Morality and the Public Good in Post-Socialist European States

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Abstract

In this study, we investigate morality in relation to the public good in post-socialist Europe. Public good morality is defined as the (non)acceptance of behaviour that contravenes the law and harms society and the greater good of the collective, such as cheating on taxes if one has the chance, paying cash to avoid taxes, not paying one's fare in public transport, and claiming state benefits one is not entitled to. Using data from the European Values Study in 2008 on more than 30,000 respondents in 23 post-socialist states, we find that on average the level of public good morality is quite high: 8.4 on a ten-point scale. However, there are marked differences between individuals and between countries, which we attempt to explain by looking at the legacy of communist rule, processes of democratization and compliance attitudes. We find that individuals living in former Soviet states are more 'lenient' when it comes to actions that harm the collective. However, those who lived under communist rule for a longer time display higher (and not lower) levels of public good morality. The level of democracy in a country does not seem to add any explanatory power, but individuals who hold more democratic values appear to be morally less strict. Finally, compliance attitudes such as interpersonal trust and confidence in government do not seem to mediate the observed relationships between communist rule and democracy on the one hand and public good morality on the other hand.

Keywords: morality, public good, communist rule, democracy, comparative research.

Introduction

A growing body of literature draws attention to the potential discrepancy between what citizens socially accept or justify and what is defined as legal by the state (see Van Schendel & Abraham, 2005). On the one hand, socially unaccepted behaviour may be lawful, and on the other hand illegal actions may be viewed as acceptable by the public. Both lead to a potential conflict between the public and the state, and the latter is highly tangible when studying the concept of 'public good' morality, which can be defined as the (non)acceptance of behaviour that contravenes the law and harms society or the greater good of the collective. The public good is usually defined as common or collective benefits provided by the government, such as basic services (e.g., national defence, police protection, and the system of law), but also the provision of education, health care, public transport, and so on. These collective benefits are characterized by the infeasibility to withhold these benefits from citizens once they are provided (Olson, 1971). This means that even those who do not pay for these collective benefits cannot be excluded, which may lead to free-rider behaviour. This undermines the provision of collective benefits, since governments need to finance the public good. This is the reason why taxes are compulsory (making tax evasion detrimental to the collective), and why there are fines for not paying the consumption of certain collective benefits (such as fare dodging in public transport). In addition, citizens are expected not to place too high of a burden on the public good, for example, by making realistic (and not unnecessary or excessive) claims on welfare benefits such

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as social security. In this study, we will investigate the public morality in relation to the public good[1], which concerns issues such as cheating on taxes if one has the chance, paying cash to avoid taxes, not paying one's fare in public transport, and claiming state benefits one is not entitled to (Halman & Sieben, 2014). Individuals who have high moral standards on these topics have a prominent sense of civic responsibility and respect for legal norms and rules in a society (Letki, 2006). They emphasize the maximization of public and collective instead of private gains and loathe corruption and free-riding behaviour, even if the chance of getting caught is low and the threat of punishment is minimal. High levels of morality concerning the public good are beneficial to society, as they are the prerequisites of honest and compliant behaviour (Orviska & Hudson, 2002), which makes more effective governance possible. If citizens 'accept state regulations, pay taxes, and contribute to the common good, government will have less need of enforcing ... control of citizens' (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004, p. 341). Public good morality is linked to the broader concept of civic morality, which refers to the acceptance of behaviours and issues that contravene the law or that 'might be seen as falling into the area of behaviour where attempting to "get away with it" or not is largely a matter of personal discretion... [or that] involves the idea of personal honesty or dishonesty' (Harding, Phillips, & Fogarty, 1986, p. 11).

Research shows that civic morality as well as public good morality is rather low in post-socialist states, especially in the countries that used to be part of the former Soviet Union (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004; Frey & Torgler, 2007; Halman & Sieben, 2014). This observation is worrisome in the sense that low levels of these types of morality are thought to lead to social dissolution and isolation, as people will increasingly be 'unable to make the moral commitments that will connect them to other people' (Fukuyama, 2000, p. 48). An unbridled pursuit of personal over public gains will furthermore undermine collective solidarity and good citizenship, which are essential anchors of society. This calls for research which examines these potential consequences of low levels of public good morality for both citizens and society. However, before this step is taken, we believe it is essential to first in detail document and explain the public good morality of individuals in post-socialist states. In the present study, we therefore investigate this topic by describing the state of affairs with regards to public good morality in no less than 23 post-socialist states in Europe, using data from the 2008 European Values Study (EVS, 2011). Previous research shows that there are marked individual and cross-national differences in public good morality: some individuals in some post-socialist states show higher levels of public good morality than other individuals living in other states (Halman & Sieben, 2014). We first want to assess whether there is more variation in certain aspects of public good morality than in other aspects. Is, for example, the justification of tax evasion more widespread than the justification of benefit fraud, or is the overall pattern across countries similar?

In the next step, we search for explanations: why do some individuals living in some post-socialist European states have higher levels of public good morality than their counterparts living in other states? As we argued elsewhere (Halman & Sieben, 2014), it seems likely that morality is not in our genes but something we learn and acquire. For example, the famous primatologist Frans de Waal (2006, pp. 166-167) argues that humans

> *are not born with any specific moral norms in mind, but with a learning agenda that tells us which information to imbibe....in the same way that a child is born with any particular language, but with the ability to learn any language, we are born to absorb moral rules and weigh moral options* (de Waal, 2006, pp. 166-167).

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1   Please note that individuals' stances on public good morality (attitude) do not necessarily correspond with illegal actions with respect to the public good (behaviour) or the opportunities to do so. A parallel can be drawn with the concept of permissiveness: '...being permissive does not predict what personal behaviour the individual will display' (Halman & De Moor, 1993, p. 58), since it does not reflect one's own standards (which could be quite strict and traditional), but implies the acceptance of others having different standards.

This implies that people have the capacity to learn and internalize the moral fabric of a society. In this respect, a society's institutions could be important in determining its individuals' moral convictions.

The literature hints at two possible avenues for institutional explanations of both individual and cross-national variation in public good morality in post-socialist states: the legacy of communist rule (Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012) and processes of democratization (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004). The first explanation concerns the way the state in these societies was organized in the past: the repressive, authoritarian regime of the Communist Party still influences the lives of individuals in post-socialist states today, although to a varying degree for different citizens (individual level) in different states (country level). The second explanation focuses on the period after the collapse of the communist regimes in the 1990s: the transition phase to market economies with full democratic institutions. As we will explain below, these democratization processes also work at both the individual level and the cross-national (country) level. In addition, we will explore whether the relationships between the legacy of communist rule and processes of democratization on the one hand and public good morality on the other hand are mediated by compliance attitudes of individuals: the level of trust they have in their fellow citizens and the level of confidence in their present governments.

Theory and hypotheses

Legacy of communist rule

When studying public good morality in post-socialist European states, the legacy of communist rule seems a straightforward factor that needs to be taken into account (see Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012). After all, people living in these countries judge their current situation 'against the memories of the communist past' (Mishler & Rose, 1997, p. 434). In this past, the Communist Party and its ideology of Marxism-Leninism was the main and only accepted source of collective moral authority. Authoritarian regimes made the interests of the individual subordinate to those of the Communist Party. This may have led to two types of reaction when it comes to public good morality (Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012; see also Halman & Sieben, 2014). The first alternative is that individuals living under authoritarian regimes are more law abiding. Socializing agents such as schools, the media, and mass organizations 'taught' them to place the interests of the state above their own interests, and there were severe repercussions for those who did not comply. Fear of punishment may be the leading principle to behave as expected, to respect the law and to act according to the official rules. The other type of reaction is that harsh suppression by the state led to the development of animosity towards the dominant and repressive role of the communist regime. As a result, individuals do *not feel overly obliged to fulfil their duties to the state* (Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012, p. 6) and will thus be more inclined to accept all kinds of subversive activities to undermine the state, such as tax evasion and benefit fraud.[2] It is this second type of reaction that seems to be backed up by empirical research: public good morality is rather low in post-socialist states, especially in countries that used to be part of the former Soviet Union (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004; Frey & Torgler, 2007; Halman & Sieben, 2014).

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2   Illegal acts such as tax evasion and benefit fraud can also be seen as survival strategies for individuals who struggle to make ends meet. These survival strategies were especially important in command economies where limited resources were available (see Polese, 2008), but may also work in the post-socialist states where informal economies play a prominent role (Rasanayam, 2011). On the other hand, it can be argued that such illegal actions might be more beneficial for wealthier individuals, since they have more resources to manipulate. This is why we will control in our analyses for the level of economic welfare at both the individual level (household income) and the country level (GDP per capita).

This latter observation can be explained by the stronger hegemony of the Communist Party in these ex-Soviet states compared to the so-called satellite states in Central Eastern Europe. The satellite states were formally independent, but under heavy political and economic influence (or control) by the Soviet Union. Individuals in these states *had always perceived Soviet Russia as yet another repressive colonist power, quite alien in terms of culture and political tradition* (Crawford, 1996, p. 2). This implies that the legacy of communist rule will in general have left greater imprints on individuals in communist regimes that lasted longer and that were more totalitarian, such as those found in the states of the former Soviet Union. After all, this provided *more opportunity for communist ideology to penetrate all parts of society* (Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012, p. 5). In the case of the satellite states, this imprint will have been less severe. We therefore expect that individuals living in former Soviet states will display lower levels of public good morality than individuals living in Central Eastern European countries (*hypothesis 1*).

At the individual level, we expect that the impact of communist rule will be strongest for those individuals who lived under a communist regime longer (cf. Halman & Sieben, 2014). For example, individuals who lived their entire life in the communist era experienced a lengthy time period under communist rule in which they were subjected to the ideology of the Communist Party and in which they felt the prolonged repression of the communist regime. Individuals who are relatively young and grew up in post-socialist societies have lived under communist rule for a shorter time and will, therefore, in general be less marked in this way.[3] The youngest age cohorts have been raised and socialized in societies that recently became democratic, and as we will argue further on, among them public good morality is assumed to be a kind of necessity for democracies to flourish and work properly (see Putnam, 1993). Our second hypothesis, therefore, is that individuals who lived under communist rule longer will display lower levels of public good morality than those who lived under communist rule for a shorter period of time (*hypothesis 2*).

Processes of democratization

After 1989, when the collapse of the Berlin Wall triggered the start of the breakdown of communist rule in Europe, all post-socialist states underwent a transition phase in which market economies were introduced and democratic institutions were built. Twenty years later, some countries clearly are further in this process than others. Full democracy has been reached only in a few post-socialist European states. According to The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index (2008), which is based on scores for electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation, and political culture, these full democracies can be found in East Germany, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Most post-socialist states are, however, flawed democracies in the sense that they have been relatively successful in achieving the political freedom and civil liberties that are associated with democracy, but 'lag significantly in political participation and political culture — a reflection of widespread anomie and weaknesses of democratic development' (The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, 2008: 3). In addition, there are also post-socialist states with hybrid and authoritarian regimes, which are lagging in the development of freedom or have at least partly fallen back into an authoritarian mode of governing (Mishler & Rose, 2001).

Ever since the seminal study by Almond and Verba (1963), it is widely recognized that in order to survive, democracies require political cultures that encourage citizens' societal engagement, involvement and participation. The stability and effectiveness of democratic governments appears to depend upon people's orientations that must be favourable to the political democratic process. Living in a democracy implies that individuals have to endorse the norms and obligations of democratic life

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3   It should be noted that communist repression varied across decades, countries, as well as groups in the population (such as higher versus lower strata in society). We are not able to make detailed distinctions here, and therefore focus on a general, rather crude, impact of communist rule in life.

(Van Deth, 2007; see also Kymlicka & Norman, 2000), which include a number of civic virtues such as responsibility, cooperation, commitment, loyalty, tolerance, solidarity, law abidance, involvement, activism and engagement. Since democracies do not have the repressive abilities of totalitarian regimes to enforce laws, the survival of democracies depends on the public support of the system and its institutions and the willingness of citizens to comply with the societal rules of good conduct, which implies conformation to democratic laws and rules. More *than any other system of government, democracy depends on citizens' voluntary compliance or what we will call 'norm obedience'* (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005, p. 247).

Thus democracies more or less require from its citizens to be societally engaged, to behave responsibly, to support the norms and obligations related to solidarity, and to obey laws both from an individual and a societal perspective (Van Deth, 2007). Hence we expect that individuals living in more democratic societies will value the collective and the public good more than individuals who are living in less democratic societies, as individuals in the latter countries will feel less tied and loyal to the system. Our hypothesis at the country level, therefore, is as follows: Individuals who live in more democratic states will display higher levels of public good morality than individuals who live in less democratic states (*hypothesis 3*). At the individual level, we may expect that individuals who highly value democratic ideals will also cherish ideals of the 'good' society and the 'good' citizen. They will be loyal to the rules of good conduct and more eager to conform to societal laws. In other words, they are more likely to emphasize civic honesty and to stress norm obedience with respect to the collective than individuals with lower levels of democratic values. We, therefore, hypothesize that individuals who hold more democratic values will display higher levels of public good morality than individuals who hold less democratic values (*hypothesis 4*).

Compliance attitudes: interpersonal trust and confidence in government

So far, we argued that the legacy of communist rule and democratization are plausible explanations for variations in public good morality, both at the individual level and at the country level. We would like to take these explanations one step further and claim that the above mentioned relationships can (to a certain extent) be mediated by what we label as compliance attitudes. We will first discuss what these attitudes comprise and how they are related to morality on the public good, after which we will describe their association with communist rule and democracy.

In general, two motives can be distinguished for compliance and cooperative orientations (Tyler, 2011; see also Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012): instrumental or rational considerations on the one hand and group or community orientations (such as group identity) on the other. Here we focus on the rational considerations for compliance, which refer not only to the likelihood of being caught and the size of penalties in case of breaking the law, but also to the behaviour of others and to that of the government. More specifically, these considerations are linked to the compliance attitudes of interpersonal trust (horizontal trust) and confidence in government (vertical trust).

With respect to interpersonal trust, research shows that the extent to which others in a society comply matters for one's own compliance, since 'no one prefers to be a 'sucker'(Levi, 1988, p. 53). This implies that perceptions and evaluations of these others are important attributes of people's ethical decisions and moral reasoning. If fellow citizens are considered trustworthy, they are being trusted and it is assumed that they will not take advantage of the society and its citizens. Therefore, it feels like a moral obligation that no one will engage in or accept misconduct (see e.g., Offe, 1999), which implies that individuals are less prone to engage in uncivil behaviour or free-riding activities. Research shows that interpersonal trust is indeed linked to civic and public good morality (Scholz, 1998; Frey & Torgler, 2007), although others did not find such empirical evidence (Letki, 2006; Halman & Sieben, 2014). In addition, it is observed that individuals who trust their fellow citizens are on the whole *less likely to lie, cheat, or steal* (Putnam, 2000, p. 137) than less trusting individuals. It is very

probable that trusting individuals also do not accept this dishonest behaviour from others, which suggests that individuals with higher levels of interpersonal trust have higher levels of public good morality. At the same time, it can be argued that interpersonal trust is related to both the legacy of communist rule and to democratization, although in opposite directions. Living in a communist and authoritarian regime, individuals under communist rule tried to overcome the difficulties of these regimes (and of command economies in particular) by forming close-knit networks with family and friends who could help. The radius of trust (Fukuyama, 2000) was small, including family and close friends, but excluding others. This communist legacy seems to be still at work in post-socialist states today, as interpersonal trust is observed to be relatively low in these countries (Mishler & Rose, 2001). With respect to democratization, it is observed that democratic governance is associated with more reliable, predictable and transparent institutional structures than authoritarian and totalitarian regimes (Porta, Lopez-de-Silanas, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1999). Democracies are more likely to implement impartial policies through fair procedures. In addition, they create stronger and more reliable legal systems, which not only strengthen the deterrent effects of law, but also reinforce perceptions of transparent and fair institutional design (Levi, 1988; Tyler, 1998). Hence more democratic systems are considered to be fairer, more efficient and less corrupt. In such societies, trust will be higher because, as Uslaner (1999, p. 140) argues, *only in democracies is trust a rational gamble*. Indeed, research shows that interpersonal trust and stable democracy are closely linked (e.g., Inglehart, 1999). Although full democracies as such do not produce trust, it is clear that authoritarian and totalitarian regimes in particular destroy faith in others (Uslaner, 1999). The latter forces citizens to conform to societal rules. Alternative centres of power are not allowed and are even suppressed. In stable democracies on the other hand, individuals obey rules and laws, not because they are forced to do so and fear punishment if they don't, but because the legal system is considered to be fair and legitimate. Given the described relationships between communist rule, democracy, interpersonal trust and public good morality, we expect that the level of interpersonal trust can (partly) explain the association between the legacy of communist rule and democratization on the one hand and public good morality on the other hand (*hypothesis 5*). It should be noted that our cross-sectional study design does not allow us to test this mediation in a strict causal sense. Both compliance attitudes and public good morality are personal dispositions, which are likely to develop simultaneously, influenced by the same individual and country-level factors.

Next to this horizontal dimension of trust (i.e. trust between citizens), vertical trust, that is trust between citizens and the state, is an important factor in explaining public good morality (Frey & Torgler, 2007). It is the state that ultimately determines what legal behaviour is by describing its norms and rules in laws. Obedience to and respect for these norms and rules will be determined by the performance of state institutions that provide these rules and norms. When these institutions are considered to be legitimate, are accepted by citizens and when they are functioning well, then it is much easier for citizens to comply with their norms and standards. Indeed, research shows that trust in government and state institutions such as the parliament, civil service, the police, the legal system, etc., is positively associated with civic morality, tax morale, and public good morality (Letki, 2006; Frey & Torgler, 2007; Marien & Hooghe, 2011; Halman & Sieben, 2014). Furthermore, confidence in government and its institutions appear to be not very high in post-socialist states (Mishler & Rose, 2001; Marien & Hooghe, 2011). In the past, the communist regime forced people to compliance through repression and this led to *massive alienation and distrust of the communist regime and a lingering cynicism toward both political and civil institutions* (Mishler & Rose, 1997, p. 420), which is still noticeable today. In full democracies, citizens' trust in government and state institutions is much higher (e.g., Norris, 1999). Next to the earlier mentioned observations that democratic governance is more reliable, efficient, and fair (Letki, 2006), political leaders in more democratic states depend on popular support and are, therefore, more likely to implement policies that serve the majority of citizens. This generates more confidence in the state than in less democratic states (Levi & Stoker,

2000). Since confidence in government is associated with higher levels of public good morality and at the same time is related to communist rule and democracy, we expect that it can (partly) explain the association between the legacy of communist rule and democratisation, on the one hand, and public good morality on the other hand (*hypothesis 6*). Again, it must be emphasized that we cannot make any claims about causal effects with our cross-sectional design.

Data and operationalization

We test the hypotheses mentioned above by employing data from the 2008 European Values Study (EVS, 2011). In this large-scale, cross-national research project, survey data on the human values of Europeans are collected. In all European countries with a population of more than 100,000, a random sample of about 1,500 respondents is interviewed about their opinions and attitudes with respect to important domains in life such as family, religion, work, and politics. In all participating countries, the same structured questionnaire and rigid methodological guidelines are followed. In addition, much attention is paid to the translation process. As a result, the EVS data are of high quality and quite comparable cross-nationally. For more information on the data, we refer the reader to the European Values Study website at www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu.

From the 47 countries included in the survey, we select all post-socialist European states except for Kosovo and Azerbaijan. Kosovo is excluded because of lacking relevant macro indicators on the level of democracy and GDP per capita in the country, whereas Azerbaijan is excluded because the EVS team expressed serious doubts about the data quality. It should be noted that with respect to Germany, we only include the eastern part (i.e. the former GDR) in our study, since the western part did not experience communist rule in the past. In total, we have information on citizens in 23 post-socialist European countries: Albania (AL), Armenia (AM), Belarus (BY), Bosnia-Herzegovina (BA), Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), Czech Republic (CZ), East-Germany (DE-E), Estonia (EE), Georgia (GE), Hungary (HU), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Macedonia (MK), Moldova (MD), Montenegro (ME), Poland (PL), Romania (RO), Russian Federation (RU), Serbia (RS), Slovak Republic (SK), Slovenia (SI), and Ukraine (UA). We exclude all respondents who did not experience communist rule in their lives because they are too young (n=355). In addition, respondents with missing information on key variables[4] are excluded, which leaves us with 31,354 cases for the analyses. The sample is weighted to adjust for the populations' distribution of gender and age.

To measure *public good morality*, the respondents are presented a battery of 20 actions and behaviours that refer to sexual-ethical permissiveness as well as civic permissiveness (cf. Halman & de Moor, 1993). They are asked to what extent these actions and behaviours can be justified on a ten-point scale from 1 being *the action or behaviour can never be justified* to 10 being *the action or behaviour can always be justified*. Please note that this question asks respondents to give a 'general moral opinion' (see also note 1). Since we are interested in activities that harm the public good, we focus on a specific part of civic permissiveness and include the following four indicators in our analyses:

a) claiming state benefits to which you are not entitled;
b) cheating on taxes if you have the chance;
c) paying cash to avoid taxes; and
d) not paying the fare on public transport.

The respondents' answers to these four items are mirrored and averaged in order to measure the concept of public good morality. This scale is reliable with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .765. Detailed reliability analyses indicate that this holds for all post-socialist states in our sample (Cronbach's

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4   More detailed information on the handling of missing values is given when we discuss the operationalization of specific variables.

alphas higher than .700), with the exception of Armenia (.556) and Romania (.641). However, excluding specific items from the scale does not lead to improvements in reliability in the latter two countries, which is why we consider the scale of public good morality to work in all 23 countries studied here.

In order to explain variation in public good morality in post-socialist Europe, we first focus on the 'legacy of communist rule'. For each respondent, we construct a variable that rather crudely measures the length of communist rule during his or her life by combining information on birth year and the year that communist rule started and ended in the country of residence. For example, communism took power in 1917 in Russia, followed by Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova in the 1920s, the Baltic states in 1940, and all other Eastern European countries after the Second World War. Communist rule ended between 1989 (the year the Berlin Wall fell) and 1991 (collapse of the Soviet Union), so individuals born in the 1970s experienced communist rule for a much shorter time period than individuals born in the 1940s. At the country level, a distinction is made between the former Soviet Union and its satellite states. The latter may have been less severely suppressed during communism. Therefore, a dummy is created for countries that used to be part of the former Soviet Union (FSU); the Central Eastern European (CEE) countries are the reference category.

The second explanation for variation in public good morality in post-socialist Europe lies in processes of democratization. The respondents' democratic values are measured by combining their answers (disagree strongly, disagree, agree, agree strongly) with five statements:
a) Having a democratic political system is a good way to govern the country;
b) Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government;
c) In democracy, the economic system runs badly;
d) Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling; and
e) Democracies aren't good at maintaining order.

The latter three statements are reversed coded. These five items form a reliable scale with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .735. It should be noted that a substantial part of the respondents (more than 10% in all countries except for Hungary and Slovenia) didn't express their opinion on these statements or responded 'don't know'. To deal with these missing observations, we imputed them by the average level of democratic values in the country of residence. To account for this, we will include a dummy variable with the score '1' if information was originally missing in the analyses. After all, individuals with missing information on democratic values might be a very specific group, also with respect to public good morality. To measure democracy at the country level, we use The Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy 2008, which ranges from 0 (no democracy at all) to 10 (very democratic).[5]

We also look at respondents' compliance attitudes, i.e. *interpersonal trust* and confidence in government. Interpersonal trust, or trust in other people, is measured by combining three questions in EVS 2008. First, respondents are asked whether (1) *they think most people can be trusted* or that (2) *one cannot be too careful in dealing with people*. This dichotomous item is complemented[6] with two ten-point semantic differential scales: one item has as extremes (1) *most people would try to take advantage of me* versus (10) *most people would try to be fair*; the other item has as opposite poles (1) *people mostly look out for themselves* versus (10) *people mostly try to be helpful*. The three items together form a scale with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .660, which is quite acceptable for a scale with only three items. 'Confidence in government' is indicated by levels of trust in governmental institutions, such as the educational system, the police, the parliament, civil service, the social security system, the health care system, the justice system, political parties, and the government. Respondents expressed their confidence in these nine organizations ranging from 1 = very much; 2 = quite some confidence; 3 = no confidence; to 4 = no confidence at all. After mirroring the answer categories and averaging them, a highly reliable scale is constructed (overall Cronbach's alpha = .876).

5   See http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf.
6   To combine the dichotomous item with the two ten-point items, we recode the answer categories of the former (1=10 and 2=1) to match the ten-point scales.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of individual-level (n=31,354) and country-level (n=23) variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Sd
Individual-level variables				
Morality on the public good	1.000	10.000	8.405	1.768
Gender: female	0.000	1.000	0.525	
Educational level	0.000	6.000	3.236	1.213
Having a partner	0.000	1.000	0.671	
Having children	0.000	1.000	0.724	
Secular orientation	-1.972	1.777	0.010	0.889
Monthly household income (in ppp)	0.010	14.728	0.804	0.826
Missings on household income	0.000	1.000	0.146	
Communist rule in life (in years)	1.000	72.000	26.773	15.516
Democratic values	1.000	4.000	2.202	0.508
Missings on democratic values	0.000	1.000	0.106	
Interpersonal trust	1.000	10.000	4.185	2.276
Confidence in government	1.000	4.000	2.276	0.585
Country-level variables				
Former Soviet State	0.000	1.000	0.391	
Democracy index	3.340	8.820	6.571	1.360
GDP per capita (in ppp / 1,000 dollars)	3.004	35.666	15.066	8.171

Source: EVS 2008, World Economic Report (IMF) 2008, The Economist Intelligence Unit 2008

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of country-level variables per country

Country code	Country name	N	Average public good morality	Former Soviet State	Democracy index	GDP per capita[7]
AL	Albania	1413	8.443	no	5.91	6.911
AM	Armenia	1378	8.652	yes	4.09	5.809
BA	Bosnia Herzegovina	1423	8.769	no	5.70	7.791
BU	Bulgaria	1299	9.143	no	7.02	13.192
BY	Belarus	1343	7.316	yes	3.34	12.587
CZ	Czech Republic	1534	8.128	no	8.19	25.191
DE-E	Germany East	936	8.956	no	8.82	35.666
EE	Estonia	1467	8.392	yes	7.68	20.327
GE	Georgia	1346	9.030	yes	4.62	4.912
HR	Croatia	1416	8.276	no	7.04	18.605
HU	Hungary	1431	8.933	no	7.44	19.413
LT	Lithuania	1303	7.695	yes	7.36	19.145
LV	Latvia	1464	7.867	yes	7.23	17.187
MD	Moldova	1446	8.532	yes	6.50	3.004
ME	Montenegro	1383	8.885	no	6.43	11.063
MK	Macedonia	1364	8.724	no	6.21	9.600
PL	Poland	1322	8.115	no	7.30	17.598
RO	Romania	1285	8.278	no	7.06	12.645
RS	Serbia	1405	9.056	no	6.49	10.805
RU	Russian Federation	1346	7.578	yes	4.48	16.043
SI	Slovenia	1311	8.419	no	7.96	29.679
SK	Slovak Republic	1368	7.866	no	7.33	22.002
UA	Ukraine	1371	8.398	yes	6.94	7.347

Source: EVS 2008, World Economic Report (IMF) 2008, The Economist Intelligence Unit 2008

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7   GDP per capita in ppp / 1,000 dollars.

Table 3: Correlations between individual-level and country-level variables and morality on the public good (n=31,354)

	r		r
Individual-level variables		*Country-level variables*	
Communist rule in life	0.212 **	Former Soviet State	-0.109 **
Democratic values	-0.051 **	Democracy index	0.042 **
Missings on democratic values	0.010 *		
Interpersonal trust	-0.023 **		
Confidence in government	0.064 **		

* p‹0.05; ** p‹0.01 (one-tailed)
Source: European Value Study 2008

Finally, we include a number of control variables in our analyses. First we control for the level of economic welfare, both at the individual level and the country level. This might pick up the idea of public good morality as a survival strategy (see note 2). Respondents could indicate their level of income by ticking one of the country-specific categories for monthly household income after taxes. To create a comparable income measure across countries, the country-specific categories were converted into euros using purchasing power parity rates. If information on household income was missing – about 15% of the respondents did not answer this question — we imputed it by the average income level in the country. We will include a dummy variable (score 1 if information was originally missing) in the analyses to account for this. At the country level, we include the level of economic development indicated by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on purchasing power parity (ppp) per capita in thousand dollars in 2008 from the International Monetary Fund.[8] Next to economic welfare, research shows that other important determinants of morality are gender, educational level, family status, and a secular orientation (e.g., Letki, 2006; Torgler, 2006; Lago-Peñas & Lago-Peñas, 2010). We therefore create a dummy variable for gender with men as the reference category. Educational level is measured by recoding country-specific educational classifications into the internationally comparable ISCED classification, with codes ranging from 0 (pre-primary education or none education) to 6 (second stage of tertiary education). Family status is measured by two dummy variables, indicating whether one has a partner and has one or more children respectively. Finally, secular orientation is measured by combining information on church attendance and religious belief. The latter is tapped by the question *How important is God in your life?*, with answering categories ranging from 1 = not important to 10 = very important. We mirrored these answering categories, since individuals with a secular orientation are expected to hold the view that God is not very important in their lives. Church attendance is based on the question *Apart from weddings, funerals, and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services?* The answer categories range from 0 (never) to 7 (more than once a week). In order to combine both items into one scale, the answers are first transformed into z-scores and then averaged. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the two items is .556.

Table 1 displays descriptive information of all individual level and country level variables that are used in the analyses, whereas Table 2 provides information on the macro-level indicators per country.

Results

Figure 1 shows that individuals in post-socialist countries on average display quite high levels of public good morality. An overall average of 8.4 on a ten-point scale where '10' indicates strictness and '1' is most lenient does not demonstrate that behaviour such as tax evasion, fare dodging, and benefit

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8   See http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2013/02/weodata/index.aspx.
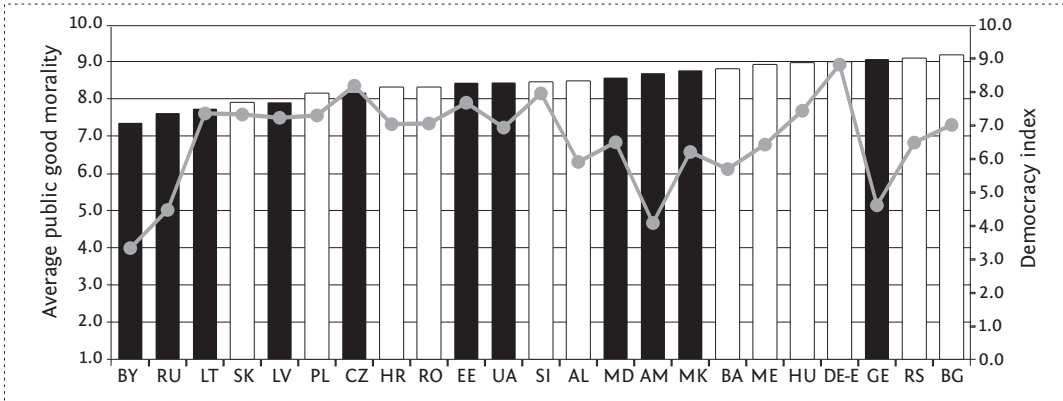
Figure 1: Average morality on the public good in post-socialist countries[9]
Source: European Values Study 2008
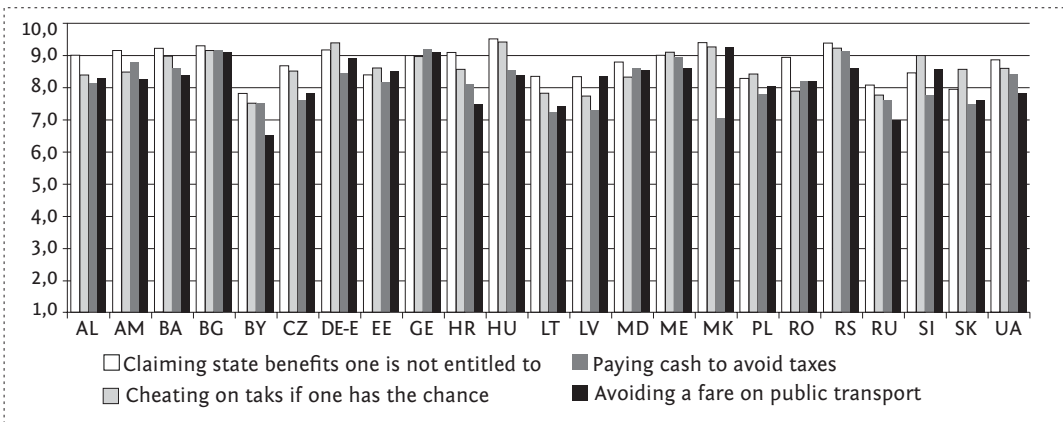
Figure 2: Average scores on public good morality items per country
Source: European Values Study 2008

fraud is viewed as justifiable in this part of Europe. In fact, 41% of the respondents express that such behaviours can never be justified. No less than 75% scores at least '8' and almost 93% scores at least '6' on the ten-point scale. This means that only 7% of the Europeans in post-socialist states are on the 'lenient' side of the public good morality scale. Based on these outcomes, we may infer that worries about low levels of this kind of morality leading to less collective solidarity and citizenship in post-socialist states do not seem to be warranted.

However, given the overall rather high level of public good morality in post-socialist Europe, we see some interesting differences between countries. Individuals living in Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Latvia are relatively permissive when it comes to justifying claiming state benefits one is not entitled to, cheating on taxes if one has the chance, paying cash to avoid taxes, and not paying the fare on public transport. The average scores on public good morality range from 7.3 to 7.9 in these countries. It is quite remarkable that four of these five countries used to be part of the former Soviet Union (see the black bars in the figure). On the other side of the spectrum, Hungary, East Germany, Georgia, Serbia, and Bulgaria score very high (i.e. average score of about 9 and higher) on public good

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9   Black bars indicate former Soviet states, white bars indicate Central European Countries.

morality. Here, it is noteworthy that this top five of strictness in public good morality includes only one ex-Soviet state. Although the pattern in Figure 1 is not crystal clear (other former Soviet countries show a rather mixed configuration with other Central Eastern European countries), we tentatively conclude that individuals living in countries that were once part of the Soviet Union seem to be somewhat less strict towards public good morality that those who live in Central Eastern Europe. The association between public good morality and the second institutional dimension we investigate in this study, namely processes of democratization, is ambiguous in Figure 1. The two countries that score lowest on public good morality (Belarus and Russia) are indeed the least democratic societies. However, the pattern for the other countries is rather mixed with more and less democratic countries ending up at both ends of the public good morality spectrum.

Figure 2 shows the mean scores per country for each morality item separately. The bars confirm the general picture described above. Public good morality is relatively 'low' in Belarus and Russia, particularly with respect to dodging a fare in public transport. Overall, individuals in post-socialist countries appear most 'lenient' towards this activity – together with paying cash to avoid taxes, which scores remarkably low in Macedonia. Claiming state benefits one is not entitled to is, on the other hand, evaluated as least justifiable in 15 out of 23 countries. However, in general we observe that the variation between the different morality items within a country is rather modest, which is why we focus on the combined measure of public good morality in the remainder of this study.

Bivariate analyses

As a first test of our hypotheses, we look at the bivariate correlations between public good morality and both individual level and country level variables. Table 3 shows that the legacy of communist rule is significantly associated with public good morality. Conformant to our observations above, living in a former Soviet state is related to less strict standards with respect to the public good. However, looking at communist rule at the individual level, we notice that the length of experiencing communist regimes in life is in general associated with higher levels of public good morality. Individuals who experienced communist rule during their whole life are most strict when it comes to tax evasion, fare dodging, and benefit fraud, whereas those who were socialized in the last days of communism and who in adult life experienced the transition to market economies are the most permissive.

Democratization is also significantly related to public good morality. Individuals living in more democratic countries, as indicated by higher scores on the democracy index, have higher levels of public good morality. Surprisingly, individuals with more democratic values are associated with less strict attitudes towards the public good, whereas respondents who were unable or unwilling to give their opinion on democracy as a political system appear to be somewhat stricter in this respect. Finally, and quite remarkably, interpersonal trust is associated with lower levels of public good morality. Confidence in government and its institutions is, on the other hand, related to higher levels of morality.

Multilevel analyses

Since we want to know if the found relationships also hold when control variables are included in the analyses, we perform a linear multilevel regression analysis. This method of analyses is needed to correct for the fact that individuals are not independent observations but are nested in countries (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). We estimate so-called random intercept models, which allow the intercept to vary across countries, while assuming that the slopes of the independent variables are the same across countries. We first estimate an empty model without any independent variables, which allows us to partition the variance in public good morality at the individual level and at the country level.

Table 4: Results of multilevel regression analyses on public good morality (n=31,354 in 23 countries)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	b	s.e.	b	s.e.	b	s.e.	b	s.e.
Intercept	8.078 **	0.231	7.341 **	0.489	7.585 **	0.522	6.945 **	0.530
Individual-level variables								
Gender: female	0.168 **	0.019	0.129 **	0.020	0.166 **	0.019	0.161 **	0.019
Educational level	0.023 **	0.008	-0.010	0.008	0.017 *	0.008	0.026 **	0.008
Having a partner	0.023	0.022	-0.087 **	0.022	0.025	0.022	0.024	0.022
Having children	0.174 **	0.027	0.571 **	0.027	0.175 **	0.027	0.170 **	0.027
Secular orientation	-0.154 **	0.012	-0.167 **	0.012	-0.154 **	0.012	-0.138 **	0.012
Monthly household income (in ppp)	-0.112 **	0.013	-0.154 **	0.013	-0.116 **	0.013	-0.119 **	0.013
Missings on household income	-0.126 **	0.027	-0.184 **	0.027	-0.131 **	0.027	-0.123 **	0.027
Communist rule in life	0.020 **	0.001			0.020 **	0.001	0.020 **	0.001
Democratic values			-0.144 **	0.019	-0.158 **	0.019	-0.136 **	0.019
Missings on democratic values			0.060 *	0.031	0.038	0.030	0.048	0.030
Interpersonal trust							-0.007	0.004
Confidence in government							0.239 **	0.017
Country-level variables								
Former Soviet State	-0.568 **	0.190			-0.440 *	0.187	-0.463 *	0.189
Democracy index			0.227 *	0.091	0.157	0.088	0.173	0.089
GDP per capita (in ppp / 1,000 dollars)	-0.012	0.012	-0.023	0.015	-0.027	0.014	-0.030 *	0.014
Variance components								
Individual level	2.677 **	0.021	2.735 **	0.022	2.672 ***	0.021	2.654 **	0.021
Percentage explained	6.2%		4.2%		6.5%		7.1%	
Country level	0.174 **	0.052	0.183 **	0.054	0.149 ***	0.045	0.152 **	0.046
Percentage explained	24.2%		20.6%		35.2%		33.7%	

* p<0.05; ** p<0.01
Source: European Value Study 2008

The calculated intraclass correlation[10] reveals that 7.5% of the variability in individual public good morality can be attributed to differences between countries and the remaining 92.5% to differences between individuals. In other words, a vast majority of the differences in public good morality between individuals in post-socialist states can be explained by looking at individual characteristics, whereas only a small part can be explained by characteristics of the country they live in.

We extend this empty multilevel model in a stepwise procedure. In Model 1, we include – next to all control variables – our crude measures of the legacy of communist rule at both the individual level and country level. Model 2 shows estimated coefficients for the impact of individuals' democratic values and countries' democracy index, again controlled for important individual level and country level variables. Model 3 combines these variables showing the net effects of the legacy of communist rule and democratization on public good morality. Finally, in Model 4, we include individuals' interpersonal trust and confidence in government in the analyses to see whether these compliance attitudes can mediate the relationships between the legacy of communist rule and democratization on the one hand and public good morality on the other hand. Of course, strong causal claims should be avoided since we are dealing with cross-sectional data. The results of the multilevel analyses on these four models can be found in Table 4.

The estimates of Model 1 substantiate the results of the bivariate analysis described above. Controlled for the individual level characteristics of gender, educational level, family status, secular orientation, and income, as well as for GDP per capita[11] at the country level, individuals living in former Soviet states display lower levels of public good morality than individuals living in Central Eastern European countries. On average, this difference amounts to 0.5 on a ten-point scale. The length of communist rule in life, however, is associated with higher levels of public good morality.[12] For each year that individuals lived longer under the communist regimes, their public good morality increases by 0.020.[13] This means that the difference between those with the least experience of living under communist rule (i.e. young people who lived one year – as babies – under the communist regime) and those with most experience (i.e. 72 years in our sample) is 1.42 on a ten-point scale.[14] The results of Model 1 also show that women, those with higher education, individuals with children, lower income groups and religious people appear to be more strict than their counterparts and, therefore, less likely to accept the norm offensive behaviours that are part of our measure of public good morality. Having a partner or living in a country with a high level of economic welfare does, however, not seem to affect public good morality.

In Model 2, we look at the relationship between democratization and public good morality. In line with the results of the bivariate analyses, we find that individuals who hold more democratic values display lower levels of public good morality, whereas those who did not reveal their opinion on

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10 The variance component at the individual level equals 2.856 with a standard error of .023, whereas the variance component at the country level is .230 with a standard error of .068. The intraclass coefficient is calculated by 0.230/(2.856+0.230) = 0.075.

11 Additional analyses without the country level indicator of economic welfare (GDP per capita in ppp) show similar results for all models presented here (results available upon request). There is one exception: the coefficient for democracy at the country level in Model 2 is not significant when GDP per capita is excluded. This hints at a suppressor effect: only when controlling for economic welfare in a country, the democracy index is negatively related to the public good morality of individuals living in that country. This suppressor effect is caused by a positive correlation between GDP per capita and the democracy index (r = 0.676).

12 We also estimated models in which we separately include length of communist rule in life and living in a former Soviet state, but there are no differences in coefficients as presented here. This shows that the negative relationship between living in a former Soviet state and public good morality is not caused by a composition effect, meaning that these countries do not inhabit more individuals with shorter (or longer, but this is contradictory to the positive association between length of communist rule in life and public good morality) periods under communist rule than in Central Eastern Europe.

13 Analyses show that the length of communist rule in life is in a linear way related to public good morality. Alternative ways of specifying this relationship (e.g., adding a quadratic term) do not lead to significant improvements in model fit.

14 Calculated as (72*0.020) – (1*0.020).

democracy as a political system have higher morality levels. In addition, living in a more democratic country is associated with less permissiveness towards activities that harm society and the collective. The difference in public good morality between the least democratic country (Belarus with a democracy index of 3.34) and the most democratic country (East Germany with a democracy index of 8.82) amounts to 1.25 on a ten-point scale.[15]

In a next step, we combine the individual level and country level indicators for the legacy of communist rule and democratization, together with the control variables, in one model. The results for the individual level variables in this Model 3 very much resemble the results in Model 1 and 2. The only exception is that having missing information on democratic values is no longer significantly related to public good morality. With respect to the country level variables, we still observe that individuals who live in countries that were part of the Soviet Union appear to score lower on public good morality than individuals in other post-socialist European countries. The level of democracy in a country is, however, not related to public good morality anymore, which is probably caused by the fact that ex-Soviet states on average score lower on the democracy index ((correlation between the democracy index and a dummy variable indicating whether a country used to be part of the former Soviet Union r = –0.462).

Comparing the variance components of the first three models reveals that our crude measures of the legacy of communist rule are more powerful predictors of public good morality than the indicators for democratization. The length of communist rule in life – together with all individual level control variables – explains 6.2% of all differences in public good morality between individuals within countries, whereas democratic values explain 4.2%. At the country level, living in a former Soviet state explains 6.3% more of the variance in public good morality than living in a more democratic country.[16] When combined, all these factors account for 35.2% of the variance in public good morality at the country level.

Finally, in Model 4, we simultaneously add the two compliance attitudes, i.e. individuals' interpersonal trust and confidence in government, after we checked whether stepwise including them separately gives similar results. From the results of this model, it becomes clear that interpersonal trust is not related to public good morality. Its coefficient is insignificant, even in a model that includes only this compliance attitude and all control variables (results available upon request). In addition, the estimates of all other variables do not change in Model 4 compared to Model 3. This implies that interpersonal trust apparently does not mediate the relationship between the legacy of communist rule and democratization. However, individuals who have more confidence in government and its institutions have higher levels of public good morality than people who trust their governments less. Adding confidence in government does not alter the estimate for the length of communist rule in life, whereas the coefficient for democratic values decreases with only 13.9%.[17] This suggests that the presumed mediating effect of this variable is quite modest, although we cannot make any causal claims based on these cross-sectional analyses. At the country level, confidence in government seems to slightly increase the estimates of living in a former Soviet state and the democracy index (with 5.1% and 10.8% respectively), but such a suppressor effect cannot be labelled as significant.

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15 Calculated as (8.82*0.227) – (3.34*0.227).

16 In order to compare variance components fairly between models, we estimated additional models which in-
    clude, next to all control variables, the indicators of communist rule and democracy separately. The results
    show that the dummy variable for a former Soviet state, together with all controls, explains 22.4% of the
    variance in public good morality between countries, whereas the democracy index, together with all controls,
    explains 16.2% (results are available upon request). These additional analyses also show that composition ef-
    fects of the individual level indicators of the length of communist rule in life and democratic values are modest.
    The fact that some countries inhabit more individuals who experienced lengthier periods under communist
    regimes, while other countries populate more individuals who lived under communist rule for a shorter time
    explains 24.2% - 22.4% = 1.7% of all differences in public good morality between countries. The composition
    effect of individual democratic values accounts for 20.6% - 16.2% = 4.4% of the country-level variance in public
    good morality.

17 Calculated as (-0.158 – -0.136) / -0.158.

Conclusion and discussion

In this study, we investigated the potential conflict that may arise between the public justifying certain behaviour that the state defines as illegal. More specifically, we studied public good morality in post-socialist Europe. Public good morality concerns the (non)acceptance of behaviour that contravenes the law and harms society or the greater good of the collective, such as cheating on taxes if one has the chance, paying cash to avoid taxes, not paying one's fare in public transport, and claiming state benefits one is not entitled to. Previous research showed that this kind of morality is rather low in post-socialist states, particularly in countries that used to be part of the former Soviet Union (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004; Frey & Torgler, 2007; Halman & Sieben, 2014). Using data from the European Values Study in 2008 on 23 post-socialist countries in Europe, we show that individuals in contemporary post-socialist European societies have quite a strong sense of public good morality. The overall average in this part of Europe is 8.4 on a ten-point scale. Only 7% of the respondents appear to be on the 'permissive' side of the public good morality scale (scores of 5.5 and lower). In addition, we observed that the variation between the different morality items is rather modest. This means that individuals in post-socialist Europe are rather unanimous in the rejection of uncivic and indecent behaviours that harm the public good. A main conclusion, therefore, is that the threat of a moral decay leading to social dissolution and isolation that will undermine collective solidarity and citizenship seems to be unwarranted.

Despite the fact that large majorities in post-socialist European states do not display low levels of public good morality, we observe some important differences between individuals and between countries. Trying to make sense of these differences, however small they may be, we forwarded six hypotheses about individual level characteristics and country level attributes, which all are related to societal institutions. After all, the literature on public good morality hinted at two possible avenues for institutional explanations: legacy of communist rule (Trüdinger & Hildebrandt, 2012) and processes of democratization (Listhaug & Ringdal, 2004). We first of all predicted that individuals who lived under communist rule might have strong negative feelings against the state because of its repressive, communist legacy. This would, in general, result in lower levels of public good morality, especially for those living in the former Soviet Union (country level) and for those who longer experienced communist rule in life (individual level). We partly had to reject these hypotheses. The multivariate multilevel regression analyses revealed that people living in ex-Soviet states are indeed less strict towards activities that undermine the public good, which is in line with hypothesis 1. The difference amounts to 0.5 on the ten-point public good morality scale. However, individuals who lived longer under communist rule are not the most 'lenient'. On the contrary, they appear to be the strictest when it comes to cheating on taxes if one has the chance, paying cash to avoid taxes, not paying a fare on public transport, and justifying claiming state benefits one is not entitled to. This contradicts hypothesis 2 and suggests that the underlying mechanism of developing animosity against the state works more strongly for the younger generation, who only lived under communist rule for a relatively short period of time. They might have been more influenced by the period after the collapse of the communist regime, when their country went through the sometimes difficult transformation processes towards a market economy and a stable democracy. These transformation processes were not without failures and hiccups and might have led to alienation or even hostility towards the state, especially in young people who had high hopes. This might explain the relatively low levels of public good morality for young individuals in post-socialist states. The older generation, on the other hand, might be much more indoctrinated by the communist regime to give top priority to the interests of the state. Life-long exposure to possible repercussions might have left an enduring imprint, which is not cancelled out by the turbulent transformation processes after the collapse of the communist regime. More research, preferably combining quantitative data with in-depth interview techniques, is

needed to shed light on these psychological processes and their relation with law abiding attitudes. Such research could also shed more light on the distinct faces of communist regimes across countries, decades, as well as groups in the population (such as higher and lower strata in society).

In order to examine the second institutional explanation for differences in public good morality, we looked at processes of democratization. The transformation to a market economy with full democratic institutions has been more successful in some post-socialist states than in others. We predicted that individuals living in more democratic societies would display higher levels of public good morality than individuals living in less democratic societies. This third hypothesis is not substantiated. At first sight, post-socialist democracies do seem to produce more support for public good morality, since the democracy index is positively related to our measure of public good morality. However, this relationship disappears when we take into account whether a country is a former Soviet state or a former satellite state, because these two country characteristics (level of democracy and former Soviet state) are related. For example, the former Soviet states of Belarus, Armenia, Russia, and Georgia are the least democratic states in post-socialist Europe (see Table 2). In addition, our hypothesis at the individual level predicting that individuals with more democratic values would be more supportive to public good morality than individuals with less democratic values is also not corroborated. On the contrary, more democratic individuals appear to belong to the more morally permissive parts of the populations.

Finally, compliance attitudes such as interpersonal trust and confidence in government do not seem to mediate the relationship between the legacy of communist rule and democratization on the one hand and public good morality on the other hand. First, interpersonal trust is not related to individuals' moral attitudes towards public good. One could speculate that this is because individuals in post-socialist states have a small radius of trust (Fukuyama, 2000): they only trust their family and close friends and no one else. However, research shows that interpersonal trust is also not associated with public good morality in the western part of Europe (Halman & Sieben, 2014), where levels of trust in others are much higher (see Halman, Sieben, & van Zundert, 2011). With respect to the second compliance attitude, we observed that individuals who have confidence in their government and its institutions are stricter when it comes to law abiding behaviours. Thus, trust in government is related to public good morality in the expected way. However, the possible mediating role of this attitude is very limited, since it hardly affects the estimated coefficients of the legacy of communist rule and democratization on public good morality. These findings, together with the limited explanatory power of our models (i.e. only 7% of the variance in public good morality at the individual level is explained), suggest that future research should focus on other mechanisms to explain public good morality in post-socialist Europe. One promising route would be to investigate the moral underpinnings of wealth and consumption under Soviet socialism and under capitalism (cf. Wanner, 2005). The transition to a market economy opened up new opportunities for certain groups in society to increase their individual wealth, also in illegal ways. The role of the political and governmental elite in a post-socialist society seems to play a prominent role here, and also the position of entrepreneurs is an interesting topic for future research. Furthermore, scholars could explore the impact of governmental performance and the degree of corruption in post-socialist states. Rose (2001: 105) already hinted at the latter factor, which may be an important determinant of the legitimacy of governments and making it likely that citizens may decide that 'the only way to deal with a corrupt state is to benefit from law-breaking oneself'.

This also points at rather complex and diverse moral obligations in post-socialist states (cf. Wanner 2005). This paper only addressed differences in *levels* of morality in these societies, which appeared to be rather modest. However, the *variance* in morality might be quite high. We see a parallel with (post)modernization theory, which does not only predict that individual's moral views will become more lenient, but also that moral views will become more diverse. According to Inglehart (1997),

among others, postmodernization implies a growth of an anti-authority sentiment, meaning that individuals are increasingly free to choose their own standards of judgement, without any traditional authority telling them what is right or wrong. Moral beliefs, convictions and values are assumed to be dependent upon personal desires and preferences and are constantly open to debate, reformulation and change. This first of all impacts the level of morality, which is what we address in this paper. But it may also affect the variance in morality, which can be assumed to be larger in more modern/individualized societies (e.g., Draulans & Halman, 2003) or among the younger generation in post-socialist states. Future research is, therefore, invited to investigate this issue of diversity in moralities.

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