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Explaining political participation in mature and post-communist democracies:
Why social trust matters?

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

Explaining political participation in mature and post-communist democracies:
Why social trust matters?

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geboren te Riga, Letland

promotor: prof.dr. P.G. Klandermans

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1 |

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

People are not born democratic; they need to learn “how to do democracy”. This insight accurately describes the challenge of democratic transformation/consolidation of post-communist societies. The lack of civic and political engagement in post-communist countries is perceived as one of the hardships of democratic development in the region. Although formal institutions in the post-communist region are displaying attributes of consolidated democracies, citizens generally feel distant from political life, are unaware of political decisions and means to influence politics, feel generally apathetic and pessimistic, and are thus not willing to use their political rights for which they have struggled so hard (Ramonaitė, 2006b: 93). The new democracies seem to be fragile in terms of the penetration of the political system from below, exposing a disparity between democratic rules on the one hand and peoples’ political attitudes on the other hand (Pollack et al., 2003: 31).

Admitting that an institutional approach does not provide a full answer to the question why citizens feel detached from politics in post-communist societies, theorists often recoil on cultural arguments. The cultural-based approach derives from the deeper reflections on the communist past and the continuity of both social and personal memories. As Howard (2003) notices in his resonant study *The Weakness of Civil Society in Post-Communist Europe*, citizens in Eastern European countries are less likely to engage actively in civil society practices than people from other post-authoritarian countries, and especially, Western democracies. A possible explanation for that, some authors assume, is the fact that post-communist societies are less trusting than other (Mishler and Rose, 1997; Sztompka, 1999; Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Lovell, 2001; Bădescu and Uslander, 2003, Markova, 2004; Kornai, Rothstein, and Rose-Ackerman, 2004; Bjørnskov, 2006).

It has been debated that communism had stronger and more significant effects on trust than other types of autocratic regimes (for instance, in Latin America, Spain, Portugal or Greece), because of the unique features of the Soviet-style communist system¹ (Traps, 2009: 64). Unlike other authoritarian regimes, communism exerted an extensive brutal power on all realms of citizens’ lives. The communist system usurped, suppressed or even destroyed political, economic and civil societies, whereas other authoritarian systems in Europe mainly focused on political control (more about the differences between authoritarian regimes in Linz and Stepan, 1996). Given this, it is suggested that communism had a profound negative impact on trust as well as on the abilities to cooperate for a common good (Sztompka, 1993).

¹ It is argued in the literature that some cultural patterns of Soviet-based communism were also rendered to some of the national communist systems, for instance, in former Yugoslavia countries, although I admit the institutional differences between these types of communism (Linz and Stepan, 1996).

A few authors claim that the lack of trust (between citizens and in institutions) has led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Instead of functioning on trust, the regime could only rely on force and fear, which eventually became too costly to maintain the system (Warren, 1999; Markova, 2004). Hereby, on the one hand, it is admitted that distrust infused the collapse of the communist regime. On the other hand, the prevalence of distrustful attitudes in the contemporary post-communist societies, these authors warn, has at the same time formidable consequences on the economic growth and enrichment of democracy. Therefore, the experiences of post-communist societies are of particular interest in the academic debate. This region is perceived as a “testing ground” for the role of trust for political engagement (Misztal, 1996: 9).

Following a cultural-based approach, in this dissertation I consider trust in a wider context of political culture. Some literature suggests that trust adheres to political culture as one of the main values or beliefs, as an important individual and collective resource that endows citizens with meaningful orientations in civic/political life. It is popularly argued that political stability depends on the congruency between political culture and political institutions, implying that democracy, besides certain juridical and political arrangements, is also sustained by efficacious citizens who support and trust their institutions (Norris, 1999). However, this argument has received criticism in contemporary studies, leading authors to admit that political distrust could also have a positive impact on democracy (Rosanvallon, 2008; Hardin, 2006). Moreover, and arguably more important, the role of social trust for democratic sustainability is still underresearched, although there are some hints in the literature that social trust indeed fosters the democratic attitudes and thus facilitates the process of increasing democraticness. For instance, Putnam in his well-known studies (1993; 2000) renewed the famous claim of Alexis de Tocqueville that social trust is essential for democratic society. Nonetheless, the substantial empirical support for this claim is still missing. This dissertation aims to fill this gap.

Acknowledging that in post-communist countries the levels of social trust are dramatically low, I assume that citizens’ willingness and readiness to participate in politics in post-communist Europe is thus greatly undermined by low levels of social trust. As Rothstein and Uslaner (2005) observe, countries in transition from socialism face particular problems in developing trust. In comparison to Western democracies, trusting relationships did not extend beyond the circle of family and friends. In sum, issues of social trust raised in the literature and in practice leads us to wonder: to what degree does social trust function (or not) as a collective resource of political action in post-communist societies?

1.2 Research questions

In this thesis I raise three sets of research questions that derive from considering trust as both *explanandum* and *explanans*.

Firstly, the nature of social trust in post-communist societies remains a controversy and a reference point in comparing social interactions between new and old democracies. Therefore, one of my core research questions in this dissertation is: why are levels of social trust in post-communist societies so low? This question will be addressed by discussing how communist legacies affected the essence of trust and, moreover, how social trust developed in the period of political/social transformation after the collapse of Soviet Union (chapter 3).

Secondly, I ask: what are the causal mechanisms between social trust and political participation? Do trusters tend to participate in politics more actively than others, and, if so, what kind of participation they are more inclined to choose? I consider this set of questions both from a theoretical and empirical point of view (in chapter 2 and chapter 4 respectively).

Thirdly, I ask: how is social trust related to different types of political efficacy, and how and to what extent does a sense of efficacy lead to participation? In other words, does social trust have an indirect effect on participation via political efficacy? Thus specifically, I aim to establish the mediated effect of social trust (X) on political participation (Y) via political efficacy (M) (Figure 1.1). I intend to explore this relationship in a broader set of democracies, and in addition zoom into the more specific Lithuanian case² (chapters 4–7).

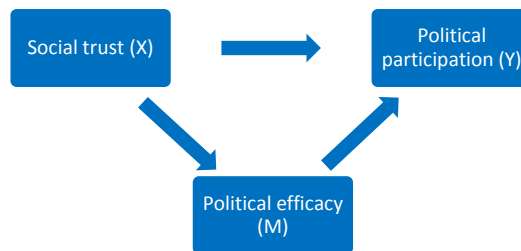


Figure 1.1 The expected causal mechanism between social trust (predictor), political participation (outcome) and political efficacy (mediator)

² A separate section of this chapter elaborates more on the scope and case selection of the study.

1.3 Relevance of the study

This section explains why the research questions are of academic and public interest. I maintain that the exploration of social trust and its connection to political participation in the former communist democracies is relevant for at least three reasons. The first reason is related to the empirical evidence of strikingly low levels of political participation in the post-communist region, the second point emphasizes the efforts to understand the weakness of civil society through the lens of social trust from both a historical and contemporary perspective, and the third point is directed to the empirical gaps this study aims to fill.

Firstly, the post-communist region witnessed a dramatic decline of electoral participation since its democratization in the early 1990s. As Kostelka (2014) notices in his newest empirical research, as of 2013, parliamentary elections turnout rates in post-communist societies are approximately 56%, and this is a considerably lower level than the West European standard, which is oscillating around 75% (or about 73%, if we exclude countries with compulsory voting). Moreover, the average voter turnout in post-communist countries dramatically decreased by about 25 percentage points between the 1990s and 2010. This is a record level decline for the region in the whole electoral history.

Even a bigger contrast is apparent, when it comes to protest actions. It seems that protest activity is not yet replacing traditional forms of participation in former communist countries, as Inglehart (1990) would predict. He asserted that the levels of political participation in democracies would not only increase, but would do so in specific ways, particularly, by the means of contentious politics. The European Values Survey (EVS) data demonstrates that in the post-communist societies only a relatively insignificant part of the respondents reported to have attended a lawful demonstration in the past.³ At the same time, more than half of the respondents in some countries across the post-communist region admitted that they would never participate in such activity, ranging from 37 % in Slovenia to 68 % in Romania and Slovakia.

The low levels of participation correspond with comparatively low levels of social trust. According to the EVS (2008) data, only around one fifth of the respondents (ranging from 13 to 33%) in the post-communist societies agreed with the statement that most people can be trusted. To give a reference point, the levels of social trust in mature democracies ranges from 27% in France to as high as 76% in Denmark.

³ As the data of the European Value Study (2008) shows, only very few respondents admitted to having participated in demonstrations or boycotts. Boycotts – 2% in Hungary, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia, 3% in Estonia, 4 % in Latvia and Poland; demonstrations - 4% in Hungary, 5% in Estonia and Slovakia, 8% in Lithuania, 9% in Poland, 12% in Czech Republic, 13% in Slovenia and 17% in Latvia. For comparison, the turnout in demonstrations in mature democracies is higher, to give a few examples: in Denmark - 34%, France - 45%, Spain - 38%, Italy - 39%, Luxembourg – 36%, Belgium – 30%, Netherlands – 22%, Sweden – 23%.

Secondly, many authors are specifically concerned with the lack of a revival or, in some cases, the emergence of civil society in post-communist countries. Although civil society has been acclaimed for its role in abolishing communism, recent developments, especially in terms of civic and political engagement and civic initiatives from below, are worrisome. Academic debates call into question why people who managed to achieve the common goal of overthrowing the communist regime, became more distant, apathetic and absent from civic and political actions.

The formation of a vivid civil society is crucial for the democratic consolidation in post-communist societies (Linz and Stepan, 1996). Civil society endows one with the vigilance against political usurpation that is likely to happen in a country without democratic traditions, as some examples of the post-Soviet bloc demonstrate. Moreover, because of the weak civil society citizens also lack representation and political “leverage” that could be provided by active voluntary organizations (Howard, 2002). Besides that, the socialization function of networks of civil society is important—they teach skills of democratic participation and convey democratic attitudes. The fact that post-communist countries have lower levels of organizational membership basically means hampered civic skills that are vital to supporting democratic systems.

Apart from the development of civil society, the formation of social capital (another element which strongly relies on social trust) in post-communist countries has also gained a particular interest (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer, 1998; Rose, 2000; Dowley and Silver, 2002; Bădescu and Uslaner, 2003; Letki, 2003; Haerpfer, Wallace, and Raiser, 2005; Lasinska, 2013). Acknowledging the weakness of civil networks, several authors direct their attention to trust as a moral imperative of social capital. From this point of view, social trust is conceived to be a bridging element of a society, a foundation of peoples’ solidarity and commonness (Uslaner, 2002; Seligman, 1997). A few scholars claim that with regard to the evolution of social trust, there are substantial differences between the conceptualizations of social capital in Western and post-communist democracies. The problem here is that while in Western-based interpretations social capital is associated with a cooperative environment (networks) and a generalized (impersonal) sense of trust, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe (hereafter: CEE) due to the historical legacy social capital and generalized trust might not be related with each other.

To go further, this insight also suggests that the relationship between social trust and political participation might be different from the one in mature democracies. For instance, Letki (2003) has identified only a weak impact of social trust on citizens’ political participation in CEE. Together with her colleague she argues that it is necessary “to go beyond the assumptions put forward in models developed in Western liberal democratic contexts” (Letki and Evans, 2005: 525). The contrasting patterns of participation “between East and West” are also acknowledged by other authors (Rueschemeyer, Rueschemeyer, and Wittrock, 1998; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Van

Deth, Montero, and Westholm, 2007; Smith, 2009; Vráblíková, 2014; Hooghe and Marien, 2013: 144; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). Thus, casting a light on social trust might contribute to the existing theories on political participation in post-communist societies and highlight the differences in predicting participation between mature and post-communist democracies.

The third point entails that this research is particularly relevant because the connections between social trust and political efficacy are insufficiently investigated in the post-communist region and lack empirical support. Roughly speaking, political efficacy, as a set of political-psychological orientations that explain political participation, has gained its popularity mostly from studies in the United States (Lane, 1959; Almond and Verba, 1963; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991) and in other Western countries (Finkel, 1985; 1987; Klandermans and Oegema, 1987; Simon et al., 1998; Morrel, 2003; Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, 2013; Marien, Hooghe and Quintelier, 2010; della Porta and Reiter, 2012; Quintelier and Van Deth, 2014). The post-communist societies are still underresearched in this respect, except for a few more recent scholars. These scholars basically assert in choir that post-communist citizens generally do not feel that they are able to effectively participate in politics (see, for instance, Mierina, 2011; Padget, 1999; Pollack et al., 2003; Hutcheson and Korosteleva, 2006; Armingeon, 2007). Yet, based on these studies, it is hardly possible to make any inferences on the mediating effects of political efficacy on political participation in the whole post-communist region, because of (1) the limited number of cases in most of the studies and (2) the limited operationalization of the concept of political efficacy in most of the studies, tapping only some aspects of it.

1.4 Theoretical background

Social trust as a resource of human interactions is one of the central concepts I employ in this study to explain the peculiarities of political activism in different political contexts. The theoretical debates on trust in post-communist societies very well comply with the sociological literature that emphasizes social trust as a facet of fraternity (or brotherhood), instead of only concentrating on liberty and equality (Newton, 1999b: 4-5). The uncertain times of post-modernity, some writers argue, lead the social sciences to search for the basis of social cooperation, integration and obligations between the members of a society, and this is where trust is given a crucial role as a valuable asset of social life (Misztal, 1996: 3). From different perspectives this idea is embedded in a number of books and studies, of which some were even revolutionary in social sciences: starting from classical theorists, such as Durkheim (1997 [1893]), Simmel (1950), Luhmann (1979; 1988) and continuing with the more contemporary authors as Giddens (1990), Fukuyama (1995), Putnam (1993; 2000), Misztal (1996), Seligman (1997), Sztompka (1999), Warren (1999), Uslaner (2002), Hardin (2002, 2006) and many others. Despite differences in theoretical nuances of conceptualizing

trust, this whole academic “branch” basically argues that social trust is a fundament of solidarity (civil society), good governance (democracy), social/economic prosperity (market economy/social welfare), and, moreover, it manifests itself as a prerequisite for collective action in modern societies. Yet in a more intrinsic sense, trust is a notion on which the paradigms of Marx and Weber clash. Trust is a hallmark for finding a balance between individual freedom, a selfish (entirely rational) attitude towards others and collective responsibility, civic consciousness and moral determination (Misztal, 1996: 9). The nature of trust reveals that human actions are not classified entirely on a calculative and conflictive basis, instead people are able to affiliate and cooperate with each other like moral actors.

Trust is a multidisciplinary concept as it is related, among other fields, to sociology and political theory, political and social psychology, economic and organizational behaviour. As Misztal (1996: 1) notices, the concept of trust derived from philosophical and political writings. In these writings, trust is usually considered as an important indication of social relations in transition from pre-modern to modern societies. Political theory literature focuses on how trust was transformed from traditional kinship-based relations to a more generalized impersonal level, which is a backbone of individualised (post)industrial society. Early academic debates were centred on the moral value of trust and in this sense trust was set in contrast to a hostile modern environment. Later, political scientists and philosophers started to advocate an economized or more rational concept of trust, arguing that (1) trust is a vital prerequisite for rationalizing economic relations and for adjusting the division of labour; (2) trust is a trait which enables social cohesion, cooperation and gives an impulse to democratic (market) institutions. Moreover, some academics theorize, (3) trust in people functions as a counter-response to institutional monopoly and thus it is a desirable attribute of modern political society (Sztompka, 1999; Warren, 1999).

Trust as a concept was particularly revived in the social capital literature. In recent decades the concept captured so much attention that it ironically was nicknamed “panacea” which is able to cure the inefficiency of society and institutions (see, for instance, Lovell, 2009). Putnam (1993) suggested that social capital would facilitate cooperation in communities based on mutual obligations and responsibility and thus it would help to confront social disorders, for instance crime, poverty, conflicts. From the individual level perspective, the stocks of someone’s social capital increase his/her sense of control, personal access to information and thus enhance skills and power (Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009; Paxton, 2002; Uslander, 2002).

Although less explicitly, trust also features in the modern civil society literature, starting with Almond and Verba (1963; 1989), who were followed by Wolfe (1989), Dahl (1989), Seligman (1992), Inglehart (1990; 1997) and many others. Civil society is defined in this sociological tradition as “a moral order whose cooperative principles and mutual self-help serve as a

counterweight to the demoralizing tendencies of the modern market and state” (Hearn, 1997: 66). According to this view, trust sustains rules of solidarity and belongs to a certain set of social obligations that also include participatory attitudes, tolerance, respect for human rights, citizenry duties and perceived common responsibility. The theories argue that these psychological and cultural resources are conducive to democracy, as it was already noticed by Alexis de Tocqueville almost two centuries ago. It is also worth saying that in the most recent sociological trends, the civic culture theories have regained their importance, while the social capital literature suffers from criticism of being poorly theoretically embedded (Durlauf, 2002; Hean et al., 2003).

In their classical study *The Civic Culture* Almond and Verba (1963) characterize types of political culture and assert that democracy goes along well with the *Participant* type. Possessing values of participant political culture, individuals are not only affected by the government (as the passive recipients), but also feel able to influence it in various ways (as active participants). The empirical evidence in the study also suggests that high levels of institutional and social trust contribute to the effectiveness of democracy and complementarity between citizens and the state. Years later, Verba with his colleagues Schlozman and Brady in *Voice and Equality* (1995) conclude that political participation, on the one hand, is strongly predicted by a sense of political efficacy, and, on the other hand, by individual’s social characteristics, including trust and social connections. Similar conclusions are also drawn in Putnam’s famous book *Making Democracy Work* (1993), in which he notices that in more trustful communities a sense of efficacy of common citizens is generally higher, compared to citizens in a less trustful environment ([1993] 2001: 147-149).

The findings of civic culture and social capital literatures make me presuppose that social trust and political efficacy are related categories that both positively affect political participation. Taking post-communist societies into account, the literature suggests that a reluctance to participate in political life is a result of the low levels of social trust and high levels of perceived political helplessness (an opposite feeling to efficacy). While political efficacy is a relatively explicit concept, social trust is a much more ambiguous, multi-layered, culturally and psychologically bounded; its role for political participation is still questioned. Some studies find a positive relationship between social trust and institutionalized political participation (Kaase, 1999; Putnam, 1993; 2000; Rossteutscher, 2008; Marien and Christensen, 2013), and others find weak, non-significant or even negative connections (Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Milner, 2000; Van Deth, 2001; Muhlberger, 2003; Uslander and Brown, 2005; Armingeon, 2007; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Hooghe and Quintellier, 2014; Kim, 2014). On the other hand, several studies show that there is a positive association between social trust and participation in unconventional/protest politics (Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009; Hooghe and Marien, 2013;

Kim, 2014). Thus the connection between social trust and the variances of political participation is yet not clear.

Adding to that, the social capital and civic culture theories also suggest that social trust might have an indirect effect on political participation, mediated by the sense of political efficacy. Following this reasoning, efficacy is acquired through social trust, which in turn eventually leads to political participation. In sum, drawing from the literature, I expect two types of relationships between social trust and political participation: (1) the direct effect, implying that trusters are more inclined to participate in politics, and (2) the indirect effect, which is mediated through political efficacy, suggesting that the more people trust each other, the more they feel efficacious to participate in politics.

1.5 Scope of the study and case selection: heterogeneity and homogeneity of the post-communist region

This study focuses on the established European democracies for both practical and theoretical reasons. The practical reasons refer to the European Social Survey (hereafter: ESS) 2008 dataset, which is used in the analysis and mainly comprises European Union (EU) countries. To analyze the effects of social trust in a comparative view, the mature and post-communist democracies are chosen. The adjective “mature” is used to describe advanced liberal democracies that achieved a high level of institutional and economic development since the first and the second waves of democratization (Huntington, 1991).⁴ Hence, as mature democracies, the old EU countries are selected that became members of the organization before 2004. Cyprus is also included in the sample, despite its arguable limitations of being mature. In addition, I also include Norway and Switzerland as both countries are linked to the EU by many bilateral agreements and are acknowledged as fitting the criteria of mature democracies. Germany in this sample is split in West (mature) and East (post-communist) parts.

My sample of the post-communist countries consists of the countries that became EU member states in 2004 and 2007 (except for East Germany). I deliberately chose not to include other post-communist countries, such as Russia and Ukraine, because the non-democratic nature of their institutions could influence the causal mechanisms between trust and participation. Basically, my study is orientated to the applicability of the theoretical inferences to the democratic context. Democratic institutions are thus considered a constant variable in this study.

⁴ European countries from the third wave of democratization where transition to democracy took place in the 1970s, namely, Portugal, Spain, and Greece, are considered as being outliers among mature democracies in terms of economic development and quality of democratic institutions.

There is discussion among scholars to what extent post-communist democracies can be treated as homogenous. The history of a few decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall demonstrated a variety of trajectories followed by the post-communist countries. The differences of these pathways are widely discussed in the academic literature (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Stark and Bruszt, 1998; Clark, 2002; Przeworski, 1991; Huntington, 1991; Holmes, 1997; Bunce, McFaul, and Stoner-Weiss, 2009; Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer, 1998; Elster, Offe, and Preus, 1998; Ekiert and Hanson, 2003; Norkus, 2008; 2012).

The students of transitology refer to a spectre of explanations for the diversity of the outcomes in the post-communist region: the pre-communist conditions (urban vs. rural); the nature of the communist rule (national vs. bureaucratic); the degree of political, economic and societal freedom under communism; the proximity to the West; national homogeneity/heterogeneity of societies; the mode of transition (pact/imposition/reform/revolution); constitution-making and speed/depth of the reforms; the timing of the first free parliamentary elections; and other so-called path dependency effects of institutional choices. These factors, authors argue, help to explain the stark variance between the countries in terms of institutional design (Elster, Offe and Preus, 1998), party systems and political cleavages (Kitschelt et al., 1999), and type of capitalism and socio-economic development (Norkus, 2008; Lane and Myant, 2007). More importantly, as Pollack and his colleagues (2003: 10) observe, there are also differences in national political cultures deriving from the experiences with communism: in some cases where communism was imposed from abroad, the basic national cultures have survived (as they were in a persistent opposition to the regime), while in other countries, where communism was “self-employed”, the political cultures in terms of democratic acceptance were severely damaged.

Apparently, a wide spectre of causal variables, mentioned above, account for the varying levels of democraticness of the post-communist countries. However, even rigid institutionalists, like Elster, Offe, and Preuss in their book *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies* (1998: 306 – 307) conclude that “the most significant variable for the success of the transformation is the compatibility of the inherited world views, patterns of behaviour and basic social and political concepts with the functional necessities of a modern, partly industrial, partly already post-industrial society. Thus what matters most is the social and cultural capital and its potential for adjusting the legacies of the past to the requirements of the present” (quoted in Kopstein, 2003: 235).

The accomplishment of some post-communist countries in adopting democracy is manifested by their accession to the Euro-Atlantic institutions. The membership of the EU is an essential hallmark to recognizing some post-communist states as established consolidated democracies. This formal acknowledgment also helps to distinguish the advanced post-communist countries from the cases that can be defined as “democracies with adjectives” or even authoritarian

regimes – mostly, post-Soviet states – Belarus, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and eastwards. As I have already mentioned, I decided not to include the latter post-communist countries in this study, as I find it methodologically confusing to compare very different institutional settings. Moreover, one should also assert a formidable homogenizing impact of the EU structures on the member states and their institutional development. In this sense the EU countries can be compared, as they at least formally have a common image how democracy should function.

The consolidation of democracy in the post-communist EU members is acknowledged by the European Commission and Freedom House reports. In the annual Freedom House surveys the countries are prized as free liberal democracies and ranked highly on the democraticness scale. However, there is some variation in terms of political rights and civil liberties across the region (see Table 1.1). In the years 2010 – 2013, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia were leaders in terms of democratic development, scoring the highest grade 1 (on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 as the highest level of achievement and 7 the lowest). Bulgaria and Romania are struggling with the high levels of corruption, as well as properly ensuring freedom of press and minority rights. More alarming is the fact that some countries, namely, Hungary and Latvia, have actually regressed on the democraticness scale over the recent years. As the reports show, Latvia is still not able to solve the problem of “non-citizens”⁵ whose political rights are restricted. Hungary is criticized for radicalization of the political system on the nationalistic basis as well as for the unfair mechanisms of mobilizing political power in one party’s hands. The experts admit that political processes in Hungary are particularly worrying as it unfolds the traces of authoritarian manners in the current government, while support for democracy is still not fully entrenched in citizens’ political culture.

Table 1.1 Freedom House scores on political rights and civil liberties indexes, 2010 - 2013

Country	2010			2011			2012			2013		
	Political rights	Civil liberties	Status	Political rights	Civil liberties	Status	Political rights	Civil liberties	Status	Political rights	Civil liberties	Status
Bulgaria	2	2	Free	2	2	Free	2	2	Free	2	2	Free
Czech Rep	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free
Estonia	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free
Hungary	1	1	Free	1	2	Free	1	1	Free	1	2	Free
Latvia	2	1	Free	2	2	Free	2	2	Free	2	2	Free
Lithuania	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free
Poland	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free
Romania	2	2	Free	2	2	Free	2	2	Free	2	2	Free
Slovakia	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free
Slovenia	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free	1	1	Free

Source: Freedom House, 2010-2013, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-aggregate-and-subcategory-scores> (Retrieved, February 10/2014). Grades: 1 = highest; 7 = lowest.

So far, in the paragraphs above, I have discussed a series of aspects that can be attributed to the heterogeneity of the post-communist region (except for the homogenizing effect of the EU

⁵ So-called “non-citizens” (residents without citizenship) comprise 15% of Latvia’s population – those who immigrated during the Soviet period and the majority of whom are ethnic Russians (Freedom House report, 2013).

institutions). Below I argue that because of certain factors and legacies, the CEE countries share some specific problems that make this region conceptually clearly distinguishable from the more mature Western democracies.

When talking about post-communism as a theoretical paradigm, authors point to two competing perceptions of this notion: post-communism as a situation and post-communism as a condition (Gill, 2001: 202). Post-communism as a *situation* appeals to a temporary period after a country has ceased to be communist and implies nothing about the nature of the society and political institutions except for its origins. Post-communism as a *condition* is a perspective which highlights some qualities and specific features that are evident in the post-communist societies. These perspectives are quite different, but not necessarily exclusive, as Gill admits. For formal political and economic institutions, post-communist as a *situation* might be applied, acknowledging the success of democratization in some post-communist countries and the efficiency of their institutions, for instance, in fighting against the economic crisis. The notable example here is Estonia, which proved to be institutionally more prosperous and effective than many mature democracies.

I argue that post-communism as a *condition* quite accurately describes the realm of culture, or more specifically, the political culture in the former communist societies. I draw upon the notion that the nature of society has been deeply transformed by the communist regime, which was unique compared to other authoritarian/totalitarian regimes. The utterly paternalistic character of the state diminished any private initiative, swept peoples' ability to cooperate and to aggregate their needs collectively. The state declared itself as being responsible for any affairs and kept its citizens in a permanent immaturity. As many surveys demonstrate, it resulted in regional "phenomena" of self-helplessness, fatigue, paranoia, cynicism, distrust and other "diseases" of civil society that are particularly common to the post-communist countries.

The developments of political culture in Central and Eastern Europe also more accurately reflect the so-called "14 point model" of post-communism (Holmes, 1997: 15). This model envisages post-communism as a condition that comprises: "assertion of independence and the rise of nationalism; near absence of the culture of compromise; high expectations of leaders; cynicism towards, and/or mistrust of, political institutions; rejection of teleologism and grand theories; an ideological vacuum; moral confusion; comprehensive revolution; temporality; dynamism; instability; a widespread sense of insecurity; unfortunate timing; and legitimation problems" (Gill, 2001: 201, referred to Holmes, 1997). I argue that some aspects of this model are still relevant to post-communist political culture today and are evident in the daily life of the CEE countries.

Based on that, I assert that the post-communist region faces some specific shared problems that allow conceptually grouping these countries together. Given that culture might be inert and

resistant to rapid changes, as the culturalists tend to believe, I assume that the traumatic experiences of communism still exert a strong homogenizing effect on national political cultures.

1.6 Design and outline of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. The next chapter (chapter 2) elaborates on the theoretical background and the conceptualization of the variables employed in this study. It presents the theoretical accounts for social trust, which is the focal concept of this study. I will furthermore discuss the perspectives to analyze the causal relationships between: (1) social trust and participation, (2) social trust, political efficacy and participation. Chapter 2 also provides an overview of the previous work on how the central variables of the study are related in both mature and post-communist democracies. At the end of the chapter I formulate the hypotheses I aim to test in this study.

Chapter 3 focuses on social trust in communist and post-communist contexts. I scrutinize the development of social trust from a historical and contemporary perspective. The aim of this chapter is to explain the ways in which social trust was impaired under the communist regime and deteriorated during the early stages of the post-communist transition. Considering contextual factors, I will contrast the “evolution” of social trust in post-communist and mature democracies. Furthermore, I elaborate on the assumptions of the link between social trust and political participation in post-communist societies.

In chapters 4 and 5 the relationship between social trust, efficacy, and political participation is empirically tested using the ESS. The relationship between social trust and political action cannot be explained in a contextual vacuum, therefore I find a comparative approach between mature and post-communist European democracies in this regard valuable. My attempt to empirically answer the third set of research questions (how is social trust related to different types of political efficacy, and how and to what extent does a sense of efficacy lead to participation?) is framed by two empirical steps. First of all, chapter 4 focuses on individual level regression models in order to explore the differences and similarities between the individual-level mechanisms accounting for political participation in two country-sets. Hence I investigate whether the Western-based theoretical claims on social trust and participation are applicable to the post-communist region. Does the effect of social trust on political participation differ between post-communist and mature democracies?

Second, a multi-level analysis is conducted in chapter 5 to examine the effects of contextual factors on political participation. The question here is to what extent social trust as a cultural phenomenon and post-communism as a political legacy shape individuals’ decisions to participate in politics or not. Thus, I wonder: how could social trust, as individual characteristic and cultural

phenomena, be helpful in explaining the differences in political participation levels between the two country-sets?

Chapter 6 zooms into more detail at the relationships between trust, efficacy and political participation in Lithuania. This Baltic state was chosen as it provides an exemplar case of a post-communist country that is characterized by relatively low levels of both social trust and political participation. Moreover, the Lithuanian case will be analyzed because I had the favourable opportunity to use the national post-election survey (2012), which quite accurately measures all the central variables that are discussed in this dissertation and thus fills the gap of an insufficient operationalization of these variables in the ESS study.

Chapter 7 summarizes the empirical results and provides the general conclusions on the causal mechanisms between social trust and political participation in a comparative perspective of post-communist and mature democracies. Following that, the theoretical improvements are suggested. The final chapter also discusses the implications of my findings and suggestions for future research.

2 |

Theoretical background: political participation, political efficacy and social trust⁶

⁶ Slightly different versions of section 2.4 of this chapter were included in the articles that have been published in *Sociopedia.isa* (Gaidytė, 2013) and *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* (Gaidytė, 2012).

2.1 Introduction

Some people assume that what applies to advanced democracies in terms of democratic developments is also appropriate to the post-communist region. In this chapter, I focus on general theories of political participation, efficacy and social trust, presupposing that the relationship between the variables should work in the same way for all democratic societies. For this reason, I mainly refer to what we already know from the literature based on the experiences of Western democracies.

One of the coryphées of democracy theories, Dahl (1971), maintains that citizens' political activity is indeed the pivotal indicator of the quality of democracy revealing its actual state and "health". By means of participation citizens shape rules, create and assess institutions and exert their fundamental rights to be involved in the decision making processes that directly affect their well-being. As Drèze and Sen (2002: 359) elegantly put in, "Participation (...) [has] intrinsic value for the quality of life. Indeed, being able to do something through political action – for oneself and for others – is one of the elementary freedoms that people have reason to value."

The literature proposes a variety of actions that are defined as political activity. During recent decades, the spectrum of what we call today political participation has expanded (Norris, 2002a; Teorell, Torcal, and Montero, 2007; Rosanvallon, 2008; Van Deth, 2014). Citizens are now active in more different ways compared to previous generations, because the contemporary political system is diffused in terms of the decision-making process and thus it "requires" more than only traditional avenues to influence it (Hooghe, 2014).

Competing theories tend to emphasize different levels of analysis of political participation, referring to opportunities, goals and motivations of citizens who get involved or restrained from the action (for instance, Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954; McCarthy and Zald, 1977; McAdam, 1982; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008). Due to the complexity of social reality, no theory is fully capable of explaining the peculiarities of political participation in a particular society.

In the following sections I do not aim to analyze all the existing approaches to political participation. My major task here is to provide the possible explanations of the modes of political participation by two determinants that are central to this monograph – social trust and a sense of political efficacy. This theoretical chapter explains how these predictors presumably affect political action in mature and post-communist democracies.

The key independent variable I am focusing on in this chapter is social trust. Referring to the seminal studies of sociologists and political scientists (Luhmann, 1979; Giddens, 1990; Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 1993; 2000; Misztal, 1996; Seligman, 1997; Sztompka, 1999, Warren, 1999;

Uslaner, 2002; Hardin, 2002, 2006), I argue that trust is a fundamental feature of democracy, a prerequisite for collective action and socio-economic prosperity in modern societies. In order to connect the concept of social trust with political participation and political efficacy, first of all I will explicate what this notion entails and through what elements trust might be linked to collective action.

Apparently, there is no consensus among social scientists about the nature, functions and the objects of trust. Nonetheless, in this chapter I will try to engage in a theoretical discussion and polemic on different questions related to trust. First, how can we describe trust using different theoretical approaches – is it a rational or moral account? Following that, what are the differences between trust in people we know personally and trust in people we do not know? Moreover, does social trust overlap with political trust? Finally, what is the relationship between trust and democracy? Should we have a certain level of trust in people and political institutions in order to maintain democracy? I will seek for the answers of these questions in the sections to come.

This chapter will proceed as follows. I will firstly distinguish between two different modes of political participation, namely, activities in party and movement-based politics. Second, I will describe the concept of political efficacy and theorize how its dimensions are related to the modes of participation. Third, I will elaborate on trust as a sociological category, disentangling its notions and elements. Most importantly, this section outlines the distinction between generalized and particularized trust. I will also distinguish between social and political trust. Subsequently I will briefly discuss the dialectics of trust and liberal democracy, displaying the nature of trust in mature democracies. Finally, I will explain the links between political participation, political efficacy and social trust, referring to civic culture and social capital literatures.

2.2 Two modes of political participation: party and movement politics

In democracies citizens have a wide range of instruments that they can use to influence political decision-making or “bring about a policy change”. The literature suggests different ways to define forms or types of political participation, including the most commonly used classifications of conventional vs. unconventional activity, electoral vs. non-electoral, institutional vs. non-institutional participation (contentious/protest politics), individual vs. collective, formal vs. informal engagement, and others (Kaase and Marsh, 1979; Tarrow, 1998; Norris, 2002a; Micheletti, 2003; Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm, 2007; Tilly, and Tarrow, 2007; Van Deth, 2014). The traditional classifications, however, recently gained criticism for not mirroring the real developments and character of a political society in which unconventional political participation has become almost as conventional as other forms of political activity (Klandermans, 2003: 670;

Teorell, Torcal, and Montero, 2007: 343). Therefore, I will use the labelling proposed by Klandermans (2013), who distinguishes between participation in party and movement politics.⁷

In this theoretical framework, party politics participation refers to so-called more institutionalized forms of political actions, such as voting, party membership, campaigning, contacting politicians via letters and directly, and doing voluntary work for a political party.⁸ All these activities, regardless of occurring in between or during elections, are driven by representational logic – it means that citizens try to influence elected representatives (Teorell, Torcal, and Montero, 2007: 341). In other words, participation in party politics contains more formal venues to influence politics and it is more routinized, and most often adjusted to particular electoral cycles. Movement participation, in contrast, encompasses a range of less formalized means of political actions, like signing petitions, demonstrating, striking, joining civic and political initiatives, boycotting and “buycotting” – and other (also, more radical) ways citizens try to make their voice heard. Movement politics mainly involves forms of protesting and it is more flexible than electoral cycles.

Traditional (conventional) theories emphasize the vital role of participation in party-based/electoral politics in nurturing democracies. Especially voting is prized as a sine qua non of political participation (Milner, 2002: 81). A wealth of empirical evidence illustrates that non-voters only very seldom take part in other active forms of politics (for instance, Norris, 2002a). Numerous scholars argue that movement politics is also important for a democratic political system. Much research suggests that citizens are generally becoming more critical (Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999; 2011). They do not rely just on elections and instead they use non-conventional forms for putting pressure on governors. Movement politics enters as a response to the lack of the institutional ways to influence politics in between elections, which roughly take place every 4-5 years (Dalton, 2008; Hay, 2007). Additionally, via movement participation citizens’ preferences and dissatisfaction with policies are conveyed in more alert, vigorous ways that attract public attention. Protesters are just as interested in politics as the ‘traditional’ participants; they are generally younger and capable to invest more time in political actions; moreover, most of them are well-educated (della Porta, 2012). All in all, democratic experiences demonstrate that movement politics serves as an additional political leverage of citizens that (with some exceptions) has positive effects on the quality of democracy.

⁷ The terms “party politics” I use interchangeably with “participation in party politics”; the same holds for “movement politics” and “participation in movement politics”.

⁸ Some authors (for instance, Teorell, Torcal and Montero, 2007) treat the item of contacting politicians as a separate mode besides party and protest-based participation. However, I will include this activity in party politics participation (as it is done, for example, by van der Meer and van Ingen (2009) and Hooghe and Quintelier (2014)).

Uslaner (2004) notices that individuals involving in protest actions are primed by post-materialist values. Inglehart (1990; 1997: 211 - 213) also asserts that the quantity of protests has increased because people put emphasis on values such as equality, human rights, environment and peace. Protests prove to be an efficient mean of political action in terms of acquiring attention of the governments and forcing them to solve issues that could conflict with the pragmatic economic interests. Moreover, post-materialists are more likely to join protests because they are less accepting political hierarchical authority and the channels of conventional participation (Benson and Rochon, 2004: 440).

Broadly speaking, all existing theories of political participation more or less reflect the classical quote of Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995: 269) arguing that people fail to participate in civic life “because they can’t, because they don’t want to, or because nobody asked”. This short and very felicitous phrasing reveals three explanatory layers of political participation: (1) resources, including political opportunities/constraints (openness/closeness of the system), time, money, political information/knowledge, civic skills (political efficacy), status, and education, (2) motivations and other psychological and social characteristics (civic-mindedness – political interest, social trust, grievances, absence of political cynicism), (3) recruitment networks (mobilizing structures, formal and informal networks of social embeddedness).

There is a huge literature and ample empirical evidence on how external and material resources and recruitment networks enhance participation, both in party politics (see among many others: Almond and Verba, 1963; Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Teixeira, 1987; Rosenstone and Hanson, 1993; Dalton, 1996; Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm, 2007; for an overview of the literature: Geys, 2006) and movement politics (e.g. Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Boekkooi, 2012; Walgrave and Wouters, 2014), but in this study I will focus only on individual skills (efficacy) and attitudes (social trust). As Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995: 22) observe in their book *Voice and Equality*, actors do not participate solely out of material benefits, but also because of other reasons, for instance, satisfying a sense of civic duty, desiring to influence policy, enjoying the other people involved. The findings of their study in American political involvement suggest that participation, besides demographic characteristics, is also determined by a sense of perceived political efficacy and social characteristics, such as trust in fellow citizens. I will elaborate on these variables in the following sections.

2.3 Political efficacy as a predictor of participation in party and movement politics

A sense of political efficacy⁹ is thought to be one of the decisive predictors leading to political activity (Lane, 1959; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954; Abramson and Aldrich, 1982; Finkel, 1985; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Warren, 1999; Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009; della Porta and Reiter, 2012). The notion is derived from psychology, where the concept of self-efficacy is widely used. Bandura (1977) describes self-efficacy as individual confidence in one's capability to attain certain goals. In the political context, self-efficacy means an individual's belief that s/he is powerful to act in some manner to seek for political aims – aims orientated towards change or stability in a certain political system.

Campbell, Gurin, and Miller (1954) in their seminal study *The Voter Decides* conceptualize perceived political efficacy as an individual conviction that one's political action might have an influence on the political processes and is worth being a civic duty. As they (1954: 187) put it, political efficacy is the “feeling that political and social change is possible and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change”. Similarly, Gamson (1968) suggests that political efficacy is one's belief that it is possible to alter political conditions or make significant inputs in the political system. From a slightly different angle, Almond and Verba (1963) define one's political competence (or, in other words, political efficacy) as a key political skill which endows individuals with the ability to reasonably act in the political system. In sum, democratic theories maintain that people who have a sense of political efficacy are more likely to participate in politics than those who are lacking this feeling (Pateman, 1970).

Although in a wide range of studies political efficacy is analyzed as a one-dimensional category, Lane (1959) distinguishes between two types: internal and external. As Niemi, Craig, and Mattei (1991: 84) define it, internal efficacy is a conviction about “one's own competence to understand and participate effectively in politics”. So this is a subjective, inner-based motivation to participate in politics. It is related to the more general notion of self-efficacy: the individuals' “judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986: 391). In political realms it is translated as individuals' “belief that one can produce effects through political action” (Bandura, 1997: 483).

Traditional theories suggest that internal political efficacy (also known as subjective competence or political awareness) is linked to political interest, which shows the amount of attention people pay to politics. Without a minimum of political interest citizens would even not be

⁹ By the notion of political efficacy I mean perceived political efficacy (in contrast to formal/institutionally “prescribed” efficacy as described, for instance, in Karp and Banducci, 2008), and I use these terms interchangeably.

aware of the opportunities how to contribute to collective decisions (Martín and Van Deth, 2007). Internal political efficacy and political interest are defined as the key determinants of whether or not citizens would be willing to participate in political action (Guo and Moy, 1998; Fiske, Kinder, and Larter, 1983). Internal efficacy is assumed to foster participation in both party and movement politics, as it unfolds individual's awareness of political issues and points towards the ways how to influence politics (Gamson, 1968: 48; Sheerin 2007; Van Zomeren, Postmes, and Spears, 2008; della Porta and Reiter, 2012).

External efficacy, on the other hand, is a conviction that the government (or the system in general) is responding to one's demands (Balch, 1974; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991: 85). Put it simply, external efficacy expresses the feeling, whether the voice of common people is heard: so this is an outer-based motivation to be politically active. External efficacy is believed to be closely associated with political trust¹⁰, but not necessarily (Fraser, 1970; Shingles, 1988; Rosenstone and Hansen, 2003; Dalton, 2004; Norris, 1999: 257-61). Hypothetically, one may think that one's voice will be heard (high external efficacy), but that institutions are not trustful (low political trust). Or the other way around: institutions are trustful, but common people, however, cannot influence them (for instance, in benign authoritarian regimes). The available empirical evidence suggests that citizens who are more politically trusting and who believe that the government is responsive to public demands are more inclined to embark on traditional political activities (Hooghe and Marien, 2013). Politically distrustful citizens with a high internal and external efficacy tend to engage more into movement politics than trustful citizens, because protest is traditionally conceived as an action directed against elite-based institutions, or, elite-challenging (for instance, Gamson, 1968: 48; Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999; Kaase, 1999; Levi and Stoker, 2000; Hooghe and Marien, 2013). People who protest are generally dissatisfied with political and economic conditions or the way the government deals with it (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald, 1996).

Table 2.1 displays the relationship between the types of political participation and the dimensions of political efficacy. The dimensions prescribed to both external and internal efficacy are hypothetical (drawn from the literature) and not necessarily form one single dimension.

¹⁰ In the Eastonian theoretical framework of political system political trust is defined as a component of political support (Easton, 1965; Norris, 1999; Zmerli and Newton, 2008, Marien and Hooghe, 2011). Political support is one of the relational channels between the citizens and the state: the citizens exert demands and control for the responsiveness of institutions/politicians by simultaneously giving their support (Fuchs and Klingemann, 1995). Political support is measured by the system's legitimacy and trust. It is also said that political trust is a pivotal element that ensures legitimacy of the system. Otherwise, it would be difficult to accept the legitimacy of a political system and ensure democratic process when citizens do not believe political institutions and politicians (Camões, 2003).

Table 2.1 Political participation and political efficacy

The dimensions of political efficacy and its meanings	Low internal political efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics is complicated • Politics is boring • Politics is not relevant/important 	High internal political efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics is easily understandable • Politics is interesting • Politics is relevant/important
Low external political efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens have no influence on what the government does • Government is not responsive to citizens demands Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political institutions are not trustful 	Citizen is not willing to vote or participate in movement politics (demonstrations, protests, boycotts, etc.).	Citizen is not willing to vote, but prefers forms of movement politics.
High external political efficacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens have an influence on what the government does • Government is responsive to citizens demands Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political institutions are trustful 	Citizen prefers participation in party politics (voting) over movement politics.	Citizen participates both in party and movement politics.

Source: adjusted by the author, using the model from a study of Sheerin (2007: 42).

At the same time, however, recent studies imply that protesters do not necessarily distrust political institutions more than people who are active in party politics. Norris, Walgrave and Van Aelst (2005) argue that in mature Western societies (they refer to Belgium as an example), people who are involved in politics are not necessarily divided between supporters and opponents of the political system, the former following the electoral route and the latter engaging in protest behaviour. Instead, they choose different political means to express their demands, depending on their assessment of the situation, timing and issues they are concerned about. Thus more recent research suggests that people might very well choose both strategies to act, instead of selecting only traditional or protest activities (Uslaner, 2004).

So far I have highlighted the individual characteristics, or, more precisely, the aspects of political efficacy, that lead to a greater political engagement. But individual resources and civic skills, different authors argue, are not sufficient to explain participation. Besides that, individuals are socially and emotionally embedded in social networks (communities) that provide citizens with the resources that can be invested in political actions (Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008). Social trust is thought to be one of these resources that spur political participation.

2.4 Social trust as a predictor of participation in party and movement politics

2.4.1 The notion of trust

Since social trust is a very abstract and rather ambiguous notion, several theoretical frameworks and approaches conceptualizing trust in sociological literature have been developed. Among the many typologies¹¹ used, we can identify a key distinction regarding the notions of trust: trust as a moral or emotional trait deriving from a very early socialization phase vs. trust as a rational response that is learned with a set of normative rules. In addition, I will discuss a third perception: trust as a cultural rule.

Moral perception of trust

According to the first approach, trust is a disposition that hinges on emotions, self-perceptions, as well as ideals and values pursued in social relations (Wolfe, 1976); and it is as much an interpretation of oneself as of the other (Frederiksen, 2011: 8). This approach considers trust as an inevitable and natural feature of every human, which evolves from interactions with and interdependence among other humans in the society. We create ourselves as human beings through communication and interaction, and trust is a vital prerequisite of being *social* (Markova, 2004: 3-4; Habermas, 1984).

This perception of trust is essential to Durkheim's (1983 [1997]) notion of "collective conscience" – a specific type of common moral beliefs that allow for social order and lead to social and economic integration ("solidarity"). Durkheim believed that trust is a ground on which collective conscience is built, and these two concepts go hand in hand ensuring social order by putting moral constraints on individuals' actions (Misztal, 1996: 46). Trust facilitates collective behaviour and actions, as it organizes our choices according to certain habits and cultural norms we are used to and do not need to reflect upon all the time.

The moral approach to trust has been dominant in the so-called Weberian sociology, where trust is perceived as an inherent, religion-based feature of culture. Indeed, Simmel, following a Weberian way of thinking, was the first scholar who integrated and analytically conceptualized trust as a sociological subject in his two main studies: *Philosophie des Geldes* (1900, [The Philosophy of Money]) and *Soziologie* (1908, [Sociology: Investigations on the Forms of Sociation]). According to Simmel, trust is evidently one of the most important synthetic forces within society and without it society itself would disintegrate (1950: 326). Metaphorically speaking, trust helps to convert the

¹¹ In the literature trust is categorized as a moral trait (Uslaner, 2002), emotion (Rotter, 1971), a relationship (Hardin, 2006), an action (Sztompka, 1999), one of the elements of social capital (Putnam, 1993). See more: Nannestad, 2008. Some categories, however, are intertwined, for instance, emotional and moral perceptions of trust.

Hobbesian state of nature from something that is brutish and selfish into something that is more efficient, pleasant and altogether more peaceful (Newton, 2001: 202).

To sum up, seen from a moral point of view, trust holds an element of “faith”, which is endogenous, attached to religion and even mystical, having nothing to do with practical knowledge or personal experiences (Simmel, 1950:318; Uslaner, 2002). Trust has a unique, metaphysic nature, therefore some theorists expect that trust is relatively consistent over different phases of individual’s life (e.g. Seligman, 1997; Uslaner, 2002).

Rational perception of trust

The second approach would suggest that trust is more of a rational choice and this choice is highly motivated by maximizing utility (Coleman, 1990; Misztal, 1996). Placing trust is making a bet about the future, about the uncertain actions of others that are always associated with risk (Kollock, 1994: 317). If we define trust as a bet, we believe that placing trust in someone means expecting particular results from him/her though we cannot really control or predict his/her actions (Sztompka, 1999: 31). In this sense, the risk would be realized if the persons we trust would behave contrary to our expectations. Thus, trust becomes a cognitive response, because the individual thinks about the risk in the situation (Kee and Knox, 1970). By trusting we risk not only to make wrong predictions regarding the actions of others, but also to suffer moral and material damage. In contrast, trust as a moral trait of personality refers to the general inclination towards trust in people, despite the risk it may bring (Hardin, 2006: 17).

Risk derives from taking some actions or making some deals in advance. The imperative of advance is obviously risky, since one can never be absolutely sure about the deeds of other individuals. In frequent social interactions we usually do not have all knowledge we need for trusting other people. Here, Simmel argues, trust emerges as a leap of faith, or the suspension of uncertainty (Simmel, 1950: 318; Möllering, 2001). This “mystical” and irrational step is also acknowledged by Luhmann (1979: 25), who admits that at least a minimum level of trust (wishful trust) is necessary in order to invoke any social cooperation, any relation per se, because in the sphere of social relations, most actions are committed “in advance”, i.e., based on expectations of particular responses. In this sense, it is suggested that a purely rational basis of trust would not enable the mechanism of the leap of faith and thus would suspend any social interaction (Luhmann, 1979:40).

Following the rational choice approach, we are inclined to take risks and place trust only if the person we are dealing with is perceived as trustworthy; hence trust evolves as not only an individual emotion, but also a relationship (Hardin, 2002). Kollock (1994, 318–319) maintains that

to be trustworthy means to become committed to particular exchange partners, and this commitment can be treated as a response to the possible risk of trust. Thus, placing trust as making a bet is grounded in the anticipation of mutual utility (Gambetta, 1988). It implies a certain level of predictability of social actions: when we trust someone, we organize our actions according to the most probable utility-based behaviour of other actors (Hardin names it “encapsulated interest”). This idea is reminiscent of the Pareto-optimum situation of the Prisoners’ dilemma in game theory: the actor is led to trust the other actor presuming that in the future, the latter would be interested in further cooperation (reciprocity). Therefore, the mechanism of trust enables confidence in mutual utility in situations in which mutual utility cannot be immediately or simultaneously realized. Putnam (1993) describes trusting others in this situation as “short-term altruism” based on “long-term self-interest”.

Moreover, Putnam (1993) claims that when we are placing trust in a certain person in a certain context, our calculations encompass not only the return from this concrete person (with whom we might never have anything to do again), but also the return from potential other people who are members of the community. So in the case of one social action we have not only two-sided reciprocity (interaction between actors A and B), but multilateral reciprocity (interaction of actor A with B, Y, X and other actors). A trust building process implies the following presumption: I, actor A, expect that every member of society in the same circumstances would act towards me in the same way I trust and act towards actor B. To describe this interaction, Putnam uses the term of general reciprocity. It implies the durable interchange when an action is plausibly not rewarded immediately in the concrete moment, but contains mutual trust that the action will be rewarded in future. One may therefore argue that trust itself is not something very rational, even if we can define it in rational terms, but that it is essential for rational decision-making to function.

Finally, the rational-choice approach also considers the function of the alternative of trust – distrust, when the risk of trusting is large and potential losses exceeds potential gains (Misztal, 1996; Hardin, 2002). Distrust, as the opposite of trust, might be described as a rational reaction (vigilance) to certain social situations and contexts (Žiliukaitė, 2005b; Levi and Stoker, 2000).

To sum up, scholars admit that despite the different approaches towards trust, it is impossible to clearly define trust as only rational or, in opposite, as a purely moral trait, when we take into account any social interaction. More importantly, as political psychologists observe, “people do not always act the way rational choice assumptions suggest they should act” (Tufiş, 2008: 118). The rational account of trust does not explain why people risk to cooperate even not knowing much about each other. Quoting Lewis and Weigert (1985: 972), “Trust in everyday life is a mix of feeling and rational thinking”. Trust may include a rational and moral basis at the same time, while the “weight” of these dimensions may vary depending on different situations: in some

situations, it is rationality that becomes a determinant of trust, and in some other situations it is morality.

Trust as a cultural rule

Alongside the moral and rational interpretations of trust, Sztompka (1999: 66–68) distinguishes the third perception of trust as a cultural rule. From this point of view, trust is conceived as a prescribed norm: individuals are expected to behave according to the norm of trust/distrust. Put it differently, an individual's decision to trust or distrust someone depends on the pre-existent cultural context, where normative rules encourage or refrain from trust. Trust is not treated as an entirely voluntary individual choice (based on morality or rational calculations), but as a cultural phenomena, or social fact, in the sense of Durkheim. Sztompka (1999: 66) points out that if rules demanding trust are shared by a community and trust is a perceived external obligation, then these rules exert a strong pressure on actually giving trust. And the other way around, if a culture implies suspicion and distrust, the rules of this culture impose the withdrawal of trust. In other words, people take into account a general level of trustworthiness in a particular context and based on that they make their decision to trust others or not (Hardin, 2002).

Trust as a cultural rule might transform the origins of trust, for instance, decrease rational calculations, and vice versa, suspend the moral inclination of trust. To give an example, I have been socialized in a distrustful post-communist society, but the general atmosphere of trust in the Netherlands, where I live now, encourages me to act in a trusting manner. Thus one may say that the emphasis on the particular context provides more insight into how the normative system of society acts as a powerful factor influencing decisions of trust.

2.4.2 Social trust: generalized vs. particularized

When I talk about social trust in this dissertation, I refer to the general dimension of it, as opposed to particular(ized) trust. Following most scholars, I use generalized (also known as “impersonal” or “thin”) trust interchangeably with social trust.¹² Usually, generalized trust is measured by the question that first appeared in a study in post-war Germany in 1948: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?” Indeed, the aim of this question is to measure the trust level between strangers and not particularly inside specific groups (Delhey and Newton, 2005: 311). Defined like this, trust is measured by an abstract scope of the fellow citizens with whom the bonds may be direct and indirect, but generally

¹² Although I also admit that social trust is a more acute term to describe personal relationship, whereas generalized/general trust in sociological literature might also contain other forms of trust (see, for instance, Bartuškaitė and Žilys, 2011).

it refers to trust in the citizenry as a whole. It aims to establish the horizontal relationship of civic trust (Newton, 1999b).

In contrast to generalized or impersonal trust, we can talk about particularized, or in-group, specific (“thick”) trust (Zmerli and Newton, 2011; Sztompka, 1999; Delhey, Newton, and Welzel, 2011). Empirically, it is measured by a set of different questions across various studies (for instance, the questions refer to trust in family members, neighbours, trust in people you know or have ever met, trust in people of the same ethnicity, religion, age and so on). These questions display certain levels of particularized trust vested in identifiable individuals or groups, so it is tightly related to the information (or expectations, prejudices) and experiences we possess. In the academic literature some scholars tend to conceptualize trust only within a framework of particularized trust, pointing out that for the real, substantive trust we need to have certain knowledge about a trustee (Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994). Given this, generalized trust, which is not based on particular knowledge, is only a normative construct (Offe, 1999; Hardin, 2002)

However, Uslaner (2002) rejects this argument, claiming that generalized trust can actually exist when it is founded on a moral, rather than rational, calculative basis. Seen like this, generalized trust appeals to a regularly honest behaviour of a trustee. The perceived trustworthiness of strangers rests on the idea that human actions are intrinsically motivated. As Seligman (1997: 43) puts it, generalized trust is a belief in the goodwill of others.

Fukuyama (1995) elaborates on this idea and proposes the notion of the *radius of trust*, which encompasses a circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative. As Delhey, Newton and Welzel (2011) observe, “with respect to civic cooperation the radius of trust is important because the wider it is, the more inclusive is the circle of cooperation”. Hence, generalized trust expresses a wide radius of perceived trustees in whom the truster is ready to vest his/her trust.

Unlike generalized trust, particularized trust has a strategic function. Particularized trust is based on knowledge or experiences. It emerges in particular groups and usually does not overcome the boundaries of this specific group. In other words, it embraces only a narrow radius of trust. In contrast, generalized trust is extended trust in people who differ from us and about whom we have no particular knowledge. By endowing generalized trust, I admit that people may have different beliefs, but at the same time belong to the same narrative of fundamental values (Fukuyama, 1995: 153; Uslaner, 2002: 17).

The question here arises to what extent generalized and particularized trust can be compatible. In Putnam’s account both forms of trust do not necessarily conflict with each other and particularized trust in small, identity-based groups can spill-over to generalized levels. Following this line, particularized and generalized trust are mutually supportive; if you honestly trust someone

you know, you most probably will elaborate your trust in strangers (Putnam, 1993: 180). This is the core idea of Putnam (who follows the Tocquevillian tradition) about a civic society: the activities in your own group foster trust, which spills over to a generalized level of trust. Zmerli and Newton (2011) conclude from their empirical research that most generalized trusters are also particularized trusters, but the reverse is not necessarily true. Thus, as they say, particularized trust is a prerequisite, but not a sufficient cause of generalized trust. Nevertheless, the authors are quite optimistic about the possibilities to develop generalized trust within a diverse society.

Uslaner, however, argues that generalized trust most probably does not evolve from particularized trust, because particularized trusters tend to engage in activities with their own group only, thus limiting social contacts with strangers. Generalized trust is a moral inclination, based on optimistic and altruistic values, whereas particularized trust is more egoistic and reciprocal. The latter has no moral force, thus it is fragile and easy to destroy (Levi, 1998: 81). Due to their adverse nature, these two types of trust, Uslaner claims, actually conflict with each other, rather than mutually support each other. The more a person is a particularized truster, the less s/he relies on strangers or people different to her/him. This type of trust requires trustees to be just like trusters: I only trust someone who is similar to me. At the same time, I am suspicious about people outside the circle, therefore I demand evidence that they share the same values. Thus, it is more likely that particularized trust will impose discriminative attitudes on individuals towards those who do not clearly belong to “them” (Offe, 1999: 64).

Various theories suggest that generalized social trust is desirable for democracy because it promotes a democratic political culture and reduces fractionalization of a society (Inglehart, 1997; Paxton, 2007; Putnam, 1993). It encourages tolerance for pluralism and a variety of lifestyles, which is inevitable for the implementation of fundamental human rights and freedoms in democratic regimes (Misztal, 1996; Sztompka, 1999; Newton, 1999a; 1999b; Uslaner, 2002; Mishler and Rose, 2005). Moreover, generalized trust allows for peaceful conflict resolution, compromise and consensus, because when people trust each other, they are committed to the same democratic values and principles (Žiliukaitė, 2005b: 87; Carnevale and Wechsler, 1992). With the persistence of generalized social trust it becomes more likely that citizens obey laws and rules and do not abuse the rights of other people. Eventually, it is also more likely that a society with higher levels of trust will reject any undemocratic alternatives (Rose, Mishler, and Haerpfer, 1998). In fact, this insight is very important when talking about the consolidation of democracy in post-communist countries. Mishler and Rose (2005: 1053) suggest that from a cultural perspective, distrust in society and democratic institutions not only undermines their legitimacy, but “also threatens to increase support for undemocratic regimes”.

From the civic culture perspective, generalized trust sustains a cooperative social climate, civic norms and a regard for public interests (Putnam, 1993; Zmerli and Newton, 2008: 706). With their strong emphasis on public interest, trustful societies are more likely to engage into collective action and pursue social-welfare policies (Uslaner, 2002: 40). Countries with many generalized trusters have generally better functioning governments, a stronger economic growth and more open market economies (see, for instance, Hirsch, 1977; Zak and Knack, 2002; Inglehart, 1997; Paxton, 2002).

2.4.3 Determinants of social trust

In this section I consider the determinants of social trust, taking into account individual, societal and institutional mechanisms.

First, at the individual level, social trust is more often a feature of people who are educated and have a higher socio-economic status (Inglehart, 1997; Uslaner, 1999; Putnam, 2000). Trust increases with education because more educated people presumably are more knowledgeable, tolerant and less bounded by prejudices (Vasilache, 2010). Offe (1999) notices that the rich, the more powerful and well-informed people are more inclined to trust, because they are less vulnerable to the potential losses of trust. These people are more likely to survive the disappointment of falsified trust investment, because they can switch to alternative resources (like money or power), whereas people lacking these resources are in a greater risk to suffer from a breakdown of the trust relations. Simply put: poverty makes people risk-averse. Similarly, Delhey and Newton (2003: 96) note that: “Those who have been treated kindly and generously by life are more likely to trust than those who suffer from poverty, unemployment, discrimination, exploitation and social exclusion”. Furthermore, the better-off are more trusting because they are surrounded by trustworthy people like themselves (Zmerli and Newton, 2011). This aspect is very important, as the question that measures social trust (“Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people”) is about how individuals judge the trustworthiness of others (Zmerli and Newton, 2011:1). Hence, contextual conditions are no less important than individual propensities.

Second, at the societal level, the literature suggests that generalized social trust is a characteristic of individualist cultures, which stand in opposition to collectivist societies (Triandis, 2004). While collectivist cultures are in-group and family centered, individualistic values promote equality across different sections of society and thus encourage a generalized sense of trust. These attitudes are especially common to Protestant cultures (Wolfe, 1989; Inglehart, 1997). Inglehart (1997; 1999; 2008) argues that modern, economically developed societies steadily turn from

materialist, or security based, values to post-materialist values, such as individual's autonomy and self-expression. Due to rising economic prosperity individuals put survival values in the second plan and give priority to individual-improvement values. Social trust with its modern connotation strengthens the post-materialist normative set (and vice versa), which is oriented towards the society based on humanist ideas. Social trust evolved along such emphasized values as personal freedom, a sense of control and efficacy, promoting a healthy environment, human rights, peace, equality, life satisfaction, and happiness. At first glance, these world views do not seem to be directly related to trust, but trust is in fact the essential component of social prosperity, leading to common understanding and solutions for "making the world a better place". As Monroe (1991) puts it, social trust contributes to creating a global identity that emphasizes inclusive human values.

Another important societal prerequisite that might encourage or reduce social trust is social/ethnic diversity. Some authors (Allport, 1954; Stolle, Soroka, and Johnston, 2008) claim that diversity increases the odds of having social contacts with different people, so people become accustomed to "strangers". But the adverse effect is also possible: diversity (especially, conflict-based) might deter people from cooperation and shelter them under their own circles (Delhey, Newton, and Welzel, 2011; Hooghe et al., 2009).

Social capital theorists (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Norris, 2002a) claim that social trust is generated by the interaction of individuals in civic networks. We learn to trust when communicating with others in civic associations that represent a segment of a society. The contacts with the members of an association allow for the process of generalization of social trust in people you do not know (Stolle, 2002). It also teaches us how to safely project trust in others and it has a heuristic function: "if others have learned similar lessons, then trust will in fact become generalized throughout the society" (Levi, 1996: 48). However, this argument has received criticism as well (Newton, 2001; Uslaner, 2002; Stolle, 1998): firstly, not all civic associations breed social trust, and secondly, social trust might even decrease because of the associational "localism" and distance created towards others outside the networks. Very interesting evidence in this regard was demonstrated by Stolle (1998), who found out in her research that joining associations indeed increases social trust for a short time, but in a long run social trust tends to shrink between the members of different civic associations. She concludes that in the initial stage members strengthen trust bonds with each other, but after some time their trust does not generalize to "outsiders" of a particular association.

Uslaner's (2002) idea is that activities do not lead to trust, but vice versa, trust leads to different activities. It means that if you are particularized truster, you are likely to choose cooperation in narrow groups with people who are similar to you. And if you are a generalized truster, you tend to participate in different types of associations, cutting across social cleavages.

These associations might include people who are different from you, but you need to agree with them upon important decisions.

Another group of authors (Foley and Edwards, 1998; Delhey and Newton, 2005) suggests that social trust stems from informal social networks, or, face-to-face interactions with people you know – family, friends, neighbours. These tight and strong relations, according to the authors, actually teach us “the virtue of trust”.

Thirdly and finally, the quality of institutions and legal norms are thought to be a crucial prerequisite of social trust – or even the factor which makes trust “generalized” as such (Coleman, 1990; Levi, 1996; Offe, 1999, Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994; Warren, 1999, Misztal, 2001; Rothstein and Stolle, 2008). Institutions and fair legal systems are thought to reduce risks related to trust and create favourable conditions for spreading trust at the generalized level. First, efficiently protected rights of individuals and well-functioning mechanisms of damage compensation make it more likely for individuals to trust others compared with the social contexts where rights are abused and legal norms are inefficient (Sztompka, 1999; Warren, 1999; Jong-sung You, 2012). In this sense, a democratic environment creates an ability to anticipate the future and thus trust could become a “rational gamble”, a voluntary choice. In totalitarian societies, contrarily, trust may cause huge losses because of the lack of anticipation. Second, as Offe (1999) observes, institutions provide normative reference values that can be relied on in order to justify the rules created by institutions. Institutions are endowed with a certain spirit, a certain moral setting which prescribes preferred ways to conduct for people in the community. If institutions are available to effectively ensure the compliance of the citizens to the values, it implies that citizens should trust their fellows as they are involved in the same institutions. This involvement creates commitment to the norms and values represented by these institutions (Offe, 1999: 65-67). However, if citizens feel in doubt about the moral inclination of the institutions, they most probably will neither elaborate loyalty towards them, nor towards fellow citizens.

In sum, contextual variables matter as much as individual ones to explain why some people display high levels of generalized trust, whereas others do not. On the aggregate level, the former variables might thus also explain why in the more unequal and less prosperous societies the levels of social trust are generally low, and why welfare states are more trusting (Rothstein and Stolle, 2002; Uslaner, 2002). Although it is obvious that so-called winners (or better-off) are more trusting, we cannot neglect contextual effects. Trust is embedded in institutional structures; and country level characteristics such as inequality or corruption have a profound negative effect on establishing a culture of trust of a society. In the next section, I turn to a question that is closely related to the institutional theory of social trust, namely, what is the relationship between social and political trust?

2.4.4 Social and political trust

In academic writing, social trust and institutional trust are sometimes conflated within the more abstract notion of political trust (Heywood and Wood, 2011: 148). However, these are two different analytical categories. Thus I separate these notions in this dissertation and refer to social trust as trust between people and political trust as trust in political institutions.

Compared to social trust, political trust¹³ rests on a vague and partial understanding (Giddens, 1990: 179), because the relationship between truster (individual) and trustee (institution, politician) is not direct or equal. Political trust can be learned through primary contact (personal experience with the institutions), but as Newton (2001: 205) observes, it is usually learned indirectly and at a distance – through media. Indeed, media play a crucial role in establishing pillars of political trust, providing us with information to make judgments about politicians and institutions. We may not know the people in government personally, but we believe that we have sufficient information to make expectations and judgments about them. Unlike some forms of social trust, political trust is always related to expectations, so in this sense it is a strategic, but not moralistic trust (Uslaner, 2002). Conceptualized in this manner, political trust applies to actions of some institution or politician being in line with my normative expectations, even if I do not check these actions permanently. Therefore, political trust is sometimes understood as a psychological orientation, having both affective and evaluative aspects (Norris, 1999).

There is a rich literature discussing the dialectics of political trust and liberal democracy, and I would like to make a brief detour into that to argue how social and political trust are related (and I find this philosophical literature helpful in this regard). To begin with, in liberal political thinking, trust is a fairly controversial notion (Warren, 1999; Hardin, 2006; Rosanvallon, 2008). Although sociological theories consider political trust and democracy as mutually supportive, according to liberal philosophy, the roots of the liberal system lie, in fact, in distrust. The French philosopher Pierre Rosanvallon (2008) maintains that distrust is a natural and legitimate component of democracy, and it functions as a protective mechanism, enabling society to control the democratic processes alongside the formal rules.

Following the thought of liberal philosophy, distrust is a necessary condition for institutions not to override their authority or abuse the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens. Historically, the institutionalisation of distrust in the political system was tightly related to economic liberalism. The Constitution of the United States (1787) has primarily anchored the legal mechanisms of distrust in

¹³ Some authors think that, when we talk about institutions and systems, the term trust is inappropriate and should be replaced with more neutral terms such as reliance or confidence (for instance, Dalton, 1999; Sapsford and Abbott, 2006). On the other hand, the term political trust is also widely used and discussed (Mishler and Rose 2001, Newton, 2007; Van der Meer, 2010).

the realm of economics: it inscribes protective mechanisms on behalf of economic liberties against the intervention of the state in economic relations. These mechanisms have been transferred to the more abstract sphere of politics, first of all, by means of the “division of powers”, allowing institutions to compete with each other for power and thus restraining each other’s possibilities for systemic usurpation. Moreover, distrust is also institutionalized through additional “safeguards”: a multi-party system, election rules, the right to competition, monitoring, and formalities that regulate the time span and periodicity of office terms (Benn and Peters, 1959: 281).

However, the constitutional rules and formal safeguard mechanisms alone are not sufficient to avoid the abuse of power by institutions. Democracy also encompasses a wide range of resistance forms that could be used by society against the government, and these forms surpass the limits of formal rules (Warren 1999; Rosanvallon, 2008). People are not only just voters (passive participants), but also active quality controllers (critical citizens) of the political system. The philosopher refers to this kind of interaction, when citizens maintain the control levers through protest, as “counter democracy” (Rosanvallon, 2008).

Permanent distrust in the political system exerted by the people is arguably one of the fundamental substantial ideas for democracy to truly work. Braithwaite and Levi (1998) label the democratic project as “institutionalized distrust”. Hardin (2006: 152) acknowledges that distrust is one of the key conditions for modern democracy. Power inequality between state institutions and common people is too immoderate (unbalanced), but we have no alternatives to these institutions. We are dependent on them. Institutionalized distrust implicates institutional accountability - so called “agencies of accountability” that may enforce trustworthiness of the system. These agencies (courts, police, controllers, examination boards, media, etc.) put pressure on persons, institutions, or systems that are our targets of trust (Sztompka, 1999: 47). Yet enforcement agencies must be trustworthy themselves. If citizens do not trust these agencies, they will not trust their officials to fulfill their duties (Dasgupta, 1988: 50).

It should be clarified that institutionalized political distrust (substantial distrust) is not the same as political distrust in concrete political institutions (formal distrust). To avoid confusion, it is expedient to differentiate between these two forms of political distrust. Formal political (dis)trust would be expressed towards, for instance, the parliament, the government, or concrete politicians. Substantial political distrust refers to the permanent distrust (or “healthy” suspicion) of institutional politics or of the system as such. Hence, in liberal thinking, political participation – voting, writing petitions, demonstrations, and boycotts – is the expression of substantial political distrust. We participate in elections in order to control the powers of institutions and express our substantial distrust in them. Thus, exposing substantial political distrust does not imply that we also feel formal political distrust at the same time.

Following this distinction, many authors actually believe that social trust and formal political trust are mutually reinforcing (Gambetta, 1988; Burt, 1992; Putnam, 1993, Sztompka, 1999; Misztal, 1996; Levi, 1998). Some of them (Sztompka 1999, Warren, 1999; Rothstein and Stolle, 2002) even think that political trust indeed gives an impulse for social trust to emerge. It is argued that trust in a certain system as a set of values empowers us to trust citizens of this system, as we all belong to the same setting of normative rules and general morality. Farrell and Knight (2003) suggest that institutions create rules and sanctions for people to behave in a trustworthy manner, thereby fostering trust. Similarly, Levi (1996: 51) argues, “governments provide more than the backdrop for facilitating trust among citizens; governments also influence civic behaviour to the extent they elicit trust or distrust towards themselves”.

We can also talk about the positive effect of social trust on political trust. As Putnam (2000) observes, if people are willing to trust strangers, they will also trust politicians and political institutions.

However, there is empirical evidence questioning the link between social and political trust. For instance, institutional theories argue that social trust has nothing to do with political trust and the latter depends on citizens’ evaluations of the political and economic performance of the government (Parry, 1976; Mishler and Rose, 2005; Zmerli and Newton, 2008). In other words, political trust is a consequence of institutional performance, but not a result of social trust. This insight is also displayed by empirical research showing that political and social trust are weakly correlated (Newton, 1999a; Kaase, 1999; Uslaner, 2002; Delhey and Newton, 2003). For instance, referring to extensive research, Uslaner (2002) points out that social trust has no significant influence on political trust at the individual level. Moreover, according to this research, particularized trust even has a negative effect on trust in government (the same results were found in the study of Zmerli and Newton, 2011). It would confirm Fukuyama’s claim that private (or particularized) trust is a substitute for the lack of institutional trust.

To sum up, political trust and social trust are different in their foundations and functions, and there is no clear empirical evidence whether these two types of trust are directly connected. On the other hand, social trust and political trust relate to the same phenomenon – democratization. Both types of trust emerged due to the institutional and cultural shifts that took place along the modernization processes. In a more systemic way, social trust and political trust accomplish and sustain each other. These forms of trust are both positively associated with life satisfaction and happiness, education, income and civic engagement (Zmerli and Newton, 2011:77). Similarly, although emphasizing the different nature of political trust, Newton and Norris (2000) argue that this relationship is apparent at the aggregated societal level. Thus, it means, that at the contextual level, in the long run social and political trust are likely to adjust to each other. Newton (2001)

refers to Finland as an example: in some historical moment, this country suffered from low levels of political trust, but it was soon recovered with a strong help of social trust. At the same time Newton (2001: 210) hypothesizes, that a country with equally severe political distrust and low social trust is likely to experience a greater problems in building or recovering political trust.

So far, we have discussed a series of theoretical aspects about political participation, efficacy, social trust and its associate – political trust. The following section aims at integrating these variables in a coherent framework and at demonstrating the relationships between them.

2.5 Connecting social trust with political efficacy and political participation

For an answer to the question how political participation, political efficacy and social trust might be related, I mainly refer to two major literatures: social capital and political/civic culture. These approaches are not necessarily conflicting. In fact, studies of social capital developed as a theoretical branch of civic culture literature. However, there are a few conceptual aspects that allow distinguishing between these two approaches. The main differences are embedded in the projection of the relationship between an individual and a state. In this respect, social capital theories advocate for a prominent role of social cohesion, which somewhat stands against hierarchical institutional power. In contrast, the political/civic culture literature focuses on the complementarity between individual freedom/choices and institutional development/the quality of democracy. Keeping this difference in mind, I will discuss each approach separately below.

2.5.1 Social capital

The *social capital* literature most particularly addresses the reciprocal relations between social trust and collective actions (Coleman, 1988; Gambetta, 1988; Putnam, 1993; 2000; Norris, 2002b; Van Deth et al., 2002). Broadly speaking, this relationship constitutes the core of the social capital concept, which aims to explain how social interactions may strengthen democratic institutions, or “make democracy work”.

In his ground-breaking study *Making Democracy Work* Putnam defines social capital (the term was coined by Bourdieu¹⁴) as a possession which does not contain material assets, but connections among individuals: it is “features of social organization such as trust, norms, and

¹⁴ Bourdieu (1986: 241) defines three forms of capital: “Depending on the field in which it functions, and at the cost of the more or less expensive transformations which are the precondition for its efficacy in the field in question, capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility”.

networks that can improve the efficiency of the society by facilitating coordinated actions” (1993: 167). As it clearly flows from the definition, trust is an integral component of social capital.¹⁵ Trust works in concert with norms/obligations and social networks: “the causal arrows among civic involvement, reciprocity, honesty and social trust are as tangled as well-tossed spaghetti” (p. 137). This relationship is circular: the more an individual trusts, the more s/he tends to cooperate and is exposed by civic norms, and vice versa, civic engagement and shared norms lead to new trust relationships. It constitutes a so-called social spiral with social trust and political action at both ends. Hence, in Putnam’s view trust is one of the mechanisms that produces and maintains social capital.

In line with the concept, active membership in organizations and involvement in voluntary associations are considered to be crucially important to transform trust from an individual characteristic to a collective resource. Indeed, emphasis here is put on voluntary organizations (with an institutional setting), but not private circles like friends or family (Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008). Formal social networks are suggested to function as “schools of democracy” where “citizens learn to participate by participating” (Pateman, 1970: 105). The argument of Almond and Verba (1963) states that “Individuals can be expected to “generalize” from experiences outside political life to politics; if they have participated within non-political authority structures they will expect to do so in the political sphere also” (in Pateman, 1989: 72). Hence, when citizens participate in small-scale civic associations, they are taught habits of cooperation and thus are able to socialize into larger political involvement (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Newton, 1997; Fukuyama, 2001; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2010).

Social organizations provide resources necessary for collective actions (Almond and Verba, 1963; Paxton, 2002; Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008). The horizontal networks ensure that these resources, both material and cognitive/psychological, could be equally accessed by citizens. Subsequently, the resources and the shared norms (as social trust) empower people to solve more complicated problems in dealing with the institutional structures (Putnam, 1993). So here the connection between social trust and political efficacy enters. Putnam observes that in more trustful communities a sense of political efficacy of ordinary citizens is higher. He explains this phenomena referring to the egalitarian nature of the society. If the societies’ structure is horizontal and based on trust, people feel more powerful and capable of influencing political issues, because they would expect that other people would behave similarly to them. This idea

¹⁵ There is a disagreement on the definition of social trust and some authors claim that Putnam’s proposed conceptualization is too narrow, favouring only social networks. Halpern (2005: 9-19), for instance, systemizes the existing definitions of social capital into a theoretical triangle which includes social networks, norms (in a wider sense, reciprocity, trustworthiness and trust) and sanctions (which also might include institutions). Seen from this angle, trust “loses” its role as separate component of social capital and is conceived as an integral part of norms. Different dimensions of social capital, however, are intertwined (Hardin, 2002).

implies that political efficacy in the social capital concept indeed connects the ends of social spiral, that is, social trust and political action. In contrast, in vertical and distrustful societies people perceive themselves being exploited, submissive and dependent, therefore their sense of political efficacy is constrained. I will discuss this in more detail in the next chapter when I elaborate on the distrustful nature of post-communist societies.

2.5.2 Political/civic culture approach

In the *civic/political culture*¹⁶ literature social trust, political efficacy and participation are interlinked less explicitly. Here, social trust is defined as a premise of social cooperation which leads to political engagement, respect for human rights, citizenry duties, perceptions of the common good and common responsibility. As Almond and Verba (1989: 4) put it, civic culture is a culture “in which there is a substantial consensus on the legitimacy of political institutions <...>, a widespread tolerance of plurality of interests and belief reconcilability, and a widely distributed sense of political competence and mutual trust in the citizenry”. Lijphart (1989: 38) adds that general social and interpersonal relations are closely related to the political orientations, and the relationship is so close that “cooperativeness and social trust are called a component of the civic culture”.

The narrower concept of political culture does not include social trust explicitly. *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Sills, 1968: 218; quoted in Freeman, 1986: 327 – 328) defines political culture as “the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behaviour in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. Political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of the system and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experience”. Referring to this definition, social trust adheres to political culture as one of the values, as an individual and collective resource which endows individuals with the meaningful orientations in political life.

In their key study *The Civic Culture*, Almond and Verba (1963) are specifically interested in the relationship between generalized social trust in people and cooperativeness in politics. The

¹⁶ There is no clear distinction between the notions of political and civic culture. Almond and Verba (1989) suggest that civic culture is a wider and more idealistic concept (aka *civic virtue*) and political culture is an element (a prerequisite) of it, and it is more “practical” and “operationalizational” in political science. Political culture combines cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations towards political objects and aims at establishing links between the public and the government. Some types of political culture (e.g. a participatory political culture) are conducive for civic culture and some are not.

authors observe that deficiency of social trust in some countries inhibits political participation. They claim (1963: 494) that without social trust, “the society divides up into closed and relatively hostile camps” and “lack of ability to cooperate politically reflects a more general inability to enter political bargains, to collaborate and to aggregate interests”. So one of the concluding remarks of the study is that social trust contributes to the involvement of citizens in the political system to the extent it creates an atmosphere conducive to bargaining and consensus building. Contrarily, societies with low levels of social trust are prone to suffer from political cleavages. This idea was borrowed by Inglehart (1990: 44) whose research on advanced industrial countries demonstrated that stable democracy is primarily related to a political culture of civiness, which is also measured by social trust (and two other components: life satisfaction and societal change).

The ability of political cooperativeness depends not only on social trust, but also on subjective political competence: the perception of whether one can do something about unjust national law or local regulation. A person’s belief in his/her competence is described as a key political attitude which enables citizens to influence political decisions, or, at least provides with a psychological feeling that (different) voices are heard by the government (Almond and Verba, 1963: 257). In this sense it is suggested that social trust and political competence go hand in hand ensuring that citizens are “involved and active in politics, informed about politics and influential” (p. 474). Thus they can keep the political elite accountable and responsive.

To conclude, the *civic/political culture* approach suggests that social trust makes political participation worthwhile. Social trust is at the heart of all political processes because of its moral implications (Dunn, 1993). Political participation cannot be only rationally driven; it requires sociability and “willingness to give”. Without trust, as a moral stimulus, political cooperation (even possessing political competence) would not be possible. Thus, social trust is equally important for political engagement as is political efficacy.

2.5.3 Conclusion: the relationships between social trust, political efficacy, and participation

In this chapter I have discussed the theoretical aspects that are relevant to the purpose of my dissertation, that is to investigate whether there is a link between social trust and political participation and, if so, whether this link passes through a sense of political efficacy. These research questions call into debate why it is important to focus attention particularly on the mediation effects of internal and external political efficacy in the analysis of the relationship between social trust and political participation.

From the theoretical perspective, I seek to illuminate how attitudes, in this case – social trust, might transform into skills, or political efficacy, in particular. For this purpose, unlike other

authors, I decide to not include external settings as mediating variables (for instance, associations), as I am interested how attitudes and skills are related. In the theoretical framework I place social trust before political efficacy as I assert that culture stands before the skills you learn. The first substance is steadier and thus influences the latter which is less resistant to change. It resembles the “funnel effect” – social trust, as a cultural substance, narrows to certain practical skills, that, in turn, affect your choices of actions. This is the causal story of my dissertation: social trust is a cause, while political efficacy and participation is a result.

All in all, we might hypothetically consider several positive effects of social trust on participation (level 1) and of social trust on political efficacy as the underlying mechanism (mediating variable) between social trust and political participation (level 2). First, while placing trust in other individuals and receiving this trust reciprocally, we feel a moral duty to be involved in common affairs (Putnam, 1993; Seligman, 1997). I have argued that social trust leads individuals to participate in the pursuit of the commons, as trust provides us with assurance that political action will be worthwhile, appreciated, and at least potentially effective. In return, successful cooperation based on trust gives people satisfaction in what they do (Putnam 1993; Fishkin, 1995: 148). Political action endows us with a sense of belonging to a collective identity, the feeling of being a part of a larger community and pride for struggling for good and right values (Klandermans, 2003). This is presumed to be the direct effect of social trust on political participation.

Second, while trusting, people are more inclined to socialize with each other, thus they more likely acquire political knowledge and information in general about the subjects to be acted on and the methods to employ such actions (Almond and Verba, 1963; Milner, 2002). Based on political knowledge, citizens yield initiatives more easily (Stolle, 2002). Thus, these insights reveal the mediation effect by internal political efficacy between social trust and political participation.

Third, trust empowers us politically as we believe that institutions we deal with are fair and that people are going to behave by the rules. Moreover, when we trust people, we expect them to act in a similar manner and it gives us a sense of control (predictability). Confidence in the motives of others encourages and facilitates participation (Kwak, Shah, and Holbert, 2004). If we are sure that the rules are not going to be violated, we feel more certain about involvement in political life. In this way, we expect a second indirect effect: socially trusting people develop a feeling of external political efficacy, which in turn fosters participation.

However, these patterns between social trust, political efficacy and participation highlighted in the literature are mostly applicable to party politics activities, while movement participation in regard to social trust is a “forgotten side” (Valencia, Cohen, and Hermisilla, 2010). The notable exceptions in the social movement literature, for instance, Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), Klandermans (1984; 1997), Benson and Rochon (2004), come through with a few hints on how

protest politics and social trust could be related. These authors acknowledge that the specificity of a protest action is first of all embedded in social interactions. People do not make decisions (to protest) in a vacuum. Even to a greater extent than party participation, movement participation relies on social connectedness: only people decide on whether to protest and which strategies to employ, whereas the setting of the elections is determined by institutions. Social trust is particularly important for facilitating mobilization (for persuasion to participate), as protest politics is usually more risky. As Benson and Rochon (2004) notice, the costs of taking part in a demonstration may be relatively small, or may entail arrest and prosecution, depending on the democraticness of the regime and the atmosphere of the protest/demonstration (for instance, whether some of the protesters become violent, how the police reacts, etc). Social trust reduces risks of participation. It leads to optimistic estimates about the likelihood of success, because it allows to form expectations about the actions of others (Dasgupta, 1988; Gambetta, 1988). People engage in collective actions because they trust others will do so as well. And the odds of the success of a protest action are directly related to how many people participate (Klandermans, 1984).

Another important dimension is that trust induces empathy for people who are protesting. Movement politics is chosen by grieved people who are about to suffer (or suffering) from the decisions of the government. But in practice not only the (directly) affected join the protests, but also citizens who sympathize with the protesters and share their grievances. In this sense trust is closely related to a shared politicized collective identity, which is one of the most decisive psychological resources of movement politics (Simon and Klandermans, 2001).

To sum up, social trust functions as a mobilizing force of movement participation. As Coleman (1990: 304) states, “a group whose members manifest trustworthiness and place extensive trust in one another will be able to accomplish much more than a comparable group lacking that trustworthiness and trust”. Thus, I assume that social trust gives one initiative to take part in a protest action. Implicitly the idea also suggests that political efficacy is an explaining mechanism between social trust and protesting.

The alternative approach to the connection between trust and participation posits that social trust may work as “double-edged sword”, meaning that trusting people can remain passive, because they believe that others can be trusted to participate (and “do the job”) for them (Pattie, Seyd, and Whiteley, 2003: 458). The scholarly literature also distinguishes between different associations of social trust and the modes of political participation, for instance, empirically supporting the negative links between social trust and participation in political parties/campaigns (Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009). However, drawing from the social capital literature, the initial assumption is that the relationship between

social trust and political participation, despite their modes, follows the same logic as with civic participation. Yet, I will get back to this question later, when discussing the empirical results.

Informed by the literature on the presumable relations between the modes of participation, efficacy and trust in democratic societies, I assume that the links between the variables work as displayed in Figure 2.1.

First, Figure 2.1 shows that I expect a direct positive effect of social trust on participation in both party and movement politics. Second, external and internal efficacy mediates between social trust and both types of political participation, meaning that more trusting people are more efficacious and thus tend to engage in politics more often. However, I acknowledge that the mediating effect of external efficacy between social trust and protest participation could be two-sided: social trust might enhance external efficacy and thus reduce protest participation, or, alternatively, social trust leads to external efficacy and thus increases the probability to participate in protest actions.

Finally, it should be noted that the relationships depicted in Figure 2.1 entail individual-level effects. In addition, a positive link between social trust at the aggregate level and participation at the individual level would be expected to apply as well, that is to say, a citizen in a more socially trusting country displays higher levels of political activity than a citizen in a country with low levels of social trust. I will further elaborate on this in chapter 5.

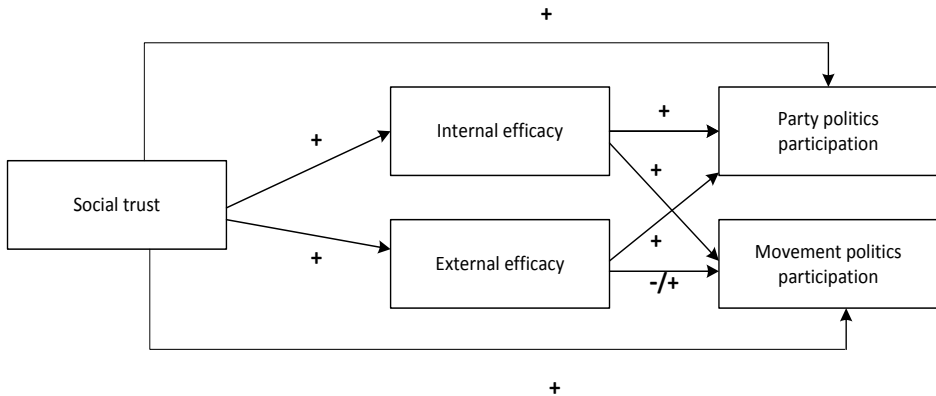


Figure 2.1 The single tale effect of trust on political efficacy and political participation. The figure displays only the presumable robust links that are addressed in the monograph

Having conceptualized the key variables in this dissertation in this chapter, and having explained how social trust and political efficacy might affect political participation, I will now pursue to

empirically probe the relationships as depicted in Figure 2.1. While the assumptions are promising, they certainly need further empirical testing, especially in the post-communist context. Do these mechanisms work out differently in post-communist societies and are there some deviations in this regard from the mature democracies? So far, none of these relations were strongly confirmed by empirical research in former communist countries. This leads to the following research questions I will address in the empirical part of this dissertation (chapters 4, 5 and 6), namely, to what extent social trust affects the modes of participation, and to what extent the same patterns occur in mature and post-communist democracies? But before turning to these empirical chapters, let me first in chapter 3 address the question why the levels of social trust are actually lower in post-communist democracies. More specifically, what is the nature of social trust in post-communist societies and how is it different from more mature democracies?

3 |

Trust in post-communist democracies¹⁷

¹⁷ Slightly different versions of this chapter have been published in *Sociopedia.isa* (Gaidytė, 2013) and *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* (Gaidytė, 2012).

3.1 Introduction

The collapse of communism in 1989/1990 resulted in the emergence of a new political, economic and social order. It had a profound impact on cultural and psychological orientations, political values, as well as on the relationships between individuals. In various empirical-based studies it is demonstrated that the shock of the exit from the communism negatively affected citizens' well-being and health, and increased levels of crime, economic inequality, and unemployment. These developments prompted a general sense of insecurity and triggered distrust in people and institutions. These processes were tightly related to the shattered peoples' behavioural patterns, cultural templates and value systems. Therefore, many scholars attribute the problem of distrust to a wider context of "cultural trauma" (Sztompka, 2002), "demoralization" (Sapsford and Abbot, 2006), or "anomie" (Haerpfer, Wallace, and Abbott, 2013).

As we already observed in the previous chapter, trust stands for a democratic political culture and vibrant, participatory civil society. These dimensions of the quality of political life are of vital importance in young and less experienced post-communist democracies. The literature notices that the hardship of democratic transition and consolidation was and still is tightly related to the weakness of post-communist civil society, which was destructed (or in some cases – even absent) during the authoritarian and totalitarian rule (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Paldam and Svendsen, 2000; Letki and Evans, 2005; Howard, 2003). Therefore, following these authors, I raise the question: does social trust function in post-communist societies in the same manner as in mature plural democracies or are there some cultural/psychological obstacles that restrain citizens from civic and political engagement (Letki and Evans, 2005; Lasinska, 2013; Imbrasaitė, 2004).

Civil society has been acclaimed for its role in abolishing communism (Letki and Evans, 2005; Misztal, 1996). This begs the question what happened to the spontaneous "rebirth" of post-communist civil society which managed to overthrow the communist regime? Why people who achieved their common goal – democracy – became more distant, apathetic and absent from civic and political participation? These questions undoubtedly refer to the changes within societies and to the foundations of people's relations in general.

Although the literature admits that the outcomes of democratization of the post-communist countries vary, some socio-cultural tendencies are common for the whole region. As Bjørnskov (2004: 1) observes, "Post-communist societies are less trusting than others". And they have a good reason for that. Along the total political usurpation, the communist regime implemented different policies of civic subjugation: acted upon the massive collectivization and economic de-privatization, which resulted in a lack of business orientated initiatives, destruction of spontaneous

civil society, constant surveillance of people, depriving them from the personal freedom and a sense of privacy. As a result, communism significantly ruined social trust.

This argument is also empirically proved. Numerous studies show that former communist countries tend to be characterized by low levels of trust (Sztompka, 1999; Ekiert and Kubik, 1999; Howard, 2003; Bădescu and Uslaner, 2003; Kornai, Rothstein and Rose-Ackerman, 2004; Žiliukaitė et al., 2006; Tufiş, 2008; Lewandowski and Znoj, 2009; Vasilache, 2010; Mierina, 2011; Lasinska, 2013). The World Value Survey data (2005 – 2007), for instance, indicate that in most post-communist societies only about one fifth of the respondents (between 18 to 24 percent) agreed with the statement that most people could be trusted. These levels are depressingly low, if we compare them with some of the Western countries. For instance, in the Netherlands generalized social trust is indicated at the level of 56 percent. More importantly, as Mierina (2011: 138) observes, the dynamics of the levels of social trust are very inert and do not reflect the rapid changes of political transformation. Even more shocking is the fact that in several countries, like Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, the level of social trust has decreased over time, comparing with the aftermath of Communism. Furthermore, many studies proved that the low levels of social trust are matched with political distrust, cynicism, alienation, intolerance, inefficacy, apathy, fatalism, longing for authoritarian rule, the intensity of political cleavages, skepticism and political passivity (see, for instance, Howard, 2002; Brown and Whitefield, 2005; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2013).

Some authors claim that distrust is a symptomatic feature of transformation itself (Sztompka, 1999). Some academics argue that the transformational period was the most turbulent in terms of values shift: so-called homo-sovieticus cultural orientations were destroyed and this vacuum of values was filled with the old traditional values (for instance, religiosity), on the one hand, and western liberal values on the other hand (Galasinska and Galasinski, 2010). The revival of traditional values could explain the raise of extreme right-wing attitudes such as nationalism, chauvinism, homophobia, xenophobia, and anti-semitism (for instance, Minkenberg, 2015).

Another group of authors are inclined to think that the lack of trust originated from the previous oppression of the communist regime (Rose, 1994; Mishler and Rose, 1997; Lovell, 2001; Markova, 2004; Traps, 2009; Vasilache, 2010). The literature argues that distrust was instilled through the personal experiences and conveyed to the temporary behavioural patterns as a part of the communist socialization. Some scholars go even further, emphasizing the absent conditions of generalized trust in the pre-communist years and the lack of modernization afterwards (Kochanowicz, 2004).

However, it is difficult to differentiate between these potential legacy effects, as these are most probably not mutually exclusive: the life under communism may very well have attenuated

levels of trust and the collapse of communism may have furthered this (Epperly, 2012). Therefore it is expedient to consider the nature of trust and transformation of it, while taking into account the historical as well as contemporary context of post-communism.

The central question I am to answer is: what is the nature of social trust in post-communist societies and how is it different from more mature democracies? For this aim, in this chapter I firstly describe the general conditions of trust in pre-communist societies. Second, I will elaborate on the development of trust under the communist regime. I will try to explain in what ways trust was eroded at a wider societal level causing the emergence of particularized-trust societies. Thirdly, I will disentangle the conditions of trust during the exit of communism and transition to democracy. Finally, I will focus on the contemporary environment of trust, looking at the post-communist social capital formation processes, civil society and trust in political institutions.

3.2 The transformation of trust in three historical phases

3.2.1 The pre-communist phase

Historically, all post-communist nations were under the rule of despotic (usually, non-titular) governments, which induced political distrust in alien rule and instilled the conditions for particularized (rather than generalized) trust between individuals to emerge, basically due to a hierarchical model of the society where powerful elites exploited the uneducated peasants and slaves (North, 1981).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, when Western societies experienced liberation movements against absolute monarchies and nation states were created, most Central and Eastern European countries underwent quite different processes. For example, as early as 1721, large parts of the territories of Estonia and Latvia were incorporated into the Russian Empire. Poland's and Lithuanian's territories lost their independence after three partitions, the last taking place in 1795. The territories of the modern Czech and Slovak Republics, as well as Slovenia, Croatia and Romania belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but, due to the social unrests and uprisings, the civic and political rights of these nations were particularly restricted, while the serfs were emancipated quite late. Bulgaria's territories were under the Ottoman rule for nearly five hundred years and it gained its full independence only in the beginning of 20th century. Compared to that, the geopolitical situation of Hungary was ambiguous: the Hungarians experienced the era of European empires from both dominant and subservient positions over this period of time (Rossbach, 2008).

Although after World War I, the newly established nation states began to develop their (pseudo)democratic systems (with reservations – general and equal elections, electoral competition, and peaceful change of governing parties), this process did not reach the consolidation phase and

did not become the “only game in town”. Societies remained mostly traditional; most people continued to live in rural areas, on semi-subsistence farms. The lives of common people in such agricultural economies were based on survival: in order to survive, the villagers would share a common responsibility to help each other in terms of food, healthcare, even education (self-organized schools with often voluntary teachers). As Hosking (2004) notices, such mutual aid was driven not only by altruism, but more by self-interest in the absence of institutionally provided care. As a consequence, the number of social contacts in such traditional agrarian societies was limited; trust was bounded only within the circle of people with whom one was familiar, while foreigners and strangers (those you couldn’t keep a close watch on) were distrusted (Kochanowicz, 2004).

Moreover, common people did not perceive political trust, or trust in the government as a relevant issue, since the government was far from individuals. As Kochanowicz (2004: 69-70) notices, the pre-modern states mostly relied on coercion, but not on confidence. One may disagree with me on this point and assert that during the period of the national independence movements in Eastern and Central Europe that took place in the beginning of the 20th century and after World War I, societies became more active and more engaged with politics and it made them more politically trustful. However, this is true only for a narrow circle of educated elites, while common people were still detached from politics. Thus, historically, because of the lack of institutional democratization and a critical public sphere, trust has been diminished (di Palma, 1991: 50).

To make a comparison, in Western societies, particularized (or thick, bonding) trust was gradually transformed into more generalized (thin, bridging) trust along with the process of modernization and institutional democratization. As will be explained in more detail below, this transformation of trust has never really taken place during the communist regime.

3.2.2 Trust during the Communist rule

This section explains how the communist rule shaped the development of trust. The discussion is structured around three indicative features of the communist period: 1) “liquidation” of civil society; 2) political and economic control which has led to the legitimization of the regime from the top; 3) the formation of the so-called niche society which functioned on the basis of particularized (personal) trust.

To begin with, the independent civil society was destroyed along the implementation of the communist regime. Almost all pre-communist organizations were abolished or transformed into ideological ones. For instance, the Church was constricted, especially in Soviet republics, and believers were prosecuted; political parties, unions, charities were dissolved or stripped of their

independence; private enterprises were closed¹⁸. Moreover, the old elite was also prosecuted, a lot of them got imprisoned, killed or were forced to emigrate. In this way the communist party could establish its monolithic authority which was sustained by a series of declarative “civic” institutions, like trade unions, artists’ or writers’ guilds, student organizations – all of them were state owned and served as a mechanism of indoctrination. As Geremek (1992), a famous Polish historian and politician, observed, suppressing the civic space was of vital importance to ensure the endurance of the communist rule. The liquidation of the autonomous civil society basically meant that there was no ground for generalized social trust to emerge in the newly constructed Soviet society. As Völker and Flap (2001: 424) notice, “communism taught people not to trust relative strangers (...) since all state-sponsored associations have collapsed and (...) except for the church, hardly any voluntary organizations exist in the new situation”.

The communist system supplanted voluntary activity by forcing citizens to join and participate in mandatory, state-controlled organizations (Howard, 2002: 160). Many organizations, like pioneer movements, were aimed to recruit the youth to the Communist party and participation in it often confronted with the values of resistance of the citizens. At the same time it was too risky not to engage into the state-controlled organizations, because it also provided various public goods to their members and their families (Kubik, 2000; Ekiert and Foa, 2011; Inglot, 2008). Mihajlov calls such a system the actual unfreedom, when by participating in communist mobilization the individuals were forced to actively support their slavery (1986: 4 – cited in di Palma, 1991: 57). Since the voluntary participation was of a declarative nature, eventually it made people feel apathetic about collective aspirations.

The absence of autonomous civil society restrained any independent political discourse. The latter fell under control of the state institutions. Only official opinion could circulate through the media, whereas and independent expression of opinion was dangerous. Thus the regime systematically politicized peoples’ everyday life. As Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2013) notice, citizens were not simply expected to accept the rule of the communists, but rather to embrace and embody the precepts of socialism. The regime tried to make sure that the values of *homo sovieticus* would be adopted during socialization process, including kindergartens and schools, work places, party meetings and so on. The system is very well described in the book *Iron Curtain* of Applebaum (2012), using the example of East Germany. A desire to shape people’s attitudes (instead of only being interested in ruling over them) is a very symptomatic feature of the communist regime, which at a large extent makes this regime profoundly different from other authoritarian rules.

¹⁸ The pace of the restrictions or liquidation of civil society differed across the communist bloc. For instance, to be sure, Poland and Hungary kept the most autonomy in the realm of civil society (Ekiert and Foa, 2011; Ekiert, Kubik, and Wenzel, 2013).

The Communist party claimed to truth as an ideologically superior power. Thereby, the regime presented itself as totally trustworthy, so it was considered an act of disloyalty or even a crime to overtly doubt the trustworthiness of the political system, the Communist party and state institutions (Markova, 2004: 8). The Communist party required trust from citizens placing this category in opposition to fear: if an individual did not trust the system, he/she became an enemy of the regime. Perceived fairness, coercion and repression were aimed to substitute the lack of real political trust in states' authority. Any revolts or protest actions against the regime were brutally suppressed – as it was in the cases of the Hungarian uprising of 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968.

Methodologically, the institutional system was also organized on the imitation of “trust”: no checks and balances mechanisms, no political competition, no fair and free elections, no institutional “safeguards”. In this sense, political trust had no conditions to evolve because it did not depend on evaluations or governments' responsiveness. In addition, there was no real elite circulation: the nomenklatura took control over all appointments. This meant that party apparatchiks would appoint themselves or their fellows (Traps, 2009: 65).

The prescribed and only nominal political trust (without any legal realm for suspicion) concurrently generated very high expectations from the state. Substantially, there was low real trust in the one-party communist system among citizens, but there was a high level of expectations in regard to what the state should offer or provide (Kochanowicz, 2004: 72).

As Rose (1994: 18) notices, citizens in general were not allowed to involve in the assessment of political structures, since the Communist party insisted that it alone knew best how society ought to be ruled and there was no need for individuals to expressing their views through elections or through any civic engagement that would be organized independently from the state. Only fictional forms of participation existed – such as voting in elections – designed to foster the appearance of democratic legitimacy (Geremek, 1992). But in reality, popular participation in politics became largely involuntary and completely formulaic (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2012). Using this facade, the institutionalized lie was instilled: people were driven to act as the system expected (di Palma, 1991: 66).

The state determined the narrow range of life choices – in work, consumption, amenities – to which people were entitled (di Palma, 1991: 61). Due to the planned state economy and huge resources used for the military policy (the industrial-military sector accounted for 60 percent of the GDP), people faced scarcity of all necessities. These conditions created a series of negative effects on public and private lives. First, struggling for goods deprived people from spare time. In line with Inglehart's argumentation, the scarcity and ongoing efforts to ensure the basic needs left little room for any independent civic action (Geremek, 1992: 4).

Second, the economic shortages created the perfect conditions for corruption. Bribing became the most effective way to obtain food, health care, housing, a car, a phone-line, recreation, education and other goods. Usually bribing was not committed using cash money (there was not much you could buy for money in the deficient state market), but by exchanging goods or services. For instance, someone who belonged to state “apparatchiki” (so-called bureaucrat apparatus) at the state institution (ministry) would collect vouchers for pursuing furniture and s/he could exchange these vouchers for a possibility to buy a car or get a phone line installed at home. For clarity, these goods were of deficit in the Soviet system, and one should stand in line and wait for years to obtain them. But if you had the means to bribe or you could rely on some influential relations, this line could be “reduced”.

Given an outspread and commonly acknowledged system of corruption, we can identify an ambiguity of a proclaimed equality of the communist society. In theory, the minimal economic and social security benefits were available to all people. But in reality, the people were not equal in terms of the access to these elementary requirements, and thus, paraphrasing Orwell’s famous quote, “all people were equal, but some of them were more equal than others”.

Despite the formally required political trust, the communist state insisted that citizens be suspicious in terms of social trust. An atmosphere of fear of politically disloyal citizens was created. The state aimed at maintaining permanent distrust in social relations and at shattering wider networks of trust within society, since these networks might have initiated opposition to the communist regime. There was no real trust in vertical relations (trust in employees, higher party members, professors at universities, etc.), but at the same time, there was dependence on them based on fear. Obviously, communist social engineering was psychologically grounded. Referring to historical colonial uprisings and revolutions, the regime realized that successful revolutions were those which were capable of mobilizing not only the masses (at the horizontal level), but also the middle classes and elites (at the vertical level). Therefore, the communist regime did everything it could to destroy real trust at the vertical level, thereby preventing vertical social partnerships, which might function as an opposition to the formal regime. Based on fear and dependence, these vertical social ties instead functioned as the backbone of the regime and guaranteed its stability (Sztompka, 1999: 152–153).

The strict hierarchy and the actual inequality made citizens to become very suspicious about others in terms of their career achievements, purchased deficit goods, holidays or trips to foreign countries. It usually meant that a person who enjoyed such benefits (that were usually not accessible to common people), complied with the system – relayed on influential acquaintances, or, even more likely, was cooperating with (or infiltrated in) the security police. The security network was

widespread in the communist societies and aimed to ensure that private lives of citizens were neatly controlled.

The spying mechanisms were most actively applied before 1953, but to some extent (depending on the situation in the countries and the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) the persecution lasted also after the death of Stalin until the collapse of the regime (and in some post-soviet countries – till nowadays). The state systematically invaded privacy, intimacy and relations of trust (Outhwaite and Ray, 2004: 158). The aim to destruct the natural social ties at that time could be exemplified by some “heroic” stories, for instance, a story of Pavlik Morozov, a 14-year-old-boy, who was made a hero because of denouncing his anti-communist parents to authorities, who were subsequently executed by NKVD (Holmes, 1997: 267-8, referred in Outhwaite and Ray, 2004: 158). Similar propaganda stories were used in other Soviet republics and satellite countries. The aim of such propaganda was to dismantle personal relations, make society more atomized and people more conformists, able to serve the needs of the Party and be loyal to the Communist ideology.

There was a variety of favourable conditions to implement the permanent surveillance and control citizens. As it was already noted, citizens belonged to the same state-owned networks, let it be work places, out-door activities, universities, schools, etc. The workers were dependent on their superiors who would prepare the reports on them to the secret services. Even the most intimate spheres of people’s lives were controlled, including marriage, raising children, lifestyle, celebrations and others. Any deviation from the Soviet style of living was dangerous, especially efforts to imitate Western lifestyle and fashion, such as listening to rock music, wearing jeans or growing long hair for men (hippie culture was treated as anti-soviet, thus dangerous to the regime). Any of such actions could have been reported to the security police which was infiltrated in the inner social circles, including friends, colleagues, and family members. Even trusting family members could result in a wide specter of betrayal (Vasilache, 2010). As Hosking (2004, 56-60) notices, the Soviet housing system created a perfect environment for surveillance. Due to the scarcity and demand of the skilled individuals in the bigger cities, the communal apartments (so-called *komunalki*), where a few families would share one flat, became very popular. The communal apartment was linked to an authority system which supervised the behaviour of its members. Such closed proximity in which people lived and thin walls of the rooms ensured that all family events would be known by everyone and all conversations might well be overheard (especially in a common kitchen which was a general place for social meetings). Hosking writes that normally one or more members of such apartment would be reporting regularly to the security police in order to gain some extra free space or other forms of privilege. Such a situation caused great distress to people, because there was no privacy. People were forced to live together in the squeezed places

despite their different social backgrounds and would face a variety of demoralizing practices as alcoholism, cheating, stealing from neighbours, lack of hygiene and others.¹⁹ Subsequently, paranoid mental disorders became very common in the Soviet Union. Although from the late 1950s and onwards the number of communal apartments was reduced and people could settle in private flats, fear and distrust in the closest environment had left a trace in peoples' consciousness.

At this point, the question arises how people managed to survive given these hostile political conditions. Here we come to the third distinguishable feature of the communist society: niche-society. There was no generalized trust at a wider societal level, so people basically relied on personal relations and tried to stay within closed circles of trustees. Kochanowicz (2004) thoroughly describes the "preservation" of traditional particularized trust in communist societies, arguing that the Western-conceived modernization of trust actually has never taken place under the communism.

According to Kochanowicz (2004), communist societies retained strong elements of the traditional social organization and cultural legacies of the rural society. Roughly speaking, communist modernization just transferred peasant traditions to the cities. Even a large part of urban workers commuted from villages, hence the traditional family structure still prevailed. Moreover, the pre-war urban culture (the axis of individualism-based modernization) was also destroyed by the regime (Kochanowicz, 2004: 74). The peasant cultural-type cities meant that generalized social trust was not evolving, as it was supposed to evolve in industrial individualist societies where, due to many social contacts, partial morality (particularized trust) was replaced with more generalized morality (generalized trust). With this peasant culture, the real trust-based contacts remained limited while other social contacts with less familiar people and strangers included more distrust, as was the case in traditional societies. Trust remained of personalistic or communal nature. Due to the harsh economic and political conditions people would invest and be embedded only within small family circles and did not pass beyond these circles. Some authors note that the traditional organization of the family was tightly related to very egoistic attitudes towards those outside the family circle; this behaviour, lacking the perception of the common good, is described as "amoral familism"²⁰ (Tarkowska and Tarkowski, 1991). As Kochanowicz (2004: 75) puts it,

¹⁹ The scenes of such life in the communal apartments were picturesquely portrayed in the movie "East-West" (French: Est – Ouest), 1999, which tells the story about the Russian re-émigré and his French wife who, after believing in honesty of Stalin's invitation "to return to the Motherland", arrived from abroad and settled down in Odessa (Ukrainian part of the Soviet Union) in 1946.

²⁰ The term was coined by Edward C. Banfield and used in the book *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1958). Focusing on mafia families in Southern Italy, the author notices that due to the lack of common social norms the family needs are put over the interests of the citizenry, and this percept is called "amoral familism".

The economics of shortage and the lack of a notion of the common good during Communism legitimised a particular understanding of honesty which enabled shirking, cheating, and petty stealing from the workplace as long as it led to supplying the family with things necessarily for survival and functioning in society.

The withdrawal into the close circle of family and friends meant a conscious defensive reaction against the state's usurpation. Because of the high politicization of the public sphere, many people could express themselves openly only within closed circles of trusted friends and family (Howard, 2002: 162). It was the only safe mean to preserve customs, own language, cultural habits and personality in general, which was impossible in public and institutional life (Wojcicki, 1981: 102-103). Families were functioning as certain secret shelters or "niches" that transformed society into a so-called "niche society" – a society of small groups distanced from the state (Wetiz, 1997: 388; quoted in O'Kane, 2004: 195).

Moreover, as I already mentioned, the economy of shortages and political unfairness also demanded to rely on personal trust and mutual assistance networks for the exchange of basic goods (Letki and Evans, 2005). Most deals were done only with the help of friends, relatives or colleagues. The ethos of informal exchange in political and economic realms, or, *blat*, became a central feature of the hidden scene of the regime (Ledeneva, 1998). Personal trust basically replaced institutional distrust; dependence on the spoken word became more important than reliance on (uncertain) institutions. Simultaneously, the out-group trust was very low (Pehlivanova, 2009). The hostile attitudes towards outside groups enabled the ethos of double-morality which helped individuals to handle internal conflicts by applying different moral standards for people who were inside or outside their group. Given these circumstances, stealing, lying, and manipulating for family needs was treated moral. This double-morality ethos is best described by a popular saying in the Soviet Union: "Everyone who does not steal, is stealing from his own family" (Zsolnai and Gasparski, 2002).

3.2.3 Anti-communist revolutions: the role of social trust

If hypocrisy and distrust was prevalent at the societal and political level, one would ask how the anti-communist revolution could occur in so neatly controlled societies. How people managed to cooperate with each other to overthrow the regime from below? Here we should turn back to the discussion about civil society and stress two essential points: 1) a parallel anti-political civil society emerged in the last decade of the Communist regime in almost all communist countries; 2) this civil society was based not on formal relations, but merely on personal relations and particularized trust.

Formally, there was no separation between the state and society under the communist regime. But informally a parallel civil society was being formed on the basis of "underground" and

“unofficial” networks of social relations (Rose, 1994: 22). There were a few mobilizing channels of such networks. Most of them were embedded within the official organizations: cultural, academic circles, unions, underground church movements, arts’ and writers’ guilds, various ethnographic, green-movement knots, folklore, marching groups, bands etc. Although formally these organizations were subordinated to the regime, some of them were duplicitous and provided space for activities sheltered from direct political interference. Hence, the inner informal circles within the organizations could arise where opinions would be more openly expressed.

Another important mobilization channel were various subcultures, not bounded by any legal networks – hippies, punks and other youth movements who shared the same taste in music (usually, rock music which was conceived as a symbol of Western freedom), literature, movies, clothing, lifestyle. All these small circles were much closed: you could only get into such circles based on personal trust and the recommendations of the trusters (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė, 2011). The development of such secret networking was a long process. First, individuals would look for someone similar to them, non-conformists. Further, different methods were elaborated to attract the dissidents – using a hidden (*Ezop*) language, secret coding, social testing. For instance, telling anti-soviet jokes and anecdotes (in a subtle way) could have helped to identify who are the “right” persons in the company²¹. The secret communication maintained in the small groups that were hidden from the official eyes further strengthened the formation of niche society.

For more open conversations people would gather to private places where they would involve into “kitchen politics” (this space actually became more private after Stalin’s death). It was unofficial free space where people could develop counter-totalitarian ideas. Geremek (1992) argues that face-to-face primary groups became a substitute for civil society. In the academic discourse this parallel civil society is defined as being anti-political, or functioning in opposition to the state, emphasizing peoples’ political disaffection. Civil society was perceived as an alternative to the totalitarian system. Outhwaite and Ray (2004) claim that these networks based on personal relations spurred the independence movements and were responsible for the collapse of Communism in the whole region.

Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė (2011) elaborate on this argument in their edited study *The Non-Soviet in the Soviet World: The Origins of the Contentious Politics under Non-Liberal Regime* (in Lithuanian: *Sąjūdžio ištakų beieškant: nepaklusniųjų tinklaveikos galia*). The book draws on the independence movement of *Sąjūdis* which emerged in 1988 in Lithuania. The authors claim that civil society back then was not that weak and passive as it is common to believe. In contrary, the

²¹ Here is an example of such an anti-soviet anecdote: “Why don’t we have any meat in the stores? It’s because we are marching towards Communism with such speed, that no cattle can catch up with us” (Interview with the writer Zaborskaitė, cited in Ivanauskas, 2011:128).

niche-society managed to become a self-organized one to defend itself against totalitarian regime. Face-to-face personal relations (as a response to a collective threat) helped to build a shared identity and played a decisive role for protest actions to occur. The study concludes, that based on personal trust, the informal underground circles were capable of mobilizing dissidents from below to a more centralized network which later transformed into the widespread revolutionary movement.

To sum up, the communist regime generated very peculiar specifics in regard to trust. Communism contributed to *particularized* trust, instead of *generalized*. Rephrasing Fukuyama (1995), the trust radius was limited only to the family or friends circles and did not spill over to the generalized level. We might say that trust turned out to be pragmatic and selfish in the sense that it was related to some expectations for the self; this trust also involved a higher perception of risk of social action, as it was connected with fear and low trustworthiness of not-familiar people. In contrast, in democratic systems, social trust originates from the spill-over of real trust in family circles and is consequently related more to the perceived notion and benefits of the common good, which is at the core of social capital. This also holds for political engagement. Although the networks of the dissidents managed to work in clandestine and eventually mobilized for the resistance against unjust power, the collective actions at that time were driven not by generalized, but by particularized social trust.

In the following section I raise questions concerning the development of trust after the collapse of communism. What happened with trust during the phase of transition to democracy? Did the new democratic rules induce a sense of social trust? What communist era legacies on trust we can identify in the contemporary post-communist societies?

3.2.4 Trust during transition to democracy

As I already discussed in chapter 1, the transition period from communism to democracy is usually conceptualized from the institutional perspective, focusing on the implementation of political and economic reforms. Therefore, one may argue that the symptoms of trust transformation I describe below are only applied for the early stages of democratization.²² However, based on empirical data, I am inclined to think that the trauma of distrust is a long lasting phenomenon and that communist experiences, as well as the lessons from the transition, very well contributed to the nature of trust in contemporary societies.

²²In this section my focus is on trust during political and economic transition which conditionally took place between 1989–1998/2001 when the post-communist countries were invited to join the European Union and democratic regime was believed to be institutionalized (Norkus, 2008).

To begin with, the destruction of the communist regime manifested very high expectations and idealistic hopes related to democracy. There was, as Geremek (1992) observes, the fascinating time when the world in peoples' eyes was changing rapidly and dramatically. This initial phase, marked by patience towards the new national elite and (radical) political and economic reforms, was titled as a period of "extraordinary politics" (Balcerowicz, 1995). However, the "shock therapy" did not bring a better life, as it was assumed. For most people it resulted in economic hardship and increased insecurity. Therefore, despite the short period of the so-called partial solidarity immediately preceding and following the proclaimed political independence and free elections in post-communist societies, the antinomy of trust and fear remained and was even sharpened due to traumatic transformation processes.

During transition the relationship of trust anticipated much too high costs because of the lack of legal mechanisms that could compensate associated risks. Because of unstable institutional, economic, and social conditions trust among society members became much more risky (Sztompka, 1992). On the one hand, you could not rely on the personal-based agreements as it was common under the communist rule. On the other hand, the legal mechanisms were also not reliable. The courts were not functioning properly; political institutions were not perceived as trustworthy: they seemed to be nominal and subordinated to certain clans and cliques. So basically, people were forced to buffer against their high-risk and low-trust environment (Lehmbruch, 2012).

The explanation for that is that communist political capital and politics-based social relations were actually transformed into economic capital during the early years of transition; this was made possible by the unfair mechanisms of privatisation, which benefited the old nomenklatura (Howard, 2003). As a result, some of the old Communist party members became businessmen or managers of state-owned companies, some of them remained in politics, and these communist legacy-based relationships created the background for the establishment of influential oligarchic clans in most of post-communist societies. Alongside the decadent reputation of political, economic and social structures, these new informal political and economic clans also decreased the reputation of the political system and induced distrust (Kochanowicz, 2004: 79).

Moreover, distrust and social antagonism escalated due to the increased inequality. The transition abruptly dismantled the existing political and economic system, which basically meant the loss of jobs and savings for a lot of people. Meanwhile, the members of the old elite, which turned into the new rich businessmen, were showing off the expensive lifestyles. Lots of them earned by providing goods or services in the market, however, it was commonly believed that the rich men had taken advantages from speculations, exploiting and deceiving. In result, there was a huge gap between rich and poor, dividing society into so-called winners and losers of transition: winners could enjoy the benefits from the newly discovered western markets, while losers were

forced to struggle for a work place (unemployment rate increased dramatically) and money (having a job did not yet insured a steady income).

Because of the deficit of the legal regulation, a vast amount of crimes was actually committed during the first years of transition, among them – con-related frauds (for instance, persuading people to sell their land and real estate for a cheap price, or make them investing in the fraud concerns), and racketeering. Moreover, to have one's own business became a very risky choice, because of the pressure of criminals. The anti-legalist culture, undoubtedly, contributed to a huge damage of trust: most people felt that their social trust was abused.

A sense of distrust was also reinforced along the aspect that society inherited a very paternalistic view of the state. The state was perceived as being responsible for all spheres of life, since, during the post-communist transformation, citizens were hardly used to taking responsibility for their own actions in personal as well as in social, economic, and political realms. For all failures, the state was to be blamed. But the free market did not guarantee any basic social needs anymore. It resulted in a huge moral panic and fear. As Tufiş (2008: 118) observes, “The state's total involvement in all the sectors of society during the communist regime resulted in the dramatic reduction of risks associated with daily life. Under the new regime, democratic rules have required the withdrawal of the state from the society, letting the individual to confront these risks alone”. The communist experience and post-communist traumas naturally placed the state and the people in opposition.

Overall, most people felt they were let down by the new system. Compared to their idealistic hope in the beginning of the transition, the realities afterwards have fallen short (Howard, 2002). The expectations of citizens were not rewarded by quick results and desired political outcomes, the short successes of private business actions were often replaced by economic set-backs, corruption, and bribery, since styles of behaviour in the old regime still remained omnipresent during the transformation process. Although political and economic reforms rapidly took place, cultural patterns, identities, values, and attitudes did not undergo any sudden changes and remained reserved, based on suspicion and passivity.

Similarly, Sztompka (2004) emphasizes the long-lasting trauma of the social and cultural change: the despotic previous government and rapid political, economic, social reforms undermined trust both as a common action and as an organisational ability. These basic aspects of trust transformation have conditioned, according to Sztompka (1998), the formation of a specific culture in the post-communist region – a *culture of suspicion*, or *culture of cynicism*, as he calls it (he actually borrows this term from Stivers, 1994). Like the culture of trust, the culture of suspicion is also a product of institutional and national narratives, and it affects relationships at the political, economic, and social levels. At the political level, the culture of suspicion results in distrust in

formal institutions and lack of motivation to engage with the political system by any means of political participation. It also means a growing gap between political elites and citizens, the state and the society, as the latter have no motivation or feel inefficient to control the actions of the former. If there is always a suspicion, you cannot feel you can make a difference! At the economic level the culture of suspicion manifested itself in corruption, bribing and shadow economy, since people, if they want to achieve their goals, do not trust legal institutions and do not trust other individuals to commit their duties without any “favour” (bribe). At the societal level, suspicion strengthens only particularized trust, or limited trust to one’s family or group.

As mentioned before, the mainstream of cultural theories underlines the modern substance of trust, creating the antinomy between trust and risk. Risk, in fact, is a self-reflexive notion, since one decides on the trustworthiness of another subject: whether it is expedient to take risks and what gains or losses trust might produce (Coleman, 1990). In the communist regime and later on in post-communist societies, this antinomy of trust and risk hardly makes sense. The communist regime and the so-called trustworthiness of the communist regime were grounded in the mechanisms of coercion, terror, and fear. The unpredictable situation did not allow for any reasonable-based evaluation of trustworthiness, which is why it did not include any “making a bet” mechanism. Therefore, while trust in democracy is opposite to *risk* as a self-reflexive notion (which also includes responsibility for one’s decisions), under post-communist conditions, trust comes in opposition to *fear*. Fear brings about passivity, non-involvement, and non-communication (Markova, 2004: 8).

To sum up, the transition increased the actual inequality leading to social alienation. For many people the independence, unfortunately, meant increasing helplessness, lack of perspectives, and a sense of insecurity. Thus, post-communist citizens continued isolating themselves within the limited circle of family and friendship-based networks who have earned their personal trust.

3.3 Trust, civil society and social capital in the contemporary post-communist region

In this section I address the role of trust and the development of civil society and social capital in the post-communist region. My argument here is based on the presumption that low levels of trust are related to the low levels of political/civic engagement and low stocks of social capital in general. Civil society is run autonomously, but is legally protected by the law. Usually it is structured around the formally established networks of peoples’ relations – organizations, associations, groups, clubs, movements, etc. (Howard, 2003: 35). Social capital is a broader concept than civil society, as it encompasses all relations between people, not only public activities framed by the legal setting.

The overthrow of the communist regime was indisputably considered as a triumph of civil society. However, different studies stress the characterization of the weakness of civil society as a distinctive element of post-communist democracy (Howard, 2002). So why a seemingly strong civil society became so weak after democracy was established, given that democratic institutions should have facilitated the conditions for civil society to flourish? Howard (2002: 161-163) gives several possible explanations for that: 1) the legacy of distrust in communist organizations; 2) post-communist disappointment; 3) the persistence of family and friendship-based networks. I will elaborate on each argument below.

First, negative experiences with communist organizations escalated distrust in the latter-day organizations. As it was already discussed, under the communist regime, the voluntary organizations were discredited, as participation in them was usually obligatory. There was no inner motivation or desire to join the organizations back then, thus the pressure instilled antipathy for so-called voluntary activities. For most of the citizens civic organizations are still associated with undemocratic attitudes and strict hierarchical structure. Howard (2003: 38-39) notices that in contemporary post-communist society, civic organizations “sacrifice” because of the still-alive perceived antinomy between individuals and the state. People treat organizations as a part of state institutions, including trade unions, and they are reluctant to participate claiming for apolitical civil society. As a result, civic organizations also try to place themselves in opposition to the state, whereas in mature democracies the relationship between civil society and state is more interactive (Howard, 2003: 38- 39; referring, for instance, to Walzer, 1998).

Second, disappointment in the post-communist transition made people apathetic about civic activities. Citizens’ faith in democracy fell short, as willing to participate in the “civic fabric”. Like in communism, participation still resembled subordination to someone’s will, especially given a corrupt and anti-legal culture in the transition period. Moreover, common threat is not relevant anymore, so there is no need to organize for collective actions. The achieved collapse of the communism created a certain vacuum of orientations and goals. The solidarity of people during the transition was disrupted; people were struggling for survival in a very hostile economic environment, so it left a little room for shared idealistic goals and values.

Third, instead of joining organizations, people prefer spending their private time as they used to do, in their own private circles. As Howard (2002: 163) put it, “Unlike in many Western societies – where voluntary organizations have become a central part of the social and political culture, and where people join organizations in order to meet new people and to expand their horizons through public activities – in post-communist societies, many people are still invested in their own private circles, and they simply feel no need, much less desire, to join and participate in civil society organizations.” So supposing that in Western democracies people participate in

organizations because of their needs and desires, people in post-communist societies assume that their social needs are already fulfilled in family-based circles.

The systemic suppression of civil society over half of the century has made it difficult for new organizations to emerge and get rooted (Rose, 1994). To compensate the passivity of the citizens, many organizations in the post-communist region were in fact created with the financial support from the West. The benefits of such initiative have been quite disputable in the literature. Western organizations have been accused of interference and efforts to create civic society “from above”. On the other hand, the sponsors would argue for the need to teach democracy. However, as many authors notice, the problem is, how to really measure the strength of civil society, as many of organizations in reality are nominal, of exaggerated size and activities. As Howard (2003: 52) notices, statistically civil society might seem strong, but it is organized from above and thus missing real participation of ordinary citizens.

Authors link the weakness of civil society and low levels of citizens’ involvement in East-Central Europe with the low stocks of social capital expected to be crucial for the success of democratic consolidation in post-communist countries (Newton, 1999b; Dowley and Silver, 2002; Letki and Evans, 2005; Bădescu and Uslaner, 2003; Lasinska, 2013). There is a causal relationship: social capital cannot be produced and maintained through the absent civic networks and, in return, the vacuum of social capital discourages people to act collectively. As Pehlivanova (2009) observes, most participation takes place in activities involving tight social circles, less in any kind of formal organizations, and least in any kind of political or governmental institutions. Referring to Putnam’s theory, we might assume that social capital in post-communist societies is emerging around bonding (particularized), but not bridging (generalized) trust.

Yet, the study of Dowley and Silver (2002) suggests that social capital in post-communist countries does not seem to contribute to democratic development: there is no significant correlation between democratization and social capital in 7 post-communist countries they investigated. Therefore it might very well be that social capital as a human resource is largely politically irrelevant (Gibson, 2001).

Some authors even go further by arguing that civic engagement in the post-communist societies has nothing to do with trust. For instance, Zmerli, Newton, and Montero (2007) find no significant effect of associational involvement on social trust. It is hypothesized that the decision to participate in organizations still remains an involuntary choice, most likely, that “someone asked to participate”, and it is conceived as a duty. In this respect, a few researchers suggest that participation in post-communist societies might be less natural, but imitable. For instance, data used in the study of Bădescu, Sum and Uslaner (2004) reveal that members of organizations in the Eastern bloc are less active than those in the West. Activists are less willing to cooperate with

people or groups from outside their organizations. Moreover, the same study shows that participants are treated by the general public as less trustful than the rest of the respondents. Furthermore, the authors discuss that trust not necessarily contributes to participatory effectiveness. The empirical evidence of the study reveals that some civic organizations are not democratic inside. Being active in an organization is not a key to participation and decision making process. Trust thus might not be a predictor of democratic support in general (Letki and Evans, 2005). Hence, these theoretical assumptions call into question, whether social capital as indicated in the West societies really contributes to political participation in the post-communist region.

3.3.1 Some empirical evidence of levels of trust in post-communist societies

To further support the theoretical points above, I refer to the few empirical studies on trust in post-communist societies. As it was mentioned in the beginning, the most comprehensive research on trust in post-communist societies was done by Mierina (2011). She uses the WVS data (2005 – 2007), which shows that only one quarter of the respondents in post-communist societies tend to trust people in general: 22.2 % in Bulgaria, 19.0 % in Poland, 20.3 % in Romania and 18.1 % in Slovenia. It is worth noting that during the democratization period, in some countries generalized trust went down: in Bulgaria from 30.4 (1993) to 22.2 % (2007), in Czech Republic from 30.2 % (1993) to 23.9% (2001), in Estonia from 27.6 % (1993) to 23.9 % (2001), in Lithuania from 30.8 % (1993) to 24.9 % (2001). Similar results using the WVS datasets (waves 1990-2005) are also attained by Horne (2013). Thus, the authors demonstrate the post-communist trust deficit appears to have increased between the first and second wave (WVS), and actually widened even more between the second and third wave (1999 – 2004). Although in more recent years some positive developments concerning social trust have also been observed (for instance, Ramonaitė, 2006b), most of the studies are less optimistic or at least emphasize the differences between post-communist countries (and between the datasets) in this regard (Horne, 2013).

In another study, *Undiscovered Power: Map of the Civil Society in Lithuania*, Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė (2006: 234) have found a significant difference between generalized and particularized social trust in Lithuania. The results of the fieldwork (Lithuanian Values 2005) indicate that out of 1010 respondents only 7.2 % expressed trust in strangers (people whom the respondents have not met before). In comparison, about 75 % of respondents trust people they actually know, 59 % trust their neighbours, 84 % trust relatives and almost 98 % trust their family. The numbers illustrate that most people are attached to particularized trust and rely on the close-knit ties with family and friends, which existed in communist societies. Similar findings were also discussed by Bădescu and Uslaner (2003) and Vasilache (2010) in Romania and Pehlivanova (2009) in Bulgaria.

Furthermore, Letki's (2003) study on 11 post-communist countries shows that although 42% of the respondents would expect help and support from other people, almost 80% of them are afraid that others may take advantage of them. At the same time, over 70 % of the respondents do not believe in unselfish cooperation. It strengthens the assumptions of family-centred particularized trust.

When talking about social trust in former communist countries, Vasilache (2010: 11) notices some interesting variation within trust, pleading for a conservation of the traditional social structure. Based on her research in Romania, she concludes that in younger groups of friends, one best friend is enough to be a catalyst of trust, while in groups of older people, only communities of 10 or more friends increase trust. It suggests that "these communities of older people are reminiscences of the communist period groups of friends which cultivated a somehow semi-clandestine trust". Vasilache (2010: 12) also finds a negative correlation between the frequency of social meetings and the existence of someone to discuss personal and intimate matters with. The results incline that there are two levels of socialization, preserving the communist tradition of relationships: the extended group of friends, bound by superficial relationships, and the confident(s), usually only one.

Moreover, the results of the same study show that trust is correlated with compliance (the importance of doing what is told and following rules) and less significantly with tolerance (the importance of understanding different people). This evidence-based insight matches with the theoretical premise that in post-communist societies trust might be related to fear and less to risk. However, lacking more empirically-backed evidence in other post-communist societies, this paradox of trust still remains a subject for further research.

Post-communist countries have also consistently lower levels of organizational membership. In post-communist societies individuals are on average engaged in less than one organization (organizational membership level is 0.91), compared to post-authoritarian regimes (2.39 organization for one person) and far beyond older democracies (Howard, 2002: 159). Hence, as Howard (2002: 160) envisages, communism, as prior regime type, is "the most powerful and statistically significant factor".

Recent empirical studies prove that the low levels of social trust are accompanied by distrust towards political institutions. Referring to the Standard Eurobarometer Study (2012 Fall), only a few respondents express some level of trust in political parties (14 % in Bulgaria, 8 % in Czech Republic, 16 % in Estonia, 6 % in Latvia, 13 % in Lithuania, 9 % in Romania and Slovenia). The parliament is trusted by one fifth of the respondents on average, varying from 9 % in Czech Republic to 30 % in Slovakia.

On the other hand, almost all post-communist societies are distinguished by a comparatively high trust in the president, varying from 30 % in Bulgaria to around 70 % in Poland and Lithuania.

The scholars notice that these tendencies illustrate longing for authoritarian (or “strong hand”) politics and societal will to follow strong leaders (Sztompka 1999; Rose, 2001; Ramonaitė 2007). The reliance of providentialism, as Tufiş (2008) and Sztompka (2002) observe, is also reflected by the higher levels of trust in Church and international institutions. But as the authors explain, citizens tend to idealize these institutions as they have no detailed understanding how they really work.

Finally, in his comprehensive studies on post-communist countries, Uslaner (2003; 2008) provides empirical evidence that in former communist countries a general climate of political distrust and atomized (in-group) societal trust are tightly related to corruption, inequality and expectations for the future. His longitudinal findings show that in almost all post-communist societies generalized trust significantly correlates negatively with perceived corruption of politicians and perceived inequality. The results of the research disclose that the more the system is perceived as unequal, the less social trust exists in the society. Uslaner explains this by saying that a sense of inequality diminishes a feeling of control and this drives down generalized trust in people. When lacking trust in the system and in people around, individuals often see only one way of achieving their goals – bribery and corruption. Consequently, high level of corruption leads to a higher economic inequality (Uslaner, 2008: 11). Obviously, these processes create a long lasting vicious circle, which is very damaging to the quality of post-communist democracy.

3.4 Summary and concluding remarks

The present chapter viewed trust in a historical perspective and analyzed the nature of trust in contemporary post-communist societies. To sum up the considerations on trust in post-communist societies, three observations can be made.

First, scholars suggest that social trust in post-communist democracies lacks attitudes based on good will and mostly relies on particularized trust. Due to the communist experience, social trust became limited to the “strategically egoistic” attitude in order to fulfill one’s needs, even by using illegal methods. This perception of social trust has become pervasively and robustly attached to rational calculations. Based on that, social trust did not generalize to wider societal levels. The evidence from different studies also suggests that trust in strangers is deeply set apart from trust in family.

Second, low generalized trust in the Eastern bloc is accompanied with a weak civil society and low levels of social capital. The nature of trust has maintained the stratification of the post-communist society along the inner social circles of close family and friends, thus preserving cultural legacies of the so-called niches. Some studies reveal that trust is not even necessarily related to participation in civic organizations at all and does not contribute to the effectiveness of democracy.

Third, social trust in post-communist societies is weakly associated with self-reflexiveness due to placing trust against fear. The exposure of fear restrains post-communist citizens from active political engagement, prompts political alienation, and perverts the state-society relationship. The escalation of fear weakens citizens' vigilance towards the political system, political institutions, and rules. Fear creates a general atmosphere of suspicion which prevents political actions.

Having analyzed the development and nature of trust in pre-communist societies, I will now focus my attention (again) on participation in party and movement politics. I further investigate how individual social trust predicts political engagement. Does social trust, as individual stimulus, lead to political participation in the same way in mature and post-communist democracies? Or are there some differences in this regard and social capital theories cannot be applicable to the same extent in contrasting cultural settings? And following that, what is the role of context? In this case, how post-communism, as a condition, affects individuals' willingness to participate? These questions are addressed in the chapters to come.

4 |

Social trust, political efficacy and political participation: mature and post-communist democracies in a comparative view²³

²³ Slightly different versions of this chapter have been presented at the 8th Annual Conference in Political Science, International Relations and Public Policy in Memory of the late Yitzhak Rabin, Jerusalem, Israel, December 12-14, 2012, and at the ISPP (International Society of Political Psychology) Annual Scientific Meeting, Herzliya, Israel, July 8-11, 2013.

4.1 Introduction

The question how to explain political engagement in post-communist European democracies and what is the role of social trust arises as an unresolved issue in comparative political sociology. The empirical puzzle different authors try to solve derives from the observed patterns of voting and protesting across Europe: post-communist societies reveal lower levels of participation in politics than their western neighbours. As voting trends show (Table A1 in Appendix A), in more than two decades, electoral turnout in post-communist societies has declined from about 77% on average in the early nineties, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet empire, to about 56% on average today. Thus, there is a striking gap in this regard compared to the more mature democracies. In these democracies, turnout has also somewhat declined, but not so strongly. Overall, the average voting turnout in mature Western democracies currently fluctuates around 70%.

Moreover, according to the ESS and EVS surveys, (Table A2 in Appendix A) other means of “doing politics”, namely, demonstrating, also dramatically decreased during the past decades in post-communist societies (Letki, 2003; Howard, 2003; Ramonaitė, 2006b; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Kostadinova and Power, 2007; Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm, 2007; Pietrzyk-Rieves, 2008; Van Deth and Vrábliková, 2013; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). According to the EVS, the difference between the post-communist and mature democracies is really huge: taken together, approximately 9% of the respondents in post-communist democracies have once attended a lawful demonstration, while about 26% of the respondents in mature democracies reported to have done so. The difference in the trend over time is also rather striking: the percentage has dropped with more than 13% in the post-communist region since 1990, whereas in mature democracies the levels of demonstrating have been more or less stable during the same time period.

In this chapter I specifically address the three-folded question whether social trust has both (1) a direct influence and (2) an indirect influence on political participation, mediated by efficacy, and (3) whether these effects differ between mature and post-communist societies, as well as among post-communist societies. Put differently, to what extent does social trust lead to political engagement in old and young democracies, either directly or via political efficacy, and do we find the same patterns between different sets of countries?

A few authors have already compared the patterns of political participation; however, the empirical results are quite ambiguous. For instance, Bernhagen and Marsh (2007: 1) show that “the factors explaining election turnout have a largely similar impact in old and new democracies” in terms of socio-demographic, attitudinal and mobilization-related characteristics of citizens. On the other hand, the same study proves that the causes of protest participation are different between the two sets of countries. Their results show that social trust is a more significant predictor of political

engagement in mature democracies (taken both party-based and movement politics) than in post-communist ones. Moreover, the authors conclude that “some differences in political engagement cannot be accounted for without reference to contextual variables specific to the post-communist democracies <...>.”

However, the existing literature has paid only limited attention to how social trust can both directly and indirectly affect different types of participation in mature and post-communist democracies. Some recent studies have indicated the links between participation, social trust and political efficacy (for instance, Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009). Nonetheless, there is still a gap in the current research regarding the questions to what extent political efficacy mediates between social trust and political engagement and whether such mediation patterns are the same in the two country-sets. This is still a rather new area of research in post-communist studies, although there are a few hints on this subject in the works of Mierina (2011), Pierobon (2008), Mishler and Rose (2005), Armingeon (2007) and the already mentioned study of Bernhagen and Marsh (2007).

The general theoretical claim of this chapter is that social trust was systematically impaired during the Communist era, thus I assume that citizens’ motivation to participate in politics is weakened due to the loss of this essential element of social connectedness. In addition to that, I expect that social trust has an impact on political efficacy: the less citizens trust fellow people, the less they feel politically efficacious, which in turn will make them less willing to participate in politics. In my view, social trust helps to increase efficacy: the mutual growth of these values is perceived as a process of adapting to (or socializing into) democracy.

Building on the arguments put forward in the previous chapters, I will test these expectations on the influence of social trust and political efficacy on citizens’ political activities. Empirically, the direct and indirect effects of social trust are estimated in two country-sets (15 mature and 12 post-communist societies²⁴) with individual level regression models using the ESS data of 2008. Moreover, the models are tested in the post-communist countries separately to investigate the similarities and differences between them in this regard.

First, this chapter will briefly resume the theoretical accounts for social trust and political participation and provide the literature overview on how these variables are empirically connected in mature and post-communist democracies. The subsequent section will describe the data and methods used. Then, the results will be presented. After displaying the descriptives and the cross-country differences in political participation, social trust and political efficacy, the direct and

²⁴ Countries/societies included as mature/established democracies are: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Germany-West, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Post-communist democracies: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany-East, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

indirect effects of social trust on participation are tested in mature and post-communist democracies with logistic regression analyses. The conclusion section will summarize and interpret the results.

4.2 Theoretical perspectives and hypotheses

Traditionally, when explaining political participation, the literature refers to individual resources and democratic values individuals possess (Almond and Verba, 1963; Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady, 1995; Dalton, 2004). In addition to that, the social capital literature proposes a culture-based interpretation of why individuals engage in politics, namely it points to social attitudes and social connectedness. One of the main questions the social capital theorists are concerned with is: does social trust stimulate political actions and does it provide a sense of readiness to participate in political life? My research interest goes beyond this general question and addresses the pattern between social trust and participation in a comparative view between old and new European democracies.

I review two kinds of literatures in my attempt to answer my research questions. First, this study builds further on general literature that provides important theoretical insights based on the experience of mature democracies (Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993; 2000). Second, I also rely on more specific literature that scrutinizes the predictors of political participation in post-communist societies (Letki, 2003; Smith, 2009; Uslaner, 2004; Rueschemeyer, Rueschemeyer, and Wittrock, 1998; Barnes and Simon, 1998). For each research question, I formulate hypothetical claims.

The first claim: there is a positive effect of social trust on political participation

To begin with, there is an ongoing debate on the link between social trust (or social capital in a more general sense) and political engagement. In social capital theories, social trust is conceived as one of the causes of individuals' willingness to participate in politics (i.e. it has a direct effect). The explanation of this assertion is that trusting people care for each other and thus feel a moral duty to be involved in common affairs (Putnam, 1993; 2001; Misztal, 1996; Seligman, 1997). It is argued that social trust leads individuals to participate in the pursuit of the commons, as trust provides us with the assurance that political action will be worthwhile. In return, successful cooperation based on trust gives people satisfaction in what they do (Putnam, 1993; Fishkin, 1995: 148). Political action endows us with a sense of belonging to a collective identity and pride for struggling for good and right values (Klandermans, 2003).

So far, previous studies have shown that associational membership (which is a component of social capital) is tightly related to political activity (Van Deth, 2001; Krishna, 2002a, 2002b;

Teorell, Torcal, and Montero, 2007). However, the relationship between social trust and political participation is more ambiguous, as different studies find different types of relationships. Talking about party politics, several studies find positive links between social trust and voting (Kaase, 1999; Putnam, 1993; 2000; Rossteutscher, 2008; Rubenson, 2005; Roller and Rudi, 2008; Hooghe and Marien, 2013). Regarding other forms of party politics participation, the effect of social trust differs from positive (Marien and Christensen, 2012; Roller and Rudi, 2008) to negative or non-existent (Muhlberger, 2003; Van Deth, 2001; Armingeon, 2007; Uslaner, 2008; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Hooghe and Quintellier, 2014; Kim, 2014). Concerning protesting, some of these studies prove that there is a positive effect of social trust on movement politics (Roller and Rudi, 2008; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Kim, 2014; on political consumerism – Armingeon, 2007). Thus, the existent empirical evidence unveils that the relationship highly depends on what means of party politics – voting or other, like, contacting politicians and campaigning, – and movement politics we take into account.

Some scarce evidence on how trust contributes (or not) to citizens' political involvement in post-communist societies can be detected. Mierina (2011) and Barnes and Simon (1998) conclude that social trust has a positive impact on participation in a few post-communist societies, suggesting that the effect of trust on political activity is related to a country's level of democraticness. However, Letki (2003), Letki and Evans (2005), Uslaner (2004), Armingeon (2007) find no positive or no significant effect of social trust on most of the political activities in post-communist societies.

Despite contrasting findings in the literature, my expectation is as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between social trust and political action: voting (H1a), party politics (H1b) and movement politics (H1c) participation.

The second claim: no cross-national differences in the positive effect of social trust

The social capital approach relies on the universal character of the causal relationship between social trust and political participation, although the aspects of this approach are rooted in stable, Western democracies. Nevertheless, as it was already mentioned, a universal, positive association between social trust and political action is not evident at all, meaning that this relationship can depend on the institutional environment. In other words, the literature also suggest that social trust may not function in the same way (as a stimulus for participation) in countries that have had a totalitarian and/or authoritarian regime (see similar argumentation in Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009). The same logic would also apply to post-authoritarian Southern European countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Cyprus, referring to our dataset).

A relevant study in this regard was carried out by Armingeon (2007) who compares different predictors for different modes of political participation between Western and Eastern European democracies. The study reveals that at the individual level, most of the predictors work more or less in the same way in Western and Eastern Europe. However, party politics activities (except for voting) are more significantly predicted in mature democracies. The same also applies to social trust: Armingeon shows that social trust is a more significant predictor of different forms of political participation (for instance, party politics, consumerism, voting) in the West than in the East. To sum up, although the differences in predictions between the country-sets are not very remarkable, there are some reasons to believe that social trust, as an individual characteristic, could play a different role in spurring political action.

However, for the sake of comparison, I will test whether hypothesis H1 holds in all of the 27 European societies that are in my dataset. This will allow us to see whether the associations of these variables vary cross-nationally. Thus, I predict that:

H2: The individual level effect of social trust on political action (*H2 a-b-c*) is positive in all countries.

H3: The individual level effect of social trust on political action (*H3 a-b-c*) is similar in mature and post-communist democracies.

The third claim: the association between social trust and political action is explained by political efficacy

As I already discussed in chapter 2, social capital and civic society literatures assume that social trust fosters political efficacy. For example, Putnam (1993) observes that people in more trustful societies and individuals who possess higher levels of trust feel more aware of the capabilities to influence the government. Certainly, political efficacy has been cited as one of the decisive factors explaining whether and how citizens participate (Lane, 1959; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954; Warren, 1999; Morrell, 2005; Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008; della Porta and Reiter, 2012). Following the conceptualization presented in chapter 2, I distinguish between internal and external efficacy (Lane, 1959). *Internal efficacy* is self-understood competence to influence political outcomes, whereas *external efficacy* reflects on perceived government's responsiveness (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991).

Three aspects are of interest here: 1) how different dimensions of political efficacy lead to, or restrain people from, the different types of political participation; 2) how social trust is related to different dimensions of political efficacy; 3) are the patterns of the relationship between social trust,

internal and external dimensions of political efficacy and types of political participation similar or different between old and new European democracies?

With regard to the first aspect, a few studies indicate that confidence in governmental institutions and the perception that the government responds to one's demands induces individual's willingness to participate in institutional (party/electoral) political activities (Marien and Christensen, 2013). On the other hand, political distrust and disappointment in government's policies, some research show, bring people to the streets and encourage them for protest activities directed against elite-based institutions (Braun and Hutter, 2013; Kaase, 1999; Norris, 1999; Rosanvallon, 2008; Hooghe and Marien, 2013). Yet, some evidence also demonstrates that political distrust not necessarily is an attitude of protesters (for instance, Van Stekelenburg, 2014), but all in all, politically distrusting people tend to protest more than politically trusting. However, it is less clear whether this theoretical account also holds for the post-communist democracies.

Internal efficacy, several studies showed, has a less ambiguous effect on political participation, meaning that it positively contributes to all modes of participation (Almond and Verba, 1989; Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). It encourages conventional participation, as efficacious individuals are more aware of and more interested in politics. Internal efficacy might also foster protests activities, as an efficacious citizen not only learns about the political outcomes and consequences, but also knows how to (effectively) influence those outcomes (Gamson, 1968: 48; Sheerin, 2007).

There is not much research on the second aspect, thus on how social trust is connected to political efficacy or variables related to efficacy, except for the well-known study of Putnam (1993) and a few other studies. Andersen and Pammett (2009), for instance, observe that low levels of trust in societies very robustly correlate with low levels of political efficacy. Drawing on the already mentioned empirical research in the USA, Uslaner concluded that social trust does not directly lead to participation, but instead it robustly correlates with one's sense of efficacy, which is an assumed mediator between trust and participation (2008: 115–160).

The relationship between social trust and political efficacy has been also (although less thoroughly) investigated by Almond and Verba (1963), Van Deth and Scarbrough (1998), Roller and Rudi (2008), Anderson (2010), Hooghe and Marien (2013), and Hsung (2014). Other authors provide some hints on how social trust positively contributes to political literacy and awareness (Milner, 2002), self-confidence, and also to political support and political trust (Newton, 1999a; Norris, 2002a).

The literature suggests several ways how political efficacy can explain why trust fosters participation. First, while trusting, people are more inclined to socialize with each other, they are more likely to acquire political knowledge and information in general about the subjects to be acted

on and the methods to employ such actions (Almond and Verba, 1963; Milner, 2002). Based on political knowledge, citizens yield initiatives more easily (Stolle, 2002). Second, trust empowers us politically as it makes sure we believe that institutions we deal with are fair and that people are going to behave by the rules. Moreover, when we trust people, we expect them to act in a similar manner and it gives us a sense of control (predictability). Sustained confidence in the motives of others encourages and facilitates participation (Kwak, Shah, and Holbert, 2004). If we are sure that the rules are not going to be violated, we feel more certain about involvement in political life. Thus, I expect socially trusting people to develop a feeling of political efficacy (Andersen and Pammett, 2009).

Even to a greater extent than party participation, movement participation relies on social connectedness, as people decide on whether to protest and what strategies to employ (whereas the setting of the elections is determined by institutions). Trust is crucially important to facilitate mobilization and mitigate the risk of protesting. As Benson and Rochon (2004) notice, the costs of taking part in a demonstration may be relatively small, but it also may entail being arrested and prosecuted, depending on the democraticness of the regime or the general atmosphere of the protest/demonstration. Trust leads to optimistic estimates about the likelihood of success, because it allows forming expectations about the actions of others (Dasgupta, 1988; Gambetta, 1988).

The alternative approach to the connection of trust and participation posits that social trust may work as “double-edged sword”, meaning that trusting people can remain passive, because they believe that others can be trusted to participate (and “do the job”) for them (Pattie, Seyd, and Whiteley, 2003: 458). However, this approach is not mainstream in political sociology, it neither receives sufficient empirical support.

Based on the assumptions suggested in the literature and previous research, I have formulated the following hypotheses. These hypotheses have been introduced and discussed in more detail in chapter 2. All hypotheses are summarized in Figure 4.1.

H4: External efficacy mediates between social trust and voting (H4a) and party politics activities (H4b). However, I expect that the effect of external efficacy, as a mediating variable, on movement politics activities (H4c) is negative.

H5: Internal political efficacy plays a mediating role between social trust and voting (H5a), participation in party politics (H5b) and between social trust and participation in movement politics (H5c).

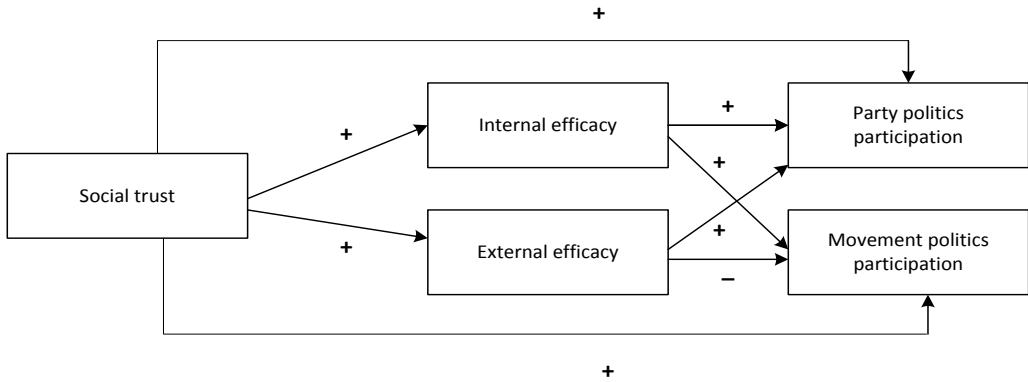


Figure 4. 1 Causal links between social trust, external and internal efficacy and party/movement politics participation

The hypotheses I have formulated in this section are tested in the two-country groups: mature and post-communist societies. Thus, the third interesting aspect is the comparison of the interplay between social trust, political efficacy and political participation between mature and post-communist democracies. As I have already pointed out above, the existing literature does not illuminate this relationship in a comparative perspective, although the different levels of participation between these two country-sets are acknowledged by several authors (Rueschemeyer, Rueschemeyer, and Wittrock 1998; Bernhagen and March, 2007; Armingeon, 2007; Pierobon, 2008; Hooghe and Marien, 2013: 144). Thus, it has remained poorly understood and a topic for controversial debates, whether and to what extent the predictors explaining engagement in party and movement politics in more mature, older democracies differ from younger post-communist ones. Does social trust lead to protest and movement politics in the same way in both types of countries, or does it work out differently in post-communist societies?

4.3 Research design

4.3.1 Data and measurements

Data and sample. To test the hypotheses empirically, I will use the data from the fourth wave of the European Social Survey (ESS; 2008),²⁵ which provides extensive information on different modes of participation, social trust and political attitudes, including those that represent political efficacy. The year 2008 was selected for two reasons. First, it embraces the largest number of

²⁵ The European Social Survey is a cross-national attitude survey. Starting in 2002, the survey has been held every two years in many European countries, with round 4 (2008) covering more than 30 nations.

European post-communist democracies (compared to the ESS datasets of 2002, 2010 and 2012). Second, I decided to choose this dataset to avoid the timing of the economic crisis that broke out a year later and which might have profoundly altered the standard rates of political participation in each democracy.

In this research 26 established European democracies countries were chosen²⁶, most of them members of the EU, plus Norway and Switzerland, which are linked to the EU by many bilateral agreements and are internationally acknowledged as fitting the highest democratic standards. Overall, 15 countries in the sample represent mature democracies (28 744 respondents) and 12 (including East Germany) are from the post-communist region (20 747 respondents) (see Table 4.1 for an overview of the number of respondents per country). So in total we have 27 societies, as Germany is entered in the analysis as two different societies: Germany is split to Western Germany, which followed the Western-based political and cultural developments, and Eastern Germany, which experienced communism and thus is expected to be substantially different from the Western part. As I have explained in the section on the case selection in chapter 1, I chose only those post-communist countries that belong to the EU, as it allows controlling for the development of political regimes: all countries are formally recognized established democracies (fitting the so-called Copenhagen criteria²⁷).

In the descriptive analysis that compares countries, the figures are based on the weighed data required by the ESS sample design. Design weights in combination with population size weights are applied. The main propose of the design weight is to avoid a possible selection bias, and population size weight insures the proportional representation of the countries, despite differences in their population (*The ESS Documentation Report*, 2008).

4.3.2 Dependent variables

As theorized in chapter 2, I distinguish between participation in party and movement politics, which are the dependent variables. As it has a comprehensive list of political activities, the rich ESS data provides the possibility to refine this dichotomy and conceptually distinguish three different types of participation. Due to behavioural specifics involved in different forms of political participation, many authors suggest separating between voting and other institutionalized forms of participation

²⁶ Countries included as mature democracies are: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Germany (split in West and East Germany), Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Post-communist democracies: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. N.B. Data for Austria, Italy, Luxemburg and Malta is not available.

²⁷ Copenhagen criteria are the set of political, economic and the Community *acquis* criteria that the countries must meet in order to join the EU. In practice it means that a country, as the EU member, demonstrates stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities. Retrieved, February 15/2013, from http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/accession_criteria_copenhagen_en.htm

(see, for instance, Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Armingoen, 2007). Voting is the most regular and the most prominent form of participation and for many people it is the primary mean of participating in politics (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). Thus, refining the conceptualization employed in the theoretical part (chapter 2), I differentiate between voting and participation in other party politics activities²⁸. I also keep participation in movement politics as a separate variable.

The decision to make a distinction between voting and other modes of party politics participation is also based on an inspection of the distribution of the data, which shows that involvement in these activities is highly skewed: the majority of the respondents (around 80 per cent) did not participate in other party politics activities, except for voting.

I measure **voting** with the question: “Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]? Yes/No?” (variable name: vote).

Other **party politics participation** activities are tapped with these items: 1) Contacted politician or government official last 12 months (variable name: contplt²⁹) 2) Worked in political party or action group last 12 months (wrkprty); 3) Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker (badge); 4) Member of a political party (mmbprty). Answers: yes=1; no=0. The dichotomized scoring to measure participation in these activities is applied: 1 is given to the respondents who participated in at least one of the mentioned activities, and they get a 0 score if they did not participate in any of the activities.

Participation in **movement politics** is gauged by three indicators: 1) Signed a petition in last 12 months (sgnptit); 2) Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months (pblldmn); 3) Boycotted certain products in last 12 months (bctprd). The answer categories consist of “yes” (1) and “no” (0). As the distributions are skewed again (around 70 per cent of the respondents did not participate in any activity), the dichotomized scoring was employed, 1 meaning participation in at least one movement activity, and 0 indicating non-participation.³⁰

4.3.3 Independent variables

Social trust

The ESS 2008 survey operationalizes social trust by using three questions that combine the original question of generalized trust (used in West Germany in 1948) and its later adaptations by

²⁸ Voting is thus not considered a component of participation in party politics. The latter variable only includes all other institutionalized forms of political participation.

²⁹ I also include the original variable names of the ESS database for the ease of the replication of the analyses.

³⁰ Although dependant variables are skewed, we decided not to apply log transformation, which is not a neat solution here (score 0 would still comprise the largest category).

Rosenberg (1956), who added the other two questions to form a more reliable trust scale (in Zmerli and Newton, 2008).

The respondents are asked to indicate on a 0 to 10 scale³¹, where 0 means the lowest and 10 the highest agreement, whether they agree with these statements:

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

2) Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance or would they try to be fair? (pplfair)

3) Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or are they mostly looking out for themselves? (pplhlp)

The first question is assumed to be the most precise one to measure the generalized level of social trust and, despite some criticism, the usage of this formulation of the question is academically defended (for instance, Uslaner, 2002). I follow Zmerli and Newton (2008), who suggest using the three-item scale of generalized trust. I argue that the above-mentioned questions are related to each other in the sense that they represent three notions associated to the category of trust: trustworthiness, honesty, and altruistic attitudes.

A principal component analysis of the three trust questions show that they load on one dimension quite strongly, the first component explaining between 58.7 and 78.3 per cent of the variance in each of the 26 countries (Table 4.1). This indicates a single dimension, therefore my decision is to summate each individual's responses to the three questions and divide the number by three. In the cases where only answers to one or two questions are provided, accordingly one score or the sum of the score divided by two are counted. I label the new scale variable Rosenberg trust index.

³¹ The ESS survey employs an eleven-point rating scale to answer these questions and compared to other surveys, it is more accurate. To compare, World Value Survey (also European Value Survey) uses dichotomized answers for the question of generalized trust (Yes/No). The International Social Survey Programme employs a 4-point Likert scale.

Table 4.1 Principal component analysis of three-item Rosenberg trust scale

Country	General trust	Fairness	Helpfulness	Eigenvalue	% of variance explained by single factor	N of respondents (not weighted)
Belgium	.81	.80	.73	1.82	60.65	1760
Cyprus	.88	.88	.85	2.28	75.87	1215
Denmark	.83	.84	.74	1.94	64.78	1610
Finland	.83	.84	.76	1.97	65.74	2195
France	.76	.80	.73	1.76	58.71	2073
Germany-West	.78	.80	.79	1.87	62.37	1784
Greece	.89	.90	.87	2.35	78.28	2072
Ireland	.79	.80	.76	1.85	61.74	1764
Netherlands	.83	.85	.74	1.95	65.13	1778
Norway	.82	.83	.74	1.90	63.41	1549
Portugal	.83	.81	.76	1.91	63.68	2367
Spain	.84	.80	.76	1.93	64.30	2576
Sweden	.81	.83	.74	1.90	63.19	1830
Switzerland	.81	.83	.78	1.95	64.84	1819
United Kingdom	.81	.85	.78	1.98	65.89	2352
Bulgaria	.85	.88	.82	2.16	72.09	2230
Croatia	.87	.86	.82	2.16	71.94	1484
Czech Republic	.87	.86	.78	2.09	69.74	2018
Estonia	.81	.81	.74	1.85	61.60	1661
Germany-East	.77	.82	.82	1.93	64.48	967
Hungary	.82	.80	.79	1.95	65.15	1544
Latvia	.79	.83	.74	2.01	66.98	1980
Lithuania	.89	.89	.84	2.30	76.67	2002
Poland	.78	.82	.75	1.84	61.28	1619
Romania	.86	.91	.87	2.32	77.19	2146
Slovakia	.87	.88	.81	2.18	72.55	1810
Slovenia	.83	.84	.77	1.98	66.11	1286

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: Data weight is applied.

Variables associated with political efficacy

The ESS 2008 survey does not provide the items that were originally used in the American Elections Studies to measure external political efficacy (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). The closest indicator to it is **political trust**, which expresses diffuse political support (in D. Easton's sense), and refers to the perceived trustworthiness of the governmental institution and assumingly renders a feeling that the respondent's voice is heard.

I operationalized political trust by measuring trust in the most important institutions of a political system using this question: "Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out". The following institutions were presented: a) the country's parliament (trstprl); b) the legal system (trstplg); c) the police³² (trstplc); d) politicians (trstplt); e) political parties (trstprt). The answer categories ranged thus from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete

³² I also include trust in the police as an indicator of political trust, as it is done by a few authors, for instance by Marien (2011). Nevertheless, I have to emphasize that in some countries trust in police and trust in other governmental institutions might be less strongly associated. Studies admit that trust in the police is comparatively higher across the European countries compared to trust in other political institutions (Marien, 2011).

trust). In Table 4.2 a principal component analysis shows that the responses form a single dimension, although trust in the police loads to a relatively lower degree. The single factor explains more than 60 percent of the total variance, and yields a reliable scale with a Cronbach's α of 0.88. Similar factor loadings are found in mature and post-communist democracies, although in the latter the components form a somewhat stronger single dimension (explaining 69.9% of the variance). The general score of political trust for each individual is the mean of five items. If individuals at least provided an answer on two items (out of five), the sum of the scores by the appropriate number of valid answers is counted; otherwise (if there is only one item or none) the case is missing.

Table 4.2 Principal component analysis for political trust

Observed measures	Factor loading		
	All countries	Mature democracies	Post-communist democracies
Trust in parliament	.85	.83	.87
Trust in the legal system	.81	.78	.82
Trust in the police	.71	.66	.72
Trust in politicians	.89	.88	.89
Trust in political parties	.86	.85	.87
Variance explained, %	67.97	64.53	69.89
Eigenvalue	3.40	3.23	3.49

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: Data weight is applied.

As it was theorized, internal political efficacy is related to political awareness (which is sometimes described as political sophistication, but the latter term has a broader scope) and one's perceived understanding of political issues and self-efficacy, a psychological orientation which expresses a perceived ability to participate in an effective manner (to have a control over your life).

Unfortunately, the ESS questionnaire does not include questions that accurately measure internal political efficacy.³³ In line with some other studies (for instance, Hooghe and Marien, 2013: 140), I use political awareness as a proxy variable representing internal efficacy, assuming that the association between these two variables is very strong. Political awareness is defined as the extent an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered (Zaller, 1992: 21).

Political awareness at the individual level is measured taking into account two indicators: a) "How often does politics seem so complicated that you can't really understand what is going on?"

³³ Internal efficacy is operationalized in the International Social Survey Programme 2006 ("Role of Government") with the questions "Would you agree with the statement that people like me have no say what government does" and "Would you agree with the statement that average citizen can influence politics". Unfortunately, the ISPP 2006 data does not include the questions about political participation. The European Values Survey questionnaire operationalizes self-efficacy, as a proxy of internal political efficacy, with the question "How much freedom of choice you feel you have over the way your life turns out", but also does not include some of the important variables discussed in this chapter.

(polcmpl) (1 = frequently; 2 = regularly; 3 = occasionally; 4 = seldom; 5 = never); b) “How difficult or easy do you find it to make your mind up about political issues?” (poldcs) (1 = very difficult, 2 = difficult; 3 = neither difficult, nor easy; 4 = easy; 5 = very easy). These items correlate (Pearson’s $r = 0.47$), which allows us to make a single score variable. The cases with an answer to only one question are also taken into account.

Another important variable included in the analysis is **political interest**, considered as one of the most decisive factors of political participation (Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Van Deth and Elff, 2004). Political interest is measured in the ESS survey with a standard question: “How interested would you say you are in politics?” (polintr) (1 = not at all interested; 2 = hardly interested; 3 = quite interested; 4 = very interested). Although political interest is sometimes conflated with political awareness, I keep these two variables in my analysis separate.

Social embeddedness

The social capital literature assumes that people can be mobilized through networks. First of all, I refer to ‘secondary organizations’ as networks of formal social embeddedness that are presumed to be crucial for political participation (Putnam, 1993). Thus I include social embeddedness in the research as a control variable. The ESS measures the participation in (voluntary) associations using this question: “Worked in another [than political] organisation or association last 12 months” (wrkorg).

In addition, I include two other types of associational participation: membership in labour unions and religious (church) attendance. Social capital literature suggests that participation in these (semi-)hierarchical traditional organizations also may foster face-to-face contacts and function as a stepping stone to political participation (Newton, 1999b; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2001; Warren, 2001; Norris, 2002a). Trade union membership (mbtru) is measured as a dichotomous variable (1 = yes; 0 = no). Religious attendance (rigratnd) measured how often respondents attend religious services apart from special occasions. Answers ranged on a seven-point scale from “never” (1) “to more than once a week” (7). Due to the different nature and function of these organizations, I keep all three variables (social embeddedness, union membership and church attendance) separate.

Individual socio-demographic characteristics

A standard set of demographic variables was included in the analysis: education, income, age and gender. Education, Almond and Verba (1963: 370 – 371) argue, is a “many-sided” experience which increases “an individual’s potentiality to participate”. Similarly, Dalton (2004) defines

education as one of the most important resources to participate. Moreover, education is positively related to social trust (Putnam, 1993; Uslaner, 2002). In the ESS data education level (*edulvla*) of respondents is measured as follows: 1 = “Less than lower secondary education”; 2 = “Lower secondary education completed”; 3 = “Upper secondary education completed”; 4 = “Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed”; 5 = “tertiary education completed”.

Furthermore, financial stability and higher income rates are believed to promote political engagement, as richer people do not need to spend all their time and energy to ensure their survival needs, so they possess more socio-economic resources that could be invested in participation (Inglehart, 1997). The original question to measure household’s income (Household’s total net income, all sources) was not chosen because of many missings of this variable. Instead, following Hooghe and Quintelier (2014), the perceived income was considered. Correlation between the two variables is 0.50. I measured perceived income with a question about how the respondents “feel about household’s income nowadays” (*hincfel*). The answer categories are ranked from 1 = “Very difficult on present income” to 4 = “Living comfortably on present income”.

Moreover, we assume that respondent’s age adds to the inclination to participate in politics: the older you get, the more knowledge and experience about political life you receive. We measure age in the ESS data with the variable “Respondent’s exact age in years” (*agea*). Finally, empirical studies show that gender might be important to anticipate the odds of participation: men are presumed to be more active in politics than women (Kaase and Barnes, 1979; Almond and Verba, 1963). Gender is coded as a dichotomous variable (*gndr*): (0) = Female, (1) = Male.

The overview of descriptive statistics of all variables is shown in the Appendix A (Table A3 and Table A4).

4.3.4 Descriptives

Before answering the research questions, I first investigate the cross-national differences in the levels of political participation, social trust and political efficacy. Table 4.3 depicts the descriptives on the items that tap the three categories of political participation. As I have already pointed out in the introduction of this chapter, voter turnout in post-communist countries is in general on a systematically lower level than in mature democracies. For the specific sets of countries in this study, the gap is overall 10%. In particular, Lithuania (49%), Czech Republic (58%), Latvia (63%) and Estonia (65%) display alarmingly low levels. Although there is considerable variation with regard to the other activities related to party politics, on average we also discern a striking difference here: whereas in mature democracies about 22% of the respondents have at least engaged in one activity, in post-communist democracies this figure is only 14%.

The gap is even more striking when we consider protesting. With on average 41% of the people having engaged in at least one protest activity in the previous year, the results lend support to the argument that participation in movement politics is nowadays quite common in Western democracies. Despite some exceptions, Central and Eastern European democracies show a quite different picture: the figure is on average only 13%.

Table 4.3 The country-means of party politics and movement in post-communist and mature democracies

Country	Voting VOTE	Party politics activity				Movement politics activity				
		CON T	WP	WB	PM	TOT	PET	PDE M	BOY C	TOT
Belgium	.92	.15	.04	.07	.05	.23	.28	.07	.11	.33
Cyprus	.93	.20	.09	.07	.14	.27	.06	.02	.06	.32
Denmark	.94	.19	.05	.11	.09	.31	.34	.09	.22	.48
Finland	.83	.21	.04	.15	.07	.33	.32	.02	.30	.48
France	.78	.15	.04	.11	.02	.24	.34	.15	.28	.49
Germany-West	.85	.17	.04	.05	.04	.22	.30	.08	.34	.49
Greece	.88	.11	.04	.03	.08	.16	.04	.06	.14	.18
Ireland	.79	.23	.05	.10	.05	.31	.24	.10	.14	.33
Netherlands	.86	.14	.03	.05	.05	.22	.23	.03	.09	.29
Norway	.86	.21	.06	.26	.07	.43	.38	.07	.22	.48
Portugal	.74	.07	.01	.03	.02	.11	.05	.04	.03	.08
Spain	.82	.10	.03	.05	.01	.14	.17	.16	.08	.27
Sweden	.91	.15	.04	.18	.07	.31	.47	.06	.37	.61
Switzerland	.65	.12	.05	.07	.06	.22	.38	.08	.25	.48
United Kingdom	.70	.17	.02	.06	.02	.22	.38	.04	.24	.47
Total (mature)	.83	.16	.04	.09	.06	.25	.27	.07	.19	.39
Bulgaria	.73	.05	.04	.03	.06	.11	.06	.04	.03	.10
Croatia	.79	.07	.05	.06	.12	.21	.24	.08	.17	.31
Czech Republic	.58	.16	.02	.04	.04	.20	.15	.05	.07	.19
Estonia	.65	.11	.03	.05	.05	.19	.08	.02	.06	.12
Germany-East	.78	.17	.04	.04	.02	.21	.32	.07	.20	.43
Hungary	.80	.09	.01	.01	.01	.10	.07	.02	.06	.11
Latvia	.63	.12	.01	.04	.01	.15	.06	.07	.05	.14
Lithuania	.49	.05	.03	.02	.04	.10	.09	.04	.02	.12
Poland	.73	.07	.03	.04	.01	.11	.07	.02	.04	.11
Romania	.68	.11	.06	.04	.06	.18	.03	.04	.03	.08
Slovakia	.78	.07	.02	.02	.02	.10	.22	.02	.07	.26
Slovenia	.73	.11	.03	.04	.05	.16	.09	.02	.05	.13
Total (post-communist)	.70	.10	.03	.04	.04	.15	.12	.04	.07	.18

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: Entries are means from 0 to 1 having performed the activity. Data weighted with design weight. Voting: VOTE voted last national election. Party politics participation: CONT contacted politicians or officials, WP worked political party or action group, WB Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker, PM party member, TOT total party politics participation (country mean).

Movement politics participation: PET sign petition, PDEM public demonstration, BOYC boycotted products out of ethical/political concerns, TOT total movement politics participation (country mean).

In the chapter 5, I will elaborate in more detail on explaining the differences between country means. For now, however, I focus on causal relationships between individual-level variables. Hence, I merely show these differences between the two sets of countries to underline my

expectation that the individual predictors explaining engagement in party and movement politics in mature democracies not necessarily have similar effects in the younger post-communist ones.

I shift my attention now to the explanatory factors (see Table 4.4). These figures underline again what I have pointed out in previous chapters: in the new democracies, the level of social trust is at a much lower level. Likewise, even though there are again remarkable differences within each country set, in the post-communist region people have generally a much lower level of trust in political institutions. The differences are vast: overall, the levels of social and political trust are both more than 1 point lower (on a 0-10 scale). These figures make also immediately clear why it important to test the hypotheses on the effect of individuals' trust and efficacy on political participation separately for the two types of countries: the presumed causal relationships between these variables might indeed work out differently, due to the profoundly different contexts in which they operate.

Table 4.4 Country-level amount (mean scores) of independent variables

Country	Social trust score	Political trust	Political awareness	Political interest	Social embeddedness	Union membership	Religious attendance
Belgium	5.27 (1.62)	4.70 (1.77)	2.69 (0.89)	2.38 (0.87)	0.21 (0.41)	0.50 (0.50)	2.06 (1.37)
Cyprus	4.54 (2.01)	5.34 (1.95)	3.37 (1.11)	2.36 (1.04)	0.07 (0.05)	0.36 (0.48)	3.66 (1.19)
Denmark	6.79 (1.58)	6.52 (1.58)	3.30 (0.86)	2.90 (0.77)	0.25 (0.43)	0.84 (0.37)	2.11 (1.14)
Finland	6.32 (1.53)	6.19 (1.58)	2.90 (0.89)	2.46 (0.79)	0.34 (0.47)	0.72 (0.45)	2.31 (1.16)
France	4.91 (1.62)	4.46 (1.73)	2.88 (0.88)	2.53 (0.90)	0.15 (0.36)	0.19 (0.40)	1.95 (1.25)
Germany-W	5.35 (1.68)	4.96 (1.70)	3.13 (0.82)	2.74 (0.82)	0.26 (0.44)	0.30 (0.46)	2.48 (1.39)
Greece	3.65 (1.93)	3.64 (1.99)	2.89 (0.99)	2.05 (0.92)	0.04 (0.20)	0.16 (0.37)	3.33 (1.15)
Ireland	5.88 (1.60)	4.38 (1.76)	2.91 (0.96)	2.53 (0.92)	0.17 (0.37)	0.43 (0.50)	3.78 (1.61)
Netherlands	5.93 (1.55)	5.65 (1.54)	2.97 (0.87)	2.67 (0.78)	0.26 (0.44)	0.29 (0.45)	2.26 (1.58)
Norway	6.51 (1.47)	5.79 (1.61)	3.05 (0.77)	2.49 (0.78)	0.28 (0.45)	0.66 (0.47)	2.06 (1.15)
Portugal	4.17 (1.84)	3.47 (1.78)	2.58 (0.90)	1.94 (0.89)	0.03 (0.16)	0.16 (0.37)	3.18 (1.75)
Spain	4.93 (1.61)	4.38 (1.81)	2.70 (1.00)	1.97 (0.87)	0.10 (0.29)	0.12 (0.33)	2.42 (1.59)
Sweden	6.37 (1.52)	5.56 (1.68)	2.94 (0.86)	2.63 (0.81)	0.27 (0.44)	0.75 (0.43)	2.04 (1.16)
Switzerland	5.90 (1.65)	5.75 (1.56)	3.02 (0.88)	2.63 (0.87)	0.13 (0.34)	0.19 (0.39)	2.48 (1.40)
UK	5.52 (1.70)	4.59 (1.87)	2.93 (0.94)	2.54 (0.90)	0.07 (0.25)	0.42 (0.49)	2.16 (1.57)
Total (mature)	5.27 (1.76)	4.73 (1.85)	2.92 (0.92)	2.47 (0.91)	0.16 (0.37)	0.31 (0.46)	2.33 (1.48)
Bulgaria	3.63 (2.10)	2.18 (2.03)	3.09 (1.01)	2.30 (0.95)	0.02 (0.13)	0.48 (0.50)	2.64 (1.20)
Croatia	4.14 (2.09)	2.98 (1.96)	2.87 (1.04)	2.02 (0.93)	0.09 (0.29)	0.36 (0.48)	3.42 (1.52)
Czech Rep.	4.82 (2.02)	3.58 (1.95)	2.66 (0.95)	1.87 (0.76)	0.09 (0.29)	0.41 (0.49)	1.76 (1.24)
Estonia	5.37 (1.79)	4.27 (1.93)	2.88 (0.83)	2.41 (0.82)	0.05 (0.22)	0.56 (0.50)	2.17 (1.07)
Germany-E	5.09 (1.85)	4.43 (1.81)	3.03 (0.85)	2.74 (0.82)	0.24 (0.45)	0.52 (0.50)	1.79 (1.17)
Hungary	4.32 (1.93)	2.92 (1.93)	2.90 (0.99)	2.20 (0.92)	0.05 (0.22)	0.41 (0.49)	2.31 (1.32)
Latvia	4.80 (2.05)	2.76 (1.86)	2.84 (0.89)	2.26 (0.77)	0.03 (0.17)	0.51 (0.50)	2.46 (1.23)
Lithuania	4.33 (2.03)	2.83 (1.86)	2.68 (0.85)	2.12 (0.77)	0.05 (0.21)	0.31 (0.46)	3.06 (1.17)
Poland	4.23 (1.82)	3.31 (1.66)	2.82 (0.96)	2.29 (0.85)	0.06 (0.24)	0.26 (0.44)	4.15 (1.29)
Romania	3.65 (2.31)	3.66 (2.39)	2.86 (0.89)	2.25 (0.90)	0.03 (0.16)	0.26 (0.44)	3.29 (1.40)
Slovakia	4.31 (2.01)	4.06 (2.03)	3.00 (0.93)	2.36 (0.83)	0.06 (0.23)	0.55 (0.50)	3.17 (1.81)
Slovenia	4.71 (1.97)	4.12 (1.92)	2.91 (0.94)	2.41 (0.84)	0.02 (0.44)	0.49 (0.50)	2.74 (1.45)
Total (post-comm)	4.29 (2.05)	3.47 (2.02)	2.87 (0.94)	2.29 (0.88)	0.08 (0.27)	0.36 (0.48)	3.06 (1.60)

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: Standard deviations in parentheses.

4.4 Analysis and results

4.4.1 Methods of analysis

The research questions involve explanatory factors at the individual level and the dependent variable is dichotomous, therefore logistic regression analysis was chosen as the most appropriate method. This allows to predict the probability of participation in party and movement politics, given social trust, certain values representing political efficacy (political awareness, political trust), political interest and social embeddedness as independent variables. A logistic regression provides a coefficient “b”, which indicates each individual variable’s contribution to the dependent variable: an increase or decrease in the logit of the dependent variable when the independent variable increases one unit (Marien and Christensen, 2013). In the tables, I will provide the “exp(B)”, which is the change in the odds ratio associated with a one unit increase in the independent variable³⁴.

4.4.2 Individual-level regression on voting and party politics activities

My first hypothesis dealt with the assumption that social trust has a positive effect on voting, party politics and movement politics. The analysis for each form of participation contains two models (two steps): the first model includes socio-demographic variables and social trust, and in the second step I add a set of variables associated to political efficacy, as well as social embeddedness. I run individual-level regression analysis separately in mature and post-communist democracies.

Model 1a (mature democracies) and Model 1b (post-communist democracies) in Table 4.5 examine the impact of individual level factors and social trust on voting. This model explains 8 percent of the variation in voting in mature democracies and 6 percent in post-communist ones.³⁵ The main interest lies here in the effect of social trust. As expected, Model 1a demonstrates that there is a direct significant effect of social trust on the propensity to vote in mature democracies, although compared to other variables (like one’s perceived financial situation), the effect is rather modest ($\exp(B)=1.067$). Social trust also directly impacts voting in post-communist societies ($\exp(B)=1.058$), as we see in model 1b. The $\exp(B)$ indicates that holding all other variables constant, the odds of voting increases by 7% or 6% respectively, when increasing one unit on the social trust scale. Thus hypothesis H1a is confirmed.

Moreover, the pattern of social trust affecting individual’s inclination to vote is comparatively similar in both country-sets (H3a). Additional analyses also demonstrate that the effect of social trust on political action (H2a) is positive and significant in almost all countries,

³⁴ Odds ratios less than 1 are negative coefficients, whereas greater than 1 express positive coefficients.

³⁵ Please note, however, that we need to interpret this pseudo R-square with caution, it is not equivalent to the R-square.

except for Cyprus, Greece (note: both countries apply compulsory voting) and Latvia (see Table A5 in appendices).

When we add other variables in Models 2a and 2b the explained variance increases to 16% and 17% respectively in old and new democracies. We see that social trust loses its significance in both country-sets, hence, in line with my claim that the variables I included have a mediating effect. It is important to note that in regard to voting, the sizes of the effects of the independent variables are more or less similar in both mature and post-communist democracies. After controlling for other characteristics, there is no difference anymore (see model 2) with regard to gender: in both country sets, *ceteris paribus*, being a man decreases the propensity to vote, although this effect is only significant in post-communist countries.

I have also explored the mediation effects of political trust and awareness (that serve as proxies of external and internal efficacy in the ESS dataset) in more detail by using the Process macro for SPSS, written by Hayes (2013: see also Preacher and Hayes 2008).³⁶ The results show that in post-communist countries there is no direct effect of social trust on voting, whereas there is a significant indirect effect via political trust (H4a). Thus, we can conclude that in post-communist societies social trust indeed leads to more political trust (or, in other words, to external political efficacy), which in turn fosters electoral participation. Political awareness (or internal political efficacy) is positively related with voting, but does not work as the suggested mediator (H5a), due to the fact that social trust does not increase political awareness.

In mature democracies, I found no direct effect of social trust either. Political trust is a significant mediator (H4a), meaning that social trust in this country-set also enhances voting, because it leads to political trust. However, there is no significant indirect effect of social trust via political awareness for mature democracies; therefore H5a is rejected.

When it comes to other party-politics activities (that not include voting), we again observe very similar patterns between mature and post-communist democracies. Models 1c and 1d (see Table 4.5) demonstrate that social trust has a positive and significant direct effect on party politics participation in both country-sets, thus hypothesis H1b (direct effect of social trust on party politics participation) is again tentatively supported. However, taken together with the socio-economic

³⁶ This macro is freely available at Hayes's website: <http://www.afhayes.com/introduction-to-mediation-moderation-and-conditional-process-analysis.html>. This method has the ability to estimate models with dichotomous outcomes and more than one mediator and adjusts all paths for the potential influence of covariates not proposed to be mediators in the model. Thus, it allows to simultaneously testing the direct and indirect effects of social trust via both types of efficacy on participation in one model, while controlling for all confounding variables.

characteristics, social trust explains only the modest 5 (in mature democracies) and 4 (in post-communist democracies) percent of the variation.

Furthermore, in Models 2c and 2d, when we include additional variables, the explanatory capacity increases to 21 and 17 percent of the variance for the old and new democracies, respectively. Social embeddedness has a pronounced effect in both mature ($\exp(B) = 4.348$) and post-communist ($\exp(B) = 6.743$) democracies on inclination to participate in party politics, even when we control for other variables. It might be due to the fact that participation in other (than political) organizations and participation in political campaigning/decision-making process actually coincide.

Additional analyses, based on Hayes' Process macro mediation test, also show that there is no direct effect of social trust on party politics participation in mature democracies (see Table 4.6). Moreover, neither political trust nor political awareness has a mediation effect in mature democracies. This means that the fact that social trust has no direct effect anymore is due to the inclusion of the other variables (political interest, union membership, embeddedness, and religious attendance). Political trust has not even any effect at all on party politics participation in mature democracies. However, in post-communist countries, hypothesis H3a is confirmed: there is no direct effect of social trust on participation, but the indirect effect via political trust (proxy of external efficacy) is significant. Thus, with regard to the relationship between social trust, political trust, and participation at the individual level, we find the first difference between mature and post-communist democracies.

Table 4.5 Parameter estimates from individual-level regression models on participation in voting and party politics

	Voting				Party politics participation			
	Mature democracies (n=15)		Post-communist democracies (n=12)		Mature democracies (n=15)		Post-communist democracies (n=12)	
	Model 1a	Model 2a	Model 1b	Model 2b	Model 1c	Model 2c	Model 1d	Model 2d
Constant	0.179 ^{****} (0.093)	0.077 ^{****} (0.108)	0.195 ^{****} (0.093)	0.055 ^{****} (0.114)	0.047 ^{****} (0.083)	0.027 ^{****} (0.100)	0.033 ^{****} (0.095)	0.015 ^{****} (0.146)
Age	1.031 ^{****} (0.001)	1.023 ^{****} (0.001)	1.023 ^{****} (0.001)	1.014 ^{****} (0.001)	1.007 ^{****} (0.001)	0.999 (0.001)	1.003 ^{***} (0.001)	0.992 ^{****} (0.002)
Gender (female = ref)	1.123 ^{***} (0.034)	0.955 (0.037)	0.950 (0.033)	0.872 ^{****} (0.036)	1.183 ^{****} (0.029)	0.898 ^{***} (0.032)	1.459 ^{****} (0.041)	1.282 ^{****} (0.045)
Education	1.285 ^{****} (0.014)	1.121 ^{****} (0.015)	1.208 ^{****} (0.016)	1.078 ^{**} (0.017)	1.298 ^{****} (0.011)	1.104 ^{****} (0.012)	1.327 ^{****} (0.018)	1.149 ^{****} (0.021)
Perceived financial situation	1.238 ^{****} (0.021)	1.145 ^{****} (0.022)	1.237 ^{****} (0.020)	1.133 ^{****} (0.021)	1.106 ^{****} (0.020)	0.995 (0.021)	1.162 ^{****} (0.026)	1.031 (0.028)
Social trust	1.067 ^{****} (0.009)	0.990 (0.011)	1.058 ^{****} (0.008)	1.007 (0.009)	1.062 ^{****} (0.008)	0.987 (0.010)	1.043 ^{****} (0.010)	0.997 (0.011)
Political trust		1.080 ^{****} (0.010)		1.139 ^{****} (0.009)		0.986 (0.009)		1.090 ^{****} (0.011)
Political awareness		1.152 ^{****} (0.021)		1.162 ^{****} (0.021)		1.199 ^{****} (0.020)		1.116 ^{****} (0.027)
Political interest		1.547 ^{****} (0.023)		1.701 ^{****} (0.024)		1.579 ^{****} (0.021)		1.524 ^{****} (0.029)
Embeddedness		1.565 ^{****} (0.039)		1.990 ^{****} (0.095)		4.348 ^{****} (0.036)		6.743 ^{****} (0.067)
Trade union membership		1.508 ^{****} (0.039)		1.294 ^{****} (0.040)		1.492 ^{****} (0.032)		1.401 ^{****} (0.052)
Religious attendance		1.169 ^{****} (0.013)		1.148 ^{****} (0.012)		1.067 ^{****} (0.011)		1.065 ^{****} (0.015)
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	0.087	0.157	0.064	0.168	0.053	0.208	0.041	0.166
N	25 497	25 497	18 212	18 212	27 344	27 344	18 967	18 967

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p < 0.001; Standard errors in parentheses.

To sum up, the empirical evidence corroborates the theoretical argument that socially trusting people indeed tend to participate more in electoral and party-based activities, such as voting, campaigning, or being member of political parties. It holds for both mature and post-communist democracies. Moreover, political trust, as the proxy of external efficacy, proves to fully mediate between social trust and voting/other party politics activities in post-communist democracies. It means that the more individuals trust others, the more they are politically trusting (externally efficacious) and thus involve in politics. However, in mature democracies this relationship is only apparent for voting. In the subsequent section, I scrutinize if similar or different patterns predict protest activities in the West and in the East.

Table 4.6 Parallel multiple mediation analyses examining indirect effects of social trust on voting, party politics, and movement politics via political trust and political awareness

	Mature democracies		Post-communist democracies	
	Unstandardized b-coefficient	SE (B)	Unstandardized b-coefficient	SE (B)
Voting				
Direct effect	-0.0101	0.0106	0.0070	0.0089
Indirect total effect	0.0295*	0.0041	0.0388*	0.0030
Indirect effect via political trust	0.0298*	0.0041	0.0384*	0.0029
Indirect effect via political awareness	-0.0002	0.0004	0.0004	0.0005
Party politics participation				
Direct effect	-0.0133	0.0097	-0.0026	0.0114
Indirect total effect	-0.0056	0.0038	0.0260*	0.0035
Indirect effect via political trust	-0.0054	0.0037	0.0257*	0.0035
Indirect effect via political awareness	-0.0002	0.0005	0.0003	0.0004
Movement politics participation				
Direct effect	0.0783*	0.0087	0.0616*	0.0111
Indirect total effect	-0.0221	0.0033	-0.0036	0.0033
Indirect effect via political trust	-0.0220	0.0033	-0.0039	0.0033
Indirect effect via political awareness	-0.0001	0.0002	-0.0003	0.0004

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: * $p < 0.05$. Results are based on 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples. For the statistical controls that were included, see Tables 4.5 and 4.7.

4.4.3 Individual-level regression analysis of movement politics participation

Table 4.7 replicates the analysis for movement politics participation. Model 1e (mature democracies) and Model 1f (post-communist democracies) show the impact of socio-demographic characteristics and social trust on protest activities. The results lend support to hypothesis H1c. As expected, Model 1e demonstrates that there is a significant effect of social trust on the propensity to protest in mature democracies. The odds of being engaged in movement politics are 1.12 larger if one increases one unit on the social trust scale. The pattern of social trust affecting individual's inclination to protest is similar in both country-sets. However, although also highly significant, the effect is somewhat smaller in post-communist societies (Model 1f). In these countries, the odds of protesting increases by a factor of 1.08 when increasing one unit on the social trust scale ($\exp(B)=1.08$). Furthermore, the results show that, in both the "West" and "East", young people, higher educated and those who are financially well off are more likely to participate. Finally, it is interesting to note that in post-communist societies, men tend to engage in movement politics more often than women, whereas in Western democracies the reverse is true.

When the other variables are added (Models 2e and 2f in Table 4.7), the explained variance increases to 22 and 16 percent in mature and post-communist democracies, respectively. Interestingly, the results show that the effects of social trust do not significantly decrease in both country-sets. It gives support for our assumption that in movement politics, an individual indeed

relays on his/her fellow citizens and thus we observe an independent effect of social trust, even when we include a set of other variables.

The analysis using Hayes' (2013) Process macro (see Table 4.6) confirms that there is no significant indirect effect of social trust on participation via the mediators (political trust and awareness) on protesting in mature countries. This is in line with our expectations that political trust most of the time works in contradiction to participation in movement politics.

Moreover, Table 4.6 shows that social trust does not lead to political awareness (or internal efficacy), in neither post-communist nor mature democracies, neither in the context of voting, as we have observed earlier, nor in the context of protesting. The reason why remains a topic for future research: how social trust is connected to political awareness in mature and post-communist democracies?

Let us get back to the table 4.7 once more. We see that most additional variables (political awareness, political interest and social embeddedness) have significant effects on the propensity to be active in movement politics. Most importantly, in contrast to my previous findings on participation in institutionalized politics, we have to conclude that political trust has a negative effect on participation in movement politics. However, this effect is only significant in mature democracies. It is also interesting to note that the more often individuals attend religious services (presumably, the more they interact with other religious people), the less they are inclined to embark on protest activities: that is relevant for both country-sets, but only in mature democracies this negative effect is significant.

All in all, the causal relationships and effect sizes are indeed generally quite similar in post-communist and mature democracies. In line with my earlier finding, the only notable difference is that embeddedness exerts a much stronger influence in post-communist countries ($\exp(B) = 5.179$) compared to the mature democracies ($\exp(B) = 2.896$). It leads to the conclusion that in post-communist countries associational activities at a greater extent fosters movement politics. We also might presuppose that post-communist citizens participate in movement politics less because indeed they are also less involved in civic organizations.

To sum up, social trust proves to exert a positive significant effect on all types of participation. In common language, it means that trust in fellows brings citizens closer to political affairs. Social trust makes people more politically trustful, leading them for institutionalized participation in post-communist democracies, while in mature democracies this indirect causal relationship is only found for voting. For movement politics, however, social trust has its own independent, direct effect without mediation in both country-sets. Following this finding, we might also assume that political efficacy, both internal and external, is a multidimensional concept. It relates to social trust in different ways, given different participation channels. Social trust leads to

political efficacy in the context of voting, but it does not lead to efficacy in the context of protesting.

Table 4.7 Parameter estimates from individual-level regression models on participation in movement politics

	Participation in movement politics			
	Mature democracies (n=15)		Post-communist democracies (n=11)	
	Model 1e	Model 2e	Model 1f	Model 2f
Constant	0.103**** (0.074)	0.126**** (0.086)	0.031**** (0.114)	0.026**** (0.127)
Age	0.992**** (0.001)	0.986**** (0.001)	0.993**** (0.001)	0.981**** (0.002)
Gender (female = ref)	0.884*** (0.026)	0.670*** (0.029)	1.150*** (0.040)	0.973 (0.043)
Education	1.363**** (0.010)	1.204**** (0.011)	1.453**** (0.018)	1.274**** (0.020)
Perc. financial situation	1.199**** (0.018)	1.101**** (0.019)	1.220**** (0.026)	1.141**** (0.027)
Social trust	1.122**** (0.007)	1.081**** (0.009)	1.076**** (0.010)	1.064**** (0.011)
Political trust		0.945**** (0.008)		0.987 (0.011)
Political awareness		1.046*** (0.017)		1.117**** (0.026)
Political interest		1.600**** (0.019)		1.452**** (0.028)
Embeddedness		2.896**** (0.037)		5.179**** (0.067)
Trade union membership		1.479**** (0.029)		1.514*** (0.043)
Religious attendance		0.883**** (0.010)		0.984 (0.015)
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	0.117	0.220	0.072	0.160
N	27 318	27 318	18 909	18 909

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01, **** p < 0.001; Standard errors in parentheses.

All in all, the relationships predicting participation are generally quite similar in post-communist and mature democracies. However, so far I have investigated differences only between two country-groups: mature and post-communist democracies. But as it was already mentioned in the introduction, the decision to pool countries together as “mature democracies” was normative. It is important to underline that the Southern European democracies included in this analysis are relatively young: the democratic transition in these countries took place in late seventies and eighties during the third wave of democratization (Linz and Stepan, 1995). Thus Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, and Spain are considered less advanced on the scale of democraticness compared to their Western counterparts. Therefore, I perform an additional analysis to scrutinize whether the inclusion of the Southern European countries has significantly altered the results (Table 4.8).

For this reason I have replicated the regression models (Model 1) of participation in party and movement politics for two separate country-sets, namely: (1) Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, and Spain and (2) the remaining 11 mature democracies: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom. These additional analyses lead to the same conclusions. The results (see Table 4.8) show that in 11 mature democracies social trust exerts a direct and significant effect on voting and party politics activities, whereas in Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain the effect of social trust is not significant. In sum, the size of the effect of social trust is not considerably different if we put the countries together (n=15)

or if we leave only 11 of them instead: $\exp(B)=1.07$ and $\exp(B) 1.17$ respectively for voting and $\exp(B)=1.06$ and $\exp(B) 1.05$ for other party politics activities. Also for movement politics, the size of the exerted effect of social trust is very similar. The conclusion follows that at the individual level the patterns between the variables do not vary remarkably.

Table 4.8 Parameter estimates from individual-level regression models on participation in voting, party and movement politics in two sets of mature democracies

	Voting		Participation in party politics		Participation in movement politics	
	Mature democracies (n=11)	Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain	Mature democracies (n=11)	Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain	Mature democracies (n=11)	Cyprus, Greece, Portugal, Spain
Constant	Model 1g 0.06 ^{****} (0.123)	Model 1h 0.56 ^{***} (0.177)	Model 1i 0.09 ^{****} (0.101)	Model 1j 0.03 ^{****} (0.181)	Model 1k 0.39 ^{****} (0.089)	Model 1l 0.05 ^{****} (0.175)
Age	1.04 ^{****} (0.001)	1.02 ^{****} (0.002)	1.01 ^{****} (0.001)	1.01 ^{****} (0.002)	0.99 ^{****} (0.001)	0.99 ^{****} (0.002)
Gender	1.09 ^{**} (0.041)	1.27 ^{****} (0.064)	1.07 ^{**} (0.032)	1.68 ^{****} (0.064)	0.83 ^{****} (0.030)	1.03 (0.062)
Education	1.31 ^{****} (0.017)	1.27 ^{****} (0.027)	1.26 ^{****} (0.013)	1.32 ^{****} (0.024)	1.32 ^{****} (0.011)	1.38 ^{****} (0.023)
Perceived financial situation	1.32 ^{****} (0.027)	1.23 ^{****} (0.039)	1.01 (0.023)	1.21 ^{****} (0.041)	1.05 ^{**} (0.021)	1.26 ^{****} (0.04)
Social trust	1.17 ^{****} (0.012)	0.98 (0.017)	1.05 ^{****} (0.010)	0.99 (0.017)	1.05 ^{****} (0.009)	1.07 ^{****} (0.017)
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	0.13	0.04	0.03	0.07	0.07	0.10
N	18 225	7 272	19 570	7 774	19 530	7 788

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01, **** p < 0.001; Standard errors in parentheses.

4.5. Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter I have tested to what extent and how social trust and efficacy predict political participation. Moreover, I investigated whether these causal relationships differ between mature and post-communist European democracies. The conclusions concerning the three core claims I put forward in the theoretical framework are as follows.

First, the results show that social trust is positively related with all forms of political participation. My findings thus lend empirical support to my first claim.

Second, when we compare the impact of social trust on different modes of participation across mature and post-communist democracies, we see that the causal patterns explaining participation are similar; the hypothesized effects work in the similar direction. Thus, we can conclude that at the individual level the pattern of the relationship between social trust and political participation does not vary between countries.

Third, I claimed that the association between social trust and political participation can be explained by the fact that trust enhances efficacy, which in turn stimulates participation. My findings show that this mediation effect of *external* efficacy indeed exists (for some forms of participation), but the claim does not hold for *internal* efficacy. Hence, political awareness has not a mediating effect in neither post-communist nor mature democracies.

Moreover, this chapter shows that the relationship between social trust, political efficacy and the types of participation are roughly the same in the East and West. It means that, at the individual level, post-communist citizens' decision to participate in politics is driven by the same socio-economic resources, perceptions of social trust and efficacy and associational engagement that determine voter turnout in the mature democracies. Western models of political participation work relatively well for voting turnout and movement participation in new democracies.

However, there are some notable exceptions to this general conclusion. In post-communist democracies, we found a significant positive mediation effect of political trust on participation in party politics activities and voting: trusters participate more often, because they feel more externally efficacious. In mature democracies, this mediation effect only exists for voting. Political trust does not significantly influence participation in party politics activities (other than voting). In sum, these findings suggest that the role of social trust in political engagement (by fostering efficacy, which in turn enhances participation) is more important in the post-communist region.

Interestingly, there is a crucial difference between party politics and movement politics participation. External political efficacy stimulates voting and involvement in party activities, but refrains people from protesting. The direct effect of social trust on movement participation is positive, but at the same time the direct effect of political trust is negative. Simply put, in order to take to the streets, citizens need to trust their fellow citizens but distrust their politicians.

In this chapter, I focused on causal relationships between individual-level variables. Different participation levels are only in part accounted for by reference to individual levels of social trust, efficacy and socio-economic factors. I have not addressed the question to what extent we can explain the differences between countries. Are levels of participation in the new democracies lower because citizens in these countries have lower levels of social trust and feel less efficacious? Or, for that matter, because incomes and education levels are generally lower? (i.e. is it a composition effect)? Alternatively, do "trusters" in post-communist countries participate less than "trusters" in Western democracies because of contextual effects? Addressing these follow-up questions will be the task I pick up in the next chapter. Thus, I presume that contextual variables specific to post-communist democracies also account for the difference in voting and protest participation between mature and post-communist democracies.

Why are citizens in post-communist countries less politically active than in West European societies? The contextual impact of social trust³⁷

³⁷ This chapter was written together with Jasper Muis. A slightly different version of this chapter is prepared as a paper for the APSA (American Political Science Association) Annual Meeting, San Francisco, September 3-6, 2015. An earlier draft was presented at the “Dag van de Sociologie”, Amsterdam, May 27, 2015. This paper is intended to be published as an article, therefore some repetitions and references to other chapters may occur.

5.1 Introduction

So far, we have learned that the inclination of post-communist citizens to trust others and participate in political life is systematically lower compared with people living in mature democracies. At the same time, I have already described and considered a set of individual level effects (socio-economic variables, political efficacy and interest, social trust and social embeddedness) on political participation in chapter 4.

In this chapter I focus on contextual explanations of political participation. I address the following central question: why are people in some countries more politically active than people in other countries? It examines whether contextual factors influence individuals' political actions and to what extent they explain differences in aggregated rates of political activity. More specifically, I analyze factors that are associated with the communist legacy and post-communist transition and at the same time matter for individuals' decisions to engage in politics. In line with, for instance, Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm (2007), I distinguish between three forms of participation: voting, participation in party politics, and protesting. Referring to other studies on political involvement, I expect six contextual predictors to be related to the individual willingness to participate in politics, namely, general atmosphere of social trust, economic growth, (in)equality, corruption levels, government effectiveness, and historical experience with democracy.

Several recent studies have already suggested that contextual effects, like, corruption (Olsson, 2014), type of political regime, including post-communism (Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014; Letki, 2003), institutional effectiveness, inequality, and economic growth (Van Deth and Elff, 2004; Schroeder, 2008; Christensen, 2011; Hooghe and Marien, 2013) and other conditions (for instance, Geys, 2006; Kostadinova, 2003; Van der Meer, Van Deth, and Scheepers, 2009; Vráblíková, 2014) matter for individuals' decision to engage in politics. However, one of the key notions pointed out by Putnam (1993) and others (cf. Fukuyama, 1995) – social trust as a contextual factor – has attracted less attention. Only a few scholars tested the impact of contextual social trust on political participation (Roller and Rudi, 2008; Bäck, 2011; Norris, 2002a; Rothstein, 2011; Kim, 2014). To my best knowledge, none of these studies though systematically compared trends in both conventional and unconventional participation in both mature and post-communist democracies.

Hence, there is still a significant lacuna in the existing literature as we lack comprehensive research on the connection between aggregated levels of social trust (among other country-level variables) and political participation. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to address this caveat and cut into the question whether the level of contextual social trust (the average level of social trust in a country) significantly shapes political participation. The cross-level interaction effect between

contextual and individual levels of social trust on the modes of political participation tested in this research adds to the novelty of this study. Moreover, this effect is tested for three modes of political participation, which makes the analyses more fine-grained (in contrast to most other studies that only investigate one or two modes).

Again, my primary focus is on post-communist societies. I disentangle the concept of post-communism as a set of economic, political and social variables that define post-communism as a stage or context of political transformation. In the literature the definition of the “context” is used to describe the political system and economic conditions, as well the socio-demographic composition of a society. These factors are believed to exert an influence on individuals’ decisions and belong to the “external” or outside realm of one’s own influence sphere. In this study, I conceive post-communism as a set of various contextual factors that influence the attitudes and behaviour of citizens in post-communist societies (Vráblíková, 2014; Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011; Klandermans and Van Stralen, 2014). These contextual effects refer to present institutional settings, economic conditions, common norms and values, as well as the past collective experience of the citizens that lived through the communist regime and its collapse. I expect that the contextual factors can partly explain the remarkable “divergence” of post-communist societies from mature democracies with regard to participation that we observed in cross-national datasets that I showed in the previous chapter.

Multi-level analysis presupposes that, on the one hand, the lower levels of political participation in post-communist democracies could result from a so-called composition effect: because there are more people in post-communist countries who do not trust their fellow citizens, levels of political participation are lower. In a similar vein, the fact that some societies are more politically apathetic than others could be due to the fact that some societies have a larger proportion of people with lower levels of education, lower individual incomes, or lower levels of political interest.

On the other hand, we have good reasons to believe that the levels of political engagement of post-communist citizens are shaped by country-level factors. In other words, I presume that the striking differences in participation between Western democracies and post-communist countries are also due to the nature of the societies in which these citizens live (Pop-Eleches and Tucker, 2011). This implies, for instance, that even well-educated, efficacious, and trusting post-communist citizens are less inclined to engage in political activities than their counterparts in mature democracies because they are embedded in a distrustful society (Sztompka, 1999). The overall context individuals are nested in has to be taken into account to explain varying levels of political participation. In sum, the analysis presented in this chapter cuts into the role of the context in shaping political participation.

The structure of this chapter is as follows. First, I will outline which individual and contextual factors arguably matter for political participation in both party and movement politics. I distinguish between economic, political and cultural facets of post-communism. Next, I present the data and research design, which will be followed by the results. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings.

5.2 Explaining political participation: theories and hypotheses

Does having experienced communism diminish political activeness? Post-communism as a certain stage of “democratic development” has many facets. We can think about the impact of “living in a post-communist country” on participation in two broad ways: individual and contextual. I will briefly focus in this section on the distinction between these two types of effects and the relationships between macro and micro level variables analyzed in this chapter (Figure 1).³⁸ For reasons of brevity, I use the general variable “political participation” in this Figure, but it can be specified for different forms of political participation, such as voting and protesting.

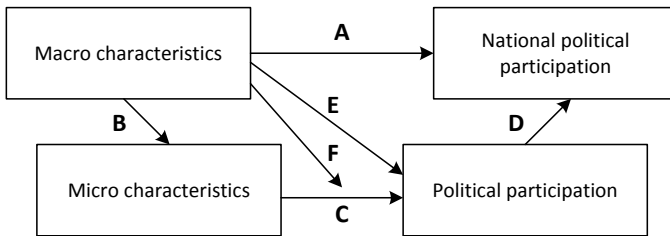


Figure 5.1 The relationship between country characteristics and political participation

Scholars have proposed a number of macro-level explanations to account for cross-country differences in political participation, such as differences in turnout (Geys, 2006; Dalton, 2004; Bühlmann and Freitag, 2006; in the post-communist region (Barnes and Simon, 1998; Kostadinova, 2003; Armingeon, 2007) and non-electoral political participation (Vráblíková, 2014; Armingeon, 2007).

For now, it is important to acknowledge that the relationships observed at the macro-level, depicted as arrow *A* in Figure 1, can be the result of different underlying processes. Macro-level effects on individual political participation can arise in three different ways (Ruiter and Van Tubergen, 2009; Coleman, 1990). We can distinguish contextual, individual, and cross-level

³⁸ The figure displays the causal relationships which I depict as arrows. However, I admit that the relationships between variables could be reciprocal (mutual): macro and micro level characteristics affect individual and national political participation, as well as the latter have influence on the former (Quintelier and van Deth, 2014).

interaction effects. First, macro-level effects can be compositional in nature. In that scenario, macro differences arise because of the unequal distribution of individual characteristics (arrow *B*), which in turn influence individuals' political behaviour (arrow *C*). Second, in line with for instance Putnam's current of thought (1993), country characteristics can also have a contextual effect on political participation. If that is the case, properties of countries have a direct effect on participation over and above individual characteristics (arrow *E*). In this theoretical section, I will discuss three contextual effects, based on three sets of country characteristics: their economic, political-institutional, and cultural properties.

Third, cross-national differences can be the result of cross-level interaction effects (i.e. arrow *F* type of relationships). If so, certain characteristics of countries condition the relationship between important individual characteristics and political participation. For instance, a higher income could perhaps lead to more participation in Western democracies, but decrease participation in post-communist countries.

In all cases, the influence on individual political participation leads to aggregate outcomes in national political activeness (arrow *D*). In the following discussion, I will elaborate on the most prominent micro and macro effects on participation that (might) distinguish post-communist countries from other mature democracies, namely, economic, political-institutional, and cultural factors. In other words, I am going to investigate arrows C, E and F.

5.2.1 Economic factors

The first argument refers to a very popular belief that economic conditions explain the lower participation levels of post-communist citizens. Different theories of political participation, democratization and modernization argue that economic growth gives people "the luxury" to participate, because, on the one hand, it reduces material insecurities and, on the other hand, a higher income insures that people can invest more of their time in political issues – this is also what the post-materialist thesis suggests (Van Deth, 1983; Inglehart, 1997). Economic factors are closely related to the so-called socio-economic standard model (SES) of political participation research that has been developed by Verba and colleagues (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt, 1969; Verba and Nie, 1972: 123-137; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). The socio-economic status of an individual is represented by three components: education, income, and occupational status; all three variables strongly positively correlate. Individuals with more intellectual resources (meaning a higher level of education) and more material resources (a higher income or higher occupational status) are more active in politics than persons with fewer resources. It is argued that resources lead to political participation in the sense that individuals with more resources can exert more pressure on

politicians. Moreover, resources stimulate political interest and form participatory political attitudes that make citizens more responsible for their country and thus more willing to participate (Dalton, 2004). Thus, I assume that socio-economic status has a positive effect on all three modes of participation: *People of higher socio-economic status are more likely engage in political participation, be it voting (H1a), party (H1b) or movement (H1c) activities.*

The literature demonstrates that there is also a contextual effect of economic development on participation: in countries where people are economically better off, citizens vote and protest more often (Lipset, 1959; Dahl, 1971; Sedehi and Tabriztchi, 1974; Przeworski and Limongi 1997; Dalton, 2004; Teorell, Torcal, and Montero, 2007).

There are several theories that illuminate this relationship. Some authors assume that active involvement of citizens in politics actually contributes to government's effectiveness and economic development. Others explain it in a reverse way: the process of economic development leads to social change that also alters the political culture of a nation and that is associated with the rise of new forms of political participation (Nie, Powell, and Prewitt, 1969: 362; Inglehart, 1997; Dalton, 2004). The causal chains between economic development and political participation consist of a set of simultaneous processes that are acquired along economic growth: industrialization, urbanization, educational expansion, the rise of new communication (media) technologies, mobilization, and increasing political incorporation that helps people to get involved in political life in a society (Weitz-Shapiro and Winters, 2008: 1). Put it differently, national economic growth generates and creates the access to resources. However, it is difficult to actually distinguish between the individual and macro-level effects of economic factors on participation. Do people participate because they become better-off? Or do poorer people also participate more in richer countries?

Empirical studies suggest that with the increases in the supply of material resources, the general level of participation increases naturally, even among the relatively poor (for instance, Inglehart, 1997). One argument for this is that rich countries generally implement extensive social welfare systems that not only facilitate the development of civic engagement, but also make citizens feel safer (because the system guarantees basic socio-economic needs) and consequently make them more willing to take a political action (Van Oorschot and Arts, 2005; Lancee and Van de Werfhorst, 2011; Alber and Kohler, 2008). Another argument suggests that in wealthier countries people are more involved in civic associations, private charities, voluntary organizations that in turn teach "participatory" skills (Walzer, 1998; Pichler and Wallace, 2009). Moreover, Nie, Powell, and Prewitt (1969) argue that although individuals of higher social-economic class participate more (individual-level effect), their success in achieving political goals is presumably spread and motivates others to participate as well. Therefore, low socio-economic status citizens might henceforth participate more in the manner of high-SES participants (contextual-level effect). All in

all, we might assume that national economic conditions have an influence on individual political activity.

To sum up, the arguments above lead to the following hypothesis: *People who live in countries with a higher level of socio-economic development more frequently vote (H2a) and participate more often in party (H2b) and movement (H2c) politics.*

If the hypothesis holds true, it could explain why economically less developed post-communist countries have lower rates of participation than mature democracies. Moreover, it could account for differences among the post-communist countries, although Duch (1998) could not find support for this hypothesis within this region.

Equality is another contextual economic indicator that explains participation (Uslaner and Brown, 2005; Alesina and La Ferrara, 2000; Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm, 2007; Schroeder, 2008). If resources are equally distributed, it means that access to participation is also more equal. Higher levels of political participation thus tend to be accompanied with higher levels of equality. The reverse is also true. A large literature on democratization argues that inequality erodes the sense of social trust and there is some evidence that inequality even lowers rates of political participation in democratic societies. As Lancee and Van de Werfhorst (2011) notice, in more unequal societies people tend to abstain from participation because they feel more disadvantaged and more anxious than they would have been in more egalitarian societies. In their empirical study, they find evidence that independent of individual resources, higher inequality indeed hinders political engagement. Uslaner and Brown (2005) support the argument by saying that in unequal societies people think that they are not represented; they feel powerless and therefore they engage in less societal interaction. Informed by these theoretical insights, I assume that relatively higher inequality rates in post-communist societies hinder individuals' political involvement: *In countries with more socioeconomic equalities, people politically participate more frequently in elections (H3a), party (H3b) and movement (H3c) politics.*

5.2.2 Political factors

According to the second set of effects, it is plausible that political institutions and their outcomes have an impact on attitudes citizens hold about politics, and that the post-communist countries have distinct features in this regard. The literature considers a wide array of institutional effects on political behaviour, both subjective and contextual: political and electoral systems, political polarization, access to governmental institutions, different policies, citizens' expectations, evaluations of political institutions, years of democratic experience and other (Freitag and Stadelmann-Steffen, 2010; Freitag, 2010; Powell, 1986; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991; Lijphart,

1999; Christensen, 2011). However, although acknowledging the importance of, for instance, the political and electoral systems (Lijphart, 1999), I am not going to delve into all these contextual factors, as I focus on the effect of post-communism and the variables that are particularly related to it.

At the individual level, political efficacy is conceived as being one of the most decisive factors that spur individual's inclination to participate (Lane, 1959; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954; Warren, 1999; Morrell, 2005; Klandermans, Van de Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008; della Porta and Reiter, 2012). Political action is more likely to be undertaken by citizens who have the feeling that they can bring about changes. Following the conceptualization of Lane (1959), I distinguish between internal and external political efficacy. Internal efficacy is self-understood competence to influence political outcomes, whereas external efficacy reflects on perceived government's responsiveness (Barber, 1984).

Although there is empirical support for the claim that both dimensions of political efficacy positively contribute to all modes of participation (Almond and Verba, 1989; Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Verba, Scholzman, and Brady, 1995; Karp and Banducci, 2008), it is popularly assumed that external political efficacy (a citizen thinks that his/her voice is heard) more strongly encourages conventional participation, while internal efficacy is a condition for both party and movement politics, as efficacious citizens not only learn about the political outcomes and consequences, but also know the ways how to influence those outcomes (Gamson, 1968: 48; Sheerin, 2007). Thus, I formulate the following expectations: *Individual sense of external efficacy leads to more active involvement in electoral (H4a) and party (H4b) politics, and less active involvement in movement politics (H4c); Individual sense of internal efficacy leads to more active involvement in electoral (H5a), party (H5b) and movement (H5c) politics.*

From the contextual perspective, corruption features the ineffectiveness of an institutional setting of a country (Rothstein, 2011). Political corruption has been known for many damaging effects, including citizens' political disengagement. Uslaner (2002) claims that corruption in a society proves to be a counter-motivator of political participation. The acceptance of corruption diminishes the importance of legal channels to influence politics. For instance, McCann and Dominguez (1998) find that the suspicion of corruption among political elites depressed participation in Mexican elections between 1986 and 1995. In a similar vein, scholars analyzing the US and Britain also come to the conclusion that electoral participation erodes as a result of corruption scandals (Bowler and Karp, 2004; Blass, Roberts, and Shaw, 2012). Hooghe and Quintelier (2014) find that higher corruption levels significantly negatively affect both institutionalized and non-institutionalized political participation in European democracies.

Kostadinova (2012) asserts that the negative impact of corruption is even more devastating in countries transitioning from a totalitarian system to democracy. When governments are dishonest, ordinary citizens lose trust in the new system and it deters them from public engagement. We should keep in mind that voluntary political participation is not yet a habit in post-communist countries. It simply means that corruption leaves no room for participatory skills and civic virtues to flourish. In her studies based on Eastern European democracies, Kostadinova (2003) finds that with regard to electoral behaviour, corruption perceptions discourage people from voting (for instance, because of the fear of buying votes). On the other hand, the World Values Survey and Comparative Study of Electoral Systems data demonstrate that corruption instead propels some forms of protest participation. Kostadinova concludes that disenchanted citizens with little faith in the efficacy of the electoral process will search for other ways to express their anger about the practices of corrupt policies. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses: *In countries with higher levels of corruption individuals less likely participate in voting (H6a) and party politics (H6b); In countries with higher levels of corruption individuals more likely participate in protest politics (H6c).*

Moreover, another political-institutional factor widely considered in the post-communist context is so-called government effectiveness. By government effectiveness I refer to the ability of a government (among other capabilities) to effectively implement decisions, provide qualified services and meet the objectives of a society (cf. World Bank Governance Indicators). The more a government is effective in this sense, the higher the level of social welfare in a country. Scholars argue that when post-communist democratic institutions are in a period of flux (instability), governments are not effective and therefore it creates barriers for participation (Duch, 1998). The Soviet-type legacies of the political/administrative setting are believed to be still rooted (to a certain level) in post-communist political institutions. As Norgaard, Ostrovska, and Hansen (2000) notice, “the extreme reliance on central (Moscow) decision making produced a “learned helplessness”, in local and regional administrations, who were used to receiving very detailed guidelines for any sort of decision”. Thus, there is a popular presumption that post-communist institutions (governments) are ineffective because structural properties are legacies of the incumbent socialist systems with certain (legal and illegal) rules and norms. The perceived clientelistic nature of the institutions hinders citizens’ belief that they can influence politics and thus diminish the willingness to participate in it. On the other hand, it might hold true that government ineffectiveness encourages people to take to the streets to protest against it. Thus, the subsequent hypotheses can be formulated: *The more effective a government, the more likely individuals are to participate in elections (H7a) and party politics (H7b), but the less likely individuals are to participate in movement politics (H7c).*

Finally, I presume that the years of stable democracy of a country also has an impact on whether citizens more actively participate in politics (Van Deth and Elff, 2004; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). The assumption implies that through the years of democracy citizens learn democratic procedures and routines, including political participation. In other words, the longer citizens live in a democracy, the more they are used to the rules of the democratic game. It would not only help us to distinguish between mature and post-communist democracies, but also between so-called Western and Southern European countries that made democratic transitions in the 1970's. The hypothesis thus suggests: *the more years of democracy a country experiences, the more citizens are likely to participate in voting (H8a), party (H8b), and movement (H8c) politics.*

5.2.3 Social trust as a cultural factor

A third set of effects stresses that citizens are exposed to their socio-cultural environment and its norms about participation (for instance, Schwartz, 2006). Social trust is one of the prominent attributes of the socio-cultural environment. I have already discussed in previous chapters that social trust as a personal trait might lead to individuals' willingness to participate in politics. The explanation of this assertion is that trusting people care about each other and thus feel a moral duty to be involved in common affairs (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Seligman, 1997). It is argued that social trust encourages individuals to participate in the pursuit of the commons, as trust provides us with the assurance that political action will be worthwhile. Thus, it overcomes the rational choice dilemma of the lack of effectiveness of individual political action, since social trust is not only about what you get, but also what you give. In this manner, successful cooperation based on trust gives people satisfaction in what they do (Putnam, 1993; Fishkin, 1995: 148). Political action stimulated by social trust endows us with a sense of belonging to a collective identity and pride for struggling for good and right values (Klandermans, 2003; Dahl, 1998). Following the reasoning entrenched in social capital theories, I hypothesize that: *Individual sense of social trust leads to more active participation in elections (H9a), party (H9b) and movement (H9c) politics.*

Moreover, it may be that social trust makes us more active democrats because it is tightly related to social embeddedness or participation in voluntary civic organizations. Social capital theorists assert that more trustful people tend to join organizations, and vice versa, organizations teach individuals to have trust in other fellows (Van Deth, 2001; Hooghe and Stolle, 2003). Networks of civic engagement function like "schools of democracy" where citizens learn skills of participation (Hooghe and Stolle, 2003). The general claim is that participation in associations "spills over" to national-level participation in politics. Thus, I expect that: *Individual's involvement*

in social networks (social embeddedness) leads to more active participation in elections, party and movement politics (H10a, H10b and H10c, respectively).

From the culturalist perspective, social trust is a property of contexts, not only of individuals (Kawachi, Subramanian and Kim, 2008). Put differently, it is a collective level resource and comprises a contextual climate (Subramanian, Lochner, and Kawachi, 2003). This approach asserts that political participation differs cross-nationally because cultural settings and norms differ. In other words, cross-national differences in political behaviour are attributed to differences in culture (Duch, 1998). This type of explanation first of all refers to one of the most important arguments of Almond and Verba in their study *The Civic Culture* (1963), namely that the political culture influences whether and in what way people participate in politics. Their study for instance concludes that even those who possess a lower socio-economic status are inclined to actively participate when a civic culture is prevalent. Thus, the culturalist approach presupposes that an atmosphere of social trust in a country propels people to participate in determination of their own affairs. In a socially trusting environment people feel more comfortable with participation. Even distrustful people participate more if the general atmosphere is trustful.

Empirical research also lends support to the argument that countries with a longer democratic tradition demonstrate higher levels of trust and political activism (Bäck, 2011; Inglehart, 1997: 188; Almond and Verba, 1963; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). For instance, Iglíč and Fábregas (2007) show that trust as a contextual attribute is one of the strongest predictors of involvement in social networks in European democracies. Social networks are collective endeavours and participation (in these networks) largely depends on the contextual level of trust. Moreover, Warren (1999) tested the contextual effect of trust as a predictor of voting in the United States. Panel data demonstrate that in more trusting environments people tend to vote more often. He assumes that the same logic may apply to other types of participation.

In a similar vein, Putnam argued that social trust serves as a “public good” with positive spill-over effects on political participation (Putnam, 1993; 2000). His study of the Italian regions pointed out that democracy works better in an environment of high social capital (hence, social trust): “Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Virtuous circles result in social equilibrium with high levels of cooperation, trust, reciprocity, civic engagement and well-being, as well as honesty and law-abidingness” (Putnam, 1993: 111, 177). In other words, Putnam (2000: 20) contends that there may be positive spill-over effects from the societal level to individuals, so that poorly connected individuals benefit from a well-connected community (cf. Bäck, 2011). Likewise, Uslaner (2001: 108) argues that people who live among trusters may not actually become trusters themselves, but they may adopt the behaviour of trusters (for instance, inhibit habits of participation).

The reverse is also true. Putnam (1993: 115) explains that societies can also be locked in a vicious circle of distrust. Distrust is defined as a common legacy of the post-communist countries. Sztompka (1999) has argued that the thorough dominance of social life by the Communist Party during the Soviet period produced a “block culture” characterized by widespread distrust of the social sphere. These cultural paths that are inherited from the past are resistant to change and influence our present.

Hence, I presume that the culture of distrust has a significant harmful contextual effect on individuals’ readiness to participate in politics. Even if they are individually trusting, they will participate less when they live in a distrustful society. For this reason, the individual-level impact of generalized trust may vary across countries (Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm, 2007). To sum up, I formulate the following hypothesis: *people who live in more trustful countries have a higher propensity to be active in elections (H11a), party politics (H11b) and engage in movement politics participation (H11c).*

Moreover, I also expect a cross-level interaction effect between individual social trust and contextual factors. For instance, Iglič and Fábregas (2007) notice that individual social trust is a stronger predictor of political participation in Western cultures than in Eastern European societies. Thus, I hypothesize that *in prosperous, politically advanced, and socially trustful societies, the effect of individual social trust on voting and participation in party and movement politics is stronger compared to less developed societies (H12a, H12b and H12c, respectively).* In other words, I will test the interaction effects between individual social trust and all contextual indicators (GDP per capita, GINI, corruption perception, governments’ effectiveness, years of democracy, and contextual social trust) employed in the analyses. To conclude, all hypotheses are summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Overview of the hypotheses

Factors	Levels	Hypotheses
Economic factors	Micro level	H1a-c People of higher socio-economic status more likely engage in political participation, be it voting (H1a), party (H1b) or movement (H1c) activities.
	Macro level	H2a-c People who live in countries with a higher level of socio-economic development more frequently vote (H2a) and participate in party (H2b) and movement (H2c) politics. H3a-c In countries with more socioeconomic equalities, people politically participate more frequently in elections (H3a), party (H3b) and movement (H3c) politics.
Political factors	Micro level	H4a-c External efficacy leads to more active involvement in electoral (H4a) and party (H4b) politics and less active involvement in movement politics (H4c); H5a-c Internal efficacy leads to more active involvement in electoral (H5a), party (H5b) and movement (H5c) politics.
	Macro level	H6a-c In countries with lower levels of corruption individuals more likely participate in voting (H6a) and party politics (H6b), but less likely participate in protest politics (H6c). H7a-c The more effective a government, the more likely individuals participate in elections (H7a) and party politics (H7b), but the less likely individuals participate in movement politics (H7c). H8a-c The more years of democracy of a country, the more citizens are likely to participate in voting (H8a), party (H8b), and movement (H8c) politics.
	Micro level	H9a-c Individual social trust leads to more active participation in elections (H9a), party (H9b) and movement (H9c) politics.
Cultural factors	Micro level	H10a-c Individual involvement in social networks (social embeddedness) leads to more active voting (H10a), participation in party (H10b) and movement politics (H10c).
	Macro level	H11a-c People who live in more trustful countries have a higher propensity be active in elections (H11a), party politics (H11b) and engage in movement politics participation (H11c).
Interaction effects	Micro X Macro level	H12a-c In societies that are more economically and politically advanced and have higher levels of contextual social trust, the effect of individual social trust on participation in elections, party and movement politics is stronger than in less advanced societies (H12a, H12b and H12c, respectively).

5.3. Data and research design

5.3.1 Data

I will use the data from the fourth wave of the ESS (2008). Compared to the other waves (for instance, 2002, 2010 and 2012), the wave of 2008 embraces the largest number of European post-communist democracies. In total 27 democratic societies were selected: 26 European countries plus

East Germany as a post-communist society.³⁹ Most of the countries included are members of the EU; I also added Norway and Switzerland, which are internationally acknowledged as fitting the highest democratic standards. All in all, the analyses include more than 40,000 respondents (N₁) from 27 societies (N₂).

5.3.2 Dependent variables

Voting. – I measure voting with the question: “Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]? Yes/No?” (variable name: vote⁴⁰).

Party politics participation. – Other party politics participation activities are tapped with these items: 1) Contacted politician or government official last 12 months (variable name: contplt); 2) Worked in political party or action group last 12 months (wrkprty); 3) Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker (badge); 4) Member of a political party (mmbprty). Answers: yes=1; no=0. The dichotomized scoring to measure participation in these activities is applied: 1 is given to the respondents who participated in at least one of the mentioned activities, and they get a 0 score if they did not participate in any of the activities.

Movement politics participation. – Participation in movement politics is gauged by these indicators: 1) Signed a petition in last 12 months (sgnptit); 2) Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months (pbldmn); 3) Boycotted certain products in last 12 months (bctprd). The answer categories consist of “yes” (1) and “no” (0). As the distributions is skewed (around 70 per cent of the respondents did not participate in any activity), the dichotomized scoring was employed, score 1 meaning participation in at least one movement activity, and 0 indicating non-participation.

5.3.3 Independent variables

Socio-economic status is measured by two indicators: education and (perceived) income.

Education. – Education level (edulvla) of respondents is measured as follows: 1 = “Less than lower secondary education”; 2 = “Lower secondary education completed”; 3 = “Upper secondary education completed”; 4 = “Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed”; 5 = “tertiary education completed”.

Perceived income. – I measured perceived income with a question about how the respondents “feel about household’s income nowadays” (hincfel).⁴¹ The answer categories are 1 =

³⁹ Countries/societies included as mature/established democracies are: Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Germany-West, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Post-communist democracies: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany-East, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

⁴⁰ I also include the original variable names of the ESS database for the ease of the replication of the analyses.

“Very difficult (to live) on present income”; 2 = “Coping on present income”; 3 = “Difficult (to live) on present income”; 4 = “Living comfortably on present income”.

Socio-economic development. – The socio-economic level of a country is measured by its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita (the household income, standardized by purchasing power parity/PPP in US\$) in 2008. The figures are obtained from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook. To avoid very small parameter estimates, in the analysis the real numbers of GDP were divided by 1000.

Inequality. – The Gini coefficient measuring inequality of income and wealth is proposed to be an accurate indicator of actual inequality within a society. I use 2008 figures (or adjacent figures when figures were missing for 2008) obtained from The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Data for Switzerland and Hungary are from 2009. Data for Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia and Romania come from the World Bank Organization (2008), for Bulgaria – 2007, for Romania – 2009. The 2008 data for East Germany are found in Grabka, Goebel, and Schupp (2012). The Gini coefficient is measured after taxes and transfers of total population. Theoretically, the inequality index ranges from 0 (no inequality) to 1 (perfect inequality). Thus I expect that the higher GINI inequality coefficient of a country is, the lower are the country’s participation rates.

Political trust. – I use political trust as a proxy of external efficacy. The ESS 2008 survey does not provide the items that were originally used in the American Elections Studies to measure external political efficacy (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). The closest indicator to it is political trust, which refers to the perceived trustworthiness of the governmental institution and assumingly renders a feeling that the respondent’s voice is heard. Political trust is operationalized by measuring trust in the most important institutions of a political system using this question: “Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out”. The following institutions were presented a) the country’s parliament (trstprl); b) the legal system (trstlgl); c) the police (trstplc); d) politicians (trstplt); e) political parties (trstprt). The answer categories ranged from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust). The general score of political trust for each individual is the mean of the items. Individuals are included if they at least provided an answer on two items (out of five); otherwise (if there is only one item or none) the case is missing.

Political awareness. – This variable serves as a proxy of internal efficacy. The ESS questionnaire does not include questions that accurately measure internal political efficacy. In line with some other studies (for instance, Hooghe and Marien, 2013: 140), I use political awareness as

⁴¹ The original question to measure household’s income (Household’s total net income, all sources) was not chosen because of many missings of this value. Instead, following Hooghe and Quintelier (2014), the perceived income was considered. Correlation between the two variables is 0.50.

a proxy variable representing internal efficacy, because the association between these two variables is strong. Political awareness is defined as the extent an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered (Zaller, 1992: 21). Political awareness at the individual level is measured by these two indicators: a) “How often does politics seem so complicated that you can’t really understand what is going on?” (polcml) (1 = frequently; 2 = regularly; 3 = occasionally; 4 = seldom; 5 = never); b) “How difficult or easy do you find it to make your mind up about political issues?” (poldcs) (1 = very difficult, 2 = difficult; 3 = neither difficult, nor easy; 4 = easy; 5 = very easy). These two items moderately correlate (Pearson’s $r = 0.47$), which allows us to compose a single variable. The cases with an answer to only one question are also taken into account.

Political interest. – Another important variable which assumingly predicts political participation is political interest. I will therefore add this as control variable. It is measured in the ESS survey with a standard question: “How interested would you say you are in politics?” (polintr) (1 = not at all interested; 2 = hardly interested; 3 = quite interested; 4 = very interested). I include political interest in the analysis because it is closely related to political awareness, however, I keep these two variables separate.

Corruption. – The data for corruption perception come from the Eurobarometer (EB) 2009 (“Attitudes of Europeans towards Corruption”). The EB study was chosen above the Transparency International report, for the purpose to differentiate between West and East Germany. The differences with regard to the corruption perception levels between these two parts of Germany are noted by several studies (Clemens, 2000; Pázmándy, 2011). The additive index of corruption perception of the given countries is formed by Pázmándy (2011). He chose three questions to form the index: 1) “There is corruption in local institutions in (our country)”, 2) “There is corruption in regional institutions in (our country)”, 3) “There is corruption in national institutions in (our country)”. All of them have four answer categories: “Totally agree”, “Tend to agree”, “Tend to disagree”, “Totally disagree”. Pázmándy carries out a confirmatory factor analysis to prove the consistency of the index across all countries and regions. The analysis shows that the reliability of the index is high with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.93. Pázmándy (2011: 63) concludes that “the three questions form an additive index with a scale from zero to nine. The respondent does not perceive any corruption at all when his answers result in a value of zero and perceives rampant corruption when his questions result in a value of nine”.⁴²

⁴² However, data for Norway, Switzerland and Croatia were not available in the EB study. Thus, the values from the Transparency International were taken for these countries and the scores were adjusted to fit the same measurement scale. The data on the TI Corruption perception indexes are available online: http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2009#results

Government effectiveness. – The government effectiveness coefficient provided by the World Bank research programme is one of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) capturing the dimensions of good governing across the countries. Government effectiveness captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies. Percentile rank of countries ranges from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest). The higher values of the coefficient indicate better governance scores (WGI, Country data reports, 1996 – 2012).

Years of democracy is measured by the years of stable democracy since 1919. The accurate data is obtained from the Polity IV Annual Time Series. The Polity IV data series includes democracy and autocracy indicators for over 160 countries from 1800-2013. Both the democracy and autocracy indicators were constructed as 21-point scales based on an assessment of political competition and participation. The scale ranges from -10 to +10, with -10 to -6 corresponding to autocracies, -5 to 5 corresponding to anocracies, and 6 to 10 to democracies (The Polity Project).

Social trust (individual level). – The ESS 2008 survey operationalizes social trust by using three questions: 1) Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people? (ppltrst); 2) Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got a chance or would they try to be fair? (pplfair); 3) Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or are they mostly looking out for themselves? (pplhlp). For each question, the respondents were asked to indicate their consent on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means the lowest and 10 the highest agreement. A principal component analysis of the three trust questions showed that they load on one scale quite strongly (the first component explains between 58.7 and 78.3 per cent of the variance in each of the 27 societies). Other research (for instance, Zmerli and Newton, 2008) also demonstrate that trust and the perceptions that people are fair and helpful indicate a single dimension, therefore my decision is to summate each individual’s responses to these three questions and divide the number by three. In the cases where only one or two questions are answered, accordingly one score or the sum of the scores divided by two are counted.

Social embeddedness. – The ESS measures the participation in (voluntary) associations using this question: “Worked in another [than political] organisation or association last 12 months” (wrkorg). In addition, I include two other types of associational participation: *membership in labour unions* and *religious attendance*. Participation in these organizations may foster face-to-face contacts and function as a stepping stone to political participation (Newton, 1999b; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2001; Warren, 2001; Norris, 2002a). Trade union membership (mbtru) is measured as a dichotomous variable (1 = yes; 0 = no). Religious attendance (rlgatnd) measured how often

respondents attend religious services apart from special occasions. Answers ranged on a seven-point scale from “never” (1) “to more than once a week” (7). Due to the different nature and function of these organizations, I keep all three variables (social embeddedness, union membership and religious attendance) separate.

Social trust (country level). – Aggregated mean of the items of social trust of individuals in a particular country is counted.

Age and gender. – Age is measured in the ESS data with the variable “Respondent’s exact age in years” (agea). Gender is coded as a dichotomous variable (gndr): (0) = Female, (1) = Male.

5.3.4 Describing country differences

Table 5.2 provides an overview of the 27 societies included in the study and their scores on the country-level variables. It shows that the mean levels of contextual social trust, corruption, government effectiveness, GDP, and years of democratic experience significantly differ between the two samples of societies. Thus, we observe that there is substance behind the notion of “post-communism” that can be unraveled by a set of contextual-level factors. In contrast, some other scholars, for instance Lasinska (2013: 189), use post-communism as a dummy variable, but I deliberately did not include this dummy because it is already captured by theoretically more meaningful variables. In other words, the characteristic features of post-communist countries are already incorporated by the other measures in my study.

It is important to note that one can also notice considerable differences within the two samples. For instance, levels of social trust are remarkably lower in Greece and Portugal, compared to other Western democracies, while in Estonia or East Germany contextual social trust is of the same level as in mature democracies. In regard to economic development, the two country-sets are more distinct, although Portugal, the poorest country among the mature democracies, would better fit in the post-communist context. It is also worth noting that there are no considerable differences between the country-sets with regard to income inequality, and within the groups the differences are also modest (except maybe for Portugal within the mature democracies, and Lithuania and Latvia within the post-communist ones). With regard to corruption, there is more variation within the sample of mature democracies (for instance, Greece and Cyprus are perceived as being highly corrupt). Last, but not least, post-communist governments seem to be less effective, with some noticeable differences, for instance, Estonia, Slovenia and Czech Republic.

Because of the relatively small number of countries and specifics of the sample, I did not include several other country level variables, for instance, the Freedom House index (measuring the country’s degree of political freedoms and civil liberties) and Human Development index, as it is

unlikely that these variables can account for the differences in political participation between the democratic countries in Europe. As I have explained in chapter 1, there are some minor differences between the chosen countries in regard to the Freedom House index, but these differences are rather small to have a significant impact on country's level of participation. I proceed with the descriptive analysis of these participation levels.

Table 5.2 Country-level characteristics

	Contextual social trust (ESS)	GDP (PPP) per capita 2008*	Gini inequality coefficient 2008**	Corruption perception index 2009***	Government effectiveness coefficient 2008****	Years of democracy since 1919 until (and included) 2008*****
Mature	5.47	36,586	0.29	6.2	90.65	77
Belgium	5.27	36,322	0.27	6.5	87.86	85
Cyprus	4.54	28,381	0.29	7.7	89.32	44
Denmark	6.79	38,208	0.24	3.3	99.51	85
Finland	6.32	36,844	0.26	5.3	99.03	89
France	4.91	34,262	0.29	6.4	91.26	84
Germany – West	5.35	35,740	0.29	6.5	89.81	75
Greece	3.65	30,661	0.33	8.1	71.84	67
Ireland	5.88	42,780	0.29	7.3	88.83	88
Netherlands	5.93	40,434	0.29	5.0	94.17	85
Norway	6.51	55,199	0.25	5.2	97.09	85
Portugal	4.17	22,264	0.35	7.4	82.04	54
Spain	4.93	30,757	0.32	7.2	79.13	43
Sweden	6.37	37,526	0.26	4.9	98.06	90
Switzerland	5.90	42,841	0.30	5.1	98.54	90
United Kingdom	5.52	36,571	0.34	6.3	93.20	90
Post-comm.	4.45(*)	19,690(*)	0.30	7.3(*)	71.27(*)	26(*)
Bulgaria	3.63	12,372	0.28	7.9	52.91	19
Croatia	4.14	16,474	0.29	7.7	71.36	9
Czech Republic	4.82	25,755	0.26	7.2	81.07	39
Estonia	5.37	20,754	0.33	6.6	83.98	32
Germany – East	5.10	23,040	0.24	6.9	89.81	33
Hungary	4.32	19,830	0.27	7.8	75.24	19
Latvia	4.80	17,801	0.37	7.5	70.87	32
Lithuania	4.33	18,855	0.38	7.6	72.82	32
Poland	4.23	17,560	0.31	6.6	67.48	26
Romania	3.65	12,698	0.30	7.6	45.63	13
Slovakia	4.31	22,242	0.26	7.0	77.67	39
Slovenia	4.71	28,894	0.24	7.5	84.95	18

Sources: CIA World Factbook data

**OECD data; WBO data; Grabka, Goebel, and Schupp, 2012.

*** Eurobarometer 2009; Transparency International data.

**** WBO data .

***** The Center for Systemic Peace data.

Notes: (*) indicates a significant difference from the mean of mature democracies ($p < 0.01$; $df=24$). Countries are grouped as mature and post-communist democracies and ranked in alphabetical order.

If we compare countries based on the aggregated data on three different modes of political participation, we observe remarkable differences in the average amount of political participation across countries, especially in party politics (other than voting) and movement politics activities

(Figures 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4). As we can see, Denmark, Norway, Ireland and Finland have the highest overall level of political participation and are much more active than the least engaged post-communist countries, like, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

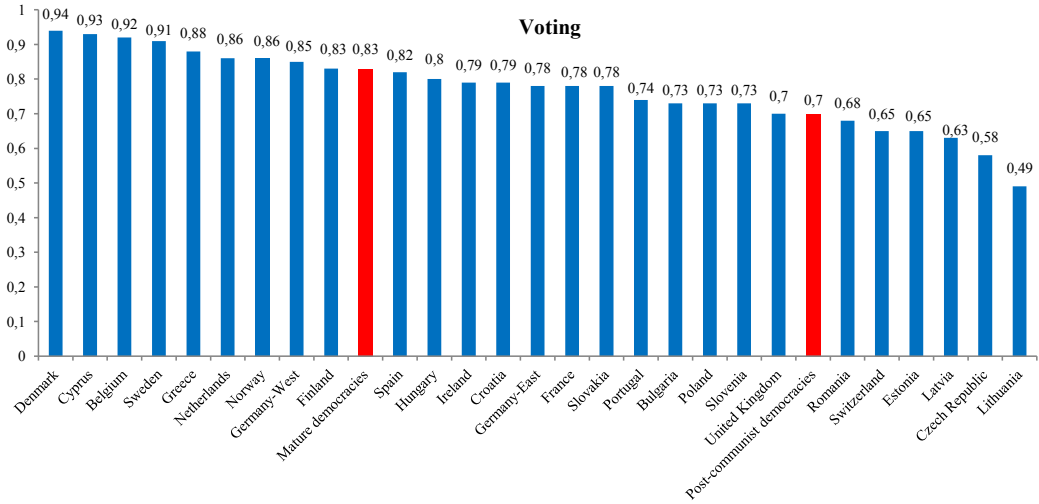


Figure 5.2 Aggregated levels of voting

Source: ESS 2008.

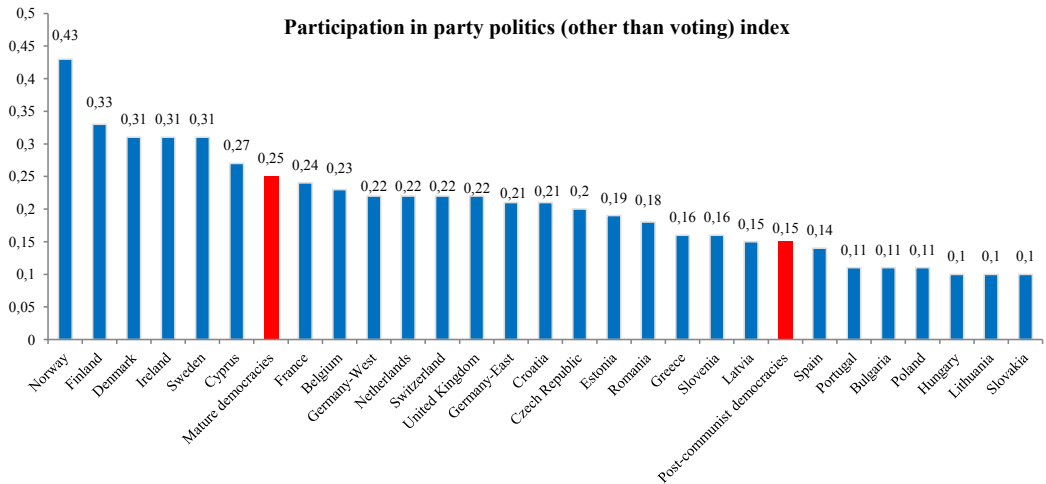


Figure 5.3 Aggregated levels of participation in party politics

Source: ESS 2008.

Reading example: 43% of the respondents in Norway participated in at least one party politics activity.

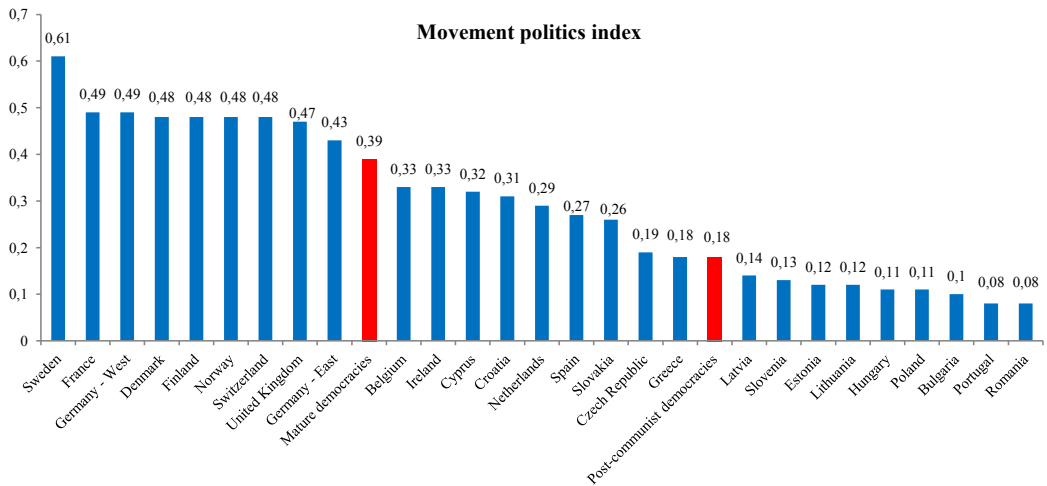


Figure 5.4 Aggregated levels of participation in movement politics

Source: ESS 2008.

Reading example: 61% of the respondents in Sweden participated in at least one movement politics activity.

The data is summarized and the countries are grouped according to the levels of participation in Table 5.3. Although only party politics (other than voting) and movement politics participation is taken into account in this table, the same distribution of the countries would be found if we would consider voting (see Appendix 5.1), as party politics and participation in elections highly correlate with each other. The table depicts that almost all post-communist countries, together with Portugal and Greece, belong to the countries with the lowest average level of political activities. Belgium, Cyprus, Netherlands, Croatia and Spain take a moderate position. They constitute a first group of countries whose citizens engage more actively in politics than in the remaining post-communist region. Then we have France, Germany (both sides), Switzerland, Ireland and United Kingdom with high engagement in one type of political activities (party or movement politics). Furthermore, citizens of another group of mature democracies participate in politics on average even more: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden have the highest level of participation in both party and movement politics. In Sweden, for instance, 61 per cent of the citizens reported to have been engaged in at least one social movement activity.

Table 5.3 Countries according to the levels of participation in party (other than voting) and movement politics

	High level of participation in movement politics	Moderate level of participation in movement politics	Low level of participation in movement politics
High level of participation in party politics	Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden	Ireland	
Moderate level of participation in party politics	France, Germany-West, Germany-East, Switzerland, United Kingdom	Netherlands, Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia	
Low level of participation in party politics		Spain, Slovakia	Greece, Portugal, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia

Source: ESS 2008.⁴³

To conclude, the aggregated-level data proves that post-communist citizens are indeed less likely to engage in a range of political actions than citizens of mature democracies. However, the mechanisms underlying these correlations have not yet been explored in sufficient detail in the political science literature, thereby leaving many unanswered questions. At this point, the following questions arise. Why are countries that experienced communism less politically active? Let us turn to this question in following sections.

5.5 Analysis and results

5.5.1 Method

I focus on cross-national variations, rather than variation within countries. To investigate and decompose the country-level variance, I will make use of multilevel methods. This takes into account the hierarchical nature of our data, since individuals (level 1) are clustered within societies/countries (level 2) (Snijders and Bosker, 1999)⁴⁴.

Multi-level modelling (Goldstein, 1995; Snijders and Bosker, 1999) is a method explicitly designed to deal with clustered data. The two main reasons to use this method are, first, to obtain

⁴³ High level of participation in party politics: >0.30
Moderate level of participation in party politics: 0.21 – 0.30
Low level of participation in party politics: <0.20

High level of participation in movement politics: >0.40
Moderate level of participation in movement politics: 0.21 – 0.40
Low level of participation in movement politics: <0.20

The participation in 2008 is considered. Therefore some countries, for instance, Greece, displayed at that time relatively low levels of movement politics participation compared to the following years (during the economic crisis).

⁴⁴ I used the `genlinmixed` command in SPSS.

correct standard errors and test statistics, and, second, to model explicitly the degree of heterogeneity across clusters. I have more than 43,000 observations (43709 – when I use voting as a dependent variable; 46311 – other party politics activities; 46226 – movement politics activities) observations at the individual level and 27 at the society level. The dependent variables are dichotomous. For ease of interpretation, the estimates are translated into odds ratios (expB).

5.5.2 Results

I started with models with only an intercept (empty models). Thus, we can consider in which degree the variation in political participation is explained by the country in which people live. Respondents with one or more missing values on any of the variables were left out of the analyses. Hence, subsequent models are all based on the same set of respondents.

In the empty model applied on voting the residual variance at the country level is 0.502. This means that the intra-class correlation (the ratio of the between-cluster variance to the total variance) is 0.13.⁴⁵ It is the proportion of the total variance in Y that is accounted for by the clustering. It implies that 13% of the variation in voting is explained by the country in which people live. For the two other indicators of political activeness (participation in party politics and protesting), the residual variance at the country level is 0.243 and 0.811, respectively. Hence, respectively 7% and 20% of the variance of party politics participation and of protest participation is explained by the country in which people live.

In sum, there are country level differences in political participation. The question is, whether these diminish when we control for all individual level variables. The second set of models takes these composition effects into account.

Individual factors

We explain differences between countries if the between country variance is reduced, either by context effects or by composition effects of the individual-level variables. First, I added all individual-level variables to the empty model. The estimates of these baseline models are depicted in Table 5.4. The results show that about 16% ($(0.502 - 0.423)/0.502$) of the cross-national variation in voting can be explained by the unequal distribution of individual characteristic across countries. Moreover, 46% ($(0.243 - 0.132)/0.243$) and 16% ($(0.811 - 0.682)/0.811$) of the variance in party politics and movement politics participation is explained, respectively.

⁴⁵ The intra-class correlation is calculated with the following formula: $\rho = \text{var}(0)/[\text{var}(0) + \pi^2/3]$ (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 224; cf. Ruiter and Van Tubergen 2009: 878). In random-effects logistic models, the individual-level variance parameter is fixed a priori to $\pi^2/3 \approx 3.289$ (Snijders and Bosker 1999: 229; cf. Van Deth and Elff 2004: 490).

Which individual level factors explain cross-national variation in political participation? I will discuss the empirical evidence for the hypotheses one by one below.

Hypotheses H1a–c stated that people of higher socio-economic status more often engage in political participation. As it was already mentioned, to measure socio-economic status I took education and perceived financial situation into consideration. In line with hypothesis H1a, the results show that education and perceived financial situation indeed both have a significant positive effect on the propensity to vote ($\text{expB} = 1.131$ and 1.170 , respectively). It reads, for instance, that the odds of voting for people who score one unit higher on the perceived income scale are 17% higher than the odds of people with a lower perceived income.

However, when it comes to other party politics activities, the hypothesis (H1b) is only partially confirmed, as perceived income is not a significant predictor, while education still is. Finally, the same results apply to movement politics (H1c): the effect of one's perceived financial situation is not significant, whereas education stimulates engagement in protest behaviour. In sum, more educated people participate more, be it in voting, party and movement politics activities, while perceived income only significantly predicts voting. Hence, H1a–c are largely confirmed.

Now we will turn to the individual levels of external and internal efficacy. I hypothesized that external efficacy leads to more active involvement in electoral (H4a) and party (H4b) politics, but less active involvement in movement politics (H4c). If we take a look at the individual level effects in Table 5.4, we indeed find empirical evidence for these hypotheses. Political trust, as a proxy of external efficacy, has a significant positive effect on the propensity to vote and be involved in party politics activities (H4a and H4b). In contrast, it is also true that people who are more politically trusting (and thus, we presume, have higher levels of external efficacy) participate in movement politics less often ($\text{expB} = 0.933$). Hence, a one unit increase in the individual level of political trust decreases the odds of movement politics participation by a factor of 0.93. To illustrate: put simply, if the average individual level of political trust would increase one unit (from 4.27 to 5.27), we predict that involvement in protesting, which overall averages 29.0 per cent in these societies, would drop to 27.5 per cent.⁴⁶

We observe a slightly different picture if we consider the effects of internal political efficacy. In Hypotheses 5a–c we expected that internal efficacy leads to more active involvement in electoral, party, and movement politics. We took individual political awareness as a proxy of internal political efficacy. Indeed, the analysis shows that there is a significant positive effect of political awareness on voting ($\text{expB} = 1.118$), participation in party politics ($\text{expB} = 1.176$) and

⁴⁶ The calculation is as follows: the overall probability to be involved in movement politics is 0.29, the odds is therefore $0.29/0.71 = 0.408$ to 1. Multiplication by 0.93 yields the odds of 0.380, which is similar to a probability of $0.380/1.380 = 27.5\%$.

movement politics ($\text{expB} = 1.125$). These findings thus corroborate the Hypotheses 5a–c: the more someone feels efficacious to understand and influence political affairs, the more s/he is ready to participate in different kinds of political activities. Furthermore, we also included political interest as a control variable and find a strong and significant effect of this variable for all types of participation ($\text{expB} = 1.726$ for voting; $\text{expB} = 1.609$ for party politics, and $\text{expB} = 1.556$ for movement politics).

Hypotheses H9a–c predicted that people with a stronger sense of social trust are more likely to actively participate in elections, party politics, and movement politics. The findings show that there is a positive significant effect of social trust on voting (H9a) and movement politics (H9c). For instance, the odds ratio for protesting is 1.049, meaning that those with a one unit higher score on the social trust scale are 1.05 times more likely to be active in protesting, holding all other factors constant. However, at the same time we find that the effect of social trust on other party politics activities is negative (thus H9b is rejected). This result is somewhat in line with Hooghe and Quintelier (2014), who find a non-significant effect of social trust on institutionalized participation (party politics activities except voting).

Furthermore, the results show that social embeddedness is an important individual level predictor for voting, party and movement politics. A higher degree of social embeddedness increases the odds of voting by a factor of 1.67; for other institutionalized activities and movement politics the odds are even increased by a factor of 4.89 and 3.06, respectively. This clearly confirms Hypotheses H10a–c.

Finally, we have also controlled for gender and age. The analysis shows that older people are more likely to go to the ballots, but less likely to protest and engage in party politics activities. Regarding gender, the ESS data reveal that women participate more in elections and in protest politics. Similar findings for non-institutionalized (movement) participation were obtained by Hooghe and Quintelier (2014).

Table 5.4 Multi-level logistic regression of political participation in 15 mature and 12 post-communist democracies

	Voting		Party politics		Movement politics	
	exp B	SE	exp B	SE	exp B	SE
Constant	0.046	.151	0.021	.111	0.085	.177
Individual:						
Age	1.021****	.001	0.997***	.001	0.982****	.001
Gender	0.903****	.026	1.016	.026	0.750****	.025
Education	1.131****	.012	1.106****	.011	1.234****	.010
Perceived financial situation	1.170****	.017	0.998	.018	1.003	.016
Social trust	1.033****	.007	0.979***	.008	1.049****	.007
Political trust	1.127****	.007	1.017**	.008	0.933****	.007
Political awareness	1.118****	.015	1.176****	.016	1.125****	.015
Political interest	1.726****	.018	1.609****	.017	1.556****	.016
Embeddedness	1.669****	.052	4.868****	.033	3.062****	.033
Trade union member	1.256****	.030	1.277****	.029	1.373****	.027
Religious attendance	1.128****	.010	1.080****	.010	0.992	.009
Variance country	0.423****	0.120	0.132***	0.038****	0.682	0.197
N_1 (Individuals)	43709		46311		46227	
N_2 (Countries/Entities)	27		27		27	

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$.

Contextual factors

The models with individual-level effects I have presented thus far form the baseline against which the contextual variables can be assessed. Following e.g. Van Deth and Elff (2004), I will expand the baseline model with each of the country-level variables separately, in order to trace the impact of these contextual factors. Hereby, I will rely on the comparison of models in terms of their respective country-level intra-class correlation and their respective country-level variance. I have computed the relative reduction of the country-level variance parameter and relative difference of the country-level residual intra-class correlation (see Tables 5.5, 5.6, 5.7). Due to multicollinearity, parameter estimates and standard errors are biased if we would consider a full model.⁴⁷ In each regression model of voting (also the base model), I also included a dummy variable (not shown in Table) to denote the countries in which voting is compulsory (Belgium, Greece, and Cyprus).

Which factors in the model explain cross-national variation in political participation? I discuss the empirical evidence for the hypotheses one by one below.

Economic factors. We find mixed support for hypothesis H1c. The results show that the GDP has no contextual effect on voting (the effect is not significant). Statistically significant positive effects of GDP are obtained for other party politics activities and protesting. Hence, in more prosperous societies, levels of collective actions are higher. This variable reduces both the

⁴⁷ Especially corruption, social trust, and government effectiveness are strongly related. We find for instance high Pearson's correlations ($n=27$) between social trust and corruption (-0.83), government effectiveness (0.85) and years of democracy (0.69).

country-level variance and residual intra-class correlation by about 30 per cent (party politics) and 50 per cent (movement politics). This finding is in line with previous research (for instance, Roller and Rudi, 2008) that argues that there is a stronger effect of socio-economic resources in the case of non-electoral participation compared to electoral participation.

Economic inequality is another contextual aspect that was included in the analysis. I presumed that inequality might deter individuals from electoral participation. This negative effect is indeed significant. For the individual inclination to protest, inequality proves to have a significant negative effect as well, although it is rather small: the higher the economic inequality in a society, the less individuals are inclined to engage in movement politics. I however find an insignificant effect of GINI on party politics participation. Hence, H1d can be confirmed, with some reservations.

Political factors. We observe that perceived levels of corruption have a non-significant effect on voting, but a small significant effect on party politics activities, and a highly significant effect on protesting. The results show that including corruption levels reduce the country level variance by about 50 per cent. A higher score on the corruption index (which means that the system is perceived as fair and transparent) leads to higher levels of protest. This finding contradicts my hypothesis, but is in line with Hooghe and Quintelier's (2014) findings. Since corruption levels correlate with democratic experience ($r=-0.70$) and government effectiveness ($r=-0.71$), it is not surprising that we find similar results for the latter two political factors. They stimulate protest participation and, to a somewhat lesser degree, party politics participation. Years of democracy most strongly reduces the country-level variance in party politics participation (about 25 per cent).

Cultural factors. The results show that one unit increase in the national level of social trust is associated with a 21% and 88% increase in the odds of participating in party politics and movement politics, respectively. Hence, contextual social trust proves to have an independent explanatory power of predicting the levels of political participation. This variable particularly decreases the country-level variance and intra-class correlation for movement politics; it reduces it by more than 40 per cent. The effect of contextual social trust on voting is however not significant.

Table 5.5 Multi-level logistic regression of **voting** in 15 mature and 12 post-communist countries

	Effect of country variable		Variance parameter		Country-level residual variation		
	Odds ratio	SE	Estimate	SE	Relative difference to baseline model (%)	Estimate	Relative difference to baseline model (%)
Base model + compulsory dummy	--	--	0.234***	0.068	--	0.0664	--
Country variables:							
Contextual social trust	1.055	0.110	0.242***	0.071	-3.4	0.0685	-3.2
GDP per capita (:1000)	1.002	0.005	0.242***	0.071	-3.4	0.0685	-3.2
Gini inequality coeff.	0.004**	2.382	0.198***	0.059	15.4	0.0568	14.5
Corruption perc. index	1.035*	0.057	0.240***	0.071	-2.3	0.0680	-2.4
Government effectiv.	1.002	0.007	0.243***	0.072	-3.8	0.0688	-3.6
Years democracy	1.000	0.003	0.244***	0.072	-4.3	0.0691	-4.0
N_1	43709						
N_2	27						

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p < 0.001.

Each line in the table represents a model that contains a different contextual variable as predictor. Each model also contains all individual-level predictors (see Table 5.4). The estimates of the effects of these variables are omitted from this table because they do not differ substantially from the estimates obtained for the baseline model. In the base model also a (highly significant) dummy has been added for countries where voting is compulsory (Greece, Cyprus, Belgium).

Table 5.6 Multi-level logistic regression of **party politics** in 15 mature and 12 post-communist countries

	Effect of country variable		Variance parameter		Country-level residual variation		
	Odds ratio	SE	Estimate	SE (sig)	Relative difference to baseline model (%)	Estimate	Relative difference to baseline model (%)
Base model	--	--	0.132***	0.038	--	0.0386	--
Country variables:							
Social trust	1.208**	0.073	0.108***	0.032	18.2	0.0318	17.6
GDP per capita (:1000)	1.010***	0.003	0.093***	0.028	29.5	0.0275	28.8
Gini inequality coeff.	0.087	1.939	0.129***	0.038	2.3	0.0377	2.3
Corruption perc. index	1.074**	0.040	0.121***	0.036	8.3	0.0355	8.0
Government effectiv.	1.011**	0.005	0.114***	0.034	13.6	0.0335	13.2
Years democracy	1.007***	0.002	0.100***	0.030	24.2	0.0295	23.6
N_1	46311						
N_2	27						

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p < 0.001.

Each line in the table represents a model that contains a different contextual variable as predictor. Each model also contains all individual-level predictors (see Table 5.4). The estimates of the effects of these variables are omitted from this table because they do not differ substantially from the estimates obtained for the baseline model.

Table 5.7 Multi-level logistic regression of **protesting** in 15 mature and 12 post-communist countries

	Effect of country variable		Variance parameter		Country-level residual variation		
	Odds ratio (sig)	SE	Estimate	SE (sig)	Relative difference to baseline model (%)	Estimate	Relative difference to baseline model (%)
Base model	--	--	0.682****	0.197	--	0.1717	--
Country variables:							
Social trust	1.882****	0.132	0.367****	0.183	46.2	0.1004	41.5
GDP per capita (:1000)	1.030****	0.005	0.314****	0.090	54.0	0.0871	49.3
Gini inequality coeff.	0.001*	4.239	0.639****	0.183	6.3	0.1627	5.2
Corruption perc. index	1.443****	0.061	0.302***	0.087	55.7	0.0841	51.0
Government effectiv.	1.045****	0.008	0.328***	0.094	51.9	0.0907	47.2
Years democracy	1.021****	0.004	0.339****	0.097	42.8	0.0934	45.6
N_1	46226						
N_2	27						

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$.

Each line in the table represents a model that contains a different contextual variable as predictor. Each model also contains all individual-level predictors (see Table 5.4). The estimates of the effects of these variables are omitted from this table because they do not differ substantially from the estimates obtained for the baseline model.

Cross-level interactions

I predicted that the context moderates the direct individual level effects of social trust on voting, participation in party politics, and movement politics (H12a–c). To test these interaction effects, I included cross-level interaction terms for social trust and each of the contextual effects (GDP per capita, GINI, corruption perception, governments' effectiveness, years of democracy and contextual social trust). For reasons of space, I will only report the significant interaction effects. These are shown in Tables 5.8 to 5.10. To avoid multicollinearity, I mean-centered both the individual-level social trust and all contextual variables before computing the interaction terms.

With regard to voting, we only observed a significant (and positive) direct contextual effect of socio-economic equality. Table 5.8 shows that we find that GINI does not only matter due to its direct effect; it also has an impact on the relationship between social trust and voting. The negative effect implies that social trust has a weaker effect on the propensity to participate in the polls when a society is more unequal. All other interaction effects are positive, which indicates that the effect of social trust is stronger when a society is more trustful, more affluent, less corrupt, more effectively governed, and more mature regarding its democratic experience. However, the effects are not strong and, except for GINI, the models with interaction effects do not yield reductions of the country-level variance and intra-class correlation.

When the interactions are included in the models of party politics (see Table 5.9), we observe again that social trust is negatively related with political engagement, holding all other

individual factors constant. Furthermore, the results indicate that this negative relationship is significantly *weaker* the more the societal context is characterized by social trust, high standards of living, equality, low levels of corruption, governmental effectiveness, and long-term democratic experience. Apparently, it seems that being actively involved in institutionalized politics makes one socially cynical and is detrimental for one’s interpersonal trust, and this effect is stronger in unprosperous and dishonest societies. The extent to which the inclusion of the variables and the interaction terms reduces the country-level heterogeneity differs, but generally it is rather small.

Table 5.8 Multi-level logistic regression of **voting** in 15 mature and 12 post-communist countries

	Effect of country variable		variance parameter		Country-level residual variation		
	Odds ratio	SE	Estimate	SE	Relative difference to baseline model (%)	Estimate	Relative difference to baseline model (%)
Base model + compulsory dummy	--	--	0.234***	0.068	--	0.0664	--
Cross-level interactions:							
Individual social trust	1.043****	0.008					
Contextual social trust	1.047	0.109	0.235***	0.069	-1.5	0.0667	-0.5
Social trust * contextual social trust	1.036****	0.008					
Individual social trust	1.039***	0.008					
GDP per capita (:1000)	1.002	0.046	0.240***	0.071	-2.6	0.0680	-2.4
Social trust * GDP	1.001**	0.0004					
Individual social trust	1.037****	0.007					
Gini inequality coeff	0.004**	2.367	0.195***	0.058	16.7	0.0560	15.7
Social trust * Gini	0.638***	0.170					
Individual social trust	1.041****	0.008					
Corruption perception	1.034	0.055	0.237***	0.070	-1.3	0.0672	-1.2
Social trust * corruption	1.013***	0.004					
Individual social trust	1.038****	0.008					
Government effectiveness	1.003	0.007	0.242***	0.071	-3.4	0.0685	-3.2
Social trust * government effectiveness	1.001**	0.001					
Individual social trust	1.038****	0.008					
Years democracy	1.000	0.003	0.241***	0.071	-3.0	0.0683	-2.9
Social trust * years democracy	1.001**	0.0002					
N_1	43709						
N_2	27						

Source: ESS 2008.

Note: *p < 0.10, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01, ****p<0.001.

Table 5.9 Multi-level logistic regression of **party politics** in 15 mature and 12 post-communist countries

	Effect of country variable		variance parameter		Country-level residual variation intra-class correlation		
	Odds ratio	SE	Estimate	SE	Relative difference to baseline model (%)	Estimate	Relative difference to baseline model (%)
Base model	--	--	0.132***	0.038	--	0.0386	--
Cross-level interactions:							
Individual social trust	0.977***	0.008	0.110***	0.033	16.7	0.0324	16.1
Contextual social trust	1.218***	0.074					
Social trust * contextual social trust	0.972****	0.008					
Individual social trust	0.977***	0.008	0.095***	0.028	28.0	0.0281	27.2
GDP per capita (:1000)	1.011****	0.003					
Social trust * GDP	0.998****	0.0003					
Individual social trust	0.979***	0.008	0.133***	0.039	-0.8	0.0389	-0.8
Gini inequality coef	0.085	1.967					
Social trust * Gini	1.761***	0.195					
Individual social trust	0.977***	0.008	0.122***	0.036	7.6	0.0358	7.3
Corruption perception	1.076*	0.040					
Social trust * corruption	0.985****	0.004					
Individual social trust	0.977***	0.008	0.119***	0.035	9.8	0.0349	9.6
Government effectiveness	1.011*	0.005					
Social trust * government effectiveness	0.998****	0.001					
Individual social trust	0.977***	0.008	0.102***	0.030	22.7	0.0301	22.0
Years democracy	1.007***	0.002					
Social trust * years democracy	0.999****	0.0002					
N_1	46311						
N_2	27						

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$.

Each line in the table represents a model that contains a different contextual variable as predictor. Each model also contains all individual-level predictors (see Table 5.4). The estimates of the effects of these variables are omitted from this table because they do not differ substantially from the estimates obtained for the baseline model.

Lastly, concerning engagement in movement politics, all interaction terms are significant, except for GINI. The results depicted in Table 5.10 reveal that social trust stimulates participation in protest activities, and generally this effect is significantly stronger in societies that are less socially trustful, less affluent, more corrupt, have less effective governments, and a shorter democratic legacy. In for instance Bulgaria (ExpB=1.151; $p=0.000$) and Romania (ExpB=1.113; $p=0.013$) the

direct effect of trust on protest participation is highly significant, in contrast to countries such as Denmark (ExpB=1.026; $p=0.522$) and the Netherlands (ExpB=1.092; $p=0.047$).

Table 5.10 Multi-level logistic regression of **movement politics** in 15 mature and 12 post-communist countries

	Effect of country variable		variance parameter	Country-level residual variation			
	Odds ratio	SE		Estimate	SE	Relative difference to baseline model (%)	intra-class correlation
Base model	--	--	0.682****	0.197	--	0.1717	--
Cross-level interactions:							
Individual social trust	1.049****	0.007	0.365****	0.104	46.5	0.0999	41.8
Contextual social trust	1.898****	0.131					
Social trust * contextual social trust	0.969****	0.008					
Individual social trust	1.051****	0.007	0.304****	0.087	55.4	0.0846	50.7
GDP per capita (:1000)	1.030****	0.005					
Social trust * GDP	0.999****	0.0003					
Individual social trust	1.050****	0.007	0.302***	0.087	55.7	0.0841	51.0
Corruption perception	1.425****	0.061					
Social trust * corruption	0.986****	0.004					
Individual social trust	1.050****	0.007	0.336***	0.097	50.7	0.0927	46.0
Government effectiveness	1.045****	0.008					
Social trust * government effectiveness	0.998****	0.001					
Individual social trust	1.050****	0.007	0.341***	0.098	50.0	0.0939	45.3
Years democracy	1.021****	0.004					
Social trust * years democracy	0.999***	0.0002					
N_1	46227						
N_2	27						

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$.

Each line in the table represents a model that contains a different contextual variable as predictor. Each model also contains all individual-level predictors (see Table 5.4). The estimates of the effects of these variables are omitted from this table because they do not differ substantially from the estimates obtained for the baseline model.

5.6 Conclusions and discussion

In this chapter I tried to explain why citizens in post-communist democracies engage less actively in politics. I did so by constructing a multi-level model that included individual level and country level variables. I assumed that low levels of political participation in the new democracies cannot be explained only by individual level factors. Even after two decades since the collapse of

Communism, the new democracies differ substantively from the older democracies in several economic, political and cultural respects. Hence, the contextual explanatory levels must be considered. The empirical results of the multi-level models can be summarized in four points.

The first obvious conclusion is that the analyses reveal compositional effects on the levels of participation. This means that the observed country differences in political activeness can be partly explained by different distributions of individual characteristics between countries. I found that almost all individual factors I included in this study have a significant effect on voting. Among them, the positive effect of political interest and social embeddedness are the most considerable. The tested individual-level variables also determine whether a citizen would embark on party politics activities, yet, quite surprisingly, perceived financial situation (the indicator of SES) proves to be less relevant. The latter variable is also insignificant for movement politics, while all other individual-level factors are predictors. So we can conclude that people mobilize for protest activities regardless from their financial resources. Protest politics is embarked on by both rich and poor people. It is worth noting that women and younger citizens protest more often and that protesters are less politically trustful.

Second, I found that social trust is generally linked positively to voting and participation in movement politics, even when controlling for other factors. This finding thus confirms previous studies that suggest that social trust has a positive effect on collective actions, such as protesting. However, the effect appears to be modest compared to other factors at the individual level (in line with, for instance, Bäck, 2011; Van Deth, 2001; Nannestad, 2008; Roller and Rudi, 2008). To compare, the influence of social embeddedness (another component of social capital) on the willingness to engage in politics seems to be much stronger.

Third, macro characteristics have an influence over and above the effect of the individual level variables. Hence, the hypothesized country-level variables (such as corruption levels, government effectiveness, economic prosperity) to explain political participation are important. My key variable of interest, contextual social trust, had a positive impact on being active in movement and party politics. More generally, my findings indicate that the cultural and institutional contextual aspects were less relevant for predicting voting and institutionalized participation, but it in particular did promote participation in non-institutionalized activities outside the formal political sphere.

Yet, except inequality, none of the various contextual indicators play an important role in explaining cross-national differences in voting in Europe. Thus, it gives an extra argument that it is important to distinguish voting from other types of participation. Voting is a special case: for this form of political participation, only societal equality matters. I also controlled for compulsory voting, which reduced the country-level variance. It could very well be that voting is influenced by

other institutional factors I did not include, such as the type of electoral system (majoritarian or proportional), and, accordingly, the type of democracy (“Westminster” or consensus), in line with other studies, for instance, Roller and Rudi (2008). However, the distribution of different electoral systems does not seem to differ between Eastern and Western democracies.

This apart, this research confirmed most of the “contextual” hypotheses: low income levels, lack of efficient government, high levels of corruption, few years of democracy and low contextual social trust have a strong negative effect on political participation levels. These findings are in line with previous research, for instance Hooghe and Quintelier (2014).

Fourth, I have also examined the interplay between social trust, forms of political participation, and the context, understood as cultural, socio-economic, and institutional societal aspects. The most remarkable finding concerned the interaction between the contextual circumstances and social trust in shaping political participation. The results showed that the effect of social trust on participation is moderated by the context. For instance, the interplay between individual and contextual social trust has a significant effect on voting, party politics activities and protesting. Moreover, the socio-economic and political-institutional aspects also proved to be relevant: they also shape the effect of social trust on the propensity to be politically active. However, the specific effect depends on both the forms of participation and the societal characteristic under consideration. The results show that there are differences in the direct effect of social trust, dependent on societal characteristics. The impact of social trust on participation depends on the context in which the political activities take place. Put simply, in more trustful, prosperous and advanced societies, social trust has a stronger positive effect on voting. Involvement in institutionalized politics is negatively related with social trust, and this association is stronger in unprosperous and dishonest societies. Finally, social trust stimulates protest participation, and this effect is stronger in societies that are less socially trustful, less affluent, more corrupt, have less effective governments, and a shorter democratic legacy. Taking this particular context of the study into account, in post-communist societies the merit of social trust on protest participation is more pronounced: in these countries the possession of social trust motivates citizens to involve in movement activities more vigorously compared to people from Western democracies who also possess the same amount of social trust.

To conclude: the societal context matters. In this way, this study helps to shed new light on the often-debated question: why participation levels remain so low in post-communist democracies? The results of the analysis suggest that the historical legacy of having a communist regime is insufficient, but still important to explain these low levels. However, the specific effect of post-communism is difficult to pin down, because many important variables (like corruption and social trust) correlate so strongly with each other. Therefore, one cannot easily single out only one

contextual effect. Obviously, post-communism comprises a whole set of interrelated dimensions and it is difficult to disentangle all the context level variables. Consequently, it is difficult to unreservedly answer the question which factors are responsible for disenchantment from politics: did people return to the communist-era habits and political apathy, or does this process more accurately reflect the economic and political developments (or disillusion) of post-communism. The latter refers for instance to the fact that the effort of participation has not been rewarded by better living conditions. There is obviously more to say about this, but I will return to this issue in the final chapter.

At this point, I will only point out that the main limitation of the ESS 2008 data used in this chapter is that it unfortunately does not contain accurate measurements of both internal and external political efficacy. In the next chapter, this issue will be addressed. I will focus on Lithuania. One of the reasons to do so is that I have a very good dataset at my disposal.

6 |

Examining political participation in post-communist Lithuania: does social trust matter?⁴⁸

⁴⁸ This chapter is written together with Jasper Muis. A slightly different version of this chapter is currently under review at *East European Politics & Societies and Cultures*. Earlier drafts were presented at the ISPP (International Society of Political Psychology) Annual Meeting, Rome, Italy, July 4-7, 2014, and at the 13th International Postgraduate Conference on Central & Eastern Europe, London, UK, February 19 – 21, 2014.

6.1 Introduction

The lack of civic and political engagement in post-communist countries is perceived as one of the most challenging aspects of democratic consolidation in this region. As Howard (2003) noticed, despite the collapse of communism more than two decades ago, citizens in Eastern European countries are still less likely to engage actively in civil society practices than people from other post-authoritarian countries, and especially, mature Western democracies. Scholars often recoil on the cultural approach to explain the alarmingly low levels of participation in post-communist societies. The cultural-based argument derives from reflections on the communist past and the inherited attitudes and behavioural patterns.

A possible explanation, many authors argue, is the observation that post-communist societies are less trusting than others (Bjørnskov, 2007; Bădescu and Uslaner, 2003; Kornai, Rothstein and Rose-Ackerman, 2004; Lovell, 2001; Markova, 2004; Mishler and Rose, 1997; Sztompka, 1999). However, the relationship between social trust and political participation in the post-communist context is yet empirically underresearched (except for a few notable exceptions, for instance, Letki, 2003; Uslaner, 2004; Armingeon, 2007; Sedláčková and Šafr, 2009; in Lithuania: Imbrasaitė, 2004; 2008; Žiliukaitė, 2005a; 2005b; Bartuškaitė and Žilys, 2011). Empirical work has been handicapped by a lack of detailed nation-wide data for the former communist countries. This chapter aims to fill this void, not only by focusing on the direct effect of social trust on participation, but also the mediating variables. I fortunately could use the Lithuanian national post-election 2012 survey, which offers a rare opportunity to examine the relationship between social trust and participation in depth: the national database provides extensive information on political activities, attitudes and different aspects of trust. Moreover, my curiosity is also stimulated by the fact that Lithuania serves as an exemplar case of a post-communist society, typically characterized by low levels of political participation and social trust (Žiliukaitė, 2005a; 2005b; Ramonaitė, 2006b; 2007; Žiliukaitė and Ramonaitė, 2006; Riekašius, 2003; Imbrasaitė, 2004; 2008; Matonytė, 2004; Gaidys et al., 2013).

Social capital theories claim that social generalized trust induces political participation, both in conventional and unconventional politics (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Norris, 2002b; Uslaner, 2004). While the benefits of social trust in fostering political engagement in mature Western democracies have been thoroughly debated, some authors claim that the legacy of political participation is considerably different in Central and Eastern Europe. For instance, Letki (2003) has identified only a weak impact of social trust on citizens' political participation, and Letki and Evans (2005: 525) argued that it is necessary "to go beyond the assumptions put forward in models developed in Western liberal democratic contexts." The contrasting patterns of participation between "East and

West” are also acknowledged by several other authors (Barnes and Simon, 1998; Rueschemeyer, Rueschemeyer, and Wittrock, 1998; Bernhagen and Marsh, 2007; Armingeon, 2007; Hooghe and Marien, 2013).

The findings of previous research beg the question how far the assumptions of the Western model about social trust and participation can be extended to the distrustful post-communist region, and particularly to Lithuania. Do social trusters in Lithuania participate in politics more actively than others? And if so, which forms of political participation are more linked to social trust?

As argued in chapter 2, in addition to social trust, external and internal political efficacy plays a crucial role to determine the paths of participation (Lane, 1959; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller, 1954; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). High levels of efficacy among citizens are usually viewed as desirable for active participation and the stability of democracy, because “in the modern democratic society, citizens should feel that they have some power to influence the actions of their government” (Wright, 1981: 69). However, to our best knowledge, there is no available research illuminating the path between social trust, political efficacy and political participation, except for a few hints in the literature (for instance, Van der Meer and Van Ingen (2009) study how associational membership affects political participation via one dimension of political efficacy, namely, civic skills). An even bigger lacuna in this regard is observed in the post-communist context and this is caused by the data limitations in both country-sets.

Fortunately, I had a good opportunity to contribute myself to the Lithuanian post-election survey 2012 and make use of the accurate measurements of internal and external efficacy. This allowed me not only to operationalize all relevant variables, but also to accurately analyze the connections between them. Therefore, using the Lithuanian dataset, I am able to scrutinize whether social trust translates into efficacy (external, or internal, or both), or, to the contrary, efficacy does not mediate between social trust and political participation, but exerts a direct (independent) effect on participation.

Specifically, addressing the Lithuanian context, I examine the following research questions:

1. How strong is the direct effect of social trust on political participation?
2. To what extent is the effect of social trust on participation mediated by political efficacy?

In a broader light, this research can be defined as a theory testing case that aims at contributing to the academic discussion on political participation and its determinants with a special focus on the post-communist context. The chapter is organized as follows. I will briefly discuss more on the case of Lithuania in the next section. The third section provides the conceptualization of the variables used and briefly reviews the literature on the determinants of political participation. It also theorizes the role of social trust in regard to political activity and outlines the hypotheses.

Next, I will describe the data and research methods. The subsequent section presents the results. I will conclude with the interpretation of the results and reflections on the role of social trust and efficacy as predictors of political participation in Lithuania.

6.2 Description of the context: Lithuania as an exemplar case of post-communist society

Before the fall of Communism Lithuania has experienced only very few democratic rules, procedures or political freedoms. The democracy of the young state of Lithuania, which was established in 1918 after the First World War, was already thwarted in 1926 by a coup d'état by the anti-democratic and nationalistic political powers. Later, in 1939, the country was occupied by the Soviet Union, and lost any claims to political independency. Among the Soviet Union countries, Lithuania was clearly one of the leaders in terms of economic and industrial development, semi-peripheral as most of the Central East European countries, rather homogeneous (compared to other Soviet states) and much more nationalistic than its counterparts (Norkus, 2008). Thus, it is not at all surprising that the opposition leaders of Lithuania were the first to proclaim and re-establish independency in the Soviet Union: they did so on 11 March, 1990, and this was followed by a so-called “domino effect”: thereafter other countries also stood up for their political freedom (Beissinger, 2002).

As a “dangerous nationalistic case” within the Soviet Union, Lithuanians were under close political scrutiny, which gravely suppressed the freedoms of speech and associations in Lithuania. The Soviets executed massive deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia, drastically fought against the partisans, creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust among people. In the aftermath of the communist regime, the society was heavily divided between supporters, conformists and opponents of the regime, suspicious and generally inactive: most of the people did not actively participate in any formalistic political activities, but rather chose for more cultural, leisure-related and ethnographic assembles (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė, 2011).

A society under transition, as Vihalemn, Lauristin and Tallo (1997) suggest, undergoes three stages of the development of political culture, and Lithuania is an acute example of that. The first stage (which occurred around 1988-1990) is *mythological*, related to the very high expectations about democracy, romanticizing the pre-communist past, and idealizing the future. Indeed, during the collapse of the communist regime, people in Lithuania massively gathered to the streets and squares, bravely fighting for their freedom. It was a precious emotional moment, as the people were the witnesses of the fall of totalitarianism, and their sense of political empowerment and efficacy grew rapidly (cf. Imbrasaitė, 2012). As a result, the first free parliamentary elections in Lithuania

were attended by 71.7 % of the citizens, who chose for the anti-Soviet opposition (Ramonaitė, 2006b).

The second stage is *ideological*, stemming from establishment (and re-establishment) of political parties. This stage creates most of the tensions and the divisions within society as citizens start to politically identify themselves. Two major political powers dominated the scene during the early years of transition in Lithuania: the anti-Communist independence movement “Sąjūdis” and the ex-communist Lithuanian Democratic Labour Party (LDDP). Political interest of the common people reached its peak, as the future trajectory of the country was to be decided. In the aftermath, Lithuanians witnessed two of its highest electoral turnouts: 75.2 % in the parliament elections in 1992 and 78.6 % in the presidential elections in 1993 (Ramonaitė, 2006b). Such a high turnout never occurred in independent Lithuania’s history ever again.

The ideological stage continued until after the 1993 elections. However, shortly after the initial years of the transition, the enthusiasm about democracy evaporated. The disappointment in reforms and the governmental ineffectiveness (“lack of political content”) resulted in a dramatic decrease of political participation, be it voting or protesting, and brought about the disconcerting developments of a weakening civil society. For instance, compared to the latest parliament elections in 2012, the turnout decreased by 22 percentage points since 1992 (highest activity), and by around 25 percentage points for presidential elections.

Table 6.1 maps Lithuania among other post-communist countries. First, the European Election Survey data show that participation levels of post-communist citizens in parliamentary elections range from 47 to 67 %. As I mentioned, in the Lithuanian parliamentary elections of 2012 the turnout reached the meagre 53 per cent, meaning that only around half of the citizens expressed their will by going to the polls, whereas in mature European democracies the average turnout generally reached 73 percent.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Table 6.1 makes clear that protesting has not replaced traditional forms of participation in former communist countries. Lithuania is not an exception in this regard: only a relatively insignificant part (8 per cent) of the respondents reported to have attended a lawful demonstration in the past. At the same time, 39 per cent of the Lithuanians, and even more than half of the respondents in some other post-communist countries, admitted that they would never participate in such activity. Finally, the low levels of participation are accompanied by low levels of social trust. According to the European Value Survey 2008 data, 30% of the respondents in Lithuania and around one fifth of the respondents (ranging from 13 to 33%) in other post-communist societies agreed with the statement that most people could be trusted. By contrast,

⁴⁹ The European Elections Survey data show that the turnout at national parliamentary elections in mature European Union democracies varies from 59 to 87%, excluding countries with compulsory voting. See European Elections database, 2014. National parliamentary elections [data], retrieved April 27/2014 from http://www.nsd.uib.no/european_election_database/.

generalized social trust in mature democracies varies between 31 % in Luxemburg and Italy to as high as 76 % in Denmark.

Table 6.1 Levels of political participation and social trust in 10 post-communist countries

	Participation in the last national parliament elections, turnout %, EED	Attended lawful demonstrations, % of the respondents, EVS	Would never participate in a demonstrations, % of the respondents, EVS	Social trust (% of the respondents agreeing that most people could be trusted), EVS
Bulgaria	61	8	57	18
Czech Republic	63	12	48	30
Estonia	64	6	59	33
Hungary	61	4	75	21
Latvia	59	17	40	26
Lithuania	53	8	39	30
Poland	49	9	47	28
Romania	47	8	68	18
Slovakia	59	5	68	13
Slovenia	67	13	37	24

Sources: European Election database (the latest data as of 23rd of April, 2014); European Values Survey 2008.

Following Vihalemn, Lauristin and Tallo (1997), Lithuania, like other post-communist countries, is currently entering the *critical-rational* stage. On the one hand, the political system becomes more plural, participation more diversified, civil society more critical, and the elements of democratic political culture are entrenched. On the other hand, Lithuanians still feel detached from politics, lacking sense of efficacy, social and political trust. Different approaches are proposed to explain the absenteeism from political participation in Lithuania, both from institutional and cultural perspectives. It might very well be that the low level of participation, especially in elections, is caused by the weakness of political parties (lack of their accountability and failed promises), the huge corruption scandals that ruined political and interpersonal trust (for instance, the dramatic impeachment process against the president Rolandas Paksas), turbulent socio-economic developments and large-scale emigration from the country.⁵⁰ However, although these factors undoubtedly account for the low levels of political activities, they are not sufficient to fully explain why people choose to participate (or not) in politics (Ramonaitė, 2006b: 94-99).

To sum up, Lithuania is not a distinct case in the post-communist context. As the empirical evidence shows, the country is yet interlocked in the early stage of the critical-rational phase of political culture. Very similar trends are observed in other post-communist societies: the enthusiasm for the political events and mass participation was followed by the disappointment and passivity. In most of the countries of the post-communist region, the turnout declined (on average about 25

⁵⁰ The department of statistics of Lithuania estimates that at present around 337 000 Lithuanians live abroad, which is about 10% of the Lithuanians. Only around 13 000 of emigrants voted in the elections of 2012.

percentage points) or remained fluctuating (Kostelka, 2014; Ramonaitė, 2006b). The low levels of political participation hit bottom and calls into question: how to explain this lack of political engagement, not only by focusing on individual resources, but also by the social-psychological factor of social trust, that stem from the complex and even agonizing historical experiences of Lithuania. Before continuing with the empirical analysis, I will briefly recollect the main theoretical aspects that were already discussed in other chapters.

6.3 Theoretical background

6.3.1 Party and movement politics as dependent variables

In democracies citizens have a wide range of instruments that they can use to influence political decision making. The literature suggests different ways to define types of political participation, including the most commonly used concepts of conventional vs. unconventional activity, electoral vs. non-electoral, institutional vs. non-institutional participation, individual vs. collective actions (Barnes and Kaase, 1979; Tarrow, 1998; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996). This chapter, following the reasoning of chapter 2, employs the conceptual labelling proposed by Klandermans (2013), who distinguishes between participation in party and movement politics. Participation in party politics refers to more institutional forms of political actions, such as voting, party membership, campaigning, contacting politicians via letters and directly, and doing voluntary work for a political party. However, I treat voting and other party politics actions as separate categories, due to the different nature of these participatory means: voting is the most regular and simplest form of participation, while other forms, above voting, are more intensive and require more initiatives from the citizens (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady, 1995). Participation in movement politics encompasses a range of less formalized forms of political actions, like signing petitions, demonstrating, striking, joining civic and political initiatives, boycotting and “buycotts” – and other ways citizens try to make their voice heard. Although traditional theories emphasize the vital role of participation in party-based politics in nurturing democracies, numerous scholars argue that movement politics is also important for a democratic political system (see, for instance, Klandermans and Van Stralen, 2015; Norris, 2002a; Rosanvallon, 2008). First, movement politics is less dependent on the established rhythm of electoral cycles, thus it helps to permanently express citizens’ preferences, dissatisfaction with policies and convey these messages to politicians. Second, the diverse forms of participation, including movement politics, strengthen political accountability and in return contribute to institutional effectiveness. Finally, movement politics as a mean to influence government is believed to be more efficacious to disadvantaged people compared to party politics participation (Fraser and Honneth, 2003; Smith, 2009). All in all, democratic experiences

demonstrate that movement politics serves as an additional political leverage of citizens that (despite some exceptions) has positive effects on the quality of democracy.

Given this, the relevance of party and especially movement politics to the young post-communist democracies cannot be overrated. I purposely emphasize the role of movement politics as a certain substitute to party politics as it reflects the trends of post-materialist and democratic values (Inglehart, 1997). As Dalton (1996) notices, post-materialists in fact demonstrate strong levels of support for democratic processes. Thus, movement politics implies the emerging initiatives from below – and, more importantly, on behalf of civil society. In this respect, taking different forms of political participation into account, many authors are specifically concerned with the revival or, in some cases, the emergence of civil society in post-communist countries. Although civil society has been acclaimed for its role in abolishing communism, authors observe the decline of civic/political engagement in post-communist countries, first, in comparison with the late 90's, and second, in comparison to mature democracies (Howard, 2003; Barnes, 2006; Rueschemeyer, Rueschemeyer, and Wittrock, 1998). The literature on post-communism eagerly tries to find out why people, who managed to achieve the common goal of overthrowing the communist regime, became politically apathetic and absent from civic and political participation. Given this, the debates call into question why post-communist citizens participate or not in which type of political actions. In the following section I will discuss a series of suggested predictors.

6.3.2 Predictors of participation: political efficacy and social trust

As Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995: 22) observe in *Voice and Equality*, actors do not participate solely out of material benefits, but also because of other reasons, for instance, satisfying a sense of civic duty, the desire to influence policy, enjoying the other people involved. The findings of their study of American political involvement suggest that participation, besides demographic characteristics, is also determined by a sense of perceived political efficacy and social trust in fellow citizens. I will briefly elaborate on each of these two variables below.

First, Verba and colleagues (1995) conclude that social connections lead to more participation. On the one hand, it could mean that social networks foster participation, as is argued by Krishna (2002b), Teorell (2003), Howard and Gilbert (2008), Maloney and Van Deth (2010). On the other hand, the odds that someone is politically active might be increased by generalized social trust, as several authors have noticed (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Bădescu, Sum, and Uslaner, 2004).

By social trust I mean a non-exclusive type of trust in people you are not necessarily familiar with (or who are not similar to you). It expresses a broad perception of the individual's "moral community" and conceptually stands against particularized trust, which is invested only in a

certain group, such as one's family, a religious or ethnic community, or people "that are like me" (Uslaner, 2002: 26; Newton and Zmerli, 2011). Thus having this in mind, it is not at all surprising that in the literature the notions of social trust and generalized trust are seldom used as synonyms, as I also do in my dissertation.

Social trust is theorized as being conducive to democracy, because it promotes tolerance, makes cooperation possible, because it reduces a free-rider problem by maintaining a belief in the goodwill of others, and endows people with a sense of control and general optimism that most people can succeed in life (Leicht, 2002; Stolle, 2002; Seligman, 1997; Uslaner, 1999; 2002). All in all, there are therefore good reasons to believe that social trust promotes democratic and participatory attitudes. Following the idea, some authors propose that social trust makes participation less risky and more worthwhile, as we feel moral obligation and social responsibility to get involved in political affairs (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Uslaner, 2002). Social trust is an impetus of generalized morality and good willingness. While socially trusting, we also care about others and believe that others care about us. Mutual reciprocity gives a stimulus to also be politically active (to stand up for the issues of our community). Accordingly, as already explained in chapter 4, I formulate the following two hypotheses: social trust has a positive direct effect on participation in voting (H1a), party politics (H1b) and movement politics (H1c).

From a sociological perspective, being embedded in social networks and social trust are treated as two facets of social capital. Additionally to social trust, I will also include formal social embeddedness as a control variable in our explanatory framework. By this term I mean involvement in voluntary civil society organizations, but not in private networks, like friends or family (Klandermans, Van der Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008). Active involvement in formal social networks is proposed as a predictor of political participation in the sense that those who are involved in non-political associations are more likely to participate in politics (Barnes, 2006). This holds both for conventional and unconventional political participation as involvement in social networks provide the resources necessary for collective actions (Almond and Verba, 1963; Paxton, 2002; Klandermans, Van der Toorn, and Van Stekelenburg, 2008). However, I would like to emphasize that I do not focus on social networks (as one of the facets of social capital) as a mediating variable, as I am more interested in attitudinal dispositions of individuals, and particularly, in social trust. Associational membership is not an attitudinal variable. Moreover, the relationship between membership and social trust is not evident, since certain memberships comprise so-called unsocial capital (for instance, Levi, 1996; in post-communist societies: Letki, 2003; Imbrasaitė, 2004; Beresnevičiūtė, 2006).

Second, Verba, Schlozman and Brady's *Voice and Equality* (1995) points out that participation is not only determined by one's socioeconomic status and social characteristics, but

also by a sense of political efficacy: both external and internal (cf. Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). Traditional theories suggest that external efficacy is closely related to political trust and works in harmony to strengthen party politics (Fraser, 1970; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993; Norris, 1999; Dalton, 2004). Internal efficacy, theorists argue, is more likely to spur both party and movement politics, as it unfolds individual's self-confidence (self-efficacy) and points towards the way in which we could influence politics (Gamson, 1968: 48). Some authors claim that internal efficacy is associated with political interest, which is an "internal motivating force" and key determinant of whether or not citizens would be willing to participate in political action (Guo and Moy, 1998; Fiske, Kinder, and Larter, 1983).

If we compare the predictors of party and movement politics, some differences come into account. For instance, it is suggested that movement politics, contrary to party politics, tends to be negatively correlated with political trust, as protest is traditionally conceived as an action directed against elite-based institutions, or, elite-challenging (Gamson, 1968: 48; Inglehart, 1997; Norris, 1999; Kaase, 1999; Levi and Stoker, 2000; Hooghe and Marien, 2013). Similarly, citizens who believe that the government is responsive to citizens' needs are thought to be more willing to participate in party politics, but not in movement politics: people who protest are generally dissatisfied with political and economic conditions or the way the government is dealing with it (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996). The next section discusses how social trust might foster political efficacy, and thus also indirectly (via efficacy) affect political participation.

6.3.3 Connecting social trust with political efficacy and political participation

The second research question of this chapter "To what extent is the effect of social trust on participation mediated by political efficacy?" calls into debate why it is important to focus our attention particularly on the mediation effects of internal and external political efficacy in the analysis of the relationship between social trust and political participation. This debate centers around social capital and political capital literatures, explaining how social trust, as a social attitude, can convert into political skills. So it is important from the perspective that individual's social environment matters for his/her political inclinations and decisions. In other words, the mediation effect would demonstrate that social resources could be transformed into individual political resources.

As we have already discussed, the literature on how social trust exactly affects political participation is quite ambiguous. Some studies find a positive effect of social trust on most forms of political participation (Kaase, 1999; Putnam, 1993; 2000; Rossteutscher, 2008: 228; Marien and Christensen, 2013), while others come across relatively weak, non-existent or even negative

relationships, depending on the forms of political activity (Millner, 2000; Van Deth, 2000; Muhlberger, 2003; Rubenson, 2005; Armingeon, 2007; Hooghe and Marien, 2013; Hooghe and Quintellier, 2014). Generally, voting and movement politics in most studies occur to be positively associated with social trust, while the relationship with other institutionalized forms of participation is less clear. Moreover, social capital theories also suggest that social trust might have an indirect effect on political participation mediated by political efficacy. For instance, in his acclaimed study *Making Democracy Work* Putnam (1993) notices that social trust empowers people to solve more complicated problems in dealing with the institutional structures. So here the pivotal connection between social trust and political efficacy enters.

Putnam (1993) observes that in more trustful communities a sense of efficacy of common citizens is higher. He explains this phenomenon by referring to the egalitarian nature of the society. If the societies' structure is horizontal and based on social trust, people feel more powerful and capable of influencing political issues, because they expect that other people would behave similarly to them. In vertical and distrustful societies people perceive themselves being exploited, submissive and dependent, and therefore a sense of political efficacy is constrained.

In the civil society or civic culture literature, social trust, efficacy and participation are interlinked less explicitly. Here, social trust is prescribed to a certain set of mutual obligations together with political participation, respect for human rights, citizenry duties, perceptions of the common good and common responsibility. In *Civic Culture*, for instance, Almond and Verba (1963) argued that subjective competence, participation, self-empowerment and social trust are connected through the socio-economic status and education level, which promote political efficacy, a sense of social trust and political activity. But as it was already mentioned, the research on this relationship is quite scarce, except for a few studies (for instance, Hsung, 2014; Anderson, 2010; Van Deth and Scarbrough (1998), and some theoretical aspects are discussed in Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009), Hooghe and Marien (2013)). Other authors provide some hints on how social trust positively contributes to political literacy and awareness (Milner, 2002), self-confidence, and also to political support and political trust (Newton, 1999a; Norris, 2002a).

Drawing on the literature, I consider three indirect positive effects of trust on participation. First, while placing trust in other individuals and receiving this trust reciprocally, we feel a moral duty to be involved in common affairs (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Seligman, 1997). It is argued that social trust leads individuals to participate in the pursuit of the commons, as trust provides us with assurance that political action will be appreciated and at least potentially effective. In return, successful cooperation based on trust gives people satisfaction in what they do (Putnam, 1993). Social trust endows us with the feeling of being part of a larger community and provides us with a sense that we, people, can make a difference. This first point refers to both external and internal

efficacy. Second, while trusting, people more likely acquire political knowledge and information in general about the subjects to be acted on and the methods to employ such actions (internal efficacy). Third, trust empowers us politically as we believe that institutions we deal with are fair and people we trust are going to behave by the rules. When we trust people, we expect them to act in a similar manner and it gives us a sense of control (predictability). Sustained confidence in the motives of others encourages and facilitates participation (Kwak, Shah, and Holbert, 2004). If we are sure that the rules are not going to be violated, we feel more certain about involvement in political life (external efficacy).

In sum, I expect socially trusting people to develop a feeling of external and internal political efficacy. Hence, the theoretical presumptions lead to the following hypotheses: external political efficacy plays a mediating role between social trust and participation in voting (H2a), party (H2b) and movement (H2c) politics; internal political efficacy plays a mediating role between social trust and participation in voting (H3a), party (H3b) and movement (H3c) politics. It is important to note that I hypothesize that all indirect effects are positive, except for H3c: higher levels of social trust will *decrease* the willingness to engage in protesting, because external efficacy is expected to be negatively correlated with participation in movement politics.

6.3.4 Testing hypotheses in post-communist Lithuania

These hypotheses that are presumed to make sense in mature democracies, still lack empirical support in the post-communist context. The reason for that stems from the nature of trust in post-communist societies. Different authors argue that trust was heavily ruined at political as well as social levels due to the destructive effects of the communist regime and traumatic experiences of the post-communist transformation (Sztompka, 1999; Mishler and Rose, 1997; Bădescu and Uslaner, 2003; Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Imbrasaitė, 2004).

As I explained earlier, Howard (2002: 161-163) distinguishes three reasons why political engagement might be weak in post-communist societies compared to mature democracies: 1) the legacy of distrust in communist organizations; 2) post-communist disappointment; 3) the persistence of family and friendship-based networks that replaces generalized sense of social trust. These features, as I will discuss below, are also evident in Lithuanian political culture. The insights could be also helpful for considering why the link between social trust and political participation might work differently in Lithuania and other post-communist countries, although Howard does not illuminate this relationship directly.

First, negative experiences with communist organizations escalated distrust in the latter-day organizations, actuates apathy and reluctance to participate in public/political life. For instance,

different surveys reveal that around 80 percent of Lithuanians do not belong to any organization or association (Žiliukaitė, 2006; Imbrasaitė, 2004). Under the communist regime, voluntary organizations and political institutions were discredited, as participation in them usually was obligatory. Like under communism, participation still resembles subordination to someone's will, especially given the anti-legal culture in the transition period. Howard (2003: 38-39) notices that in contemporary post-communist societies there is still-alive perceived antinomy between individuals and the state. Given that, people are not willing to join organizations and thus have no ability to learn civic democratic skills, flourish social trust and generalized morality, as it is presumed by social capital theories.

Second, disappointment in the post-communist transition made people apathetic about civic activities. Dramatically increased inequality, widespread corruption and struggle for survival in a very hostile economic environment left little room for collective aspirations, shared idealistic goals and values. Citizens' faith in democracy fell short, as the willingness to participate in political action. Theoretically speaking, the supply-side of the political process rapidly declined. Moreover, analysts notice, common threat is not relevant anymore, so there is no need to organize for collective actions. As Imbrasaitė (2004; 2008) observes, Lithuanians are either abstaining from the political process or choose more for individual political actions above collective ones. One of the reasons for it is that the solidarity of people, which seemed to be quite high during the revolution period, was disrupted, and social trust between people (both generalized and particularized or personal) was even more damaged (Rose-Ackerman, 2001: 415).

Third, instead of joining organizations and participating in public life, people prefer spending their private time as they used to do, in their own private circles. As Howard (2002: 163) put it: "Unlike in many Western societies – where voluntary organizations have become a central part of the social and political culture, and where people join organizations in order to meet new people and to expand their horizons through public activities – in post-communist societies, many people are still vested in their own private circles, and they simply feel no need, much less desire, to join and participate in civil society organizations." So supposing that in Western democracies people participate in political life because of their needs and desires, people in post-communist societies assume that their social needs are already fulfilled in family-based circles. This trend is also very symptomatic for Lithuanians, who chose to spend their time with family and friends, rather than with strangers (Imbrasaitė, 2004; Ramonaitė, 2006a; Bartuškaitė and Žily, 2011).

Letki (2003) interlinks the weakness of civil society and low levels of citizens' involvement in East-Central Europe with the low stocks of social capital. There is a vicious circle: on the one hand, social capital cannot be produced and maintained through the absent civic networks. At the same time, the absence of social capital discourages people to act collectively. Imbrasaitė (2004)

indeed observes in her research that in Lithuania social capital has an effect only on collective means of political participation, but not on individual political actions. Thus, the low levels of social capital would explain why individuals do not embark on collective political actions.

Some authors even go further by arguing that civic engagement in post-communist societies has nothing to do with trust. It is hypothesized that decisions to participate in organizations still remain an involuntary choice (most likely, that “someone asked to participate” and it is conceived as a duty). In this respect some researchers suggest that participation in post-communist societies might be less natural, but imitable. For instance, a study of Bădescu and colleagues (2004) revealed that organization members in the Eastern bloc are less active than those in the West. Similar results are also discussed by Žiliukaitė (2006) in Lithuania. Moreover, activists are less willing to cooperate with people or groups from outside their organizations, which goes along well with the relationship patterns inherited from communism (Beresnevičiūtė, 2006). As Bartuškaitė and Žilys (2011: 33) observe, activists not only face the competition with other organizations (for resources), but, more importantly, they are neglected by governmental institutions. The lack of cooperation within and outside the organizations deprives from stimulating initiatives and breeding social trust. The same logic could be applied not only for civic organizations, but also for political participation and especially social movements that implement the same motives of cooperation. Hence, these considerations call into question whether social trust as indicated in Western societies really contributes to political participation and translates into a sense of political efficacy in post-communist Lithuania.

6.4 Data and measurements

The data for studying the hypotheses come from the Lithuanian National Election Study (hereafter: LNES), which is a post-election survey carried out in 2012, November – December. In total 1500 residents in Lithuania who are 18 years and older were interviewed in 161 localities. The sample was selected in a stratified random way. Each district was represented proportionally to its residents’ share to the total Lithuanian population. The sample includes residents regardless of their citizenship, nationality, religion, language or legal status. Face-to-face interviews at the respondents’ homes were performed. The response rate was 61 % (Survey Field Report, 2012; Ramonaitė et al, 2014).

6.4.1 Dependent variables

As already described in previous chapters, due to the specific nature of participation, I leave voting and other activities in party politics as separate variables. **Voting** is gauged by the question: Did

you vote on the national parliamentary elections day, 13th of September, 2012? Answers: yes=1; no=0. Involvement in other forms of **party politics participation** is tapped by the following question: Did you work in a political party or participated in its activity during the last 12 months? (Yes/No).

Movement politics participation is measured by these 5 indicators: 1) Participated in a civic action/movement, which was not related with charity in the last 12 months; 2) Signed a petition (not via internet) in the last 12 months; 3) Took part in a demonstration or picket in the last 12 months; 4) Participated in a strike in the last 12 months; 5) Bought or boycotted certain products because of ethic (moral) or political reasons in the last 12 months; Answer categories: 1 = yes, 0 = no.⁵¹ The distribution of the summed variable is highly skewed: the majority of the respondents did not participate at all in any movement action. Therefore we decided to apply a dichotomised scoring: We give a score of 1 to participants who participated at least in one movement politics activity, and a score of 0 to the non-participants.

6.4.2 Independent variables

Social trust is measured with a standard question “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or you can’t be too careful?” Measurement: 0 = you can’t be too careful; 10 = most people can be trusted.⁵²

I measure **external political efficacy** as perceived government’s responsiveness, which is captured with the question “Do average citizens have an influence on the important decisions in the country?” Measurement: 0 = No influence, 10 = Very big influence.⁵³

Internal political efficacy is tapped by four items, measuring agreement or disagreement with the following statements: 1) “I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics”; 2) “I feel I have a good understanding of the most important political issues facing our country” 3) “I feel that I could do as good job in public office as most other people”; 4) “I think that I am better informed about politics and governing than most people”.⁵⁴ Answers ranged from Disagree strongly (1) to Strongly agree (5). Including all respondents with at least one non-missing value on the items, the general score for each individual is a mean of the items. Cronbach’s α of the four items is 0.91.

⁵¹ Questions 2, 3 and 5 are formulated in accordance to the ESS (round 4, 2008) and ISSP Survey (Citizenship, 2004).

⁵² The same question is used in the major global surveys (EVS, ESS, ISSP). The 0 to 10 scale is employed in the ESS questionnaire.

⁵³ In America’s National Election Study and the ISSP 2006 survey, two different items are used to measure external efficacy, namely: “People like me don’t have any say about what the government does”; “The average citizen has considerable influence on politics”. Unfortunately, these items are not included in the Lithuanian National Elections Study, but we presume the two measurements are closely related to each other.

⁵⁴ Identical questions to measure internal political efficacy are formulated in ISSP 2004 survey “Citizenship” and the American National Election Study.

We also include **political trust** a predictor of political participation, which is assumed to be closely related to external political efficacy. We operationalize political trust by measuring trust in political institutions: 1) the country's parliament; 2) courts; 3) the police; 4) political parties; 5) the government; 6) the president. Measurement: 0 = no trust at all; 10 = complete trust.⁵⁵ A principal component analysis indicated that the items load strongly on a single dimension. We included respondents with at least two non-missing values; the political trust score for each individual is the mean of the items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.86$).

Political interest and actual political knowledge (including political information) are believed to be linked to a sense of internal political efficacy, thus worth including in the analysis as control variables. **Political interest** is gauged with a standard question: "In general, are you interested in politics?" (1 = not at all interested; 2 = hardly interested; 3 = interested; 4 = very interested).⁵⁶ **Political information** is measured with four items capturing the knowledge about the Lithuanian political system. The respondents were asked to indicate whether the following statements were true or false 1) "According to the Constitutional law, the president can give an order to the judges what decision to make in one or another case"; 2) "Lithuanian Parliament is composed of 181 members"; 3) "Mayors are elected directly in Lithuania"; 4) "In the PM office of A. Kubilius, the post of the minister of Foreign Affairs was held by Audronius Ažubalis". The measurement: 0 = did not answer any question correctly; 4 = answered 4 questions correctly.

To measure social embeddedness of a respondent, I focus on what Putnam labelled as 'secondary organizations'. Thus, I identify the density of **social embeddedness** of a respondent by taking the following two forms of civic sociability into account: 1) Worked in another [other than political, TG] organisation or association during the last 12 months; 2) Participated in the activities of the local community during the last 12 months; (answers: yes=1; no=0). The two items are strongly correlated with each other ($r = 0.67$). A respondent with the highest embeddedness would score 2; the minimum score is 0. In addition, I include embeddedness in two other types of organizations as control variables: labour unions and religious communities. Due to the different nature and function of these organizations, I keep all three variables (social embeddedness, union membership and religious attendance) separate. **Trade union participation** is measured as a dichotomous variable (1 = yes; 0 = no), indicating whether a respondent has participated in trade union activities during the last 12 months. **Religious attendance** indicates how often respondents attend religious services apart from special occasions. Answers ranged on a seven-point scale from "never, almost never" (1) to "more than once a week" (7). Missing values (don't know, no answer)

⁵⁵ The political trust questions are formulated in line with the ESS (round 4) survey. The ESS also uses a 0-10 point scale.

⁵⁶ The variable "How interested in politics" is used in the ESS, EVS and ISSP (2004) surveys with a 4-point scale measurement.

were recoded into 1 if respondents answered “no” on another question, namely whether they had participated in religious community activities.

Other **individual characteristics**. A standard set of demographic variables is also included in the analysis: age, gender, level of education, social status, and financial situation. Age: respondent’s exact age in years. Gender is coded as (0) = Female, (1) = Male. Education level is measured by the Lithuanian educational system scale from 0 (not completed primary) to 16 (Doctorate degree or Candidate of Sciences (equivalent to PhD)). Social status is measured by the item “What social status are you considered to be in?”, whereby answer categories ranged from “the lowest position” (1) to “the highest position” (10). The financial situation of the respondent’s family was measured by a 1-5 scale that ranged from “we do not even have enough money for food” (1) to “we can afford anything we want” (5).

6.4.3 Descriptives

Before examining the hypotheses, I scrutinize the descriptives of the key variables. Table C1 in Appendix C shows that the levels of participation in movement politics is considerably lower than electoral participation in Lithuania: 65% of the respondents reported to have voted in the elections, whereas at least one of the movement actions were undertaken only by 15 %. Petitions were signed by 9 %, demonstrations attended by 4 % of the respondents. A vast majority (81 %) did not participate in any movement politics at all. Only 5.5 % of the respondent engaged in party politics activities (other than voting).

Social trust is recorded below the average level (the mean is 4.13, on a 0-10 scale), suggesting that most respondents think that they cannot be “too careful” with other people. When it comes to external and internal political efficacy, the descriptives show a big gap between these variables: the external efficacy of the respondents is considerably lower (2.46 on a 0-10 scale) than internal efficacy (2.49 on a 1-5 scale). Put differently, the belief that the government is responsive to citizens’ demands is more than twice as low as the confidence in one’s own ability to participate in politics.

Additionally, political trust is lower than average, thus complying with a low sense of external efficacy. Political interest scores about 2 (“hardly interested”) on average, whereas the stocks of the actual political information is considerably above the average (2.8), implying that respondents possess a relatively good knowledge about the political system. This is in line with the assertions of other scholars that people in Lithuania are aware of political issues, but political institutions are treated as non-responsive and distrustful (Mažylytė, 2011; Ramonaitė, 2006b).

Finally, involvement in social networks is not large at all, indicating only a very insignificant part of the respondents being bonded by some social networks in the public realm.

To assess to what extent the variables are related to each other, it is expedient to consider the Pearson's correlation coefficients (Table 6.2). The results show that participation in elections and other party politics activities significantly correlates with all central variables, thus supporting the traditional paradigm of explaining conventional participation: civic values of a good citizen endorses his/her activity in institutional politics. Yet, the correlation with social trust is rather weak (Pearson's $r = 0.10$). Movement political participation is significantly correlated with social embeddedness (0.29), internal efficacy (0.22) and political interest (0.22). As for social trust, it most firmly goes along with external efficacy (0.30) and political trust (0.27), but only weakly correlates with embeddedness in formal social networks (0.09), trade unions (0.04) and religious attendance (0.06). The latter finding, however, is not very surprising for Lithuania, as it complies with the theoretical insights discussed in previous theoretical sections.

Table 6.2 Pearson's correlations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
(1) Voting	x															
(2) Party polit. part.	.158	x	.													
(3) Mov. polit. part.	.166	.195	x													
(4) Social trust	.095	.025	.040	x												
(5) External efficacy	.219	.075	.130	.300	x											
(6) Political trust	.200	.124	.060	.272	.349	x										
(7) Internal efficacy	.246	.248	.215	.133	.263	.187	x									
(8) Political interest	.442	.248	.217	.084	.187	.189	.419	x								
(9) Polit. information	.282	.109	.140	.140	.071	.140	.264	.311	x							
(10) Embeddedness	.208	.407	.292	.086	.139	.171	.242	.256	.178	x						
(11) Trade union	.056	.150	.212	.041	.073	.069	.149	.092	.040	.208	x					
(12) Religious attend.	.202	.028	.026	.062	.110	.131	.022	.170	.085	.093	-.021	x				
(13) Age	.180	.018	-.056	-.095	-.097	.034	-.036	.243	.123	.028	-.019	.314	x			
(14) Gender	.030	-.019	-.043	-.016	.001	.060	.135	.095	.090	-.059	-.036	-.255	-.060	x		
(15) Education	.232	.144	.114	.057	.134	.022	.332	.251	.123	.183	.138	-.041	-.145	-.103	x	
(16) Financial sit.	.069	.130	.034	.123	.185	.151	.297	.156	.112	.193	.128	-.034	-.254	.040	.285	x
(17) Social status	.116	.070	.056	.201	.268	.179	.302	.153	.118	.144	.083	-.002	-.263	.016	.323	.559

Source: LNES 2012.

Note: significance ($p < 0.01$) in bold.

6.5 Results

Two logistic regressions were performed for each form of political participation.⁵⁷ Table 6.3 displays the results for participation in elections. Model 1 only includes socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, social status, financial situation) and social trust. Model 2 adds external and internal political efficacy and a few related variables to examine whether the effect of social trust is mediated.

The results of model 1 in Table 6.3 demonstrate that social trust has a significant positive impact on the propensity that an individual takes part in the ballot. I have reported the

⁵⁷ Examination of multicollinearity statistics indicated no concerns with respect to multicollinearity for all analyses.

exponentiated b-coefficient ($\text{Exp}(B)$), which is the change in the odds ratio (OR) associated with one unit increase in the predictor variable, as well as the predicted probabilities. One unit increase in the amount of social trust increases the odds of voting by a factor of 1.11. Simply put, this implies that if we could raise the average level of social trust by one unit (from 4.13 to 5.13), we predict that the turnout, which is currently 65.0 per cent, would increase to 67.3 per cent.⁵⁸ The depicted predicted probabilities show that citizens with the minimum amount of social trust have a much lower propensity (60%) to go to the polls compared with citizens who have the highest level of trust (81%), holding all other variables constant.

Hypothesis 1a (Social trust has a positive direct effect on participation in elections) is therefore tentatively confirmed by the results. Moreover, education and age prove to be significant predictors for electoral participation. Older and more highly educated people are more likely to vote. These findings go well along with previous research (for instance, Ramonaitė, 2006b; Imbrasaitė, 2008).

Model 2 shows the results if we include a set of political efficacy variables. I find that political interest ($\text{Exp}(B)=2.837$), external efficacy ($\text{Exp}(B)=1.191$) and political information ($\text{Exp}(B)=1.227$) are highly significant predictors of voting, as conventional theories on political participation would assert. The impact of social embeddedness is also significant; individuals who are strongly involved in the community (score 2) have a much higher probability to vote (90%) than people who score lowest on social embeddedness (71%), holding other variables constant. Taken these variables into account, social trust becomes insignificant. Our results thus indicate that these variables actually mediate between social trust and involvement in electoral politics.

In this respect, hypothesis 2b (External political efficacy plays a mediating role between social trust and participation in voting) is empirically supported.⁵⁹ This conclusion also holds when I test the mediation effects of external and internal efficacy in a more sophisticated way by using the PROCESS macro for SPSS developed by Hayes (see Table 6.4).⁶⁰ The results in Table 6.4 show furthermore that there is also a significant indirect effect of social trust on voting via political trust.

However, as can be seen in Table 6.3, internal political efficacy has no significant effect on the propensity to vote. This might be explained by the fact that I have controlled for both political information possessed and political interest; particularly the latter correlates strongly with internal efficacy. A closer inspection using Hayes' process analysis indeed reveals that if we would not

⁵⁸ The calculation is as follows: the probability to vote is 0.65, the odds is therefore $0.65/0.35 = 1.86$ to 1. Multiplication by 1.11 yields an odds of 2.06, which is similar to a probability of $2.06/3.06 = 67.3\%$.

⁵⁹ When only external efficacy is added to model 1, the effect of generalized trust ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.062$; $\text{SE}(B) = 0.030$) is also significantly reduced though still significant ($p=0.045$).

⁶⁰ This method allows to simultaneously test the direct and indirect effects of social trust via both types of efficacy on participation in one model, while controlling for all confounding variables. See: Hayes (2013). The macro is freely available at Hayes' website: <http://www.afhayes.com/introduction-to-mediation-moderation-and-conditional-process-analysis.html>.

control for these two variables, hypothesis 2a (Internal political efficacy plays a mediating role between social trust and voting) could be confirmed. In that case, the effect of internal efficacy ($\text{Exp}(B) = 1.634$; $\text{SE}(B) = 0.080$) on voting becomes substantial and highly significant. However, if one strictly considers political interest and political information as different concepts than internal efficacy that need to be controlled for, we indeed have to reject Hypothesis 2a.

Table 6.3 Logistic regression analysis of voting

	Model 1				Model 2			
	Exp (B)	SE (B)	Probabilities		Exp (B)	SE (B)	Probabilities	
			x=min	x=max			x=min	x=max
Constant	0.068****	0.027			0.018****	0.009		
Age	1.029****	0.004	0.502	0.875	1.010**	0.005	0.686	0.808
Gender	1.057	0.137	0.695	0.706	0.888	0.138	0.754	0.732
Education	1.158****	0.022	0.394	0.872	1.100****	0.024	0.558	0.853
Social status	1.071	0.048	0.636	0.764	0.993	0.049	0.749	0.737
Financial situation	1.027	0.092	0.690	0.713	0.817**	0.083	0.807	0.650
Social trust	1.108****	0.033	0.603	0.810	0.996	0.035	0.747	0.739
External efficacy					1.191****	0.048	0.652	0.916
Political trust					1.094**	0.045	0.670	0.833
Internal efficacy					1.121	0.108	0.709	0.794
Political information					1.227****	0.072	0.616	0.784
Political interest					2.837****	0.339	0.467	0.952
Embeddedness					1.904***	0.392	0.714	0.900
Union membership					0.775	0.354	0.745	0.694
Religious attendance					1.119**	0.057	0.682	0.808
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	0.142				0.343			
N	1241				1241			

Source: LNES 2012.

Note: * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$, **** $p < 0.001$ (two-tailed tests).

Concerning party politics activities (other than voting), Table 6.5 shows that there is no effect of social trust. This refutes hypothesis H1b and re-confirms the argument that very competitive and conflict-based atmosphere of party politics is not related to cooperative attitudes in Lithuania (cf. Imbrasaitė, 2008). I obviously neither find support for my hypotheses about the mediation effect of efficacy (H2b and H3b). Nevertheless, the results reveal that both internal efficacy and political trust significantly increase participation in party politics activities. At the same time, I find that social trust (not shown in Table 6.5) stimulates external efficacy and political trust. In sum, my findings suggest that involvement in party politics is driven by particular interests, rather than generalized social trust and altruistic behaviour.

Table 6.4 Parallel multiple mediation analyses examining indirect effects of social trust on voting, party politics, and movement politics via external efficacy, political trust, and internal efficacy

	B coefficient	SE (B)	95% confidence interval	
			Lower	Upper
Voting (n=1249)				
Direct effect	-0.0044	0.0353	-0.0735	0.0648
Indirect total effect	0.0639*	0.0138	0.0388	0.0918
Indirect effect via external efficacy	0.0427*	0.0119	0.0222	0.0657
Indirect effect via political trust	0.0192*	0.0092	0.0015	0.0371
Indirect effect via internal efficacy	0.0021	0.0026	-0.0009	0.0098
Participation in party politics (n=1249)				
Direct effect	-0.0870	0.0755	-0.2350	0.0610
Indirect total effect	0.0418	0.0293	-0.0158	0.1022
Indirect effect via external efficacy	-0.0108	0.0225	-0.0574	0.0326
Indirect effect via political trust	0.0386	0.0217	-0.0032	0.0808
Indirect effect via internal efficacy	0.0140	0.0099	-0.0017	0.0389
Participation in movement politics (n=1250)				
Direct effect	-0.0269	0.0138	-0.0040	0.0574
Indirect total effect	0.0213	0.0120	-0.0010	0.0486
Indirect effect via external efficacy	0.0277*	0.0115	0.0065	0.0533
Indirect effect via political trust	-0.0117	0.0039	-0.0396	0.0077
Indirect effect via internal efficacy	0.0053*	0.0043	0.0001	0.0169

Source: LNES 2012.

Notes: *p < 0.05. Results are based on 10,000 bias-corrected bootstrap samples. For the statistical controls that were included see Table 6.3.

Table 6.5 Logistic regression analysis of participation in party politics

	Model 1				Model 2			
	Exp (B)	SE (B)	Probabilities		Exp (B)	SE (B)	Probabilities	
			x=min	x=max			x=min	x=max
Constant	0.002****	0.001			0.0001****	0.0002		
Age	1.014*	0.008	0.031	0.075	0.989	0.010	0.020	0.010
Gender	0.899	0.223	0.048	0.044	0.620	0.198	0.019	0.012
Education	1.164****	0.046	0.013	0.128	1.041	0.050	0.011	0.020
Social status	0.941	0.081	0.059	0.035	0.771**	0.087	0.043	0.004
Financial situation	1.811****	0.325	0.016	0.151	1.523*	0.338	0.001	0.036
Social trust	1.031	0.060	0.041	0.055	0.917	0.069	0.021	0.009
External efficacy					0.957	0.071	0.017	0.011
Political trust					1.200**	0.102	0.007	0.043
Internal efficacy					2.196****	0.468	0.005	0.095
Political information					1.133	0.192	0.010	0.017
Political interest					2.986****	0.773	0.004	0.103
Embeddedness					4.330****	0.858	0.011	0.167
Union membership					1.264	0.629	0.015	0.019
Religious attendance					0.981	0.102	0.016	0.014
Nagelkerke pseudo R ²	0.167				0.437			
N	1251				1251			

Source: LNES 2012.

Note: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p < 0.001 (two-tailed tests).

The analysis of movement politics participation (Table 6.6) indicates that there is no direct effect of social trust on this type of political activities (the effect is insignificant; see Model 1). Hence, we have to reject H1c (Social trust has a positive direct effect on participation in movement politics). Yet, the finding is not very surprising and leads us to consider that people are recruited to protest on the basis of particularized trust (strong ties between people we know), rather than generalized social trust (weak ties between strangers). This was also observed at the beginning of the independence movement in 1987 (Ramonaité, 2011). I will elaborate more on this point in the discussion section.

When I include other variables in my analysis (Model 2), the results show that both internal and external efficacy have a positive effect on engagement in protest behaviour. They both considerably spur social movement activities: the predicted amount of engagement increases from 8 and 9 per cent to 21 and 23 per cent, respectively, if we compare people who score lowest and highest on both scales. Contrary to the results of voting, internal efficacy has an independent (significant) effect on protests actions, even if we control for political information and political interest. As one might expect, I find that political interest and information are also positively associated with the likelihood that an individual engages in movement activities, and these effects are significant.

Table 6.6 Logistic regression analysis of participation in movement politics

	Exp (B)	Model 1		Model 2				
		SE (B)	Probabilities x=min x=max		Exp (B)	SE (B)	Probabilities x=min x=max	
Constant	0.101****	0.479			0.087****	0.050		
Age	0.995	0.005	0.168	0.130	0.975****	0.006	0.215	0.048
Gender	0.853	0.137	0.161	0.140	0.690*	0.133	0.135	0.097
Education	1.101****	0.026	0.071	0.264	1.002	0.028	0.113	0.118
Social status	0.997	0.055	0.152	0.149	0.930	0.059	0.151	0.085
Financial situation	0.938	0.105	0.166	0.133	0.683***	0.087	0.206	0.054
Social trust	1.051	0.039	0.126	0.191	0.973	0.042	0.127	0.100
External efficacy					1.119**	0.050	0.090	0.233
Political trust					0.947	0.048	0.139	0.086
Internal efficacy					1.347**	0.161	0.076	0.214
Political information					1.197**	0.102	0.072	0.137
Political interest					2.003****	0.287	0.056	0.322
Embeddedness					2.546****	0.377	0.095	0.405
Union membership					5.423****	1.984	0.109	0.400
Religious attendance					1.059	0.069	0.101	0.137
Nagelkerke pseudo R²	0.030				0.255			
N	1243				1243			

Source: LNES 2012.

Note: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p < 0.001 (two-tailed tests).

Although the effect of social trust remains insignificant, surprisingly, the sign of the effect has changed from positive to negative in model 2. Regarding the mediation, the analysis using the above-mentioned macro of Hayes (see Table 6.4) reveals that the indirect effects of social trust on

protesting via external and internal efficacy are both significant. Hence, these indirect paths results from the fact that social trust is a strong predictor of both internal and external efficacy and, in its turn, efficacy fosters participation. H2c and H2d are corroborated; these two hypotheses claimed that external and internal political efficacy, respectively, play a mediating role between social trust and participation in movement politics.

Finally, two points are worth noting. First, the significant positive effect of external efficacy on movement participation contradicts the theoretical assumption that disappointment in government's responsiveness leads to protests actions. Although political trust has no significant effect, the direction of the effect is negative, suggesting that the more individuals trust political institutions, the less they tend to protest. Therefore, in total (considering all mediators at the same time), there is no indirect effect of social trust on protesting. The findings importantly indicate that the conviction that politicians are responsive works out quite differently than the conviction that they are trustful: the former leads to activism, the latter might yield apathy.

Second, although social trust has no direct impact, I find a highly significant effect of embeddedness on movement politics ($\text{Exp}(B) = 4.330$). In a broader view, the findings imply that formal social networks are apparently not connected to a sense of social trust. I indeed already showed in the descriptive analysis (Table 6.2) that the relationship between these two variables is very weak, if not non-existent, and that social trust is not associated with participation in two other formal networks (trade unions and religious communities) either. I will talk more about it in the discussion.

6.6 Discussion

This chapter investigated the role of social trust in connection to political efficacy in determining political participation in Lithuania, a society which possesses the attributes of a political culture typically found in post-communist countries. More particularly, drawing from the data, Lithuanians can be described as low social trusters, endowed with low levels of external efficacy and being relatively passive in political participation.

My results showed an indirect positive effect of social trust on participation in elections. The results thus support the claim that social trust translates into a sense of external efficacy and political trust, which in turn enhances the likelihood that an individual takes part in the ballot. We thus have a reason to believe that trust in other people is related to positive evaluations of government responsiveness and reduces the distance between citizens and institutions. Yet, the mediating role of internal efficacy is not fully empirically supported, which may be partially due to the fact that the latter is tightly related to political information and political interest. For engagement

in party politics, however, I did not find any effect of social trust. Apart from this, internal efficacy and political trust stimulates this form of participation, whereas external efficacy is surprisingly not associated with party political participation.

Furthermore, it is worth paying attention to the fact that I found no direct effect of social trust on movement political activities. Yet, there are small but positive indirect effects: when controlling for the other mediator (political trust), we can conclude that social trust increases external and internal efficacy, which in turn enhances protest behaviour. Remarkably, however, political trust is not a significant mediator. In a comparative view, protesters are apparently not the same type of people as those who take part in conventional politics. Social trust is indeed positively related to political trust, but the latter actually seems to *decrease*, rather than increase participation in movement politics.

Given that movement politics participation is commonly conceived as a manifestation of collective action, we have to conclude that social trust plays a limited role as a collective resource that fosters the mobilization of people for the common good in Lithuania. The conclusions comply with other research on social capital and political/civic participation in Lithuania, for instance, by Imbrasaitė (2004; 2008), Bartuškaitė and Žilys (2011). The possible explanation for this is offered by Ramonaitė (2011) who, using the example of the independence movement in 1987-1988, assumes that the initial stimulus of mobilization for protest activities rests upon particularized, or, bonding social trust: individuals need to be recruited for participation, and the success of the recruitment heavily depends on trust in people you know. Ramonaitė (2011) admits that the importance of particularized, or, bonding, social trust is more pronounced in risky political environments (like revolutions). It might very well be that the fear of participation inherited from the communist period makes Lithuanians more suspicious and more frightened of the consequences of their actions (as it used to be under the communist regime), although in a democratic setting these fears are less rationally grounded.

Finally, it is interesting to note that my analysis reveals strong empirical evidence for the argument that social embeddedness is tremendously important for any kind of political participation. Civic engagement strongly affects the odds of individuals to be involved in political activities. And the opposite is also true: the lack of political engagement in Lithuania is caused by a lack of civic engagement. As Žiliukaitė (2006: 28) notices, people in Lithuania most often choose “freedom not to participate” in any civic and political actions. And the main reasons for that are the lack of interest, the lack of resources and the absence of mobilizing agents. Moreover, people in Lithuania tend to embark on individualist, but not collectivist civic/political actions (Imbrasaitė, 2008). That would explain why the role of trust for the civic activities is limited.

Indeed, the empirical analysis suggests that social trust might not be a significant attribute of social embeddedness (or social capital in a wider perspective) in Lithuania, and, applying to a broader context, in post-communist societies in general. Although this presumption contradicts the basic ideas of social capital theories, which implicitly connect social trust and membership in voluntary organizations, this relationship is not necessarily found in post-communist societies (Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Uslaner, 2004; Beresnevičiūtė, 2006; Karakoc, 2013; Matonytė, 2004; Bartuškaitė and Žilys, 2011).

To conclude, I provide two possible explanations why social trust is not (or only weakly) related to formal networks, which (as the data demonstrated) importantly enhanced participation in both party and movement politics.

The first explanation is based on the nature of post-communist societies and the structural legacies inherited from the communist regime. In Soviet Lithuania, civic associations served as a shelter against the system and thus generated suspicious feelings towards strangers (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė, 2011). On the other hand, formal associations as trade unions were subordinated to the Communist party and were aimed to escalate the tensions within society (as a mean to control it) (Matonytė, 2004). All in all, both formal and informal organizations were functioning on the basis of particularized, but not generalized social trust, and these legacies might very well have been transferred to the contemporary society.

Furthermore, associational activity based on particularized trust was possibly even deepened by increased socioeconomic inequality during the post-communist transition. As Karakoc (2013) observes, the less economically privileged people prefer associations whose members are alike or choose not to participate at all. As a result, these people have less chances to increase interactions with different others, they less likely feel a part of the “imagined community” and, in turn, they tend to not cherish a feeling of generalized social trust (Uslaner, 2002).

Adding to that, some authors notice, civic associations in post-communist countries are not used to work in a collective manner; many of them are still very hierarchical (for instance, Letki, 2004). The non-egalitarian nature of decision-making processes might even reduce the stocks of social trust of members of organizations. Moreover, the institutional setting the organizations operate in, is very competitive due to the limited resources. Activists from the different organizations consider each other as competitors rather than collaborators. A very similar logic applies to movement politics, as civic organizations play indeed the biggest role in mobilizing people for protest activities. Thus, although social embeddedness promotes political participation, especially social movements, it does not necessarily go along with social trust.

The second possible explanation relies on the social movements literature and might also be applicable to the post-communist context. Different activities of movement politics reflect the

variance in the motivations of the participants on the axis of universalistic (or post-materialistic) vs particularistic (or materialistic) values. Inglehart (1990; 1997) claims that political actions are usually taken by the educated elite, primed by post-material values. Such conclusions could be also drawn from Table 6.6 which shows that high education and low perceived financial situation is positively associated with movement politics and implies, for instance, that many of the protesters might be students. Often they are aimed at the causes emphasizing peace and justice instead of material goods. However, citizens in post-communist societies are not yet sufficiently well-off to become post-materialists, but they rather possess materialistic values of survival (Uslaner, 2004). Hence, we might expect that most of the protesters who take part in movement activities in Lithuania are driven by their particularistic motivations and are less concerned with the common goods. This type of activists are usually low trusters.

Both explanations are not necessarily conflicting, but follow-up empirical research is needed to find out which account is most accurate. Based on our results, we presuppose that civic organizations in Lithuania are still not likely to generate trust in strangers. Even the fabric of democratic participatory attitudes – local communities – , in a Putnamian sense, are not associated with social trust, supporting Levi's (1996) claim that not all voluntary organizations are creating social capital, but instead rest on unsocial capital.

7 |

Conclusion and discussion: how and why social trust matters?

7.1 Research questions and theoretical perspectives

The main aim of this dissertation was to explain why political participation in post-communist societies is so much lower than in Western democracies, considering social trust as a stimulus for political engagement. I maintain that the exploration of social trust and its connection to political participation in the former communist countries is relevant for at least three reasons. The first reason is related to the empirical evidence of strikingly low levels of political participation in the post-communist region, the second point emphasizes the efforts to understand the weakness of civil society through the lens of social trust from both a historical and contemporary perspective, and the third point is directed to the empirical gaps this study aims to fill.

The theoretical perspectives of this dissertation (chapter 2) suggest that, based on the experiences of Western democracies, social trust might function as a positive attitudinal stimulus for almost all means of political participation. Moreover, I presuppose that social trust has not only this positive direct effect on political involvement *per se*, but also leads to political efficacy, which in turn to a large extent determines whether an individual will embark on political actions or not. Thus, political efficacy is defined as an underlying mechanism (mediating variable) between social trust and political participation. The underlying reasoning for these hypotheses arises from the following two theoretical assumptions.

My first assumption is based on the ample social capital literature, which acknowledges the role of social connectedness for the decision to participate in political life, although cause and result are debated (Putnam, 1993; 2000; Almond and Verba, 1963; 1989; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). It argues that placing social trust in others and receiving it back bounds us with the norms of reciprocity: trusting makes us trustworthy and the other way around. For this reason, we feel responsibility and a moral duty to be involved in common affairs (Putnam, 1993; Seligman, 1997). I have argued that social trust leads individuals to participate in the pursuit of the commons, as trust provides us with assurance that political action will be worthwhile, appreciated, and at least potentially effective. In return, successful cooperation based on trust gives people satisfaction in what they do (Putnam 1993; Fishkin, 1995: 148). Many studies show that social trust stimulates participation in civic associations and political processes in general as it overcomes collection action problems in producing public goods (Van Deth, 2001; Uslander and Brown, 2005). This holds for electoral, but even more for movement politics, which, at times, could be risky and thus requires reliance on other people.

The ambiguousness of the associations between social trust and different political actions leads us to distinguish different forms of political participation. That is to say, I expect that social trust might spur political actions differently, depending on the nature of political action. I

differentiate between three forms of political participation, namely, voting, party politics (conventional, other than voting) and movement (non-conventional) participation. Although there is no clear empirical evidence on how social trust is related to each of these forms of participation, based on the latest findings, I presumed that social trust enhances voting and movement participation. Yet the relationship of social trust with other institutionalized forms of party politics is less evident (Armingeon, 2007; Hooghe and Marien, 2014; Bäck, 2011; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). The argumentation here is that while movement politics is often driven by a sense of belonging to a wider community (politicized identity), party politics (except for more routinized actions such as voting) relies on the competition of different ideas and values that should be pursued.

My second theoretical assumption refers to the more specific question of my dissertation, namely, to what extent (if any) is the effect of social trust on participation mediated by political efficacy? This debate centers around social capital and political culture literatures, explaining how social trust, as a social attitude, can convert into political skills. Trust is important from the perspective that individual's social environment matters for his/her political inclinations and decisions. In other words, the mediation effect would demonstrate that social resources could be translated into individual political resources. To my best knowledge, this relationship is underresearched; only a few studies illuminate this connection (for instance, Van Deth and Scarbrough, 1998; Van der Meer and Van Ingen, 2009; Hsung, 2014; Anderson, 2010).

This dissertation distinguishes between external and internal dimensions of political efficacy (Lane, 1959; Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). External efficacy, or the feeling that “my voice is heard” by the government, leads to more institutionalized forms of participation, like voting and party politics. Internal efficacy, or the conviction that I am capable to make a difference, fosters any kind of political activity, be it party or movement politics. Drawing on the literature, I consider two indirect (mediated) positive effects of trust on participation. First, while trusting, people more likely acquire political knowledge and information in general about the subjects to be acted on and the methods to employ such actions (the effect on internal efficacy). Moreover, trust empowers us politically as we believe that institutions we deal with are fair and people we trust are going to behave by the rules. If we are sure that the rules are not going to be violated, we feel more certain about the effectiveness of involvement in political life (the effect of external efficacy).

However, it is not clear from the scholarly literature and the available empirical evidence whether what applies to advanced democracies in terms of democratic developments is also appropriate to the post-communist region. Only some scarce evidence on how trust contributes (or not) to citizens' political involvement in post-communist societies can be detected. Mierina (2011) and Barnes and Simon (1998) conclude that social trust has a positive impact on participation in a

few post-communist societies, suggesting that the effect of trust on political activity is related to a country's level of democraticness. On the other hand, Letki (2003), Letki and Evans (2005), Uslaner (2004) find no positive or no significant effect of social trust on political activities.

The lack of empirical support for the association between social trust and political participation could be due to the fact that the nature of trust in post-communist societies is significantly distinctive. I have elaborated this notion in chapter 3. I have pointed out that different authors argue that social trust was heavily impaired due to the destructive effects of the communist regime and traumatic experiences of the post-communist transformation (Sztompka, 1999; Mishler and Rose, 1997; Bădescu and Uslaner, 2003; Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Imbrasaitė, 2004). Referring to Howard (2002: 161-163), we might assume that social trust is not connected to political engagement in post-communist countries because of the weak civil societies that result from 1) the legacy of distrust in communist organizations; 2) post-communist disappointment; 3) the persistence of family and friendship-based networks that replaces generalized sense of social trust. To elaborate more on these points, negative experiences with communist organizations escalated distrust in the current organizations. People are not willing to join organizations and thus have no ability to learn civic democratic skills, flourish social trust and generalized morality, as it is presumed by social capital theories. Second, peoples' social trust was arguably even more gravely undermined during the post-communist transition. Increased inequality, widespread crime and corruption, and struggle for survival in a very hostile economic environment left little room for collective aspirations, shared idealistic goals and values. Finally, social trust is disconnected from political engagement as individuals' satisfy their social needs not in voluntary organizations (as it is the case in many Western societies), but in their own private/family circles. People in post-communist societies do not learn trusting others in associations, they prefer not to join association and thus this stepping stone mechanism between social trust and participation is missing (Letki, 2003).

Moreover, social trust in post-communist democracies lacks attitudes based on good will and mostly relies on "strategically egoistic" attitudes in order to fulfill one's needs. This perception of social trust has become pervasively and robustly attached to rational calculations as a result of being exposed by constant fear (for instance, Bartuškaitė and Žilys, 2011; Markova, 2004). This is why social trust did not generalize to wider societal levels and, consequently, why post-communist citizens restrain from being active in political life. However, it also holds true that if fear was the main factor distracting people from politics, now the apathy, instead of fear, takes its turn and leads to political alienations. Apathy is a legacy of fear and a lack of generalized morality.

Having discussed these theoretical aspects, we inevitably direct our attention not only to the individual-level effects (chapter 4), but also to the contexts individuals are nested in (chapter 5).

Why are people in some countries more politically active than in others, or putting it differently, why the inclination of post-communist citizens to participate in political life is systematically lower compared with people living in mature democracies? Explanations can be grouped in two broad perspectives: (1) because of a different composition of a society (e.g. there are fewer highly educated, richer and socially trusting people living in post-communist countries and therefore the average levels of participation of these countries are lower); (2) contextual economic, political and cultural factors shape individual's willingness to engage in politics. Chapter 5 offered the contextual layer of explaining political participation, focusing on inequality, and economic growth (Van Deth and Elff, 2004; Schroeder, 2008; Christensen, 2011; Hooghe and Marien, 2013), corruption (Olsson, 2014; Kostadinova, 2003), institutional effectiveness and experience of democracy (Van der Meer, Van Deth, and Scheepers 2009; Vrábliková, 2014). I assert that these predictors disentangle the equivocal concept of “post-communism”, which is often untenably used as a dummy variable. In addition, I also consider a cultural account which describes “post-communism” as a general atmosphere of social distrust. The role of this cultural interpretation of political participation is emphasized by Putnam (1993), Fukuyama (1995) and more recent ones, for instance, Bäck (2011), Norris (2002a), Rothstein (2011), Kim (2014). Thus, one of the aims of this dissertation was to cut into the question whether the level of contextual social trust (the average level of social trust in a country) significantly shapes political participation. I tested whether the contextual economic, political and cultural factors, that express the experiences of post-communist citizens, can explain the remarkable “divergence” of post-communist societies from mature democracies with regard to participation that we observe in cross-national datasets. If so, certain characteristics of countries condition the relationship between important individual characteristics and political participation. For instance, a higher income could perhaps lead to more participation in Western democracies, but decrease participation in post-communist countries.

As I have already mentioned, the dissertation aimed to fulfil some empirical gaps. The novelty of this study lies in its discovery of (1) mediation effects of different dimensions of political efficacy between social trust and political participation in two different country-sets, namely, mature and post-communist democracies; (2) contextual effect of social trust and cross-level interaction effects of individual social trust and societal characteristics on the individual propensity to participate in politics. Referring to the first point, the existing research has been scarce and not of the comparative manner. These attitudinal values are rarely connected in the literature. Moreover, the limitation of the global survey data is that they often not accurately operationalize the dimensions of political efficacy. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to use the Lithuanian post-election survey 2012 data and employ accurate measurements of internal and external efficacy, as it is done in the American National Survey (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991). This allowed me not

only to operationalize the variables, but also to accurately analyze the mediation effects between social trust and political participation (chapter 6).

Regarding the second point, another added value of this study is the detailed analysis of the contextual effect of social trust. Do people who live in socially trusting environments participate more often, over and above the individual effect of social trust? And does individual social trust affect political participation significantly different in less trusting post-communist societies? The literature does not give clear answers to these questions, leaving an empirical lacuna in the scholarship of political participation. Scrutinizing social trust as a societal characteristic provides more insight in the trends of political participation and the means to enhance it. This is what my dissertation was about.

7.2 Overview of the results

The first part of the empirical study (chapter 4) focused on the impact of social trust on political participation at the individual level, taking two country-sets – mature and post-communist democracies – in a comparative view. Chapters 2 and 3 have given theoretical support to the argument that social trust positively affects political participation directly and moreover mediates via external and internal political efficacy. The results showed that social capital theories largely hold true: social trust is indeed positively related with all forms of political participation.

First, I found that there is a direct significant effect of social trust on the propensity to vote in mature and post-communist democracies. Additional analyses also demonstrated that the effect of social trust on voting is positive and significant in almost all countries, except for Cyprus, Greece, which have mandatory voting system, and Latvia. However, voting is the most routinized mean of participation (especially in mature democracies), thus the positive association between social trust and voting might reflect the outcomes of socio-economic and political developments.

Second, when it comes to other party-politics activities (beyond voting), we again observed very similar patterns between mature and post-communist democracies: social trust has a positive and significant direct effect on party politics participation in both country-sets. However, more detailed analyses show that there is more variation in this regard within countries. For instance, in nine countries (out of 27 cases) I found negative connections – interestingly enough, five of these nine countries are Western post-authoritarian or post-communist democracies. So it also might be true that social trust is not necessary an attribute of someone getting actively involved in political parties and campaigning.

Third, participation in movement politics also fits in this general pattern: socially trusting people tend to protest more in both country-sets, although the effect is somewhat weaker in post-

communist societies. Additional analyses for each country separately also demonstrate that the association between movement politics and social trust is generally positive. Thus we can conclude that movement politics indeed inherits the logic of civic participation: more socially trusting people tend to join the more alternative and elite-challenging activities.

To sum up, the observed positive effects of social trust on different forms of political participation lend support for the social capital theories and perhaps even fortify (with some exceptions) its universal applicability.

By the same token, I investigated whether the relationship between social trust and the forms of political participation is mediated by internal and external efficacy and whether these causal relationships differ between mature and post-communist European democracies. The pattern of social trust affecting individual's *inclination to vote* is comparatively similar in both country-groups, however, there are some notable exceptions to this general conclusion. Although I found a significant positive mediation effect of political trust (proxy of *external* efficacy in the ESS dataset) on voting in both mature and post-communist democracies, the same claim does not hold for political awareness (proxy of *internal* efficacy). Put it differently, socially trusting people vote because they tend to be politically trusting. However, voters who are socially trusting, do not necessarily feel politically aware: the exerted effect of political awareness plays an independent role above and beyond social trust. Hence, political awareness has no mediating effect in neither post-communist nor mature democracies.

Interestingly enough, a similar mediation effect (of external efficacy) is also observed for other forms of *party politics participation* (that not include voting) in post-communist societies, while in mature democracies it only exists for voting. Political trust does not (at least significantly) influence participation in party politics activities in mature democracies, but it does so in post-communist democracies. Thus we can conclude that the role of social trust in political engagement (by fostering external efficacy, which in turn enhances participation) is more important in the post-communist region.

The direct effect of social trust on *movement participation* is positive, but at the same time the direct effect of political trust (proxy of *external* efficacy in the ESS dataset) is negative in both country-sets. In other words, citizens need to trust others in order to express their demands by protesting, but at the same time distrust their politicians.

Political awareness (proxy of *internal* efficacy) positively affects movement politics, but is not a mediator either. Thus the results support my assumption that in movement politics, an individual indeed relies on his/her fellow citizens. This holds for both mature and post-communist countries. However, the results are conditional. For instance, additional analyses in each country reveal that social trust has no significant effect on movement politics in 7 post-communist societies

out of 12, whereas this link is more significant in mature (not post-authoritarian) European democracies (Table A5 in Appendix). This insight is also supported by Lithuanian data.

All in all, the relationship between social trust, political efficacy and the types of participation are, with a few exceptions, more or less the same in the East and West. It means that, at the individual level, post-communist citizens' decision to participate in politics is driven by the same socio-economic resources, perceptions of social trust and efficacy, and associational engagement that determine voter turnout in the mature democracies. Western models of political participation work relatively well for voting turnout and movement participation in new democracies.

As the descriptive analyses in chapters 4 and 5 revealed that the levels of political participation in post-communist societies are low, in the second empirical part of this dissertation (chapter 5) the focus of attention was shifted to the possible explanations why citizens in post-communist democracies engage less actively in politics. What factors – individual or societal – are more important in determining citizens' political participation? Does the context shape individuals' readiness to embark on political actions? I tested individual and contextual predictors of participation by conducting multi-level regressions. Given the fact that the empirical evidence shows there are persistent differences in the quality of democracy, political and civic culture between Western and Eastern European societies, apart from already tested individual-level variables, a set of contextual explanations was included – namely, economic, political and cultural components that in all define the “stage” of post-communism.

The multi-level analyses revealed compositional effects on the levels of participation. This means that the observed country differences in political activeness can be partly explained by different distributions of individual characteristics between countries. I found that almost all individual factors I included in this study predict voting. However, this is not very surprising, keeping in mind that voting is the most routinized form of political participation, so all the attitudes assigned to a good citizenry increase the odds of going to the ballot. But “being a good citizen” not necessarily refers only to voting. Differently from voting, citizens' perceived financial situation does not determine whether a citizen would embark on party-politics activities or movement politics. Put it differently, protest actions are taken by both rich and poor people, as far as someone's subjective perception of wealth is concerned.

More importantly, social trust is generally linked positively to voting and participation in movement politics, even when controlling for other factors. For other party politics activities social trust, however, renders a non-significant negative effect and this complies with other research (for instance, Van der Meer, 2009; Hooghe and Quintelier, 2014). Among all individual level predictors, nonetheless, political interest and social embeddedness are the most pronounced variables. Yet, it

remains unclear whether this latter variable does not indeed measure the different side of the “same coin”. Participation in (other than political) organizations might be considered as a dependent variable to be explained, rather than causal factor that precedes political activity. It is furthermore worth noting that religious attendance, unlike social embeddedness, refrains citizens from protesting. In the wider context, it could also explain why more traditional societies with a bigger proportion of religious people are less active in unconventional participation. In contrast, more secular and post-materialist societies express higher levels of protests activities (Norris, 2002b; Inglehart, 1997; Schwartz, 2006).

The country level characteristics remain very important for both institutionalized and non-institutionalized participation. Even two decades after democratic transition, the post-communist countries clearly expose lower levels of political participation that cannot be explained by individual level factors only. The multilevel analysis shows that not only fewer years of democracy (or authoritarian history) is important, but also corruption, lack of effective government and economic backwardness have a negative effect on political participation levels. Moreover, contextual social trust proved to be positively related with being active in movement and party politics. More generally, my findings indicate that the cultural and institutional contextual aspects were less relevant for predicting voting and institutionalized participation, but it in particular accounted for participation in movement politics.

Voting is an interesting case and an exception from other means of participation. The analysis showed that none of the various contextual indicators explain cross-national differences in voting in Europe. Only societal inequality makes a difference: in more unequal societies people go to the ballots less.

Furthermore, my research focused on the interplay between social trust, forms of political participation, and the context, understood as cultural, socio-economic, and institutional aspects. The most remarkable finding concerned the interaction between the contextual circumstances and social trust in shaping political participation. The results showed that the effect of social trust on participation is moderated by the societal context. For instance, the interplay between individual and contextual social trust has a significant effect on voting, party politics activities and protesting. The socio-economic and political-institutional aspects (GDP, government effectiveness, corruption, democratic experience), also proved to be relevant: they also shape the effect of social trust on the propensity to be active in the political activities under consideration. In more trustful, prosperous and advanced societies, social trust has a stronger positive effect on voting. Involvement in institutionalized politics is negatively related with social trust, and this negative association is stronger in unprosperous and dishonest societies.

Finally, the results showed that social trust stimulates protest participation, and this effect is stronger in societies that are less socially trustful, less affluent, more corrupt, have less effective governments, and a shorter democratic legacy. Taking this particular context of the study into account, in post-communist societies the merit of social trust on protest participation is generally more pronounced: in these countries an increase in social trust motivates citizens to involve in movement activities more vigorously compared to people from Western democracies who increase the same amount of social trust.

Although the societal context matters, the specific effect of post-communism is difficult to pin down, because many important variables (like corruption and social trust) correlate so strongly with each other. Therefore, one cannot easily single out only one contextual effect. Obviously, post-communism comprises a whole set of interrelated dimensions and it is difficult to disentangle all the context level variables. Consequently, it is difficult to unreservedly answer the question which factors are responsible for disenchantment from politics: did people return to the communist-era habits and political apathy, or does this process more accurately reflect the economic and political developments and disappointment with democratic transformation? The latter refers for instance to the fact that the effort of participation has not been rewarded by better living conditions.

The last part of this research investigated the relationship between social trust, political efficacy and political participation in post-communist Lithuania (chapter 6). The extensive Lithuanian post-electoral dataset could solve the limitations of the ESS 2008 data and provide the accurate measurements of internal and external political efficacy. So it allowed scrutinizing mediating relationships in more detail.

More generally, Lithuanians can be described as low social trusters, feeling helpless about political decisions and relatively passive in political participation. That is to say, Lithuania possesses the attributes of a political culture typically found in post-communist countries (Matonytė, 2004; Ramonaitė, 2006b; 2007; Žiliukaitė et al., 2006; Imbrasaitė, 2008). These aspects of political culture suggest indeed why the levels of political participation in Lithuania are low.

My results showed that social trust is indeed positively associated with citizens' propensity to vote, but it is not significant for other party politics activities. Regarding the mediation effects, social trust leads to voting via both external efficacy and political trust. In other words, social trust also determines whether a citizen in Lithuania trusts the institutions and whether s/he considers these institutions being responsive to peoples' needs. So in this regard, when it comes to voting, social trust and political trust are related categories.

The connection between social trust and internal political efficacy of voters is less clear, especially if I control for political information and political interest of the respondents. If I exclude these two variables, internal political efficacy plays indeed a mediating role between social trust and

participation in voting. The question here remains to what extent political interest and political information could be considered as a part of internal political efficacy. Either way, the results suggest that it is reasonable to distinguish between subjective and more objective political knowledge/skills: political interest and internal political efficacy might form one single variable, while political information should be entered as an independent dimension.

Movement politics is again an interesting case. There is no direct effect of social trust on this type of political participation, in contrast with my findings in chapter 4. Yet, the results showed that both internal and external efficacy considerably spur social movement activities. The mediation analysis revealed that the indirect effects of social trust on protesting via both internal and external efficacy are significant. The results are somewhat contradicting the dominant theoretical assumption that external efficacy makes people refrain from movement participation. Contrarily, I found that people, who feel that the Lithuanian government is responsive, tend to protest. This contradicting finding can be explained by the fact that when it comes to protesting, external efficacy and political trust, work in different directions: perceived responsiveness leads to activism, while at the same time my findings suggest that political distrust yields apathy. One does not necessarily trust political institutions, but still tends to believe that government might respond to the citizens' demands or average citizens can influence it.

Moreover, it is worth observing that although social trust has no direct impact on movement politics, I found a highly significant effect of embeddedness. In a broader view, the findings imply that formal social networks are apparently not connected to a sense of social trust. I showed in the descriptive analysis that the relationship between these two variables is very weak, if not non-existent. Social trust is not associated with participation in two other formal networks either, namely trade unions and religious communities.

To sum up the results based on the Lithuanian dataset, we see that in a comparative view, protesters are apparently not the same type of people as those who take part in conventional politics. Social trust is indeed positively related to political trust, but the latter actually seems to *decrease*, rather than increase participation in movement politics.

Finally, it is interesting to note that my analysis revealed strong empirical evidence for the argument that social embeddedness is tremendously important for any kind of political participation. Civic engagement strongly affects the odds of individuals to be involved in political activities. And the opposite is also true: the lack of political engagement in Lithuania is caused by a lack of civic engagement. As Žiliukaitė (2006: 28) notices, people in Lithuania often choose “freedom not to participate” in any civic and political actions. And the main reasons for that are the lack of interest, the lack of resources and the absence of mobilizing agents. Moreover, people in

Lithuania tend to embark on individualist, but not collectivist civic/political actions (Imbrasaitė, 2008). That would explain why the role of trust for civic activities is limited.

The findings of chapters 4 and 6 concerning the causal model are in summarized in Figures 7.1-7.3 below.

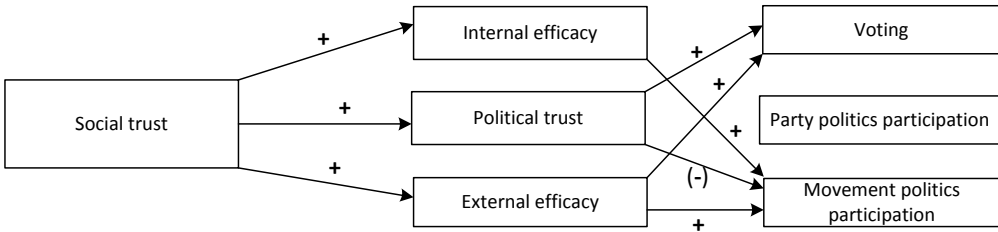


Figure 7.1 Summary of findings (Lithuania, chapter 6)

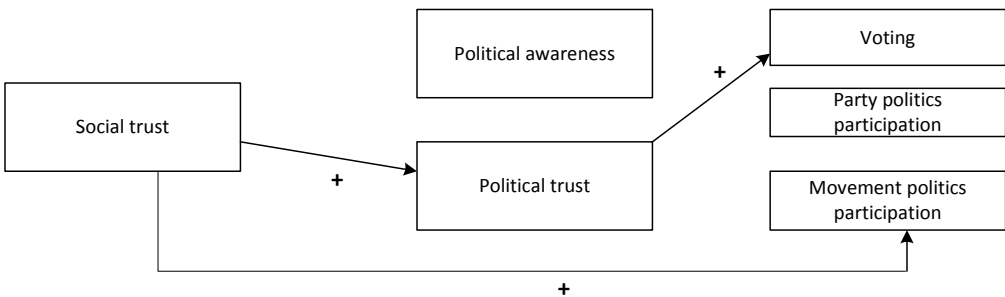


Figure 7.2 Summary of findings (mature democracies, chapter 4)

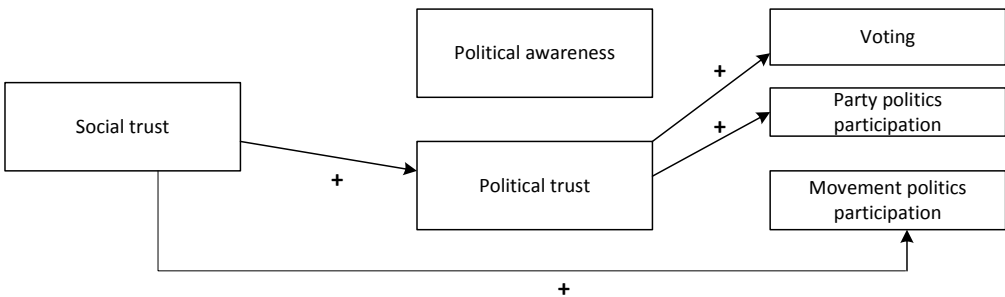


Figure 7.3 Summary of findings (post-communist democracies, chapter 4)

7.3 Discussion and wider relevance of the findings

In this section, I discuss three points of interest that arise from the empirical results. The first point relates to neo-Tocquevillean social capital theory and the applicability of it to the post-communist context. The second point refers to the cultural/moral implications of social trust. My third point considers a wider context of post-communist transformation and its perspectives from the cultural point of view.

First, although I found a positive relationship between social trust and political participation in most of the countries, at least for voting, this link is still debatable for movement politics, especially in the post-communist context. This concern is also empirically supported by Lithuanian data: this case suggests that social trust is not a resource that spurs protest participation, or at least the role of social trust as a collective resource is debatable. The possible explanation for this is that, when we consider post-authoritarian and post-communist societies, we should take not only generalized, but also particularized trust (thick relations between people) into account. Under the perception of a risky environment, individuals might very well be mobilized on the basis of particularized trust, rather than generalized trust (Ramonaitė, 2011; McAdam, 1986). Although the political situation in Lithuania, like other EU post-communist societies, *de jure* (and *de facto*) is not threatening for human rights and freedoms, the fear inherited from totalitarian experiences hampers bottom-up initiatives that are mostly based on generalized social trust and altruism.

I emphasize the relationship between social trust and movement politics participation purposely, as it indeed provokes the discussion to what extent social trust is a collective resource. While voting is considered to be an individual action (you cast a ballot as a single person and your preferences may remain confidential, if your wish), while participation in movement politics is a manifestation of a collective action and often requires courage and reliance on other social actors. Social movements literature emphasizes that indeed, non-institutionalized/protest politics follow the same causal pattern as participation in civic associations, that is, socially trusting people join civic associations, they learn habits of cooperation, and they transfer these habits and skills to the political realm (Stolle, 1996; Maloney and Van Deth, 2010; Van Deth, 2001). I observed this connection in Lithuania: social trust enhances protest, because it increases internal and external efficacy. However, the *total* effect of social trust on protest is absent, because it likely also leads to political trust, which, in turn, diminishes protest participation. Equally interesting, is the fact, that social embeddedness, be it in mature democracies and post-communist countries, taken together, and Lithuania, taken solely, has a prominent effect on movement politics participation. More specifically, with social embeddedness, I do not mean labour union activities (that somewhat complies or even replicates activities of movement politics) or religious attendance, but

membership in other (than political) associations. It leads us to the remarkable observation that social trust is not connected to social embeddedness (and protest politics), questioning the validity of neo-Tocquevillean approach.

The Lithuanian case indeed proves that there is little evidence that social trust is connected to social embeddedness; and this could be applicable to a broader post-communist context (Rose-Ackerman, 2001; Uslaner, 2004; Karakoc, 2013; Matonytė, 2004). It could be, first, because of the nature of post-communist societies and the legacies of the communist regime. Formal associations were subordinated to the communist party or secretly served as a shelter against the system and thus generated suspicious feelings towards strangers (Kavaliauskaitė and Ramonaitė, 2011). Thus both formal and informal organizations were functioning on the basis of particularized, but not social trust, and these legacies might very well have been transferred to the contemporary society. The second possible reason why trust and embeddedness are not connected refers to the observation that different activities of movement politics reflect the variance in the motivations. It might be that protests in Lithuania (and other post-communist societies) attract less socially trusting people. As we know from social movements literature, participants in elite-challenging activities are driven by universalistic (or post-materialistic) *or* particularistic (or materialistic) values. Protesters that are primed with post-materialist values are aimed at the causes emphasizing peace and justice instead of material goods. However, citizens in post-communist societies are not yet sufficiently well-off to become post-materialists, but they rather possess materialistic values of survival (Uslaner, 2004). The disillusionment with the socio-economic developments refrain citizens from activities based on the altruistic behaviour and social trust, since their motivation to participate is driven by more pressing survival (and particularistic) issues. This type of activists are usually low trusters, because their social trust was not only impaired by the communist regime, but even more damaged during the post-communist transition.

Adding to that, we might also consider the specific character of memberships in organizations in post-communist societies, which are still encumbered with the communist legacy and thus weakly linked with political and civic culture (Sedláčková and Šafr, 2009). I presuppose that civic organizations in post-communist societies are still not likely to generate trust in strangers. It could be due to the authoritarian nature of these organizations and lack of democratic decision-making processes within them. This especially applies to so-called “old” associations with path dependency inherited from the communist regime, so to say, with the formal and somehow profitable purpose of the membership (as trade unions and some leisure-time associations).

All in all, these observations are tendencies, but not the general rule of the whole post-communist region. The problem is conditional as the analyses yield slightly different results in different countries on how social trust is related to movement politics. In this discussion, I mainly

referred to the Lithuanian context. However, as discussed in previous section, the pooled sample of the countries and multi-level analysis revealed that social trust is indeed important for someone to engage in protest politics, and it becomes even more relevant in more corrupt, less institutionally and socio-economically developed societies. Thus the weakness of the link between social trust and movement politics is debatable.

The second point also refers to the interpretation of the link between social trust and political efficacy, or so to say, the implications of social trust. The empirical evidence made it clear that social trust is intrinsically connected to our perception of the external world, or to be more specific, of the political system. Quite interestingly, we observe that socially trusting people are indeed more politically trusting and politically efficacious. That is, social trust leads (or is connected) to a general inclination that political institutions can be trusted and these institutions are responsive to people's demands. This observation is in line with the culturalist theories stating that social and political trust are related categories, and the latter one does not necessarily depends on the evaluations of political outcomes. If this holds true, the merits of social trust in post-communist societies cannot be overrated: it would not only bring about the solidarity of the people, but also bring those people closer to the political institutions. From the perspective of social capital theories, the fact that social trust enhances external political efficacy indeed leads us to the question "in what way or how social trust spurs political participation?" It does so because socially trusting people think that they can influence political institutions.

But there is another side of the connection between social trust and political efficacy: namely, the side of internal political efficacy. We learned that social trust does generally not lead to political awareness, in neither post-communist nor mature democracies, neither in the context of voting, nor protesting. The more refined Lithuanian analysis also revealed that social trust is not strongly associated with internal political efficacy, particularly when we control for political interest and knowledge. The analysis has relevance for the consideration of the nature of social trust. The idea here is twofold: one, that socially trusting people not necessarily gain political skills (for instance, via organizations), and, flowing from that, social trust is not necessarily driven by the rationale of intelligence, or by something you learn. As Sztompka (1999) observes, social trust is not only an individual, but also a cultural phenomenon and is thus both intuitively and rationally grounded. You cannot learn it on the rational basis solely, but yet it can develop and grow in reaction to positive experiences. In post-communist societies, the variation of social trust levels among the people generally reflects the positions of "winners" and "losers" of post-communist democratic transformation, as well as views about the world and the humanity in general. Thus social trust has many facets and it is scientifically challenging to interpret its implications for political systems.

The third point of the discussion refers to the interpretation of the departure from communism or how culturalist theories, including ones about social trust, could be helpful to understand the process of democratization and of democratic consolidation. The leading theories of post-communism are centered around the so-called transitologist paradigm, which stems from the experiences of transition in Southern Europe and Latin America. It regards the post-communist region as a certain experiment-field suitable to “solve the problems of Western societies” (Przeworski, 1991; di Palma, 1990; 1991; O’Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead, 1986; Huntington, 1991; Linz and Stepan, 1996). The notion of transition itself suggests that the process of democratization is conceptually teleological, progressive, expressed with a clear linear course and the predictable results, where institutions play the main role, leaving cultural aspects behind the scenes (Przeworski, 1991; Berdahl, 2000: 2; Kollmorgen, 2013). This paradigm asserts that democratization of institutions leads to a democratic political culture, or, put it differently: the institutional consolidation would have a “spill-over” effect on civic and political society, assuming a causal link between the new economic relations and other aspects of transformation, like behavioural patterns and attitudes (Illner, 1996).

However, the real practice of post-communist societies shows that the transition model is not capable of explaining the pathways and outcomes of democratization. That is why Carothers (2002) in his seminal article proclaimed the end of the transition paradigm. He argues that transitional thinking is not appropriate in trying to understand the developments and peculiarities of post-communist societies, underestimating the social and cultural legacies of communism. The implantation of institutions and rules from one socio-cultural setting to another inevitably created a gap between the establishment and the citizens: on the one hand, post-communist societies have institutions that are supposed to function on participatory attitudes and inclusive social orientations; on the other hand, most citizens are not yet ready to participate, as they need to “learn” democracy. Although in the procedural democracy citizens have more individual freedom and could seek for more political rights, paradoxically they do not miss these rights and do not fight for them (Kuolys, 2010). Low levels of peoples’ involvement in the CEE countries leads to the risk of “selective democracy”, in which political elites adopt exclusionary policies in order to overrule political competition. That is, the withdrawal of citizens from the political processes creates the opportunity for political elites to mobilize the radicalized voters and exclude the potentially rival groups from political life and thus endanger democracy (Varga and Freyberg-Inan, 2012). In sum, political disengagement leads to the “exclusionism” of the political elite, which in turn produces political distrust and escalates dissatisfaction with democracy. This inverse circulation locks down the political process, therefore it is so important to study what bring people both to the ballots and to the streets to express and defend their grievances and demands.

The historical and sociological debate about social trust and civil society in general deepen our comprehension of post-communist societies and their chosen “freedom” not to participate in politics. Moreover, the cultural insight might be helpful to understand why post-communist transformation is cyclical, rather than linear. It goes with interruptions, frustration, drawbacks and is exposed by open-ended consequences (Bunce, 2003). Thus the scenarios of transformation cannot be predicted, as some elements of democratization might be deconstructed and deformed (Norkus, 2008: 317). It holds for all post-communist societies, both inside and outside the EU. In democratically consolidated post-communist societies (the EU members) transformation resulted in varieties of capitalism, in which cultural factors, including social trust, plays a huge role. In fact, Norkus (2008) argues, cultural factors are responsible for the success of the implementation of different forms of capitalism and the pathways the countries are developing (diverging from or converging with the Western mature democracies). In this Weberian-based view, institutions are shaped by culture, and democracy as well as market economy needs to be culturally embedded (Pollack, 2003: xvi).

Different authors also argue that cultural factors and the absence of democratic political values accounts for the failed democratization of the non-EU post-communist countries, or at least add to the institutional explanations why some countries, such as Moldova, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and others, get ‘frozen’ in their democratization process and end up in permanent political instability (Šatūnienė, 2006). One cultural explanation, among others, could be that for instance, family-based and particularized networks of social trust prevented the development of full-fledged politically orientated civil society that could resist and vigilantly thwart the non-democratic regime. The lack of generalized trust, instead, makes people more reliant on their families and submissive to their authorities, for, they cannot make a change, but to comply.

In sum, although the new behavioral models were also introduced within the process of democratization, it did not utterly replace the communist mentality. Rather the communist legacies were absorbed by the new models, but still maintain the significant influence on them. During the transition communist legacies clearly did not vanish. It remained vital in the behavioral patterns, attitudes, perceptions, values. Post-communism is an integral narrative of past, present and future. In its essence, Sztompka (2004: 171) says, transformation is the traumatic process, since it ruptures culture from the background of the old system. The new system requires from individuals the new set of civilizational competences – rules, norms, values, habits, orientations and codes that frame the ground of the modern social structures (Sztompka, 1993: 89). Thus transformation is a deep mental process, which is shaped not only by institutions and formal rules. As Dahrendorf metaphorically describes, democratization runs at three different paces: *“The hour of the lawyer” is the shortest; legal changes can be enacted in months. “The hour of the economist” is longer;*

dismantling command economies and establishing functioning markets must take years. But the longest is “the hour of the citizens”; transforming ingrained habits, mental attitudes, cultural codes, value systems and pervasive discourses. This may take decades and presents the greatest challenge” (Dahrendorf, 1990).

7.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Despite its contributions, the dissertation has a number of limitations and shortcomings, which will be discussed in this section, as well as suggestions for future research that may fill the gaps this study leaves.

Firstly, as it was already mentioned several times, one of the shortages in the study was unavailability of accurate operationalization of external and internal political efficacy in the ESS 2008 data. Due to this limitation, I have used the measure of political trust as a proxy of external efficacy and political awareness as a proxy of internal efficacy (cf. Hooghe and Marien, 2013). The more detailed measurement of these items using Lithuanian post-electoral survey data indicates that external efficacy is not the same as political trust and can even work in different directions (for instance, for movement politics), whereas political awareness indeed comes very close to internal political efficacy. However, more exact operationalization of these variables in global surveys would allow us to learn more about the nature of internal and external efficacy and how these categories are related to social trust. Similarly, to what extent external political efficacy mediates between social trust and voting, and, more intriguingly, movement politics? So apart from only looking at political trust which is at work here, it would be expedient to also include the proper measurement of external political efficacy, at it is defined in American post-electoral survey (Niemi, Craig, and Mattei, 1991), and to compare countries in this regard.

The second point refers to the diversification of political activities, especially of movement politics, when considering the relationship of these activities with social trust. More particularly, the question here arises: what kind of protests and demonstrations people participate in? Are these protests driven by universalistic or paternalistic motifs? How social trust relates to each kind of these activities? Some research, for instance, by Sedláčková and Šafr (2009) in Czech Republic, show that social trust is positively linked to only one kind of movement politics, namely, donating, which commonly flows from the altruistic motifs. What are the patterns of different kind of protest actions in post-communist and mature democracies? This question still remains unanswered due to the limitations of most of the global datasets (including the ESS and EVS). It is also due to the difficulties to methodologically categorize protests (“taxonomy of the protests”), assigning them to specific issues (especially, based on cross-country data). Efforts to classify protests and the motives

of protesters are recorded in more Western environments (for instance, the “Caught in the act of protest: Contextualizing Contestation” project (see more: Van Stekelenburg et al., 2012), whereas post-communist societies are less investigated in this respect. Therefore, future research should distinguish between the issues protests and demonstrations are centred around.

Furthermore, related to that, the third limitation is that the study ignored the supply-side, that is – organizations and political parties – and focused on the demand side, or preferences/attitudes of people. Due to the data limitations the study cannot give an answer about what type of organizations mobilize for social movements in different countries. Moreover, do associations generate generalized social trust and how they differ in this account? Is it true that “old” (stemming from the communist regime) organizations escalate only particularized trust or distrust towards others, whereas new, more post-materialist-driven associations enhance a generalized sense of social trust? Another aspect of the demand side is of course politicians and political parties. When we talk about social trust and efficacy, we can phrase the problem of lack of participation in two ways: people feel helpless or politicians are not listening (cf. Hay, 2007). The study did not aim at elaborating the hypothesis that people are not efficacious because politicians are not responsive or parties are not adjusting to their demands. So the future research could focus more on the “weaknesses” of post-communist governments and how it is reflected in levels of citizens’ political helplessness or why citizens’ initiatives are being ignored. The issue is worrisome and worth investigating because non-responsiveness of a government tend to lead to more aggressive political actions, while common citizens become politically outrageous and apathetic (Foley and Edwards, 1996). These developments become more apparent in the political scenes of post-communist societies.

The fourth shortage of the analysis addresses the more thorough analysis of social trust based on longitudinal data. Has the pattern of the relationship between social trust and political participation changed over the years of democratization in post-communist societies? Is social trust becoming more and more important for political participation? Or is the relationship more or less stable? The question is especially interesting if we consider the remarkable fluctuations of levels of voting and protesting during the transition years, and especially compared to the Revolutions of 1988-1991. This unique historical moment is in particular intriguing to be investigated. On the one hand, the post-communist region experienced huge protests and massive involvement in elections. But on the other hand, citizens operated on a soil of low social capital in Putnamian way: “Many of the formerly Communist societies had weak civic traditions before the advent of Communism, and totalitarian rule abused even that limited stock of social capital” (Putnam, 1993: 183). So this question remains for follow-up study: does only generalized social trust lead to political participation, or can political activeness also arise from particularized, in-group social trust, as some

authors, for instance, Ramonaitė (2011), argue? Although the particularized trust is more difficult to measure, the attention could be drawn on the mobilization agents of protest politics in post-communist societies. Adding to that, the specific interest lies in the comparative study in the importance of the type of social trust (thick/particularized or thin/generalized) for mobilizing people in mature and post-communist democracies.

Not directly touched here in this dissertation is the issue of longitudinal data measuring of the same issues. A fruitful avenue for future research is to investigate how social trust and political efficacy reinforce each other. Does social trust lead to efficacy or the other way around? The same could be applied for social trust and political participation. How political engagement leads to social trust? Is it true that the more people participate, the more they become efficacious and socially trusting? To illustrate this issue of a longitudinal analysis of civic and political values to the case of Lithuanians: how do they change and how does it reflect the process of democratization? Based on the Lithuanian post-electoral survey, we see that the mean of social trust indeed increases for those who are younger (Appendix C2). It gives us hope that with the generational change people will become more socially trusting and thus more willing to participate in politics. However, we cannot really see if the same individuals elaborate stronger feelings of social trust in a democratic society compared to the years spent under communism.

The fifth limitation deals with the emigration and nationalism. First, how the problem of emigration in Eastern Europe affects the levels of participation? Let me illustrate this again with the Lithuanian case. The recent elections revealed that indeed the percentage of voters residing in foreign countries is very low and equals only around 4-5 percent of all emigrated citizens that are eligible to vote. So it could very well be that the low turnout of elections in Lithuania is partly due to the fact that emigrants are not actively involved in political life. However, the problem of emigration should not be overestimated keeping in mind that the sample of Lithuanian post-electoral data, which comprises citizens living in Lithuania, yields similar patterns – that is, the actual and the reported turnout is comparatively low. Another relevant aspect of discussion which this study did not embrace is the national dimension, or how social trust relates to national identity. Levels of social trust in a country are also determined by the ethnic composition of the society. In other words, it might very well be that social trust in Eastern Europe is lower due to the greater ethnic heterogeneity. Social trust refers to the “imagined communities” that, in most cases, are nationally based. Thus I would expect that levels of social trust differ between national groups within countries. Within Lithuania, for instance, between Lithuanians, Polish and Russians (however, the Lithuanian data-set does not reveal significant differences between the minorities, although the trend is that the minorities are indeed less social trusting).

Finally, the sixth limitation of my study is related to the applicability of the results to other former Soviet countries. Would we find the same patterns between social trust and political participation, or do social capital theories work in different ways in less democratically advanced societies? The question is particularly pertinent keeping in mind the latest political developments in Belarus, Moldova, Georgia and especially, Ukraine. Future research can investigate the effect of social trust in these different political settings. These countries did not yet undergo the institutional democratization and the nature as well as the functions of social trust might indeed not transform into collective resource: there are other more important factors restraining political participation. Paraphrasing Dahrendorf, the “hour of citizen” is still yet to come in these societies: there is a need for a lawyer and an economist first before a full-fledged citizen entrenches.

7.5 Implications and concluding remarks

The last point of the discussion asserts the implications of this research for practice. What can for instance policy makers, NGO’s, think-tanks learn from this study on political participation in post-communist societies and Lithuania, and the role of social trust in generating it? How could it be applicable in the practical realm, for instance, by political institutions and non-governmental associations? The suggestions that derive from my research results are two-folded: directed towards the means to increase political participation in post-communist societies in general (for instance, by making voting compulsory), and directed more specifically towards the means to increase collective political and civic actions that are based on social trust. The latter is more desirable for sustaining a full-fledged democracy.

Concerning the first aspect, the attention should be shifted to the effectiveness of political institutions and their responsiveness that would in return empower people politically: make them more politically efficacious. The results clearly show that citizens in post-communist societies participate less because they feel less efficacious than their counterparts in Western democracies. The efforts to increase citizens’ efficacy is both a top-down and bottom-up process. The institutional ways refer to the transparency of political decisions, fighting corruption, and creating an environment in which common citizens feel that they can make a difference. The bottom-up process of strengthening efficacy actually closely relates to the second aspect of the implications: how to increase civic actions (and thus political efficacy) based on social trust? The post-communist societies would greatly benefit from strengthening the democratic setting and the role of civic organizations, changing them to “schools of democracy”, endowing skills of political duties and responsibilities. People learn participating by participating. Thus more involvement of the younger generation is crucially important, as they participate in politics less. Equally relevant is to

democratize the internal environment of organizations, transforming them in more open, more cooperative and less conflicting groups. That would attract more citizens willing to invest their time outside their family and friends' circles.

When it comes to post-communist societies that experienced massive emigration, such as Lithuania, the practical advice would be to think of the strategies how to attract emigrated well educated and young citizens – living abroad – to contribute to the political processes in the country. By well educated and young, I imply that these citizens are primed by post-materialist values and would indeed embark on collectivist political actions that are driven by generalized social trust.

To sum up, refraining from political practices of citizens is an actual concern of post-communist democracies. Withdrawing from political life also means the rejection to participate in the creation of civil society. The communist legacy made people apathetic and even afraid to participate or become “too active”, just not to jeopardize their “stable” and “secure” life (Dahrendorf, 1990). The paradox remains that withdrawing from political life does not bring about the “safety” and “stability” in a democratic system: on the contrary, by being apathetic, citizens voluntary give away a part of their political freedoms (Genys, 2012: 133 - 134). Thus instead of trying to improve their living conditions and pursuing their civic dreams, the absence from political life creates contra-effects, as it strengthens the political positions of already privileged, more successful citizens that create their own rules and thrust them on others. This is where social trust can get at work: solidarizing people at empowering them and thus breaking the vicious circle of political passivity and long-lasting disappointment with post-communist transformation. Before this circle is broken, for years yet to come these and other related aspects of political culture will undoubtedly stand at the core of future research in social capital of Eastern European societies.

Appendices

Appendix A. Trends of voting and demonstrating in different data-sets (chapter 4)

Table A1 Trends of voting

	Voting EED					Trend 1990- 2014	Voting ESS			
	1990- 1994	1995- 1999	2000- 2004	2004- 2009	2010- 2014		2002	2008	2012	Trend 2002/8 -2012
Belgium	92.72	90.86	91.63	91.08	89.22	-3.5	85.2	92.1	89.3	-4.1
Cyprus	93.00	92.94	91.75	89.00	78.70	-14.30	-	93.3	80.3	-13.0
Denmark	83.55	85.95	87.15	85.57	87.74	4.19	93.7	94.2	93.9	0.2
Finland	68.39	66.93	66.71	65.02	67.33	-1.99	81.7	83.2	85.0	3.3
France	69.32	68.44	64.41	60.42	56.32	-13.00	74.9	77.6	78.9	4.0
Germany	78.37	81.99	79.08	74.23	71.5	-6.87	84.6	82.6	82.0	-2.6
Greece	79.23	76.35	75.74	72.54	65.10	-14.13	89.6	87.0	-	-2.6
Ireland	68.49	65.92	62.57	67.03	69.90	1.41	77.8	79.7	74.4	-3.4
Netherlands	78.81	73.23	79.55	80.35	75.00	-3.81	86.4	85.6	83.7	-2.7
Norway	75.85	78.33	75.48	76.90	78.30	2.45	84.8	85.7	86.7	-2.1
Portugal	67.78	63.70	61.48	61.05	56.54	-11.24	72.5	72.8	69.1	-3.4
Spain	76.44	77.38	68.71	73.85	68.94	-7.5	78.7	81.3	76.4	-2.3
Sweden	86.78	81.38	78.89	81.99	83.97	-2.81	87.0	91.1	90.5	3.5
Switzerland	46.05	42.76	45.23	48.28	48.50	2.45	68.7	63.3	66.3	-2.4
UK	77.70	71.40	59.38	61.36	65.10	-12.60	72.6	70.8	71.7	-0.9
Total	76.17	74.50	71.14	72.58	70.81	-5.36	86.5	82.6	80.6	-5.9
(mature)										
Bulgaria	84.38	62.93	67.03	59.20	51.33	-33.05	-	72.2	73.8	1.6
Croatia	79.80	68.79	67.46	59.48	54.32	-25.48	-	78.7	-	-
Czech Rep.	90.83	75.38	57.95	64.42	61.04	-29.79	64.2	57.8	64.8	0.6
Estonia	67.84	63.25	58.24	61.91	63.53	-4.31	-	64.7	68.2	-
Hungary	66.91	56.21	70.47	67.87	63.06	-3.85	80.9	80.0	72.9	8.0
Latvia	86.25	71.80	70.83	60.49	60.75	-25.50	-	62.8	-	-
Lithuania	75.30	52.90	58.63	47.34	52.93	-22.37	-	48.6	56.0	-7.4
Poland	47.67	47.90	46.18	44.34	48.92	1.25	66.3	73.4	69.1	2.8
Romania	81.25	76.01	60.96	37.30	47.11	-34.14	-	67.7	-	-
Slovakia	84.95	84.15	69.99	54.67	58.98	-25.97	-	77.5	76.3	-1.2
Slovenia	85.67	69.33	68.02	61.87	58.67	-27.00	80.0	72.6	73.2	-6.8
Total	77.35	66.24	63.25	56.26	56.42	-20.93	72.9	68.7	69.3	-3.6
(post-com)										

Sources: 1. European Election Database 1990 – 2014. The voter turnout of parliamentary elections is counted. If there were several elections in a concrete period of time, the average of the voter turnout is taken. For example: in 1995 – 2000 two parliamentary elections were held in Belgium, namely, in 1995 (voter turnout: 91.15) and in 1999 (90.56). Hence, the average turnout is: 90.86. Note: Some of the data applied in the analysis in this publication are based on material from the "European Election Database". The data are collected from original sources, prepared and made available by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). NSD are not responsible for the analyses/interpretation of the data presented here.

2. ESS data. Voting is measured with the question: "Did you vote in the last national elections?". (Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes").

Table A2 Trends of demonstrating

Country	Demonstrations (ESS)			Trend 2002/8 - 2012	Demonstrations (EVS)		
	2002	2008	2012		1990	2008	Trend 1999 - 2008
Belgium	8.4	7.4	5.2	-3.2	22.8	29.7	6.9
Cyprus	-	2.3	4.8	2.5		24.8	-
Denmark	8.3	9.3	4.3	-4.0	27.4	34.4	7.0
Finland	2.0	2.5	1.5	-0.5	14.2	16.0	1.8
France	16.9	14.6	11.0	-5.9	32.7	44.8	12.1
Germany	11.4	8.0	9.1	-2.3	33.6	30.4	-3.2
Greece	4.3	5.9	-	1.6	-	22.8	-
Ireland	6.7	9.2	10.5	2.5	16.5	15.9	-0.6
Netherlands	2.7	3.3	3.0	0.3	25.3	21.5	-3.8
Norway	9.0	7.2	9.6	0.6	19.5	30.1	10.6
Portugal	4.2	3.7	7.4	3.2	21.2	11.7	-9.5
Spain	15.9	15.8	25.9	10.0	23.3	37.6	14.3
Sweden	6.4	6.4	7.3	0.9	22.6	22.9	0.3
Switzerland	7.7	7.5	4.4	-3.3	-	25.4	-
United Kingdom	4.4	3.9	3.5	-1.1	14.0	14.9	0.9
Total (mature)	7.9	7.1	7.7	-0.2	22.8	25.8	3.0
Bulgaria	-	3.6	5.5	0.9	14.5	8.4	6.1
Croatia	-	7.4	-	-	-	8.8	-
Czech Republic	4.3	4.2	6.7	2.4	35.5	12.0	-23.5
Estonia	-	2.1	4.0	1.9	25.9	5.9	-20
Hungary	3.7	2.2	3.6	-0.1	4.4	4.0	-0.4
Latvia	-	6.9	-	-	35.6	17.4	-18.2
Lithuania	-	3.9	1.9	-2.0	34.0	7.7	-26.3
Poland	1.4	1.6	2.4	1.0	19.3	8.5	-10.8
Romania	-	3.7	-	-	-	7.3	-
Slovakia	-	1.8	3.5	1.7	22.9	5.4	-17.5
Slovenia	2.7	1.6	3.4	0.7	10.1	12.7	2.6
Total (post-com)	3.0	3.6	3.9	0.9	22.5	8.9	-13.6

Sources: ESS: 1. Voting; 2. Demonstrations: Have you taken part in lawful public demonstration in the last 12 months?
EVS: Have actually done any of these things: "attending lawful demonstrations" (Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes").

Table A3 Descriptive statistics of all variables (mature democracies)

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	N
<i>Dependent variables</i>				
Voting	0.82	0.38	0/1	26 851
Participating in party politics (except for voting)	0.24	0.43	0/1	29 674
Contacted politician or government official last 12 months	0.15	0.36	0/1	29 676
Worked in political party or action group last 12 months	0.04	0.19	0/1	29 691
Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker last 12 months	0.09	0.28	0/1	29 689
Member of political party	0.05	0.22	0/1	29 634
Participating in movement politics	0.37	0.48	0/1	29 640
Signed petition last 12 months	0.26	0.44	0/1	29 626
Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months	0.07	0.26	0/1	29 686
Boycotted certain products last 12 months	0.19	0.39	0/1	29 672
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Social trust (three-item scale)	5.40	1.90	0/10	29 697
Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful	5.27	2.36	0/10	29 663
Most people try to take advantage of you, or try to be fair	5.85	2.20	0/10	29 601
Most of the time people helpful or mostly looking out for themselves	5.08	2.24	0/10	29 632
Political trust	4.92	1.95	0/10	29 593
Trust in country's parliament	4.89	2.41	0/10	28 903
Trust in the legal system	5.52	2.51	0/10	29 222
Trust in the police	6.37	2.33	0/10	29 575
Trust in politicians	3.90	2.30	0/10	29 313
Trust in political parties	3.89	2.27	0/10	29 146
Political awareness	2.93	0.93	1/5	29 611
Politics too complicated to understand	3.11	1.13	1/5	29 488
Making mind up about political issues	2.97	1.05	1/5	29 458
Political interest (How interested in politics)	2.55	0.91	1/4	29 681
Social embeddedness (Worked in another organisation or association last 12 months)	0.17	0.38	0/1	29 688
Union membership	0.40	0.49	0/1	29 711
Religious attendance	2.51	1.51	1/7	29 711
1 = Never*	35.4 %			10 528
2 = Less often	20.8 %			6 194
3 = Only on special holy days	19.2 %			5 716
4 = At least once a month	10.5 %			3 132
5 = Once a week	10.7 %			3 168
6 = More than once a week	2.5 %			734
7 = Every day	0.8 %			239
<i>Control variables</i>				
Education	3.06	1.45	1/5	29 647
1 = Less than lower secondary education	18.1 %			5 371
2 = Lower secondary education completed	18.4 %			5 448
3 = Upper secondary education completed	32.0 %			9 481
4 = Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed	2.4 %			712
5 = Tertiary education completed	29.1 %			8635
Perceived income	3.10	0.83	1/4	29492
1 = Very difficult on present income	4.9%			1442
2 = Difficult on present income	15.5%			4576
3 = Coping on present income	44.8%			13211
4 = Living comfortably on present income	34.5%			10263
Gender (Male=1)	0.47	0.50	0/1	29701
Age	49.13	17.86	18/123	28700

Source: ESS, 2008. Note: Unweighted results of pooled data.

*This category also includes those respondents who refused to answer or did not know the answer.

Table A4 Descriptive statistics of all variables (post-communist democracies)

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	N
<i>Dependent variables</i>				
Voting	0.69	0.46	0/1	19400
Participating in party politics (except for voting)	0.15	0.36	0/1	20645
Contacted politician or government official last 12 months	0.10	0.29	0/1	20620
Worked in political party or action group last 12 months	0.03	0.17	0/1	20611
Worn or displayed campaign badge/sticker last 12 months	0.03	0.18	0/1	20597
Member of political party	0.04	0.20	0/1	20661
Participating in movement politics	0.16	0.37	0/1	20525
Signed petition last 12 months	0.11	0.31	0/1	20588
Taken part in lawful public demonstration last 12 months	0.04	0.19	0/1	20609
Boycotted certain products last 12 months	0.06	0.24	0/1	20524
<i>Independent variables</i>				
Social trust (three-item scale)	4.37	2.09	0/10	20707
Most people can be trusted or you can't be too careful	4.23	2.54	0/10	20646
Most people try to take advantage of you, or try to be fair	4.80	2.46	0/10	20424
Most of the time people helpful or mostly looking out for themselves	4.09	2.44	0/10	20573
Political trust	3.34	2.07	0/10	20477
Trust in country's parliament	3.10	2.47	0/10	20228
Trust in the legal system	3.79	2.60	0/10	19948
Trust in the police	4.67	2.72	0/10	20346
Trust in politicians	2.53	2.26	0/10	20245
Trust in political parties	2.57	2.24	0/10	20126
Political awareness	2.87	0.94	1/5	20266
Politics too complicated to understand	3.20	1.13	1/5	19908
Making mind up about political issues	2.97	0.99	1/5	19683
Political interest (How interested in politics)	2.75	0.87	1/4	20632
Social embeddedness (Worked in another organisation or association last 12 months)	0.06	0.23	0/1	20589
Union membership	0.43	0.50	0/1	20747
Religious attendance	2.79 %	1.50	1/7	20747
1 = Never*	26.3 %			5450
2 = Less often	18.9 %			3927
3 = Only on special holy days	26.5 %			5504
4 = At least once a month	11.6 %			2401
5 = Once a week	12.9 %			2666
6 = More than once a week	2.8 %			574
7 = Every day	1.1 %			225
<i>Control variables</i>				
Education	3.13	1.14	1/5	20695
1 = Less than lower secondary education	5.4 %			1127
2 = Lower secondary education completed	22.0 %			4559
3 = Upper secondary education completed	48.3 %			10023
4 = Post-secondary non-tertiary education completed	2.6 %			536
5 = Tertiary education completed	21.4 %			4450
Perceived income	2.55	0.86	1/4	20481
1 = Very difficult on present income	13.7 %			2810
2 = Difficult on present income	28.9 %			5909
3 = Coping on present income	46.2 %			9462
4 = Living comfortably on present income	11.2 %			2300
Gender (Male=1)	0.45	0.50	0/1	20727
Age	48.67	17.81	18/96	20055

Source: ESS, 2008. Note: Unweighted results of pooled data.

*This category also includes those respondents who refused to answer or did not know the answer.

Table A5 Individual level effect of social trust on voting, participation in party and movement politics

	Voting	Participation in party politics	Participation in movement politics
Positive	Belgium (1.159)* Bulgaria (1.154)**** Croatia (1.091)*** Czech Republic (1.089)*** Denmark (1.093) Estonia (1.137)**** Finland(1.177)**** France (1.158)**** Germany-East (1.154)*** Germany-West (1.107)** Hungary (1.015) Ireland (1.134)*** Lithuania (1.108)**** Norway (1.097)* Poland (1.114)*** Portugal (1.012) Romania (1.073)*** Slovakia (1.050) Slovenia (1.035) Spain (1.042) Sweden (1.231)**** Switzerland (1.164)**** The Netherlands (1.166)*** United Kingdom (1.192)****	Belgium (1.034) Bulgaria (1.058)* Czech Republic (1.003) Denmark (1.019) Estonia (1.000) Germany-East (1.086)* Germany-West (1.071)* Greece (1.010) Latvia (1.160)**** Lithuania (1.058) Poland (1.048) Romania (1.044)* Slovakia (1.043) Slovenia (1.050) Sweden (1.073)** Switzerland (1.054) The Netherlands (1.002) United Kingdom (1.039)	Belgium (1.097)*** Bulgaria (1.148)*** Croatia (1.116)**** Czech Republic (1.009) Denmark (1.015) Estonia (1.056) Germany-East (1.046) Germany-West (1.065)** Greece (1.092)*** Hungary (0.973) Latvia (1.030) Lithuania (1.031) Norway (1.054) Poland (1.053) Portugal (1.065) Romania (1.102)*** Slovakia (1.097)*** Slovenia (1.160)*** Spain (1.022) Sweden (1.104)*** Switzerland (1.014) The Netherlands (1.102)** United Kingdom (1.070)***
Negative	Cyprus (0.918) Greece (0.932)* Latvia (0.986)	Croatia (0.994) Cyprus (0.975) Finland (0.958) France (0.994) Hungary (0.901)** Ireland (0.941)* Norway (0.928)** Portugal (0.987) Spain (0.980)	Finland (0.917)*** Cyprus (0.980) France (0.970) Ireland (0.993)

Source: ESS 2008.

Notes: the effect sizes exp(B) in parentheses.

Significant: *p < 0.10, **p < 0.05, ***p < 0.01, ****p < 0.001

Appendix B. Cross-national variation of participation (chapter 5)

Table B1 Countries according to the levels of participation in elections and movement politics

	High level of participation in movement politics	Moderate level of participation in movement politics	Low level of participation in movement politics
High level of participation in elections	Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany-West	Netherlands, Belgium, Cyprus	Greece
Moderate level of participation in elections	France, Finland, Germany-East	Spain, Croatia, Slovakia, Ireland	Hungary
Low level of participation in elections	Switzerland, United Kingdom		Portugal, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia

Source: ESS 2008.⁶¹

Note: voting is compulsory (enforced or not enforced) in Belgium, Cyprus and Greece.

⁶¹ High level of participation in elections: >0.85

Moderate of level participation in elections: 0.75 – 0.85

Low level of participation in elections: <0.75

High level of participation in movement politics: >0.30

Moderate of level participation in movement politics: 0.21 – 0.30

Low level of participation in movement politics: <0.20

Appendix C. Descriptives of the Lithuanian National Election Study data (chapter 6)**Table C1** Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max	N
Voting					
Voted in the last elections (2012)	0.65	0.48	0	1	1486
Party politics participation					
Worked in a political party or participated in its activity during the last 12 months	0.06	0.23	0	1	1491
Movement politics participation					
Participated in a civic action	0.15	0.36	0	1	1471
Signed petition	0.05	0.23	0	1	1485
Participated in a demonstration	0.09	0.29	0	1	1485
Participated in a strike	0.04	0.20	0	1	1487
Boycotted certain products	0.01	0.12	0	1	1484
Boycotted certain products	0.02	0.16	0	1	1484
Generalized trust					
	4.13	2.21	0	10	1480
External efficacy					
Do average citizens have an influence on the important decisions in the country	2.46	2.13	0	10	1459
Political trust					
Trust in country's parliament	3.90	1.97	0	10	1481
Trust in courts	2.97	2.42	0	10	1457
Trust in the police	3.69	2.64	0	10	1451
Trust in political parties	5.31	2.69	0	10	1458
Trust in government	3.24	2.27	0	10	1433
Trust in president	3.62	2.50	0	10	1447
Trust in president	4.54	2.82	0	10	1454
Internal efficacy					
I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics	2.49	0.91	1	5	1441
I feel I have a good understanding about the most important political issues facing our country	2.49	1.05	1	5	1412
I feel that I could do as good job in public office as most as other people	2.74	1.09	1	5	1427
I think that I am better informed about politics and governing than most people	2.37	1.02	1	5	1390
I think that I am better informed about politics and governing than most people	2.33	0.99	1	5	1399
Political interest					
	2.09	0.76	1	4	1438
Political information					
	2.81	1.29	0	4	1500
Social embeddedness					
Worked in organization or association	0.23	0.51	0	2	1484
Participated in the activities of a local community	0.06	0.23	0	1	1486
Participated in the activities of a local community	0.17	0.37	0	1	1488
Trade union activities					
	0.03	0.18	0	1	1487
Religious attendance					
1 = Never, Almost never*	2.59	1.60	1	7	1500
2 = Less than once a year	19.3 %				290
3 = Only on special holy days	7.0 %				105
4 = Once a month	7.2 %				108
5 = Once a week	39.8 %				597
6 = More than once a week	15.9 %				239
7 = Every day	10.1 %				151
	0.7 %				10

Education	8.55	3.81	0	16	1500
0 = Not completed primary	0.6 %				9
1 = Primary	3.4 %				51
2 = Vocational (without completing basic)	1.7 %				26
3 = Basic (including youth schools)	7.9 %				119
4 = Vocational (completing basic)	5.3 %				79
5 = Vocational (after completing basic)	2.9 %				44
6 = Vocational after completing basic, when the studies of vocational lasted two or more years	4.9 %				74
7 = Secondary (including gymnasium schools)	15.5 %				232
8 = Special secondary (including high technical schools)	6.3 %				95
9 = Vocational (after completing secondary)	8.1 %				121
10 = Further education or special secondary obtained after basic	9.3 %				139
11 = Further education or special secondary obtained after secondary	6.6 %				99
12 = Higher vocational (non-university degree)	7.0 %				105
13 = Higher (university degree), Bachelor degree	10.8 %				162
14 = Higher (university degree), Extramular studies	6.9 %				103
15 = Higher (university degree), Master degree	2.7 %				40
16 = Doctoral or candidate of sciences degree	0.1 %				2
Perceived financial situation	2.79	0.88	1	5	1443
1 = We don't have enough money even for food	7.6 %				110
2 = We have money only for food, but not enough for clothes	27.0 %				389
3 = We have money only for food and clothes, but not for more expensive goods	44.8 %				646
4 = We can afford some expensive things, for instance, TV set, refrigerator	19.7 %				284
5 = We can afford anything we want	1.0 %				14
Perceived social status	5.22	1.84	1	10	1452
1 = The lowest position	1.7 %				24
2	7.0 %				102
3	9.8 %				143
4	15.6 %				226
5	21.2 %				308
6	17.9 %				260
7	15.9 %				231
8	8.5 %				123
9	2.2 %				32
10 = The highest position	0.2 %				3
Gender (Male=1)	0.50	0.50	0	1	1500
Age	46.41	17.50	18	87	1500

*This category also includes those respondents who refused to answer or did not know the answer.

App

Table C2 Levels of social trust by the age cohorts

Social trust	Age cohort													
	1925 - 1935		1936 - 1945		1946 - 1955		1956 - 1965		1966 - 1975		1976 - 1985		1986 - 1995	
	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count	Mean	Count
	3.69	39	3.97	203	3.97	227	4.01	302	4.12	225	4.17	248	4.60	256

Source: LNES 2012.

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Summary

The main aim of this dissertation is to explain why political participation in post-communist societies is so much lower than in Western democracies, considering social trust as a stimulus for political engagement. The empirical puzzle of the research draws from the observations that since its democratization in the early 1990s, the post-communist region has experienced a dramatic decline of both participation in electoral politics and social movements. The lack of civic and political engagement in post-communist countries is perceived as one of the hardships of democratic development in the region. Although formal institutions in the post-communist region are displaying attributes of consolidated democracies, citizens generally feel distant from political life, and are unaware of political decisions and means to influence politics.

Admitting that an institutional approach does not provide a full answer to the question why citizens feel detached from politics in post-communist societies, theorists often recoil on cultural arguments. The cultural-based approach derives from the deeper reflections on the communist past and the continuity of both social and personal memories. This dissertation suggests that low levels of political participation in post-communist democracies result from low levels of social trust, which was heavily ruined during the communist regime and right after its collapse. Social trust in this research is considered as both *explanandum* (chapter 3) and *explanans* (chapter 2).

In the theoretical framework laid out in chapter 2, first, social trust is defined as generalized impersonal trust in other people, including strangers, whom a truster is not necessarily familiar with. The notion of generalized trust stands in contrast with particularized trust, or trust inside specific groups. Social trust generally it refers to trust in the citizenry as a whole.

Second, social trust is regarded as an independent variable of political participation. Social capital theories argue that social trust sustains a cooperative social climate, civic norms and a regard for public interests. Thus, social trust is conceived to be conducive to democracy. More specifically, referring to a wide scholarship of social capital and political/civic culture, socially trusting people are more prone to participate in public affairs. This study differentiates between three forms of political participation, namely, voting, party politics (conventional, other than voting) and movement (non-conventional) participation. It is also presupposed that social trust has not only direct positive effects on political involvement, but also leads to political efficacy, which in turn stimulates individuals to embark on political actions. In other words, my assumption is that social resources (social trust) translate into political resources (political efficacy). This dissertation distinguishes between external and internal political efficacy. External efficacy expresses the feeling that “my voice is heard” by the government, while internal efficacy is the conviction that I am skilled enough to influence politics. Social trust enhances political efficacy in a way that socially trusting people more likely acquire political knowledge and information in general about

the subjects to be acted on and the methods to employ such actions. Moreover, social trust empowers citizens politically, as they believe that institutions we deal with are fair and people we trust are going to behave by the rules.

In chapter 3, social trust is scrutinized as a dependent variable. Using a comparative historical approach, this dissertation considers the development of social trust in post-communist societies. More particularly, this chapter discusses how communist legacies affected the essence of trust and, moreover, how social trust developed in the period of democratic transition after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The chapter explains how communism and the democratic transition had a formidable negative impact on trust, as well as on the abilities of citizens to cooperate for a common good. First, communism deterred individuals from participating in organizations by making this form of participation obligatory. The notion of volunteering as such was discredited. Second, civic and political involvement falls short because of the post-communist disappointment. The economic hardships and efforts invested in “insuring basic survival” leaves no room and no motivation for civic engagement. Third, due to oppressive government, political censorship and harsh economic conditions, post-communist citizens are used to spending their time in family and friendship-based networks instead of spreading their contacts outside these circles. The legacy of spending time within close-knit networks accurately characterizes the contemporary post-communist society. In turn, as an effect of a vicious circle, since citizens are not being keen on expanding their social contacts with strangers, they lack to opportunities to increase social trust.

The theoretical chapters are followed by empirical chapter 4. Two country-sets – mature and post-communist democracies – are compared based on the European Social Survey 2008 data. The chapter investigates the causal relationship between social trust and political participation at the individual level. It posits political efficacy as the linking variable of this relationship. The results show that social capital theories largely hold true: social trust is indeed positively related with all forms of political participation in both mature and post-communist democracies, although I observe some variation between countries, especially for *party politics* activities (not voting). For instance, in nine countries (out of 27 cases) I found negative connections between social trust and party politics. So it also might be true that social trust is not necessary an attribute of someone getting actively involved in political parties and campaigning.

The results also showed that the pattern of social trust affecting individual’s decision to *vote* is generally similar in both country-groups. The research corroborates the hypothesis that socially trusting people vote because they tend to be politically trusting (proxy of *external* efficacy in the ESS dataset). However, voters who are more socially trusting do not necessarily feel more politically aware (proxy of *internal* efficacy): political awareness plays an independent role above and beyond social trust.

Moreover, political trust does not influence participation in party politics activities in mature democracies, but it does so (positively) in post-communist democracies. When it comes to *movement participation*, the direct effect of political trust is negative in both country-sets. In other words, citizens need to trust others, but at the same time distrust their politicians, in order to express their demands by protesting. Thus, the results support my assumption that in movement politics, an individual indeed relies on his/her fellow citizens. This holds for both mature and post-communist countries. Political awareness positively affects movement politics, independently of social trust.

All in all, the relationship between social trust, political efficacy and the types of participation are, with a few exceptions, more or less the same in the East and West. It means that, at the individual level, post-communist citizens' decision to participate in politics is driven by the same factors that determine voter turnout in the mature democracies. Western models of political participation work relatively well for voting turnout and movement participation (and less for other party politics activities) in new democracies.

The second empirical part of this dissertation (chapter 5) focuses on the possible explanations why citizens in post-communist democracies engage less actively in politics. The individual and contextual predictors of participation by conducting multi-level regressions were tested – namely, economic, political and cultural components that in all define the “stage” of post-communism. The analyses revealed that the observed country differences in political activeness can be partly explained by different distributions of individual characteristics between countries (so-called compositional effects).

Moreover, the analyses display that the country level characteristics remain very important for both institutionalized and non-institutionalized participation. Not only democratic experience is important, but also corruption, lack of effective government, and economic backwardness have a negative effect on political participation levels. Furthermore, contextual social trust proved to be positively related with being active in movement and party politics. However, the specific effect of post-communism is difficult to pin down, because many important variables (like corruption and social trust) correlate so strongly with each other. Therefore, one cannot easily single out only one contextual effect. Obviously, post-communism comprises a whole set of interrelated dimensions and it is difficult to disentangle all the context level variables. More generally, the findings indicate that the cultural and institutional contextual aspects were less relevant for predicting institutionalized participation, but it in particular accounted for participation in movement politics.

Furthermore, chapter 5 focused on the interplay between social trust, forms of political participation, and the cultural, socio-economic, and institutional context. The most remarkable finding concerned the interaction between the contextual circumstances and the individual effect of social trust in shaping political participation. The results showed that in more trustful, prosperous

and advanced societies, social trust has a stronger positive effect on voting. Involvement in institutionalized politics is negatively related with social trust, and this negative association is stronger in unprosperous and corrupt societies. Finally, the results showed that social trust stimulates protest participation, and this effect is stronger in societies that are less socially trustful, less affluent, more corrupt, have less effective governments, and a shorter democratic legacy. In post-communist societies the merit of social trust on protest participation is generally more pronounced: in these countries an increase in social trust motivates citizens to involve in movement activities more vigorously compared to people from Western democracies.

The last part of this research investigated the relationship between social trust, political efficacy and political participation in post-communist Lithuania, using the national post-election survey of 2012 (chapter 6). The results showed that social trust is indeed positively associated with citizens' propensity to vote, but it is not significant for participation in other party politics activities. Regarding the mediation effects, social trust leads to voting via both external efficacy and political trust. In other words, social trust positively affects whether a citizen in Lithuania trusts the institutions and whether s/he considers these institutions being responsive to peoples' needs; in turn, political trust and perceived responsiveness fosters voting.

The mediation analysis furthermore revealed that the indirect effects of social trust on protesting via both internal and external efficacy are significant. The more people feel that the Lithuanian government is responsive, the more they tend to protest. Remarkably, when it comes to protesting, external efficacy and political trust work in different directions: perceived responsiveness leads to activism, while at the same time my findings demonstrate that political distrust yields apathy.

Moreover, it is worth observing that although social trust has no direct impact on movement politics, I found a highly significant effect of social embeddedness. Civic engagement strongly affects the odds of individuals to be involved in political activities. And the opposite is also true: the lack of political engagement in Lithuania is caused by a lack of civic engagement. Interestingly enough, the findings imply that formal social networks are apparently not connected to a sense of social trust. The descriptive analysis disclosed that the relationship between these two variables is very weak, if not non-existent. Social trust is not associated with participation in two other formal networks either, namely trade unions and religious communities.

In sum, this dissertation increased our understanding of the development of post-communist civil society from a historical and contemporary perspective. It explains the deterioration of social trust during the communist regime and after its fall, and points out how low levels of social trust undermine individuals' willingness to participate in politics. This study adds to current scholarship that the weakness of civil society and low levels of citizens' political involvement in East-Central

Europe is associated with the low stocks of social capital, that is, low social trust and limited social contacts. By doing so, this study underlines that Eastern European democracies are still fragile in terms of the penetration of the political system from below. As Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) wrote, there is not much democracy in a country where only few citizens engage in decision-making. Mass withdrawal from political participation leads to the risk of “selective democracy” and creates the opportunity for political elites to center their policies around the radicalized voters and exclude potential rivals. This “childhood illness” of post-communist systems might constitute a threat for democracy, therefore it is so important to study what bring people both to the ballots and to the streets and how to enhance different forms of civic and political activities. After all, it is much easier to implement political reforms than to foster a cultural shift towards more democratic values.