

# UNLOCKING THE LINKS BETWEEN POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING: INSIGHTS FROM THE 11<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY

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## Abstract:

The factors contributing to political and institutional trust in Europe are under-researched. This study aims to explore the links between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy by applying data from the 11th round of the European Social Survey, conducted in 2023–2024. The age of the participants ( $n = 22,039$ ) ranged from 15 to 90 ( $M = 51.88$ ,  $SD = 18.728$ ). The results reveal that in European countries, trust in politicians and political parties is consistently lower than trust in institutions such as the police, the legal system, and international organizations like the United Nations. The findings show that subjective well-being is significantly correlated with all forms of political and institutional trust, including trust in the country's parliament, legal system, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, and the United Nations, suggesting that institutional trust is a foundational component of societal well-being. However, the strongest correlation is observed between trust in the police and subjective well-being. Satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy show the strongest correlations with trust in the country's parliament and politicians, positing that economic conditions and governmental performance are the primary determinants of political trust. Structural equation modeling reveals that subjective well-being does not directly translate into political and institutional trust, but political and economic satisfaction acts as a critical mediating variable. High

levels of life satisfaction and happiness can enhance positive perceptions of economic and governmental performance, which in turn foster political and institutional trust.

**Keywords:** European Social Survey; political trust; institutional trust; subjective well-being; life satisfaction; economic satisfaction.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** Europos socialinis tyrimas; politinis pasitikėjimas; institucinis pasitikėjimas; subjektyvi savijauta; pasitenkinimas gyvenimu; ekonominis pasitenkinimas.

## 1. Introduction

Political and institutional trust are important concepts in political science and public administration, indicating citizens' confidence in their political systems and institutions (e.g., the country's parliament, the legal system, the police, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, or the United Nations) (Zmerli and Van Der Meer 2017). Political trust refers to citizens' confidence in their political system, including the belief that government officials and institutions will act in the public's best interest, and it encompasses trust in elected representatives, government bodies, and political processes. Political trust is critical for the stability and legitimacy of democratic systems, as high levels of political trust facilitate effective governance, compliance with laws, and citizens' engagement in political processes (Levi and Stoker 2000). Conversely, low political trust can lead to political instability, apathy, and even civil unrest. Previous research has indicated that political trust increases when: citizens perceive that the government is performing well in areas such as the economy, public services, and national security (Hetherington, 1998); governments are open about their actions and hold officials accountable (Grimmelikhuijsen et al. 2013); corruption is low (Anderson and Tverdova 2003); and citizens have positive early experiences with political institutions and processes (Easton 1975).

Institutional trust refers to the confidence citizens have in public administration and formal institutions, such as the police. This concept is broader than political trust, as it also encompasses non-political institutions. Other researchers have established links between institutional trust and the effective functioning of societal systems, compliance with regulations, cooperation between citizens and institutions, and social cohesion (Newton and Norris 2000). Further studies have revealed that trust in institutions increases if they: are perceived as effective, fair, and responsive (Van de Walle and Bouckaert 2003); treat all citizens equally and fairly (Rothstein and Stolle 2008); and possess high levels of interpersonal trust, which translate to trust in institutions (Putnam 2000). Additionally, historical legacies and cultural norms positively affect institutional trust (Inglehart 1997). It is important to explore the analysis of political and institutional trust in order to enhance the effectiveness of governance.

Previous research has suggested that political and institutional trust is linked to societal

well-being – namely, citizen's subjective well-being, which refers to various aspects of mental health including emotional stability, life satisfaction, and overall happiness – and that these links might be bi-directional.

Subjective well-being is broadly defined as individuals' self-reported assessments of their life satisfaction, happiness, and emotional experiences (Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh 2010). Regarding the impact of subjective well-being on political and institutional trust, it has been demonstrated that individuals with high psychological well-being are more likely to perceive institutions as fair and competent. Positive mental states enhance the cognitive bias toward perceiving external entities, including institutions, in a favorable light (Diener, Lucas and Oishi 2009). It has also been revealed that individuals with higher levels of subjective well-being tend to be more optimistic and hopeful, which extends to their views on political and institutional structures (Seligman 2011). Furthermore, it has been found that positive emotions lead to greater social trust, which might spill into trust in political and institutional structures (Fredrickson 2001). Emotional stability has also been positively associated with political trust, as stable individuals are less likely to perceive governmental actions as threatening or unfair (Tyler 2006). Studies have shown that low stress and anxiety levels are linked to a lower likelihood of skepticism toward institutions (Pressman and Cohen 2005). Additionally, trust in parliament and politicians positively affect individuals' private savings (Newton and Norris 2000; Facchini, Massin, and Brookes 2024).

Researchers have also demonstrated that higher psychological well-being is linked to increased civic engagement and participation in community activities, as engaged citizens feel a part of the governance process and perceive institutions as responsive to their needs (Helliwell and Putnam 2004). Moreover, happy individuals tend to believe in the integrity and competence of governmental structures (Helliwell and Putnam 2004). Studies have also shown that individuals with better mental health report higher levels of trust in governmental and other institutions, suggesting a significant link between mental health indicators and institutional trust across different countries (Bjørnskov 2007).

Regarding the impact of political and institutional trust on subjective well-being, it has been demonstrated that high levels of political and institutional trust contribute to a sense of security and predictability in society, which is essential for psychological well-being (Hudson 2006). Political and institutional trust enhance social cohesion, which is linked to improved mental health outcomes (Helliwell and Putnam 2004). People that believe in a just world are also more likely to perceive the political system as just (Hadarics 2024). When individuals believe that institutions are fair and just, they demonstrate higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of psychological distress (Tyler 2006). Trust might reduce uncertainty about the reliability of institutions, which, consequently, can lower stress levels and enhance overall well-being (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994). Trust in institutions is linked to civic engagement, a greater sense of purpose, and well-being (Putnam 2000). Additionally, higher institutional trust might lead to better compliance with public

policies and utilization of public services, which impact individual well-being (Sønderskov and Dinesen 2014).

Prior studies have indicated that the link between political and institutional trust and subjective well-being might be bidirectional, and could be based on several theoretical perspectives. Based on the theory of cognitive dissonance, individuals strive for cognitive consistency, and if they are generally satisfied with their lives, they seek consistency by maintaining positive views towards various entities, including political and institutional ones (Festinger 1957). Based on the theory of attribution, individuals in a positive psychological state are more likely to attribute benevolent intentions to others, including institutions, and this positive attribution might enhance trust (Weiner 1985). Based on the theory of solidarity, when individuals feel connected to a society (feelings of social cohesion and belonging might be a sign of well-being), they are more likely to trust its institutions (Durkheim 1897). Sohlberg, Agerberg, and Esaïssonet (2024) described the reduction of institutional and interpersonal trust within asylum seekers as processing times increased.

Despite the abundance of studies demonstrating the possibility of links between political and institutional trust and subjective well-being, some researchers suggest that these links are not direct, and might be mediated by various factors. This means that there may be non-subjective well-being variables strongly related to political and institutional trust. For example, some studies indicate that positive economic indicators such as low unemployment, high GDP growth, and stable inflation rates bolster trust in political institutions (Rothstein and Stolle 2008), and that economic mismanagement can erode trust (Anderson and Guillory 1997). Furthermore, political trust significantly declines with increased economic inequality (Bienstamen, Hense and Gangl 2024).

Some research suggests that satisfaction with the national government is closely linked to perceived governmental performance (Norris 1999). This leads to higher acceptance of policy outcomes, even if they are not entirely favorable to all citizens, as trust engenders a belief in the government's overall levels of competence and fairness (Levi and Stoker 2000). High levels of political trust contribute to democratic stability, reduce the likelihood of political unrest, and increase satisfaction with democracy (Newton 2001). Trust in institutions promotes civic engagement (Dalton 2004), and trust is strengthened when institutions are seen as acting with integrity, transparency, and accountability (Mishler and Rose 2001). Open and transparent communication from political institutions as well as constructive media coverage of governmental actions and economic performance helps build trust and enhances satisfaction (Cook, Hardin, and Levi 2005; Norris 2011). Trust in institutions fosters social cohesion, which positively impacts satisfaction with economic conditions, government, and democracy (Putnam 2000).

These findings on the variables linked to political and institutional trust are in line with several theoretical perspectives. Based on performance theory, citizens' trust in institutions is significantly impacted by the perceived performance of those institutions: when they perform well, trust in institutions tends to be higher, and vice versa (Hetherington 1998).

Based on legitimacy theory, when citizens trust their government, they are more likely to view its actions as legitimate and are satisfied with its performance (Easton 1975).

Based on the analysis of previous studies, it was hypothesized that satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the state is a mediating factor in the link between political and institutional trust and subjective well-being. This study aimed to explore the links between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the state. By leveraging subjective well-being data, the researchers sought to uncover how governance and economic policies affect individuals’ lives, offering perspectives on the efficacy and outcomes of such policies (Helliwell and Barrington-Leigh 2010). Regardless of the abundance of prior research on the links between political and institutional trust and subjective well-being and other variables, the factors that most strongly contribute to political and institutional trust in Europe today are under-researched.

2. Methodology

This study applied data from the 11th round of the European Social Survey (hereinafter ESS 11), which was a multi-national, cross-sectional survey conducted in 2023–2024. The ESS intends to examine and depict the development and maintenance of social structures, conditions, and attitudes across Europe and to provide an understanding of the landscape in Europe’s social, political, and ethical dimensions. The survey includes questions on a variety of core topics repeated from previous rounds of the survey, along with two modules developed for ESS 11 specifically. These are “Gender in Contemporary Europe: Rethinking Equality and the Backlash” and “Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants” (Sikt – Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research., 2024). The data were retrieved from the ESS 11 database in August 2024 at <https://doi.org/10.21338/ess11-2023>, and details of the sample are depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Number of participants in total, by country, and by gender

	Total		Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Austria	2,354	10.6	993	9.7	1361	11.4
Switzerland	1,384	6.2	697	6.8	687	5.8
Germany	2,420	10.9	1214	11.8	1206	10.1
Finland	1,563	7.0	770	7.5	793	6.7
United Kingdom	1,684	7.6	824	8.0	860	7.2
Croatia	1,563	7.0	711	6.9	852	7.1

Hungary	2,118	9.5	835	8.1	1283	10.8
Ireland	2,017	9.1	906	8.8	1111	9.3
Lithuania	1,365	6.2	526	5.1	839	7.0
Netherlands	1,695	7.6	843	8.2	852	7.1
Norway	1,337	6.0	673	6.6	664	5.6
Slovenia	1,248	5.6	608	5.9	640	5.4
Slovakia	1,442	6.5	671	6.5	771	6.5
Total	22,190	100.0	10,271	100.0	11,919	100.0

The age of the participants ( $n = 22,190$ ) ranged from 15 to 90, and the mean age in the total sample was 51.88 ( $SD = 18.728$ ). The interviews lasted roughly one hour, were administered in local languages, and were held face-to-face, with computer assistance, or on paper. Some variant of probability sampling (simple, stratified, or multistage) was used to collect the data.

Several parts of the modules of ESS 11 were used to analyze the links between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the state.

*Political and institutional trust* was assessed using items from section B, via the following instruction: "Using this card, please tell me how much you trust each of the institutions: the country's parliament, the legal system, the police, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, the United Nations." The respondents had to choose an answer on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust). Cronbach's alpha for these 7 items in the total study sample was 0.912.

*Subjective well-being* was assessed using one item from section B, via the following instruction: "All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole nowadays?" The respondents were asked to choose one of the answers on a 10-point Likert scale from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Additionally, one item from section C was applied, with the following instruction: "Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?" The respondents were asked to choose one of the answers on a 10-point Likert scale from 0 (extremely unhappy) to 10 (extremely happy). Cronbach's alpha for these 2 items in the total study sample was 0.813.

*Political and economic satisfaction* (satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the state) was assessed using three items from section B, via the following instruction: "On the whole how satisfied are you with the present state of the economy in the country/the way the government is doing its job/the way democracy works in the country." The respondents were asked to choose one of the answers on a 10-point Likert scale from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Cronbach's alpha for these 3 items in the total study sample was 0.845.

SPSS v.26.0 and AMOS v.26.0 software were used to calculate descriptives and Pearson correlations, and to perform structural equation modeling (SEM). In SEM, model fit was evaluated based on the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis’s coefficient (TLI), the normed fit index (NFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA).

### 3. Results

To gain some insights into the data, several key descriptive statistics were computed in the preliminary analysis: means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis (Table 2). Based on the skewness and kurtosis results ranging within  $\pm 2$ , it was considered that the data were distributed normally.

**Table 2.** Means, standard deviations, and data distribution

Variables	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Trust in the country’s parliament	21,817	4.86	2.680	–.231	–.806
Trust in the legal system	21,833	5.90	2.627	–.558	–.484
Trust in the police	22,037	6.76	2.373	–.880	.322
Trust in politicians	21,883	4.04	2.500	–.035	–.848
Trust in political parties	21,773	4.04	2.441	–.037	–.800
Trust in the European Parliament	20,880	4.76	2.551	–.273	–.685
Trust in the United Nations	20,655	5.33	2.571	–.442	–.511
Satisfaction with life as a whole	22,049	7.41	1.953	–1.080	1.265
Happiness	22,120	7.63	1.776	–1.133	1.701
Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in the country	21,868	4.90	2.408	–.253	–.635
Satisfaction with the national government	21,666	4.32	2.553	–.065	–.843
Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country	21,562	5.53	2.582	–.426	–.612

The preliminary analysis revealed that in European countries, trust in politicians and political parties is lower compared to trust in the police, the legal system, or the United Nations. To explore the links between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy, correlation analysis was performed on the study variables (Table 3).

Table 3. Pearson correlations of the study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Trust in the country's parliament	1										
	21,817										
2. Trust in the legal system	.685"	1									
	21,604	21,833									
3. Trust in the police	.519"	.672"	1								
	21,728	21,756	22,037								
4. Trust in politicians	.772"	.615"	.498"	1							
	21,669	21,638	21,796	21,883							
5. Trust in political parties	.743"	.598"	.473"	.877"	1						
	21,579	21,542	21,688	21,719	21,773						
6. Trust in the European Parliament	.575"	.510"	.423"	.609"	.625"	1					
	20,728	20,716	20,811	20,768	20,722	20,880					
7. Trust in the United Nations	.514"	.497"	.440"	.526"	.542"	.758"	1				
	20,499	20,492	20,584	20,536	20,473	20,180	20,655				
8. Satisfaction with life as a whole	.246"	.288"	.312"	.229"	.217"	.190"	.188"	1			
	21,688	21,699	21,902	21,752	21,646	20,763	20,546	22,049			
9. Happiness	.206"	.241"	.275"	.195"	.188"	.171"	.171"	.687"	1		
	21,751	21,767	21,971	21,816	21,708	20,819	20,599	22,004	22,120		
10. Satisfaction with the present state of the economy in country	.532"	.446"	.376"	.515"	.494"	.367"	.320"	.359"	.284"	1	
	21,563	21,568	21,737	21,616	21,517	20,686	20,464	21,756	21,806	21,868	
11. Satisfaction with the national government	.624"	.448"	.379"	.629"	.589"	.436"	.370"	.248"	.202"	.648"	1
	21,443	21,415	21,558	21,497	21,404	20,563	20,349	21,551	21,606	21,471	21,666
12. Satisfaction with the way democracy works in the country	.645"	.567"	.464"	.604"	.580"	.474"	.442"	.312"	.249"	.613"	.676"
	21,317	21,324	21,453	21,370	21,281	20,520	20,341	21,451	21,499	21,355	21,265

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.



Correlation analysis showed that political and institutional trust was positively linked to subjective well-being (life satisfaction and happiness) ( $p < 0.01$ ). The strongest correlation was observed between subjective well-being (life satisfaction/happiness) and trust in the police ( $p < 0.01$ ). Generally, subjective well-being was significantly linked to all of the forms of political and economic trust surveyed, including trust in the country’s parliament, the legal system, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, and the United Nations ( $p < 0.01$ ). Satisfaction with the economy/national government/democracy in the country was most strongly correlated with trust in the country’s parliament and politicians ( $p < 0.01$ ), although the findings showed significant positive links with other forms of political and institutional trust ( $p < 0.01$ ). Similarly, satisfaction with the economy/national government/democracy in the country was significantly linked to subjective well-being, encompassing life satisfaction and happiness ( $p < 0.01$ ). Overall, the preliminary analysis showed that political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy were interlinked variables.

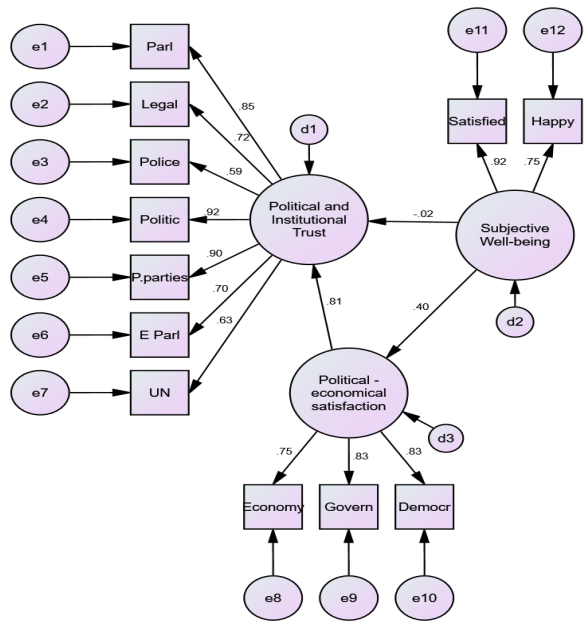
To explore the specifics and various aspects of the relationships between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the state, SEM analysis – which offers several advantages, including the assessment of the significance of the theoretical structural connections between the constructs – was conducted. The estimates of the model of associations are displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Scalar estimates of the model of associations between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy

Regression			B	S.E.	C.R.	$\beta$	p
Subjective well-being	→	Political and economic satisfaction	.480	.011	43.157	.403	<0.001
Political and economic satisfaction	→	Political and institutional trust	.616	.008	81.061	.814	<0.001
Subjective well-being	→	Political and institutional trust	-.019	.005	-3.603	-.022	<0.001
Subjective well-being	→	Satisfied with life	1.000			.921	
Subjective well-being	→	Happy	.738	.013	56.315	.747	<0.001
Political and economic satisfaction	→	Satisfied with democracy	1.000			.829	
Political and economic satisfaction	→	Satisfied with government	.985	.007	132.608	.826	<0.001
Political and economic satisfaction	→	Satisfied with economy	.847	.007	119.070	.754	<0.001

Regression			B	S.E.	C.R.	β	p
Political and institu- tional trust	→	Satisfied with United Nations	1.000			.630	
Political and institu- tional trust	→	Satisfied with European Parliament	1.100	.013	87.086	.700	<0.001
Political and institu- tional trust	→	Satisfied with political parties	1.356	.013	105.162	.901	<0.001
Political and institu- tional trust	→	Satisfied with politicians	1.412	.013	106.292	.916	<0.001
Political and institu- tional trust	→	Satisfied with police	.867	.011	77.106	.592	<0.001
Political and institu- tional trust	→	Satisfied with legal system	1.172	.013	90.089	.723	<0.001

The standardized results of the model are presented in Figure 1. These findings revealed that the fit of the model was acceptable:  $\chi^2 = 21929.304$ ; Df = 51; CFI = 0.875; TLI = 0.809; NFI = 0.875; RMSEA = 0.139 [0.137–0.141].



**Figure 1.** Standardized results of the model of associations between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the country

SEM analysis revealed the specifics of the links between latent variables of subjective well-being, political and economic satisfaction, and political and institutional trust. The findings indicated that subjective well-being played no significant role in political and institutional trust compared to the impact of political and economic satisfaction. However, satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy in the country could be considered to have a mediating effect on political and institutional trust. The findings showed that subjective well-being was linked to political and economic satisfaction, which, in turn, was strongly linked to political and institutional trust.

#### 4. Discussion

This study intended to examine the predictors of political and institutional trust, exploring the links between political and institutional trust, subjective well-being, and satisfaction with the economy, the national government, and democracy in the state. This aim was pursued based on several theoretical perspectives and previous studies. The insights, grounded in data from more than 22,000 respondents to ESS 11, are as follows.

Firstly, the results revealed that trust in politicians and political parties was lower than trust in institutions like the police, the legal system, or international bodies such as the United Nations. This observation aligns with existing literature suggesting a general skepticism toward political actors compared to more consistent trust in law enforcement and judicial institutions (Newton 2001; Norris 2011). Next, the correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between political and institutional trust and subjective well-being, defined as life satisfaction and happiness. A most robust correlation was found between subjective well-being and trust in the police. This finding suggests that trust in institutions perceived as protective and just is directly linked to subjective well-being. Previous research supports this, indicating that trust in the police might be associated with a sense of security, which is crucial for life satisfaction (Helliwell and Putnam 2004). Moreover, subjective well-being significantly correlated with all surveyed forms of political and institutional trust, including trust in the country's parliament, the legal system, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, and the United Nations. This link suggests that overall confidence in political and institutional frameworks contributes to subjective well-being and supports the idea that institutional trust forms a foundational element of societal well-being (Newton and Zmerli 2011). Furthermore, satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy was most strongly correlated with trust in the country's parliament and politicians. This relationship underscores the critical role of economic performance and governmental effectiveness in fostering political trust. Citizens' perceptions of economic stability and democratic integrity appear to significantly shape their trust in political institutions. This finding aligns with the political economy perspective, which posits that economic conditions and governmental performance are primary

determinants of political trust (Mishler and Rose 2001).

The SEM analysis showed that while subjective well-being is linked to political and economic satisfaction, it does not directly translate into political and institutional trust. Instead, political and economic satisfaction emerged as a critical mediating variable. This mediating role implies that individuals' overall satisfaction with economic conditions, governmental performance, and democratic processes significantly influences trust in political and institutional frameworks, and this mediation effect is consistent with theories suggesting that economic performance and governmental effectiveness serve as benchmarks through which individuals assess the trustworthiness of political institutions (Inglehart 1997). When people are satisfied with the economic and political status quo, they are more likely to develop and sustain trust in the institutions governing them.

Although subjective well-being alone does not have a significant direct impact on political and institutional trust, it influences trust indirectly through its effect on political and economic satisfaction. This finding highlights the complex interplay between subjective well-being and broader socio-political evaluations. High levels of life satisfaction and happiness can enhance positive perceptions of economic and governmental performance, which in turn foster trust in political institutions, as suggested by previous research.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of improving economic conditions and governmental performance to increase political and institutional trust. Policies aimed at economic stability, transparency in governance, and strengthening democratic processes can significantly contribute to higher levels of institutional trust. Governments and institutions need to be transparent, fair, and responsive to build and maintain trust, and this can involve implementing policies that promote accountability, reduce corruption, and ensure the equitable treatment of all citizens (Rothstein and Stolle 2008). Moreover, fostering environments that enhance subjective well-being can indirectly reinforce political trust through improved perceptions of economic and political satisfaction. Programs that facilitate citizens' involvement in decision-making processes can enhance both trust and well-being (Helliwell and Putnam 2004).

Future research could explore the causal pathways between subjective well-being, economic and political satisfaction, and political and institutional trust. Longitudinal studies could provide insights into how changes in one domain affect the others over time. Additionally, investigating cultural and regional differences within Europe could offer a more comprehensive understanding of these relationships.

## 5. Conclusions

1. This study confirms that in European countries, trust in politicians and political parties is consistently lower than trust in institutions. There are significant positive relationships between political and institutional trust and subjective well-being,

and the strongest correlation is observed between trust in the police and subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is significantly correlated with all forms of political and institutional trust, including trust in the country's parliament, legal system, politicians, political parties, the European Parliament, and the United Nations, suggesting that institutional trust is a foundational component of societal well-being. Satisfaction with the economy, national government, and democracy show the strongest correlations with trust in the country's parliament and politicians, positing that economic conditions and governmental performance are primary determinants of political trust.

2. SEM analysis revealed that subjective well-being does not directly translate into political and institutional trust. Instead, political and economic satisfaction acts as a critical mediating variable. High levels of life satisfaction and happiness can enhance positive perceptions of economic and governmental performance, which in turn foster trust in political institutions.
3. In conclusion, this study revealed that political and economic satisfaction play a pivotal mediating role, emphasizing the need for effective new public governance and economic management to foster citizens' trust. The role of subjective well-being and its indirect pathway through political and economic satisfaction underscores the complexity of building and sustaining political and institutional trust. Future research should investigate the causal pathways between subjective well-being, economic and political satisfaction, and political and institutional trust. Examining political figures' perceptions of trust and its impact on public decision-making could provide valuable insights (Weinberg 2023). Therefore, presumably, political and institutional trust is a foundational element of a healthy society, and fostering trust in political and institutional frameworks can lead to more stable, cohesive, and prosperous communities.

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## POLITINIO IR INSTITUCINIO PASITIKĖJIMO IR SUBJEKTYVIOS GEROVĖS RYŠIŲ ANALIZĖ: 11-OJO EUROPOS SOCIALINIO TYRIMO ETAPO IŽVALGOS

Anotacija. Veiksniai, skatinantys politinį ir institucinį pasitikėjimą Europa, ištirti nepakankamai. Šiuo tyrimu siekiama ištirti sąsajas tarp politinio ir institucinio pasitikėjimo, subjektyvios gerovės ir pasitenkinimo ekonomika, nacionaline valdžia ir demokratija. Šiame tyrime taikyti 11-ojo Europos socialinio tyrimo etapo (2023–2024 m.) duomenys. Dalyvių amžius ( $n = 22039$ ) svyravo nuo 15 iki 90 metų ( $M = 51,88$ ,  $SD = 18,728$ ). Rezultatai atskleidė, kad Europos šalyse pasitikėjimas politikais ir politinėmis partijomis yra nuolat žemesnis nei pasitikėjimas tokiomis institucijomis kaip policija, teisinė sistema ir tarptautinės organizacijos, pavyzdžiui, Jungtinės Tautos. Išvados parodė, kad subjektyvi gerovė reikšmingai koreliuoja su visų formų politiniu ir instituciniu pasitikėjimu, taip pat pasitikėjimu šalies parlamentu, teisine sistema, politikais, politinėmis partijomis, Europos Parlamentu ir Jungtinėmis Tautomis. Tai rodo, kad institucinis pasitikėjimas yra pagrindinis visuomenės gerovės komponentas. Tačiau stipriausia koreliacija nustatyta tarp pasitikėjimo policija ir subjektyvios gerovės. Pasitenkinimas ekonomika, nacionaline valdžia ir demokratija atskleidžia stipriausias koreliacijas su pasitikėjimu šalies parlamentu ir politikais. Tai reiškia, kad ekonominės sąlygos ir vyriausybės veikla yra pagrindiniai politinio pasitikėjimo veiksniai. Struktūrinių lygčių modeliavimo (SEM) analizė atskleidė, kad subjektyvi gerovė tiesiogiai neperauga į politinį ir institucinį pasitikėjimą, tačiau politinis ir ekonominis pasitenkinimas veikia kaip kritinis tarpininkavimo kintamasis. Aukštas pasitenkinimo gyvenimu ir laimės lygis gali sustiprinti teigiamą ekonomikos ir vyriausybės veiklos suvokimą, tai savo ruožtu skatina politinį ir institucinį pasitikėjimą.

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