

***“Twenty-Five Years after The Fall of Communism:
Toward a Symbolic Interactionist Approach to The Study Of Corruption in Central and
Eastern Europe”***

Roxana Toma, SUNY Empire State College, USA

The Asian Conference on Business & Public Policy 2015
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Even when the domestic political system has undergone reform, it sometimes seems unlikely that any outside force can introduce enough of a “carrot and stick” approach to persuade a country to maintain momentum. This article is concerned with understanding the cultural peculiarities of fighting corruption and building civil society in Romania, where despite the tough EU monitoring and domestic anti-sleaze efforts, corruption and low trust remain significant problems. Many of the theorists in the post-communist literature argue that socioeconomic factors and the communist legacy have weakened post-communist civil society in the region. This article explores the question whether corruption has replaced the legacy of communism as a factor undermining trust in others and government in Romania and presents an examination of the association between corruption and post-communist civil society. The article argues that future research needs to switch focus from discussing Romanian social, political, and cultural behaviors from a *longue durée* perspective to evaluating the impact of political corruption on trust and, hence, civil society in Romania. In doing so, the article also argues that future research should move from the rational-choice model of corruption and draw on social psychology to study the interactions that shape people’s decisions to engage in corruption, as this approach would likely yield more accurate and culturally sensitive conclusions for Romania and more generally, for Central and Eastern Europe.

Keywords: corruption, civil society, social capital, trust

iafor

The International Academic Forum
www.iafor.org

Introduction

The year 2014 marked the 25th anniversary of the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. This may be a short period of time in the overall arc of history, but it doesn't feel this way for the Romanian people, who have been yearning for a "return to Europe" and a similar quality of life for almost 70 years now. Romania joined the European Union (EU) on January 1, 2007, having come a long way from Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship. Its evolution is even more remarkable considering that it was the only Eastern European country with a bloody revolution that was followed by a transition dominated by former communists. Nonetheless, in 2007 Romania continued to be regarded as the poorhouse of Europe and was rated as the most corrupt EU member state by Transparency International¹. While the European Commission reports after accession have acknowledged the vital steps taken in developing its institutional capabilities to deal with corruption, the Anticorruption Report from 2014 indicates that both petty and political corruption remains a significant problem in Romania. "Although some positive results have been observed when it comes to prosecution of high level corruption cases, political will to address corruption and promote high standards of integrity in Romania has been inconsistent."²

The regular *Nations in Transit* survey of Freedom House International has established since 1999 a well-recognized indicator of corruption, among other indicators of democracy in post-Communist Europe. A closer look at Table 1 tells us that Romania's corruption score deteriorated gradually from 1999 until 2002; then it recorded a small positive evolution in 2003 due to the passage of an anticorruption bill and the adjacent strategy; after that, it has improved only slightly and up until Romania joined the EU; since 2007, it has stagnated. Greece is now the most corrupt country in the EU³; Bulgaria - the most corrupt of the *new* EU members⁴, and while some of the other new members have scores closer to Romania's (e.g. Hungary, Slovakia) this is not so much an indication of Romania's progress, but more likely due to the regress made by the other states in this arena (e.g. Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary and Poland had all seen downgrades to their corruption ratings amid public protests and high-level corruption cases).

[TABLE 1 AROUND HERE]

The existing literature on civil society attributes the weakening of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe to a lack of trust in government, due to the legacy of communism as well as to socioeconomic failures. This article builds on the existing literature by focusing on the following questions. What role does corruption play in civil society in Romania? Has a culture of corruption replaced the legacy of communism as a factor weakening civil society in Romania? Does corruption reduce trust in others and in government, in turn pushing individuals away from civil societies? Is there a generational difference? Are post-communist generations less inclined to take part in civil society in Romania?

Post-Communist Civil Society

While many observers were optimistic that post-communist civil society would develop remarkably, most of the recent literature acknowledges its slow pace of development (Badescu et al. 2004). Communist inheritances are to blame, which left an atomized society and crushed civil society whenever possible (Linz and Stepan 1996; Jowitt 1992). Scholars have credited the

weakening of post-communist civil society to the nature of the communist system and its socialization effects on individuals. Most people during communism were socialized into distrusting institutions (Badescu et al., 2004; Howard, 2002; Mishler and Rose, 1997, 2001). Howard (2002) contends that citizens in this region have a peculiar apathy toward joining civic associations which is partially rooted in the communist legacy of distrust of organizations. This environment of distrust stems from the communist era, when participation in state-controlled organizations was mandatory and lacked the true essence of what civil society is supposed to represent (Zakaria 2012). Wheaton and Kavan (1992) suggest that the legacies of communism have led individuals to withdraw from the public sphere and, instead, to turn to ‘inner emigration.’ Owing to their negative experiences of organizations during the communist era, citizens have continued to distrust any sort of organization.

Moreover, democratic institutions have failed to live up to citizen expectations, resulting in a retreat from public life for many post-communist citizens (Rose et al. 1998). Tismaneanu (1995) notes that the post-communist political culture in Romania is still not fully compatible with democratic institutions that demand citizen engagement. Badescu et al. (2004) maintain that distrust is generally the main factor preventing individuals from participating in civic associations in Romania. For example, Romanians distrust each other as well as political authorities, and this stems from their decades-long negative experiences under communist rule. The *National Integrity System Assessment* undertaken by Transparency International Romania in 2012 confirms these claims, arguing that “the foundations of the integrity system, the political, social, economic and cultural profile of the country are shaped by the Communist heritage and moreover by the difficult and slow transition of the country.”⁵ Furthermore, “the socio-cultural tradition and low involvement of the people in civic movements represent vulnerabilities in the Romanian context.”⁶

Mishler and Rose (1997) question the effect of the communist legacy on civil society, and instead suggest that the declining macroeconomic conditions of the region, such as the declining standard of living, have been the primary factors contributing to distrust in civic organizations and political institutions. Badescu et al. (2004: 324) additionally claim that a lack of resources and skills has contributed to the weakening of civil society since 1991; the authors argue that ‘the more wealth a country has, the higher its share of group members.’

Smolar (1996: 26) raised another interesting argument for the weakening of civil society by arguing that civil society’s “activists moved en masse into government and business, leaving a plethora of associations, human rights groups, independent publishing concerns, and informal educational institutions without enough people to keep them going.” Thus, following the revolution, civil society failed to institutionalize, and this condition can partially explain the low levels of civic activity in the post-transition period (Zakaria 2012).

In addition to the legacies of communism and economic decline, Howard (2002) claims that citizens of the post-communist world show deep distrust of formal institutions. Moreover, the persistence of close networks of friendship has had the significant effect of social disengagement and has thereby prevented true civic association from thriving in the region. Howard (2002) notes that in Central and Eastern Europe the public sphere is highly politicized, and such an environment acts as a roadblock to civic participation: essentially, the lack of trust in political

institutions as a result of communism has pushed citizens to engage more in close networks of friendship, as opposed to large organized groups. On a similar note, Badescu et al. (2004) claim that the communist regime discouraged and fiercely controlled any form of collective action in the region, thereby conditioning individuals to turn to family and close friendships for association, rather than to civil society. Building on the concept of distrust, the authors also suggest that individuals refrain from taking part in civil society because of their lack of trust in others. In Romania, for example, the authors argue that the lack of trust in others, especially in minority counterparts, has contributed to a lack of engagement in civic activities (Badescu et al. 2004).

However, this literature does not take into account the fact that it has been more than two decades since the fall of the communist regime in Romania. A new, post-communist generation, which does not have the same legacy and experience of communism as its predecessors, is now active in civil society. It is expected that this post-communist generation will behave differently toward civil society, since it lacks a formative experience with the legacy of communism (Zakaria 2012). However, it seems that the post-communist generation in Romania is also apathetic toward civil society. What contributes to such behavior if the legacy of communism no longer applies?

I argue that research on the civil society in Romania needs to take into account social capital theories of corruption. In this literature, corruption is viewed as a departure from the cultural norm of social trust, where citizens naturally expect the government (and each other) to be honest. In such societies, the vast majority of citizens do not even consider offering bribes, nor do they tolerate bribe-taking, favoritism, or other forms of corruption. If most citizens perceive honesty to be widespread, honesty in fact becomes widespread – a self-reinforcing mechanism.

Social Capital and Corruption

Social capital is broadly defined as the set of rules, norms, reciprocity and trust embedded in social relations, social structures, and society's institutional arrangements, which enables its members to achieve their mutual goals (Woolcock and Narayan 2000). Social capital is created from the horizontal networks and relations between individuals, groups and organizations in civil society. Social capital is embedded in primary social institutions that provide people with basic values, such as high levels of social trust, cohesion and participation. Social capital provides "trust" as a "public good" (Del Monte and Papagni 2007). The classical study by Almond and Verba (1963) on civic culture gave empirical evidence to the Toquevillian intuition that social trust, cohesion and participation increase the quality of democracy. Putnam (1993) computed the level of civiness of each of Italy's twenty regions and found a remarkable concordance between the performance of regional governments and the degree to which social and political life in those regions approximated the ideal of civic community. In creating trust between members of their organizations, individuals are providing a public good to other members of society who are not part of their organizations – in this way, trust becomes a positive externality. Not only does social capital create a "public good" but "most forms of social capital such as trust, are 'moral resources' - that is, resources whose supply increases, rather than decreases through use and which become depleted if not used" (Putnam 1993: 169). Low economic development and low social capital would lead a community into a "vicious cycle," draining its social capital even

more and transforming it into a less civic community. The opposite is also true and a community with high economic development and high social capital will enter a virtuous cycle, which leads to a productive community (Putnam 1993).

Research specifically on corruption shows that trust matters. In order to be able to set mutual goals, and cooperate for achieving them, people have to trust each other and their governmental institutions, which in turn have to ensure the environment, favorable for such cooperation (Jankauskas and Šeputienė 2007). The literature on government regulation has argued that the higher the level of trust in government, the more likely the people will comply with government demands and regulations (Levi and Stoker 2000; Scholz and Lubell 1998a, 1998b; Tyler 1990, 1998). This literature approaches trust from a rational perspective - trust reflects beliefs about risk, and trust is a result of encapsulated interest (Levi and Stoker 2000, Scholz 1998). This rational approach argues that in cases involving social dilemmas, both sides cooperate as long as the other is perceived to be trustworthy. To the extent that people are able to make such a generalization, trust should be related to higher probabilities of compliance (Scholz and Lubell 1998a; 1998b). Applying this argument to corruption, one would expect that the extent to which people trust the government to be fair and trust other people to behave fairly, it is rational for them to reciprocate and also behave fairly. Trust becomes the basis on which non-corrupt exchange is sustained (Tavits 2005).

Other authors have claimed a strong relationship between both trust in government and trust in other people on the one hand, and the level of corruption on the other, both across countries and at the individual level (Camp, Coleman and Davis 2000, 2004; della Porta 2000; Morris 1991; Rothstein 2000; Uslaner and Badescu 2003, 2004a, 2004b). However, this literature argues that trust has a positive consequence in terms of reducing corruption via social bonds rather than via rational calculation of utility - “trust leads to empathy with others - and thus a respect for the law” (Uslaner 2004:10). Seligson (2002) used individual level data to argue that corruption influences the level of trust in other people and trust in the fairness of the political system. Uslaner (2004) on the other hand, relying on aggregate country level data, demonstrated the relationship between high trust and lower corruption, while Uslaner and Badescu (2004b) established several reciprocal relationships between political and social trust on the one hand, and the perception of and actual encounters with corruption on the other.

Positive Versus Negative Social Capital

Positive social capital assumes that monitoring of officials is carried out by the clients (perhaps through complaints to their political representatives), rather than by the state itself directly. Kingston (2005) used a simple linked-games model to show how positive social capital reduces corruption. Social capital can enable citizens to engage in collective action against corruption. Paying bribes often creates a negative externality⁷ among the potential bribe-payers. By paying a bribe in exchange for preferential treatment, an individual reduces the benefits available to everyone else. Likewise, by accepting a bribe in exchange for preferential treatment, a public servant reduces the benefits available to everyone else. As a result, bribe-payers face a collective action problem: they would all be better off if they could all mutually commit not to pay bribes. Social capital can enable them to enforce agreements not to pay bribes (or informal “norms” against bribery) and thereby reduce the level of corruption. In this way, in states with high levels

of positive social capital, people are less likely to act corruptly, and more likely to be punished if they do so (Kingston 2005).

However, social capital theory also points to the possibility of a close relationship between networks, associations, and corruption. For example, della Porta and Vannucci's detailed portrait of corruption in Italy highlighted that businessmen, politicians, and public servants might view corrupt dealings not as "right," but as inevitable and beyond any individual to change. Under a negative social capital framework, if one is going to do business in the public sector, then one has to play by the rules (della Porta and Vannucci 2012). The aura of inevitability not only creates incentives for corruption, but also justifies it as natural - the way things are done. Individuals' perception that they cannot change the system tends to level moral standards down, reducing the moral costs of corruption to individuals.

Warren (2006) claimed that when people lose confidence that public decisions are made for reasons that are publicly available and justifiable, they often become cynical about public speech and deliberation. People come to expect duplicity in public speech, and the expectation tarnishes all public servants, whether or not they are corrupt. When people are mistrustful of government, they are also cynical about their own capacities to act on public goods and purposes, and will prefer to attend to narrow domains of self-interest that they can control. In this way, corruption diminishes the horizons of collective action (Warren 2006) and social capital enables the collective processes of corruption - collective in the sense that they solve collective action problems for those involved in corruption, even if they are not public goods.

Del Monte and Papagni (2007) found using econometric results that the spread of corruption in Italy weakened the sense of loyalty to civil and organized society and the climate of corruption created further incentives for corruption, due to the belief that known offenders could continue their corrupt practices with little risk of punishment. Čábelková and Hanousek (2004) claimed that high perceptions of widespread corruption in Ukraine can increase corruption in government by encouraging people to believe that they must pay bribes, and by enticing public servants to think that accepting bribes is natural and widely accepted. They found empirical results that perceptions of widespread corruption among the Ukrainian population are correlated to actual encounters of corruption. In this way, perceptions of corruption facilitate actual corruption levels (Čábelková and Hanousek 2004). Tavits (2005) argued that the decision to engage in corrupt behavior is primarily influenced by a personal definition of corruption and individual perceptions of how widespread corrupt activities are (imitation). This explanation borrows from social learning theory - if people perceive that a behavior is widespread and that there is an approval of the problem behavior, they will be more likely to engage in such behavior. Tavits showed that somebody who thinks that corrupt activities are very common in the country is about ten times more likely to be corruptible than somebody who thinks that corrupt activities are not at all common (Tavits 2005).

Newton (2001) argues that social capital and a developed civil society help to make good government possible, and good government helps to sustain social capital and the conditions of civil society - a bottom-up and top-down concomitant process. In our case, while the pre-accession years brought about the development of an impressive arsenal of legal instruments of transparency and accountability in Romania, progress is not straightforward, so that advances in

one area can be constrained or negated by setbacks elsewhere. For example, when Romania was campaigning for admission in the European Union, in 2003, it launched an anticorruption drive, and appointed Monica Macovei, a tough justice minister who spurred a series of corruption cases against senior officials. The data in Table 1 confirm a decrease in corruption in Romania around that time. However, as soon as Romania joined the EU in 2007, the campaign dissolved, the justice minister was fired, and the cases were dropped.

Romania had barely entered the EU when its political class started to undo the anticorruption commitments undertaken to allow the country's accession. Matters worsened to the point that two deputy prime ministers resigned in one year, and most of the political class mobilized to change the legislation to decrease the power of prosecutors. The government even attempted to close down the National Anticorruption Department (DNA), Romania's independent anticorruption agency. A vicious fight erupted between the president and the Parliament, culminating in an attempt to impeach President Traian Basescu. A severe split between representatives and voters emerged when two-thirds of Parliament voted to have Basescu deposed and two-thirds of the voters reinstated him in a referendum on May 19, 2007.

In July 2012, the Romanian President Traian Basescu survived another referendum on his impeachment, after turnout fell below the 50% needed to validate the vote, raising again questions about the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in Romania. The referendum was part of the ongoing power struggle between the President and his arch-rival, center-left Prime Minister Victor Ponta, who has been the driving force behind efforts to unseat the President. The center-left government had accused the center-right President of exceeding his authority and of meddling in government affairs, and President Basescu was suspended by Parliament. The row caused by the impeachment vote had paralyzed political decision-making in Romania at a time when it was finalizing agreements on an IMF-backed aid package.

In December 2013, decisions in the Romanian Parliament served as a reminder that the core principles and objectives of anticorruption reform are still being challenged. The Romanian Parliament voted to amend the Criminal Code to exempt top politicians and lawyers from corruption crimes. The snap amendments, voted without parliamentary debate, said that the country's President, senators, members of the lower chamber, as well as lawyers, were no longer to be considered "public officials." This in turn meant they could no longer be held accountable for abuse of office, bribery, conflicts of interest and other corruption crimes. This was happening at a time when 28 of the MPs had been convicted or were on trial for corruption, and over 100 mayors and vice-mayors were on trial for awarding public contracts to family and friends or for similar abuses. The Constitutional Court showed checks and balances at work in ruling this unconstitutional. Events like these make it particularly difficult to assess the sustainability of reform and to judge how much domestic momentum exists to ensure that a broadly positive trend is assured. They also offer an explanation for why Romania's corruption score has stagnated since 2007 (see Table 1). Additionally, setbacks like these may explain the persistent low social trust in Romania, which I discuss next.

Implications for Social Trust

While Romania's corruption score has been the same since 2007, the European Values Survey and World Values Survey data suggest a gradual deterioration of social trust among Romanians from 19.3% who think most people can be trusted in 2005, to 17.6% in 2008, and 7.7% in 2012. While counterintuitive at first, let's go back to social capital theories of corruption where social trust is a positive manifestation of social capital, while corruption is the negative form. Unlike forced cooperation enforced by a third party (i.e., formal institution), social trust is self-enforcing (as an informal institution).

[TABLE 2 AROUND HERE]

[TABLE 3 AROUND HERE]

Considering social trust as a response of individuals to the changing external world around them (Newton 2001), these data are telling of how Romanians evaluate the trustworthiness of their environment (see Table 2 and Table 3). The problem with repeated setbacks in the political arena is that they have long-term consequences on social trust and hence, civil society and collective action. As Hardin (1993) observes, trust involves the continual accumulation and updating of experience. Štulhofer (2004) showed that the decrease of social capital in Croatia in the 1995-2003 period could not be exclusively attributed to the situational effect of the 1991-1995 war. In fact, the strongest and most consistent factor contributing to negative dynamics of social capital through fragmentation of trust in institutions was found to be the increasing public perception of corruption among public officials. In other words, perception of widespread corruption causes a deficit of (positive) social capital or a deficit of social trust. Decreasing social trust and trust in institutions are adaptive reactions to the social environment that is perceived as unpredictable, risky and full of frauds (Štulhofer 2004). Data released by the European Commission in 2014⁸ reveal that an astonishing 93% of Romanians think that corruption is widespread in the country⁹ and 65% think that the level of corruption has increased in the past three years; no wonder, then, that Romanians exhibit decreasing levels of social trust.

Conclusion

Much of the literature has argued that Central and Eastern Europe is predisposed to distrust political and social institutions because of the long history of communism and its end product. This line of argument would have been plausible immediately following the collapse of communism; however, the legacy of communism fails to account for the weakening of civil society in the years since the first transition. In essence, the legacy of communism, which produced distrust in institutions, cannot be applied as the causal factor leading to the weakening of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe. If the legacy of communism fails to account for the weakening of civil society, then what other factor can explain this situation? This article has argued that research needs to shift focus to investigate the factors that sustain corruption and affect trust in society and, in turn, impact civil society. Future research about civil society in Romania should instead examine longitudinal data on perceptions of corruption in order to evaluate the long term effects on social trust and collective action.

Moreover, social psychology can bring a lot to the discussion of global differences in corruption if we give up the assumptions of ‘amoral calculus’ and instrumental rationality behind corruption and instead focus on contextual determinants of corruption and interactional processes whereby people come to develop and share corruption-favorable logics. This way, we may be able to offer an effective alternative that does not involve attempts to change centuries-old national cultures. Since this approach focuses on situational determinants of emergence and transmission of corruption-favorable beliefs, it can help scholars and policy-makers identify the contextual characteristics of interactional moments that promote corruption. These characteristics are likely to be much easier to access and alter than corrupt behaviors themselves.

Table 1: Nations in Transit Corruption Ratings

	1999-2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
New EU Members*															
Bulgaria	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25
Czech Republic	3.25	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50
Estonia	3.25	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.50
Hungary	2.50	3.00	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.25	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.75
Latvia	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.25	3.25	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00
Lithuania	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.75	4.00	4.00	3.75	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.50
Poland	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.50	3.00	3.25	3.00	3.00	2.75	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.50
Romania	4.25	4.50	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Slovakia	3.75	3.75	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.75	3.50	3.50	3.75	3.75
Slovenia	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.25	2.25	2.25	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.25	2.25	2.50
Average	3.33	3.40	3.35	3.23	3.23	3.23	3.28	3.23	3.15	3.25	3.35	3.33	3.28	3.30	3.43
Median	3.38	3.63	3.50	3.38	3.38	3.25	3.25	3.13	3.13	3.25	3.38	3.50	3.38	3.38	3.50
The Balkans															
Albania	6.00	5.50	5.25	5.00	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.25	5.25
Bosnia-Herzegovina	6.00	5.75	5.50	5.00	4.75	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.75
Croatia	5.25	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00
Kosovo	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00
Macedonia	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.50	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.25	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.25
Montenegro	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.50	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Serbia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
Average	5.70	5.40	5.20	5.05	5.14	5.11	5.00	4.96	4.82	4.79	4.75	4.68	4.64	4.75	4.79
Median	6.00	5.50	5.25	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.75	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.75	4.75

* Includes 2004 and 2007 entrants; excludes Croatia which joined mid-2013.

Source: *Nations in Transit 2008 and 2014*, Freedom House. The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest.

Table 2: Social Trust in Romania 1999/2000 and 2008

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?	1999/2000	2008
Most people can be trusted (%)	10.1	17.6
Cannot be too careful (%)	89.9	82.4
Valid cases (N)	1115	1362
Missing (N)	31	127

Source: European Values Study ZACAT - GESIS Online Study Catalogue ZA3798 and ZA4773

Table 3: Social Trust in Romania 2005 and 2012

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?	2005	2012
Most people can be trusted (%)	19.3	7.7
Need to be very careful (%)	75.6	91.4
N	1776	1503
Missing (N)	91	15

* Romania was not part of Wave 4: 1999-2004

Source: World Values Survey Wave 5: 2005-2009 and Wave 6: 2010-2014

References

Almond, G.A. and Verba, S. (1963) *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Badescu, G., Sum P.E. and Uslaner, E.M. (2004) "Civil Society Development and Democratic Values in Romania and Moldova." in *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 316-341.

Čábelková I. and Hanousek, J. (2004) "The Power of Negative Thinking: Corruption Perception and Willingness to Bribe in Ukraine." *Applied Economics* 36(4), 383-397.

Camp, R. A., Coleman K. M., and Davis C. L. (2000) "Public Opinion about Corruption: An Exploratory Study in Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the World Association of Public Opinion Research, Portland, Oregon, May 15-17.

_____ (2004) "Influence of Party Systems on Citizens' Perceptions of Corruption and Electoral Response in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies* 37 (6): 677-703.

Del Monte, A. and Papagni, E. (2007) "The Determinants of Corruption in Italy: Regional Panel Data Analysis." *European Journal of Political Economy* 23 (2007): 379-396.

della Porta, D. (2000) "Social Capital, Beliefs in Government, and Political Corruption." In *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?* Eds. Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

della Porta, D. and Vannucci, A. (2012) *Corrupt exchanges : actors, resources, and mechanisms of political corruption*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

European Commission (2014) *Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: EU Anti-Corruption Report*. COM(2014) 38 final. Brussels, 3.2.2014. Accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/e-library/documents/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/corruption/docs/acr_2014_en.pdf

European Commission (2014) *Summaries of the National Chapters from the European Anti-Corruption Report*. MEMO/14/67. Brussels, 3.2.2014. Accessed at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-67_en.htm

Hardin, R. (1993). "The Street-level Epistemology of Trust." *Politics and Society*, 21 (December): 505-529.

Howard, M. (2002) "The Weakness of Post-communist Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1: 157-69.

Jankauskas, V. and Šeputienė, J. (2007) "The Relation between Social Capital, Governance and Economic Performance in Europe." *Business: Theory and Practice*, Vol VIII, No 3, 131–138.

Jowitt, K. (1992) *The New World Disorder: The Leninist Extinction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kingston, C. (2005) "Social Capital and Corruption: Theory, and Evidence from India." Working Paper. Amherst College. July 18, 2005. Accessed at <http://www.amherst.edu/~cgkingston/India.pdf>

Levi, M. and Stoker, L. (2000) "Political Trust and Trustworthiness." *Annual Review of Political Science* 3: 475-507.

Linz, J.J. and Stepan, A. (1996) *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Mishler, W. and Rose, R. (1997) "Trust, Distrust, and Skepticism: Problem Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-communist Societies." *Journal of Politics* 59(2): 418–51.

Mishler, W. and Rose, R. (2001) "Trust and Honesty in Post-socialist Societies." *International Review for Social Science* 54: 415–44.

Morris, S.D. (1991) *Corruption and Politics in Contemporary Mexico*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Newton, K. (2001) "Trust, Social Capital, Civil Society, and Democracy." *International Political Science Review* (2001), Vol 22, No. 2, 201–214.

Putnam, R.D. (1993) *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

Rose, R., Mishler, W. and Haerpfer, C. (1998) *Democracy and Its Alternatives: Understanding Post-Communist Societies*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Rothstein, B. (2000) "Trust, Social Dilemmas and Collective Memories: On the Rise and Decline of the Swedish Model." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 12: 477-501.

Scholz, J.T. (1998) "Enforcement Policy and Corporate Misconduct: The Changing Perspective of Deterrence Theory." *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 60:253-268.

Scholz, J.T. and Lubell, M. (1998a) "Adaptive Political Attitudes: Duty, Trust, and Fear as Monitors of Tax Policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (3): 903-920.

_____ (1998b) "Trust and Taxpaying: Testing the Heuristic Approach to Collective Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (2): 398-417.

- Seligson, M.A. (2002) "The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries." *Journal of Politics* 64(2): 408-433.
- Smolar, A. (1996) "From Opposition to Atomization." *Journal of Democracy* 7(1): 24-38.
- Štulhofer, A. (2004) "Perception of Corruption and the Erosion of Social Capital in Croatia 1995-2003" *Politička misao* Vol. XLI, (2004), No. 5, pp. 74-86.
- Tavits, M. (2005) "Causes of Corruption: Testing Competing Hypotheses." Working Paper, Nuffield College, University of Oxford. Accessed at <http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/Politics/papers/2005/Tavits%20Nuffield%20WP.pdf>
- Tismaneanu, V. (1995) *Political Culture and Civil Society in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, vol. 7 of *International Politics of Eurasia*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Transparency International Romania (2012) *National Integrity System Assessment*. Accessed at http://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/nisarticle/romania_2012
- Tyler, T.R. (1990) *Why People Obey Law?* New Haven: Yale University Press.
- _____ (1998) "Trust and Democratic Government." In *Trust and Governance*. Eds. Valerie Braithwaite and Margaret Levi. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Uslaner, E.M. (2004) "Trust and Corruption." In *The New Institutional Economics of Corruption*. Eds. Johann Graf Lambsdorff, Markus Taube, and Matthias Schramm. London: Routledge.
- Uslaner, E.M. and Badescu, G. (2003) "Legacies and Conflicts: The Challenges to Social Capital in the Democratic Transition." In *Social Capital and the Democratic Transition*. Eds. Gabriel Badescu and Eric M. Uslaner, London: Routledge, pp. 219-232.
- _____ (2004a) "Making the Grade in Transition: Equality, Transparency, Trust, and Fairness." Memo. University of Maryland-College Park. Accessed at <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/uslaner/uslanerbadescumakingthegrade.pdf>
- _____ (2004b) "Honesty, Trust, and Legal Norms in the Transition to Democracy: Why Bo Rothstein Is Better Able to Explain Sweden than Romania." In *Creating Social Trust: Problems of Post-Socialist Transition*. Eds. Janos Kornai, Susan Rose-Ackerman, and Bo Rothstein. New York: Palgrave, pp. 31-52.
- Warren, M.E. (2006) "Political Corruption as Duplicitous Exclusion." *Political Science & Politics*, volume 39, No. 4.
- Wheaton, B. and Kavan, Z. (1992) *The Velvet Revolution: Czechoslovakia, 1988-1991*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Woolcock, M. and Narayan, D. (2000) "Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research and Policy." *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol 15, No 2, p. 225–249.

Zakaria, P. (2012) "Is Corruption an Enemy of Civil Society? The Case of Central and Eastern Europe." *International Political Science Review* 34(4) 351-371

NOTES

¹ Transparency International Scores 2007. Accessed at http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2007

² MEMO/14/67: 9.

³ Transparency International Scores 2013. Accessed at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Page 10.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Negative externalities are the negative by-product of the processes taking place in society, negative in the sense that they add cost to these processes at the expense of everyone else.

⁸ Special Eurobarometer 397, 2014. Accessed at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_397_en.pdf

⁹ 54% Romanians think corruption is widespread, and 39% think it is fairly widespread. It is important to mention that perceptions of widespread corruption are lower in Romania (93%) than Greece (99%), Italy (97%), Lithuania, Spain and the Czech Republic (all 95%), and Croatia (94%).