

# **Institutional Trust in Post-socialist States**

**-the effects of welfare state attitudes and civic  
morality -**

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# Identifying the field

- Former socialist countries:
  - Special and common historical background in the last decades (communist heritage, experiencing the transitional process)
  - Low level of trust and high level of corruption (Uslaner 2003)
  - High acceptance of state intervention (Voicu and Voicu 2011, Vučković Juroš 2012)

# Conceptual framework

- Attitudes towards the welfare state:
  - Redistribution made by the state
- Institutional trust
  - On societal level, the trust is operationalized as trust in institutions (Freitag and Bühlmann 2009:1537, Jensen and Svendsen 2011)
  - Institutional trust is conceptualized as an integrant part of social capital

# Connection between institutional trust and welfare state

- Which influences which?
  - I. Only a positive interconnection is proved, without a directional measure
  - II. Crowding-in and crowding-out debate => the welfare state influences the social capital
  - III. Social capital (or one of its components) influences the welfare state

- Accepting the II<sup>nd</sup> group of arguments:
- (H1) *The trust towards the welfare state institutions are influenced by the attitudes towards them (=WSI).*

# The moral legitimacy of the welfare state

- Two perspectives in the reviewed literature:
  - I. Morality of the officials: incorruptibility fosters the legitimacy of the welfare state
  - II. Morality of the citizens: if the welfare state redistribution is not transparent, it finds legitimacy in the uncivil or misbehaving character of a large number of citizens who are trying to avoid taxation and to claim unmerited benefits

- Concluding:
- (H2) *The trust in [welfare state] institutions depends on the moral level of the citizens.*

# Data

- EVS 2008 (round 4)
- Post-communist states: AL, BY, BA, BG, HR, CZ, EE, GE, DE-E, HU, RS-KM, LV, LT, MK, MD, ME, PL, RO, RU, RS, SK, SI, UA (AR and AZ left out)
- 23 countries; N = 34.498



# Dependent variable

- “Please look at this card and tell me, for each item listed, how much confidence you have in them: is it a great deal, quite a lot, not very much or none at all?” (EVS 2008, Q63A-R).
- 4 degree Likert scale: 1=a great deal, 4=not at all
- Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.909

- Factor Analysis – Principal Component Analysis  
KMO=0.923,  $\chi^2 = 194946$ ,  $df = 120$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ,  
Varimax Rotation with Kaiser nominalization
- I. Security and welfare institutions (or policy applying institutions): Health Care System, The Police, Social Security System, Educational System, Justice System, Civil Services
- II. International institutions: NATO, UN, EU
- III. Political institutions: Government, Political Parties, Parliament
- IV. Lobby making institutions: The Press, Labor Unions
- V. Traditional institutions: Church , Armed forces

# Independent variables I.

- Attitudes towards welfare state:
- “Individuals should take more responsibility for providing for themselves” and “The state should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for” (EVS 2008, Q58 A)
  - a 10-point scale
  - Individual=1, state=10

# Independent variables II.

- Morality of the citizens:
- “Please tell me for each of the following whether do you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card” (EVS 2008, Q68)
- The responses were marked in each case on a 10-point scale, where 1 means “never” and 10 means “always”
- 6 items (Cronbach’s Alpha= 0.835)
- Moral Legitimacy Index (MLI): arithmetical average

# Control variables

- Age, gender, educational level, settlement size, income, political views, religiosity, post-materialist value orientation

# Results

- Multilevel regression (2 models):
  - 1.st model: individual-state providing, MLI
  - 2.nd model: M1+control variables
- The low level of R squares of both models show the complexity of the social phenomenon of the institutional trust (M1= 0.05, M2= 0.23)
- For both models  $p < 0.001$

# Results (H1)

- In the former socialist countries, the more a person considers that the state should be responsible for providing, the less trust he/she has in the welfare state and security institutions.
- This result is in concordance with previous findings, as citizens who tend to rely more on the welfare state have probably higher expectation towards the state and more experience regarding their functionality.

# Results (H2)

- When a person is more disposed to seek personal benefits by an evasive behavior towards, for example, the redistributive system, starting from his/her own behavior probably tends to trust less in the welfare and security institutions.
- What's more, when a citizen succeeds in an evasive behavior, he/she gets the confirmation that state institutions do not work in a constraining way, so there is the possibility for personal interpretation of the norms, and as such the trust in the states institutions diminishes.



- The listed individual-level control variables increased the explanatory value of my model, but did not diminish the negative effect of the higher expectance toward the welfare state and the lack of moral attitude regarding personal informal benefits on the trust towards the welfare state and security institutions in the former socialist countries.

Thank you for your attention!