

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS: ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

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Because of several conditions, it is rather difficult to carry out an analysis of political trust in the post-Communist countries, including the Baltic States. On the one hand, these are countries where the traditions of democracy are only in the process of formation. We could assume, therefore, that, as democracy develops, the trust of the people both in the government as well as civic institutions would grow. However, the findings of Western researchers, made from surveys in their own countries, may be regarded as not supporting such an assumption. These findings rather suggest a downslide in political trust. Researchers often even speak about the crisis of representative democracy.

As we analyze the situation in the Baltic States, we have to consider the ambivalent nature of this situation: on the one hand, the political trust is determined by specific transitional processes and conditions in each particular country. On the other hand, however, taking into account the fast information exchange, we may not ignore the influence of socio-political changes in Western countries on the new democratic states. We may also not exclude the possibility that certain disillusionment with representative democracy, which can be seen in Western countries, may also create more skepticism and criticism in post-Communist countries in respect to democracy and its institutions. Even more so, if we take into account the rather high educational levels of the population in these countries in combination with the existing rather poor living conditions. The situation in the countries of newly restored democracy is complicated by the fact that the experience of democracy in these countries is quite weak, and dissatisfaction of the people with the slow development of democracy contributes to the critical attitudes toward the ways in which democracy is implemented and also toward democratic institutions. This dissatisfaction is further aggravated by the enormous distance between the living conditions in developed countries and in the newly democratic countries, especially because this distance has not much diminished during the first ten

years of independence for most of the inhabitants in the newly democratic countries.

The totalitarian regimes of the 20th century created a significant resonance among the political theorists. They not only tried to explain the roots of totalitarianism but also created a series of rather pessimistic theories regarding the prospects for development of democracy. The Mass Society theory of Kornhauser (1960) was one of the reactions toward the totalitarian regimes of the first half of the 20th century. In the 1970s, many authors focused on shortcomings, even crisis, of representative democracy. To explain it, they referred to the theories of the legitimacy crisis, for example, those of O. Connor, C. Offe, J. Habermas. The overloaded government theories also emerged at that time. The said theories focused on the observation that “the demands made by citizens on democratic governments were increasing... at the same time, the capacity of governments to realize their policy objectives was declining. Habermas argued, that for various reasons, the governmental system is increasingly less successful in fulfilling the growing demands of citizens. One of the causes was lower economic growth.”

These theories lost their significance in 1990s, because, as the theorists now believe, there is no democracy crisis. There are, however, as they argue, more or less successful stages of the development of democracy. Accepting the opinion that it is more productive to view democracy as a process of changes and development, not as a fully developed system, I am inclined to think that many findings of the said theories allow us to analyze, by separate indicators, those achievements and drawbacks which are experienced by transitional societies in their development. For example, under conditions, when the civic society, with its institutional structures, has not yet been formed, we may speak about an individual who is rather similar to the individual described in the Mass Society theory by Kornhauser as an isolated, atomized being who can be easily manipulated.

In transitional societies, the situation when the political elite, in addition to political issues, is also deeply involved in solving economic problems, is one more factor impeding successful functioning of democratic institutions. A vivid example of this is the dealing by the government with the privatization process in Latvia. In many cases, this issue is “overloaded” by the inability of political office holders to separate their own private interests with those of the public, which is cause to significant dissatisfaction among the electorate. To draw a

parallel with the conflict, described by Offe, between the capital and public needs, which the government is unable to solve, we may say that in transitional societies (for example, in Latvia) the conflict is rather between the government and capital, on the one hand, and the public, on the other hand. This is an additional load on the government which reduces political trust.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that there is not only decline of theoretical interest in the theories of the crisis of democracy. Rather, these theories have not been empirically proven, since empirical studies do not justify drastic conclusions about the crisis of democracy. Possibly, this is the reason why more “optimistic” theories, which do not focus on “crisis” but rather set the task to reveal social changes and explain their determining factors, have turned out to be more viable.

During the last decade of the 20th century, several sociologists pointed out that the decline of trust in political institutions does not imply the crisis of legitimacy. They rather try to look for explanation in the context of modernization processes in society. As one example, we may refer to the Change of Values theory by R. Inglehart. According to him, growing educational levels and information lead to more critical attitudes toward political institutions and politicians. Further to modernization of society, there is also modernization of individual. This modernization of individual involves higher cognitive competence, on the one hand, and change in value orientation, on the other hand. Both these processes can be also observed in the newly democratic countries. The results of surveys show that people accumulate more information, they have more knowledge about and better understanding of political ideologies, the process of political decision-making, that the political behavior of each individual is more and more based on his or her cognitive competence (which was confirmed by the analysis of the behavior of voters during the election of the 7th Saeima in Latvia (B. Zepa, 1999.)). At the same time, it is typical for transitional societies that the people here have low self-assessment of their cognitive competence. As it was shown by the results of the study “Role of Government”, carried out by ISSP (International Social Survey Program) in 1996, only one fifth of the population of Norway said that “most people are better informed about politics and government than I am”. At the same time, the proportion of people in Latvia holding such low opinion about their own competence was two thirds (Zepa, 1999). Both these factors, i. e. the rise in competence and the low self-assessment weaken the motivation

for political participation and, at the same time, create the barrier of distrust in relation to political institutions.

Regarding the change in value orientation, the studies carried out in Latvia suggest that, like in countries with long experience in democracy, there is a change of values, especially among the younger generation. The social values, described by R. Inglehart as post-materialistic values, seem to be more attractive to the younger generation (Zepa, 1999). It is especially important, therefore, to find out whether the trust in institutions is different among people from different generations.

Support to democracy

On the basis of many comparative studies, many researchers believe that the low trust in institutions do not justify conclusions about the crisis of legitimacy, since “the legitimacy of democracy must be evaluated relative to other forms of government (Linz, 1988).

Ola Listhaug and Matti Wiberg (1995), on the basis of EVS data analysis, also point out that the low trust in political institutions does not yet imply a crisis of legitimacy, but simply mean that people are not satisfied with the working of democracy in their country. Other authors point out that it is better to have a critical attitude than blind reliance (Wiberg 1986).

The comparative surveys, carried out in the Baltic States and in other countries, also suggest that people in transitional societies are much more dissatisfied with implementation of democracy in their countries as compared with people who live in countries with lasting democratic traditions. For example, the comparative surveys, carried out in the ISSR framework (Role of Government, 1996), show that only about 1/3 of inhabitants in Latvia and more than 4/5 of inhabitants in Norway believe that democracy functions well in their respective countries.

The results of the New Baltic Barometer III (1996) show that the low trust in political institutions by people in the Baltic States does not yet imply support to the former communist regime: only 1% of inhabitants in the Baltic States have expressed firm belief that the communist regime should be restored. There are slightly more supporters of the communist regime among the Baltic Russians.

However, even among them, most have expressed negative attitudes among the option of returning back to the communist system.

Table 1. Support for communist rule in the Baltics

“We should return to the communist rule”
 (% of Estonian Estonians, Estonian Russians...)

	EstEst	EstRus	LatLat	LatRus	LitLit	LitRus
Strongly agree	0	2	1	1	1	1
Somewhat agree	1	12	2	8	6	7
Somewhat disagree	9	31	10	26	15	20
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>71</i>

Source: Rose, R., Vilmorus, Baltic Data House. *New Baltic Barometer. 1997.* University of Strathclyde.

At the same time, it should be pointed out that many people in the Baltic States hope that the political system in their countries will be improved and will become better in the future. It is typical that people in Estonia and in Latvia are more critical against the former communist regime, rather neutral against the present system of governing, but hopeful regarding the political system in their countries in 5 years, believing that it will become better. The attitudes of people in Lithuania are slightly different, where inhabitants are most critical toward the present system of governing. However, even they are rather positive about changes within the nearest five years. These data suggest that people in the Baltic States support the political system in their countries and, what is more important, is that they have positive expectations regarding the improvement of the political system in the future.

Table. 2. Attitude of Inhabitants of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania toward the system of the government: past, present, future.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Former communist regime	4.69	3.95	4.98
Present system of governing	5.18	4.55	4.34
System of governing in five years	6.48	5.93	5.75

Source: Baltic Barometer, 1999

Question reads: *We want to ask you about how the government works. 10 on the scale means 'very good' and 0 'very bad' (X)*

Table. 3. Attitude of Inhabitants of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania towards functioning of the economy: past, present, future.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Socialist economy before independence	5.48	5.91	6.64
Present economic system	4.49	3.75	3.56
Economic system in five years	5.99	5.58	4.89

Source: Baltic Barometer, 1999

Question reads: *We want to ask you about functioning of the economy. 10 on the scale means 'very good' and 0 'very bad' (X)*

If we compare the attitudes of inhabitants in the three Baltic States against the political and economic system, we can see a direct correlation: when the assessment of the economic system is higher (both regarding the current system as well as that in the future), the assessment of political system in the country is also higher. This is especially the case in Estonia and Latvia. In Lithuania, however, the assessment of both economic as well as political system is lower. We can see a similar correlation as we compare the expectations among inhabitants of the Baltic States regarding changes in their households: approximately 40% of Estonia and Latvian inhabitants hope that their households will improve within the nearest five years. In Lithuania, less than half of the population have such positive expectations. There are also more people in Lithuania who believe that the conditions in their households will even deteriorate (16%). On the other hand, only about each tenth respondent in Estonia and Latvia adhered to such a pessimistic view.

Table.4. Expectations of Inhabitants of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania toward the economic situation of their household in five years.

	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Much better/ A little better	39.8	39.4	26.9
About the same	24.0	28.0	22.3
A little worse/ Much worse	11.1	10.2	15.7
Don't know	25.1	22.4	35.1

Source: Baltic Barometer, 1999

Question reads: *What do you think the economic situation in your household will be in five years time? (%)*

The comparisons between the three Baltic States lead to the conclusion that the assessment of the political situation is influenced by dissatisfaction of inhabitants with economic conditions: if the economy in the country is more successful and inhabitants have more positive expectations regarding changes in their households, they also hold more positive views regarding the development of the political system in their country. We see that the perception of economic safety among the population is an important precondition for political legitimacy of the political system.

Trust in state and other institutions

To analyze the trust of the population in institutions, it is rather difficult to find criteria allowing us to judge whether trust could be assessed as high or low. To solve this question, I have selected different types of comparisons:

Firstly, institutions will be divided into state institutions and civic society institutions;

Secondly, the three Baltic States will be compared with each other; and

Thirdly, different socio-demographic groups of the population will be compared with each other.

Respondents were asked to express their trust in 12 institutions on a 10-points scale, where 1 meant “do not trust at all”, while 10 meant “fully trust”. I will use the arithmetical mean values as numerical indicators of trust, while the analysis of factors will be used as the secondary method of data analysis.

As we compare the trust of the people of the Baltic States in different institutions, we can see certain similarities.

- Firstly, there is a tendency among the people in all three countries to have more trust in civic society institutions, especially in the church, as compared with state institutions.
- Secondly, in all three countries, people have expressed the least trust in the main state institutions (the Parliament and political parties). The inhabitants of Latvia and Estonia have also been critical toward their Prime Ministers. However, people in all three Baltic States have a high level of trust in the Presidents of the State.

Table 5. Confidence in institutions: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.(x)

	Estonia	Rangs	Latvia	Rangs	Lithuania	Rangs
Churches	6.43	3	7.03	1	6.52	3
Environmental "green" groups	6.55	2	5.82	2	4.48	8
Mass media	5.48	6	5.70	3	6.75	2
President	7.42	1	5.57	4	8.90	1
Military	5.70	4	5.44	5	4.88	6
Private enterprise	4.11	11	4.85	6	5.00	5
Courts	5.37	8	4.68	7	3.70	10
Police	5.02	9	4.67	8	3.82	9
Trade unions	5.53	5	4.33	9	4.50	7
Prime Minister	5.45	7	4.05	10	5.62	4
Parliament	4.88	10	3.90	11	3.43	11
Political parties	3.65	12	3.05	12	3.26	12

Source: Baltic Barometer, 1999.

It is more likely that the high trust in the Presidents of the State is more of an emotional character, since the Presidents of the State perform rather representative functions in their countries. These are strong personalities, therefore the positive attitude toward them is more an indication of emotional belonging to the state, while there are less practical expectations toward them, as it is the case, for example, when assessing political parties or the Parliament. This conclusion may be illustrated by an example from Latvia: when the crisis of the *Baltijas Banka* occurred in 1995, leading to a substantial deterioration in budgets of many families, the image of the President of the State “suffered” least of all.

Apparently, a certain correlation exists: when there are more practical expectations regarding a certain institution (state or civic society), there is a higher possibility that such institution may get lower public trust. We may assume that such attitudes are rather typical for a transitional society. The analysis of factors also reveals a similar division among institutions.

Generally, regarding all the three countries, we can conclude that, in the view of the population, institutions mainly consist of state institutions and civic society groups. This is the case in all three Baltic States if we apply the solution matrix with 2 factors.

If we apply the solution matrix with 3 factors, the major political leaders of the country and the mass media form a separate group. In Latvia and Estonia, the mass media and private companies form a separate group of institutions. If we apply the solution matrix with 4 factors, the same structure remains in Lithuania, with the church as a separate component. In Estonia, too, the church appears a separate component if we apply the solution matrix with 4 factors. There is, however, an interesting feature in Estonia, namely that the borders between the state institutions and the civic society institutions tend to “blur”.

**Table 6. Estonia: confidence in institutions
(4-factor matrix)**

	Comp.1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3	Comp. 4
Political parties	.696	.109	.277	8.000E-02
Courts	.578	.555	8.000E-02	-.200
Police	.541	.620	5.094E-02	-.107
Prime Minister	.818	.205	9.211E-02	.134
Military	.489	.512	-8.598E-03	.139
Parliament	.748	.266	.129	.188
Churches	.202	.223	3.597E-02	.845
Trade unions	.5.952E-02	.766	.182	.262
Environmental "green" groups	.211	.635	.183	.254
Private enterprise	.394	-2.852E-02	.714	3.597E-02
President	.687	.146	.181	.297
Mass media	3.770E-02	.334	.777	.103

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Source: *Baltic Barometer, 1999.*

**Table 7. Lithuania: confidence in institutions
(4-factor solution)**

	Comp.1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3	Comp. 4
Political parties	.713	.345	.155	-4.17E-02
Courts	.867	.175	.132	.106
Police	.826	.136	.171	9.637E-02
Prime Minister	.544	.106	.554	.138
Military	.606	.335	.152	.309
Parliament	.758	.267	.160	.144
Churches	.182	.205	7.312E-02	.924
Trade unions	.331	.752	.121	.170
Environmental "green" groups	.263	.776	.122	.186
Private enterprise	.153	.610	.333	1.476E-02
President	.182	.129	.854	.124
Mass media	.129	.267	.792	-4.38E-02

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

**Table 8. Latvia: confidence in institutions
(4-factor matrix)**

	Comp.1	Comp. 2	Comp. 3	Comp. 4
Political parties	.708	.152	3.687E-02	.123
Courts	.413	.742	8.222E-02	8.899E-02
Police	.247	.832	.127	6.434E-02
Prime Minister	.800	.213	.247	3.949E-02
Military	.379	.558	.388	4.916E-02
Parliament	.797	.285	.153	9.631E-02
Churches	6.144E-02	6.701E-02	.768	-4.312E-02
Trade unions	.350	.118	.644	9.387E-02
Environmental "green" groups	.134	.220	.646	.327
Private enterprise	.212	-1.864E-03	6.257E-02	.880
President	.614	.273	.330	.200
Mass media	2.129E-02	.520	.192	.583

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

In Latvia, too, if we apply the solution matrix with 4 factors, the former structure of the components remain. However, as compared with Estonia and Lithuania, the state institutions split into two groups:

1. the main state institutions (the Cabinet of Ministers, Saeima, the President of the State and political parties);
2. other state institutions (courts, the police, the army) and mass media;
3. civic society institutions (the church, trade unions, environmental “green” groups);
4. private companies and mass media.

The following conclusions were reached as a result of the factor analysis in the three Baltic States:

- Firstly, there is a sharp division between the two groups of institutions: the state and civic society institutions. Notably, the perception of this division is less pronounced in Estonia. It is possible that, as we compare the attitudes of the inhabitants of these countries, we will be able to make more accurate conclusions about the existing tendencies.
- Secondly, the particular feature of Lithuania is that the main leaders (the President of the State and Prime Minister) are separated as a particular group.
- Thirdly, in the view of inhabitants of Estonia and Lithuania, the church is more separated from the rest of civic society institutions as compared with Latvia.

What defines the trust of the Baltic States in institutions

It should be pointed out that trust in institutions differs among various socio-demographic groups. Notably, however, there are similar correlations in all the three Baltic States.

Gender

In all the three Baltic States, women have more trust in institutions than men. Private business is an exception: more men than women have trust in private companies.

Age

The younger generation (people aged 18 - 30 years) as well as the older generation (people over 70) have more trust both in state institutions as well as in civic society institutions. We can see the lowest trust in institutions among people in the age group 40-50.

Education

In all the three Baltic States, people with the lowest education level are those who have most trust in state institutions. On the other hand, people with the highest education level have more trust in civic society institutions and in private business. This correlation does not apply, however, to the attitudes toward the church: people with different levels of education have expressed high trust in the church. Generally, we can conclude that the group with the average education level has the lowest trust in institutions.

Self-assessment of one's own socio-economic status

There is a linear correlation between the self-assessment of one's own socio-economic status and the political trust: the higher the socio-economic group, to which the person belongs, the higher is his or her trust in institutions: both in state institutions as well as in civic society institutions. However, this may not be said about the higher socio-economic status groups, since the number of people who regard themselves as belonging to the upper class or to upper-middle class was too low: 0.1% and 1.9% in Estonia, 0.3% and 0.7% in Latvia, and 0.5% and 4.4% in Lithuania, respectively.

The said correlation does not apply to the church.

The lowest trust in the main political institutions: the Parliament and political parties

The fact that the Parliaments and political parties in the three Baltic States are trusted least of all is worth paying attention to. In this attitude, political dissatisfaction could be mentioned alongside economic dissatisfaction. This could be explained by the fact that the system: government-opposition is not functioning efficiently in the post-Soviet states; that political changes through elections or governmental crises do not bring about the expected improvements. This is the reason why the trust in institutions is not growing perceptibly. While the subjects of power change, there are no quality changes in the output of the activities of state institutions. Empirically, this has been confirmed by the unchanging indicators of trends in political trust. (See the enclosure.)

The more effectively the government / opposition mechanism operates, the easier it is to limit and canalize dissatisfaction to avoid its generalization to the higher level of the system – that is, to dissatisfaction with the formal, constitutionally determined, structures of government (Kaase, Newton, 1995).

Political culture as the criterion of political trust

On the basis of the models of political culture developed by Almond and Verba, we may ask how rational is the support rendered by inhabitants to institutions (independently of whether it is high or low): how much of it is based on understanding, interest in politics, desire to participate, or maybe it is an assessment based on emotional attitudes?

In this case, we selected the following features of political culture:

- interest in politics
- self-assessment of political competence
- political efficacy
- political participation

The interest of inhabitants in politics

The data of the survey do not show a linear correlation between the interest in politics and trust in institutions: most often, those people had higher trust in institutions who were only fairly interested in politics than those who were most interested in politics, as it might be expected. This correlation could be observed in all the three Baltic States. In Estonia, the exception was trust in “greens”: they were trusted most by those people who were actively interested in politics. On the other hand, in Lithuania, those people had the highest trust in the President of the State who were most interested in politics.

Self-assessment of political competence

When comparing the assessment by the people of their ability to understand politics and their political trust, we found that political trust in the Baltic States is higher among those inhabitants who assess their competence as equal with that of other people, instead of those who have higher self-assessment of their political competence. In the case of Estonia, the only exception was the trust in the President of the State: the President is more trusted by people with higher self-assessment of political competence. In Lithuania, a group could be selected with lower self-assessment of political competence – the political trust was also lower among them. The political trust is rather similar in groups with average and higher self-assessment.

Political efficacy

When comparing the opinions of inhabitants about whether they may make politicians take into account their demands with their trust in institutions, we found that those who assess their possibilities as ideal, have also higher political trust as compared with those who assess their possibilities below the average or higher than average.

Political participation

Similarly, as we consider political participation, we found that the most active group of people expressed lower political trust as compared with the medium active group. The political trust was lowest in the group that was least active.

Possibly, the aforementioned correlation, which revealed that those people who are fairly interested in politics, who have a fair self-assessment of their political competence and political efficacy, are those with the lowest political trust, refers, to a certain extent, to the ideas of Inglehart who pointed out that the most informed (educated) people have more critical attitudes toward political institutions.

Therefore, if we consider the prospects for political trust in the future, we may not expect any linear correlations. We may not expect, for example, that higher levels of education will directly lead to higher political trust. Rather, we may expect that changes in different factors, which in itself could be regarded as positive, for example, rising of educational levels, may have different influence on the political trust which may be rising or falling.

The economic condition of individual and trust in institutions: Households today

Regarding trust in all institutions, we see the correlation: the higher is the assessment of the respondent's economic condition, the higher is political trust. It is especially so in regard to the main state institutions (the Parliament, political parties, the Prime Minister and the President). The economic condition of the family has a major influence on the trust in the said institutions.

Taking into account that the most satisfied group in economic terms consists of only a few persons (8 people in Estonia as well as in Lithuania), we may not conclude unequivocally that this same correlation also applies to them. In Lithuania, this group is somewhat interesting since it did not express the highest trust in institutions, as it might be expected (and as it is in Estonia).

Households in five years from now

We can see a similar correlation also, as we compare the expectations of people regarding changes in their households within the nearest five years. Generally, we may conclude: the more positive are expectations, the higher is the political trust. It should be pointed out that this correlation is more pronounced in Estonia, and it especially characteristic for attitudes toward the main state institutions. However, when we consider attitudes toward civic society institutions (trade unions, environmental "green" groups, mass media), the trust in these institutions is much less affected by expectations regarding the

economic condition of the family during the nearest five years. In Lithuania, too, as regards all institutions, except for the church, a correlation can be observed: the higher are expectations regarding the improvement of household, the higher is political trust. However, this correlation only partially applies to Latvia, since the group with the highest expectations does not have the highest level of political trust.

“Winners” and “losers”

Considering how the economic condition of the family has changed as compared with what it was before independence, people may be divided into “winners” and “losers”.

In this case, too, we can discuss the main trend and particularities in separate countries: in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania.

In Estonia, “winners”, i. e. those who assess their households as “much better”, are more supportive of institutions. It is interesting to observe, however, that those who assess changes in their households as “little better”, are less supportive of institutions as compared with those whose households have not changed.

In Lithuania, trust in institutions was most often expressed by those whose households have not changed as compared with what they were before independence. Those people are more critical whose households have improved (“a little better” or “much better”), but those people, whose households have declined (“a little worse” or “much worse”), have the lowest level of trust in institutions.

In Latvia, those people have the highest trust in institutions whose households have improved slightly and those with no changes. However, those with much improved households are more critical. And, understandably, those people are still more critical against institutions whose households have declined.

Generally, the answers to questions about households and trust in institutions allow us to make certain conclusions.

- Trust is most directly linked to the current assessment of own household: the higher is this assessment, the higher is trust in institutions, this correlation can be observed in all three Baltic States.
- Expectations regarding the economic condition of the family during the nearest five years are more related to trust in institutions but are not related to trust in civic society institutions (Estonia). In Latvia, this correlation does not apply to the group with the highest expectations.

- Regarding “winners” and “losers”, there is no linear correlation, since in Lithuania we see that those people have more trust in institutions whose households have not changed. In Estonia, people with unchanged households have more trust in institutions than those whose households have slightly improved. Again, in Latvia, we see that those people are most trustful whose households have slightly changed rather than those whose households are “much better”, as it may be expected.

These data suggest the conclusion that the most active groups of the population, i. e. those people who have achieved improvement of their households, are often more critical toward institutions, especially toward state institutions. This tendency is most pronounced in Latvia and in Lithuania. In Estonia, that group is interesting among more successful people whose household has improved “a little”. Probably, dissatisfaction with what they have achieved also reflects in their rather negative attitude toward state institutions.

Expectations in regard to the development of the economic and political system

In all the three Baltic States, we observe the correlation that more positive expectations regarding the economic development of the country are linked to higher political trust. There is a similar, though less pronounced correlation between expectations regarding changes in the political system and political trust.

To sum up the foregoing analysis, we can conclude that the results of the Baltic Barometer 99 may be regarded as one more empirical proof that the “crisis theories” do not hold ground even in the post-communist countries of 1990s. The main evidence of this is the positive expectations of people in regard to the development of democracy in their countries, while economic growth is a precondition for it.

Secondly, another major factor defining political trust is economic development, since there is a close linkage between the assessment of one’s own household and expectations in regard to its development during the nearest five years, on the one hand, and political trust, on the other hand. Notably, however, those whose economic condition has improved, as compared with the time before independence, i. e. the “winners”, are not always most trusting institutions. Apparently, this is an evidence of higher demands of these more active people and of a certain discontent. To some extent, this refers to the conclusions of M. Lauristina about “winners” as the most satisfied people.

Thirdly, the political trust is higher among that part of the population which may be regarded as average in terms of cognitive competence, activity, interest in politics. On the other hand, those who are better informed and more active

are more critical toward institutions. This conclusion correlates with the theories of social changes, for example, the Change of Values theory by R. Inglehart, according to which modernization of individual is a process running parallel to modernization of society, which, on the one hand, means higher cognitive competence and, on the other hand, implies a change of value orientation. The results of the Baltic Barometer 99 show that the growth of the educational level and the cognitive competence of the population contributes to a more critical attitude towards state institutions and politicians. On the other hand, this could give grounds for the hope that, as the public becomes more demanding, the quality of the work of state institutions in the future will also improve.

Only the future will show whether the fact that more educated people have more trust in civic society institutions could be regarded as a safeguard for the development of civic society institutions.

Notes.

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Appendix

Table1. Gender by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Gender		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.004	.013	.054
Courts	.105	.008	.062
Police	.072	.079	.058
Prime Minister	.029	.061	.007
Military	.057	.052	.001
Parliament	.065	.032	.035
Churches	.047	.003	.064
Trade unions	.093	.124	.052
Environmental "green" groups	.010	.083	.053
Private enterprise	.056	.048	.046
President	.062	.080	.032
Mass media	.039	.065	.007

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Table2. Age by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Age		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.101	.128	.088
Courts	.113	.284	.140
Police	.084	.173	.113
Prime Minister	.044	.200	.125
Military	.108	.107	.087
Parliament	.064	.153	.133
Churches	.142	.083	.075
Trade unions	.127	.132	.133
Environmental "green" groups	.075	.163	.146
Private enterprise	.304	.301	.096
President	.062	.102	.076
Mass media	.113	.089	.099

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Table3. Education by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Education		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.048	.111	.089
Courts	.107	.073	.052
Police	.138	.125	.054
Prime Minister	.054	.082	.079
Military	.104	.075	.063
Parliament	.050	.060	.076
Churches	.170	.100	.056
Trade unions	.097	.116	.062
Environmental "green" groups	.083	.126	.051
Private enterprise	.088	.096	.110
President	.055	.077	.160
Mass media	.048	.106	.069

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Table 4. Socio-economic status by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Socio-economic status		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.106	.138	.071
Courts	.174	.108	.110
Police	.082	.162	.099
Prime Minister	.163	.188	.139
Military	.083	.084	.148
Parliament	.163	.135	.077
Churches	.071	.104	.104
Trade unions	.085	.189	.084
Environmental "green" groups	.096	.121	.087
Private enterprise	.162	.149	.197
President	.158	.141	.136
Mass media	.094	.071	.088

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Table 5. Interest in politics by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Interest in politics		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.157	.219	.114
Courts	.192	.161	.035
Police	.157	.091	.083
Prime Minister	.117	.140	.243
Military	.103	.074	.144
Parliament	.072	.138	.121
Churches	.077	.059	.064
Trade unions	.087	.118	.085
Environmental "green" groups	.145	.076	.127
Private enterprise	.156	.083	.241
President	.104	.118	.262
Mass media	.146	.092	.177

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Table 6. Political competence by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Political competence		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.227	.298	.334
Courts	.172	.233	.303
Police	.186	.138	.275
Prime Minister	.134	.253	.274
Military	.179	.134	.275
Parliament	.188	.241	.305
Churches	.145	.146	.176
Trade unions	.134	.161	.261
Environmental "green" groups	.195	.207	.276
Private enterprise	.166	.273	.334
President	.194	.196	.163
Mass media	.150	.140	.153

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Table 7. Political efficacy status by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Political efficacy		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.224	.313	.375
Courts	.178	.154	.281
Police	.137	.189	.238
Prime Minister	.122	.279	.272
Military	.113	.202	.255
Parliament	.148	.273	.350
Churches	.193	.190	.171
Trade unions	.137	.188	.230
Environmental "green" groups	.127	.178	.273
Private enterprise	.199	.279	.254
President	.167	.196	.151
Mass media	.154	.159	.126

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Table 8. Household today by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Household today		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.182	167	218
Courts	.150	135	268
Police	.099	118	263
Prime Minister	.162	166	268
Military	.182	087	263
Parliament	.255	153	223
Churches	.045	134	092
Trade unions	.157	108	166
Environmental "green" groups	.100	105	235
Private enterprise	.221	199	258
President	.220	168	215
Mass media	.115	094	187

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Table 9. Household in five years by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Household in five years		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.245	225	242
Courts	.180	225	199
Police	.110	165	203
Prime Minister	.215	345	284
Military	.192	162	177
Parliament	.273	261	162
Churches	.188	175	158
Trade unions	.177	163	118
Environmental "green" groups	.120	163	220
Private enterprise	.272	302	271
President	.236	272	257
Mass media	.174	163	207

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Table 10. Household before independence by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Household before independence		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.137	222	259
Courts	.121	202	221
Police	.136	096	218
Prime Minister	.199	273	286
Military	.112	090	254
Parliament	.213	204	284
Churches	.060	100	137
Trade unions	.037	041	182
Environmental "green" groups	.081	154	175
Private enterprise	.218	242	219
President	.140	257	203
Mass media	.103	093	213

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Table 11. Economic system in five years by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Economic system in five years		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.311	399	376
Courts	.238	370	398
Police	.225	299	396
Prime Minister	.347	476	467
Military	.271	266	366
Parliament	.385	472	414
Churches	.194	277	294
Trade unions	.251	257	316
Environmental "green" groups	.219	214	293
Private enterprise	.257	307	300
President	.367	497	378
Mass media	.239	206	335

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Table 12. Political system in five years by institutions: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania

Eta, institutions dependent variable

	Political system in five years		
	Latvia	Estonia	Lithuania
Political parties	.404	381	396
Courts	.293	357	455
Police	.281	350	438
Prime Minister	.348	510	552
Military	.303	288	457
Parliament	.441	472	445
Churches	.268	347	297
Trade unions	.281	247	335
Environmental "green" groups	.251	291	356
Private enterprise	.239	359	307
President	.388	532	505
Mass media	.240	227	292

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