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Democracy, Post-Communism and Public Trust: An Examination of Levels of Democracy and Post-Communism as Predictors of Long Term Public Trust In Government

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Democracy, Post-Communism and Public Trust: An Examination of Levels of Democracy and
Post-Communism as Predictors of Long Term Public Trust In Government

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Undergraduate Honors Thesis for PSCI

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Trust among the public in government institutions varies based on many different factors. Herein several variables are examined to determine their significance in predicting levels of trust a decade after the collapse of communism by looking specifically at post-communist countries in Eastern Europe. The key variables examined are the level of democracy immediately following the collapse of communism, and the legacy of communism itself. It is determined that neither the level of democracy nor a legacy of communism have a long-term effect on levels of public trust in government, while instead factors such as perceived economic expectations for the future and personal job situation are significant predictors of trust.

Introduction:

Trust is necessary for democratic institutions to succeed because they are based on how well citizens believe they will be represented by elected officials (Mishler and Rose 2001). Political attitudes of citizens are an important aspect of any country because trust in government can predict stability. "When one trusts, one accepts some amount of risk of potential harm for the risk of cooperation" (Warren 1999 p.1). Democratic institutions in particular rely on citizen trust in order to function effectively, and citizen trust in government is a function of how well those institutions work. Creating functional democracies after the collapse of communism could increase public trust, in part by being more responsive to citizens' demands. But it is currently unclear whether higher levels of democracy in fact translate to higher levels of public trust in government. I look at the determinants of trust by examining the political attitudes in post-communist countries from 1990 to 2001.

Thus far the effects of the former regime and transitions on political attitude have been studied, but not in regards to public trust in government; the study that I will use for precedent is an unpublished manuscript by Pop-Eleches and Tucker. These authors look at the effects of communism on the political attitudes of citizens in post-communist countries. I plan to go one step further and ask: Does the regime type immediately following the collapse of communism have a lasting effect on the levels of trust in government of citizens, and will those effects still be present over two decades later? I propose several hypotheses that I hope will be clarified by the data.

First, I suspect that Eastern European countries that transitioned to more democratic regimes after the collapse of communism should foster a higher level of current citizen trust in government than those that transitioned to less democratic regimes. In a democratic system

citizens should trust the government more because they have a role in selecting their leaders, and the leaders should be responsive to public demands. Also, due to the fact that most post-communist countries were under communist regimes that were generally repressive for 45 to 70 years, citizens' political attitudes should become more positive with democratic institutions that foster acceptance of a variety of political views. Second, people who were too young to understand the political world in 1990 should have a view of government that reflects the regime that they were socialized under, not the regime directly after the collapse of communism. Although, there is the concern that the older regime may have an effect due to socialization from parents and other family that projected their political attitudes onto their children. A lifetime learning model also needs to be considered for this hypothesis; it essentially says that people's trust is a function of how they have been socialized throughout their lives (Mishler and Rose 2001). Older people who lived under communism for longer should therefore be less trusting in general.

Along these lines there is also the concern that a democratic regime will not have a significant impact on the levels of trust in post-communist countries. This is due to the transition itself and the poor economic and social conditions that existed immediately following the collapse of communism. The negative impacts did however vary across countries, which could have an impact on how citizens felt about the transition. Trust should decrease because people in communist states were faced with a sudden negative change (Abbott & Sapsford 2006). This could potentially mean that the regime implemented immediately after the collapse of communism would be less trusted because of the conditions that existed when it was implemented. If the level of trust amongst various countries that implement more and less democratic regimes is statistically the same, it will show that regime type has no significant

effect on trust. But looking at the data over time may show that there is a lagged effect of regime type on trust in government. There are likely contingent factors that determine when regime type effects trust in government. My three main hypotheses are:

H1: Countries that transition to higher levels of democracy following the collapse of communism will have higher levels of public trust in government in the future due to legacy effects.

H2: Age will be a significant factor in determining trust because depending on the age of respondents during the collapse of communism, they will not understand the political implications of the new regime.

H3: There will be no legacy effect of communism on people's level of trust in government because people base their trust on current issues and forget the past.

H1 is based on the idea that people's initial impressions of their post-communist government will remain in their views of government today due to a "legacy effect" (Pop-Eleches & Tucker). What I hope to potentially see from this data is that political attitudes in the present are similar to those directly after the collapse of communism. There will obviously be changes in trust due to other events that took place over this time, but I am just looking for trends that indicate countries with an initial more democratic regime should demonstrate more trust than ones with initially less democratic regimes. Also, it is likely that the influence of the initial regime will fade over time, but should still be an echo of the past, it is presently unclear how long this legacy effect would last, and my analysis of the data sheds light on the issue.

I examine data from multiple Eastern European countries and then use several specific countries as examples in order to provide examples to better explain the results. The countries that I am examining as case studies are Hungary and Romania. These countries vary in the ways that they transitioned to a market system and the ways that the new regimes were implemented.

There are multiple ways to code regime type, as well as coding how democratic a regime is. I will be using the Polity IV scale as a measure of how democratic particular regime is. Polity IV offers a relatively simple scale on which to measure levels of democracy across countries and over time.

I was able to retrieve the survey data necessary from the Eurobarometer. This offers primary source data of surveys on public opinion in East European countries. There are multiple variables within the data that I can use to determine levels of trust in government. The data also provides the age of respondents, which will be necessary to test my second hypothesis. I will need to control for certain factors that I will detail later.

By looking at this data I am able to relate the variables accurately and gain a greater understanding of what effects regime type has on public trust in government. It is important to instill a high level of trust of government in a population quickly following a collapse of their previous system because democratic regimes of the future will need high levels of trust in order to function effectively. But it is unclear whether democratic institutions themselves can instill this sense of trust in the population. This paper will attempt to provide an answer.

Literature Review

The main basis for my thesis is a currently unpublished manuscript by Pop-Eleches and Tucker titled *Communism's Shadow: Historical Legacies, and Political Values and Behavior*, that looks at the effects that communism had on the Eastern European countries, and how "legacy effects" cause communism to have an effect on the current population (Pop-Eleches & Tucker Unpublished). This literature argues that post-communist countries are different in nature because they were communist. Essentially, the way that the political and economic spheres were reconstructed after the collapse of communism was influenced by communism, the slate was not

wiped completely clean (Pop-Eleches & Tucker Unpublished). Past studies have looked mainly at how communism shaped the institutions and political leaders; this manuscript instead looks at the political attitudes and behavior of citizens. These authors attempt to explain the "peculiarities" that are present in post-communist governments. I agree that the fact a country was communist may certainly be a factor on political attitudes and behavior, but I will look in particular at whether being post-communist has any effect on the publics' level of trust in government.

Trust in government is important for multiple reasons. One of the first being that democratic institutions are largely based on citizen trust and political participation (Chanley et al 2000). This also leads to the possibility of endogeneity between my variables, but this should not end up being an issue because democratic institutions did not evolve out of trust in the post-communist countries, but instead were implemented in top down style. Also, most post-communist states experienced a drop in public trust due to the collapse itself (Abbott & Sapsford 2006). Despite this, almost all post-communist states did initially transition to some form of democracy (the levels of democracy varied between countries). However, the democratic regime may be threatened by the lack of public trust.

Another potential problem is that people may display lower levels of trust in the incumbent when public attitudes are negative is due to other variables (Chanley et al 2000). This may mean that whatever regime takes over after the collapse of the communist regime may be looked upon unfavorably by the public due to the negative effects of the collapse. So potentially citizens may be distrustful of the new regime due to factors not related to the regime type. My research should be able to hold the other variables constant and produce an answer to this quandary. Also, Chanley et al were looking at public opinion in the US during the 1990s which

has been democratic for over 200 years, and their findings may not translate to states that have transitioned regime types. It is also unclear if citizens would blame the new regime, or the communist regime.

The new regime type is only one of many factors that would affect the levels of public trust in post-communist regimes. It is also important to consider the effects that increased poverty, increased crime rates, rise in unemployment, and a general decrease in living standards had on levels of public attitudes. Abbott & Sapsford note that trust decreases due to "sudden and dramatic negative perceived change" (Abbott & Sapsford 2006 p. 59). This potentially puts the states at a disadvantage in terms of implementing stable democratic regimes. Yet some countries of the region essentially copied democracy from Western European countries (Kopstein 2003). Due to this fact, countries that may not have had the proper domestic scenarios for democracy still implemented democratic regimes and institutions. This phenomenon is important because those states that transitioned to democratic regimes, due to copying, may or may not exhibit higher levels of trust in government, but it does create a control for endogeneity.

There are actually multiple levels of trust that can be examined, and generally tend to fluctuate freely from each other. Abbott & Sapsford look at several levels of trust in some of the post-communist countries, looking at trust in family and friends, people in general, and political leaders and institutions. They find that trust in political leaders and institutions declined the most, and in general levels of trust are down, but do vary between countries (Abbott & Sapsford 2006). These variations between countries may be able to be explained by a multitude of variables, including legacy effects from the communist regime, and the decisions made for how the country would move forward during the collapse. However, Kopstein finds by examining the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Bulgaria, that the Communist legacy is not accurate at

explaining the causal of outcomes of countries, including both the implementation of long-term democratic institutions and economic reform (Kopstein 2003). If the Communist regime has little effect on the future, it leaves more room for other factors including whatever regime replaces it to influence the countries future, and levels of public trust in government. This also supports H3 while it discounts H1.

More importantly to H3, is that the previous literature brings to light that legacy effects can only have an impact so far into the future. Most authors agree that "long-distance" causality is implausible and that political configurations from centuries ago would have no observable effect on democratic institutions of the present (Kitschelt et al. 1999). This study will hopefully lend evidence to end this argument. Also political attitude tends to reflect more immediate negative events, like those following the collapse of communism. The more quickly a new regime is able to create positively perceived socioeconomic change, the more likely public trust in that regime is going to increase.

Public trust in Eastern European countries may be one of the most important factors moving forward. During the early stages of transition in Eastern Europe it was important to instill a sense of importance in civic engagement. However, this was not the case in most countries. Many post-communist states saw significant levels of apathy and lack of participation several years after the transition (Letki 2004). But this is widely blamed on general distrust of people, and that Communist politics are the only type of politics that most people can remember (Letki 2004). The new regime type is not to blame for immediate lower levels of trust, but is instead due to a return in traditional values where people put their trust solely in those closest to them such as family and friends (Abbott & Sapsford 2006). It is not particularly surprising that people would resort to a withdrawal from society, and a decrease in trust when a system they had

lived in for all of (or a majority of) their lives crumbled around them. People were worse off, and the government was largely unable to protect people, which led to a rising crime rate. Both of these factors easily explain the decrease in trust towards other people and government. With everything controlled for, I should still be able to show the effects that just regime type has on trust.

Even though people in post-communist countries tended to have less trust in government due to the previously mentioned reasons, it did not have a significant impact on whether countries became democratic. Although Chanley et al (2000) claim that democracies need public support in able to continue functioning, they don't consider whether a country has a democracy implemented from the top down. Many Eastern European countries democratic regimes were a result of political elites choosing to voluntarily implement democracy (Letki 2004). For this reason I will be able to look at the data without much worry of endogeneity. The democratic regimes came to exist not as a factor of public trust, but should still have an effect on public trust.

Past research also indicates that citizens of Eastern Europe are going to have low levels of trust in democracy because they are changing regime type. Mishler and Rose (2001) state that "the replacement of undemocratic by democratic regimes necessarily introduces fundamental institutional discontinuities" (Mishler and Rose 2001 p. 31). Citizens are abruptly introduced to something completely different that they have not experienced before, and are therefore distrusting because they do not understand the system. However, it has been argued that there may be some proximity effects with where Eastern-European countries are geographically located. In general the Central Asian post-communist countries became more authoritarian, and East-Central European countries tended to develop functioning democracies (Pop-Eleches 2007).

This is actually rather promising, because the more exogenous causes there are for the new regime type, the more likely there will be a one way relationship between trust and regime.

I will be considering an institutional theory of trust; basically that trust is a product of institutions functioning well and providing for society. Institutionalists however, do not agree that past institutions can be deterministic of current public trust (Mishler and Rose 2001). In most democracies, political attitudes are a function of how well the economy is doing, but in new democracies trust can be shaped largely by the change in institutions (Mishler and Rose 2001). So citizens coming out of repressive regimes and having democratic regimes would likely be more trusting due to the democratic institutions themselves and not solely focus on the economic outcome that regime creates. The immediate negative impacts of the collapse mentioned by Sappsford and Abbott should not be blamed on the new regime, and citizens should note an increase in civil liberties after transitioning to a democratic regime.

Many Western theorists argue that democracies should generally generate more public in trust in government. This is mainly due to the networks created by democracy that makes citizens feel more connected to the political system (Cohen 1999). Of course it is likely that in post-communist countries it will take some time for these networks to strengthen, and for citizens to start trusting the government more because of these networks. But this research does provide more evidence to support H1. Due to the likely lagged effect of new democratic regimes on public trust, and that networks take time to develop, it is even more important to look at the long term effects of regime type.

Most previous literature also focuses on trust being a driving factor behind democracy (Warren 1999). But there has been debate on whether trust actually matters for democracy to be able to function. To some it is a necessity that public trust in government exists in order for

democratic institutions to function properly, but for others democratic institutions can largely function without public trust. Lack in trust causes people to take fewer risks which in turn increase their own feelings of security (Warren 1999). However, this tends to be the case with individual trust between people, not the government. However, people can participate in democracy without much risk. True democratic regimes are generally not repressive, and citizens are able to participate without the fear of personal harm. So even if they do not trust the system, they are able to participate, and thus keep the democratic institutions functioning despite low levels of trust.

The counter to this is that in systems that are relatively weak democracies, like those in the post-communist Eastern Europe, democratic institutions may be unable to function and solve problems without the trust of citizens (Warren 1999). Thus, trust matters much more in newer and weaker democracies than it does in long established democracies. Democracies' existence is almost entirely contingent upon popular support (Offe 1999). This does not mean that a democracy has to have support in order to be implemented necessarily, but it does mean that there has to be support in order for its continued existence. Therefore, the simple fact that democracies continue to exist means that there is some amount of trust in the government, but of course it does not mean that trust is caused by the regime.

In another section of *Trust and Democracy,* Eric Uslaner argues that trust is not a function of the government, but instead a function of long-term culture (Uslaner 2000). However, Uslaner specifically excludes post-communist countries from this statement "Democracy doesn't make people become more trusting. Trust across nations without a legacy of Communism depends largely on long-term culture" (Uslaner p. 1). Presumably this is because countries with a legacy of communism do not have the same levels of long-term culture as other

democratic countries. Communism creates its own culture, and generally this culture is under a century old. This is not particularly long in the lifespan of culture, and it is likely that when a regime and economy transition to almost of the polar opposite of what they had been, long-term culture becomes almost irrelevant to levels of trust in government. Trust in government in post-communist states thus most likely depends on the changes immediately following the collapse in communism, not cultural factors.

One of the main reasons it is expected that democracy generates more public trust for the government is that it is meant to be more representative. When people feel more in control of their future and the decisions that the government makes, they are more likely to be trusting. All that trust is, is believing that you can predict the actions that a person (or in this case government) is going to make in the future (Sztompka 1998). Democracies tend to be more transparent, which allows for an easier prediction of the decisions that they will make in the future. And they are also easier to trust because they should be more responsive to public demand than authoritarian regimes. Likewise, when politicians know that making unfavorable decisions or implementing sudden changes is likely to get them removed from office, they are less likely to make those decisions. Therefore, politicians in democratic systems are less likely to make rash unfavorable decisions, which in turn allows the public to more easily predict what they will do. This should create democratic culture that promotes trust in the long run, and should hopefully be visible in legacy effects.

The choice of regime type and implementation of institutions post-collapse is a factor of a wide variety of variables. One of those variables is actually a legacy effect of what the country was like before communism. Pop-Eleches (2007) argues that this legacy effect is actually the greatest determining factor of regime type. Other factors that have been mentioned previously

are also important to deciphering why a regime type is favored, but are bounded by the legacy of a country (Pop-Eleches 2007). This demonstrates the power of legacy effects in explaining outcomes that happen decades in the future. It also is not particularly of importance to my hypotheses where and why the new regime type is chosen. But I do hope to determine the power that legacy effects have in predicting outcomes of the future, and the importance that regime type has on levels of trust.

Research Design

Although I would prefer to be able to examine all the post-communist countries, from East-Central Europe to Central Asia, in order to get the most variety, it is unfortunately unrealistic due to the fact that there is no survey data collected across all the countries. So instead I will focus on the East-European post-communist states. The Eurobarometer has compiled comprehensive survey data on the political attitudes of citizens in Eastern-Europe since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Eurobarometer is a survey that was created by the European Commission in order to gauge public opinion in European countries about how citizens felt about joining the European Union (EU). The Eurobarometer also asks questions pertaining to how citizens feel about their own governments (among other things). The Eurobarometer now is split into several sections, the surveys that were given to Eastern European states in the 1990s, the ones given to EU candidate states to gauge citizen support of joining the EU, and now there are mainly specialized surveys that are used to collect specific public attitudes on things like women's' rights, climate change, and the global economic crisis. There are also some surveys on political attitudes pre-collapse, but they are likely misrepresentations of actual political attitudes due to the repressive regimes that existed at the time (this data is also not as comprehensive).

I am using data from ten years after the last communist regimes finally collapsed in 1991 in order to determine if and how much of a legacy effect there is on public trust in government as a function of regime type. I choose to look at levels of trust in 2001. If there are no legacy effects present just ten years after the transition, then there also won't be any present twenty years after, so it is not necessary to look at 2010 data. The Eurobarometer data is split into countries that are already in the EU and countries that are candidates or have a potential to become candidates for the EU. In the 2001 Eurobarometer candidate survey the following states are included: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey. Although I am mainly interested in the Post-Communist states, it is also worth comparing the varying levels of trust between countries with a history of communism and those without. I use a dummy variable to code the data as either being from a post-communist country or a non-communist country. I had to drop Malta from the observable data because there is no Polity IV data available for Malta. Obviously dropping data is unfortunate, but without information on one of the key IVs for this country I cannot keep it.

The data from 2001 has specific trend questions that ask if the respondent tends to trust or not trust specific aspects of the government of their respective country. In this section there are also questions regarding the public's trust in other institutions of the government such as the justice system and political parties. I chose not to include other government institutions such as the army and the police. These two variables seem to be inherently different from trust in governmental institutions such as parliament and the national government. Those questions are numbers 4, 9, 12, and 13 of Appendix Figure 1. In the 2001 data this question series is numbered Q13/1-15. Unfortunately, data for other post-communist countries that are not candidates for the EU at this time do not have any Eurobarometer data. This does narrow my results slightly, but

there are still enough post-communist countries to collect a large enough amount of data. I will then compare this data to other variables included in the Eurobarometer, as well as levels of democracy that I incorporate from the Polity IV that will be explained in more detail later.

The research design that I use for this study is cross-national statistical analysis combined with case studies. This is done by looking at the multiple countries that are included in the 2001 Eurobarometer data. This method allows for regression analysis that can explain what determinants are significant for determining levels of public trust in government across countries.

Data

Trust in government is based on an ordinal scale and be relative amongst the states in the study. The Eurobarometer unfortunately only asks respondents whether they "tend to trust" or "tend not to trust" for all of their "Trust" questions. Because of this, there can only be a bivariate response, along with a "Don't know/Refuse to answer" (which I dropped from the data as a non-response). Therefore I created a "TrustIndex" variable in which I combine the four trust variables that I am interested in. This Trust-index is used as my dependent variable (DV). The trust question that I use is phrased, "I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?", and the institutions that I am interested in are: justice system, political parties, lower house of parliament, and national government (See appendix figure 1). Respondents could then receive a score of 0-4 on this Trust Index. 0 implying that they chose "Tend not to trust" for all of the trust variables, and a 4 meaning that they chose "Tend to trust" for all the variables. They could score anywhere along this scale depending on how they responded to the corresponding survey questions. Some data was automatically dropped from the

index if respondents chose not to answer any of the questions included in the index, but there is still plenty of usable data.

Also, in order to test whether age at time of the regime transition has an impact on individual's levels of public trust I added the age variable that is asked in the demographics portion of every Eurobarometer survey to my analysis. Age is simple variable that is coded as the person's age; the youngest that a person could be to respond to the survey is 15. This variable becomes more important in the models I include that take post-communism into account, as well as job situation.

The next important determination is the regime type post-collapse, which is the independent variable. Whatever the regime is after the first election post-collapse of communism will be coded as "First Regime Type". For most of the states in this study the "First Regime Type" was established either in 1990 or 1991. I will be using the Polity IV scale to rate the regime of the post-communist states directly following the transition. The Polity IV scale rates states on an ordinal scale that goes from positive 10 to negative 10. The scale goes: +10 is a full democracy, 6 to 9 is a democracy, 1 to 5 is an open anocracy, -5 to 0 is a closed anocracy, -10 to -6 is an autocracy (Marshall 2012). This scale is useful because it allows for varying degrees of democracy, as well as tracks the regime type from immediately after the collapse of communism to the present. I also created a bivariate variable for whether the countries are post-communist or not. A post-communist country is coded "1", while a non-post-communist country is coded "0".

I am also controlling for a number of variables that could affect trust in government. This includes gender, paid by the state, level of education, attention to national news, perceived employment situation in the country, and personal job situation. Gender is a simple dichotomous variable split between male and female, male being coded as "1" and female being coded as "2".

Paid by the state is a dummy variable of whether the respondent receives any money from the state, a "0" if they are paid by the state, and a "1" if they are not paid by the state. This includes if the respondent works for the state, is a pensioner, or receives any form of benefits from the government, I include this variable because a person may be more trusting of the government simply because they receive money from them. Level of education is coded by what age a respondent stopped receiving formal education. The Eurobarometer codes this variable by four age brackets that a person was educated to. The brackets range from: up to 15, 16-19, 20+, and still studying (Eurobarometer 2001.1).

On top of this it is important to consider the economic situation of each country, or at least how each respondent perceives the economic situation. People tend to be happier with their government when they believe the economy is strong, and also blame the government when the economy is bad. This creates the serious possibility that even if a country rates low on the democracy scale, people will still tend to be more trusting because the economic situation is good and vice versa. There is a survey question in the 2001.1 Eurobarometer that helps to determine the perceived economic situation. The question is phrased as "Q2. What are your expectations for the year to come: will 2002 be better, worse or the same, when it comes to…?" (see Appendix Figure 2). This response is coded as "3" for better, "2" for the same, and "1" for worse. The important part of this question is the perceived economic situation. The actual economic situation of any given country is not particularly concerning, what matters instead is simply how the respondent feels the economic situation is.

I also account for the perceived employment situation in the country, as well as personal job situation. Both of these variables were coded the same way as economic situation and were asked in the same question series. Perceived employment situation may be an important variable

in public levels of trust in government, because unemployment rates are often blamed on the government. Personal job situation is essentially just a variant of this to see if people care more when the employment refers to country as a whole, or only when it affects the respondents personally.

The final independent variable that I will be including is attention to national news. The more informed a person is could play a role on how much they trust the government. Of course, this variable could push trust in either direction. If the news is more likely to show the government in a positive light, then it makes sense that trust would increase. If they show the government in a bad light, then trust would decrease. This variable is coded as "3" for "a lot of attention", "2" for "a little attention", and "1" for "no attention at all".

None of the demographic controls create any implicit challenge to my theory, as regime type can still have a significant impact in conjunction with other variables that affect public levels of trust. However, the other variables I am controlling for could have a serious impact on my theory, but only if the control variables have a highly significant impact on levels of public trust. Even if the regime of a state is undemocratic, if the economic situation in the country is good or if the government provides the population with social goods, the citizens of the country could exhibit high levels of public trust. Many variables can play a significant role on affecting levels of trust. Ultimately my theory can be conclusive as long as the correct variables are controlled for.

Data Analysis

For my data analysis I use an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression that is robust and clustered by country to determine the significant determinants of the "TrustIndex" variable that I created. The OLS regressions creates models in which I can easily determine the coefficient as

well as the standard deviations, and making the regression robust helps to account for any outliers in the data. This negates one of the weaknesses of OLS, which is that it generally weighs outliers equally to the rest of the data which can create disproportionate results. I cluster the data by country because there is the possibility that something about a particular country may affect the way in which respondents answer survey questions. This regression method also assumes linearity in all of the variables. This concerns me slightly, mainly with the age and attention to national news variables, which I do not think would necessarily be linear in their indication of levels of trust. But overall this method should work well for determining what variables are significant predictors of my DV. Overall my models had very low R-squares which indicate that not much of the variance of the Trust-Index is explained by the IVs. However, I think the data will tell us something.

The data provides some interesting insights into what plays a role on public trust in government. First and foremost, it does appear that there is some importance on a countries polity level in 1991. However, polity level in 1991 alone has no real bearing on trust in government, but a country being post-communist does (See Table, 1 Model 1). I then considered the possibility that what may explain even more variance was a countries polity level as well as whether it is post-communist or not. So I then created another model in which I include the variable for post-communism. This does not make polity level significant, nor is post-communism a significant indicator of trust. However, when the post-communism variable is added, the age education variable and attention to national news both become significant (See Table 1, Model 2). It is possible that people were not able to attain a higher education under the post-communist regime, as well as people in post-communist countries are more likely to attain

their opinion of the government through media consumption. I will discuss both of these variables later; first I would like to focus on my key IVs.

The main variable that I was testing for was whether the Polity IV score of a country in the year 1991 was not a significant indicator of public trust in governmental institutions in the year 2001. Polity scores ultimately are not significant in any of the models. This is likely because there is not enormous variation in the polity scores from 1991 of these twelve countries tested. Remember that the Polity IV scale goes from -10 to 10, and the variation in the countries tested goes from 5 to 10. Out of these countries, Romania is the only one that is categorized by Polity IV as not a democracy in 1991. The other countries are all categorized as varying levels of democracy. This lack of variance may be what makes this variable not significant, or it could just be that citizens of countries do not consider levels of democracy when thinking about how much they trust the government. This may, in fact, be the case as I will discuss later in the case study section on Romania.

States being post-communist or not was also not a significant factor. This may have been because there were only two non-post-communist countries included in this study due to the lack of non-post-communist countries in the Eurobarometer Candidate Country data for 2001. The only non-post-communist countries were Turkey and Cyprus. This is still interesting, because it means that the inherent nature of countries being post-communist does not have a lasting effect on their levels of public trust in government. This obviously does not mean that it holds true for states transitioning to democracy from some other regime type. But it does point to there not being a legacy effect of communism on trust in governments. If there is any effect, it washes out over the decade between the collapse of communism and the time this Eurobarometer was administered. The main point though is that the time elapsed is only a decade, which when

compared to how long many of these countries were under communist rule is not particularly long. This leads me to believe that communism (or past regime styles in general) are particularly important in predicting the future public trust of a country.

Respondents' attention to news on national politics was significant in both models that included the post-communist variable. It is important to pay attention to this variable because it the only thing that provides a bearing as to how much people know about what is going on in their own country. Without this variable, it would be difficult to separate the people that are educated about political issues from those that are not.

Theoretically speaking, a person's use of media and knowledge of national news makes sense as a predictor of their level of trust in governmental institutions. The more informed a person is, the better they can assess whether they believe the government has their best interest in mind. They are also likely to be informed on political matters and any issues that are occurring within the government. Therefore, it makes sense that a person's trust is likely to vary based on how much news they consume. It would be interesting to see if the sources of the news matter, but unfortunately there is no data provided by the Eurobarometer to answer this question.

Personal Perception:

Personal perception is a collection of variables that look directly at how the individual respondents feel about factors that affect them personally. This includes: perceived economic situation, personal job situation, whether or not they are paid by the state, and the employment situation in the country as a whole. There are separate questions for all of these variables on the 2001 Eurobarometer. I included both state paid and economic situation in all three of models that I created. Perceived economic situation was consistently significant, while being paid by the state was consistently not. Perceived economic situation makes sense as a predictor as how

people will respond to trust variables. Generally, people want the government to ensure economic prosperity for the future. This seems to be even more the case in countries that have recently transitioned to democracy. I will discuss this further in the Romania section of the case study. But this phenomenon can be witnessed from cases in many different countries; citizens tend to become upset with government when the economy is doing poorly. Considering that trust can mean different things to many different people, it is likely that when people are upset about the economy, they are more likely to say that they do not trust the government. State paid was not significant; I included this variable because it seemed possible that being paid by the state could skew a person's perception of the state. However, this is not the case, at least in terms of how much a person trusts the state.

In addition, personal job situation is also a significant factor while perceived overall employment level is not (See Table 1, Models 2 & 3). I included these in different models because I was concerned that person having a job themselves may skew how they respond to the overall levels of employment in the country. Given the other factors discussed above, it theoretically makes sense for personal job situation to be significant. This is similar to the respondents being self-interested, and that playing a major role in trust in government. It also means that people believe that the government is also responsible for them having jobs, in addition to ensuring that the economy does well. But expecting the government to be responsible for people having jobs may in fact be a legacy of the communist regime in which the government did provide jobs for a large part of the population. However, it is interesting to note that while people's levels of trust are affected by their own job situation, overall employment situation does not affect trust. I posit this is likely because people are generally more concerned with themselves having a job rather than other people having jobs.

Demographics:

In this section I will discuss my demographic control variables which are: age, at which age education stopped (ageeducation2) and gender. Age is significant only in Model 3, which includes job situation. It is not significant in Model 2 that added post-communism without job situation. This likely means that age is not a significant predictor of trust in government, even among post-communist states. However, it does make sense that when job situation is included, age becomes significant. Because the Eurobarometer surveys people at ages 15 and up, there are going to be some ranges of people who are likely unconcerned about having a job or not.

Gender is also a significant factor in just Model 3 that includes job situation. This was slightly more surprising to me, but when I thought about it a bit more the reasons started to become clearer. Women may be less concerned that they do not have jobs, which makes sense considering that the data shows that in this model women are more likely to be trusting of the government than men are. So gender can be important for gauging level of trust in government, but only when there are other gender dependent factors.

The final control variable is age education. This variable is significant but only in Model 2, which is also the only model that includes perceived employment situation of the country. It is difficult to say why this would be significant in this model, and my best guess would be that something the time at which a person ceases education may have something to do with how they interpret the employment situation in the country. But this variable is not an ideal judge of how much education a person has attained (I will talk more about concerns about variables later). The insignificance in the other two models leads me to believe that age education is not a good indicator of public trust in government overall.

That both of my key IVs are insignificant as determinants of public trust in government provides evidence to the argument that democracy does not instill trust, and that characteristics of post-communist countries do not have lasting effects on levels of trust in government. But instead this data shows that respondents' levels of trust can be determined by factors such as their perceived economic situation, and how much attention they pay to national news. Personal job situation was also a significant factor; however, general employment situation in the country was not significant. And age and gender only become significant in the model number three when job situation is included. What this data says in general is that people are more concerned that they are employed and that the government takes care of the economy.

Case Studies

This section is designed to provide some insight into what is happening in terms of the democratic transitions of post-communist countries, especially why some became more democratic than others, and what that means (if anything) for the levels of public trust in those countries. Essentially, what about post-communist countries caused them to take different paths to the final destination which is some level of democracy? And did the initial transition actually have any long lasting effect on levels of democracy or trust? In order to understand this more clearly I look at two states in particular that started out on opposite sides of the spectrum (relative to the countries in this study) during the transition from communism (in terms of democracy level), and also examine some of the interesting results on levels of trust.

The countries chosen to use as case study examples are Hungary and Romania. There are multiple reasons for choosing these countries, and stem from the Polity IV levels of the state in 1991 as well as the changes they went through in the following 20 years. Hungary started out with a Polity IV score of 10 (the highest possible), and remained static with a score of 10 all the

way up to 2010 (Marshall 2012). Hungary is not unique among these countries in terms of these statistics, but it is uncommon. Hungary also had a Trust Index score 1.68 which is about 1/3 of a standard deviation higher than the Trust Index mean for all countries included. Romania on the other was unique in that it was the only state that came out of the transition not categorized as a democracy. Romania was scored as a 5 by Polity IV in 1991. Although a 5 is categorized as the high end of "open anocracy" it still implies that democratic institutions did not have a great foot hold in the country (Marshall 2012). Romania however, has a Trust Index score mean of 1.27 which is close to the overall mean of all countries included. Even with the differences these case studies will demonstrate, both states end up being fairly similar in terms of the variables in 2001 (see Descriptive Statistics tables for each country). Romania however does not remain static in terms of its Polity IV level. The Polity IV level of Romania increases to a moderately high level of democracy, and in 2010 has a level of 9 (Marshall 2012). Romania eventually got on the path to democracy and market liberalization, but it definitely lagged behind.

Case Study: Hungary

Hungary, like many of the other Communist states, had opposition groups to the Communist controlled government. But even with these opposition groups they were unable to take the government completely from the Communists due to simple lack of experience (Bunce and Csanadi 1993). The bureaucracy was still largely run by the same people who had been employed under the Communist regime. This may not have been the ideal situation for reformers within the country, but ultimately it kept the government in a stable position in which a transition could occur. But due to the relatively surprising and quick nature of which the Communist regimes collapsed, there were still many factors missing that are necessary for creating a free market economy (Bunce and Csanadi 1993). In hindsight this case is not surprising at all. States

that have been communist for decades are generally in no way capable of making a quick and seamless transition to capitalism (as will be showcased by the Romania example). However, one of the first changes to occur in Hungary was the liberalization of politics (Bunce and Csanadi 1993). This created a system in which competition for control of the government began early on with many different groups striving for power.

At the same time however, there was a power structure that was already established, and although it may not have been the ideal situation for many of the political elite during the transition it did reduce the uncertainty of the population (Bunce and Csanadi 1993). Uncertainty is often the precursor to mistrust, and honestly the best that could happen in any of the post-communist states was for there to be some semblance of a government to reassure the population. There were certainly many new officials in the Hungarian government that were not ready or prepared to be in active political roles, but the bureaucracy persisted (Bunce and Csanadi 1993). That the bureaucracy remained for the most part intact allowed for the rest of the government to transition to a liberal democracy. Although the transition was rapid, it would not have been possible to rebuild a functional bureaucracy from the ground up and still maintain the civil services expected by citizens. Keeping the experienced members of the bureaucracy seems to have been paramount in providing for a successful transition and a functional economy.

It is certainly also important to note that Hungary went through a rapid civil service transformation after their first democratic election in 1990 (Hinkirk and Sahling 2001). The simple fact that the civil service transformed means little, but the way that the system changed propelled democracy. Constraints were put on the bureaucracy that limited the amount of power they had over political decisions and put more power into the hands of elected officials (Hinkirk and Sahling 2001). This makes sense considering that most of the bureaucracy and civil service

remained full of the same people as during the communist regime. Putting the majority of political decisions in the hands of elected officials by instituting legal changes to the state's civil service is certainly a step towards democracy. The civil service was amended in 1992 and then again in 1997 and 2001 (Hinkirk and Sahling 2001). If citizens were informed at the time of the legal changes that put more power into the hands of elected officials, it would make sense that the public would be more trusting. This lends some evidence to why paying attention to national politics is a determinant of trust in government.

Now to consider something slightly different although my main focus is on how democratic the regime is, there are other variables that did have an effect on levels of public trust while regime type had none. Non-governmental social services can fill gaps that are left by the government, especially in a time as tumultuous as a transition from a collapsed political system. When these social services work in conjunction with the government, it can be difficult for an average citizen to realize that the services are coming from a group nonaffiliated with the government. During the Communist regime and immediately following the collapse, there was almost no social service care to speak of in Hungary (Osborne and Kaposvari 1998). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were integral in providing many social services in the early 1990s but often had to rely heavily on the government for funding, and informal relationships often existed between NGO leaders and politicians (Osborne and Kaposvari 1998). On one hand the informal relationships were likely a good thing because they could bypass the long arduous bureaucracy, but on the other hand NGOs that did not have friends in the right places were less likely to receive funding. Ultimately, as long NGOs or the government are filling roles that make citizens feel secure about their own wellbeing then trust increases. Although this does not

necessarily relate exactly to the economic situation in the country or job situation, it suggest that states that provide better social services receive higher trust scores from their citizens.

Like most aspects of society after the collapse of communism, the relationship between NGOs that provided social services and the government evolved. During the 1990's there was a push to formalize the relationship between NGOs and the government through the creation of contractual obligations (Osborne and Kapsvari 1998). This did not mean that NGOs would now be subjected to the full torment of bureaucratic procedure, but it would create a more transparent system in which it was clear what was expected from each party in their obligations to one another. Granted, this type of transparency could exist in a regime type that isn't one hundred percent democratic, but it shows an evolution of sorts that was occurring in Hungary at the time and could be a factor in public trust in government increasing.

Another important factor that is unique to Hungary are the changes that occurred in the country while it was still under communist rule. The Hungarian regime became much less repressive in the 1960s than other communist states, and in addition to other changes: allowed more people access to higher education, gave more freedom to cultural institutions, and opened up the country more in general to the West (Meusburger and Jons 2001). These early changes to the system in Hungary likely lead to less uncertainty among the population when the communist regime collapsed. The data generally indicates that people's trust in government is mainly related to factors concerning certainty. Early Hungarian reformation, therefore, may have done more than just sparked a rapid economic transition, by creating the ground work for transition that greatly reduced the turbulence and uncertainty of the collapse of communism.

In addition to the reforms made to the communist system in Hungary, there were also reforms made to the political system. These changes started in the 1960s and picked up even

more in the 1980s, mainly in that the criteria for choosing top political officials was changed from "ideological reliability and party membership" to "meritocracy, professional skills, educational attainment and experience" (Meusburger and Jons 2001 p. 7). Even with these changes occurring in Hungary during the 1960's and 1980's the Polity IV level of Hungary remained at a -7, which is categorized as an autocracy (Marshall 2012). This seems to provide evidence that a polity score on its own does not provide any information about how quickly a state can successfully transition. In addition, it may provide clues as to why polity levels do not correlate with public trust in governmental institutions.

From the Hungary example, it is easy to see that many factors shape into how a government operates, as well as the multitude of variables that must be considered when examining states in transition. It is also important to keep in mind that simply because a state is labeled as "post-communist" does not necessarily mean that they were all the same or operated in the same way. Hungary started the process of transition much earlier than most communist states, and even if it was mainly through subtle means it appears to have played a significant role in Hungary coming out of the collapse on much more stable political ground. This also demonstrates that post-communist states are not the same, and it explains why the post-communist variable can't be a useful determinant of levels of trust in government. Also, rapid transition in post-communist Hungary likely increased the levels of trust by establishing a more successful economy and creating a more stable job market.

Romania

If Hungary was the success story that emerged from the collapse of communism, then Romania was the example of exactly what not to do. In 1991 while Hungary was sitting at a Polity IV score of a perfect 10, Romania was still at a 5, sitting outside of democracy looking in.

This was in a large part due to the fact that Romania took longer to oust the communist regime than Hungary and also approached economic reform in a much slower and cautious fashion (Firebaugh & Sandu 1998). Slow transition may make sense in the short term because it could ease uncertainty by easing the country into a new system. The main problem with this approach in regards to post-communist countries is that the old system has collapsed, and it is nearly impossible to transition slowly with no foundation. Citizens of Romania also appear not to have entirely understood what democracy would be like in the early 1990s.

Romania is certainly an interesting case among the post-communist countries, and like Hungary exemplifies that post-communist countries maintain many unique characteristics that differentiate themselves from their brethren in communism. Earlier I discussed some of the factors that made Hungary unique during communism, mainly the ways in which its political system experienced subtle changes that set a foundation for democracy. Romania on the other hand was the polar opposite from the mid-1960s to 1989. During this time Romania was ruled by Nicolae Ceaușescu, the General Secretary of the Communist Party in Romania (Danta 1993). Ceaușescu was a brutal dictator and created a totalitarian state by the 1980s, and at the same time most of the social and economic plans he created were failing (Danta 1993). This essentially pulled Romania down into a state of turmoil before the collapse of communism even started. In addition, it is likely that people would be highly distrustful of a government that has destroyed the country, as well as established a secret police in order to control the population. Ceaușescu was overthrown and executed in 1989, but his legacy of failed projects lived on. This is important to keep in mind, because the economic situation plays one of the most dominate roles in trust levels.

According to Firebaugh and Sandu, "Fully two-thirds of Romanians said economic prosperity in the country is essential for democracy, and 61% said it is essential that the government guarantees that basic needs are met". This is relative to other post-communist countries, such as Hungary and Poland, in which 32% and 35% respectively say that "economic prosperity in the country" is the most important aspect for a democracy (Firebaugh and Sandu 1998 p. 524). Countries with a history of democracy that conducted this same survey showed a much lower rate of 11% or lower of respondents that said "economic prosperity in the country" is the most important aspect of democracy (Firebaugh and Sandu 1998 p. 524). There is obviously some sort of misinterpretation regarding what "democracy" means among citizens of long-term democracies and those in post-communist countries that had recently transitioned. In addition to this, however, Romanians had an even more altered view of democracy in the early 1990s than other post-communist countries, as evidenced in the Firebaugh & Sandu article.

In order to understand why democracy might not be an important factor in public trust, it is important to understand whether the public knows what democracy is in the first place. Firebaugh & Sandu study this question specifically in their 1998 article. The way the question was phrased in the Romania 1993 survey used by Firebaugh & Sandu (1998) were

> People associate democracy with diverse meanings such as those on this card. For each of these items, please tell me whether you think it is essential, important but not essential, not very important, or not at all important for a society to be called a democracy. [Responses on the card: (a) At least two strong political parties competing in elections; (b) A government that guarantees economic equality among its citizens; (c) A system of justice that treats everyone equally; (d) Freedom to criticize the government; (e) A government that guarantees that basic economic needs of its people will be met; (f) Economic prosperity in the country.]

The authors determined that in Romania there is a clear disjunction between market and political reform, and that people can be in favor of one but not the other (Firebaugh & Sandu 1998). But

at the same time as mentioned earlier, Romanians during transition tended to relate the idea of democratization with a stable economy rather that political reform. One can infer from this that democracy was a difficult idea for people in some post-communist countries to grasp immediately after the collapse of communism, and also that people seemed to be more concerned with the government ensuring economic prosperity while taking care of citizens. Two transitions were taking place in post-communist countries, and although they were happening at the same time in many countries, they were not necessarily related. A strong market economy could exist in a political system that was not a democracy. Therefore, if public trust is based more on economic situation, then it is reasonable to assume that a state in which a democracy does not exist but has economic stability would have higher levels of trust than a democracy with a poor economy.

Conclusion of Case Studies:

Romania and Hungary both provide interesting examples of similarities to be expected amongst post-communist states, as well as exemplify the dynamic range of social and economic factors that were present in the states during and after the collapse of communism. Hungary was experiencing success in terms of political transition during the communist regime while Romania actually regressed during the tail end of the communist regime. It is clear that a foundation is of great importance for countries making a successful transition to democracy. At the same time, however, a rapid transition to a market economy and liberal democracy worked much better than the slow and cautious approach. Likewise, it was clearly important to create a functional social society that provides services to the public. Romania lagged behind in most of these categories, while Hungary pushed ahead and ultimately was able to rebuild its society quickly and establish a Western style of democracy.

Hungary and Romania provide other insights regarding the data analyzed in this paper specifically, the way that people in post-communist countries view "democracy". Although the Firebaugh and Sandu article (1998) focuses on ideology in Romania, it does contain information regarding the thoughts of citizens from many different countries, both post-communist and not. This is an important theoretical idea, and although my data does not necessarily support this idea in terms of the post-communism variable, it could be due to a lack of non-post-communist countries included in this study. Not only that but it also explains the reason that "economic situation" plays a significant role in predicting the level of public trust in government. It appears that the more unfamiliar people are with democracy, the more they assume that a democracy is supposed to generate economic prosperity for the country. Romania was much less exposed to liberal democracy than the other post-communist countries, while Hungary started to develop characteristics of liberalization much earlier.

In the end Romania and Hungary are useful for explaining the variables that go into public trust of government. But unfortunately there still remains a lot unanswered. Romania and Hungary were the most diametrically different post-communist states, but I realized that there are a lot of subtleties to be considered when looking at a state in transition. But in the end just ten years after the transition these countries look remarkably similar. To understand every post-communist state, it would be necessary to look in-depth at each one individually. The label "post-communist" can explain some of the variance in public trust in government, but ultimately it is more important to consider how well acquainted a person is with the idea of democracy, and how well the transition went after the collapse of communism. On top of this, it points to the results that economy plays a more major role in determining trust variance than does level of democracy.

Concerns and Improvements

Although the data that I analyzed contained a large number of observations, a problem arose in that there was not a lot of variation of polity levels among the countries that were included. Unfortunately, there was no real to remedy this problem, the Eurobarometer is a useful tool but also has some serious shortcomings. First off, the Eurobarometer (in the candidate country surveys) is specifically conducting these interviews in order to gauge public opinion in regards to joining the EU. Generally countries that have candidacy for the EU are democracies. It was convenient that respondents in all of the countries were asked the same questions, but only being able to use countries that were all similar polity levels may have interfered with those results. Lack of variation was a serious issue; it would have been useful to include other post-communist countries like those of Central Asia that did not transition to democracies. This also leads me to believe that the findings on polity level not being predictors of trust may not actually be accurate. It would be necessary to recreate this analysis using a much more varied group of states (in terms of polity level) that transitioned at the same time in order to reliably test this variable.

Another concern I have is with the DV itself, specifically the way in which respondents could answer the questions about trust. Respondents were given the options "Tend to trust", "Tend not to trust", and "Don't know". I ended up dropping the "Don't know" which left only two options available. This variable being dichotomous is not ideal, I would have much rather preferred for there to be a scale on which respondents could choose how much they trust any of the particular institutions. But on top of this I believe that the phrasing of the answers is ambiguous. The respondents cannot answer whether they trust or do not trust, it is whether they "tend" to or not. This can lead to people thinking to the most recent reason that caused them trust

or distrust, or might think to the strongest reason they have. This is especially the case because they are being given an oral response survey that does not likely afford them much time to give an answer based on full contemplation of the question. These are just possibilities, it may also be that a person's gut response to these questions does accurately gauge all the factors going in to their decision, but I doubt it. If I were able to change the way this survey was administered I would have made it written, and changed the answers to the trust questions to a numeric scale ranging from 1-10.

The next issue I am concerned with is the post-communist variable. This variable is obviously simply defined, but my list of countries is once again lacking variation. Out of the thirteen countries that were included in the 2001 Eurobarometer survey that I used only three were not post-communist. I then had to drop Malta because there are unfortunately no Polity IV scores for that country. So I was then left with only two countries out of twelve being not post-communist. Once again this lack of variation makes it difficult to consider this variable reliable. It would have been ideal if there had been a survey in which more non-post-communist countries were included, or if the other Eurobarometer surveys conducted in 2001 that did include a wider variety of countries had the same questions. In the end there was nothing that I could do to combat this lack of variation with the resources that I had available to me.

If I had the opportunity to conduct this analysis and control everything from beginning to end I would start by having a survey that was conducted during the communist regime and that was constant in every country. This way I would be able to include states that did not transition to democracy. This would increase variance a make a more reliable test of the polity score variable and allow gauging levels of public trust in government in a communist controlled state. I could then see the changes that occurred in trust levels as the countries transitioned.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to control a situation such as the massive transnational collapse of a regime type. But without such a scenario it may be impossible to determine with a high level of reliability that these variables do (or do not) play a significant role in determining public levels of trust in the government.

Conclusion

Trust is a difficult factor to deal with. There are many variables that play a role in why people trust or do not trust, and trust is also fairly subjective. It would be useful to know exactly what instills trust in a population, but in an ever changing world the best we can do is to understand trust is by evaluating it against many factors over time. From the data I have presented, it does not appear that levels of democracy correspond with people's level of trust in the government, nor does a communist legacy. This is made even clearer by how similar Romania and Hungary are in just a decade after the collapse of communism, even when they experienced different factors during communism as well as during the transition. This information does not corroborate H1 but does corroborate H3. This information is interesting because it lends evidence to the argument of whether people tend to be more trusting of democratic institutions. At the same time, based on the data and the case studies it seems plausible that labeling states as "post-communist" may not actually provide a whole lot of information about a country, other than that it was ruled by a communist regime at one point. Other than that, many of the similarities that may have existed because states that were communist have likely been washed away by other factors in the time since the collapse. Also, H2 appears to proven false; age does not play a role in predicting trust of people in post-communist countries, unless it is looked at with variables that do vary based on age, such as job situation.

One thing that does appear to be conclusive however is that perceived economic situation in one's own country is a significant predictor of trust in government, and that this is true of countries from different backgrounds and polity levels. Most people seem to think that their government is more trustworthy when they believe the economy is doing well. It is also important to keep in mind that it is just the respondents believing the country is doing well economically, not necessarily that the economy is actually doing well. This leads me to conclude that people base their trust on personal feelings about the future rather than the past. Also, the Firebaugh & Sandu (1998) article leads me to seriously believe that the average citizen does not necessarily have an ideological grasp on what democracy is. But they do want the government to ensure that the economy is successful.

To some degree my data is somewhat inconclusive. I previously mentioned the lack of variance among multiple of my key variables, as well as the poor response options on the Eurobarometer surveys. Ultimately, none of my models predict much of the variance in my DV, and although I found some theoretical evidence supporting some of my results, I would prefer to gather much more data to ensure a more conclusive analysis. However, there are still important lessons to be learned from this study. First, the general public does not seem to understand democracy well, which therefore makes it difficult to use democracy to explain any public opinion. Second, trust is an incredibly complex variable that is subjective based on each person and their individual experiences. So many factors go into trust that it is not surprising that the few variables I tested for would not be able to explain much of its variance. Democracy by itself is not a successful way to instill public trust in the government for a long period of time. Citizens' levels of trust vary based on factors that they perceive in the present. In the end, it is

important to evaluate countries on a case-by-case basis and not simply define them by a

simplistic label such as "post-communist".

Data Appendix:

1.

Q13. I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?
(read out)

	tend to trust	tend not to trust	DK / No opinion	Refuse
1. The written press	1	2	9	X
2. Radio	1	2	9	X
3. Television	1	2	9	X
4. Justice / the [COUNTRY] legal system	1	2	9	X
5. The police	1	2	9	X
6. The army	1	2	9	X
7. The Churches*	1	2	9	X
8. Trade unions	1	2	9	X
9. Political parties	1	2	9	X
10. Civil service	1	2	9	X
11. Big companies	1	2	9	X
12. The [COUNTRY] government	1	2	9	X
13. The [COUNTRY] parliament (USE PROPER NAME FOR LOWER HOUSE)	1	2	9	X
14. Non-governmental organizations	1	2	9	X
15. Charitable or voluntary organizations	1	2	9	X

(European Commission Survey: ZA3978)

2.

	better	worse	the same	DK / no opinion	Refusal
a) your life in general	3	2	1	9	X
b) the economic situation in (COUNTRY)	3	2	1	9	X
c) the financial situation of your household	3	2	1	9	X
d) the employment situation in (COUNTRY)	3	2	1	9	X
e) your personal job situation	3	2	1	9	X

Summary of Variables

	Description of Variable
Trust Index	Index created using trust variables: justice system, political parties, lower house of parliament, and national government.
Polity Level	A range of levels of democracy as categorized by Polity IV, possible range of -10 to 10
Post-communism	Binary; 1 if post-communist, 0 if not
Age Education	The age at which a respondent stopped receiving formal education separated into 4 brackets; 1 being "up to 15 years", 2 being "16-19 year", 3 being "20+ years", and 4 being "still studying"
Age	Respondents age coded in years
Gender	Binary; 1 if male, 2 if female
National News	How much attention a respondent pay to national news, 1 being the lowest and 3 being the highest
State-paid	Binary; 0 if they are paid by the state; 1 if they are not
Expected Economy	Perceived economic situation of the coming year by respondent; ranges from 1 being worse, to 3 being better, and 2 is the same
Job Situation	Perceived personal job situation for the coming year; ranges from 1 being worse, to 3 being better, and 2 being the same
Employment Situation	Perceived employment situation of the country for the coming year; ranges from 1 being worse, to 3 being better, and 2 being the same

Descriptive Statistics

	Min	Max	Mean (Stan. Dev.)	No. Obs.
Trust Index	0	4	1.23 (1.36)	8684
Polity Level	5	10	8.26 (1.54)	11545
Age Education	1	4	2.28 (.895)	11228
Age	15	99	44.07 (17.95)	11487
National News	1	3	2.39 (.651)	11414
Expected Economy	1	3	1.86 (.748)	10506
Gender	1	2	1.535 (.499)	11541
Post-Communist	0	1	.87 (.34)	11545
Job Situation	1	3	2.006 (.637)	8964
State Paid	0	1	.476 (.499)	10200

Summary Statistics of Hungary

	Mean (Std. Devs.)
Trust Index	1.65 (1.444)
Expected Economy	1.93 (.85)
Job Situation	2.006 (.595)
National News	2.45 (.646)

Summary Statistics of Romania

	Mean (Std. Devs.)
Trust Index	1.27 (1.34)
Expected Economy	2.06 (.81)
Job Situation	2.14 (.72)
National News	2.49 (.658)

Table 1: Determinants of Public Trust

OLS Models with robust standard errors and clustered by country; unit of analysis is respondent answer to survey about trust

Dependent Variable = Public Trust in Government (based on an index of trust in government institutions)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Polity Level 1991	.02 (.07)	-.012 (.05)	.003 (.047)
Post Communism	----------	-.67 (.47)	-.697 (.408)
Age Education	.002 (.05)	.071 (.026)**	.03 (.02)
Age	.002 (.002)	.004 (.003)	.005 (.003)*
Gender	.02 (.03)	.048 (.032)	.057 (.029)*
National News	.016 (.056)	.15 (.05)***	.14 (.05)**
State Paid	-.09 (.06)	-.08 (.06)	-.07 (.05)
Expected Economy	.16 (.03)***	.15 (.03)***	.12 (.02)***
Job Situation	---------	--------	.307 (.033)***
Employment Situation	---------	-.0001 (.036)	----------
Constant	.222 (.641)	.902 (.607)	.217 (.545)
N	6997	6575	5790
Prob.> F	.0000	.0000	.0000
R-squared	0.0419	0.0412	0.0622

Significance: *p<.1 **<.05 ***p<.01

Size of Effect of Significant Variables:
Range of Change from Min to Max for Significant Variables in Specified Models

Age Education: Model 2 = .213
Age: Model 3 = .42
Gender: Model 3 = .057
National News: Model 2, Model 3 = .3, .28
Expected Economy: Model 1, Model, Model 3 = .32, .3, .24
Job Situation: Model 3 = .614

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