

Communism's Shadow: Post-Communist Legacies and Political Behavior

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Abstract: Twenty years after the collapse of communism, a rough consensus in the literature on post-communist politics is that the past matters; many questions remain, however, about exactly how, when, and why the past matters, especially in terms of political behavior. To address this gap in the literature, we present a systematic framework for considering the effect of communist era legacies on post-communist political behavior, including a set of mechanism by which these effects can be transmitted and a set of questions related to political behavior about which we expect legacy effects may be particularly important. We also address methodological questions associated with testing the effects of legacies, and provide an example of how the framework can be applied by examining the issue of trust in political parties.

Legacies: Why?

Political behavior, which we define as the way in which ordinary citizens do or do not interact with the political world, has long fascinated political scientists. However, the vast majority of work on most topics of political behavior – including studies of voting, partisanship, political participation, public opinion formation, social movements and protests – has focused on such behavior in advanced established democracies, and especially in the United States.¹ As political behavior is ultimately rooted in the actions of individuals, there is no reason to assume that the factors that explain political behavior ought not to be universal: for example, there is no first principle that suggests that the way in which a citizen forms an opinion about a policy proposal ought to *a priori* to be different in Boston, Bolivia, or Bulgaria. At the same time, we have long been aware that *context* matters for political behavior (Powell and Whitten 1993).

In addition to the literature on political behavior in established democracies, a small but growing body of research has emerged that analyzes political behavior in post-communist countries.² As with analyses of other features of post-communist political systems, much of the literature on political behavior in post-communist countries has reserved a place for “legacies” as an explanatory factor. In most cases, the legacy in question is from the communist era, although some studies even harken back to the pre-communist era (Wittenberg 2006; Darden and Grzymala-Busse 2006). But regardless of its source, there is by now a fairly strong consensus that post-communism did not represent a “blank slate”, and thus attempts to explain post-communist politics can often be enhanced by taking account of historical legacies. In terms of political behavior, we can therefore think of these legacies as a set of theoretical arguments about

¹ The study of protest may be a bit of an exception, with non-democratic societies such as Poland and South Africa also playing an important role. But even here, the American civil rights movement has formed the background for seminal works in the field (e.g., Chong 1991).

² For a review of the literature on elections and voting in post-communist countries, see Tucker (2002).

why political behavior in ex-communist countries ought (or ought not) to differ from political behavior in other countries. While such arguments have been prevalent in the literature on post-communist political behavior, we lack a unifying framework for discussing these arguments in conjunction with one another.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to remedy this gap by proposing an overarching theoretical framework for thinking about the effects of legacies on political behavior in post-communist countries. In doing so, we aim to take seriously Kopstein's (2003) warning that "the concept of legacy is especially slippery. If the weight of the past affects the present, at a minimum it is necessary to specify which past." (p.233) The analytical framework we propose has three components: (1) political behavior as a dependent variable; (2) a historical legacy that affects that behavior; and (3) most crucially, a mechanism through which the legacy exerts its influence. This framework allows us to classify existing hypotheses about the effects of legacies on post-communist political behavior as well as to derive new ones. In turn, this should allow us get a much more synthetic picture of the mechanisms by which these legacies operate, or, to put it in Kopstein's language, which past matters and how.

We begin in the following section by proposing what we argue is an exhaustive set of mechanisms by which the past can affect political behavior in post-communist countries. In the next section, we present a set of general expectations about the most plausible effects of legacies on post-communist political behavior. While this is in part a deductive exercise, we have the advantage of drawing on almost two decades worth of existing research on political behavior in post-communist countries, some of which has explicitly (or implicitly) incorporated the concept of legacies. This list of topics is not meant to be exhaustive, but is intended to hit upon many of the most important potential effects of communist-era legacies on post-communist political

behavior. In the final section, we pull these pieces together to propose a unified research agenda on the effect of legacies on political behavior, including the question of methodology: how exactly would one go about testing for the presence of a legacy effect in post-communist political behavior? To provide a concrete illustration of this empirical endeavor, we apply our framework to the question of trust in political parties.³ As we will demonstrate, the level of trust towards political parties is lower in post-communist countries than it is in other countries. Received wisdom holds that this is due in large part to the experience of having lived under communism, where “the party” was not an institution designed to aggregate the interests of citizens, but rather an instrument of party-state control of society. However, when we systematically test the different mechanisms that could account for the unusually low levels of trust in post-communist countries, a different conclusion emerges: low levels of trust in political parties appear to be more a phenomenon of the post-communist experience than the communist experience.

Legacies: How?

There are a variety of causal paths through which the past can exert its influence on present behavior. Identifying these causal paths allows us to derive different hypotheses which can be tested empirically to assess the relative explanatory power of the different mechanisms. We intend for our set of mechanisms to be exhaustive, but not necessarily exclusive.⁴

³ To be clear, the primary purpose of this exercise is to illustrate how our research framework would be applied in practice, and not to provide the definitive last word on trust in parties in post-communist societies, and therefore we will certainly leave some interesting questions on the table that we could have addressed in an article primarily devoted to this topic. That being said, the exercise still results in a number of interesting substantive conclusions.

⁴ For example, one’s attitudes towards communist successor parties could both be a function of living through communism and the type of post-communist party that emerged (e.g., reformed or non-reformed) in one’s country.

To understand how the communist past may produce distinctive patterns of political behavior in post-communist countries, we start from a very basic understanding of political behavior as involving the interaction between an individual and a particular political environment. Therefore, as a first cut, we have to distinguish between the individual-level legacies of Communism and its effects on the broader post-communist political environment. In turn, individual legacies may be of a demographic nature (reflecting the social and educational consequences of communist modernization efforts), or they may reflect the psychological repercussions of the experience of living through communism and its aftermath. With respect to the post-communist political environment, we need to distinguish between the objective features of formal and informal institutions, which may directly alter the incentives for individual behavioral, and a set of contextual factors, such as economic performance and media coverage, which may only partially reflect the performance of key post-communist public institutions but which are more easily observable and, therefore, significantly shape individual perceptions of political reality. We will discuss each of these factors in greater detail below.

Individual Experiences

As political behavior is an individual level phenomenon, then perhaps the most direct legacy of communism on post-communist political behavior is through the different personal experience of the political sphere for citizens of the former communist countries. The two most obvious sources of different prior experiences would be (1) the effect of having lived under communist rule and (2) the effect of having lived through the collapse of communism, or what is commonly known as the transition period.

Consider for example the experience of having lived through communism and the issue of distrust of political parties in the post-communist world. We might expect that it is the actual experience of interacting with ruling communist parties during the communist era that causes a general distrust of political parties, or at the very least, *ceteris paribus*, less trust than in other countries where citizens have not had this experience. Such a hypothesis predicts variation in levels of trust in political parties not only *across countries* but also *across citizens* within post-communist countries, as younger citizens in recent years will not have experienced communism first hand as adults; these days, some may not have even experienced communism as a child. More nuanced hypotheses could also be developed about the proportion of one's (likely adult) life that one has spent living under communism.

Of course, age is not the only source of individual variation in the experiential legacy of Communism: arguably the nature of one's experience with the communist regime mediates the strength of the predicted legacy effect. For example, disgust with political institutions caused by the experience of living under communism could be stronger in a person who was persecuted by the communist regime than in someone who led her life with a minimal amount of interference from either the Party or the state. So an additional feature of personal experience-based legacies is that they might be conditioned by the *nature of one's experiences under communism*.

Furthermore, we might expect the experience of having lived under communism to differ systematically across countries from the former Soviet Union, and those from East-Central Europe and the Baltic States. The logic here would be that by the time communism collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s, people living in the former Soviet Union (excluding the Baltic States) would not know anyone who had lived any of their adult life under any other form of rule

than Soviet Communism.⁵ Conversely, in East-Central Europe and the Baltic States, there would still be people alive who would have had personal experience living under a different form of rule, and could communicate these experiences to other citizens. To the extent that these memories and vignettes of a world without communism could “undermine” any individual-based legacy effect of having lived under Communist rule, we would expect these any of these legacies effects to be *stronger or more pronounced in the countries of the former Soviet Union*.

Similarly, living through the collapse of communism and its hectic aftermath might also leave a lasting effect on how an individual approaches politics. Conceptually, though, such an individual transition-based legacy ought to differ from an individual communist-based legacy on three dimensions. First, since the impact of the legacy results from the experience of the dramatic collapse of the communist system and its political and economic repercussions, we should expect greater variation across different post-communist countries. For example, one might expect that in certain countries (e.g., Poland, Czech Republic, Romania) the nature of the communist collapse would lead to a greater belief in the ability of popular protest to influence political developments. Alternatively, we might expect that in countries where the transition was accompanied by a particularly severe post-communist economic crisis or political instability, citizens might be less enthusiastic about the new political institutions.

Second, if post-communist exceptionalism is driven primarily by the experience of the post-communist transition, we should expect less variation in effects across age groups.⁶ In fact, to the extent that we see variation in post-communist political behavior from the legacy of

⁵ Unlike the rest of the Soviet Union, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia were added to the USSR in the aftermath of World War II

⁶ The only exception may be very young individuals, which may have experienced the early transition years as small children, and were therefore less aware of their political environment.

having lived through the transition, we would be more likely to expect it to vary across “winners and losers” (Tucker et al. 2002) from the transition than across different age groups.⁷

Finally, legacy effects based on the experience of having lived through a post-communist transition should exhibit a very different temporal pattern than the legacies from living through Communism. While we should expect the latter to diminish gradually as the memory of life under Communism fades into the past, an individual’s impression of the transition is likely to vary much more unevenly over time. In broad terms, we might expect to observe an initial period of euphoria immediately after the collapse of Communism, followed by the growing realization of the economic challenges and political disappointments of the post-communist transition, followed – to varying degrees – by a gradual “normalization” as economic decline gives way to recovery and the pace of political change starts to slow down. Of course, the length and intensity of these stages is likely to vary depending on a given country’s political and economic trajectory.

A second broad set of individual-level communist legacies are related to the grand developmental project of Communism, which arguably left behind individuals with a very distinctive set of demographic characteristics. For now, let us highlight three such possible socio-economic legacies, although there may be more. First, communism left behind societies that were significantly poorer than their West European neighbors and in some cases further behind than during the pre-communist period (Janos 2000). Second, communism produced highly literate societies with lower levels of income inequality, and very distinctive patterns of social mobility. Finally, communism resulted in a rapid but distorted industrialization, which created pockets of industrial concentration.

⁷ Complicating matters a bit here is the fact that often the elderly are also often among the biggest losers. That being said, should particular hypotheses require it, we should be able to use different measures to identify the elderly and economic losers. Clearly, not all older citizens are economic losers, and nor are all economic losers are old.

Any of these demographic patterns could be hypothesized to affect political behavior in post-communist countries, and thus would represent a legacy of communism. So for example, work by Darden and Grzymala-Busse (2006) links the acquisition of literacy under communism to initial support for communist successor parties in the post-communist era. Such a hypothesis is grounded in a socio-economic development under communism – the spread of literacy – but is hypothesized to have an effect on political behavior in the post-communist era. Given that such political values are transmitted very effectively through family socialization, these demographic legacies of communism are not limited in their effect to those who lived significant portions of their lives under communism, and may therefore be among the most lasting influences of the communist past.

The demographic imprint of communist development could matter in two distinctive ways: First, it may affect national patterns of political behavior because post-communist countries may have different concentrations of certain types of citizens (e.g. a greater prevalence of highly educated but relatively poor citizens). If that is the case, then post-communist and non-communist citizens with similar demographic profiles could display similar patterns of behavior, but collective political outcomes could still be very different in post-communist countries than elsewhere. Alternatively, it is conceivable that particular demographic characteristics, for example education or urban residence, may have different individual behavioral implications in ex-communist countries due to the distinctive patterns of communist modernization efforts.

Institutional Legacies

A second, different, way that communist era legacies could affect political behavior in post-communist countries would be if there are distinctive institutional legacies of communism,

and if these institutions have a subsequent effect on political behavior. From this vantage point, we can consider both formal and informal institutions. For obvious reasons, the nature of formal political institutions, ranging from the relative balance of powers between parliaments and presidents to the details of electoral systems or the mode of party organization, should be expected to affect how individual citizens interact with and experience the political sphere. In some instances, post-communist institutions, such as the presence of communist successor parties, or the powerful presidencies in many former Soviet republics, are direct legacies from the communist regime. In other instances, such as PR electoral systems in much of Eastern Europe, post-communist institutions represent a radical departure from the communist model but the very fact of such massive institutional transformation is likely to affect political behavior, as citizens learn only gradually how these institutions work (Pacek et al 2009). Alternatively, we could consider the effect of particular economic institutions instead, such as companies that also provide housing and healthcare, on the way that citizens form opinions about the welfare state.

Similarly, we can examine the effect of informal institutions inherited from the Communist era on political behavior. One example would be the extent to which “protest repertoires” developed under communism continue to impact political participation and social protest in the post-communist era (Ekiert and Kubik 1998). Another line of research that basically follows in this vein explores the extent to which pre-communist social networks were or, more importantly, were not, eradicated under Communism, and then predicts aspects of political behavior based on whether one is a member of such networks (Howard 2003; Badescu and Sum 2005; Wittenberg 2006).

Regardless of whether the focus is on formal or informal institutions, the institutional approach to legacies presupposes a very different mechanism than the individual experiential

approach. In the case of the latter, it is the fact that the individual in question experienced communism (or the post-communist transition) that drives him or her to behave in a manner that may be peculiar to post-communist countries. In the institutional story, the key factor is the presence of peculiar institutions – rooted in communism – that exist in post-communist countries. These institutions then lead to particular forms of post-communist political behavior. This has important implications for hypothesizing about the presence of legacy induced behavior, namely that the key variation needs to be on the presence of the particular institution and the relevance of that institution in the individual's life. Crucially, such hypothesized effects ought *not* to depend on the amount of time one has lived under a communist regime: legacy effects that work through institutions could have just as much of an impact on generations that came of age in the post-communist era as they do generations that lived through communism.

Another important distinction to keep in mind is that political behavior is shaped not only by objective institutional features but by the subjective process by which citizens form their views about these institutions. Since the direct exposure of most individuals to key political institutions is usually quite limited and episodic, much of the process through which citizens evaluate and react to political institutions depends on various cognitive shortcuts, which may in turn be shaped by the communist past. One common shortcut is to judge institutions and public officials based on certain highly visible and salient outputs, such as economic performance. While this practice is obviously not a post-communist peculiarity, it may nevertheless produce peculiar patterns of political behavior given the severity of the post-communist economic crisis and social dislocation. While the pain associated with this socio-economic transformation was obviously exacerbated by weak institutions and corrupt/incompetent officials, some of the transitional losses were almost certainly the consequences of communist developmental

distortions. Therefore, we could expect post-communist citizens to be more critical of their political institutions, and this should be reflected in distinctive patterns of political behavior (such as protest voting).

Legacies and Causal Pathways

Taken together, we now have six potential pathways by which the “past” in post-communist countries could legitimately be said to influence political behavior in the present in post-communist countries: (1) the individual-level experience of *living through communist rule*; (2) the individual-level experience of *living through the collapse of communism* and the transition that followed it; (3) a changed *socio-demographic landscape* from years of communist rule; (4) the existence of *formal institutions* from the communist era that continue to exist in the post-communist era and exert an influence on political behavior; (5) the existence of *informal institutions* from the communist era that continue to exist in the post-communist era and exert an influence on political behavior; and (6) particular socio-economic and political outcomes that serve as criteria for citizens when evaluating post-communist institutions, but are shaped by communist-era legacies.

Legacies: What?

Having suggested a number of mechanisms by which legacies from the past could affect political behavior in post-communist countries, we now move on the question of what these legacies actually affect, or, put another way, what aspects of political behavior in post-communist countries might we have cause to believe – either from existing literature or deductive reasoning – could play out differently than in other countries because of the legacies of

the past? Here we are not trying to establish an exhaustive list, but just to highlight some of the more interesting questions for future research and identify them as examples of the types of questions one could address using the theoretical framework we have put forward in the previous section. At the same time, these questions do address many of the central questions in the study of political behavior, and getting answers to them would go a long way towards understanding political behavior in post-communist countries, including how, why, and if it is different from political behavior elsewhere.

After the Party: post-communist attitudes towards political parties

We begin with attitudes towards political parties. For four (and in some cases more than seven) decades Central and East European politics were thoroughly dominated by the region's Communist Parties, which allowed for little if any electoral competition. To make matters worse, the fusion of the party and state apparatuses meant that the Communist Party was a ubiquitous – and usually hated – presence in the lives of most East Europeans. With the exception of the older generation in a few interwar (quasi)democracies, most citizens of the disintegrating Soviet bloc had very little (if any) exposure to multi-party competition. Thus for the majority of citizens in the region, the notion of political party was indelibly tied to that of the Communist Party, and this association should be expected to negatively affect popular attitudes towards political parties.

Therefore, even though most post-communist citizens supported competitive elections (Finifter and Mickiewicz 1992) and large numbers of political parties emerged in transition countries that experienced at least some political opening, popular reactions to these parties were rather ambivalent. As a sign of public ambivalence towards political parties, the first round of

elections in many countries featured not parties but “movements”, such as the Czech Civic Forum, which employed the slogan “Parties are for party members, Civic Forum is for everybody” during the 1990 elections (Kopecky 2001). As time went on, these movements were inevitably supplanted by actual political parties, and, perhaps as was originally feared, support for these political parties often was very low. Of course, an alternative proposition may be that the distrust of parties in post-communist countries today has nothing to do with the experience of living under Communist rule, but rather is a direct result of the performance of those political parties in the post-communist era; we return to this question in much greater detail in the penultimate section of this paper.

Perpetually dissatisfied citizens: distrust in post-communist institutions

While political parties are held in particularly low esteem by post-communist citizens, public opinion surveys suggest that many other political institutions (including parliament, the government, the civil service and the justice system) do not fare much better. Given the alienating experience of decades of communist rule (Shlapentokh 1989, Jowitt 1992), this lack of trust could simply reflect the slow progress away from the ingrained legacy of distrust dating back to the communist period (Mishler and Rose 1997.) As the post-communist transition takes its course, these legacies should be gradually superseded by the more recent performance of post-communist political institutions, at least in countries where a clear institutional break with the past has taken place.

While the overall importance of political trust for a wide range of economic and political outcomes has been widely discussed in the literature,⁸ the implications of the post-communist trust deficit hinge to a great extent on the difficult task of untangling the complicated mechanisms through which communist legacies and post-communist developments shape citizens' attitudes towards political leaders and institutions. To the extent that such distrust is either a gradually receding "hangover" after decades of communist rule, or a short-term reaction to the challenges of the wholesale institutional transformation of East European polities and economies during much of the 1990s, then the long-term region's democratic outlook may be fairly bright despite the current malaise. If, however, post-communist disappointments have reinforced the communist-era distrust of the political sphere then democracy in Eastern Europe may remain at best superficial and at worst uncertain.

Expecting a free lunch? Communist legacies and the role of the state

Compared to other developing countries, the communist regimes in Eastern Europe stood out in their rapid expansion of a broad range of publicly provided welfare benefits (Haggard and Kaufman 2008). While the quality of services was often uneven, most communist countries provided significant health, education and social security benefits to the majority of their citizens, along with a high degree of job security and additional benefits such as free or heavily subsidized public housing, utilities and child care.

This legacy of paternalism inevitably shaped popular expectations of state responsibilities, and thereby set the stage for a particular understanding of democracy, and of the social contract between the state and its citizens more broadly. Thus, according to a July 2008 survey in

⁸ Examples include the functioning and consolidation of democracy (Schmitter 1994, Mishler and Rose 1997), the successful conduct of economic policies (Weatherford 1984), and the development of civil society (Seligman 1992, Eisenstadt 1995).

Bulgaria, almost two decades since the fall of Communism, over 80% of respondents considered “jobs for everyone” and “basic necessities for everyone” to be an essential part of democracy, while only 23% gave the same importance to minority protections and 34% to regular elections.⁹ While more systematic cross-national and cross-regional research is necessary to establish the extent of post-communist exceptionalism reflected by these findings, they nevertheless suggest a remarkably resilient legacy imprint on post-communist political attitudes towards the role of the state.

These peculiarly post-communist expectations about state responsibilities are important for several reasons. First, they are likely to affect the nature of political competition, as political parties and candidates can be expected to tailor their electoral messages to appeal to voter concerns about welfare state retrenchment. Second, this free-lunch mentality arguably played an important role in fueling post-communist political dissatisfaction by undermining political accountability. Given the high political salience of welfare benefits for many voters, many East European parties made unreasonably generous electoral promises. Once in office, however, they faced the reality of shrinking economies and state budgets, which combined with the constraints imposed by external creditors and international financial institutions forced them to backtrack on their promises. While such bait-and-switch tactics are obviously not uniquely East European (Stokes 2001), their frequency was probably greater in post-communist countries due to the communist legacy of higher welfare expectations.

Political and civic participation deficit

The thorough dominance of political life by the Communist Party during the Soviet period produced a “ghetto political culture” characterized by a widespread distrust of the political

⁹ Source: authors’ own survey (self-citation omitted).

sphere. (Jowitt 1992) Prior to the wave of protests that eventually led to the collapse of Communism, popular participation in politics (in the form of party meetings, public rallies etc.) had become largely involuntary and completely formulaic. Therefore, once coerced participation was largely eliminated after the fall of Communism, one might reasonably expect to observe a deficit in political participation among the citizens of post-communist countries. This prediction seems to be confirmed by cross-national survey evidence, which indicates that ex-communist citizens are indeed less likely to engage in a range of political actions (including signing petitions, taking part in demonstrations, strikes and boycotts, and occupying buildings) than citizens of established democracies or even other post-authoritarian countries (Bernhard and Karakoc 2007, Pop-Eleches 2008).

However, the mechanisms underlying these correlational patterns have not yet been explored in sufficient detail, thereby leaving a lot of unanswered questions. For example, there is disagreement whether this deficit should be considered a specific communist legacy (Pop-Eleches 2008) or whether it is part of a broader post-totalitarian phenomenon as Bernhard and Karakoc (2007) argue. Another significant challenge for a legacy-based explanation of post-communist political participation is to account for the significant temporal fluctuations in participation: how can we reconcile communist-era apathy with the remarkable spike of political mobilization of the 1988-1992 period, during which East Europeans turned out in large numbers not only to vote but also to participate in massive and often dangerous political demonstrations (Beissinger 2002)? Was the subsequent decline of political participation a return to communist-era apathy, did it reflect disenchantment with post-communist developments (White and McAllister 2004; Mason 2003/4; Kostadinova 2003) or was it a symptom of democratic learning

and normalization, whereby post-communist citizens became more discerning about when and where to expend their political efforts (Pacek et al 2009)?

A second and closely related phenomenon that can be linked to the communist-era chasm between a compromised public sphere and an idealized private sphere is the post-communist deficit in interpersonal trust and civic participation, which has been confirmed by cross-national survey evidence (Howard 2003). While communist regimes promoted a variety of civic organizations (ranging from youth organizations to labor unions), participation in these organizations was often mandatory and highly regulated by the state, while independent alternatives were either marginalized or outlawed. As a result, the transition countries initially suffered from a dearth of credible civic organizations, as much of the communist “civic infrastructure” was abandoned, while the emerging alternatives were significantly constrained in terms of both economic and human resources (and in some cases by restrictive legislation even in the post-communist period.) Since civil society restrictions were more severe in communist countries than in the generally shorter and shallower authoritarian episodes in other regions (Bunce 1998), this organizational perspective would predict a large initial civic participation deficit, which should gradually diminish over time as international efforts to promote civil society development produce a new generation of civic leaders and organizations.

However, a more pessimistic interpretation of this deficit focuses on the demand-side aspect of civil society participation. From this perspective, the pervasive distrust of the public sphere under Communism has left an attitudinal legacy that severely undermines the sort of inter-personal and institutional trust necessary for civic participation. To make matters worse, the logic of communist shortage economies promoted the proliferation of informal friendship networks (Howard 2003), which continued to thrive during the uncertainty of the post-

communist transition. These friendship networks are much smaller and have a very different organizational logic than Western voluntary organizations, and have arguably “crowded out” the fledgling civil society in terms of both resources and personal allegiances of post-communist citizens. Further research is necessary to establish the extent to which these attitudinal legacies are slowly fading (either through generational change or through social learning) and whether the persistent participation gap can be explained by the disappointments of post-communist civic participation experiences (Howard 2003).

The tolerance deficit

Post-communist Eastern Europe has seen more than its share of ethnic conflict in the last two decades. While some of this conflict was arguably the inevitable fallout of the dissolution of the region’s multi-ethnic states, it is nevertheless worth exploring to what extent the intensity and frequency of these conflicts is rooted in a peculiarly communist legacy of intolerance. While pre-communist Eastern Europe was hardly a bastion of tolerance, communism arguably reinforced these problems in at least two ways: first, its imperial undertones exacerbated the frustrations of small nationhood (Janos 2000, Bunce 2005) and created a whole new set of scores to be settled after the fall of Communism. Second, while the communist maxim that “whoever is not with us, is against us” ostensibly applied to class conflict, its broader logic nevertheless lent itself to a much wider rejection of any kind of “other”, whether they be defined in class, ideological, or ethnic terms.

A number of studies have used survey evidence to document the widespread political intolerance in Russia (Gibson and Duch 1993; Bahry et al 1997) and have found that this lack of tolerance is pervasive even among generally pro-democracy respondents (Gibson 1995). Nor are

Russians unique in their intolerance: thus, Gibson (1998) found that Russians were no more intolerant than Bulgarians, Poles and Hungarians, and East Europeans were generally less tolerant towards political opponents than West Europeans and Americans. However, more systematic cross-national research is needed to establish the nature, the roots and the temporal evolution of the post-communist political tolerance deficit and its ties to the legacy of communism.

The capitalism-democracy link

One of the most distinctive empirical regularities to emerge from the literature on the political economy of post-communist reforms is the strong positive correlation between democratization and economic liberalization among the transition countries. This pattern has sparked a series of debates about the extent to which the post-communist reforms can be compared to similar efforts in other regions (Bunce 1995, Schmitter and Karl 1994) and about the direction of causation between economic and political liberalization (Fish 1998, Hellman 1998, Kurtz and Barnes 2002). From the perspective of the current paper, the crucial question is to what extent these country-level regional patterns are reflected in the attitudes of individual citizens, and whether the geographic and temporal evolution of these attitudes can illuminate the political mechanisms underlying these macro correlations.

Preliminary survey-based evidence suggests that during the early transition period support for political reforms and economic liberalization were indeed positively correlated in the minds of many post-communist citizens (Miller et al 1994, Evans and Whitefield 1995, Gibson 1996). However, in order to establish whether there is something uniquely post-communist about these patterns, future research needs to engage in a more systematic comparison of whether and how

the link between economic and political liberalism differs between ex-communist and non-communist countries, and whether any initial differences gradually disappear as citizens of transition countries have greater exposure to capitalism and democratic politics.

Distinctive post-communist voting patterns

A growing body of research has identified ways in which the voting behavior of post-communist citizens differs from the usual patterns found in other democracies. Thus, several authors have argued that the traditional left-right division is not particularly useful in the post-communist context, where a party's relationship to the communist past is more important than its current policy platform (Tismaneanu 1998, Tucker 2006). However, this pattern raises a series of additional questions about why this may be the case: Is it because the communist past still provides a strong moral compass that helps voters navigate the confusing landscape of post-communist politics? Does it reflect the fundamental divisions between transition winners and losers (Tucker et al. 2002) ? Or is it simply a more informative labeling system than party platforms, whose policy range is severely narrowed by international constraints and appears to have an even weaker impact on actual policies (Innes 2002) ?

Towards a Research Agenda

Ideally, we can now begin to move to a more unified research agenda by generating hypotheses that draw on the different pathways identified in Section 2 by which the past could affect political behavior in post-communist countries to answer the kinds of questions raised in Section 3. In a more general sense, such an approach would allow us to begin to get a sense of the scope conditions of legacy effects by illustrating both which pathways (Section 2)

and which particular types of particular behavior (Section 3) are better supported empirically Are legacy effects on political behavior more a function of having lived through communism or of having inherited particular institutions from communism? Are post-communist citizens truly distinguished from citizens in other countries in their distrust of political parties, but not, perhaps, in terms of trusting military or religious institutions?

In the remainder of this section, therefore, we aim to provide some additional practical guidance in exactly how this research agenda might evolve empirically. We do so in two ways. First, we address some of the methodological considerations inherent in testing for the effect of the communist legacies on post-communist political behavior. Second, we provide an illustrative analysis by considering the question of trust in political parties.

Methodological Considerations

We begin with the question of how one should study a communist legacy on post-communist political behavior. Perhaps the most obvious approach is to explicitly measure a quantity of interest in post-communist countries, measure the same quantity of interest in other countries, and then establish whether there is a statistically and substantively significant difference across the two.¹⁰ In essence, this is an *inter-regional comparison*: we are trying to ascertain the existence of a post-communist legacy by seeing whether the political behavior in question is different in post-communist countries than it is elsewhere. Of course, communist legacies are rarely the sole determinants of the political behavior in question. Therefore, to avoid omitted variable bias we need to control for other potential explanations at both the country level

¹⁰ For the moment, we set aside the question of the appropriate reference group of “other countries”; depending on the question, it could include all other countries in the world, advanced industrialized democracies, other European countries, other new democracies, non-democracies, etc.

(e.g., is the country a new democracy? how poor is the country?), and the individual level (e.g., education, income).

However, in addition to simply predicting that political behavior will be different in post-communist countries, we might hypothesize that the effect of a variable on some political behavior might differ in post-communist countries. For example, one might expect that in post-communist countries, the most educated citizens would understand how political parties are important for democracy, and thus be more likely to trust political parties than their less educated counterparts, whereas in established democracies perhaps the less educated would be more likely to just blindly trust political parties. For this type of analysis, our key independent variable would be an *interactive variable* between living in a post-communist state and education.

However, there is also a second, less obvious, way to think about testing for the presence of legacies effects in post-communist countries, which is to leverage variation *within* post-communist countries. Doing so requires that there is variation in the effect being tested across different citizens within post-communist countries. Thus, if the argument is that the larger a proportion of one's life that one has spent living under communist rule, the less one is likely to trust political parties, then there will be substantial individual level variation on the key independent variable in question (proportion of one's life spent living under communism) *within* post-communist countries. In fact, it makes little sense to include non-communist countries in this type of statistical test. Similarly, we can think of hypotheses where there will be variation across post-communist countries at the country-level as well, with the most obvious being the difference between countries that were ruled by communist parties for longer (e.g., the former Soviet Union) or shorter (e.g., East-Central Europe) periods of time. But we might also think

about legacies caused by the presence of strong vs. weak (or reformed vs. unreformed) communist successor parties.

An Illustrative Example: Trust in Political Parties

With both the theoretical framework and methodological tools discussed above in hand, we can now present an example of how our approach can be applied to an actual research question. The specific question we examine here is whether and how legacies have influenced the trust (or lack thereof) that post-communist citizens hold for political parties. We begin with the stylized fact of a “post-communist trust deficit”: citizens in post-communist countries trust political parties less than citizens do in the rest of the world.¹¹ The question, then, is why? And, moreover, do communist legacies actually account for this deficit? In line with our approach, our analysis builds on a combination of individual-level survey data and country-level socio-economic and institutional indicators to establish to what extent post-communist deviations from general patterns of attitudes towards political parties can be explained by (1) individual experiences living through communism, (2) individual experiences living through the transition (3) individual demographic characteristics (4) institutional legacies and (5) socio-economic outcomes in the transition countries.¹² The results turn out to be somewhat surprising: we find little evidence consistent with the received wisdom that the trust deficit is due to the experience of living under communism; instead we find evidence suggesting that it is both the post-communist experience and institutional choices made by post-communist countries that drive the trust deficit. Additionally, we find important differences between the trust deficit in East-Central

¹¹ See Table 1, Model 1 for confirmation of this claim.

¹² We do not consider the effect of informal institutions in our current analysis, and thus we examine hypotheses from five of the six pathways identified at the end of Section 2.

Europe and the former Soviet Union, but in the exact *opposite* direction from what the individual experiences under communism hypothesis would have led us to expect.

TRUST IN POLITICAL PARTIES: HYPOTHESES

We begin by laying out hypotheses in accordance with our theoretical framework.

Turning first to the individual experiences of living under communist rule, we expect that the longer individuals have lived under Communism, the more they should be affected by its anomic legacy, and the greater their distrust of political parties.¹³ To the extent that this effect is reinforced by family socialization, we should expect a larger and more durable trust deficit in countries of the former Soviet Union, where more generations were exposed to communism than in East-Central Europe. In the aggregate, then, we should expect to see the size of the trust deficit decline over the course of the transition, both because the older generation, which has lived most of its life under Communism, is gradually dying off, and because the more recent experience of post-communist politics should gradually overshadow the older memories.

Conversely attitudes towards political parties in post-communist countries may be driven by citizens' experiences with these parties during the transition process itself. After all, much has been written about the failures of political parties during the transition; perhaps high expectations for the promise of democracy collided with the harsh realities of the difficulties of the transition. If so, we would no longer expect to see greater distrust of parties among people who spent more years of their lives living under communism. Additionally, we should observe a

¹³ This type of hypothesis presumes a kind of cumulative effect of the experience of living under communism, whereby the more time spent living under communist rule, the more you internalize lessons associated with communism. In this way, it is similar to arguments about partisanship made by Converse (1969) and others. Of course, it is possible that the lessons of communism are not cumulative, and instead are learned exceedingly fast and ought best to be represented in a more dichotomous format. Here the idea would be that even one day (or one year, or whatever measure was deemed to be appropriate) under communism would be enough to learn the relevant lessons, and beyond this point there would be nothing new to be learned or reinforced. While an interesting question for future research, we leave this question aside for now.

very different temporal pattern for the aggregate size of the trust gap as opposed to the communist era individual experience hypothesis. Instead of a trust gap that declines gradually over time, we might instead expect to see the gap actually expand over time, as people's expectations for the benefits associated with the transition begin to be superseded by the realities of what the transition has entailed.

An alternative individual-level legacy mechanism is tied to the demographic footprint of communism, characterized among other things by low inequality and widespread secondary education, along with relatively low tertiary education and overall economic development. Thus, it is conceivable that post-communist distrust towards parties is simply a symptom of the frustrations of an over-educated but relatively poor population, rather than the result of attitudinal legacies or institutional differences. If this is true, then we should expect the post-communist deficit to disappear (or at least diminish significantly) once we control for such developmental legacy indicators.

Moving on to the institutional legacies of Communism, it seems important to understand to what extent post-communist political parties differ systematically from their counterparts in non-communist countries (including other new democracies.) Under this scenario, post-communist exceptionalism is no longer in the eye of the beholder and may therefore not decline monotonically as the communist past recedes. Instead party trust should be a function of party performance across different countries: thus, in countries where party competition stabilizes around a small number of ideologically recognizable and reasonably accountable political parties, citizens would gradually learn to trust them (even though temporary setbacks are of course possible.) However, in countries where party competition is volatile and where parties

consistently break their electoral promises and/or deliver poor performance, it is conceivable that trust in political parties may actually decline over time.

Since to the best of our knowledge there is no consistent cross-national and cross-temporal indicator of political party performance, we instead test for these types of effects using variables that measure a variety of institutional features of the political system that may be associated with differences in the strength and responsiveness of parties. Thus, given the weakness of parties in presidential systems, we hypothesize that trust in parties should be higher in parliamentary systems. Similarly, trust in parties is predicted to be higher in proportional representation electoral systems than in majoritarian systems. In addition, it is possible that parties in new and/or weak democracies just generally engender less trust than parties in more established and better functioning democracies; to test for this effect we can examine the effect of both age and quality of democracy on trust in parties. Finally, given the salience of corruption in the public discourse about the shortcomings of post-communist politicians, we can also examine whether party trust is lower in countries where corruption is more of an issue. Taken together, these variables will allow us to see if the post-communist deficit can be “explained away” by institutional choices made by post-communist countries. If so, then it would suggest that the key legacy left behind by communism in terms of trust in parties is not so much the experience of living under communism, but rather the institutional legacies of transition away from communism.¹⁴

Finally, since most citizens rarely interact directly with political parties, we consider how legacies may affect the more easily observable outcomes that many individuals use as shortcuts

¹⁴ Of course, these institutional choices may, in some of these cases, actually resemble institutions found in other parts of the world as well. This would be particularly interesting, because it would suggest the trust deficit in post-communist countries actually has something to say about why parties might or might not be trusted in other parts of the world based on institutional choices made elsewhere, and is not simply limited to being a hangover from the experience of Communism.

for evaluating institutional performance. One particularly salient issue during the traumatic post-communist transition was economic performance. While the extent of the economic crisis experienced by transition countries is obviously due at least in part to the policy choices made by post-communist governments (and is therefore partly endogenous to the quality of political parties), almost all ex-communist countries experienced a combination of deep recessions, high inflation and rising unemployment during much of the 1990s, and these crises are obviously related to the distorted economies inherited from Communism. Since a large economic voting literature has shown that voters tend to punish incumbents for poor economic conditions (even if the incumbents are not necessarily to blame for the economic crisis), it is conceivable that the post-communist trust deficit towards political parties is simply a reflection of the extremely difficult post-communist economic transitions. If this were true, we should expect the post-communist trust deficit to be lower once we control for such economic performance indicators. Moreover, the trust deficit should be lower in countries that experienced less painful economic crises, and it should decline during the economic recovery of the transition countries since the mid 1990s.

We summarize these hypotheses below in Table 1.

-- INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE --

TRUST IN POLITICAL PARTIES: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

To analyze these hypotheses, we use data from the second, third and fourth survey waves of the European and World Values Surveys covering the time period 1989-2004. While EVS/WVS does not cover all the countries in the world, its inclusion of over 80 countries from all five continents makes it the broadest collection of cross-nationally comparable public opinion surveys. A particular advantage of EVS/WVS for the present paper is that post-communist

transition countries are relatively over-represented in the series with 23 of the 28 countries having at least one survey in the series, with several of them having two or more surveys (usually in the early, mid and late 1990s), thereby allowing for some analyses of cross-temporal trends.

The dependent variable in our analysis is a survey question that asks respondents to indicate their confidence in political parties on a four-point scale ranging from 0- *none at all* to 3 – *a great deal*. Given the ordinal nature of the dependent variable, we used ordered probit analysis. To account for the multi-level nature of the data – whereby some variables vary at the individual level while others vary only at the country-year level but are identical for individuals in a given country survey – we ran multi-level models using HLM 6.0.¹⁵ To ensure the comparability of the statistical results across different models, we restricted the sample to those observations for which data was available for all the variables included in any of the models presented in Table 2.

-- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE --

As a first step of the analysis, in model 1 we use a simple dichotomous indicator of whether or not the country in which the respondent lives is a former communist country to test whether a post-communist trust deficit in political parties indeed exists. This basic model, which only controls for the survey wave to capture potential temporal effects, confirms that on average, citizens of ex-communist countries have less confidence in political parties than their non-communist counterparts, though the effect is only marginally statistically significant.

To begin analyzing the causal mechanisms underlying this deficit, model 2 includes three interaction terms between the post-communism indicator and the three dummy variables indicating the survey wave. These interaction terms indicate to what extent ex-communist

¹⁵ Our first level is the individual, and our second level is the country-year.

countries seem to underperform in each wave in terms of citizen confidence in political parties.¹⁶ While temporal trends need to be interpreted with some caution because the mix of countries differs for each of the survey waves, the results in model 2 run counter to the predictions of individual communist experience legacies, which would have led us to expect a declining role of post-communist exceptionalism. Instead, the post-communist confidence deficit appears to have grown in successive survey waves, and for the most recent wave (1999-2004) the deficit is significant in both substantive and statistical terms.

In model 3 we control for the straightforward communist developmental legacies at both the country and individual levels, and find that doing so does not remove the post-communist trust deficit. Indeed, once we account for differences in income, education, and inequality, the deficit appears even greater than in model 2 for all three waves. This somewhat surprising finding is due to the fact that low inequality – one of the few clear post-communist advantages – was (predictably) associated with greater levels of confidence, whereas higher levels of GDP/capita had the unexpected effect of reducing confidence, perhaps because citizens of richer countries have higher expectations of their political institutions. Finally, neither secondary nor tertiary education had much of an impact on party confidence.

Model 4 further adds three indicators of economic performance: inflation, economic growth, and unemployment. In doing so, we hope to capture three important dimensions of the post-communist economic crisis, which may have undermined trust in political institutions including parties. The statistical results confirm that political party trust suffers in countries with high inflation, weak growth, and high unemployment but the statistical significance of these effects varied across models. More importantly, however, a comparison of the coefficients for

¹⁶ We drop the straight ex-communist dummy variable at this point, because it is equal to the sum of the three ex-communist dummy variables interacted with each of the three waves.

the post-communism indicators in models 3 and 4 suggests that the economic crises experienced by ex-communist countries account for a sizable portion of the confidence deficit towards political parties in both the second and third waves.¹⁷

Finally, in order to test whether the post-communist dissatisfaction with political parties may be simply an accurate reflection of the worse functioning of parties in the region's fledgling party systems, in model 5 we introduce our institutional performance indicators described in the previous section: age of democracy; quality of democracy (Freedom House scores); extent of corruption; governing system; and electoral rules.¹⁸

The results in model 5 confirm that the objective characteristics of political institutions matter for how citizens view political parties. Thus, public confidence in parties was higher in countries with greater democratic freedoms, in parliamentary systems and in majoritarian systems, though the age of democracy and the extent of corruption had a more modest impact. Once we account for institutional differences, the post-communist trust deficit disappeared altogether for the first wave, which suggests that at the outset of the transition, post-communist citizens were actually surprisingly objective in their assessment of the nascent political parties in their respective countries.¹⁹ However, model 5 indicates that, as the transition progressed, the post-communist public became increasingly disenchanted with political parties, and even though

¹⁷ The size of the coefficient on the post-communist country-level dummy variable falls by about 35% in the second wave (which occurred in the mid 1990s, close to the bottom of the transition slump) and by 28% in the third wave. Unsurprisingly, there was no change for the first wave, since it occurred before citizens were exposed to the full impact of the post-communist economic crisis.

¹⁸ To capture the effect of presidentialism vs. other forms of government, we coded each country's political system as presidential, semi-presidential or parliamentary. To capture the effects of different electoral systems, we code each country as having a PR, mixed or majoritarian electoral system. Age of democracy is coded by the authors. Quality of democracy is the combined total of Freedom House political and civil rights scores rescaled so that larger numbers mean higher quality democracy. Corruption is measured by an index created by the authors combining data from three sources: World Bank Governance Indicators (Control of Corruption), ICRG, and the Transparency International CPI score.

¹⁹ Of course, it is theoretically plausible that this "non-finding" is the result of two opposite effects – a trust boost associated with the hopes of democratization and a trust deficit due to the psychological traumas of the communist experience – cancelling each other out. While such an interpretation is somewhat undermined by the results in models 7 & 8, it nevertheless deserves greater attention in future research.

the size of the deficit is smaller once we control for institutional performance indicators, it did not completely disappear and remained statistically significant for the most recent survey wave.

In the remaining models, we address the question of whether post-communist citizens are equally affected by the party trust deficit, or whether this deficit is more pronounced among certain types of citizens or in certain types of countries. With respect to the first question, model 6 suggests that the positive correlation between age and party trust was much stronger (and only achieved statistical significance) in ex-communist countries (see the positive coefficient on the interactive variable between age and residence in an ex-communist country at the bottom of Table 2), which suggests different generational dynamics are at play in post-communist countries. However, as we will discuss in greater detail below, the direction of the interaction effect is at odds with the expectation that older respondents, who had greater exposure to Communism, would exhibit a greater dose of distrust in political parties. On the other hand, we found rather weak interactions between the post-communism indicator and a variety of demographic factors (results omitted), which suggests that the distrust in political parties is not directly linked to the peculiar developmental strategies of the communist regimes.

Models 6 and 7 reveal some interesting cross-country variation in the extent of party distrust *within* the group of ex-communist states. Thus, the negative interaction effect between the ex-communist dummy and the FH democracy score in model 6 indicates that greater democratic freedoms only contribute to greater trust in political countries in non-communist countries but not in their ex-communist counterparts.²⁰ Moreover, model 6 suggests that the post-communist party trust deficit is much more pronounced for countries with strong civil and

²⁰ The conditional effect of FH democracy in ex-communist countries is almost 75% smaller than in non-communist countries, and is no longer even close to statistical significance.

political rights, and in fact the deficit disappears altogether for countries in the lower freedom range.²¹

Along similar lines, model 7 suggests that once we control for economic conditions and institutional variation, the post-communist party trust deficit primarily affected citizens of East European countries, whereas for residents of pre-World War II Soviet republics the deficit was substantively small and not statistically insignificant.²² Strikingly, this finding is the *opposite* of what the individual experience with communism hypothesis predicts, and clearly demonstrates that the post-communist trust deficit is not simply a function of the length and depth of a country's communist experience. Instead, this finding raises an interesting subject for future research: might the greater trust deficit in Eastern European post-communist countries be due to heightened expectations about the performance of political parties in the context of the region's European integration process?

Finally, model 8 tests the micro-logic of the country-level evidence that greater exposure to communism does not seem to be responsible for the post-communist trust deficit in political parties. To do so, we restricted our sample to survey respondents from post-communist countries and we created an individual level variable, which measures the number of years a given individual has lived under a communist regime.²³ If the individuals indeed suffer from greater distrust of political parties as a result of their personal experience of Communism, then we

²¹ While the deeper mechanisms underlying these different patterns are beyond the scope of this paper and should be addressed in greater detail by future research, they nevertheless illustrate the methodological importance of testing for causal heterogeneity in the behavioral implications of similar political conditions across ex-communist and non-communist countries.

²² Given that we did find a larger and statistically significant ex-Soviet trust deficit in regressions that excluded economic performance and institutional variation, it appears that the finding in model 7 reflects at least in part the fact that post-Soviet citizens had *more reasons* to be dissatisfied with their political parties (not necessarily that they did not distrust them.)

²³ We also tried a number of alternative measures, such as the total number of years the respondent has lived under Communism as an adult or the proportion of his/her life the respondent lived under pre-communism. However, the results were very similar and are not reported here due to space constraints.

should expect these effects to be stronger for those respondents who have lived a longer period under Communism. However, model 8 indicates that the exact opposite is true: even after controlling for a number of other individual characteristics such as education levels, gender and religion, we found that respondents who had lived longer under Communism actually reported significantly *higher* trust in political parties. While we are not quite ready to proclaim an alternative theory about the trust-building virtues of Communism,²⁴ this finding suggests that we need a more nuanced theory of the link between legacies and party trust. One possibility that is worth exploring further is that much of this excess confidence among the communist old-timers is actually directed at the Communist party (or its more or less reformed successors). From this perspective, the decline in trust may actually be an encouraging sign for post-communist democracies, as it suggests a move away from the “blind trust” that communists have been able to elicit from some supporters. Still, the issue needs to be addressed in more detail in future research analyzing the evolution of trust as a function of different types of partisan loyalties.

Conclusion

In this paper we have developed a theoretical framework for analyzing the effect of communist legacies on post-communist political behavior. In particular we have tried to identify an exhaustive set of mechanisms through which the communist past can shape the political attitudes and actions of citizens of the former Soviet bloc. We have argued that these mechanisms may work at the individual level (through the personal experience of living through

²⁴ While the positive effect disappears once we control for the age of the respondent, this is hardly surprising given that the two variables are very highly correlated (at .85). Therefore, it is possible that the results in model 8 simply capture the fact that older respondents are generally more trusting towards political parties. However, given the positive interaction between post-communism and age in model 6, it appears that the post-communist trust deficit is somewhat weaker among older respondents. Thus, at the very least, we can be confident that a longer personal experience of communism does not undermine political trust.

communism and its aftermath or through the demographic legacies of communist developmental efforts) and/or at the institutional level (through particular institutional configurations and performance or through more easily observable outcomes that citizens may use as shortcuts for assessing institutions).

To illustrate how such a framework can be applied to a particular puzzle of post-communist political behavior, in the second part of the paper we analyzed the link between communist legacies and the trust deficit of post-communist citizens towards political parties. In doing so, we found that citizens of the former communist countries indeed express lower trust towards political parties, and that this trust deficit is explained only in part by demographic legacies, economic performance, and objective institutional features. While this suggests that part of the distrust is indeed in the eye of the post-communist beholder, we also found that among post-communist citizens a more extensive exposure to communism was *not* associated with lower trust, as arguments about the anomic legacy of communism would have led us to expect. This puzzling finding raises interesting questions to be addressed in future research, such as whether we need to differentiate between different types of trust (e.g. towards specific parties or political parties in general) or what it is about the transition experience that promotes such widespread cynicism. Moving beyond the specific question of party trust, we hope that future research will apply the broad framework proposed in this paper to a wider range of questions about post-communist political behavior (including but not limited to some of the topics we briefly discussed in this paper.) To the extent that we can do this in a systematic fashion, we will stand to learn a lot not only about the behavioral foundations of post-communist politics but more broadly about the important question of why the past (and the way people remember and relate to it) has such a lasting impact on political behavior.

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Table 1. Summary of Hypotheses Concerning Political Party Trust Deficit in Post-Communist Countries by Mechanism

Mechanism	Hypothesis
Individual Experience: Living through Communism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More years lived under communism → greater distrust of parties - Size of trust deficit between communist and post-communist countries declines over time
Individual Experience: Living through Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No effect for years lived under communism - Size of trust deficit between communist and post-communist countries does not decline over time, and will increase at points in the transition
Individual/country level demographic characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust deficit should diminish (disappear) once we control for demographic characteristics (especially country wealth, education)
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust deficit should diminish (disappear) once we control for institutions related to quality and responsiveness of parties: presidentialism, electoral rules, age and quality of democracy, and corruption
Economic performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust deficit should diminish (disappear) once we control for macro-economic indicators

Table 2: Cross-national drivers of confidence in political parties

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Country-Year Level Variables								
Ex-communist	-.258# (.144)					.077 (.356)		
Ex-communist (Wave 1)		.024 (.239)	-.196 (.229)	-.255 (.263)	-.021 (.36)			
Ex-communist (Wave 2)		-.210 (.200)	-.528* (.194)	-.335# (.193)	-.255 (.224)			
Ex-communist (Wave 3)		-.496** (.178)	-.809** (.199)	-.576* (.231)	-.428* (.192)			
Eastern Europe							-.429** (.142)	
Pre-war Soviet Republic							.010 (.246)	
Inequality			-.039* (.019)	-.030# (.018)	-.017 (.014)	-.015 (.014)	-.018 (.013)	
GDP/capita			-.144* (.065)	-.184* (.076)	-.313** (.113)	-.301** (.111)	-.272** (.107)	-.089 (.127)
Inflation				-.101# (.065)	.002 (.086)	-.026 (.079)	-.006 (.069)	-.066 (.088)
GDP chg.				.005# (.003)	.008** (.003)	.007* (.003)	.009** (.002)	.008** (.002)
Unemployment				-.013 (.012)	-.012# (.008)	-.017* (.008)	-.013# (.007)	-.024** (.009)
Democracy age					.001 (.002)	-.001 (.002)	.000 (.002)	
FH democracy					.063* (.027)	.083** (.028)	.061* (.025)	-.017 (.032)
FH democracy* Ex-communist						-.070# (.037)		
PR system					-.431** (.151)	-.435** (.148)	-.377* (.155)	
Mixed system					-.281# (.165)	-.320* (.151)	-.341* (.149)	
Presidential system					-.376** (.142)	-.415** (.135)	-.444** (.137)	
Semi-presid system					-.515** (.173)	-.426* (.185)	-.537** (.192)	
Corruption					.001 (.154)	-.013 (.153)	-.012 (.149)	
Wave2	-.819** (.204)	-.760** (.287)	-.677** (.266)	-.646** (.27)	-.492** (.202)	-.504** (.172)	-.530** (.165)	-.825** (.31)
Wave3	-.706** (.213)	-.582* (.274)	-.667** (.241)	-.664** (.235)	-.453* (.221)	-.496* (.172)	-.507** (.16)	-.929** (.217)
Individual Level Variables								
Years lived in Communism								.005* (.002)

City			-.221**	-.220**	-.220**	-.220**	-.220**	-.255**
			(.039)	(.039)	(.039)	(.039)	(.039)	(.067)
Town			-.099**	-.099**	-.099**	-.098**	-.099**	-.085**
			(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.033)	(.053)
Tertiary educ			-.026	-.026	-.026	-.026	-.026	.026
			(.054)	(.054)	(.054)	(.054)	(.054)	(.061)
Secondary educ			-.073#	-.073#	-.073#	-.072#	-.074#	-.047
			(.041)	(.041)	(.041)	(.041)	(.041)	(.04)
Male			.061*	.061*	.061*	.062*	.061*	.038#
			(.024)	(.024)	(.024)	(.024)	(.024)	(.025)
Muslim			.227**	.226**	.229**	.229**	.229**	.502**
			(.081)	(.081)	(.081)	(.081)	(.081)	(.05)
Orthodox Chr			.055	.056	.056	.049	.056	.137**
			(.049)	(.049)	(.049)	(.05)	(.049)	(.042)
Western Chr			.086#	.086#	.086#	.086#	.086#	.197**
			(.052)	(.052)	(.052)	(.052)	(.052)	(.071)
Age			.001	.001	.001	.000	.001	
			(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.002)	(.001)	
Cross-Level Interactions								
Age* Ex-communist							.004#	
							(.002)	
Observations	105652	105652	105652	105652	105652	105652	105652	36851

Robust standard errors in parentheses # significant at 10% * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1% (One-tailed for economic indicators, two-tailed otherwise)