

## Measuring Political Trust Across Time and Space

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The level of trust citizens have in their political system has been the object of extensive academic and public debate. The dominant view is that contemporary democracies are experiencing a large-scale crisis of confidence. In 2008, only 30 per cent of the Americans trusted their government, while this was more than 60 per cent in the sixties (American National Election Studies 1958-2008)<sup>i</sup>. However, a number of studies have provided evidence that does not support, and which even contradicts this pessimistic proposition (Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Van de Walle *et al.* 2008; Hooghe and Wilkenfeld 2008). In effect, while there is evidence of a structural trend towards lower political trust since the 1960s in the United States, there exists no conclusive evidence of a general decline in political trust in Europe (Lipset and Scheinder 1983; Catterberg and Moreno 2003; Van de Walle *et al.* 2008). Besides the distinct cross-national trends, the inconsistent findings are also often due to the operationalisation of political trust. A range of measurements have been used, including support for particular policies, evaluations of the politicians in office, trust in political institutions and trust in the political system.

Citizens' trust can relate to distinct objects of the political system: its current authorities, the political institutions, the values and principles or the political community (Easton 1965b; Dalton 2004). In empirical research, this issue is often not taken into account: trust in one object is measured and labelled 'political trust' or one measure includes trust in several objects. Nonetheless, distrust in the political system has different implications than distrust in the politicians in office (Anderson *et al.* 2005). A critical attitude towards the politicians in office is generally considered to be a normal and healthy part of a democracy. Citizens can easily 'throw the rascals out' and replace them with politicians they perceive trustworthy by means of elections (Klingemann and Fuchs 1995, 2-5; Anderson *et al.* 2005). However, citizens should be able to put (some) trust in the democratic procedures and institutions. This kind of trust, which relates to Easton's concept of *diffuse support*, acts as a reservoir of support on which a system can fall back when *specific support* for a particular policy measure

or prime minister is lacking (Easton 1965b). Moreover, it has been argued that trust in the democratic procedures and institutions also influences the willingness of citizens to commit public resources to public policy ends, to accept and comply with political decisions and to engage in politics (Hetherington 2005; Dalton 2004; Marien and Hooghe 2011).

The nature of trust in political institutions has also been the topic of debate. Institutional trust has been conceptualised and studied as both a one-dimensional and a multidimensional attitude. On the one hand it has been argued that citizens use different criteria to evaluate the trustworthiness of different institutions (Fisher *et al.* 2010; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995). As citizens develop distinct trust judgements, one should not simply add these different trust judgments into one measurement scale. On the other hand institutions do not operate in a vacuum but they are all part of a political system with a particular prevailing political culture (Almond and Verba 1963). As a result, we could expect that citizens develop one comprehensive attitude 'trust in political institutions' which is shaped by the political culture of their country.

Our understanding of political trust is shaped to a large extent by research conducted on the United States. Comparative research has confirmed, but also modified these research results (Bélanger and Nadeau 2005). Cross-national research has enabled researchers to investigate the generalisability of trends and theories. However, this kind of research entails methodological problems we do not encounter in single country studies. In particular, cultural differences in the interpretations of questions or words can emerge. Trust in the political system in an authoritarian country is likely to have a different meaning than trust in a democratic political system. But even among democracies, every country has its own language, culture and political system. While this can invalidate research results - apples are compared to oranges - most scholars ignore these problems.

In this chapter, I will address several problems related to the measurement of political trust. The chapter begins with a description of frequently used measurements of political trust and the problems with these. In the second section, the nature of institutional trust is investigated. Do citizens have one comprehensive attitude towards all political institutions or is institutional trust multidimensional? Subsequently, the issue of cross-cultural equivalence is addressed, i.e. I test whether trust in political institutions can be measured in a similar way across different countries. Subsequently, an overview of levels of trust in different political

institutions is provided. Finally, recent trends in trust in political institutions and trust in the current government are presented.

### Measuring political trust

A frequently used data source to analyse political trust is the **American National Elections Studies**. This study has questioned respondents' political trust from the 1960s to the present day. The questions are paraphrased here: *do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right; does the government waste a lot of money; is the government run by a few big interests looking out for themselves; are most politicians crooked; do politicians know what they are doing?* However, the validity of these questions was already being criticised in 1974. Particularly noteworthy is the discussion between Arthur Miller and Jack Citrin in the *American Political Sciences Review* of 1974. Using ANES data, **Arthur Miller argued that trust in the political system decreased sharply during the past years, Citrin refuted this conclusion arguing that Miller was measuring trust in the current incumbents rather than trust in the political system (Citrin 1974; Miller 1974).** At present, there is still substantial debate on the trends in political trust, its causes and consequences due to disagreement about the measurement of political trust. Pippa Norris (1999), for example, states that the extensive literature on decreasing political trust is based on an erroneous interpretation of the data at hand.

Besides these five ANES questions, scholars have also attempted to measure citizens' political trust by asking respondents how satisfied they are '*with the way democracy is working in [their country]*'. Political trust is often measured using this wording of the question, especially in **European empirical studies (e.g. in the Eurobarometer surveys, the European Value Studies and the European Social Survey).** However, this measurement also conflates trust in the current authorities and trust in the principles of a political system. It is not clear whether this survey question taps a more generalised political trust judgment, a more specific judgment of the trustworthiness of the politicians in office or a respondent's state of mind at the moment. Still other empirical work studies political trust by focusing on citizens' trust in different political institutions. Citizens are asked how much they trust their country's parliament, government, political parties, the legal system, the police and so forth. Although this question is designed to tap into a more generalised form of political trust, this

measurement also cannot rule out what respondents think about the people running these institutions when answering this question.

However, we can question whether it is possible at all to fully disentangle trust in the current authorities and trust in the political system and its institutions using survey questions. Some scholars state that a 'referent' is needed to obtain a valid measurement (Aberbach 1969). It is argued that citizens cannot assess the trustworthiness of political institutions without thinking about its current incumbents. Moreover, both forms of trust are clearly related. Citizens that have no trust at all in the political system will also distrust the current incumbents, and strong distrust in the politicians in office can spill over to trust evaluations of the institutions and the political system. This last measurement focuses on one part of the broader concept of political trust, i.e. trust in the political institutions. It does not assess trust in the political system as a whole. Nor does it assess trust in the democratic principles or values, nor in particular political leaders. The advantage of studying trust in one specific part of the political system is that it is clear what is being measured. The drawback is that only one part of the broader concept of political trust is measured. However, as political institutions play an important role in shaping a democratic society, we can assume that citizens' trust in these institutions is strongly related to citizens' evaluation of how they perceive a political system is performing.

Therefore, trust in political institutions is the focus of this chapter. Apart from these theoretical reasons, data on trust in political institutions in more than 30 European countries is available in the ESS datasets. In this chapter, I will not study citizens' trust in the principles or values of a democracy. The latter is (and remains) at a very high level within democracies. Democracy is considered among the overall majority of its citizens as the best system to govern a society (Klingemann 1999, 45). Whether these democratic principles and values are upheld in a democracy is an interesting question, but beyond the scope of this study. Trust in individual politicians, such as the current ministers or party leaders, is also interesting to investigate, but will not be my main focus, as distrust in the current authorities is generally considered to be a normal practice in a democracy. Nevertheless, some figures on satisfaction with the current government in several European countries will be presented at the end of the chapter.

The results of the **European Social Survey datasets 2002-2009 will be presented** (Jowell *et al.* 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009). These datasets provide extensive and up-to-date information on trust

in political institutions and, to date, four waves of high-quality survey data are already available. The data were collected biannually between 2002 and 2009 by means of uniform face-to-face interviews among representative samples of the population of more than 30 European countries. Particular attention has been paid to the operationalisation of political trust, and a measurement report by the ESS researchers on the quality of the 'trust in political institutions' already reveals that the question has a high level of validity and reliability<sup>ii</sup>. The question on trust in political institutions used in ESS is phrased as follows:

*'Using this card, please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the institutions I read out. 0 means you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust'*

- Country's Parliament

- The legal system

- The police

- Political parties (from second ESS wave onwards)

- Politicians

### **Trust in political institutions: one theoretical concept?**

Institutional trust can be defined as the expectation that political institutions operate according to fair rules even in the absence of constant scrutiny. Trust in political institutions has been studied as a one-dimensional as well as a multidimensional concept. On the one hand, it has been argued that citizens use different criteria to evaluate the trustworthiness of different institutions (Fisher *et al.* 2010). As citizens develop distinct trust judgements, one should not simply add these different trust judgments into one scale of measurement. On the other hand, institutions do not operate in a vacuum; they are all part of a political system with a particular political culture (Almond & Verba 1963). As a result, we can expect that citizens' judgements of the performance of various political institutions are strongly related to each other (Hooghe *forthcoming*). Consequently, citizens are likely to develop one comprehensive attitude of 'trust in political institutions', which is shaped by the political culture of their country. This general attitude influences their judgment of the trustworthiness of various institutions. By means of factor analysis, it is tested whether one underlying construct of 'institutional trust' exists which explains a set of trust judgments. This underlying construct cannot be observed

directly - as with all latent variables - but its existence is inferred from the way it influences variables that can be observed (Brown 2006).

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) explores the variation and co-variation among the trust judgements of the different political institutions and identifies the number and nature of latent variable(s) that account for this variation (Brown 2006). I hypothesise that citizens' trust in political institutions is shaped by their general orientation towards the political system. Consequently, a one-factor measurement model is tested, whereby the observed measures of trust in the country's parliament, trust in the political parties, trust in the legal system, trust in the police and trust in politicians are conjectured to load on one latent factor, i.e. 'trust in political institutions'. The measurement model was estimated using the maximum likelihood method. Not all institutions were questioned in the first wave of ESS (2002-2003), therefore, the analyses were only performed on wave 2 (2004-2005), wave 3 (2006-2007) and wave 4 (2008-2009)<sup>iii</sup>. Given that the results are very similar, only the results of the last wave are discussed in this section. The results of the other waves can be found in the appendix to this chapter.

After specifying the measurement model, the model is estimated and evaluated. To evaluate the fitted CFA solution, one has to study the overall goodness of fit, analyse specific points of ill-fit and look into the direction, magnitude and significance of the parameters. Several tests have been developed to evaluate whether the model provides a good description of the data. The indices of fit that I will use are the  $\chi^2$ , RMSEA and CFI. I will report the  $\chi^2$  of the model as this is a classic goodness-of-fit measure. However, given the large sample that is used in the analyses,  $\chi^2$  is a poor measure as it generally rejects solutions based on a large  $n$  (Brown 2006; Reeskens & Hooghe 2008, 523). A better measure, and which is widely used, is the Root Square Mean approximation (RMSEA) as '*it assesses the extent to which a model fits reasonably well in the population (as opposed to testing whether the model holds exactly in the population; cf.  $\chi^2$ )*' (Brown 2006, 83). A reasonably good fit is operationalised as a RMSEA close to 0.06 or below (Hu & Bentler 1999). Finally, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) will be used to evaluate the fitted CFA solution. The CFI ranges between 0 and 1. A reasonably good fit is operationalised by values that are close to 0.95 or greater. These cut-off criteria are reported by Brown (2006) based on several simulation studies of Hu and Bentler (1999).

The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis are visualised in Figure 1. The goodness-of-fit measures indicate that the estimated model provides a good approximation to reality. Institutional trust can be conceptualised as a one-dimensional attitude. The factor loadings reproduce the relation between institutional trust and the different trust judgments. A factor loading of '1' indicates a perfect relationship, while a value of '0' depicts that there is no relationship between the observed measure and the latent concept. Besides the variance accounted for by the latent concept, every measure also has its unique variance, which is labelled as the error variance. In table 1 additional estimates of the parameters of the confirmatory factor analysis are reported. The test statistic tests whether there is a relationship between latent concept and observed measure, i.e. whether the factor loading is significantly different from '0'. The last column of table 1 includes estimates of the explained variance of the observed measure, which can be considered as an indicator for its reliability. For instance, 80 per cent of the variance in trust in parliament can be accounted for by respondents' institutional trust. The remaining 20 per cent cannot be explained by institutional trust, but is 'unique variance'.

We can conclude that all items contribute significantly to the measurement of this latent concept. In effect, every factor loading is clearly above 0.30, i.e. the value that is commonly used to define a 'salient' factor loading (Brown 2006, 130). The contribution of trust in the police to the measurement of institutional trust is slightly smaller. In general, the factor loadings of the observed measures of trust in implementing institutions are lower than the factor loadings of trust in the institutions on the representational side of the political system. In summary, the measurement model indicates that all observed measures are intercorrelated because they are influenced by the same underlying construct, i.e. 'trust in political institutions'. For instance, trust in police is related to trust in parliament because they are both influenced by respondents' general attitude of 'trust in political institutions'.

However, there is some covariance between the two implementing institutions, the police and the legal system, due to sources other than this general attitude of 'trust in political institutions'. Therefore, the errors of these two measures are allowed to correlate. The police and the legal system are primarily responsible for the maintenance of order, and we can assume, in line with Inglehart's postmodernisation theory (1999), that citizens have a different opinion towards these order institutions than towards representational institutions. Likewise, citizens hold different expectations towards implementing and representational institutions.

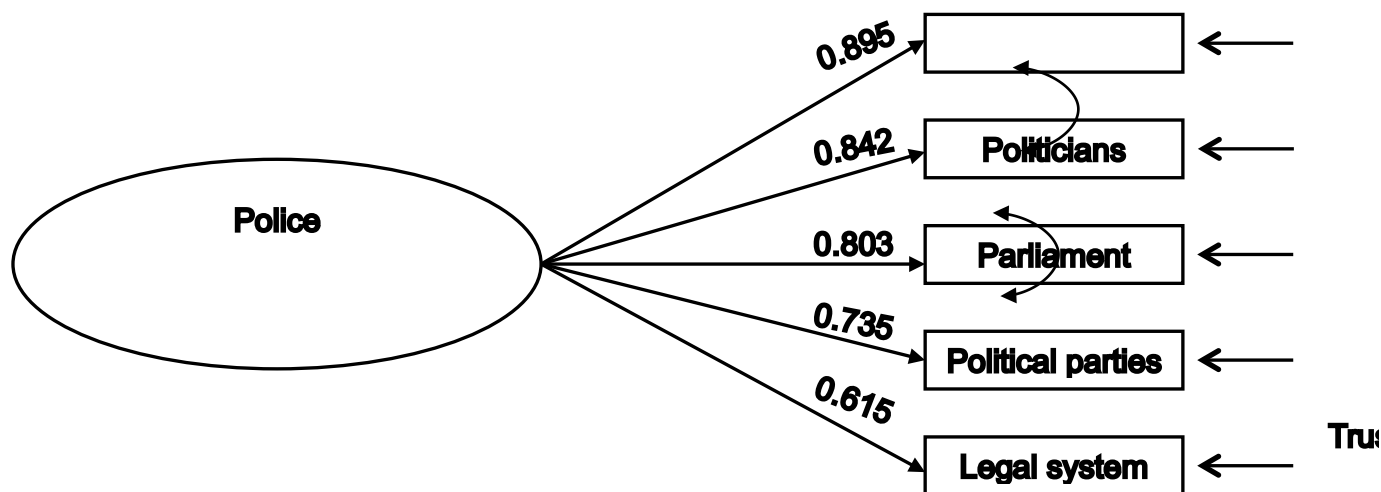
While political parties, the parliament and politicians are expected to be partisan, implementing institutions are expected to be impartial (Rothstein & Stolle 2008). However, we should note that this is not always the case; for instance, the legal system is more politicised in the United States - e.g. judges are politically appointed and their party preference is often well known. Given these theoretical arguments and the covariance between these two measures, it can be useful, depending on the research question, to make a distinction between implementing institutions and institutions on the representational side of the political system.

Furthermore, a preliminary analysis showed that trust in politicians and trust in political parties also share variance that cannot be explained by the latent concept. Allowing an error correlation between these two items increases the fit of the model. At first sight, this correlation is less clear than the error correlation between trust in the legal system and trust in the police. We can speculate that this shared variance could be because respondents perceive political parties, and especially politicians, as less of an 'institution' than parliament, the legal system or the police. The assessment of trust in politicians and political parties might be influenced more strongly by the performance of the current incumbents than respondents' trust in parliament, the legal system or the police. In addition, politicians are routinely members of a political party. The mean value of, and the variance in, trust in political parties and trust in politicians are indeed very similar, which could indicate that citizens do not make a distinction between political parties and politicians.

A one-factor measurement model was also fitted to the survey data from ESS (2006-2007) and ESS (2004-2005). Similar results emerged from these analyses (see appendix). We can conclude that institutional trust can be conceptualised as a one-dimensional attitude. Citizens have one generalised attitude which influences their trust evaluations of specific political institutions.



**Figure 1. Solution Confirmatory Factor Analysis**



*Source:* ESS 2008. 22 countries. *Notes:* standardised factor loadings resulting from a confirmatory factor analysis on the full sample. Fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 137.747$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p$  value = 0.000; RMSEA = 0.034; CFI = 0.999.  $n = 39,764$ .

**Table 1. Solution confirmatory factor analysis**

Observed measures	Factor loading	SE	z test	Standardised factor loading	Standardised Error variance	R <sup>2</sup>
Trust in parliament	1.000	0.000	-	0.895	0.198	0.801
Trust in politicians	0.865	0.005	186.05 ***	0.842	0.292	0.709
Trust in political parties	0.815	0.005	174.26 ***	0.803	0.355	0.645
Trust in the legal system	0.850	0.005	163.71 ***	0.735	0.459	0.540
Trust in police	0.689	0.005	127.65 ***	0.615	0.622	0.378
Error variances						
Legal system - police	1.568	0.024	66.48 ***	0.428		
Politicians - parties	1.128	0.018	63.34 ***	0.634		

*Source:* ESS 2008. 22 countries.  $n = 39,764$ . *Note:* variance latent variable 'institutional trust' = 5.301 (SE = 0.050). The marker observed variable is 'trust in parliament', which was fixed at 1.000. The last column includes estimates of the reliability of the observed measures (R<sup>2</sup>). Composite reliability index of scale = 0.89. Variance in observed measures explained by latent concept = 0.61.

### Trust in political institutions in a cross-national setting

So far the country-level context was not taken into account in the analysis. However, cross-national comparisons entail methodological challenges which should be addressed. In particular, cultural differences in the interpretations of questions or words can emerge. The European Social Survey pays particular attention to ensure an optimal comparability with regard to the operationalisation and cross-cultural validity of concepts in the participating countries. Nonetheless, even if all questions are translated adequately and the same method of data gathering is used, it is still possible that respondents with a different cultural background

will react differently to the same measures. Using Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MGCFA), it is investigated whether the general model that was developed holds true in all countries under study. In more technical terms, I test for the ‘cross-cultural equivalence’ of the ‘institutional trust’ scale. In particular, I test whether the same factor structure emerges in all countries<sup>iv</sup>.

A Multigroup Confirmatory Factor Analysis on ESS (2008-2009) reveals a similar factor structure across the 22 countries. The fit indices indicate that the CFA solution has a reasonably good fit. In all countries, the five measures contribute significantly to the measurement of trust in political institutions. Trust in the police has the weakest contribution to the measurement of institutional trust in all countries, but the factor loading is still largely above the minimum requirement of 0.30<sup>v</sup>. In summary, the same pattern of factor loadings is found across the different countries. It is thereby possible to discuss institutional trust meaningfully in all countries. This kind of equivalence is labelled ‘*configural equivalence*’. Nevertheless, the magnitude of the factor loadings can differ across the different countries, which can make cross-country comparisons problematic. In a next step, it is tested whether the factor loadings are the same across the countries. Put another way, is the relationship between the five measures and the latent concept the same in all countries? Only if this is the case, can one unit increase in the ‘trust in political institutions’ scale in country X be compared to one unit increase in the ‘trust in political institutions’ scale in country Y. In order to test this, the factor loadings are constrained to be equal across the different countries. This test is called ‘*metric equivalence*’ and is a stricter test of cross-cultural equivalence (Brown 2006).

The factor loading of some observed measures deviates from the general pattern in a number of countries. For instance, in Bulgaria, trust in the police has a stronger connection to institutional trust than in other countries. Put another way, the factor loadings do not reproduce the relationship between observed measure and latent concept well in all countries. The imposed constraints on the measurement model worsen the fit of the model to the data (Table 2). In practice, full metric equivalence is often considered to be unrealistic (Byrne *et al.* 1989). Therefore, partial metric equality has been proposed as an alternative, which entails that at least two items of the construct possess measurement equivalence characteristics (Byrne *et al.* 1989). Some imposed constraints can be removed in order to improve the measurement model. One has to look at the nature of the constraint, the Modification Index

(MI) and the Expected Parameter Change (EPC) in order to decide whether to relax a constraint. This is an iterative process. The constraint with the highest Modification Index and a substantial Expected Parameter Change is removed. Subsequently, the model fit is re-evaluated. This procedure is repeated until an additional modification does not make a substantial difference.

Table 2 shows the modifications that have been implemented in order to arrive at a better model. First, we removed the constraint on the factor loading of trust in the police in Bulgaria. This factor loading was constrained to equal 0.619; however, the connection between institutional trust and trust in the police is stronger in Bulgaria (Factor loading POLICE<sub>BG</sub> = 0.851). A one-unit increase in institutional trust in Bulgaria is associated with an increase in trust in the police of 0.851 units. By removing the equality constraint for trust in the police in Bulgaria, i.e. the factor loading can now be freely estimated, the model fit improves substantially: the  $\chi^2$  drops with more than 100 points, the RMSEA decreases from 0.068 to 0.065 and the CFI increases from 0.98 to 0.99. The equality constraints on the factor loadings of trust in the police and trust in the legal system in Finland are also removed. The connection between institutional trust and trust in the police and the legal system is weaker in Finland than in other countries (see the negative signs of the EPC estimates). In effect, a one-unit increase in institutional trust in Finland is associated with an increase in trust in the police of 0.462 units. Most of the modifications concern trust in the implementing institutions. In general, we observe that the connection between institutional trust and trust in the police and the legal system is stronger in the newer democracies than it is in established democracies. Overall, the connection between institutional trust and trust in parliament is rather strong. In Spain and Slovakia, however, the connection between institutional trust and trust in parliament is weaker than in other countries. Removing some of the equality constraints, the model demonstrates a good fit of the data (CFI = 0.993; RMSEA = 0.058). The final model is shown in Figure 2.

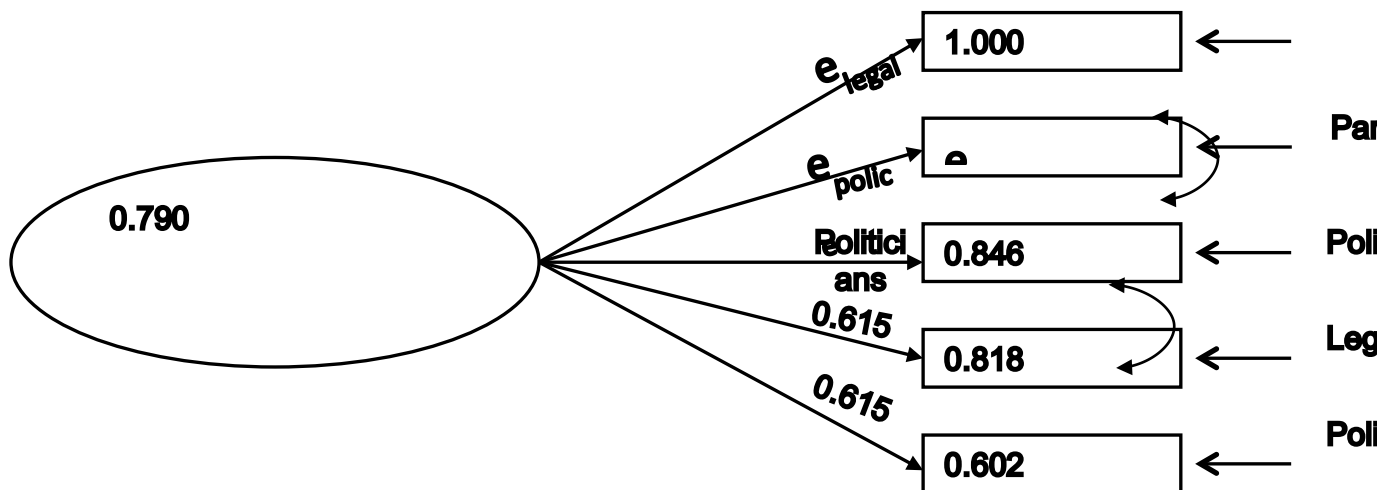
**Table 2. Testing for cross-cultural equivalence in trust in political institutions**

<b>Model specifications</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>df</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>EPC</b>	<b>MI</b>
Configural equivalence	397.742	66	0.053	0.997		
Metric equivalence	1412.841	150	0.068	0.989		
<b>Free BG police</b>	1292.412	149	0.065	0.990	0.185	113.535
<b>Free FI police</b>	1217.963	148	0.063	0.991	-0.150	76.453
<b>Free FI legal system</b>	1154.527	147	0.062	0.992	-0.153	65.558
<b>Free SK police</b>	1113.000	146	0.061	0.992	0.123	39.723
<b>Free SK parliament</b>	1080.068	145	0.060	0.992	-0.131	34.414

<b>Free ES parliament</b>	1044.826	144	0.059	0.992	-0.149	36.493
<b>Free HU police</b>	1019.571	143	0.058	0.993	0.108	24.152

Source: ESS 2008. 22 countries. n = 39,764. Notes: entries are the results of confirmatory factor analyses. Three goodness-of-fit indices are presented ( $\chi^2$  with degrees of freedom, RMSEA and CFI). The last two columns include the modification indices: the standardised Expected Parameter Change and the Modification Index.

**Figure 2. Solution Confirmatory Factor Analysis with Imposed Constraints**



Source: ESS 2008. 22 countries Notes: Unstandardised factor loadings resulting from a confirmatory factor analysis in which the factor loadings are constrained to be equal across the countries (testing metric equivalence). Some constraints were removed (see table 2). Fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 1019.571$ ; df = 143. RMSEA = 0.058; CFI = 0.993; n = 39,764.

The same analyses were performed on ESS 2006-2007 and ESS 2004-2005 (see Appendix). These analyses show that there is indeed a similar configuration of factor loadings across the different countries. In all countries, trust in the police has the lowest factor loading and thus the weakest relationship to institutional trust. As regards the tests for metric equivalence, some of the equality constraints also needed to be removed from ESS 2006-2007 and ESS 2004-2005 to obtain a better measurement model. We can observe a pattern in the applied modifications; the factor loadings of trust in implementing institutions are lower in the Nordic countries than in the other countries. In the newer democracies (Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia), the factor loadings of trust in implementing institutions are higher than in the other countries. The measurement models based on ESS 2006-2007 and ESS 2004-2005 have a slightly better fit than the model based on ESS 2008-2009 presented here.

From the analyses we can conclude that the 'institutional trust' scale is configural equivalent: a similar pattern of factor loadings emerged. Therefore, institutional trust can be meaningfully discussed in the different countries. The factor loadings are not entirely the same in all countries. In general, institutional trust has a stronger connection to trust in implementing

institutions in new democracies than in more established democracies. It seems that citizens' expectations towards representing and implementing institutions differ more in established democracies. As stated already, implementing institutions are expected to be impartial, while representing institutions are expected to be partisan. It might be that citizens in newer democracies do not perceive implementing institutions as impartial but rather as political, and even as corrupt, as their representing institutions. This could offer an explanation for the stronger connection between the different trust judgements in new democracies. Therefore, some of the equality constraints had to be removed. After these modifications, the constrained model provides a good fit of the data<sup>vi</sup>.

### **Trends in political trust**

From the previous analyses, we can conclude that trust in political institutions can be analysed as a one-dimensional latent concept across different countries. A second part provides an overview of recent (trends in) political trust figures in Europe. First, citizens' trust in a number of political institutions is described. Subsequently, recent trends in institutional trust and government support in Europe are outlined.

Table 3 includes citizens' trust evaluations of a number of institutions between 2002 and 2009<sup>vii</sup>. The same patterns emerge in all waves of the European Social Survey: respondents' trust in implementing institutions is significantly higher than in representational institutions. Moreover, the difference proves to be significant in all countries under study<sup>viii</sup>. Political parties and politicians in particular receive low trust scores. Between 2002 and 2009, 10 to 15 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not trust politicians and political parties at all (a value of '0' on an 11-point scale). Conversely, less than 8 per cent answered that they had no trust at all in the legal system, and less than 5 per cent indicated that they had no trust at all in the police. Table 3 also includes information on citizens' trust in two international institutions - the European Parliament and the United Nations. Trust in international institutions was not taken into account in the previous analysis, given that not all countries are a member of the European Union, which makes it difficult to compare the countries on this trust measure. Moreover, scholars are generally interested in determinants and consequences of trust in national political institutions.

International institutions enjoy more trust than most national institutions. Citizens have more trust in the European Parliament than in their national political parties or politicians. Moreover, respondents in half of the countries have more trust in the European Parliament than in their national parliament. Trust in the United Nations is also remarkably high. Particularly in new democracies, international institutions receive higher trust values than the national institutions. We can assume that most citizens do not have any direct contact with these international institutions and do not know much about them. In effect, fewer respondents are able to evaluate the trustworthiness of international than national institutions. In every wave of the European Social Survey, between 10 and 15 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not know whether to trust or distrust the European Parliament or the United Nations. On the other hand, less than 4 per cent of the respondents do not know whether to trust or distrust their national institutions. Almost all respondents - 98 per cent - have an opinion on the trustworthiness of the police, which is the institution with which respondents were most likely to have come into contact. The number of missing values is even larger in new democracies.

Self-evidently, it is important to distinguish countries that are not a member of the European Union. In effect, a larger number of respondents in Switzerland and Norway are not able to form an opinion on the trustworthiness of the European Parliament. Thirteen per cent of the Norwegian respondents do not have an opinion on the trustworthiness of the European Parliament, while this is less than one per cent for the Norwegian Parliament. However, also in EU-member countries the number of respondents that is unable to judge the trustworthiness of the European Parliament is substantial (especially compared to their own national parliament). In 2008, almost a fifth of the Spanish and Portuguese respondents indicated that they do not know whether to trust the European Parliament or not.

**Table 3. Trust in political institutions in Europe**

	2002 Mean	N	2004 Mean	n	2006 Mean	n	2008 Mean	n
Police	6.21 (2.46)	39,438	5.99 (2.51)	43,028	6.05 (2.49)	37,062	5.81 (2.58)	40,488
Legal system	5.42 (2.56)	38,793	5.15 (2.57)	42,401	5.24 (2.56)	36,495	4.98 (2.66)	39,868
Parliament (nat)	4.94 (2.41)	38,380	4.54 (2.45)	42,300	4.63 (2.48)	36,335	4.29 (2.58)	39,804
Politicians	3.95 (2.29)	39,045	3.66 (2.33)	42,614	3.67 (2.34)	36,734	3.44 (2.37)	40,205
Political parties	-	-	3.67 (2.30)	42,284	3.70 (2.31)	36,526	3.46 (2.35)	39,975
European Parl.	4.76 (2.36)	34,689	4.60 (2.39)	37,974	4.66 (2.37)	33,253	4.60 (2.39)	36,868
United Nations	5.46 (2.49)	35,855	5.33 (2.50)	39,091	5.43 (2.43)	33,814	5.31 (2.46)	36,808
Representing	4.45		3.97		4.02		3.75	
Implementing	5.81	p < 0.000	5.56	p < 0.000	5.64	p < 0.000	5.38	p < 0.000

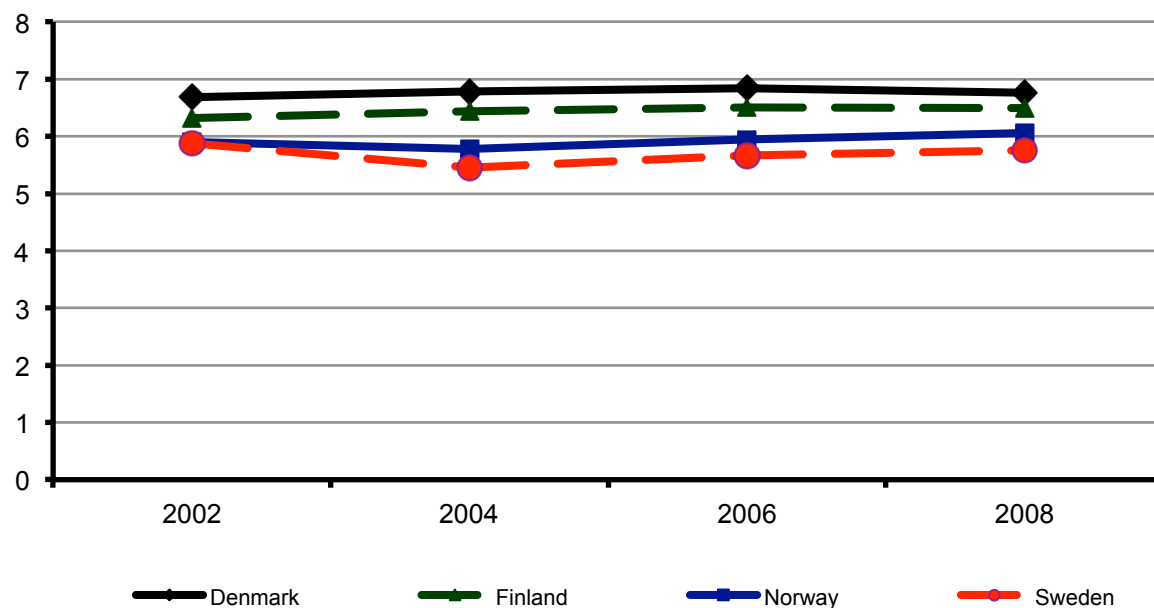
Significance test	t test: 134.424 df: 37,562	t test: 170.899 df: 40,811	t test: 157.723 df: 35,262	t test: 171.403 df: 38,682
----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

Source: ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. Notes: The means on the 'institutional trust' scale are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10. Standard deviations are between parentheses.

These figures conceal substantial differences in trust levels between the different countries. In the subsequent paragraphs, recent trends in political trust in Europe will be described per country. While political trust has strongly declined in the United States since the 1980s (Lipset & Schneider 1983; Hetherington 2005), such a declining trend was not found in Europe (Klingeman & Fuchs 1995). Recent trends in institutional trust and satisfaction with the current government in Europe are described using the four available waves of the European Social Survey. Only the 23 countries which participated more than twice in the survey will be analysed<sup>ix</sup>. Unfortunately, trust in political parties was not questioned in the first wave of the survey, therefore this measure was not included in the 'trust in political institutions' scale. The latter includes trust in the country's national parliament, the legal system, the police and politicians. The four items were added into one scale, and for reasons of clarity, this scale was recoded to range between 0 and 10.

Trust levels are represented by region in order to gain a clear overview of the trends. Looking at the established democracies, the most striking observation is the stability in levels of institutional trust (Figures 3-5). The general pattern is quite common in research on political culture, with the highest values documented in Northern Europe, while the countries in Southern and Eastern Europe tend to have lower levels of trust. In Figure 3, institutional trust in the Nordic countries is shown. In general, the changes in institutional trust are small in these countries: on average, a change of 0.13 on an 11-point scale. The most substantial changes in institutional trust are documented in Norway and Sweden. In Sweden, institutional trust decreased from 5.88 to 5.45 between 2002 and 2004. In the following years, however, trust increased again to its 2002 levels. While institutional trust was found to be in decline in Sweden during the 1980s and 1990s (Holmberg 1999), no such general declining trend can be observed in the 2000s. Institutional trust in Norway decreased between 2002 and 2004, to increase again to its 2002 level in 2006. In Finland, there is a small significant increase in institutional trust from 6.3 to 6.4 between 2002 and 2004. In Denmark, none of the changes in institutional trust between 2002 and 2009 are significant. In summary, the changes in institutional trust are modest in the Nordic countries and might even be due to sample differences.

**Figure 3. Trends in trust in political institutions in the Nordic countries**

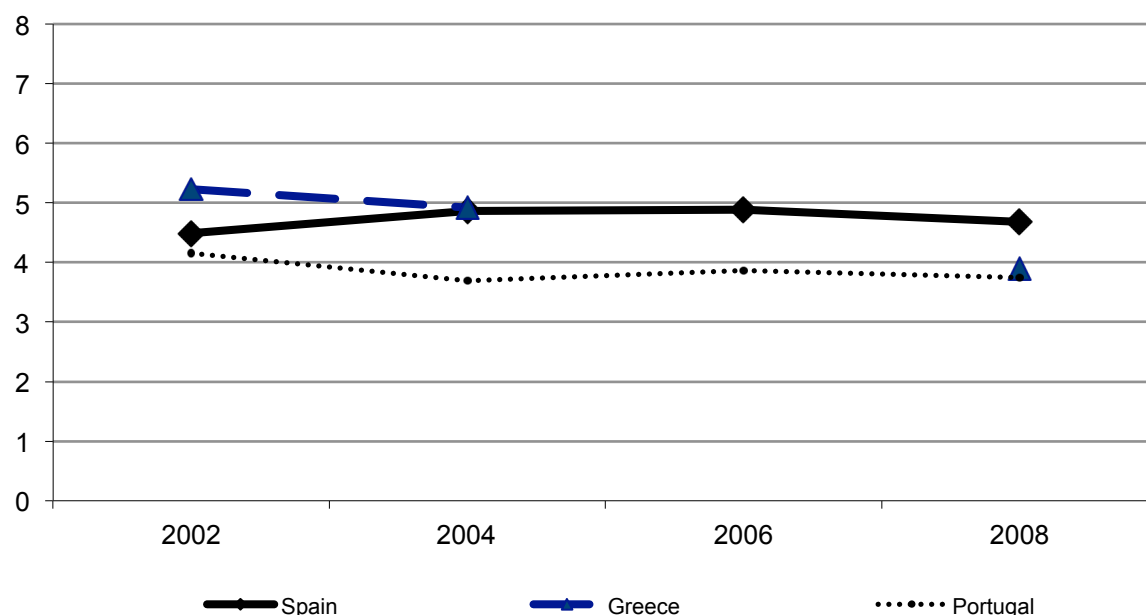


*Source:* ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. *Notes:* The means on the ‘institutional trust’-scale are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

Levels of institutional trust are less stable in Southern Europe (Figure 4). On average, the changes in institutional trust amount to 0.4 on an 11-point scale. In Greece, in particular, institutional trust decreased significantly from 5.2 in 2002 to 3.9 in 2008. In Portugal too, trust in institutions decreased from 4.2 in 2002 to 3.8 in 2008. Spain, the third Southern European country that was questioned multiple times, can be also found at the bottom of the graph. In Spain, trust in political institutions amounted to 4.5 in 2002 and increased slightly in recent years to 4.9 in 2004 and 4.7 in 2008.



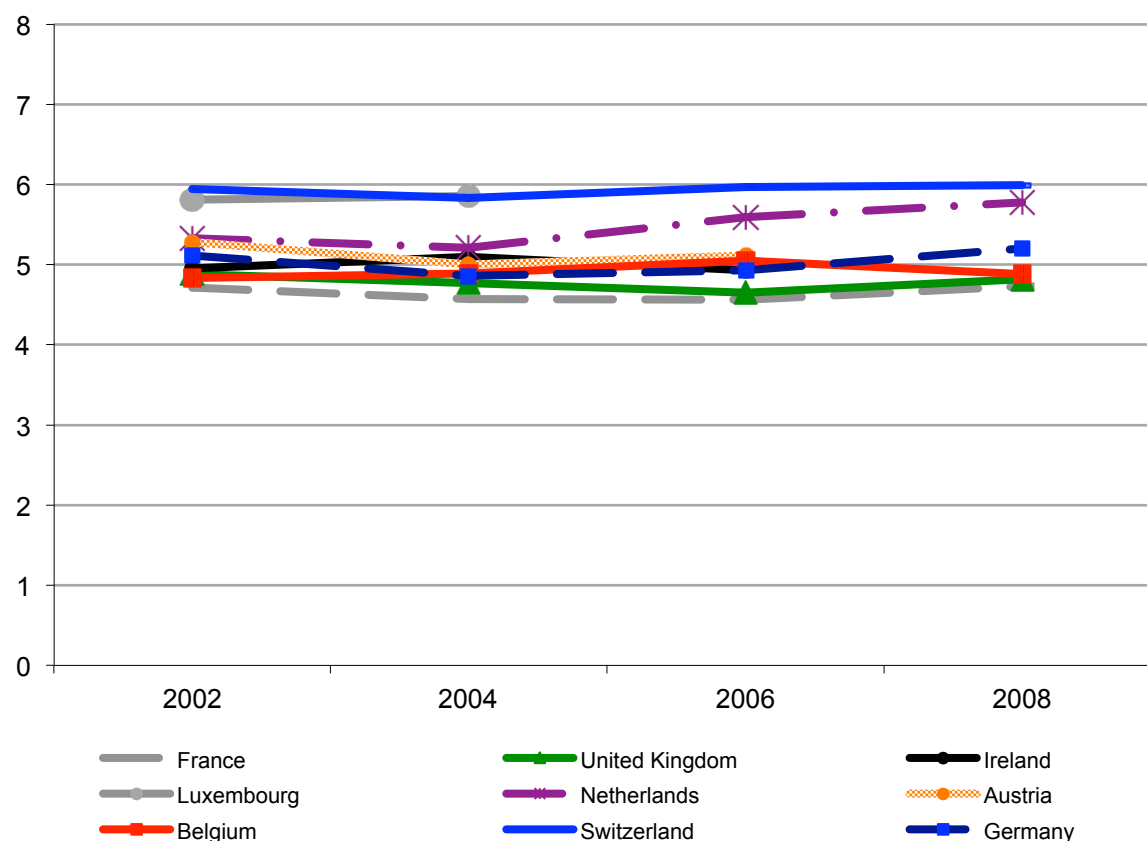
**Figure 4. Trends in trust in political institutions in Southern Europe**



*Source:* ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. *Notes:* The means on the ‘institutional trust’ scale are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

Next to Sweden, political trust levels were also found to be in decline in the Netherlands. Several scholars reported a strong decline in institutional trust in the Netherlands at the beginning of the 21st century (Bovens & Wille 2008; Hendriks 2009). Figure 5 also reveals that this decline did not persist as institutional trust increased significantly in the Netherlands during the 2000s (from 5.3 in 2002 to 5.8 in 2009). In several countries, after an increase or decrease in trust, trust levels are restored to the original level in the following years. In effect, it is argued that public opinion has become more volatile as a result of different trends such as party dealignment, better informed citizens and a more sensation-seeking media (Bovens & Wille 2009). However, the variations in levels of institutional trust in established democracies are small (e.g. an average change of 0.1 on an 11-point scale for the countries in Figure 5). Trust levels remain relatively high in the Nordic countries, while trust levels in Southern Europe remain at a lower level. In general, the levels of trust in political institutions are also more volatile in the newer democracies in Southern Europe than in the longer established Northern European democracies.

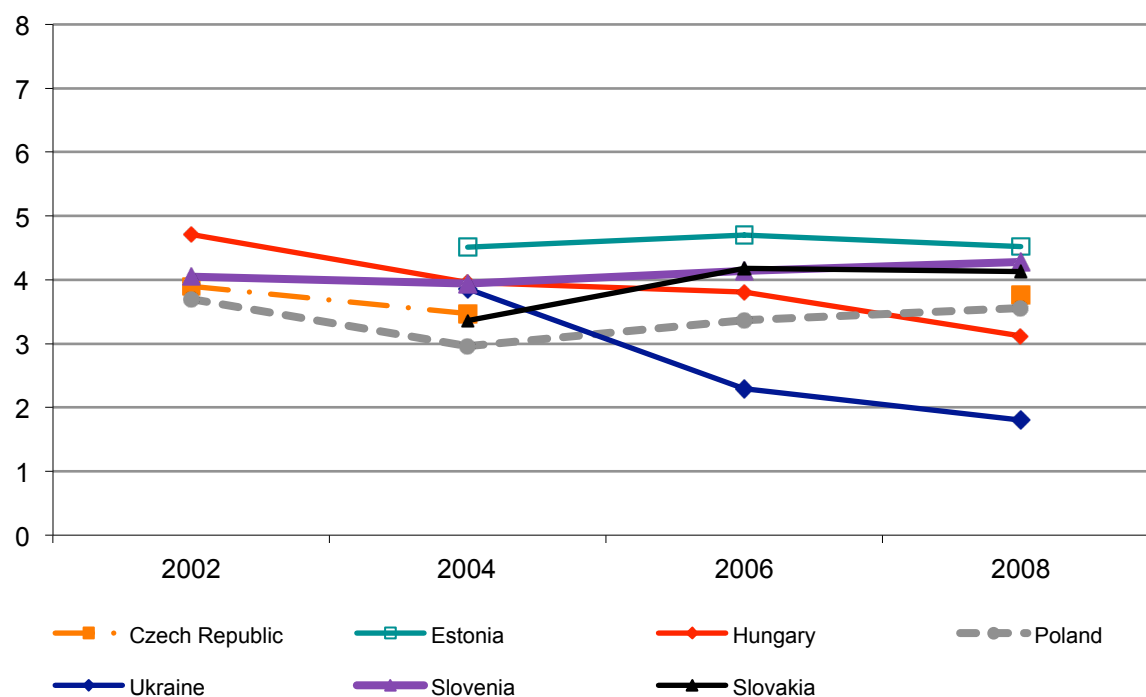
**Figure 5. Trends in trust in political institutions in other established democracies**



*Source:* ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. *Notes:* The means on the ‘institutional trust’ scale are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

A clearly different pattern emerges in the newer democracies in Eastern Europe (Figure 6). Firstly, trust levels are still substantially lower than in the established democracies. Estonia is characterised by the highest trust levels among the newer democracies, with an average score of 4.5/10 - which is still substantially below the average trust values in Western Europe. The lowest trust level is found in Ukraine, with an average value of 1.8 in 2008. Put another way, 26.5 per cent of the Ukrainian respondents indicated that they had no trust at all in any of the four institutions (parliament, legal system, the police or politicians) <sup>x</sup>. Secondly, trust levels in new democracies are clearly more volatile than in more established democracies. We can observe significant decreases in trust levels in Hungary and Ukraine. In only six years, trust in political institutions declined almost two points on the 11-point trust scale in both countries (i.e. from 4.7 to 3.1 in Hungary and from 3.9 to 1.8 in Ukraine). On the other hand, trust levels increased in Slovenia and Slovakia (especially between 2004 and 2006). In Poland and the Czech Republic, we see that trust levels restored to the original levels after a significant drop in trust between 2002 and 2004.

**Figure 6. Trends in trust in political institutions in new democracies**



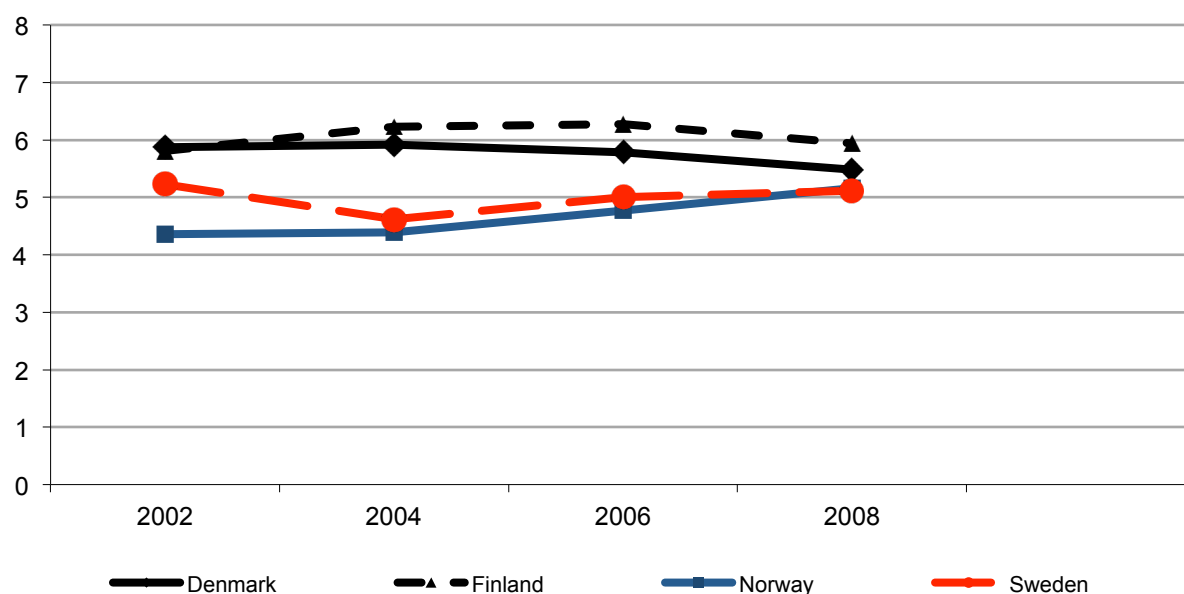
Source: ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. Notes: The means of the institutional trust scale are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

We can conclude that citizens' trust in political institutions in Europe has been stable over the past years. Institutional trust even increased in countries in which a general downward trend was documented during the 1990s or early 2000s. The analysis of trends in institutional trust in 23 European countries reveals that after a decrease or increase in trust, trust levels restore to their original levels in the following years. In newer democracies, institutional trust proved to be more volatile than in more established democracies. In Hungary and Ukraine in particular, substantial drops in institutional trust were documented during the 2000s. Institutional trust also decreased sharply in Greece during the period. However, in line with the trends in institutional trust that were reported in Sweden and the Netherlands, we can expect that institutional trust will increase again in these countries in the following years. These findings confirm Klingemann and Fuchs's (1995) conclusion that there is no general declining trend in political trust in Europe. However, it also implies that levels of political trust in newer democracies remain rather low, and there are very few indications that levels of trust in these countries will rise substantially in the years ahead.

*Satisfaction with the current government*

In the next paragraphs, we will look into the trends in a more specific kind of political trust: satisfaction with the current government. Respondents were asked ‘*Now thinking about the [country] government, how satisfied are you with the way it is doing its job?*’ A value of 0 indicated that they were extremely dissatisfied, while a value of 10 indicated that they were extremely satisfied. In 2008-2009, the average level of satisfaction with government amounted to 4.42/10 in established democracies and 3.19/10 in newer democracies ( $F = 2,316.922$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). The cross-national patterns in this specific trust judgement are similar to the ones we observed in the more generalised institutional trust. But as we could expect from Easton’s theory (1965), satisfaction with the current government is more volatile than trust in political institutions. In terms of government satisfaction, the Nordic countries are also at the top of the list, together with Switzerland and Luxembourg (Figures 7-9). While satisfaction with government fluctuates more than institutional trust in Scandinavia, the fluctuations are rather modest, especially in comparison to the evolution of satisfaction with government in Southern and Eastern European countries (Figure 8 and Figure 10).

**Figure 7. Trends in satisfaction with government in the Nordic countries**



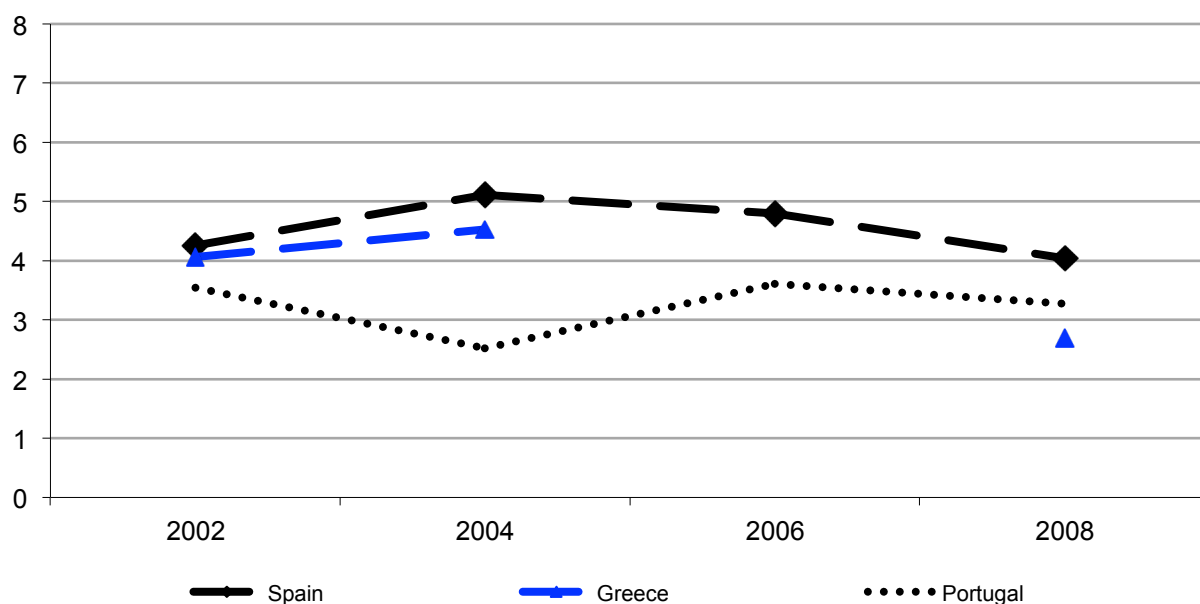
Source: ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. Notes: The means of citizens’ ‘satisfaction with government’ are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

In Southern Europe, citizens are in general less satisfied with how their government is performing than in the Nordic countries. However, in 2005, satisfaction with government was remarkably high in Spain and Greece, surpassing the satisfaction levels of their counterparts in Norway and the Netherlands. Government satisfaction significantly increased in both

countries between 2002 and 2005. The increase in government satisfaction seems to follow the economic growth that Spain experienced during the 2000s. In effect, previous research has revealed that the economic situation is an important predictor for government support (Lockerbie 1993). Government support can also suddenly increase due to a dramatic event, which is called 'rally around the flag' in the literature (Hetherington & Nelson 2003; Gross *et al.* 2009). The terrorist attacks in Madrid on 11 March 2004 could have led to such a rally around the flag effect. The graphs indeed show a strong increase in satisfaction with government in Spain between 2002 and 2005 (from 4.3 in 2002 to 5.1 in 2005). In Greece, the alternation of the parties in office in 2004 and the organisation of the Olympic Games might offer an explanation for these high levels of government satisfaction in 2005.

However, in the second half of the 2000s, satisfaction with Greek government dramatically declined from 4.1 in 2002 to 2.7 in 2008. A quarter of the respondents indicated that they were extremely dissatisfied with their current government. Greece was confronted with an avalanche of political scandals in these years. Moreover, the government's plans to reform university regulation evoked several strikes and protests. The way in which the government handled severe forest fires also created the public perception of an incompetent, ineffective government. The general elections of 2007 revealed a widespread dissatisfaction with an increase in abstention of 2.6 per cent and a substantial increase in protest votes for three minor political parties (Mavrogordatos 2008). At the end of 2008, the Greek government was confronted with the worst riots and unrest since the military dictatorship in 1974. The government failed to restore order promptly and the riots persisted for several weeks (Mavrogordatos 2009). Given the 2010 debt crisis and unrest, this declining trend in government satisfaction is likely to persist. Satisfaction with government also proves to be volatile in Portugal. In the beginning of the 2000s, satisfaction with government decreased. Portuguese politics was characterised by a series of scandals which led to numerous government reshuffles. In addition, the country was confronted with an economic recession and the government introduced severe austerity policies in public spending. However, by the mid-2000s, satisfaction with government increased gradually to its 2002 levels. At that time, the economic situation also slightly improved and the centre-right government was voted out of office and replaced by a new (socialist) government (Magone 2005).

**Figure 8. Trends in satisfaction with government in Southern European countries**



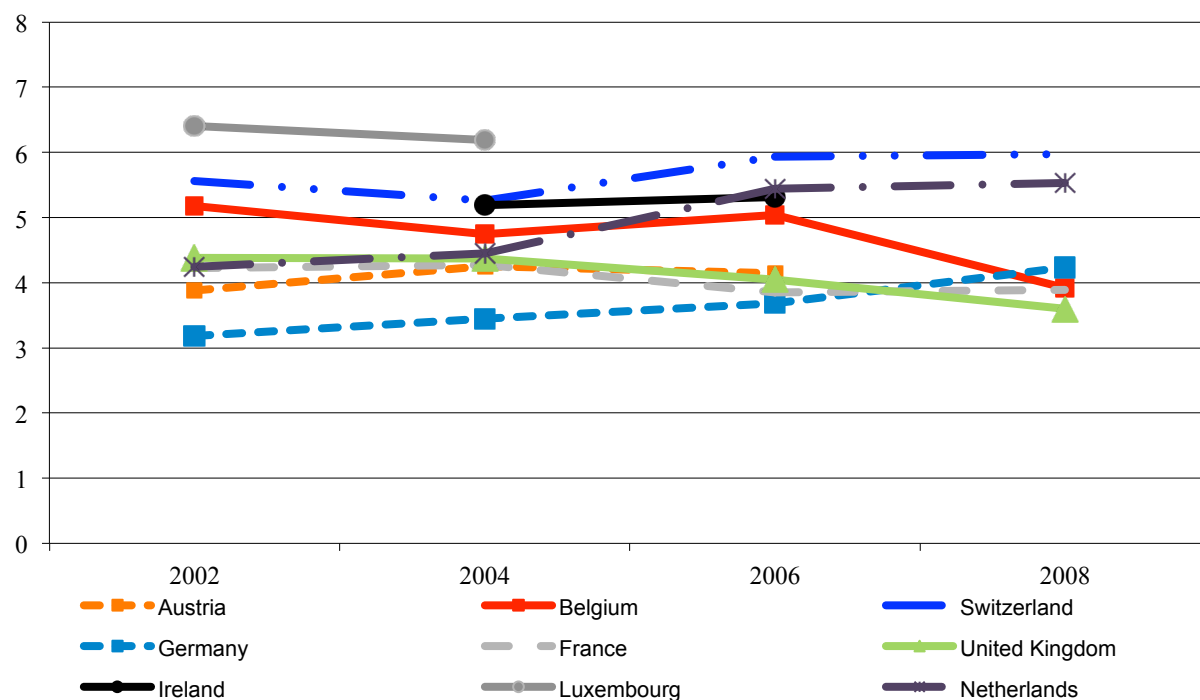
*Source:* ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. *Notes:* The means of citizens' 'satisfaction with government' are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

Satisfaction with government has also declined significantly in the United Kingdom and Belgium during the past decade. In the United Kingdom, satisfaction with the Labour government gradually declined during the 2000s (Figure 9). Satisfaction with government amounted to 4.38 in 2002 and dropped to 4.05 in 2006. In 2008, the average level of satisfaction with government only amounted to 3.60. Even the Labour voters were not satisfied with government in 2008, with an average level of satisfaction of 4.44. This might offer an explanation as to why the government could not secure re-election in the 2010 general elections. The next wave of ESS will show whether the alternation of power was able to reverse this declining trend in government satisfaction. In Belgium, satisfaction with the government reached its lowest level in the past decade (Figure 9). The political and economic crisis seems to have exerted a strong effect on specific political support in Belgium. Satisfaction with government decreased from 5.18 in 2002 to 3.92 in 2008. However, these events do not seem to affect the more generalised kind of political trust, given the remarkable stability of trust in political institutions in Belgium we observed in Figure 5.

On the other hand, satisfaction with the current government has increased in the Netherlands. Previous research has documented a steep decline in satisfaction with government in the Netherlands at the start of the century. While approximately two-thirds of the respondents in 1998 thought the Dutch government was doing a good job, less than a third of the respondents

were satisfied with government at the beginning of the century (Bovens & Wille 2008). The ESS data show that this drop was only temporary; satisfaction with government was gradually restored from 4.24 in 2002 to 4.45 in 2004 to 5.44 in 2006, and eventually to 5.53 in 2008. Governments in Switzerland and Germany also received more support in 2008 than they did in 2002, but these increases are rather modest.

**Figure 9. Trends in satisfaction with government in the other established countries**



*Source:* ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. *Notes:* The means of citizens' 'satisfaction with government' are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

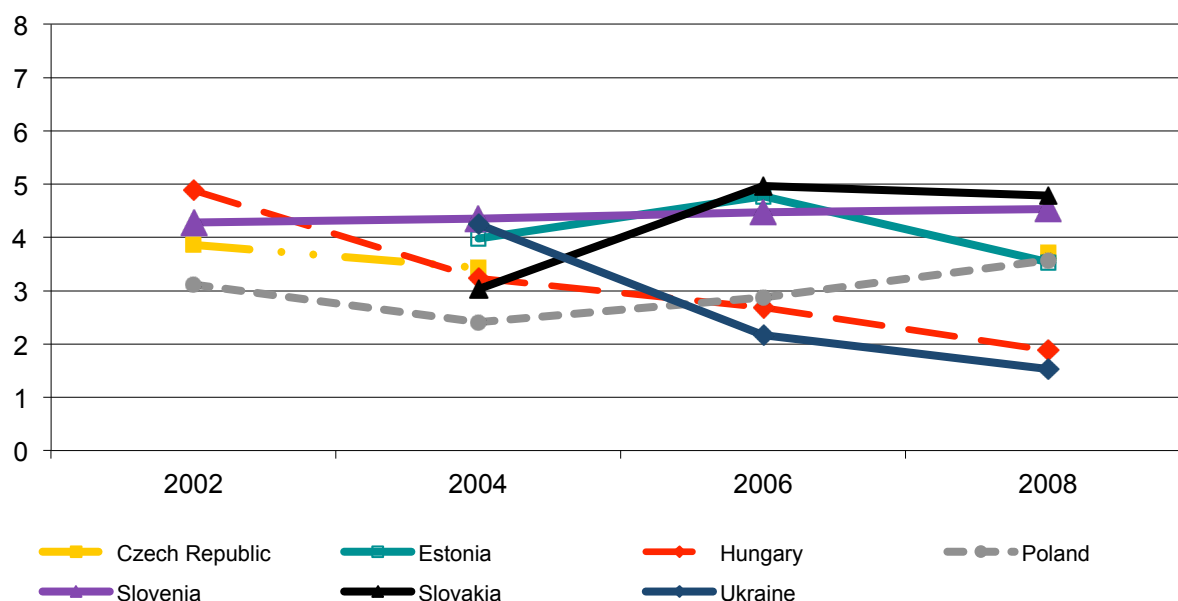
Finally, the new democracies in Eastern Europe are characterised by substantial volatility in government satisfaction. In effect, only few governments in Central and Eastern European countries are able to secure re-election (Tavits 2005). Figure 10 shows a steep decline in government satisfaction in Hungary in the past decade. Satisfaction with the current government declined by three points on an 11- point scale (i.e. from 4.88 (2002) to 3.23 (2004) to 2.68 (2006) to 1.88 (2008)). In 2008, 37.4 per cent of the respondents in Hungary indicated that they were extremely dissatisfied with their government (i.e. value 0/10). Category 0 and 1 together include more than half of the Hungarian respondents. Figure 6 already showed that institutional trust also declined in recent years in Hungary. Ukrainian governments are also confronted with declining levels of government satisfaction. At the beginning of 2005, in the aftermath of the Orange Revolution, satisfaction with government

amounted to 4.25 only to drop to 2.17 at the end of 2006 and to drop even further to 1.53 in 2009. Put another way, in 2009, 42.4 per cent of the Ukrainian respondents answered that they were extremely dissatisfied with their government. Three-fourths of the Ukrainian respondents can be found in the lowest four categories. Decreasing levels of satisfaction with government are also prevalent in the Czech Republic and Estonia, but to a more modest extent. In Poland, satisfaction with government decreased between 2002 and 2004, but was restored to its original level in 2008. On the other hand, in Slovenia and Slovakia, satisfaction with the current government increased. In Slovakia, we see quite a substantial increase in satisfaction with the current government from 3.0 in 2002 to 5.0 in 2004 to 4.8 in 2008.

We see that similar trends emerge in institutional trust and satisfaction with the current government in some countries. While diffuse and specific trust have different determinants, there is certainly a spill-over between these two political trust measures. For instance, a corruption scandal can erode satisfaction with the current government as well as trust in the political institutions. In Hungary and Ukraine, strong declines in institutional trust and satisfaction with the current government were documented. On the other hand, the political and economic crisis does not seem to affect trust in political institutions in Belgium, while it strongly decreased satisfaction with the current government. Given that trust in the political institutions is less stable in new democracies, it is possible that the evaluations of the current government are more important for trust in political institutions in newer democracies than in established democracies. However, the calculation of correlations between measures of institutional trust and satisfaction with the current government show that the relation between these two is similar in established and new democracies (resp.  $0.602$   $p < 0.000$  and  $0.572$   $p < 0.000$ ). This correlation differs between the countries under study with the weakest association in Denmark (Pearson correlation =  $0.333$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ) and Slovenia (Pearson correlation =  $0.388$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ) and the strongest correlation in the Netherlands (Pearson correlation =  $0.681$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ) and Bulgaria (Pearson correlation =  $0.644$ ;  $p < 0.000$ ). But no clear cross-national pattern emerges.



**Figure 10. Trends in satisfaction with government in new European democracies**



Source: ESS 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008. Notes: The means of citizens' 'satisfaction with government' are presented. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

## Conclusion

Since the seventies, it has been claimed repeatedly that democracy is losing legitimacy among its citizens resulting in an unprecedented confidence crisis (Crozier *et al.* 1975; Nye 1997; Dalton 2004; Macedo *et al.* 2005). In the mid-seventies, Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki (1975, 159) for instance stated '*Dissatisfaction with and lack of confidence in the functioning of the institutions of democratic government have thus now become widespread in the Trilateral countries.*' Thirdly, years later, Dalton (2004, 1) repeats a similar message: '*Contemporary democracies are facing a challenge today. This challenge does not come from enemies within or outside the nation; instead, the challenge comes from democracy's own citizens, who have grown distrustful of politicians, sceptical about democratic institutions, and disillusioned about how the democratic process functions.*'

However, the evidence presented in this chapter clearly contradicts the claim that contemporary democracies are losing citizens' support. In effect, no general declining trend could be found in institutional trust among a wide variety of European countries in the past decade. Only in Greece, Hungary and Ukraine institutional trust declined substantially in the past decade. More recent data is needed to ascertain whether this declining trend will persist.

While institutional trust has decreased in some European countries during the nineties and early 2000s (Klingemann 1999; Bovens & Wille 2008), this study also shows that institutional trust was restored to its original levels in the 2000s in these countries. Therefore, to date the only conclusion that can be drawn is that institutional trust is stable (especially in the more established democracies). These findings underline the importance of a good operationalisation of political trust and of the study of political trust beyond the United States.

Throughout this chapter, the most outspoken difference in institutional trust is between established and new democracies. Not only is political trust lower in newer democracies, it is also more volatile. Nevertheless, the analyses revealed that institutional trust in new democracies could also be measured in a valid manner. A one-dimensional attitude, institutional trust, exists in all countries under study providing strong support for the claim that institutional trust reflects an assessment of the prevailing political culture in a country. Institutional trust influences citizens' trust judgments of a broad range of institutions. While institutional trust influences trust in representative as well as implementing institutions, its influence on implementing institutions is smaller in established democracies. In new democracies, on the other hand, institutional trust influences representative and implementing institutions to the same extent. Put another way, citizens are distrustful of all institutions and hardly differentiate between (impartial) implementing and (partisan) representative institutions. Most likely, all institutions are perceived as political or even as corrupt.

While this study makes the necessary differentiations to the pessimistic claims that have repeatedly put forward, the results also show that citizens are rather critical towards political institutions and their government. Especially in new democracies, political institutions and leaders lack popular support. In Hungary, for example, 37.4 per cent of the respondents indicated to be extremely dissatisfied with their government (i.e. value 0/10). More than half of the Hungarian respondents gave their government a value of 0 or 1 on a scale from 0 to 10. Given the high levels of corruption in several of these newer democracies, it could be argued that low levels of trust in political institutions reflect an accurate assessment of the trustworthiness of these institutions. In established democracies, citizens might be dissatisfied with how their political system is performing, but they can have at least a reasonable expectation not to meet corrupt officials on a day to day basis.

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## Appendix

### European Social Survey: completed questionnaires

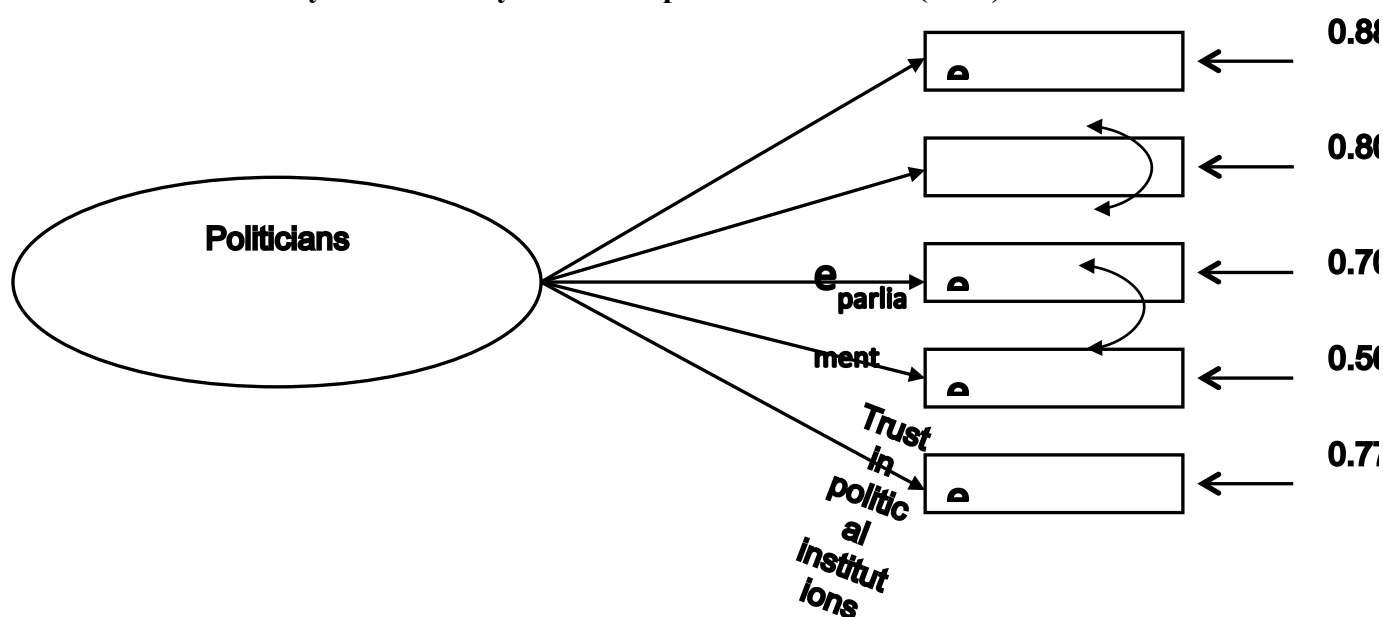
	2002	2004	2006	2008
Austria	2257	2256	2405	-
Belgium	1899	1778	1798	1760
Bulgaria	-	-	1400	2230
Switzerland	2040	2141	1804	1819
Cyprus	-	-	995	1215
Czech Republic	1360	3026	-	2018
Germany	2919	2870	2916	2751
Denmark	1506	1487	1505	1610
Estonia	-	1989	1517	1661
Spain	1729	1663	1876	2576
Finland	2000	2022	1896	2195
France	1503	1806	1986	2073
United Kingdom	2052	1897	2394	2352
Greece	2566	2406	-	2072
Hungary	1685	1498	1518	1544
Ireland	2046	2286	1800	-
Iceland	-	579	-	-
Latvia	-	-	-	1980
Luxembourg	1552	1635	-	-
Netherlands	2364	1881	1889	1778
Norway	2036	1760	1750	1549
Poland	2110	1716	1721	1619
Portugal	1511	2052	2222	2367
Sweden	1999	1948	1927	1830
Slovenia	1519	1442	1476	1286
Slovakia	-	1512	1766	1810
Ukraine	-	2031	2002	1845

### Testing for cross-cultural equivalence in trust in political institutions (2006)

Model specifications	$\chi^2$	df	RMSEA	CFI	EPC	MI
Configural equivalence	298.196	63	0.047	0.998		
Metric equivalence	1104.354	143	0.062	0.990		
Free FI police	1025.595	142	0.060	0.991	-0.157	79.819
Free BG police	973.750	141	0.059	0.992	0.161	48.540
Free AT parliament	928.411	140	0.057	0.992	0.178	42.952
Free DK legal system	891.598	139	0.056	0.993	-0.133	37.950
Free DK police	846.406	138	0.055	0.993	-0.172	45.932
Free FI legal	812.343	137	0.053	0.993	-0.117	34.975
Free HU police	778.245	136	0.052	0.994	0.128	32.118
Free CY police	739.314	135	0.051	0.994	0.156	35.580
Free SK police	708.907	134	0.050	0.994	0.112	29.543

Source: ESS 2006. 21 countries. n=36,172. Notes: entries are the results of confirmatory factor analyses.

### Solution Confirmatory Factor Analysis with Imposed Constraints (2006)



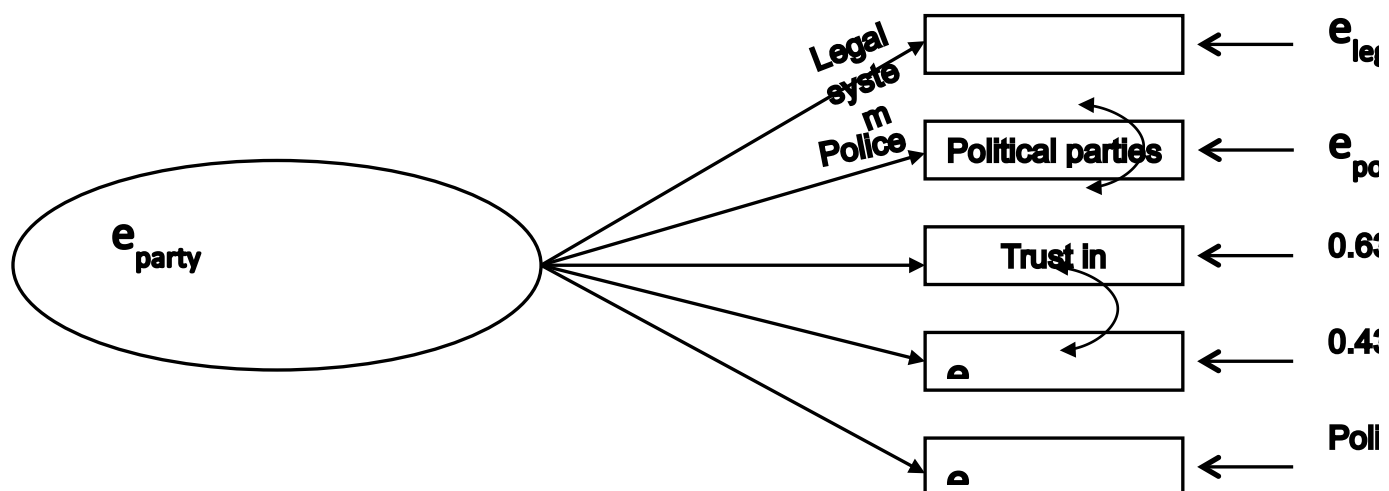
Source: ESS 2006. 21 countries. Notes: Factor loadings resulting from a confirmatory factor analysis. Fit indices:  $\chi^2=178.842$ ;  $df=3$ ; RMSEA=0.040; CFI= 0.999;  $n=36,172$ .

### Testing for cross-cultural equivalence in trust in political institutions (2004)

Model specifications	$\chi^2$	df	RMSEA		CFI	EPC	MI
Configural equivalence	367.704	69	0.049	[0.045-0.054]	0.997		
Metric equivalence	1162.237	157	0.060	[0.057-0.063]	0.991		
Free FI police	1096.463	156	0.058	[0.055-0.062]	0.992	-0.155	66.786
Free CZ police	1045.063	155	0.057	[0.054-0.060]	0.992	0.103	48.788
Free CZ parliament	1000.479	154	0.056	[0.052-0.059]	0.993	-0.116	46.930
Free PT legal	960.598	153	0.055	[0.051-0.058]	0.993	0.134	37.660
Free PT parliament	897.165	152	0.053	[0.049-0.056]	0.994	0.232	57.678
Free BE parliament	870.674	151	0.052	[0.049-0.055]	0.994	-0.142	27.529
Free HU police	845.578	150	0.051	[0.048-0.055]	0.994	0.100	23.852
Free AT parliament	823.814	149	0.051	[0.047- 0.054]	0.994	0.115	20.858
Free DK police	802.367	148	0.050	[0.047-0.053]	0.994	-0.106	21.934

Source: ESS 2004. 23 countries.  $n=40,773$ . Notes: entries are the results of confirmatory factor analyses.

# **Solution Confirmatory Factor Analysis with Imposed Constraints (2004)**



Source: ESS 2004. 23 countries. Notes: Factor loadings resulting from a confirmatory factor Fit indices:  $\chi^2=172.497$ ;  $df=3$ . RMSEA= 0.037; CFI= 0.999.  $n=40,773$



## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> See [http://www.electionstudies.org/nesguide/toptable/tab5a\\_1.htm](http://www.electionstudies.org/nesguide/toptable/tab5a_1.htm).

<sup>ii</sup> The report can be downloaded from the ESS website:

<http://ess.nsd.uib.no/streamer/?module=main&year=2003&country=null&download=%5CSurvey+documentation%5C2003%5C10%23ESS1+-+Reliability+and+validity+of+questions%2C+ed.+1%5CLanguages%5CEnglish%5CESS1MTMAnalysis.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> The analyses are limited to free democratic countries. The Freedom House Index (FHI) is a widely used indicator to assess whether a country is democratic by looking at the amount of political and civil liberties in the country. Several political and civil rights are lacking in some of the countries included in the European Social Survey. The Freedom House indices range between 1 and 7, where 7 is the lowest level of freedom. Based on this index in 2008, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania and Croatia were not included in the analyses - with combined Freedom House indices (political plus civil rights) of respectively: 11, 6, 5, 4 and 4. Given that the focus of this study is on European countries, Israel was also not included.

<sup>iv</sup> These countries include Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom in ESS (2008-2009). Austria, Iceland, Ireland and Luxembourg were included in previous waves of the European Social Survey (see Appendix). The distinction between Eastern and Western Germany is still considered to be relevant in public opinion research (Zmerli and Newton, 2008). Therefore, the analyses were also performed considering Eastern Germany and Western Germany as two distinct countries. These analyses led to similar results.

<sup>v</sup> The measurement model was also performed on every country separately. This additional analysis showed that the measurement model in Cyprus gives a poor description of the data. The different results for the trust measurement may be caused by the conflict between the Greek and Turkish community in Cyprus. However, the case of Cyprus falls beyond the scope of this study as it calls for an in-depth investigation. The subsequent analyses were conducted twice: including and excluding Cyprus. The model fit was each time slightly better when Cyprus was excluded from the analyses, but the same pattern emerged in both cases. Therefore, I decided to keep Cyprus in the analyses.

<sup>vi</sup> Several additional tests for cross-cultural equivalence can be performed which constrain the factor intercept, factor variances and error variances (see, e.g. Brown, 2006; Reeskens and Hooghe, 2008).

<sup>vii</sup> Note that a comparison of the evolution of trust levels is not possible using table 3, as different countries are included in each wave.

<sup>viii</sup> A t test was conducted per country showing a significantly higher level of trust in implementing institutions than in representational institutions in every country.

<sup>ix</sup> These countries include Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. A trend line can be presented for Ukraine as it was included in the last three waves of ESS (2004-2008). Note, however, that Ukraine is not a free democracy according to Freedom House and the results should be read with caution.

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<sup>x</sup> These results should be read with caution as cross-cultural equivalence tests show that institutional trust in Ukraine is not comparable to the other countries. Several political and civil rights are lacking in Ukraine, and therefore, it cannot be considered a free democracy, which makes comparisons with democracies difficult.