

Articles

A Comparative Study on Political Trust in Transition Countries

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This paper investigates the origin of political trust in post-communist Central European and Soviet Union countries. By comparing two competing theories that explain political trust, institutionalism, and socialization theory, the paper tried to explore which theory shows a higher explanatory power in the transitional context. The research employs ordinary least squares (OLS) methodology, using country and time as dummies to control for unobserved heterogeneity. The main independent variable is constructed based on the ‘cohort effect,’ representing years of experience of communist rule. The study explores the role of socialization, institutionalism, and labor market experiences as determinants of political trust. Findings indicate that socialization under communism resisted democracy and market economy adoption, but economic and political situations played a more significant role in shaping political trust. Additionally, being employed in the state sector or self-employed during the transition period positively influenced political trust levels. This research sheds light on the intricate factors influencing political trust in the aftermath of significant institutional transformations in post-communist countries.

Introduction

Where does individual political trust come from during political and economic transitional periods? There are two contradicting theories regarding this question; the socialization (or culturalism) theory, and the institutional theory (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2014; Závecz, 2017). While the socialization theory emphasizes one’s experience with cultural background, the institutional theory treats political trust as an endogenous factor of institutions and one’s evaluation of regimes’ economic and political performance. Answering this question is challenging since one’s life is continuous under similar regimes; making it difficult to distinguish cultural and institutional effects from one another. However, there is one exception that sheds light on this puzzling question: the experience of citizens in the transition countries, which observed a grand institutional transformation from centrally-planned communism to capitalist democracy. The ‘institutional’ transformation encompasses both formal institutions including the constitution and political system *and* informal institutions such as history, culture, and norms (North, 1990; Thelen, 1999). Consequently, it becomes imperative to engage in comprehensive deliberations regarding social norms, civic engagement, and the establishment of political and public legitimacy within this evolving landscape. Against this backdrop, addressing the concept of political trust necessitates a concurrent examination of political legitimacy.

The level of political legitimacy relies upon the degree to which citizens repose trust in their government’s commitment to righteous decision-making, as noted by Easton (1965). A recent article highlights the positive impact of effective pandemic governance on public support for the incumbent government in subsequent elections, emphasizing the pressure on democratic governments to excel in crisis management (Park & Chung, 2021). Moreover, the developmental state literature emphasizes that the performance of a centralized state plays a crucial role in determining its legitimacy (Johnson, 1982; Woo-Cumings, 1999). The rationale behind the separation of political elections and bureaucratic autonomy has been previously acknowledged, notably in the early works of Almond and Verba (1989). Trust and legitimacy are closely intertwined, exerting substantial influence on government outcomes, such as heightened effectiveness and performance, while also being reciprocally impacted by government actions.

Admittedly, political trust is indeed a complex concept. To simplify, Citrin and Stoker (2018) explain that it refers to the attitudes of citizens toward their government, encompassing confidence, system support, and legitimacy. Political trust can extend to the political system beyond government institutions. Easton (1965) demonstrated a range of system support from specific support (towards current authorities) to diffuse support (towards institutions and principles). The extent of citizens’ trust in the entity determines their receptiveness to the system’s vulnerabilities

a This research signifies the development of the author’s doctoral dissertation into an academic paper.

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and adherence to its policies. The present paper focuses on various objects of political trust including citizens' attitudes toward core values (such as democracy and a market economy), government institutions (presidency, government, parliament, and political parties), and other citizens (interpersonal trust), along with the impact of experiences under socialism. Although it cannot be generalized, Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2014) found evidence that individuals exposed to communism experience an indoctrinating effect and tend to have low support for democracy and capitalism. In contrast, this study examines the direction of the effect of experiences under socialism and also considers the *multivariate characteristics of political trust*, ranging from specific to generalized trust. The operationalization of trust in this study includes the general level of trust, including attitudes toward core values (such as democracy and a market economy), specific trust in government institutions (presidency, government, parliament, and political parties), and interpersonal trust.

Numerous studies within the realm of public administration scholarship delve into measuring government performance. It is worthwhile to include references supporting these ideas. Firstly, researchers are increasingly focusing on evaluating public service performance. This evaluation can be categorized into five conceptual areas: outputs, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and democratic outcomes (Andrews et al., 2006). Secondly, some researchers assess effectiveness ratings based on certain criteria or goals that they assume all organizations should pursue, like productivity, efficiency, flexibility, and adaptability (Rainey, 2009). Finally, some studies utilize the gap between citizens' expectations and their experiences with post-service quality. When perceived service quality falls short of expectations, the negative gap (negative disconfirmation) leads to dissatisfaction, while when perceived performance exceeds expectations, the positive gap (positive disconfirmation) results in satisfaction (Song & Meier, 2018).

There is a well-known problem concerning the understanding of a government's economic and social performance as a source of political satisfaction, which raises the question of the reference point (whether it is towards the past or to the current neighboring countries) (Nye, 1997). In this regard, this study includes individual evaluations of political/economic situations and compares them to the past rather than the current evaluation. Another notable aspect of this paper is the investigation of the effect of labor market experience on political trust during the transition period. It serves as a starting point, indicating that one's labor status and the number of job changes are significantly associated with attitude toward political and interpersonal trust.

The methodology of this research is ordinary least squares (OLS). Country and time were set as dummies to

control unobserved heterogeneity across country and time. Additionally, this study tests individuals' subjective evaluation of the current political and economic situations compared to the past, along with macroeconomic variables and basic individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, and religious denomination with exposure to socialism as the key independent variable. The novelty of this paper lies in its extensive coverage of 27 transition countries in the Central Eastern and Baltics (CEB), Southeastern Europe (SEE), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)¹. While previous research mainly focused on the CEB countries, this study provides a more comprehensive picture of political trust in the transition countries.

2. Origins of political trust – socialization and institutionalism

One of the aspects of political trust is system support or confidence in government institutions, essentially reflecting the positive or negative attitudes of citizens toward their government (Citrin & Stoker, 2018). The course of political trust can be summarized in two parts – socialization and institutional theories. The early debate on the two origins of political trust – socialization and institutional theories – was well addressed in Mishler and Rose's paper (2001). [Figure 1](#) attempts to deepen the understanding of the mechanism from an individual perspective of political trust. Citizens, influenced by socialization and their demographic characteristics such as education, age, gender, etc., evaluate economic and political performance through the lens of everyday experiences and mass media.

The effects of political trust manifest through voter turnout, policy preferences, and compliance. Levi and Stoker (2000) introduced the idea of considering both 'trust' and 'trustworthiness.' Trust is a judgment that can be conceptualized dichotomously (one either trusts or distrusts) or in a more graded fashion (one trusts or distrusts to a degree). It is relational and given to specific individuals or institutions over specific domains. On the other hand, trustworthiness is less relational; a person or institution can possess the attributes of trustworthiness, assuring potential trusters that the trusted party will not betray their trust. Trustworthy government institutions have a positive impact on citizens' compliance and consent to regulations that foster social trust for the growth of democracy and the economy.

A previous study found evidence that institutional trust is significantly related to voting in less democratic countries, suggesting that in settings with limited individual democratic rights, institutional trust plays a more prominent role in facilitating political participation (H. H. Kim, 2014). Political trust also influences citizens' policy preferences and social inequality (Edlund, 1999), as people are more

¹ Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia (CEB, 8 countries), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia (SEE, 8 countries), Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan (CIS, 11 countries)

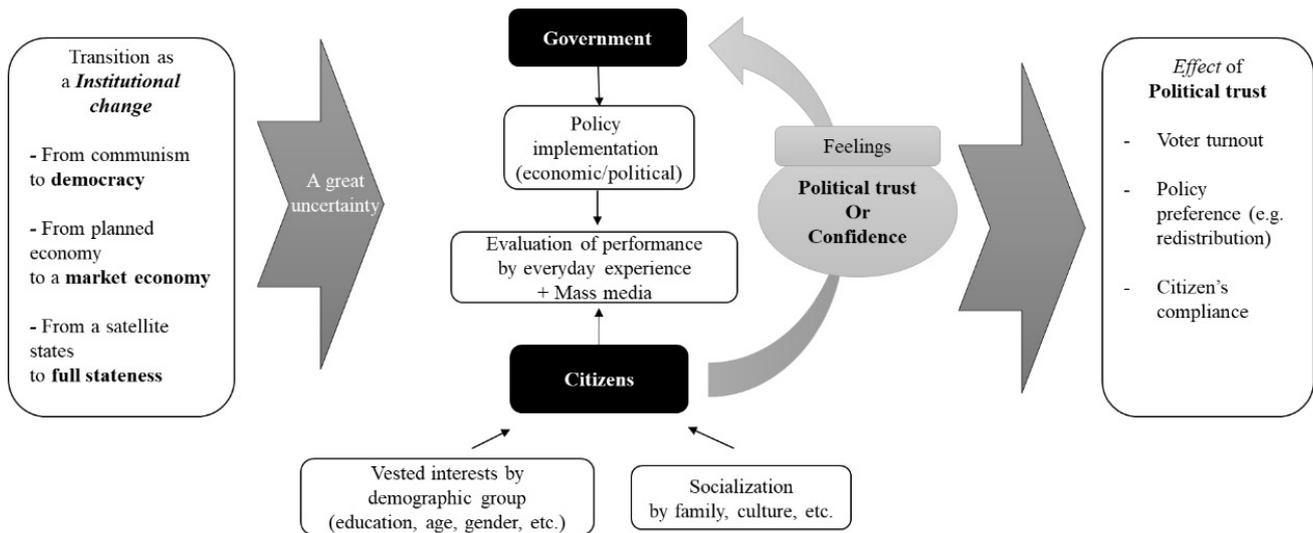


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of political trust and the post-communist Context

Source: constructed by the authors

inclined to adhere to state rules when they perceive fair enforcement and widespread compliance by others. Conversely, in some Central and Eastern European countries, enduring patterns of non-compliance persist despite public dissatisfaction due to a lack of government credibility (Rose-Ackerman, 2001). Thus, government trustworthiness, along with the coercive force of law (Schauer, 2015), is an important factor in citizens' compliance.

In the discourse of political trust and voting turnout in post-socialist economies, it is necessary to consider that the election process can differ from other democracies. Competitive authoritarianism as indicated by Levitsky and Way (2002), may involve frequent and serious violations of criteria such as fair elections, universal suffrage, protection of political rights, and genuine governing authority. Instead, it may entail electoral manipulations, media restrictions for the opposition, and harassment of critics. This distinguishes such systems from those that may have flaws but still adhere to fundamental democratic standards. Additionally, voting outcomes can be influenced by social identities, group attachments, and myopic retrospections rather than policy preferences or ideological principles (Achen & Bartels, 2017).

The specific policies during the transition can be categorized as privatization, enterprise restructuring, price liberalization, trade and foreign exchange system, and banking reform (EBRD, 1994). On top of these policies, there are a massive socio-economic institutional change from communism, a planned economy, and satellite states to democracy, a market economy, and full stateness (Závecz, 2017). One of the dilemmas that post-communist countries' governments have faced is the contradiction between privatization and foreign investment as short-term goals and democratization as a long-term public policy goal. The economic policies of privatization and foreign investment are conducted under the neoliberal *laissez-faire* economic policy, which consequently undermines centralization and bu-

reaucratic governance of the socialist planned economy (Moses, 2000).

According to the socialization theory, political trust is considered exogenous as it is shaped by cultural norms and early-life socialization. For instance, exposure to communism has been shown to indoctrinate individuals with attitudes favoring the suppression of the private sector and heavy reliance on the central government, rather than fostering resistance against the old system. Moreover, the failures of the planned economy led people to rely on interpersonal relations to cope with socio-economic problems, rather than depending on public institutions and laws (Neundorf, 2010; Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2014). As a result, new democracies inherited low levels of trust even after the collapse of the previous regime (Rose-Ackerman, 2001). Drawing a comparison between East Germans and West Germans, Alesina and Fuchs-Schündeln (2007) found that communism shifted individual preferences toward a more redistributive government, both directly and indirectly through the economic downturn.

On the contrary, institutional theories insist that political trust is endogenous to institutional performance, and thus it is conditioned by government capabilities (Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001). Several studies have analyzed the relationship between government performance and political trust. For example, Stevenson and Wolfers (2011) examined this relationship in the U.S. context and found that increasing unemployment resulted in a significant loss of confidence in the government as well as the financial sector. In the European context, Van Erkel and Van Der Meer (2015) found that longitudinal changes in economic performance, such as economic growth, government deficits, unemployment rate, and inflation, affected the level of political trust. Despite not being influenced by comparing a nation's economic performance to other countries, the present paper contends that political trust is affected when compared to its historical performance. The first point highlights how changes in performance indicators like economic growth,

deficits, unemployment, and inflation within a country impact political trust. The second point suggests that the influence of macroeconomic performance is more significant among those with lower education levels. Finally, the third point emphasizes that even during times of economic hardship, budgetary deficits tend to erode political trust. Conversely, institutional performance is influenced by political trust. Overcoming economic and social challenges proves to be effective when there is public trust. According to a recent investigation by Stanica (2022), trust in the government plays a crucial role in attaining favorable health outcomes amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.²

3. Components of Political Trust³

Easton (1965) established the spectrum of political support referred to as system support in his term with two extreme categories: specific and generalized political support. Specific political support refers to people's trust in office-holders within nation-state institutions and can be measured by the popularity of politicians or high-ranking government officials. Generalized support, on the other hand, is based on more abstract ideas on values and principles that uphold the nation-state and its institutions. Theoretically, specific and generalized political support can be both dichotomous and continuous. In countries with fragile legitimacy, distrust toward incumbent high-level politicians can raise questions about their constitutional arrangements. However, citizens in countries with deep historical roots of legitimacy would maintain their firm belief in the regime even if their political leaders disappoint them Easton (1965).

This research adopts the framework of Norris (2017), which was established upon the theoretical framework of Easton (1965). Norris (2017) defines five components of political support, ranging from the most specific to the most general level. The first and the most specific component is the approval of incumbent office-holders, involving evaluations of the performance and qualifications of presidents, prime ministers, politicians, civil servants, etc. A recent study by Nam and Lee (2021) suggests that leadership skills, such as vision and effective communication, along with the ability to manage government affairs efficiently, are closely associated with trust in government. The second component deals with confidence in regime institutions, including the legislature, executive, judiciary, and other government bodies. The third component covers the evaluation of regime performance, which is more abstract than the first two components, as it assesses the performance and process of government policies. The fourth component is the approval of the core regime, reflecting support for democratic ideas and rejection of autocratic principles. Lastly, the fifth component represents the most diffused concept,

which is national identity. This category particularly encompasses feelings of patriotism and national pride.

Research on political trust in post-communist countries has focused on each of the components from the specific to the generalized level, as indicated in Norris' (2017) work. On one hand, Fidrmuc (2000) emphasized the most specific political support towards particular parliamentary parties. On the other hand, other studies have concentrated on confidence in government or parliamentary institutions (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005; Lovell, 2001; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001; Rothstein & Stoll, 2008; Závecz, 2017). In this dimension, researchers have used global surveys such as the World Value Survey or the New Democracies Barometer to find variables related to confidence in political and government institutions.

The third component (evaluation of regime performance) has also been extensively explored in previous literature (Alesina & Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007; Delhey & Newton, 2005; Earle & Gehlbach, 2003; B.-Y. Kim & Pirttilä, 2006; Neundorf, 2010). For instance, government policies for privatization (Earle & Gehlbach, 2003) or economic reforms (B.-Y. Kim & Pirttilä, 2006) represent key aspects in the context of the post-communist countries. The fourth category encompasses more generalized political trust, which reflects the approval of the 'new' regime, such as democracy and a market economy in this region (Evans & Whitefield, 1995; Pop-Eleches & Tucker, 2014). Lastly, the full stateness of the transition can be found in the studies of Kuzio (2001). According to Kuzio, a shared national identity is a precondition for democratization in post-communist countries.

One of the important factors that determine the level of political trust in transition countries is the rising inequality caused by the introduction of a market economy. Loveless and Whitefield (2011) emphasized the significance of 'perceived inequality' by citizens of CEE countries, which is shaped by system-level changes and individual experiences during the transition – including the emergence of entrepreneurship, massive labor reallocation from the public to the private sector, high unemployment rates, and eroding social welfare. In this sense, the communist legacy may influence an individual's assessment of social inequality and, consequently, produce normative concerns about markets and democracy. Perceptions of inequality are also related to lower levels of trust and higher levels of suspicion towards others (Loveless, 2013), support for more 'strong-hand' economic government (Whitefield & Loveless, 2013), strong demands for popular democratic participation (Loveless, 2016). The theoretical framework behind the association between one's perceived evaluation of economic performance and income inequality and political trust is called the 'trust-as-evaluation' approach, which identifies citizens' assessment of the government as a key factor in

² The authors are grateful for the invaluable comments from the reviewers on this part.

³ In this study, the terms 'political trust' and 'political support' will be used interchangeably.

determining the level of political trust (Lee et al., 2020; van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017)

Political trust and social trust

In societies rich in social capital, citizens tend to trust others, fostering efforts to enhance democratic accountability and engage in arms-length economic activities. This high social capital leads citizens to express confidence not just in each other but also in public institutions and the market. Social capital, attributed to ‘civil society,’ is generated by robust civil societies, and according to Robert Putnam (1993, 2000), it can be transferred from the voluntary organizations and groups producing it to the broader realm of democratic participation.

The relationship between political trust and social trust is not clearly defined in existing empirical studies. Although many researchers have failed to find strong correlations between social and political trust at the individual level, a positively significant relationship was found at the country level (Delhey & Newton, 2005). Based on the aggregate-level correlation between social and political trust, Newton and Norris (2000) used that general trust has a positive impact on social and political institutions and effective governments. Interpersonal trust differentiates the level of trust and distrust toward political institutions because it can ‘spill over’ to political institutions and create a civic culture (Mishler & Rose, 2001). However, the causal direction is ambiguous, as a well-functioning government institution can build up social capital (Delhey & Newton, 2005; Rothstein & Stoll, 2008). There is evidence that the impact of economic decline in the 2008 financial and economic crisis appears to be contingent upon the role of state institutions, and countries with well-functioning governments show less decrease in social capital than others (Obert, 2018)

4. Government Performance and Political Trust in Transition Context

Political trust and government performance

Government performance and its evaluation lie at the core of the institutionalism theory and trust-as-evaluation approach. However, it is not a simple concept and requires careful analysis in research. Political trust is a relational and domain-specific concept, where individuals trust the government to perform specific actions or policies (i.e., A trusts B to do X) (Citrin & Stoker, 2018). Citizens evaluate their government based on its performance in areas of policy that are of interest to them. Governments make decisions on how to allocate scarce resources in society by implementing various policies. During the process of decision-making and policy implementation, governments set certain time frames and expect certain outcomes from their policies. Once the policies become effective, their results are discovered, and citizens evaluate the performance based on their everyday experiences and through the lens of mass media.

As Nye (1997) pointed out, there are several limitations to recognizing government performance as a cause of polit-

ical satisfaction/dissatisfaction. First, it is hard to measure government performance (*whose performance compared to what?*). For example, Van Erkel and Van Der Meer (2015) argue that the economic performance of a nation is meaningful to understand political support when it is compared to one’s past performance rather than to other countries.

Second, each individual has a different perception of the role of government. People who experienced communism tend to support state intervention because they are inclined to believe that it is the government’s responsibility to secure citizens’ living when someone becomes unemployed or needy (Alesina & Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007). Third, the evaluation of performance depends on one’s perception of distance from the government (either federal or local) or the gap between real and perceived performance. In this context, citizens’ everyday experiences through government services are important. When someone witnesses daily small-scale corruption, it lowers his/her support for the political regime in power (Reisinger, 2017). To address the importance of individual perception on the economic and political performance of institutions, Tormos (2019) measured the impact of personal hardship on political trust during the Great Recession.

On the aggregate level, political trust can be influenced by two factors: 1) partisanship and polarization and 2) process and probity (Citrin & Stoker, 2018). First, partisanship and polarization can contribute to a downward trend in political trust as it amplifies conflicts between parties and increases brinkmanship. Second, citizens assess the government not just based on the results but also on how they handle things and how honest they are. Considering these two factors, this study makes a hypothesis that political trust depends on the citizens’ views on the legitimacy of representative democracy

Transition as a large-scale institutional change and political trust

The institutional context is an important aspect in explaining political trust as it influences citizens’ policy preferences and patterns of social division (Edlund, 1999). For example, various factors, such as the occupational status of individuals, income, perception of social mobility, and tax schemes shape preferences for redistribution (Beramendi & Rehm, 2016; Edlund, 1999; Guillaud, 2013). Apart from an individual’s circumstances, recent studies found that political trust can also be influenced by significant crises and events like wars, COVID-19, or earthquakes, which can determine the levels of political trust (Stanica, 2022; Suryahadi & Ridho, 2023).

The transition economies should be analyzed in the context of undergoing a large-scale institutional change from communism to democracy, from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, and from satellite states to full stateness (Závecz, 2017). Each government implemented transition policies such as privatization, enterprise restructuring, price liberalization and competition, trade and foreign exchange systems, and banking reforms. The newly introduced capitalist democracy needs trust to establish the fundamentals for commercial exchange, contracts, and

agreements between people, and confidence in the legitimacy of the new government (Lovell, 2001). However, the low level of political trust in the post-communist countries remains one of the consistent obstacles in previous literature (Letki & Evans, 2005; Lovell, 2001; Mishler & Rose, 1997, 2001). The lack of trust or distrust in government continues to be a problem in this region as it greatly influences voter turnout, policy preferences, and citizens' compliance. In addition, the post-communist countries exhibit regional divergence in political trust. While the former Soviet Republics⁴ experienced a consistent decline in confidence in the parliament both in the initial period of transition and the consolidation period, the new democracies in the Central and Eastern European countries⁵ saw a more significant decrease in confidence in the later consolidation period due to the 'post-honeymoon disillusion' (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005). It is noteworthy that the transition phases of former USSR countries are not uniform. Certain nations remain significantly under the influence of Russia, while others have actively embraced a Western orientation and attained European Union membership. The evident disparity between these trajectories is particularly significant and is likely to exert a discernible impact on political trust.

Among the three big institutional changes, the process of economic transformation includes the creation and development of a market economy, the establishment of property rights, and political and legal changes, leading to privatization and economic restructuring (Dewatripont & Roland, 1996).

From another perspective, the transition countries can be understood as part of a young democracy. The institutional transformation paved the way for declining political trust due to the 'post-honeymoon disillusionment' rather than the existence of critical citizens (Catterberg & Moreno, 2005). Additionally, citizens in young democracies might exhibit different levels of trust in each component of political trust. For example, citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic showed pro-democracy attitudes concerning corruption, but they expressed distrust in existing government institutions at the same time (Collins & Gambrel, 2017). On the other hand, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, during the period 1990 to 2013, pursued the salience and shape of anti-corruption policies, which in turn resulted in growing domestic electoral pressure, civil society, and public accountability (Sicakova-Beblava & Beblavy, 2016). This indicates that past experiences of authoritarian political power, characterized by a lack of democratic participation and accountability, shape citizens' perceptions of the role of government and their evaluation of its performance. As found by Campbell (2023), public participation in the policymaking process is a crucial factor in facilitating trust in government, even when policy performance is sound.

5. Empirical Strategy

This research investigates important issues regarding the origin of political trust. Unlike other countries, the transition countries provide a unique research opportunity due to the discrepancy in institutional context before and after the transition. This can also be interpreted as the legacy of communism in terms of people's attitudes toward government. Economic performance is represented by both a subjective evaluation (compared to their past) and objective macroeconomic indicators. To emphasize the role of individual experience as a mechanism for the formulation of political trust, this research includes the individual labor market history in the regression. Political trust, the dependent variable, is two-fold – encompassing the core concepts of democracy and a market economy, as well as confidence in government institutions – and interpersonal trust was tested subsequently.

To explore the research questions, this study aims to test culturalism and institutionalism in three dimensions; social trust, confidence in government institutions, and the core concepts of the new regime (i.e., democracy and a market economy). The main motivation for this study comes from Pop-Eleches and Tucker's study (2014), in which the socialization theory was tested using the 'age-period-cohort (APC)' effect. To examine the origin of political trust in the post-communist countries, the main independent variable was constructed based on the 'cohort effect,' where the cohort represents the group of people who experienced communist rule. The challenge in addressing this research question was to isolate the cohort effect from the age and period effects.

The main data used for this research was the *Life in the Transition Survey* (LITS) created by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in collaboration with the World Bank (WB). The data aim to gather information on public attitudes, well-being, and the impact of economic and political changes in more than 30 transition countries, as well as their neighboring countries for comparison. The survey was conducted three times in the years 2006, 2010, and 2016. For this study, a selection was made from 27 transition countries from CEB, SEE, and CIS (see [Table 1](#)). In this paper, we utilize a pooled cross-sectional dataset comprising three waves of surveys. The survey design is cross-sectional at each time point, allowing for the examination of multiple entities at specific moments. Our decision to adopt a pooled cross-sectional approach, rather than conducting a country-specific analysis, is driven by the objective of identifying common characteristics among post-socialist countries. This approach enables us to capture broader patterns and trends that may be shared across the studied nations.

The basic regression model is as follows:

⁴ Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine

⁵ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia

$$\begin{aligned}
Trust_{iyc} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Exposure_{iyc} + \beta_2 Political\ Situation_{iyc} \\
& + \beta_3 Economic\ Situation_{iyc} \\
& + \beta_4 \log(GDPpercap\ PPP)_{yc} \\
& + \beta_5 Unemployment\ Rate_{yc} \\
& + \beta_6 Inflation_{yc} + X'\gamma \\
& + \beta_7 History_{ic} + \theta_c + \varphi_y + u_{icy}
\end{aligned}$$

The dependent variable $Trust_{iyc}$ represents the level of trust of individual i of country c in year y . This variable is composed of three dimensions. The first dimension is the approval of the core system, which includes democracy and a market economy. It was coded as 1 if the individual answered that a market economy (or democracy) is preferable to any other form of economic (or political) system. The second dimension measures the level of trust in national institutions, including the presidency, government, parliament, and political parties. Each answer was scaled from 1 (completely distrust) to 5 (completely trust). The third dependent variable is general trust which was assessed by asking respondents, "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" The answers were also scaled from 1 (completely distrust) to 5 (completely trust).

The key independent variable of this paper is $Exposure_{iyc}$, which represents the number of years of exposure to the communist rule of individual i of country c in year y . The identification strategy utilized the within-country variation, considering the years of living under the communist regime when an individual turned age six, and also incorporated cross-country differences of the communist period (1918-1989 for CIS countries and 1945-1989 for European countries). Additionally, other individual- and country-level control variables were included in the regression. First, there are the perception variables of the political and economic situation ($Political\ Situation_{iyc}$ and $Economic\ Situation_{iyc}$). The LITS survey asked whether they believed the economic and political situation in their country was better today than around 4 years ago. The answers were scaled from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Second, several macroeconomic variables were included as independent variables: the log of GDP per capita (PPP adjusted), the unemployment rate, and the inflation rate ($\log(GDPpercap\ PPP)_{yc}$, $Unemployment\ Rate_{yc}$, and $Inflation_{yc}$). These macroeconomic variables were obtained from the World Development Indicators. Given that economists commonly regard the growth rate of real GDP per capita in PPP, inflation rate, and unemployment rate as the key macroeconomic indicators for assessing economic conditions globally, there may arise a potential multicollinearity problem when considering both objective and subjective economic and political situations. This study aims to address this by incorporating both objective and subjective variables and examining their impacts. Third, a vector of individual characteristics ($X'\gamma$) was included in the regression. These characteristics include age, age squared (to capture non-linear relationships between age and the dependent variable), gender (1 for female, 0 for male), religion (1 for having a religion and 0 otherwise), ed-

ucation (categorized as 1 no degree/no education, 2 compulsory school education, 3 secondary education, 4 professional and vocational school/training, 5 higher professional degree (university, college), and 6 post-graduate degree), and self-rated health status (ranging from 1 for very bad to 5 for very good)).

As personal employment situation is a crucial factor for one's political attitude (Hayo, 2004), variables for labor market experience during the transition period (from 1989 to 2006) were added ($History_{ic}$). The first wave of LITS surveyed individual history under socialism, and the respondents' answers were utilized to create variables, the number of jobs as an employee or a self-employer, the number of moves to a better or worse job, whether one experienced voluntary or involuntary job switches, the number of years in the state-sector employment, and the number of years receiving unemployment benefits. One's specific labor market experience provides a more concrete picture of determinants of the political system than simply considering the status or types of employment.

Lastly, θ_c and φ_y are country and year dummies, respectively, serving as control variables to account for unobserved country and year effects, thereby functioning as country and year fixed effects in this regression analysis. Dummy variables for transition countries are generated, equaling 1 if a person belongs to the country and 0 otherwise.

6. Key Findings from Empirical Study

Descriptive analysis

For a cross-country comparison, [Figure 2](#) descriptively illustrates the level of political trust and general trust in the transition countries and the EU. The EU countries included in the comparison are France, Sweden, the U.K. (in 2010), and Germany (in 2016). From 2006 to 2010, the preferences for both democracy and a market economy declined in the CEB and SEE countries, while there was an increase in the CIS countries. The preferences for both democracy and a market economy were higher in the EU countries, but interestingly, the level of trust for a market economy in the CIS countries was almost comparable to that of the EU in 2010. On the other hand, the level of trust in the CEB countries decreased in 2010, and the decline could be a reflection of the economic downturn that began in the region in 2008.

Second, trust in national institutions showed regional diversity. On one hand, the level of trust in the SEE countries was the lowest, while the CIS countries reported the highest. Surprisingly, the confidence in the presidency in the CIS countries even surpassed that of the EU countries. On the other hand, the distrust in government institutions in the CEB countries supports the observations in previous literature (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Závecz, 2017).

CIS region showed a higher level of trust in the core concepts (at least during the economic crisis) and national institutions. One of the explanations from the previous study related to this result is Aghion et al.'s (2010) study on civic culture and political trust. A low civic culture leads to greater demand for government intervention in social prob-

Table 1. Summary statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent variables					
<i>core value</i>					
market economy	87,631	0.40	0.49	0	1
democracy	89,403	0.53	0.50	0	1
<i>trust in national institutions</i>					
presidency	91,458	3.09	1.38	1	5
government	93,539	2.72	1.33	1	5
parliament	92,567	2.59	1.29	1	5
political parties	90,980	2.36	1.22	1	5
<i>General trust</i>					
trust	93,786	2.80	1.13	1	5
Independent variables					
experience under socialism	80,070	23.17	13.20	1	65
age	97,946	47.41	17.62	18	99
age squared	97,946	2558.27	1766.64	324	9801
female	97,938	0.59	0.49	0	1
religion	96,717	0.91	0.28	0	1
education	97,953	3.47	1.06	1	6
health	97,644	3.41	0.96	1	5
Labor market experience in transition					
Number of Jobs as an employee	27,002	1.01	0.99	0	6
Number of years as a self-employed	26,993	1.05	3.35	0	18
Number of moves to a better job	3,790	1.27	1.98	0	18
Number of moves to a worse job	3,862	4.03	4.97	0	18
Ever experienced voluntary job switches	12,172	0.58	0.49	0	1
Ever experienced involuntary job switches	11,951	0.40	0.49	0	1
Number of years in state-sector employment	27,002	4.43	6.23	0	18
Number of years receiving unemployment benefits	3,610	1.53	2.46	0	18
Transition countries					
Central Eastern and Baltics (CEB)					
Latvia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Lithuania	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Slovak Republic	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Slovenia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Estonia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Czech Republic	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Poland	97,969	0.04	0.20	0	1
Hungary	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Southeastern Europe (SEE)					
Croatia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Bulgaria	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Romania	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Albania	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Bosnia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Macedonia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Montenegro	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Serbia	97,969	0.04	0.20	0	1
Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)					
Belarus	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Kazakhstan	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Armenia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Azerbaijan	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Georgia	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Kyrgyzstan	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Moldova	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Tajikistan	97,969	0.04	0.19	0	1
Ukraine	97,969	0.04	0.20	0	1
Uzbekistan	97,969	0.04	0.20	0	1
Russian Federation	97,969	0.04	0.20	0	1

lems even when political corruption is present. As such, Economic difficulties might have triggered an increase in political trust in the CIS region. The disintegration of the Soviet Union had far-reaching implications for its former member nations, extending beyond economic consequences. It shattered the established norms and compelled individuals to revert to relying on tangible elements and familiar relationships. Among these countries, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine exhibit the lowest levels of trust and optimism for the future, while Kazakhstan ranks highest, trailed by Russia and Armenia. The variations in these levels are linked to both economic recovery and sociopolitical factors; however, the overall outcome mainly signifies the failure of a range of autocratic and authoritarian regimes to foster social unity (Sapsford et al., 2015).

Third, the level of general trust in the post-communist countries showed less divergence across the transition regions. General trust in the transition countries increased in 2010 and then decreased in 2016. Overall, the level of trust was slightly below the EU level.

Empirical results

[Table 2](#) presents the results of the regression for the core concepts under the democratic capitalist systems. Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2014) reported that exposure to communism led to a decrease of 0.004 to 0.011 in democratic support and 0.005-0.006 in pro-capitalist attitude. In this study, the preference for a market economy and democracy decreased by approximately 0.0018, and 0.0017 for column (1) and column (2), respectively. It can be interpreted that one year of experience under socialist rule is correlated with a decrease in preference for the political and economic system around 0.002. Considering that the mean year of experience under socialism is around 23 years ([Table 1](#)), on average, the exposure to socialism is associated with a 0.046 decrease ($23 * 0.002$) in the preference for democracy and a market economy over any other system. Since the preference for capitalist democracy is a dummy variable between 0 and 1, the number represents 4.6 percent of the total magnitude of the variable.

It was observed that the political (or economic) situation was better than in the past showing an increased preference for democracy and a market economy. However, when the macroeconomic variables were included in the analysis, the experience under socialism became statistically insignificant. This suggests that the social and economic environment, as presented by the macroeconomic variables, had a stronger impact on preferences than the experience under socialism. Further, the coefficients for individual characteristics support Hayo's work (2004), indicating that older, female, and less educated respondents were less supportive of democracy and a market economy.

The r-squared value of approximately 0.05 (ranging from 0.048 to 0.066) in [Table 2](#) is comparable to the baseline regression in Pop-Eleches and Tucker's (2014)'s study, which had an R-Square of 0.057 when excluding country and year dummies. The slight difference in the R-squared value between the two studies could be attributed to the number of years of study. This study covered three years of data, while Pop-Eleches and Tucker (2014)'s study spanned six years, which could lead to variations in the overall explained variance. Although the regression results in the Pop-Eleches and Tucker study (2014) show a relatively small R-Square, the identification of experience under socialism still has an impact on academic discourse.

In [Table 3](#), the same model as [Table 2](#) is used, but the dependent variables are different, representing trust in national institutions. The results show that the exposure to socialism decreased confidence in national institutions, with coefficients around 0.0038 (in columns 1 to 4). On average, the experience under socialism (around 23 years, as shown in [Table 1](#)) is associated with a decrease in preference for democracy and a market economy by approximately 0.087 ($0.0038 * 23$), which represents a decrease of 8.7 percent. However, when the macro variables were included in the regression, the exposure variable lost its significance, indicating that the impact of exposure to socialism on trust in national institutions became less relevant when considering the influence of macroeconomic variables. These findings suggest that the social and eco-



Figure 2. Political trust and the general trust in the post-communist countries and EU

Source: author's calculation from LITS

Table 2. Political trust in the core values of a market economy and democracy

	(1) Market economy	(2) Democracy	(3) Market economy	(4) Democracy	(5) Market economy	(6) Democracy
Experience under socialism	-0.00182*** (0.000675)	-0.00173** (0.000720)	-0.00152** (0.000713)	-0.00152** (0.000756)	-0.000570 (0.000722)	-0.000579 (0.000766)
Political situation			0.0209*** (0.00231)	0.0306*** (0.00231)	0.0177*** (0.00233)	0.0270*** (0.00234)
Economic situation			0.0352*** (0.00227)	0.0241*** (0.00228)	0.0292*** (0.00233)	0.0183*** (0.00234)
log (GDP per capita PPP)					0.161*** (0.0348)	0.139*** (0.0349)
Unemployment rate					-0.000944 (0.000989)	-0.00180* (0.00100)
Inflation					0.00233** (0.000972)	0.00170* (0.000986)
Age	0.00346** (0.00138)	0.00468*** (0.00143)	0.00364** (0.00148)	0.00540*** (0.00152)	0.00197 (0.00150)	0.00340** (0.00155)
Age squared	-0.000037*** (0.00000884)	-0.000040*** (0.00000906)	-0.000041*** (0.00000948)	-0.000049*** (0.00000968)	-0.000032*** (0.00000962)	-0.000037*** (0.00000983)
Female	-0.0360*** (0.00369)	-0.0284*** (0.00372)	-0.0332*** (0.00380)	-0.0268*** (0.00383)	-0.0303*** (0.00386)	-0.0231*** (0.00390)
Religion	0.0163** (0.00707)	0.0174** (0.00719)	0.00982 (0.00728)	0.0145* (0.00742)	0.00176 (0.00729)	0.00313 (0.00742)
Education	0.0363*** (0.00179)	0.0531*** (0.00179)	0.0347*** (0.00186)	0.0505*** (0.00185)	0.0376*** (0.00189)	0.0540*** (0.00188)
Health	0.0465*** (0.00224)	0.0413*** (0.00228)	0.0384*** (0.00234)	0.0341*** (0.00238)	0.0366*** (0.00237)	0.0324*** (0.00241)
country dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	71,057	72,392	65,824	66,992	63,418	64,675
R-sq	0.048	0.051	0.060	0.063	0.061	0.066

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

conomic environment, represented by macro variables, had a stronger influence on trust in national institutions compared to the historical experience of socialism. Also, the R-squared has slightly increased when including macro variables.

Among the macro-level variables, the log of GDP per capita (PPP adjusted) was negatively correlated with political trust. As seen in [Figure 2](#), this is because there was less political trust in the CEB and SEE, where the log of GDP per capita is higher, compared to the CIS countries. According to Aghion et al.'s (2010) study, an explanation can be drawn that the low civic culture in the CIS region tends to lead to a greater demand for government intervention during economic hardships, consequently increasing the level of confidence in institutions.

Despite the impact of studies that have focused on core political trust and experience, the low level of R-squared implies the necessity of identifying more powerful explanatory variables. Political trust at the core level might be associated with government performance (Citrin & Stoker, 2018), measurement points (Nye, 1997), policy preferences (Alesina & Fuchs-Schündeln, 2007), personal experiences of corruption (Reisinger, 2017), economic hardships (Tormos, 2019), and partisanship and process (Citrin & Stoker, 2018). While experience under socialism serves as the key independent variable, future research should focus on identifying factors with more explanatory impact.

Similarly, just as with the core concepts, trust in institutions was also affected by the socio-economic environment rather than the amount of experience under the socialist regime. The subjective political and economic situation

showed a positive correlation with political trust, indicating that individuals who perceived their political and economic situation as better than in the past tended to have higher levels of political trust. In terms of individual characteristics, females showed more trust in institutions, while less confidence was revealed among more educated individuals. This suggests that gender and education levels can play a role in shaping individuals' trust in national institutions.

The results from [Table 4](#) show that general trust was not significantly correlated with the experience under socialism. However, other independent variables did show significant correlations with general trust. The subjective recognition of the political and economic situation, as well as education and health status, were found to be significantly and positively correlated with general trust. Ervasti et al. (2019) found evidence that general trust has not decreased in times of economic crisis in Greece while institutional trust is negatively affected. In the transition context, however, the empirical result indicates that general trust is positively correlated with economic and political perception.

The labor market experience is a dimension of everyday experience, and it can be one mechanism to evaluate the performance of government. Indeed, the individual job market experience during the transition was closely correlated with political and general trust ([Table 5](#)). The number of jobs as an employee was negatively correlated with trust in national institutions while the number of years as a self-employer showed a positive correlation with support toward the market economy and democracy. The self-employers were the new sector after the transition (Boeri & Terrell, 2002), and they showed political support for the new regime of democracy and market economy. The number of moves to a better job was not correlated with political trust but only for trust in the presidency, which appeared negative. Although one ever experienced voluntary job switches, he or she showed less support for the presidency. Moreover, if one ever experienced involuntary job switches, he or she showed less support for a market economy and the parliament. It was also revealed that those individuals expressed less general trust. The number of years in the state sector was positively correlated with the support for democracy, government, and general trust. The number of moves to a worse job and the number of years receiving unemployment benefits were not significantly correlated with political trust or general trust.

8. Conclusion

Political trust, also known as confidence in the government, is a highly intricate concept, characterized by its domain-specific and dynamic nature. By utilizing a comprehensive dataset from the transition countries, this research aimed to test two competing theories concerning the origin of political and general trust: socialization and institutional theories. The transition from the post-socialist countries involves two important dimensions: political transition from communism to democracy and economic transformation from a centrally-planned economy to a market economy aspect. While the level of transition is not quantifiable in comparison to non-transition economies,

it is noteworthy that perceptions among citizens in the post-socialist countries, where the survey respondents are located, have changed. The differences in socioeconomic institutions before and after the transition provided an opportunity to examine the formulation of political trust. This study contributes to existing literature by examining two layers of political trust as well as interpersonal trust, to assess the impact of the legacy of communism. Although this paper stands out due to its comprehensive exploration of 27 transition countries situated in the Central Eastern and Baltics (CEB), Southeastern Europe (SEE), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the constraint of this study is that it primarily deals with correlation rather than causality, given its reliance on a retrospective dataset.

This paper focused on the significance of labor market experience during the transition period. Citizens in the consolidation phase of the transition might have formed their level of political trust based on their success or challenges in participating in the labor market under the new institutional framework. Their firsthand experiences during the transition could have influenced their evaluation of government performance and consequently, their level of trust in the government. The inclusion of labor market experiences in the discussion of political trust was another valuable contribution of this research, shedding light on the process of forming political trust.

This research confirms the significance of the individual perceptions and experience under socialism in shaping political trust. Specifically, the study found a negative correlation between the experience under communism and the preference for the core concepts of democracy and a market economy. This suggests that individuals with more exposure to the communist rule were more resistant to accepting the new regime after the transition. Additionally, the number of years under communism showed a negative correlation with trust in national institutions, such as the presidency, government, parliament, and political parties. However, this relationship became insignificant when macroeconomic variables were included in the analysis. This indicates that the social and economic context represented by macroeconomic variables played a more substantial role in shaping political trust than the socialization theory.

Indeed, the investigation of labor market experience during the transition period provided valuable insights into how individuals evaluated government performance at the individual level. The result showed a significant correlation between the job market experience and political trust. Specifically, the number of years as self-employed and in state-sector employment were positively correlated with both political and general trust, indicating that individuals with longer tenure in these sectors tended to express higher levels of trust. On the other hand, the number of jobs as an employee, the number of moves to better jobs, and experiences of voluntary or involuntary job switches were negatively correlated with political trust, suggesting that these factors influenced political support and general trust negatively. This demonstrates that individual variations in work

Table 3. Political trust in national institutions

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	Presidency	Government	Parliament	Political Parties	Presidency	Government	Parliament	Political Parties	Presidency	Government	Parliament	Political Parties
Experience under socialism	-0.00390** (0.00186)	-0.00388** (0.00180)	-0.00377** (0.00176)	-0.00348** (0.00171)	-0.00262 (0.00188)	-0.00298* (0.00175)	-0.00340** (0.00172)	-0.00303* (0.00171)	-0.000942 (0.00191)	-0.0000337 (0.00178)	-0.0000148 (0.00174)	0.000788 (0.00173)
Political situation					0.272*** (0.00589)	0.322*** (0.00559)	0.277*** (0.00547)	0.213*** (0.00538)	0.265*** (0.00596)	0.312*** (0.00563)	0.264*** (0.00548)	0.199*** (0.00537)
Economic situation					0.132*** (0.00573)	0.162*** (0.00548)	0.152*** (0.00537)	0.136*** (0.00534)	0.128*** (0.00588)	0.152*** (0.00559)	0.138*** (0.00545)	0.121*** (0.00539)
log (GDP per capita PPP)									-0.602*** (0.0815)	-0.432*** (0.0795)	-0.499*** (0.0793)	-0.141* (0.0804)
Unemployment rate									-0.00652*** (0.00245)	-0.000301 (0.00224)	-0.00353 (0.00218)	0.00713*** (0.00216)
Inflation									0.00922*** (0.00240)	0.0134*** (0.00223)	0.0182*** (0.00218)	0.0226*** (0.00223)
Age	0.00353 (0.00367)	-0.00417 (0.00356)	-0.00569 (0.00352)	-0.00248 (0.00344)	0.00779** (0.00373)	0.00249 (0.00353)	0.00203 (0.00350)	0.00239 (0.00349)	0.00338 (0.00379)	-0.00439 (0.00360)	-0.00587* (0.00354)	-0.00550 (0.00352)
Age squared	0.0000704*** (0.0000230)	0.000129*** (0.0000224)	0.000127*** (0.0000221)	0.0000886*** (0.0000217)	0.0000137 (0.0000233)	0.0000527** (0.0000222)	0.0000473** (0.0000220)	0.0000351 (0.0000220)	0.0000437* (0.0000237)	0.0000976*** (0.0000226)	0.0000981*** (0.0000222)	0.0000814*** (0.0000222)
Female	0.0513*** (0.00928)	0.0273*** (0.00894)	0.0174** (0.00872)	-0.00202 (0.00856)	0.0543*** (0.00904)	0.0318*** (0.00840)	0.0193** (0.00832)	0.00115 (0.00838)	0.0589*** (0.00920)	0.0381*** (0.00857)	0.0261*** (0.00842)	0.00835 (0.00840)
Religion	0.0881*** (0.0187)	0.151*** (0.0174)	0.169*** (0.0167)	0.182*** (0.0159)	0.0630*** (0.0184)	0.115*** (0.0164)	0.138*** (0.0161)	0.151*** (0.0160)	0.0471** (0.0184)	0.0857*** (0.0163)	0.103*** (0.0160)	0.117*** (0.0158)
Education	0.00579 (0.00462)	-0.00452 (0.00445)	-0.0187*** (0.00432)	-0.0411*** (0.00420)	0.00152 (0.00453)	-0.00798* (0.00421)	-0.0208*** (0.00415)	-0.0433*** (0.00413)	0.00971** (0.00461)	0.00592 (0.00429)	-0.00497 (0.00420)	-0.0300*** (0.00415)
Health	0.121*** (0.00582)	0.135*** (0.00557)	0.130*** (0.00541)	0.123*** (0.00529)	0.0675*** (0.00575)	0.0658*** (0.00531)	0.0694*** (0.00522)	0.0699*** (0.00522)	0.0655*** (0.00583)	0.0608*** (0.00539)	0.0627*** (0.00527)	0.0616*** (0.00525)
country dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
N	73,772	75,496	74,712	73,382	68,428	70,072	69,476	68,398	66,801	67,484	66,970	66,134
R-sq	0.226	0.197	0.189	0.135	0.31	0.331	0.303	0.22	0.291	0.292	0.263	0.185

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

Table 4. General trust and experience under socialism.

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	trust	trust	trust
Experience under socialism	0.00204 (0.00166)	0.00134 (0.00173)	-0.00125 (0.00175)
Political situation		0.111*** (0.00525)	0.116*** (0.00529)
Economic situation		0.0720*** (0.00519)	0.0637*** (0.00531)
log (GDP per capita PPP)			-0.648*** (0.0810)
Unemployment rate			-0.0295*** (0.00219)
Inflation			-0.0178*** (0.00216)
Age	-0.00274 (0.00331)	0.000707 (0.00349)	0.00465 (0.00354)
Age squared	0.0000506** (0.0000207)	0.0000215 (0.0000219)	0.00000303 (0.0000222)
Female	0.00953 (0.00820)	0.0176** (0.00836)	0.0133 (0.00844)
Religion	0.0244 (0.0156)	-0.000222 (0.0160)	0.00941 (0.0161)
Education	0.0561*** (0.00404)	0.0562*** (0.00413)	0.0574*** (0.00418)
Health	0.141*** (0.00521)	0.113*** (0.00536)	0.111*** (0.00541)
country dummies	yes	yes	yes
year dummies	yes	yes	yes
N	75,655	69,598	66,998
R-sq	0.062	0.089	0.094

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01

history played a crucial role in shaping political support and general trust levels.

The results of this study show that the macroeconomic performance of the national government is important in constructing political trust, while socialization has an impact to some extent. Additionally, the findings indicate that governments should make efforts to secure employment during economically and socially turbulent times. In conclusion, the results of this study also provide practical policy implications for political entities and government organizations that are undergoing institutional changes or want to restore political trust weakened by economic vulnerabilities.

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Table 5. Labor market experience during the transition and political trust

	(1) Market economy	(2) Democracy	(3) Presidency	(4) Government	(5) Parliament	(6) Political Parties	(7) Trust
Number of Jobs as an employee	-0.00523 (0.00372) 22155 0.084	-0.00126 (0.00368) 22153 0.084	-0.0186* (0.00969) 20707 0.263	-0.0539*** (0.00870) 21369 0.234	-0.0540*** (0.00849) 21361 0.22	-0.0506*** (0.00817) 21020 0.144	0.00412 (0.00896) 21531 0.096
Number of years as a self- employed	0.00316*** (0.000978) 22149 0.084	0.00220** (0.000967) 22147 0.084	0.000596 (0.00265) 20702 0.263	0.00344 (0.00246) 21364 0.233	-0.00284 (0.00239) 21357 0.219	-0.00395 (0.00242) 21014 0.143	-0.00383 (0.00243) 21525 0.096
Number of moves to a better job	0.00162 (0.00456) 3194 0.089	0.00626 (0.00452) 3192 0.102	-0.0196* (0.0114) 3030 0.204	-0.0161 (0.0111) 3112 0.185	-0.0173 (0.0108) 3110 0.179	-0.00289 (0.0106) 3100 0.108	0.008 (0.0108) 3117 0.068
Number of moves to a worse job	-0.000148 (0.00200) 3274 0.065	-0.000790 (0.00195) 3274 0.09	-0.00663 (0.00549) 3120 0.201	-0.00598 (0.00490) 3183 0.198	-0.00769 (0.00470) 3177 0.172	-0.00645 (0.00452) 3167 0.098	0.00274 (0.00507) 3191 0.07
Ever experienced voluntary job switches	0.0164 (0.0102) 10475 0.089	0.00581 (0.0103) 10473 0.092	-0.0521* (0.0276) 9826 0.247	-0.0204 (0.0256) 10110 0.222	0.00956 (0.0247) 10115 0.208	-0.0165 (0.0241) 9984 0.137	0.01 (0.0254) 10225 0.09
Ever experienced involuntary job switches	-0.0224** (0.0103) 10283 0.089	-0.00372 (0.0103) 10281 0.092	0.0171 (0.0274) 9640 0.246	-0.0302 (0.0255) 9921 0.221	-0.0488** (0.0246) 9926 0.208	-0.0385 (0.0238) 9802 0.138	-0.0603** (0.0252) 10038 0.088
Number of years in state-sector employment	0.000503 (0.000586) 22155 0.084	0.00149*** (0.000577) 22153 0.084	0.00154 (0.00154) 20707 0.263	0.00251* (0.00144) 21369 0.233	0.00204 (0.00141) 21361 0.219	0.000513 (0.00138) 21020 0.143	0.023*** (0.00144) 21531 0.097
Number of years receiving unemployment benefits	-0.00333 (0.00367) 3174 0.086	-0.00415 (0.00378) 3173 0.104	-0.00654 (0.0112) 3025 0.155	0.000865 (0.0107) 3077 0.179	-0.00527 (0.0105) 3075 0.165	0.00865 (0.00984) 3071 0.093	0.000205 (0.00983) 3070 0.099

Note. Robust standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. Each regression is a separate regression, and only the coefficient of labor market experience is shown. Other independent variables include the perception of the political and economic situation, macroeconomic variables, and individual characteristics (age, gender, education, and health).



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