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Political Alienation and Government-Society Relations in Post-Communist Countries

Abstract: On the basis of 1996 and 2006 International Social Survey Program (ISSP) data this paper explores the character of government-society relations in post-communist countries, and its dynamics. The use of comparative data and the application of Paige's (1971) political alienation model and Woolcock's and Narayan's (2000) model of government-society relations allows to shed new light on citizen's political attitudes by analysing them in the context of the overall political environment in the country. The results reveal that while citizens in most established democracies bear allegiant attitudes, citizens of post-communist countries feel alienated. Distrust of each other and of the political authorities leads to dysfunctional government-society relations. Since the time of transitional reforms people in post-communist countries have become more confident in their political capability, yet there is no general trend with regards to confidence in political authorities. Those at the margins of society often feel alienated, and dissident attitudes are on the rise, especially among youth.

Keywords: post-communism, government-society relations, political alienation, political efficacy.

Introduction

During the last two decades accounts of growing political disaffection, declining democratic engagement, and declining confidence in the government (Torcal & Montero 2006; Dalton 2007; Stoker 2008) have revived interest in the functioning of democracy and relationship between citizens and political authorities ought to represent them. These issues are of crucial importance to the new democracies in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), considering that political disenchantment there is especially widespread (Torcal & Montero 2006; Lagerspetz 2009). Youth in particular is becoming increasingly critical of their political leaders and the political process, and show little interest in formal politics and conventional political activities (Henn et.al. 2002; Kovacheva 2003; Jennings & Stoker 2004).

How intense the political involvement of citizens should be and what forms should it take has been a subject of heated academic debates (see Raciborski 2011). Yet, scholars agree that at least some level of citizens' engagement is necessary to ensure successful functioning of democracy and the legitimacy of the political system (Mishler & Rose 2001; Dalton 2007; Raciborski 2011). The sense of political efficacy and association with the system are necessary psychological prerequisites

of democratization, as they influence attitudes towards democracy (Skarżyńska and Chmielewski 1995).

Relations between citizens and political authorities of the state have been analysed from several perspectives, starting with the participatory democracy theory (Mills, Rousseau, Pateman), and, later, the civil society theory (de Tocquille, Almond and Verba, Putnam). In the second half of the 20th century researchers turned to analysis of political alienation (e.g., Paige 1971, Seligson 1980), and recently government-society relations are frequently assessed from the perspective of the social capital theory.

In post-communist countries government-society relations attracted particular interest in the context of the transition to democracy. Among the first scholars exploring the character and dynamics of political alienation in Poland were Korzeniowski (1994), Skarżyńska and Chmielewski (1995). Their research shows that the roots of political alienation can be found in the communist system (Korzeniowski 1994). People deeply distrusted the authorities and had little confidence in the usefulness of civic and political activities which were mainly organized or closely monitored by the authorities. The established mechanisms of participation and self-management such as workers' councils or general assemblies failed to provide workers with a real opportunity to influence important decisions, thus they were mostly ignored and distrusted (Nelson 1982). Right after the fall of the Communist system political alienation decreased, but experiences of transition—hyperinflation, detoriating situation in the labor market, rapidly rising levels of poverty and economic insecurity—intensied political alienation bringing it to a level higher than in the 1980s (Korzeniowski 1994; Skarżyńska & Chmielewski 1995; Mierina & Cers N.D.). Many felt disappointed with the new system and frustrated with the slow pace of improvements (Mishler & Rose 2001; Inglehart & Catterberg 2002; Catterberg & Moreno 2006). One might expect that after more than a decade of a democratically elected government and following positive social and economic changes, people will become more politically engaged and political support will rise. Nevertheless, according to some accounts (Catterberg & Moreno 2006) expectations at the beginning of the transition have been overly optimistic, and political disenchantment and distrust in political authorities in CEE has even increased.

In this paper the character of government-society relations (in other words, relations between citizens and political authorities) in post-communist countries and its dynamics is explored on the basis of ISSP "Role of Government" data, using theoretical models derived from: i) the theory of political alienation and ii) social capital theory. The analysis demonstrates that the application of such frameworks, instead of single indicators, can be very helpful in understanding the general political climate in a country, and individual strategies people adopt in given circumstances. The data is placed in a meaningful context, indicating, for instance, whether there is a reason to worry about the persistence of political distrust and disenchantment, or it does not interfere with the normal functioning of democracy. Both macro- and micro-level analysis is employed to assess the character and dynamics of government-society relations.

Government-Society Relations in Social Capital Theory

Among the first to integrate the core ideas of social capital and good governance into the analysis of government-society relations were Michael Woolcock and Deepa Narayan (2000). Combining two measures—the level of bridging social capital and the performance of state institutions—they differentiate whether the government-society relations are complimentary or substitutive. Depending on the levels of bridging social capital, the performance of the government can lead to:

1) social and economic well-being (good governance, high levels of social capital);
2) coping (when poor functioning of the state is compensated by private networks);
3) exclusion (when there is little social capital, but people can rely on institutional support);
4) conflict (when people have little trust in both each other *and* the institutions).

Studies on post-communist Europe have shown that informal networks of co-operation and reciprocity are particularly valuable for their members, when formal institutional agreements are failing to provide the necessary support, and the economical and social spheres are poorly organized (Rose 1999; Letki & Evans 2005). During the Communist times social networks were a means of compensating for the shortages and inefficiencies of formal institutions (Ledeneva 1998; Rose 1999; Cook et al. 2004). Following Woolcock and Narayan (2000), this can be labelled as a "coping strategy." The challenge, they argue, is to transform situations where a community social capital substitutes for weak, hostile, or indifferent formal institutions into ones in which both realms complement one another. This seems to be a challenging task hence one of the key legacies of communism is the conflict between the "public" and the "private" (Jowitt 1992). At the backdrop of vibrant private networks, most communist citizens developed a very cautious relationship to public and formal activities (Jowitt 1992; Ledeneva 1998; Howard 2003). Furthermore, the fall of communism created an environment characterized by high uncertainty and institutional weakness, combined with rapid economic polarisation (Rose 1999; Letki & Evans 2005; Howard 2003). In a situation like this people do few favours to each other, especially to those who are not part of their "affective network" (Ledeneva 1998; Cook et al. 2004). As a result, generalised trust in others remained low. The "weakness of civil society" has been attributed partly to political factors (Mishler & Rose 2001; Carnaghan 2007), and partly to people being socialised under the communist system (Howard 2003).

Government-Society-Relations in Political Alienation Theory

In political alienation theory the relationship between a society and its political system is often summarized in the concept of political support or its opposite—political alienation.[1] Political alienation as a term originates in the theory of Karl Marx. Over

[1] After the 80-s some social scientists prefer to speak about political disenchantment, estrangement, disengagement from politics, political skepticism or cynism—"an individuals attitude, consisting of a conviction of the incompetence and immorality of politicians, political institutions and/or the political system

time several meanings have been attributed to it, yet the notion of 'powerlessness'—elimination of individual freedom and control—remains the most common understanding of the term (Seeman 1959; Roberts 1987). From this perspective, "alienation can be conceived as the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcement, he seeks" (Seeman 1959: 784). Unlike Marx, Seeman (1959) supports the view that alienation should be treated from the socio-psychological point of view—not as an objective 'state of affairs' but as individual's expectations of that state of affairs; more specifically, of individual's sense of influence over socio-political events (control over the political system, the industrial economy, international affairs, and the like). Similarly, Roberts (1987) interprets 'powerlessness' as a lack of sense of personal efficacy. An empirical test of the five alienation dimensions identified by Seeman (Roberts 1987) confirmed that powerlessness and self-estrangement are the two central facets of alienation. Similar conclusions about powerlessness and estrangement as central elements of alienation were reached by Korzeniowski (1994), Skarżyńska and Chmielewski (1995). At the same time, Korzeniowski (1994) rightfully argues that alienation can be seen not only as a feeling of powerlessness and self-estrangement of citizens from political authority, but also as objective alienation of the ruling elites from the society.

The most recent political alienation literature (Bowler & Donovan 2002; Kim 2005; Catterberg & Moreno 2006) refers to political alienation as a combination of:

(1) a lack of confidence in political institutions and
(2) a feeling of political inefficacy.

Confidence is related to the output process of politics, and reflects the feeling that the government is acting in the interests of people. *Efficacy*, in contrast, is related to the input process, and is usually understood as a belief that an individual action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process (Campbell et.al. 1952: 187). Both are necessary to ensure a the development of civil society and a successful cooperation between citizens and the government (Almond & Verba 1963; Paige 197l; Kim 2005). Having low confidence in political authorities *and* in individuals' ability to challenge them, is an indication of political alienation, rising doubts about the effective functioning of democracy and the legitimacy of the political system.

Jeffery Paige (1971) combines political trust and efficacy in a theoretical model, deriving four distinct political attitudes:

1) active support of the existing governmental structure (high efficacy, high trust),
2) dissident attitudes (high efficacy, low trust),
3) subordinate attitudes (low efficacy, high trust) and
4) alienated attitudes (low efficacy and low trust).

If we are to understand the character of political alienation, it is of particular importance to understand which groups of society are the most alienated. Some

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as a whole" (Schyns & Nuus 2007: 126). Yet, cynism does not say anything about the estrangement of the individual from the political process; cynics may be involved in politics, whereas estranged people are, by definition, not. Thus, cynicism may be seen essentially as the 'trust' dimension, just more intense and antagonistic (Schyns & Nuus 2007). Alienation is a broader concept, therefore I consider it more appropriate for describing relations between the state and civil society.

suggest that it is the rising cohort of young, better-educated, post-materialist citizens who are dissatisfied with how democracy works, and are pressing for the expansion of the democratic process (Inglehart 1990; 1997). If, however, dissatisfaction and political alienation has increased among those at the margins of society, occupying less advantageous social positions, this might be a sign of a conflict of interests, increasing political inequality and concentration of political power in the hands of the privileged (Korzeniowski 1994; Dalton 2007; Solt 2008).

A number of studies have found that alienated citizens are not necessarily cognitively apathetic, and often have strong political views, yet evidence is ambiguous. While research in the West shows that alienation is most widespread among those who hold more extreme political views (McClosky & Schaar 1965), studies in post-communist countries find that the process of transition to market economy alienated those who hold leftist, anti-capitalist views (Korzeniowski 1994).

Data and Indicators

The analysis is based on the ISSP 1996 and 2006 "The Role of Government" data.[2] Both data sets include a number of post-communist countries—Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Russia, (and East Germany)—as well as 13 other countries in and outside Europe. The 2006 ISSP covers even more countries—33, including seven post-communist countries and East Germany. A comparative analysis can reveal whether a particular type of government-society relations is only characteristic of post-communist countries, and might therefore be tied with the communist past.

Two theoretical models are employed in this paper: the aforementioned Paige's (1971) political alienation model, and Woolcock and Narayan's (2000) model of government-society relations. The former distinguishes two dimensions: 1) confidence in political authorities and 2) political efficacy, while the latter combines 1) the quality of governance; and 2) the level of bridging social capital. Below we discuss them in turn.

Talking about confidence in political authorities, David Easton (1965) introduces the notion of diffuse support and specific support. Pippa Norris (1999) offers a more detailed classification—support for the community, regime principles, regime performance, regime institutions, and political actors—and Bas Denters et al. (2007) distinguish between: 1) actors in a representative party-democracy (political parties, politicians); 2) institutions in a liberal democracy (parliament, cabinet); 3) institutions of the *Rechtstaat* (civil service, courts, police). Yet, empirical analysis has revealed a very high correlation between confidence in different institutions, thus, that there is essentially one single dimension of political confidence (Mishler & Rose 2001; Denters et.al. 2007).

[2] ISSP "Role of Government" surveys were also conducted in 1985 and 1990, but unfortunately they did not contain comparable questions on efficacy and trust in political institutions. For more information on sampling, data collection, translation, survey question coverage, response and outcome figures see: ISSP Study Monitoring Report to the ISSP General Assembly by GESIS-ZUMA, Germany. Questionnaires are available at: http://www.gesis.org/issp/overview/reports/

The term 'political efficacy' was profoundly established in political analysis following Almond and Verba's seminal work "Civic Culture" (1963). Nowadays scientists (Madsen 1987; Kim 2005) usually distinguish between: 1) external efficacy describing the perceived responsiveness of the government; and 2) internal efficacy reflecting an optimistic view of one's own political capabilities. Some (Paige 1971; Seligson 1980) suggest using 3) information about, or understanding of politics as a surrogate for standard efficacy measures, or as an additional item.

In the ISSP survey seven items measured on an 5-point scale were meant to characterize political interest, political trust and efficacy. Based on theory (Paige 1971; Seligson 1980) one can hypothesize that political efficacy [denoted in the following analysis as EFFI] is three-dimensional, and it consists of:

- *Self-efficacy* or internal efficacy [SELF-EFF]—a psychological disposition or feeling of confidence in one's personal ability to influence salient government decisions—measured in the ISSP survey by *People like me don't have any say about what the government does*.[3]
- *Responsiveness* of the government to citizens' influence or external efficacy [RESP], i.e., *The average citizen has considerable influence on politics*.
- *Political competence* [POLCOMP]. Many scholars (e.g., Verba et al. 1995) suggest that political competence or civic skills are part of a larger package including also motivation or interest. In ISSP it is captured by "How interested would you say you personally are in politics" [INTEREST], "I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country' [UNDERS] and "I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am" [MOSTP].

The other dimension of political alienation—*confidence* in political authorities [CONF]—is captured in the ISSP survey by "People we elect as MP's try to keep the promises they have made during the elections" [TRUST_MP] and "Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country" [TRUST_CS]. One must note though that these measures only refer to public institutions and seem to measure the specific support for *political authorities* (individuals who currently hold positions of power).

To test whether the available indicators in post-communist countries indeed fit the pre-assumed factors I used second order confirmatory factor analysis using SEM in Stata. The model fit indices of the initially specified model were not satisfactory, so the model was respecified by eliminating "I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am" [MOSTP] from the 'political competence' factor. The factor score weight of this item was low, and excluding it significantly improved the overall model fit, as well as Crombach's Alpha of the factor.[4] The respecified model shown in Figure 1 appears to have a good fit. RMSEA (root mean-

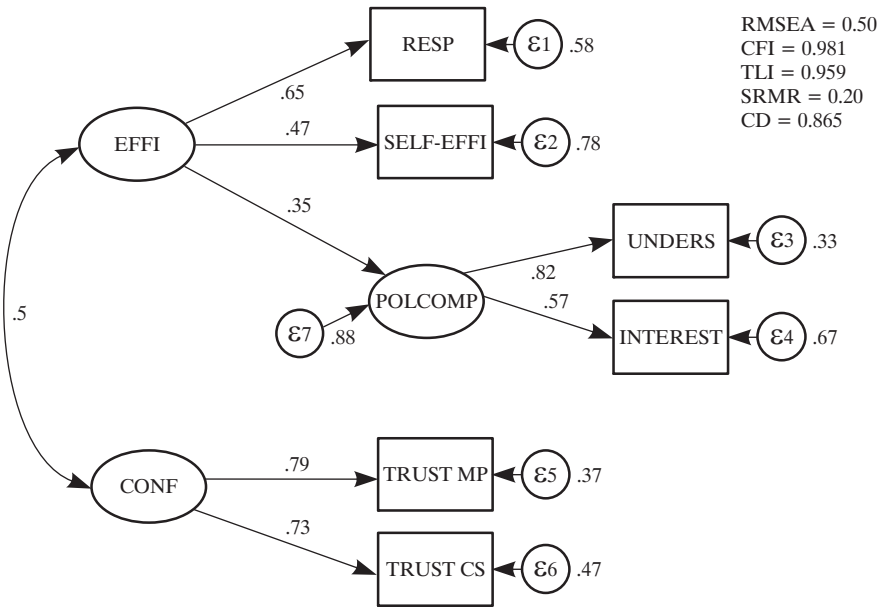
[3] Unfortunately, due to a translation error, this question can not be used for the 1996 wave of Latvian and Russian data.

[4] The likelihood ratio test confirmed that the new model fits the data significantly (<0.001) better, and AIC and BIC decreased by, accordingly, 19527 and 19547 indicating a significant improvement over the initial model.

squared error approximation), which is an estimate of fit of the model relative to a saturated model in the population, is satisfactory (<.05), and CFI (comparative fit index) of .98 means that the overall fit of the tested model is 98% better than that of an independence model, based on the sample data. The coefficient of determination (CD) of 0.865 confirms that the model describes the variation in the data rather well.

Figure 1

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis



Note: All links statistically significant at .0.001 level. The items forming EFFI explain 74% of the variation in this latent factor.

None of the factors was represented by more than two items in the questionnaire, therefore the factor scores were calculated simply as an average between the corresponding items, and expressed in the scale from one to five, where more positive value means a more optimistic answer. As all three aspects of political efficacy are necessary to facilitate effective political action, they were combined, by assigning an equal weight to each of them, to create a single efficacy measure.[5]

Now, turning to Woolcock and Narayan's (2000) model, there are two questions in the ISSP which seem like a good proxy for bridging social capital: "There are only a few people I can trust completely" and "If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you". Factor analysis confirmed that these two indicators represent one dimension. The correlation between them is 0.54, explained variance—77%, and Crombach's Alpha—0.7, which shows high level of reliability.

[5] Correlation between these dimensions is quite small—0,2 between self-efficacy and competence, 0,17 between responsiveness and competence and 0,36 between responsiveness and self-efficacy. It shows that 'efficacy' is clearly not a one-dimensional, homogenous parameter.

It is much more difficult to find adequate indicators of the quality of governance. According to the "performance hypothesis", the performance of authorities reflects in political trust (Mishler & Rose 2001; Catterberg & Moreno 2006). It is especially important how successful the institutions are in dealing with such matters as promoting growth, governing effectively, and, especially in new or transitional regimes, avoiding corruption. In fact, there is so much evidence on the strong connection between the performance of authorities and political trust, that it allows Catterberg and Moreno (2006: 46) to conclude that *performance seems an inherent element of political trust*. Therefore, I use confidence in political authorities as a proxy for the quality of governance. The correlation between these items is 0.51, explained variance—76%, and Crombach's Alpha—0.68 which confirms that the items form a coherent scale.

Hypotheses

Considering increased opportunities to get involved in the political process as well as improving economic conditions, we would expect that:

H1. Political alienation since mid-1990s has decreased.

Considering the communist legacy of political alienation and the differences in living conditions, post-communist countries can still be expected to lag behind the established Western democracies in terms of political support (Lagerspetz 2009). Therefore I would expect that:

H2. Even in 2006, citizens of post-communist countries were still more politically alienated than citizens of the established Western democracies.

Based on previous studies, it is also possible to formulate individual-level hypotheses regarding political alienation:

H3. a) political alienation is most widespread among people with low levels of education (Skarżyńska & Chmielewski 1995; Carnaghan 1996); b) Young people are the most alienated age group (Jennings & Stoker 2004); c) alienation is increasing the most among young people (Inglehart 1990; Highton & Wolfinger 2001); d) alienation is increasing the most among those at the botom of the social structure (Korzeniowski 1994; Dalton 2007; Slomczynski & Janicka 2009).

Finally, political alienation is also known to be related to political views. Based on studies in Poland (Korzeniowski 1994) I expect that:

H4. Political alienation is most widespread among people who favor left wing parties, and particularly those with far left wing views.

From the perspective of social capital theories, the communist legacy of distrust, the experiences of transition, and the inefficiency of formal institutions in post-communist countries lead to my final hypothesis:

H4. In post-communist countries people have low trust both in each other and the authorities, thus these countries are in the state of 'conflict', i.e., poor performance of institutions is matched by low levels of social capital.

Results

Political alienation perspective

To illustrate the political alienation approach to government-society relations, I use a slightly adapted Paige's (1971) model. But first, to avoid the trust-efficacy contamination problem, I present a separate analysis of each of the dimensions of efficacy (Table 1).

Table 1

Dynamics of political attitudes (mean)

Country	Wave	Confidence	Efficacy	Responsiveness	Self-efficacy	Competence
Hungary	1996	2.22	2.16	1.93	1.91	2.61
	2006	2.45	2.25	1.98	2.06	2.70
	Sig.	***	**	***	***	***
Czech Republic	1996	2.42	2.32	2.06	1.94	2.97
	2006	2.33	2.36	2.08	2.15	2.84
	Sig.	*			***	***
Slovenia	1996	2.50	2.24	2.03	1.80	1.89
	2006	2.67	2.33	2.17	2.07	2.74
	Sig.	***	**	***	*	***
Latvia	1996	2.30	—	2.61	—	2.78
	2006	2.38	2.33	2.27	1.86	2.82
	Sig.	*	—	***	—	
Poland	1996	2.45	2.47	2.38	1.91	3.08
	2006	2.24	2.40	2.28	2.01	2.90
	Sig.	***	*	*	*	***
Russia	1996	2.11	—	2.01	—	2.59
	2006	2.06	2.22	2.21	1.81	2.64
	Sig.		—	***	—	
East-Germany	1996	2.34	2.33	2.183	1.88	2.95
	2006	2.47	2.36	2.11	1.87	3.07
	Sig.	*				*
Post-communist countries	1996	2.32	2.29	2.17	1.89	2.81
	2006	2.33	2.34	2.17	2.05	2.79
	Sig.		***		***	
Other countries	1996	2.63	2.83	2.60	2.69	3.16
	2006	2.65	2.89	2.64	2.80	3.21
	Sig.	*	***	**	***	***

Note: Mean values on the scale from 1 to 5. For self-efficacy and common efficacy Latvia and Russia are excluded, because of previously mentioned questionnaire problems.

Difference is significant at 0:001*** level; at 0:01** level; at 0:05* level.

As expected, in post-communist countries both political efficacy and confidence in political authorities in 1996 was much lower than in our other 'benchmark' democracies. However, contrary to hypothesis H1, analysis of the dynamics of *confidence in political authorities* in post-communist countries as a group shows very small improvements that are not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The rather different

dynamics of the confidence in authorities in different post-communist countries (Table 1) suggests that the evaluations largely depend on the performance of incumbents. Congruent with H2, people in post-communist countries still have less (Sig<0.001) confidence in their political authorities than people in the established democracies.

A closer inspection of the dimensions of political efficacy (Table 1) provides an even stronger support for H2. In comparison to the established Western democracies, citizens of post-communist countries are much less interested in politics and often do not have a good understanding of the important issues facing their country. They are also much more skeptical regarding the responsiveness of public officials. But the biggest difference between citizens of post-communist and other countries can be observed in the perceived political *self efficacy*—belief that people like themselves are capable of influencing government decisions (all differences significant at a 0.001 confidence level).

The data reveals that in the course of time, people in post-communist countries have become more confident that they can have a say about what the government does, lending a partial support for hypothesis H1. Also, in many post-communist countries (Hungary, Slovenia, East-Germany and Russia) in 2006 citizens saw their governments as more responsive than before. Poland and Latvia, where the perceived responsiveness decreased, are the ones who had the highest scores in 1996, thus, we probably should not call it 'a negative trend', but rather 'normalization' after a period dominated by election campaigns.[6]

All in all, the results are conclusive in that alienated attitudes—low confidence in political authorities and low levels of political efficacy—were and still are especially characteristic of citizens of post-communist countries (Figure 2). None of the other surveyed countries have efficacy levels as low as those of post-communist countries, and all but a few have more confidence in their political authorities. Therefore H2 is fully confirmed. Interestingly, we find that the citizens of Spain, Portugal, Chile and Taiwan—other countries that had recently experienced totalitarian regimes—also demonstrate a comparatively high level of political alienation. Citizens of most of the established, "first wave" democracies, on the other hand, are characterized by allegiant attitudes: they rely on their governments, but will actively engage in politics and challenge them, when necessary.

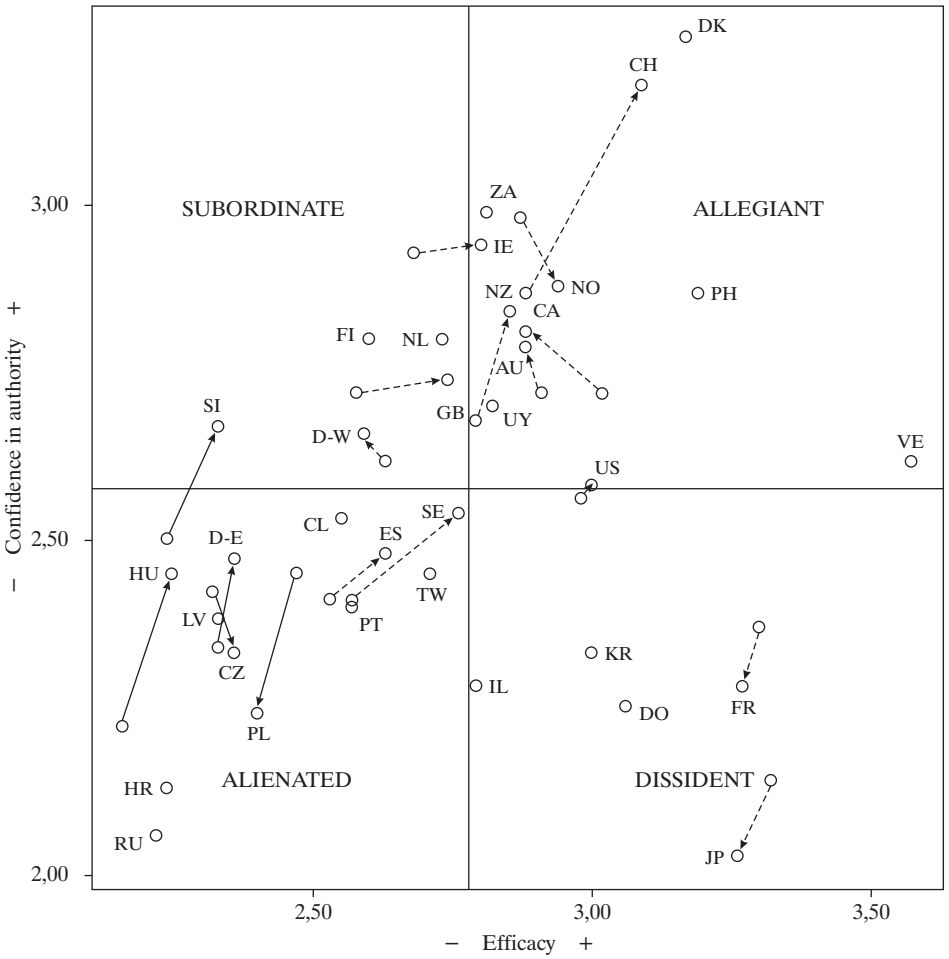
Political alienation can also be analyzed by calculating the percentage of people in each country that belongs to each of the sub-groups, i.e., have alienated, dissident, subordinate or allegiant attitudes. Table 2 summarizes the results.

As we see, in percentage terms the number of alienated citizens in post-communist countries has decreased from 54% in 1996 to 49% in 2006. Independent sample T-test confirms that the difference is significant at 0.01 level, so even if it is a small change, it supports H1. The most alienated citizens from all post communist countries can be found in Russia (62%), followed by Latvia, Poland, and the Czech Republic (52–53%). None of the established democracies had (in 1996) or has (in 2006) as many

[6] The field work in Poland was carried out in 1997—the year of parliamentary elections. Similarly, in Latvia the dates of field work coincided with the election of a new parliament. This might be the reason for overly high optimism with regards to the responsiveness of the authorities.

Figure 2

Paige's model of government–society relations



Note: The arrows reflect the dynamics from the 1996 till 2006. Country names coded according to ISO 3166-1. RU—Russia, LV—Latvia, CZ—Czech Republic, PL—Poland, HR—Croatia, HU—Hungary, D-E—East Germany, PT—Portugal, CL—Chile, ES—Spain, SE—Sweeden, IL—Israel, KR—Republic of Korea, DO—Dominica, FR—France, JP—Japan, TW—Taiwan, SI—Slovenia, D-W—West Germany, FI—Finland, ND—The Netherlands, GB—Great Britain, UY—Uruguay, US—United States, VE—Venezuela, AU—Australia, CA—Canada, NZ—New Zealand, IE—Ireland, PH—Philippines, DK—Denmark, CH—Switzerland, ZA—South Africa.

alienated people as post-communist countries (Spain is the closest with 38%), which, again, confirms H2. During the past ten years, from all post-communist countries the number of alienated people decreased the most in Hungary—from 58% to 45%; whereas in Poland it increased by 5%. Poland also has the highest number of people holding dissident attitudes (18%).

To find out in which demographic groups political alienation is more widespread, I used a hierarchical logistic regression analysis—two-level random intercept mod-

Table 2

Attitudinal groups in post-communist and other countries

	Alienated		Dissident		Subordinate		Allegiant	
	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006	1996	2006
Hungary	58	45	14	13	22	28	7	14
Czech Republic	54	53	10	15	22	17	14	14
Slovenia	50	43	10	9	29	31	11	17
Poland	49	54	15	18	19	16	17	12
Russia		62		14		15		10
Latvia		53		15		21		11
East-Germany	54	47	13	12	20	26	13	14
West-Germany	35	36	20	13	22	24	24	27
Australia	27	27	22	20	19	20	32	34
Great Britain	37	33	14	15	27	24	22	29
United States	27	27	30	29	13	13	30	31
Ireland	30	26	11	15	26	26	33	33
Norway	21	26	15	17	23	17	41	39
Sweden	47	33	15	20	16	17	21	29
New Zealand	34	28	18	17	21	21	27	34
Canada	22	26	26	17	17	21	36	36
Japan	19	21	52	54	6	5	23	21
Spain	44	38	20	23	18	18	17	21
France	15	19	49	48	7	4	29	28
Switzerland	22	11	21	15	19	20	38	55
Post-communist	54	49	12	14	22	23	12	14
Other countries	30	28	23	24	18	17	29	31

Note: Percentage from all inhabitants of the country. Percentages are calculated, based on Paige's theoretical model, taking into account the mean values for trust (2,55) and efficacy (2,70) among 19 countries that participated in both waves of the study.

els with respondents being nested within countries—with "alienated" as the dependent variable. The models were estimated using maximum likelihood estimations in GLLAMM software in Stata (Rabe-Hasketh and Skrondal, 2005). From the point of view of the hypotheses, the most important individual-level variables in my regression analysis are education, age, employment status, and socio-economic status (measured in ISSP by self-placement on the socio-economic scale from 0 to 10). In addition, I include the standard background variables gender, religious denomination, and type of locality. The number of people in the household could be important for political discussions and thus, alienation (Torney-Purta 2004), so I control for that too. Age is included in the model as a number of dummies instead of a continuous variable, because I expect the relationship to be nonlinear (e.g, Torney-Purta 2004).

In addition to the individual-level variables, I also included several country-level predictors such as the level of development (real GDP per capita), real GDP growth (at constant prices), and the level of inequality (Gini coefficient from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt, 2009)). Finally, to account for possible external limitations to political participation, I include Freedom House measure of 'Associational and organizational rights'. Inclusion of these contextual variables along-

side 'post-communist status' allows to avoid potentially spurious results as regards to the importance of post-communism for political alienation.

33 countries were included in the 2006 ISSP survey, however, due to missing data in the 'type of locality' variable, only 31 of them are included in the regression analysis. Seven of them are the post-communist CEE countries: Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Russia, and Slovenia, and Germany is split into East and West Germany. In Table 3 I present two models—one that includes all countries in the sample, and an other than only includes post-communist countries. The latter is a simple logistic regression model with country dummies.

The results are largely supportive of our expectations.[7] They reveal a significant negative effect of political alienation on education (Model 1, Table 3): In line with H3a, alienation is significantly more common among those who have no formal qualification or only the lowest level qualification than those with above upper secondary level education. It shows that increasing the overall education level of the population can help to reduce political disenchantment of citizens, facilitating a more engaged and civically active society. Second, in line with H3b, in comparison to those who are over 55 years old, younger people are more likely to be politically alienated.[8] The literature suggests that there are a number of reasons for this: individualisation, the spread of consumerism, people being busy with solving other problems in their lives, politicians failing to connect with youth, etc. (Kovacheva 2005; Henn et.al. 2002). Still, not all young people are equally alienated: in comparison to other groups students are one of the least alienated, but those who are economically inactive—the most alienated.

In the overall equation predicting political alienation, one of the strongest effects is the effect of socio-economic position. Lower socio-economic status and being a woman are factors that are associated with a significant increase in political alienation. For a one-unit increase on the socio-economic status scale, there is about 8% decrease in the odds of being politically alienated, while being a man decreases the odds by about 11%. The results also illustrate the importance of political discussions: those living in a farm or a separate house in the countryside are more alienated from politics than those who live in a village or suburbs of a city. Religion matters for political alienation too: except for Jewish, most other religious groups are less alienated from politics than those who are not religious. It seems to demonstrate the role of the Church in engaging people politically.

Regression analysis once more confirms that post-communist status is associated with significantly higher levels of political alienation (Sig.$<$0.001). If we look at odds ratios (Table 3), for a person from a post-communist country the odds of being politically alienated increase by a massive 66% (effect significant at 0.001 level). To facilitate the interpretation of results, I also calculated predicted probabilities. The

[7] All demographic and contextual variables explain 22% of the variation in political alienation. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) is 0.13, which means that 13 per cent of total variance is explained by the country-level factors.

[8] The statistical significance of differences between effects (coefficients) was tested using post-estimation Wald tests ('test' command in Stata).

Table 3

Logistic regression of political alienation on demographic and contextual characteristics (unstandardised coefficients, with SE in parentheses, and odds ratios)

	All countries n = 38 395, N = 31			**Post-communist countries** n = 8023		
	Model 1.			Model 2.		
	b	SE	OR	b	SE	OR
Sex (men = 1)	−0.113***	(0.024)	0.893	−0.093*	(0.050)	0.911
Age (reference: 45–54)						
<25	4.18e−05	(0.048)	1.000	−0.033	(0.111)	0.967
25–34	−0.008	(0.038)	0.992	0.004	(0.083)	1.004
35–44	0.003	(0.037)	1.003	−0.055	(0.082)	0.946
55–64	−0.103**	(0.042)	0.902	−0.056	(0.088)	0.946
65–74	−0.107**	(0.051)	0.898	−0.147	(0.108)	0.864
75+	−0.335***	(0.064)	0.715	−0.274**	(0.131)	0.76
Education (ref.: no education)						
Lowest formal education	0.089*	(0.052)	1.093	−0.107	(0.156)	0.899
Above lowest	−0.014	(0.053)	0.986	−0.140	(0.159)	0.87
Higher secondary education	−0.011	(0.052)	0.989	−0.020	(0.158)	0.98
Above higher secondary education	−0.113**	(0.056)	0.893	−0.201	(0.169)	0.818
University degree	−0.400***	(0.058)	0.670	−0.379**	(0.170)	0.685
Household size	−0.003	(0.002)	0.997	−0.006	(0.008)	0.994
Employment status (ref.: full-time)						
Part-time employment	−0.001	(0.041)	0.999	0.048	(0.124)	1.049
Student	−0.267***	(0.060)	0.766	−0.129	(0.128)	0.879
Economically inactive	0.077**	(0.035)	1.081	0.065	(0.079)	1.067
Unemployed	0.006	(0.049)	1.006	0.087	(0.106)	1.091
Religious denomination (ref.: none)						
Roman Catholic	−0.166***	(0.037)	0.847	−0.137*	(0.073)	0.872
Protestant	−0.181***	(0.039)	0.835	0.008	(0.104)	1.008
Christian Orthodox	−0.077	(0.084)	0.926	0.040	(0.108)	1.041
Jewish	0.461***	(0.149)	1.585	−0.823	(0.673)	0.439
Islam	−0.172	(0.115)	0.842	0.058	(0.233)	1.06
Buddism	−0.389***	(0.078)	0.678			
Other	−0.263***	(0.057)	0.769	−0.024	(0.302)	0.977
Socio-economic status	−0.079***	(0.007)	0.924	−0.142***	(0.016)	0.867
Type of locality (ref.: farm or home in country-side)						
Urban/big city	−0.074	(0.062)	0.929	−0.024	(0.174)	0.976
Suburb/ouskirts of a big city	−0.117*	(0.065)	0.890	0.118	(0.205)	1.125
Town or a small city	−0.098	(0.063)	0.906	−0.003	(0.177)	0.997
Country village	−0.153**	(0.063)	0.858	−0.015	(0.176)	0.985
GDP*1000	−0.013**	(0.006)	1.000			
GDP growth (%)	0.023	(0.024)	1.024			
FH Assoc. and Organisations	−0.044*	(0.023)	0.957			
GINI	−0.026***	(0.005)	0.974			
Post-communist	0.510***	(0.104)	1.665			
Constant	1.411***	(0.465)	4.100	0.689***	(0.261)	1.991
Random-effects parameters						
Residual	0.219	(0.042)				
-loglikelihood	−22399.188			−5222.7681		

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 (two-tailed tests). Model 2 also includes country dummies (not shown here).

results show that the probability of being politically alienated for people in post-communist countries is 0.40 [with the true value anywhere between 0.33 and 0.47], while in other countries it is much smaller—0.29 [0.25; 0.34].

A significant predictor of political alienation is week economic development. It means that one can expect that with improvements in the economic situation in post-communist countries, political alienation will decrease as well. Interestingly, the results show that in countries with higher level of inequality political alienation is less widespread.

If we look separately at post-communist countries (Model 2, Table 3) the conclusions are similar. Political alienation is more widespread among women, as well as younger and less educated people. Besides age and education, one of the strongest predictors of political alienation in post-communist countries is socio-economic status: for a for a one-unit increase on the socio-economic status scale, there is about 13% decrease in the odds of being politically alienated. Religion plays a role too, with Roman Catholics being less politically alienated than those who are not religious.

In order to test H4, I also present regression models which include a person's political orientation (Table 4.).[9] Left-right political orientation turns out to be one of the strongest predictors of political alienation. Having no party preference, or no specific party preference, is associated with a significant increase in political alienation. Contrary to H4 we find that those who feel close to left-wing parties are less likely to be politically alienated compared to those who hold centrist views. However, far left views are indeed associated with strong political alienation. Most countries included in the analysis execute right wing or centre-right wing social and economic policies, meaning that far left views are rarely discussed and acknowledged in the political arena.

In post-communist countries the results are very similar (Model 2, Table 4). Those who have moderate left-wing or right-wing preferences feel less alienated, while political alienation is most widespread among those preferring far-left parties or having no party preference. It shows that formation of a party-attachment is important for overcoming the sense of political alienation (Henn et al. 2002).

From 1996 till 2006 the number of politically alienated individuals increased similarly in all age groups (Table 5). However, the age group below 35 years of age (especially men) saw the biggest decrease in the number of people holding allegiant attitudes, and the biggest increase in people holding dissident attitudes (by 3 percentage points). Youth is becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the political leaders and their responsiveness. They are becoming 'engaged sceptics'—interested in political affairs, but distrustful of those who are elected to positions of power (Henn et al. 2002: 187).

The number of politically alienated individuals has increased among those with less than higher secondary education, but decreased among those with above higher secondary level. Still, people with higher education are less subordinate than they used to be in 1996, but bear dissident attitudes more often (an increase by 7 percentage points). Efficacy has increased only among the better educated individuals—those with at least a higher secondary education, but has remained low among the less educated individuals. In addition, confidence in authority has not changed among those

[9] The models that include left-right political orientation are calculated separately, in order for the main results as regards to demographic characteristics (Table 3) not to be contaminated with the values dimension. Full models available upon request.

Table 4

Logistic regression of political alienation on political orientation (unstandardised coefficients, with SE in parentheses, and odds ratios)

	All countries n = 34 505, N = 31			**Post-communist countries** n = 6860		
	Model 1.			Model 2.		
	b	SE	OR	b	SE	OR
Political orientation (ref.: center)						
Far left	0.132**	(0.066)	1.141	0.263**	(0.119)	1.301
Left	−0.175***	(0.041)	0.840	−0.381***	(0.104)	0.683
Right	−0.066	(0.043)	0.936	−0.278***	(0.099)	0.757
Far right	0.067	(0.073)	1.069	0.054	(0.137)	1.055
Other/no specific	0.513***	(0.101)	1.670	0.251	(0.261)	1.285
No party preference	0.510***	(0.042)	1.665	0.413***	(0.096)	1.511
Don't know/can't choose	0.166***	(0.059)	1.181	−0.119	(0.104)	0.888
Constant	0.433	(1.071)	1.542	0.665***	(0.229)	1.944
Random-effects parameters						
Residual	0.367	(0.092)				
-loglikelihood	-19464.861			-4560.0644		

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1 (two-tailed tests). Models also include individual level control variables from Table 3, as well as country-level control variables (Model 1) or country dummies (Model 2) (not shown in the table).

with above than higher secondary level of education, but has decreased dramatically among those with the lowest formal qualification. One must also mention that both alienated and dissident attitudes have increased among those who have little financial security: are employed less than part-time, are helping their family members, or are housewifes/-men responsible for home duties.

The application of Paige's model reveals that it is not alienation that is increasing among young and better educated individuals, as predicted by Inglehart's (1990) post-materialist citizens' thesis (H3c), but rather discontent. Unlike alienation that causes passivity, dissident attitudes can lead to young people engaging in unconventional political activities (Skarżyńska & Chmielewski 1995). At the same time, there are signs of increasing alienation among the least advantaged members of society—those with a low education level and those lacking financial independence or social security. This observation corresponds to H3d, marking a conflict of interests and rising political inequality described by Korzeniowski (1994), Solt (2008) and others.

Social capital perspective

From the social capital perspective, relations between citizens and the state can be described using Woolcock's and Narayan's (2000) model of government-society relations (Figure 3). The analysis shows that the two dimensions of the model—confidence in political authorities and generalised trust—are not closely linked. The correlation between them, although statistically significant (Sig. 0.001), is very week—0.13.

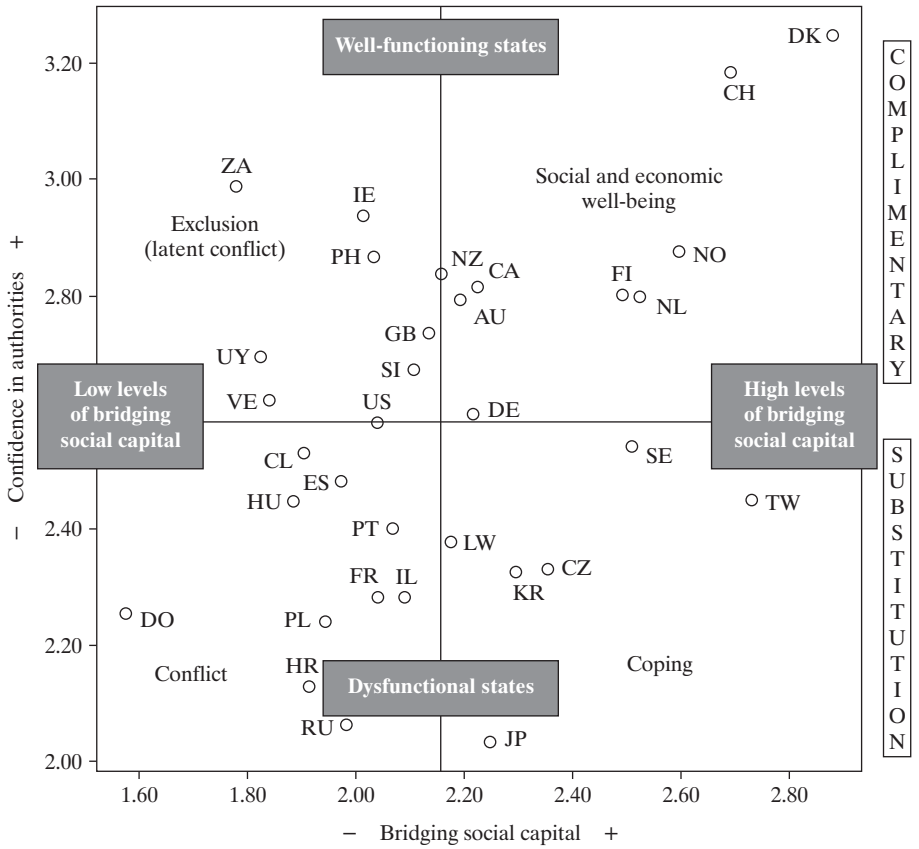
Table 5

Political alienation among different age-, education-, and employment groups

		Year	Alien-ated Row %	Dissi-dent Row %	Subordi-nate Row %	Alle-giant Row %
Age	15–24	1996	29.7	21.6	18.9	29.8
		2006	31.0	23.7	18.0	27.3
	25–34	1996	30.2	23.2	16.9	29.7
		2006	31.7	26.0	15.7	26.6
	35–44	1996	31.0	23.2	16.3	29.5
		2006	32.0	24.9	15.6	27.5
	45–54	1996	31.3	21.4	17.7	29.7
		2006	33.5	23.2	16.1	27.3
	55–64	1996	31.3	20.5	18.6	29.6
		2006	32.4	22.6	17.2	27.7
	65+	1996	31.7	18.7	21.6	28.0
		2006	33.7	17.9	21.2	27.2
Education	No formal qualification	1996	—	—	—	—
		2006	29.5	19.1	22.3	29.1
	Lowest formal qualification	1996	31.4	15.0	20.6	33.0
		2006	38.7	19.3	20.5	21.5
	Above lowest qualification	1996	31.0	15.9	20.7	32.4
		2006	36.0	18.7	19.8	25.4
	Higher secondary completed	1996	36.6	17.3	22.9	23.3
		2006	34.8	25.1	16.2	24.0
	Above higher secondary level, other qualification	1996	33.8	18.8	19.1	28.3
		2006	29.7	25.0	14.7	30.6
	University degree completed, graduate studies	1996	29.4	23.1	17.8	29.7
		2006	24.2	29.4	12.0	34.4
Employment status	Employed, full-time, main job	1996	30.5	23.1	16.8	29.5
		2006	32.3	24.6	15.8	27.3
	Employed, part-time, main job	1996	26.3	23.4	16.4	33.9
		2006	29.0	24.9	15.6	30.6
	Employed, less than part-time	1996	26.0	19.4	16.9	37.8
		2006	30.4	28.0	15.6	26.0
	Helping family member	1996	19.6	20.1	26.7	33.6
		2006	26.0	31.9	12.0	30.2
	Unemployed	1996	39.3	18.3	20.2	22.2
		2006	32.4	19.5	18.5	29.6
	Student, school, vocational training	1996	27.0	26.7	14.3	32.1
		2006	28.3	27.5	16.0	28.2
	Retired	1996	35.8	17.9	22.0	24.3
		2006	35.6	18.1	20.9	25.4
	Housewife, -man, home duties	1996	27.6	19.6	19.5	33.3
		2006	32.6	23.3	18.2	26.0
	Permanently disabled	1996	37.1	13.1	23.9	25.9
		2006	38.3	21.4	19.0	21.2
	Other, not in labour force	1996	32.7	23.6	17.5	26.2
		2006	36.2	18.9	19.9	24.9

Figure 3

Woolcock & Narayan's model of government-society relations



Note: Based on Woolcock & Narayan (2000). Source of data: ISSP 2006. Country names coded according to ISO 3166-1 (see Note below Figure 2).

Among the countries where there is complementarily between state and society, where the civil society and authorities work together to achieve better results, and where, as a result, there is peace and well-being, one can mention Denmark and Switzerland, followed by Norway, Netherlands and Finland.

In line with H4, most post-communist countries (Russia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland) are located in the sector "Conflict". People in these countries trust and rely neither on their government and civil servants, nor on other people. According to Woolcock and Narayan (2000) such circumstances provide a fruitful ground for conflicts, violence, war or anarchy. There is a high risk of social exclusion, crime and discrimination in such societies. Besides post-communist countries, Dominican Republic, Chile, Spain, Portugal, France and Israel also have this type of government-society relations (Figure 3).

In countries where the authorities of the state are strong and trustworthy, they may ensure social order, promote cooperation, build bridges and prevent conflicts

from arising. A typical example is South Africa, but among such countries we also find Philippines, Ireland, Uruguay and Venezuela. Despite the seemingly stable state of affairs, beneath there is a latent conflict. At any given moment when some groups will start to feel excluded from politics or discriminated against, and will have the resources for uprising, conflicts my escalate.

Latvia and Czech Republic are somewhat different, having a little bit higher levels of bridging social capital than other post-communist countries. Citizens of these countries have retreated in coping strategies, forming informal networks that allow to cope with an inadequate provision of services and benefits by the state. Just like in Japan, Taiwan and Korea, social capital there substitutes for weak, hostile, or indifferent state institutions.

Conclusions and Discussion

In this paper I have examined government-society relations in post-communist and other countries from the perspective of social capital and political alienation theories, using both macro- and micro-level analysis, on the basis of comparative data. Mainly, I have demonstrated that using more complex theoretical models, instead of single indicators of political attitudes, can be very useful in gaining a better understanding of the political climate in a country and the motivation behind individual's political decisions.

Based on a modified Paige's (1971) theoretical model I have shown that, even after twenty years of democratization post-communist countries still form a distinct cluster characterized by widespread political alienation among their citizens. The gap with established democracies is especially wide with regards to the sense of political self-efficacy, which seems to be one of the reasons for their much higher rates of civic activism (see Almond & Verba 1989; Korzeniowski 1994; Dalton 2007). Since mid-1990s, political alienation of citizens in most post-communist countries has slightly decreased as people have become more confident in their capability to influence salient government decisions and (at least in some countries) begin to perceive their government as more responsive to citizen's needs. The improvements are small, but they indicate that people feel that they are slowly gaining more influence on politics, becoming part of the political decision-making process instead of being just passive political subjects. At the same time, most of them still see their politicians as untrustworthy. In a situation when confidence in political authorities is not improving, an increase in political efficacy could be an early indication of more politically turbulent times ahead.

Individual level analysis, using the same model, reveals that political alienation is most widespread among younger people. However, contrary to Inglehart (1990), I find that instead of increasing political alienation, there is an increase in *dissident attitudes* among people below 35 years of age (especially men) and people with higher education. Unlike alienation that causes passivity, discontent and an increase in dissident attitudes can lead to people engaging in unconventional political activities. A worrying sign from the point of view of the effective functioning of democracy is

the increase in political alienation among the most disadvantaged members of society—those with a low level of education, low social status, and those lacking financial independence or social security. It shows that it is not just the introduction of market economy that alienated the losers of transition (Korzeniowski 1994). Nowadays politics is increasingly perceived as 'a game of the wealthy and affluent' with those at the bottom of society feeling more and more excluded from the political process.

My findings also support Korzeniowski's (1994) thesis that considering that majority of governments pursue right-wing economic policies, those who hold far-left or 'socialist' views are likely to feel politically alienated. Their views are often disregarded and under-represented in the political arena. Yet, alienation is most widespread among those who do not prefer any of the parties—a significant part of the post-communist citizenry. It shows that in order to reduce political alienation, it is important that people can find a political party that represents their views and that they would identify with.

Slovenia, Hungary and East-Germany have made the most overall progress in reducing political alienation of citizens: all political attitudes have improved supporting a trend of convergence with advanced democracies. Not much progress is observed in Czech Republic and Poland (were the situation was comparatively good in 1996) and Latvia. Despite similarities in the past, the current political climate and the performance of incumbents differs from country to country, resulting in diverging trends of political alienation.

According to the Woolcock's and Narayan's (2000) model of government-society relations most post-communist countries are characterized by 'conflict': people have low trust in both each other and the political authorities. Such circumstances provide a fruitful ground for social exclusion, crime and discrimination and increase the risk of conflicts, violence, war or anarchy. In Latvia and Czech Republic the levels of bridging social capital are slightly higher than in other post-communist countries. As the performance of authorities has fallen well short of expectations citizens have retreated in 'coping' strategies, building and using private networks to overcome difficulties and succeed both economically and socially. This type of relations, where social capital substitutes for weak, hostile, or indifferent institutions, is also dysfunctional.

The dispositions, expectations and perceptions of people regarding others, themselves and their role as citizens are affected, at least to some degree, by the performance of political authorities (Mishler & Rose 2001; Stolle 2003; Mieriņa 2012). If the quality of governance would increase, attitudes and behaviour of citizens would gradually change, and the problem of "weakness of civil society"' so characteristic for post-communist countries could be overcome.

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