

WHAT ARE THE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF TRUST? A Test of Cultural and Institutional Theories in Russia

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Trust in political institutions and in other people is hypothesized by cultural theories to be essential for making democracies work. Trust is equated with diffuse support and linked to the stability and effective functioning of democratic regimes. Institutional theories, in contrast, question the importance of trust for democratic support and emphasize institutional performance instead. A structural equation model using *New Russia Barometer* survey data tests cultural and institutional theories of regime support. The results confirm cultural arguments that institutional trust encourages political involvement and contributes to public support for democratic ideals, whereas they contradict the hypothesis that trust is critical for political support. Much stronger support exists for institutional theory's claims about the importance of economic and political performance. Cultural influences, however, appear somewhat larger than institutional theories allow and may become larger still during the longer term, suggesting the need to integrate cultural and institutional theories.

Keywords: *trust; democracy; culture; institutions; Russia*

Cultural theories of democracy emphasize that a civic culture with high levels of institutional and interpersonal trust is vital for "making democracy work" (Almond & Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993).¹ Institutional trust fre-

1. We use the term *cultural theories* to refer to a variety of loosely related constructs that seek to explain political institutions and behavior in terms of the shared customs, values, and beliefs of a social group. We recognize that there are important differences among them. Some cultural theories are holistic and aggregate in orientation, whereas others are more individualist and micro-oriented. Some cultural theories are historical and deterministic in approach, whereas

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quently is equated with diffuse political support and linked to the survival and the effective functioning of democratic institutions (Easton, 1965, 1975; Gibson & Caldeira, 2003; Gibson, Caldeira, & Baird, 1998). It also is hypothesized to contribute to citizens' normative commitments to democratic values and their rejection of authoritarian appeals. Less emphasis is accorded interpersonal trust, but cultural theories typically hypothesize that it is a central component of social capital, which culturalists consider to be critical to effective democratic governance. Moreover, both interpersonal and institutional trust are viewed by cultural theories as contributing to citizen involvement in political life (Fukuyama, 1995; Putnam, 2000; Uslander, 2002).

Institutional theories of democracy offer the principal alternative to cultural theories and ascribe little importance to either institutional or interpersonal trust.² Instead, institutional theories conceive of support for democratic regimes as the consequence of citizen evaluations of the economic and political performance of those regimes (Mishler & Rose, 2001). In the same way that institutional theories conceive of regime support as the product of citizen evaluations of the regime's performance, institutional trust is conceived by institutional theories as the expected utility of institutions performing well (see, e.g., Coleman, 1990, pp. 99ff; Dasgupta, 1988; Hetherington, 1998).

Although institutional and cultural theories disagree about the importance of trust for democratic regimes, surprisingly little systematic research directly addresses the connection (exceptions include Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Hetherington, 1998; Norris, 1999). There is a substantial literature on the origins and extent of trust—for example, the debate between Miller (1974a,

others are more statistical and probabilistic (see Mishler & Pollack, 2003, for a fuller discussion). Notwithstanding these differences, there are sufficient commonalities among these theories with regard to the emphasis given to trust as a necessary condition for democratic regimes to justify their common treatment. Our position in this regard is consistent with Eckstein's (1988) claim that "political culture theory may plausibly be considered one of two still viable general approaches to political theory and explanation proposed since the early fifties . . . the other being political rational choice theory" (p. 789).

2. Just as cultural theories differ in important respects while sharing fundamental assumptions, so also there are differences in emphasis and orientation among institutional theories. Common to institutional theories, however, is the core assumption that political institutions and behavior are the products of rational choice and purposive design based variously on individual and collective evaluations of institutional performance (see, e.g., North, 1990).

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1974b) and Citrin (1974) and Citrin and Luks (2001), as well as Mishler and Rose (2001)—but most research accepts uncritically the assumption that trust is necessary for democracy's survival and effective functioning.³

This research addresses this neglect and considers systematically the consequences of trust for regime support, democratic values, and political involvement in Russia. We analyze data from the *New Russia Barometer X* (NRB X; Rose, 2001), a nationwide survey of Russian citizens conducted in 2001. The Russian case is of particular interest because the regime is new and in continuing transition from an authoritarianism past and because political and social trust, democratic values, and citizen support for the new regime all vary widely there. Our analysis begins by considering in greater detail the theoretical arguments about the political importance of trust. We then construct a structural equation model that we use to test the hypothesized effects of trust. The results show that the consequences of institutional and interpersonal trust in Russia are considerably more limited than cultural theories presuppose. Institutional hypotheses about the importance of political and economic performance receive much greater support. Nevertheless, the effects, especially of institutional trust, are sufficient to suggest that cultural theories cannot be dismissed altogether and need to be integrated with institutional theories in a synthetic model.

THEORETICAL CONSEQUENCES OF TRUST

Cultural theories of democracy offer three distinct but interrelated perspectives regarding how and why trust matters. First, trust is hypothesized to increase public support for democratic regimes. At the most fundamental level, trust in political institutions is considered a source of *diffuse support*; some even hold that the two are synonymous (see, e.g., Braithwaite & Levi, 1998; Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Easton, 1965; Gibson et al., 1998). Trust is hypothesized to have *direct* effects on both the survival of the regime and its effective functioning. It creates a fiduciary relationship between government and the governed, allowing the former to make decisions that provide long-term benefits to citizens even if those decisions are unpopular in the short run (Bianco, 1994; Weatherford, 1984, 1989). Cultural theories frequently conceive of the relationship between institutional trust and regime support as

3. Uslaner (2002) is exceptional for devoting a full chapter to trust's consequences, although he is skeptical of the political consequences of trust, arguing that trust influences political outcomes only, or at least largely, in broad contextual ways. His work also is unusual in that his focus is on a form of social trust (moral trust in impersonal others) whose principal consequences are increased charity work and volunteerism.

reciprocal. Trust contributes to effective performance, which contributes in turn to popular support for the regime. Support, then, “feeds back” to encourage further trust, which enhances political performance and support even more (Easton, 1965).

Second, cultural theories hypothesize that trust facilitates the public’s acceptance of *democratic values and ideals* (Norris, 1999) and its rejection of *undemocratic alternatives* (Muller, Jukam, & Seligson, 1982; Rose, Mishler, & Haerpfer, 1998). To the extent that democratic values contribute to support for democratic regimes, then political trust may have both direct and *indirect* effects on regime support. From a cultural perspective, popular distrust of democratic institutions not only undermines their legitimacy and stability but also threatens to increase support for undemocratic regimes.

Third, cultural theories hypothesize that trust promotes both the quality and quantity of *political involvement* (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Norris, 1999; Putnam, 1993, 2000). Trust strengthens citizens’ beliefs that government is responsive and encourages citizens to express their demands via participation in activities from voting to joining organizations. The feedback from government actions in response to such demands reinforces trust in a recursive process in which trust is both cause and consequence, depending on the point of entry into the process.

In addition to the traditional emphasis on trust in political institutions, there is a growing literature emphasizing social or interpersonal trust (Uslaner, 2002, provides an excellent summary). According to this perspective, the impact of interpersonal trust on support for democratic regimes is indirect and mediated through trust in institutions. Interpersonal trust is generated through face-to-face interactions among individuals in informal groups. This trust “spills over” into cooperation with others in local civic associations and then “spills up,” contributing to public trust in representative institutions (Putnam, 1993).

In this sense, cultural theories posit a hierarchy of trust. The base of the hierarchy consists of the strong interpersonal bonds of trust among family members and members of face-to-face groups originating in socialization experiences linked to the individual’s position in society. A second level of “impersonal trust” extends to individuals who are not known personally and results from the generalization of personal trust discounted by the psychological distance of impersonal “others.” A third level of trust extends to political institutions, reflecting the spill over of interpersonal trust. Fukuyama (1995) suggests that the “radius” of trust (or the extent of this hierarchy) varies across cultures. In some, it is so short that citizens trust only those they know well. In other cultures or contexts, trust extends beyond family and

friends to other citizens but excludes political institutions. In a civic culture, the radius of trust encompasses political institutions too.

The relationship between interpersonal and institutional trust, however, is controversial. Although Putnam (1993) conceives of the relationship as unidirectional (e.g., interpersonal trust leads to institutional trust), others argue that it is reciprocal and that confidence in political institutions is as likely to influence interpersonal trust as the opposite is to occur (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). Still others doubt that any relationship exists between social and political trust (Newton, 1999).

Institutional theories, by contrast, challenge the importance of trust for democratic regimes and question whether trust is a cultural characteristic. Cultural theories view trust as intergenerationally transmitted and deeply embedded in society, whereas institutional theories hold that trust is produced by the same influences that generate support for democratic regimes; it is a rational response to institutional performance (Jackman & Miller, 1996; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Economic performance typically is conceived as the primary source of both political support and institutional trust, but political performance, including the protection of civil liberties, the reduction of corruption, and the establishment of the rule of law has received increasing emphasis (Gibson, 1993; Rose et al., 1998). The institutional claim that political trust and regime support emanate from the same causes raises the possibility that any relationship observed between trust and regime support may be spurious rather than causal.

Culturalists acknowledge that political performance can affect both political trust and regime support but insist that cultural influences are deeper and more profound. Moreover, they argue that evaluations of political and economic performance often are culturally conditioned (Eckstein, 1988). Corruption, for example, is more widespread and more widely accepted in some cultures than in others. Where this is the case, corruption perceptions may be less salient and have weaker effects on both institutional trust and popular support for the regime compared to contexts where corruption is less culturally ingrained.

MEASURING TRUST AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Trust should be especially important and its consequences particularly evident in new or transitional regimes that typically inherit a "trust deficit" by virtue of the legacy of the former authoritarian regime (Linz & Stepan, 1996). This is certainly the case in Russia, which has some of the lowest

macro-levels of trust (but also some of the greatest micro-level variation in trust) among post-Communist regimes. Although Russia falls short of meeting most conventional definitions of *democracy*, the current regime is certainly more open and pluralistic than its Communist predecessor. Relatively free elections are now routine, and citizens enjoy greater civil and political rights than under the old regime (Rose & Munro, 2002). Moreover, although public support for the new regime initially was very low, the accession of Vladimir Putin to the presidency in 1999 and the improvement of economic conditions since the bottom of the ruble crisis in 1998 have been accompanied by a significant, albeit far from universal, upswing in public attitudes toward the regime (for time series data, see www.RussiaVotes.org). The critical nature of trust for the Russian transition combined with the substantial variation in both trust and regime support across the population make Russia an excellent setting in which to assess trust's political consequences.

To undertake this assessment, we use data from the NRB X (Rose, 2001), which was organized by the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at University of Strathclyde and conducted by the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM). Face-to-face surveys were conducted between June 17 and July 2, 2001 with a national probability sample of 2,000 Russian citizens age 18 and older (for full details, see Centre for the Study of Public Policy, n.d.). The NRB X measures institutional trust by asking, "To what extent do you trust each of these political institutions to look after your interests? Please indicate on a scale from 1, for the complete absence of trust, to 7, for great trust." Institutions include "political parties," "the president of Russia," "the governor of this region," "Duma members," "the Duma representative of the single member district in which you live," "the Constitutional Court," "the police," "the Army," and "the Federal Security Service." The NRB X measures interpersonal trust on the same 7-point Likert-type scale asking, "To what extent do you trust the following groups in society?" The groups listed include "most people in this country" and separately, "most people you know."

Table 1 reports the distributions of trust in Russia for nine political institutions and two measures of interpersonal trust. Although trust varies significantly both within and among institutions, no Russian institution is positively trusted by more than one third of Russians.⁴ Even skeptical Russians are in

4. In interpreting Russian responses on the 7-point trust scale, we label those responding 1 or 2 as distrusting. Those responding 6 or 7 are considered positively trusting, and those responding 3, 4, or 5 are considered to be skeptical. This is consistent with Mishler and Rose's (1997) analysis of trust, distrust, and skepticism toward political institutions in nine post-Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe.

Table 1
Trust, Distrust, and Skepticism in Russia, 2001

	% Distrusting		% Skeptical			% Trusting		7-Point Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Institutional Trust									
President of Russia	14	9	9	18	19	16	15	4.3	2
Army	16	11	15	23	17	10	7	3.7	1.8
Governor of region	22	15	12	19	15	9	9	3.5	1.9
Federal Security Service	22	14	17	22	13	8	4	3.3	1.7
Constitutional Court	24	15	17	21	13	5	5	3.2	1.7
Police	32	19	17	18	7	3	3	2.7	1.6
Duma member of district	42	22	14	12	6	2	2	2.4	1.5
Duma member at large	44	22	15	12	4	2	1	2.2	1.4
Political parties	48	21	13	12	4	1	2	2.1	1.4
Interpersonal trust									
Russians you know	6	5	11	22	20	23	13	4.6	1.7
Other Russians	11	12	17	27	19	9	5	3.7	1.6

Source: *New Russia Barometer X* (Rose, 2001).

Note: Median category in boldface type.

short supply compared to what has been reported in other post-Communist systems (see Mishler & Rose, 1997).

Although Russians express the greatest trust in the president, institutional trust in the presidency appears to be confounded with personal trust in President Putin. Trust in the president in the NRB X (Rose, 2001) is more than twice as large as in 1998 when Boris Yeltsin was president, whereas trust in other institutions is roughly the same across the two periods (not shown). Still, the average Russian is skeptical of President Putin, and trust in the president, as in all political institutions, varies widely across the population.

Consistent with cultural expectations, the structure of trust in Russia is hierarchical, but its radius is short. Although 36% of Russians positively trust most people they know, only 14% trust other Russians. Trust in "others" is higher, however, than trust in seven of the nine political institutions. Still, skepticism defines the median orientation of Russians toward other citizens and toward the majority of institutions as well. Equally important, the variance in all forms of trust within Russia is substantial.

The NRB X includes multiple indicators of the hypothesized consequences of trust, including public support for the post-Communist regime, for democratic values, and for a variety of alternative authoritarian regimes (see the appendix for question wording, means, and standard deviations). A decade into the transition, Russians differ widely in their support for the new

regime. A plurality (45%) express positive support, whereas only 37% express negative evaluations. The median citizen is neutral toward the regime. This, however, is a significant improvement from 1994 (see the *NRB IV*; Rose, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, & All-Russian Centre for Public Opinion, 1995), when a majority (54%) of Russians expressed negative opinions about the new regime and only 26% positively supported it.

As in virtually all countries where the question is asked, a large majority of Russians (67%) say that they want their country to be a democracy. When pressed, a little more than one quarter say they would prefer democracy regardless of circumstances, whereas nearly one third say that there are certain situations in which an authoritarian regime might be better. Still, about one half think that Russia is suitable for democracy; 42% say that it became a democracy in 2001.

A political regime does not need to be fully democratic to be preferred by citizens over undemocratic alternatives (Rose & Mishler, 1996). Russians have firsthand experience with the current regime and its authoritarian predecessor and are able to compare the two. When asked if they favor restoration of the former Communist system, 47% of Russians say that they do, although this figure may be inflated because less than one quarter of Russians actually vote for the Communist party when given the opportunity. Perhaps more indicative of the number of Russians who prefer an authoritarian regime are the 32% who say they prefer a dictatorship compared to the current system or the 15% who favor army rule.

Political involvement is integral to the democratic ideal, and cultural theories consistently postulate that trust encourages participation. When asked if they voted in the presidential election a year earlier, 67% of Russians say they did, a figure within 1 percentage point of official reports and a higher level than in the most recent elections in the United States and Britain. Russians also report discussing politics about as frequently as citizens in established democracies, and levels of political knowledge in Russia are comparable as well.

MODELING THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRUST

Cultural theories treat political and social trust as central elements in a web of causal linkages involving political socialization, institutional performance, political support, and citizen involvement in political life. Figure 1 diagrams these hypothesized linkages and illustrates the centrality of trust in cultural theories. It also emphasizes the potentially reciprocal influences among key components of the model and underscores the difficulty of esti-

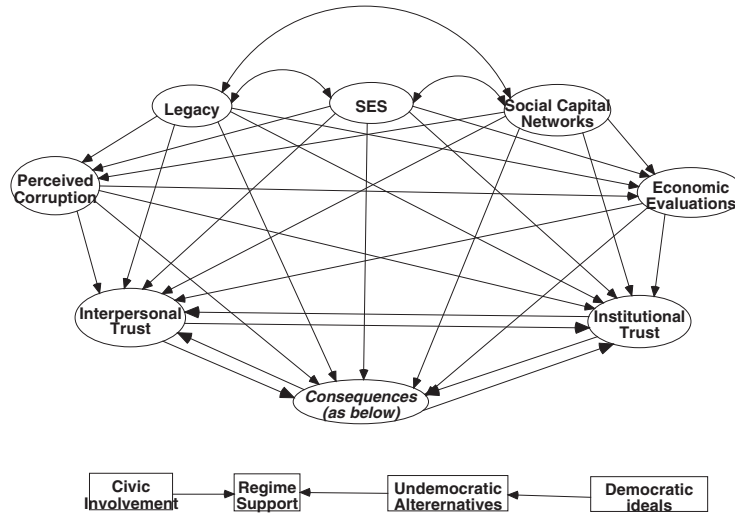


Figure 1. Hypothetical model of the political consequences of institutional and interpersonal trust.

Note: SES = socioeconomic status.

matting the importance of trust given the complexity even of this simplified causal web.⁵

Methodologically, conventional single equation techniques are not well suited to estimating the overall impact of trust within this network. Single equation techniques measure only the direct, unidirectional effects of variables and are insensitive to both indirect and reciprocal effects, which are potentially substantial in this model.⁶ To overcome these problems, we use structural equation modeling (SEM) to assess the political consequences of

5. Although the model is complex, it is highly simplified compared to a "saturated" model (i.e., one containing all possible reciprocal linkages among all variables). The latter would include more than 130 linkages compared to the fewer than 50 linkages in Figure 1. One important simplification imposed on the model is the incorporation of reciprocal linkages only between interpersonal and institutional trust and between both types of trust and regime support. Our discussion of cultural theory suggests that reciprocal linkages may also be warranted between trust and its other hypothesized consequences, especially political involvement. Unfortunately, estimating even three reciprocal linkages in the model proved to be a daunting task, and the specification of additional reciprocal linkages proved impossible to identify.

6. Although two stage least squares and traditional causal modeling methods can be used to estimate reciprocal links and calculate indirect effects, full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation procedures are superior. FIML requires fewer and less-restrictive assumptions and uses the entire model to calculate estimates. The advantages of FIML are especially strong when the system of equations is overidentified.

trust. SEM is a class of statistical procedures that simultaneously estimates a set of interrelated equations. An important feature of these procedures is that they permit the estimation of the direct, indirect, and reciprocal effects within a complex model. They also estimate a series of measurement models of underlying concepts or latent variables, such as institutional trust and democratic ideals and corruption, which cannot be directly observed but must be constructed from multiple indicators.⁷ The version of SEM used in this study, AMOS, employs full information maximum likelihood estimators (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1995; Kline, 1998). Among other benefits, full information maximum likelihood estimators provide a superior method for handling missing data compared to that typically available when ordinary least squares estimators are used.

Although SEM provides simultaneous estimates of the measurement models for latent variables and of the structural equations that link them, it is useful to treat these as separate and discrete “steps” for clarity of exposition. Thus the next section provides a brief discussion of the measurement models after which we turn to an assessment of the structural equations.

MEASUREMENT MODELS

For each of the concepts in Figure 1 (except current regime support, which is measured directly by a single variable) confirmatory factor analysis assesses the relative contribution or “fit” of each indicator to its hypothesized latent construct. (The appendix reports the standardized factor loadings of the several indicators on their respective latent variables.) In most cases, our expectations regarding the measurement of latent concepts are confirmed.

In research on trust in post-Communist regimes in East-Central Europe, Mishler and Rose (1997, 2001) demonstrate that trust for political institutions in new regimes is fundamentally one-dimensional. Although citizens in established democracies may distinguish among institutions and evaluate each of them independently, citizens of new regimes are ill equipped to make fine-grained distinctions among institutions with which they have little experience. In Russia, the SEM confirms that a single dimension underlies public trust in the nine political institutions. Confirmatory factor analysis loadings of trust in the nine institutions on this single dimension range from .58 to .74 (see appendix). This does not mean that Russians trust all political institu-

7. A *latent variable* is defined as two or more observed variables, each of which are assumed to be generated partly by a common underlying attribute and partly by a unique or variable specific attribute including error. A measurement model analyzes the relationships among the observed indicators and estimates (“constructs”) an empirical measure of the latent variable based on the commonality in the indicators.

tions equally; they clearly do not (see Table 1). Nor does it mean that the sources of trust are identical for all institutions. Rather, the measurement model assumes that trust in each institution is partly a function of a single underlying dynamic (or dimension) common to all institutions but also partly a function of institution-specific dynamics including both “uniqueness” and measurement error. The latent variable for trust measures, in essence, the commonality in Russians’ trust across the nine institutions.

A similar pattern is evident for interpersonal trust. Although Russians are more trusting of people they know than of unknown others, the measurement model confirms that there is a high degree of commonality between the two with confirmatory factor analysis loadings of .89 and .65. Equally important, the measurement models confirm that interpersonal trust is distinct from trust in political institutions. Although there is a significant relationship between the two constructs, as discussed below, the commonality among their individual indicators greatly exceeds the relationship between the two constructs and their respective indicators.

Current regime support is measured directly by a single thermometer-style variable and does not require construction of a measurement model. In contrast, because citizens may support a variety of alternative undemocratic regimes, three indicators are used to measure popular support for undemocratic regimes, including a return to Communist rule, army rule, and dictatorship. As expected, all three alternatives load strongly on a single dimension. Support for a return to Communist rule contributes most to this construct (with a loading of .76), but support for army rule (.45) and rule by a dictator (.50) contribute significantly as well.

Three indicators are used to measure public support for democratic ideals: the desirability of democracy, assessments of democracy as the best form of government, and the suitability of democracy for Russia. The three form a single dimension with loadings between .62 and .70. Among the four indicators used to measure political involvement, two contribute strongly to this latent variable: self-reported voting in the 2000 presidential election (.58) and perceived duty to vote (.52). Two others, talking about politics (.26) and political knowledge (.32), have smaller but statistically significant and correctly signed coefficients. Because a latent variable is a weighted index of the component indicators, the modest loadings of the knowledge and political discussion indicators mean that these variables contribute much less to the latent measure of political involvement than do voting and civic duty. They are included in the measure because they are statistically significant and have theoretical relevance and because excluding them does not appreciably change the analyses of interpretation.

Little agreement exists about the definition and measurement of social capital. Putnam (1997) defines the concept broadly in terms of three different “features of social life—networks, norms and trust” (p. 31), whereas Brehm and Rahn (1997) use interpersonal trust as a proxy for social capital.⁸ Both approaches conflate cause and effect in our model. In contrast, James Coleman (1990) defines social capital in terms of instrumental networks that vary with different situations. Coleman’s approach suggests measuring social capital in terms of the instrumental benefits that networks provide, for example, helping individuals in difficult situations. This approach is particularly relevant in Russia, where reliance on informal networks was common in Soviet times and persists today (Ledeneva, 1998; Shlapentokh, 1989). Thus in addition to a standard question about organizational memberships, the NRB X includes two direct measures of individuals’ social network resources: whether they could rely on anyone outside of the family to assist them if they “were seriously ill and needed some help in the house” or “needed to borrow as much as a week’s wages or pension.”⁹ Supporting criticisms of the use of trust to measure social capital, the SEM confirms that the interpersonal trust and social capital are empirically distinct and constitute separate latent variables that are weakly interrelated only. It also indicates that organizational memberships are significantly but only moderately related to the two instrumental indicators of social capital (the loading on the confirmatory factor analysis is 0.22). The indicators contributing most to social capital are those reflecting membership in networks that individuals believe will help them when they are ill or need money. Both have loadings of approximately .60 on the latent variable.

Although the Soviet Union disappeared a decade before the NRB X survey was conducted, memories of the old regime remain vivid for most Russians. To measure the Soviet legacy, Russians were asked to evaluate the political system as it existed before perestroika; the survey also asks citizens to evaluate the former socialist economic system. Compared to citizens of post-Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, Russians recall the

8. Another approach measures social capital indirectly in terms of the number of social organizations to which an individual belongs (Putnam, 1993, 2000). This also has been criticized, however, because of the differential effects of different types of organizations on social capital (a point acknowledged by Putnam) and because of the weak association observed between membership in organizations and the normative outcomes specified in Putnam’s work (Foley & Edwards, 1999; see also Booth & Richard, 1998; Eastis, 1998; Stolle & Rochon, 1998).

9. The difference between the indirect and direct measures of social capital is dramatic. Although only 8% of Russians report that they belong to any social organizations, more than 60% express confidence that they could rely on others for help if they became seriously ill, and fully three quarters say they could count on friends or relatives to lend them as much as a week’s wages if needed.

legacy of communism favorably (Rose, 2002). Nearly three quarters have positive memories of the old regime and 80% recall the socialist economy favorably. Confirmatory factor analysis shows that these indicators form a single latent measure of the Communist legacy.

Institutional theories stress the importance of citizens' political and economic performance evaluations as sources of both institutional trust and regime support (Jackman & Miller, 1996). For new or transitional regimes, corruption or the lack thereof is a principal standard of political performance. When public officials violate the rule of law and engage in corruption, public cynicism and distrust are likely results and threaten to undermine citizens' commitments to democratic ideas (cf. Gibson, 1993; Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 1995, 2001; Rose & Shin, 2001). The NRB X includes a series of questions about the perceived corruption of public officials in major political institutions. Overall, Russians rate the political performance of these officials negatively, although they distinguish, to a degree, among the different institutions. For example, 82% see the police as very or fairly corrupt, whereas "only" 46% regard the Federal Security Service as corrupt. Nevertheless, perceptions of political corruption load on a single dimension. Just as Russians trust or distrust political institutions according to a common underlying dynamic, they also assess the corruption of these institutions on a single dimension.

Citizen perceptions of economic performance initially were measured using a combination of sociotropic and egocentric evaluations (see, e.g., Clarke et al., 1992; Kiewiet, 1983; Kinder & Kiewiet, 1979; Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000), both retrospective and prospective evaluations (Chappell & Keech, 1985; Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981). The measurement model indicates, however, that sociotropic and egocentric measures are not part of a single construct in Russia. Instead, the egocentric measures load on the latent variable for socioeconomic status. Economic performance is measured, therefore, by retrospective and prospective sociotropic evaluations or macroeconomic performance, both of which load strongly on a single dimension.

Initially, we differentiated social status (age, education, gender, church attendance, and subjective status) from individual economic conditions (income, destitution,¹⁰ and current and future household economic circumstances). The SEM indicates, however, that there is a single underlying dimension linking the three economic indicators with age, education, and self-assessed social status. Therefore we revised the model in response by combining these six indicators into a single latent variable labeled socioeco-

10. Destitution is measured as the frequency and extent to which an individual has had to do without food, heat, and other necessities during the past year.

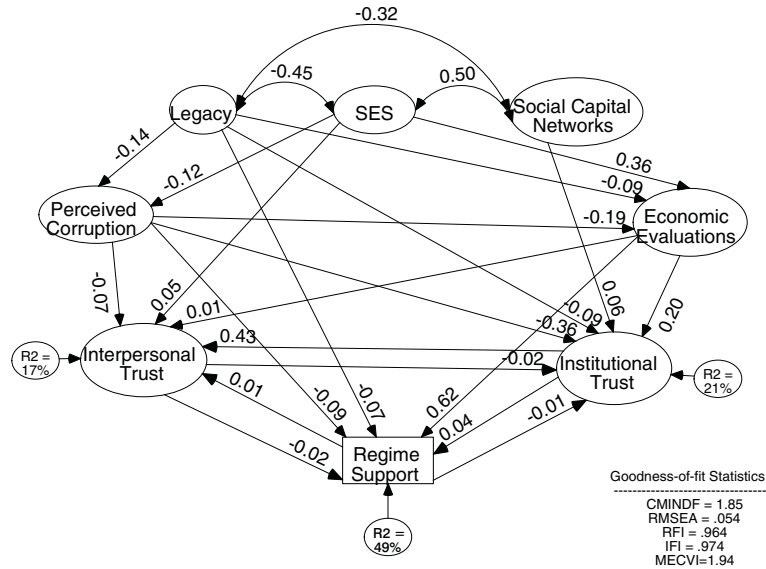


Figure 2. Structural equation model of institutional and interpersonal trust and regime support in Russia.

Note: Coefficients are standardized maximum likelihood estimates. CMINDF = relative chi-square statistic; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; RFI = relative fit index; IFI = incremental fit index; MECVI = an expected cross-validation index for maximum likelihood estimations.

conomic status. Contrary to expectations, neither gender nor church attendance load on this or with any other latent variable in the model and, therefore, are excluded from the revised model.¹¹

TRUST, PERFORMANCE, AND REGIME SUPPORT

The SEM tests cultural hypotheses regarding the political consequences of trust against institutional hypotheses that trust is irrelevant or spurious when performance evaluations are controlled. In Russia, the evidence shows that trust has small if any independent effects on support for the current regime. Figure 2 reports standardized maximum likelihood estimates for a reduced form, structural equation model of the impact of interpersonal and

11. Neither of these variables had significant independent effects on any of the outcome variables when included separately in the model.

political trust on support for the current regime.¹² (For clarity of exposition, the impact of trust on other hypothesized consequences is discussed separately below.) The statistics at the bottom of the figure show that the model fits the data very well.¹³ Moreover, the model accounts for nearly one half of the variance in support ($R^2 = .49$), albeit less of the variance in both interpersonal and institutional trust ($R^2 = .17$ and $.21$, respectively).

A comparison of the theoretical model in Figure 1 with the empirical model in Figure 2 shows that the overall network of relationships in practice is much “thinner” than cultural theory postulates. This is evident in the very small number of statistically significant linkages in Figure 2. It is important as well that trust appears much less central to this network than cultural theories predict.

Contradicting the cultural assumption that interpersonal trust spills over and up to create institutional trust, our model indicates that interpersonal trust has virtually no effect on institutional trust in Russia ($\beta = -.02$). The reciprocal effect of institutional trust on interpersonal trust ($\beta = .43$), however, is among the strongest in the model and is larger than the combined effects of all other causes on personal trust; when the effects of institutional trust are excluded, the remaining variables in Figure 2 account for less than 3% of the total variance in interpersonal trust. This result is consistent with Uslaner’s (2002) argument that generalized (i.e., interpersonal) trust is largely independent of experience and is akin to a basic personality trait that reflects “a basic sense of optimism and control” (p. 112; see also, Delhey & Newton, 2002).

Even more of a challenge to cultural theories is the evidence that neither interpersonal nor institutional trust directly influences support for the current regime. The direct effect of institutional trust on support ($\beta = .04$) is small and not statistically significant, as is the direct effect of interpersonal trust on support for the current regime ($\beta = -.02$). The reciprocal effects of regime

12. The diagram hides the measurement models for the latent variables to reduce clutter and to facilitate model interpretation. For the same reason, it does not show statistically non-significant linkages that do not directly involve trust or regime support. For clarity of exposition, other putative consequences of trust (e.g., support for democratic ideals, undemocratic alternative regimes, and level of political involvement), which are hidden in Figure 2, are discussed in a subsequent section.

13. Regarding the goodness of fit, the relative chi-square statistic ($cmin/df$) is less than 2.0, which according to a rule of thumb proposed by Carmines and McIver (1981), demonstrates an “acceptable fit between the hypothetical model and the sample data” (p. 80). The root mean square error of approximation is .05, which also indicates a good fit. Bollen’s (1986, 1989) relative fit index and incremental fit index are .97 and .98, respectively; values approaching 1.0 indicate a good fit. The MECVI (an expected cross-validation index for maximum likelihood estimations) is 1.94, which also falls within acceptable limits (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

support on political and on interpersonal trust are equally weak and non-significant (beta = $-.01$ and $.01$, respectively). Far from contributing to a virtuous cycle of trust and support for the regime, neither institutional nor interpersonal trust has any appreciable effect on political support, and political support has negligible effects on trust as well.

It is important that the simple correlations between regime support and the two measures of trust (interpersonal = $.09$ and institutional = $.24$) are statistically significant and positive as cultural theory predicts. Combined with the absence of direct causal links between trust and political support in Figure 2, this means that the simple correlations reflect spurious relationships that result from other underlying causes. The “culprit” in the case of institutional trust is easily discerned. As institutional theories suggest, both economic performance and corruption have very strong, direct effects both on the level of institutional trust and on support for the regime. If these performance variables are removed from the model, the impact of institutional trust on regime support becomes statistically significant and relatively strong (beta = $.14$, not shown). When the effects of performance are controlled, however, the relationship between institutional trust and support disappears, a classic indicator of a spurious relationship. The underlying dynamic for interpersonal trust is less pronounced but much the same. The null relationship results from the substantial dependence of interpersonal trust directly on institutional trust and indirectly on both economic and political performance.

The limited effects of trust on regime support in Russia are consistent with the weak effects on trust of other cultural indicators including socioeconomic status, social capital, and the socialized legacy of the old regime. Although the strong correlations among these three variables testify to the coherence of Russian political culture, none of these latent variables has strong or consistent effects on institutional or interpersonal trust or on support for the regime.

The weak effects of the several cultural indicators on support for the regime stand in marked contrast to the strong effects of the two indicators of institutional performance, perceived corruption and economic evaluations. Unlike post-Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, where both economic and political performance assessments have relatively equal effects on regime support (Mishler & Rose, 2002), in Russia, economic evaluations clearly dominate (beta = $.62$). Perceptions of political corruption, although statistically significant and properly signed, have more modest effects on regime support (beta = $-.09$). Corruption has stronger effects on trust in political institutions (beta = $-.36$), although economic evaluations are important in this regard as well (beta = $.20$).

The greater importance of performance compared to culture in this model can be illustrated by omitting the performance variables and reestimating the

model. When only cultural variables are included, the explained variance in regime support drops from 49% for the full model to only 5% (not shown). The dominant influence of economic evaluations and corruption perceptions confirms institutional arguments that institutional trust and regime support are both products of citizen evaluations of institutional performance.

DEMOCRATIC IDEALS, UNDEMOCRATIC ALTERNATIVES, AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

In addition to the effects of trust on support for the current regime, cultural theories hypothesize that interpersonal and institutional trust facilitate citizens' embrace of democratic values, promote the rejection of undemocratic alternatives, and increase political involvement. Theory further provides that cultural influences on democratic attitudes can be either direct or mediated through the intervening effects of culture on perceptions of institutional performance. Table 2 reports the SEM results for these additional cultural hypotheses, including both direct and indirect effects. These results are reported in tabular form because of the complexity of the SEM diagram when the links to these additional variables are displayed.

The evidence in Table 2 reinforces earlier conclusions about the minimal relevance of interpersonal trust. In fact, interpersonal trust has no appreciable effects, direct or indirect, on any of democratic attributes. Table 2 provides a more nuanced picture of the effects of institutional trust. Although institutional trust has negligible effects, direct or indirect, on support for the current regime or for undemocratic alternative regimes, it does have moderate net effects (i.e., direct plus indirect effects) on support for democratic ideals. It also has strong effects on political involvement; institutional trust increases support for democratic ideals (beta = .14) and encourages political involvement (beta = .25). The effects of other cultural influences are slightly different. Although the legacy of communism has minimal net effects on current regime support, it has substantial effects on support for undemocratic regimes and on democratic ideals.¹⁴ Moreover, social capital has strong direct

14. It is interesting that socioeconomic status has substantial indirect effects on realist regime support, owing largely to its strong effects on economic evaluations and significant but more modest effects on corruption perceptions. Previous research using ordinary least squares models of political support usually show little direct effect of social position on support for post-Communist regimes (Rose, Mishler, & Haerpfer, 1998). In contrast, the current analysis suggests that the indirect effects of socioeconomic status are considerable. Two points need to be made in this regard, however. Rather than contradicting earlier research, this shows the value of a more sophisticated modeling strategy that measures both the direct and indirect effects of variables. In addition, the measure of social structure used in this analysis is much broader than that used in previous analyses. Although interest in the past has centered on putative indicators of early life

Table 2
Direct, Indirect, and Net Effects (Standardized) of Institutional and Interpersonal Trust on Regime Support and Political Involvement in Russia

Variable	Current Regime Support			Undemocratic Regime			Democratic Ideal			Political Involvement		
	Direct	Indirect	Net	Direct	Indirect	Net	Direct	Indirect	Net	Direct	Indirect	Net
Interpersonal trust	-0.02	0.00	-0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.02
Institutional trust	0.04	0.00	0.03	-0.05	0.03	-0.02	0.13	0.01	0.14	0.25	0.02	0.27
Economic evaluations	0.62	0.03	0.65	-0.17	-0.02	-0.21	0.09	0.03	0.12	-0.03	0.05	0.02
Corruption perceptions	-0.09	-0.14	-0.23	0.04	0.03	0.07	-0.01	-0.07	-0.08	0.00	-0.09	-0.09
Socioeconomic status	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.00	-0.07	-0.07	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.11	-0.02	0.09
Social capital	0.00	0.05	0.05	-0.20	-0.10	-0.30	0.24	0.01	0.25	0.12	0.02	0.14
Communist legacy	-0.07	0.06	-0.01	0.42	0.11	0.53	-0.26	-0.01	-0.26	-0.03	-0.02	-0.05
Undemocratic regimes	-0.10	0.00	-0.10	a	a	a	b	b	b	0.00	0.00	0.00
Democratic ideals	0.06	0.04	0.10	-0.42	0.00	-0.44	a	a	a	0.00	0.00	0.00
Political involvement	0.02	0.00	0.02	b	b	b	b	b	b	a	a	a
R^2		0.49			0.74			0.22			0.08	

Source: *New Russia Barometer X* (Rose, 2001).

Note: Net = direct + indirect effects; a = variable not included in equation for itself; b = variable not included in equation because of one-way causal specification.

and indirect effects on the rejection of undemocratic regimes and as hypothesized by Putnam (1993, 2000), has strong direct effects on democratic ideals.

It is interesting that the influence of institutional performance appears to complement cultural influences in the model in the sense that they appear to contribute to different types of democratic attributes. Economic evaluations, for example, have their strongest direct effects on current regime support and their smallest on democratic ideals. Corruption perceptions show a similar pattern. Cultural influences, in contrast, have little impact on support for real regimes but significantly greater effects on democratic ideals. Although attitudes about democracy appear to be culturally conditioned, Russians appear more likely to judge the current regime in terms of its honesty and effectiveness in addressing the problems that matter to them at the moment, especially the economy. Support for undemocratic regimes occupies a middle position. Consistent with this pattern, the evidence at the bottom of Table 2 shows that support for undemocratic alternatives is strongly and negatively influenced by support for democratic ideals ($\beta = -.42$), whereas support for undemocratic alternative regimes has more modest and negative effects on support for the current regime ($\beta = -.10$).

Institutional trust has important consequences in one other respect; it contributes significantly to political involvement. Citizens who are more trusting of political institutions are more likely to vote, follow politics, feel a sense of civic duty, and have high levels of political knowledge. Interpersonal trust, however, has virtually no effects in these regards. Social capital has moderate but significant effects on political involvement. Predictably, perceptions of government corruption discourage citizen involvement (albeit indirectly), whereas negative assessments of economic performance have equally modest but more direct effects. These conclusions must be qualified, however, by the overall weakness of the equation for political involvement ($R^2 = .08$), whose fit to the data is by far the weakest in the model.

IMPLICATIONS

Cultural theories of democracy emphasize the importance of interpersonal and institutional trust for new regimes, especially those attempting the transition to democracy. In post-Communist countries, the existence of very low levels of trust should destabilize the new regimes, promote support for

socialization such as age cohort, education level, and gender, the current indicator is dominated by contemporary, personal economic indicators such as income, economic deprivation, and household financial situation.

undemocratic alternative regimes, undermine support for democratic values, and discourage citizen involvement in politics. In fact, this has not happened. Eight post-Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe are now stable democratic members of the EU with levels of citizen involvement on a par with those of other EU members. Russia, in 1991, was “partly free” (www.freedomhouse.org) rather than democratic, but the new regime enjoyed considerable support, which has grown even further in the interim (Rose, 2004). This raises the question, How can new regimes survive, much less make the transition to democracy, when there is so little trust among citizens in political institutions or other citizens?

Our analysis provides a possible answer: Although trust in political institutions encourages citizen involvement in politics and enhances support for democratic ideals, it does not influence citizens’ support for the current regime or for plausible undemocratic alternatives. Interpersonal trust is even less important in these regards.

With respect to Russia, support for the post-Communist regime, although increasing with time, remains very low. Trust in its new political institutions is lower still. The relationship between the two, however, is not one of cause and effect. The lack of institutional trust and the limited support for the new regime are both products of a common underlying dynamic—citizen assessments of the failure of political institutions to curb corruption and provide reasonable economic stability and growth. It follows from this that improvements in political and economic performance will enhance both trust and political support in Russia. It is important that the transition in Russia is not doomed by the legacy of an authoritarian past. Nor must Russia wait generations for its culture to change before sufficient trust can exist for democracy to flourish. Russians will begin to trust political institutions and to support the new regime when the regime begins to prove itself worthy of trust by honestly and effectively addressing the political and economic issues of greatest concern to its citizens.

More generally, our analyses demonstrate—as V. O. Key (1966) observes, with respect to American voters years ago—that “citizens are not fools.” Regimes, democratic or otherwise, cannot count on the blind trust of their citizens to support them regardless of how they perform. Neither must they fear the blind opposition of citizens who may have developed an abiding distrust for untrustworthy political institutions under previous regimes. Rather, citizens appear to evaluate a new regime largely on the basis of its political and economic performance.

This is not to suggest that culture is unimportant or that institutional performance is all that matters. To the contrary, our evidence suggests that social capital and institutional trust both contribute in important ways to democratic

values and to citizen involvement in politics. In the short run, it does not appear that these democratic values and practices contribute substantially to support for the new regime, but it is plausible that they will become more important sources of political support in the longer term as these values and practices become more deeply rooted in society (if they do) and as the political regime becomes more authentically democratic (if it does). Although institutional influences dominate the model of political support for Russia, as is likely to be the case for most new or transitional regimes (see Mishler & Rose, 2001), cultural influences plausibly might play a more important, albeit indirect or conditioning, role in generating support in older, more established democratic regimes. This suggests that the rejection of cultural theory may be premature and that the integration of cultural and institutional theory such as we have attempted in this analysis may provide a more general explanation of regime support. Such a possibility, however, remains to be tested with other data in more established democratic contexts.

APPENDIX
Coding of Variables

Latent Variable	Indicator	CFA	Question Wording and Coding	M	SD
Institutional trust			To what extent do you trust each of these political institutions to look after your interests? Please indicate on a scale where 1 indicates a complete lack of trust and 7 indicates great trust:		
	Pres	0.61	The President of Russia	4.3	2.0
	Gov	0.60	Governor of this region	3.5	1.9
	FSB	0.70	Federal Security Service	3.3	1.7
	Army	0.61	Army	3.7	1.8
	Court	0.63	Constitutional Court	3.2	1.7
	SMD	0.71	Duma representative in the Single Member District in which you live	2.4	1.5
	Duma	0.74	Other Duma members	2.2	1.4
	Police	0.63	Police	2.7	1.6
	Parties	0.58	Political Parties	2.1	1.4
Interpersonal trust	Known	0.89	And to what extent do you trust the following groups in society to look after your interests: Most people you know	4.6	1.1
	Unknown	0.65	Most people in country	3.7	1.6
Regime support			Here is a scale for evaluating the political system. The top, +100, is the best; the bottom, -100 is the worst. Where would you put our current political system on the scale? There are different opinions about what should be the nature of the state. To what extent do you 1. Strongly Agree; 2. Agree; 3. Disagree; 4. Strongly Disagree that:	-1.9	50.1
			It would be better to restore the Communist system	2.5	1.1
Undemocratic support	Comrul	0.76	The Army should govern	3.3	0.8
	Army	0.45	A tough Dictator is the only way out	3.0	1.0

Democratic idealism							
Desire	0.63	Here is a scale ranging from a low of 1 and a high of 10 where 1 means complete dictatorship and 10 means complete democracy. Where would you like our country to be placed?	7.0	2.7			
Suitable Best	0.7 0.62	How suitable [on this same 10 point scale] do you think democracy is for our country? Which of the following do you agree with most? 1. Democracy is always preferable to any other kind of government; 2. In certain situations authoritarian government is preferable; 3. It doesn't matter to me whether we have a democratic or nondemocratic government. (Percent #1)	5.8	2.7			
Political involvement							
Talkpol	0.26	How often do you discuss Politics? 4. Often; 3. Sometimes; 2. Seldom; 1. Never	2.5	1.0			
Polknow	0.32	Number of office holders named: Governor of region; Prime Minister of Russia; Duma district member	1.6	0.9			
Duty	0.52	What should people like yourself do when there is a national election? 1. Make every effort to vote; 2. If it's not convenient no need to vote; 3. No point voting; it doesn't do any good (Percent #1)	55	4.9			
Voted	0.58	Did you vote in the presidential election held a year ago in March? (Percent yes)	67	4.7			
Corruption		How common do you think bribe taking and corruption are in [institution]? 1. practically none; 2. not much; 3. quite a lot; 4. totally corrupt. (Percent 3 + 4)					
Duma	0.74	Duma	3.0	0.8			
Army	0.6	Army	2.8	0.8			
Police	0.64	Police	3.1	0.7			
FSB	0.64	Federal Security Service	2.5	0.9			
Pres	0.67	Presidential Administration	2.6	1.0			
Local	0.7	Local Government	3.0	0.8			
Economic evaluations		Here is a scale for evaluating how well the economy works. Plus 100, is the best; minus 100 is the worst. Where on this scale would you put:					
Econow	0.9	Our Current Economic System?	-12.0	50.5			
Econfut	0.69	Our Economic System in Five Years?	15.7	52.5			

APPENDIX (continued)

Latent Variable	Indicator	CFA	Question Wording and Coding	M	SD
Communist legacy	Comreg	0.82	Here is a scale for evaluating the political/economic system. The top, +100, is the best; the bottom, -100, is the worst.		
	Comecon	0.76	Where would you put the political system we had before perestrojka? Where would you put the economic system before perestrojka?	34.3 43.6	49.9 45.7
Social capital	Numorg	0.22	Do you belong to any of the following: Sport or recreation group; musical, literary or art group; group to improve your block/neighborhood; charitable organization; none? (Percent belonging to at least one)	7.9	2.7
	Helpill	0.57	If you were seriously ill and needed some help in the house, is there anyone outside your family that you could count on to help? 4. definitely; 3. probably; 2. probably not; 1. definitely not. (Percent 1 + 2)	2.8	1.0
Socioeconomic status	Helpcash	0.6	Could you borrow as much as a week's wages or pension from a friend of relative? 4. definitely; 3. probably; 2. probably not; 1. definitely not.	3.1	0.9
	Destitute	0.54	In the past 12 months have you or your family often, sometimes, rarely, or never had to do without: Food; Heating/Electricity; Clothes, shoes that really are a necessity? Scale ranging from 0 (never deprived of any) to 9 (often deprived of all 3)	3.8	2.5
	Famsit	0.55	How would you compare your family's current economic situation with what it was before perestrojka? 1. much better now; 2. somewhat better; 3. same; 4. somewhat worse; 5. much worse now	3.2	1.4
	Income	0.6	After paying taxes, what salary or income did you earn from your main job in the past month including money you have earned but not yet received (coded into quartiles).	2.5	1.1
	Sesnow	0.57	In our society, there are people of high social position and people of low social position. On this scale where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest, where would you place yourself now?	4.2	2.1

Age	0.51	Self-Reported Age in years.	45	17.5
Educ	0.49	1. Incomplete secondary education or less; 2. Secondary/Vocational; 3. Some higher education or more	2.4	0.52

Source: All variables from *New Russia Barometer X* (Rose, 2001; see also Centre for the Study of Public Policy, n.d.).

Note: CFA = standardized loadings of the indicators on a latent variable constructed via confirmatory factor analysis.

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