of the five different dimensions presented by Norris have been tested, and it’s obvious that different causal factors are in play on each dependent variable, again resulting in the contrasting trends in democratic and institutional trust in present Europe. The large number of significant interactions suggests that there are still differences in the generation of political trust across the old iron curtain. The results also confirm our general idea that theories generated by research on western industrialized democracies are better at explaining variance in those countries. However, it seems from the analysis, simply copying theories from the western industrialized context is insufficient for explaining the trends in post-communist EEC. Our main hypotheses assumed that one could adopt the cultural/institutional framework from the western context, basing the hypothesized different effects on this dichotomization. This has proven too ethnocentric a starting point.

Granted, some variables were missing, such as the winner/loser-variable and the individual perceptive variables of government performance. But even though these might have affected the general picture had they been included, the theoretical framework seems more fitting to explain western political trust than eastern. The concepts of diffuse, specific, democratic and institutional trust are generated based on western ideas and political structures. Trust may move in different ways in the east. In this sense the premise for this thesis was correct, but the procedures may have been inappropriate.

5.2. The consequences of political trust

There is disagreement among scientists about the consequences of the modern trends of political trust. Regarding the dimension of institutional versus democratic trust, Ronald Inglehart describes the development as positive. The changes, Inglehart claims, are fruitful for democracy, making it more secure. More trust in democratic principles is a positive phenomenon as it allows poor performance by specific actors without putting the political system at risk. Distrust in political institutions does not reflect distrust in democracy, but rather distrust in hierarchical authority. Institutions are, with the postmodern shift, evaluated by stricter criteria than before, but this does not represent a democratic problem. (Inglehart 1999:255-256). Similar attitudes are advocated by other scientists. Søren Holmberg emphasizes the ideal of having “not too much, not too little” institutional distrust (Holmberg 1999:121). Similarly, Levi states that citizen trust of government “should be and is conditional” (Levi 1998:96). Russell Hardin points to how endemic government distrust should result in a weakened government (1998:17), in tune with the theories of Inglehart.

Have we nothing to fear, then? Is decline of institutional trust just a natural consequence of economic modernization and the globalization of information? Just as the determinants of political trust remain debated, so do the effects. I discussed in the beginning of the thesis how citizen trust in the political system with the development of the modern state became an integral part of the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, as legitimacy went from being claimed to being approved, and how one of the things that separate interpersonal trust from political trust is that the “behavioral” part of general trust is removed from political trust. This is however a simplification of reality. John Locke wrote in his “Two Treaties on Government” that “...the grounds for trusting rulers are to be found in the sanctions that punish breaches of trust” (In Newton 1999:178). With the eased flow of information within

and across borders new ideas are spreading faster than ever. With popular uprisings in the Arabic world putting an end to seemingly unending authoritarian regimes, even the most resilient dictators are learning the lessons of citizen disapproval. If political distrust and disapproval becomes too low, weak legitimacy should not be the government's only concern.

The data of this analysis is measured mainly before the outburst of the recent global finance crisis. This is partly good, as it allows for a "cleaner" assessment of cause and effect, without the situational effect that follows a financial recession. However, such large international events could potentially have huge and unpredictable consequences for political trust. As Europe is now experiencing trying times, countries are to an ever increasing degree sinking in the quicksand of state debt and governments are, regardless of political ideologies forced to use extreme measures. These measures are suspected to influence the ordinary citizen negatively, through saving measures such as reduced public spending and welfare services. As citizens experience how their political preferences have little effect on the actual polity, they might become disenchanted with the democratic regime, especially if the regimes' reservoirs of diffuse, democratic support are shallow. With the European Union further tightening the iron-clasp on each country's economic policies, the individual vote may prove to have even less of an effect. Unpopular policies are needed to avoid a future catastrophe, and for citizens to tolerate short-term malaise in exchange for long-term benefits, trust is needed (Offe 1999:84). Demonstrations have already been taking place in Portugal, Spain and Greece.

Thus, recent political events present new questions needing answers. This leads us to the final section of this thesis:

5.3. Future research

Having ventured through a heavy multi-level analysis investigating different regional contexts through different theoretical points of view, what follows? This last section will present potential geographical, theoretical, and methodological fields within the trust-paradigm.

The essence of this thesis is to explore how well views on political trust transfer between two geographically defined political contexts. Due to the specific methods of choosing these countries (and excluding other, non-European ones), the models are not immediately easy to

generalize to other contexts. However, the defining traits in both the WEC and the EEC can be found elsewhere as well. As stated in the introduction, similar negative trends of institutional trust have been spotted in modern democratic countries such as USA, Australia and Japan. As for the EEC, the Latin American countries constitute a relatively coherent region characterized by a long authoritarian history, and are very under-researched in the field of political trust. Similarly, democratically struggling regimes in Asia are rarely objects of trust-related inquiries. These regions should be natural choices for social scientists looking for new areas to investigate.

Additionally, this thesis has treated EEC and WEC as homogenous blocs, a blunt simplification. Dimitrova-Grajzl and Simon note, correctly, that the post-communist countries were not equal in their practice of socialism. They present an intriguing perspective where she differentiates between different kinds of socialism and their supposed effects on the generation of trust in central and eastern European societies. Indeed she finds that different socialism legacies, such as the Yugoslavian or the Soviet Union, have resulted in different levels of political trust (Dimitrova-Grajzl, Simon 2010). Such projects can contribute to increase our knowledge of the generation of trust, and mirrors similar endeavors on western states. Instead of looking outward to other continents, one can look inwards to uncover nuances and details in European political trust-relationships.

However, to explore uncharted territories, one will need some theoretical tools. As described, this analysis has only researched two of Norris' five different levels of political trust – political trust is more than only these two indicators. Moreover, the thesis employed a strict definition of political institutions – other institutions, such as the military, the bureaucracy, and the government itself are all interesting targets. The thesis also produced some peculiar, interesting results worthy of further research. The contrasting effects of origin and education on institutional trust and the striking differences in the role of voluntary organizations on democratic trust could use some further investigation, both quantitatively and qualitatively. These variables were of less theoretical importance in this thesis, but further research specifically aimed at explaining these differences may improve our understanding about the social factors involved in political trust. One can also improve on the results of this thesis by using proper indicators on individual perceptions on political and economic performance, indicators missing from this analysis.

As for the methodological possibilities, even if the theories of trust are well-known and tried in political science, quantitative cross-national studies of the field are still quite rare, and often unable to catch the complex causal chains associated with the concept. With the advent of more sophisticated statistical methods, these methods could and should be used on political trust. As mentioned, data-banks are incorporating ever more variables, as well as ever increasing their geographical scope. This analysis has not utilized the powerful multilevel analysis to its full potential. By using random slopes and more complicated interactions, one may pinpoint more precisely different causal effects and interrelated or reciprocal influence. Being able to precisely pinpoint causal lines and explanatory factors is of outmost importance in a theoretical field that time and again proves itself a difficult nut to crack for political scientists.

6. Literature

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7. Appendix

7.1. Question wording.

Below are the concrete questions asked for each variable. All questions are collected from GESIS (2011). Gender, age and income are straightforward and are not reported.

Institutional trust:

Please look at this card and tell me, for each item listed, how much confidence you have in them, is it a great deal, quite a lot, not very much or none at all?

Q63.F The police

Q63.G Parliament

Q63.N The justice system

1 a great deal

2 quite a lot

3 not very much

4 none at all

Democratic Trust:

I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country?

Q66.D Having a democratic political system

1 very good

2 fairly good

3 fairly bad

4 very bad

Interpersonal Trust:

Q7.

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

1 most people can be trusted

2 can't be too careful

Voluntary organizations:

Please look carefully at the following list of voluntary organisations and activities and say

b) which, if any, are you currently doing unpaid voluntary work for?

Q5b.B Religious or church organisations

Q5b.C Education, arts, music or cultural activities

Q5b.D Trade unions

Q5b.E Political parties or groups

Q5b.F Local community action on issues like poverty, employment, housing, racial equality

Q5b.J Youth work (e.g. scouts, guides, youth clubs etc.)

Q5b.K Sports or recreation

1 mentioned

2 not mentioned

Post-materialism:

Q60

There is a lot of talk these days about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. On this card are listed some of the goals which different people would give top priority. If you had to choose, which of the things on this card would you say is most important? And which would be the next most important?

1 maintaining order in the nation

2 giving people more say in important government decisions

- 3 fighting rising prices
- 4 protecting freedom of speech

Winner/Loser:

[Q75: If there was a general election tomorrow, can you tell me if you would vote?]

Q75a

IF YES: which party would you vote for?

[List of available parties omitted].

Unemployment:

Q111

Are you yourself gainfully employed at the moment or not? Please select from the card the employment status that applies to you.

Paid employment

1 30 hours a week or more

2 Less than 30 hours a week

3 Self employed

No paid employment

4 Military Service

5 Retired/pensioned

6 Housewife not otherwise employed

7 Student

8 Unemployed

9 Disabled <ONLY IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT WORK BECAUSE OF DISABILITY!>

10 Other, please specify (WRITE IN): ...

Education:

Q110

What is the highest level you have completed in your education?

0 0 : Pre-primary education or none education

- 1 1 : Primary education or first stage of basic education
- 2 2 : Lower secondary or second stage of basic education
- 3 3 : (Upper) secondary education
- 4 4 : Post-secondary non-tertiary education
- 5 5 : First stage of tertiary education
- 6 6 : Second stage of tertiary education

Origin:

Q90

Were you born in [COUNTRY]?

1 yes

2 no