Institutional Trust in Contemporary Moscow

ANDREW STICKLEY, SARA FERLANDER, TANYA JUKKALA, PER CARLSON, OLGA KISLITSYNA & ILKKA HENRIK MÄKINEN

Abstract

Levels of institutional trust in Russia are amongst the lowest in the world. As yet, however, little research has focused on this phenomenon at the sub-national level. The current study examines trust in social and political institutions among citizens in Moscow in 2004. Results showed that levels of institutional trust are extremely low and that there were only three institutions (the church, president and hospitals) that were more trusted than distrusted. Moreover, although the effects of some demographic and other independent variables on trust stretched across institutions, several variables had a unique impact in terms of trust in the president.

Trust forms the basis of most social relations. Social stability, social cohesion and collaboration are promoted by trust (Misztal 1996) and a society lacking in trust does not function well (Luhmann 1979; Simmel 1950). Trust has been related to a number of societal phenomena such as democracy (Putnam 1993; Rose 1994; Sztompka 1999), civil society (Rose 1994), economic performance (Fukuyama 1995), crime (Uslaner 2002) and public health (Kawachi et al. 1997; Putnam 2000). Gambetta (1988, pp. ix–x) has stated that trust encompasses the most diverse situations ranging ‘from marriage to economic development, from buying a second-hand car to international affairs, from the minutiae of social life to the continuation of life on earth’. Moreover, the significance of trust grows with the increasing complexity of society (Luhmann 1979). As contemporary society is full of uncertainty and risk, trust is becoming increasingly important as a mechanism for dealing with the surrounding world (Sztompka 1999). In short, ‘trust matters’ (Uslaner 2002, p. 190).

The role of trust would seem to be especially important in the context of post-socialist societies such as Russia. The collapse of the Soviet regime has been accompanied by a rapid and simultaneous transformation of the state, economy and political sphere (Rose et al. 2006, p. 4) that has occurred against a background of the

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ongoing effects of a Soviet legacy that can be seen in relation to people’s attitudes to social and political institutions in the contemporary period. The dominance of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union and its intrusion into every aspect of societal life, not only prevented the emergence of a vibrant civil society with institutions independent of the state, but it also fostered a high degree of institutional distrust amongst the population (Evans 2006a, p. 48). Authors differ on whether this distrust resulted from institutional performance failure (Khodyakov 2007, p. 127), the repression of people’s real views (Rose 1994, p. 19) or whether distrust may have been inculcated more generally in socialist society as a mechanism of social control (Macek & Marková 2004, p. 176).

Regardless of its particular precursors, there is general agreement that a lack of institutional trust is now pervasive in many post-socialist societies (Mishler & Rose 2001, p. 41). The extent of this distrust can be gauged by using data from the third wave of the World Values Survey (1999–2000) to compare, for example, levels of institutional trust in Russia and the European Union. This reveals that the levels of trust in Russia were higher for only two of the nine institutions for which data were available—the church and the armed forces. Moreover, for several institutions—the police, the justice system and parliament—levels of distrust were markedly higher in Russia (World Values Survey 2009). Such low levels of trust may have important consequences. Indeed, it has even been suggested that addressing ‘the issue of trust is . . . a key matter in determining what sort of society will emerge from postcommunism’ (Lovell 2001, p. 37).

The importance of institutional trust in post-Soviet society can be gauged by the increasing number of studies of this phenomenon that have been undertaken in recent years, including several comparative studies (Mishler & Rose 1997, 2001; Miller et al. 2004; Lühiste 2006; Sapsford & Abbott 2006) as well as single country studies (Sztompka 1996, 1999, pp. 151–90). In particular, much attention has been focused on the exceptionally low level of institutional trust among citizens in contemporary Russia and the reasons underlying it (White & McAllister 2004; Shlapentokh 2006). As mentioned above, there are certainly grounds to believe that the reasons for this lie at least partly in the past. Thus, although it has been argued that during its best periods Soviet society was founded on both interpersonal and institutional trust (Kapustkina 2004, p. 185), the low levels of institutional trust currently recorded nevertheless have seemingly deep historical roots (Minina 2004, p. 158). These were further strengthened in the Soviet period as the party-state’s refusal to allow the emergence of a separate civil sphere, wedded to citizens’ expected (but involuntary) participation in social and political activities (Shlapentokh 1989), produced what Rose (1995) has described as an ‘hour-glass society’ in Russia. In this environment, individuals insulated themselves from the actions of the state and its distrusted social and political institutions by relying on their immediate and trusted networks for everyday survival in conditions of scarcity and shortage (Khodyakov 2007, p. 119).

2Although the World Values Survey examines ‘confidence’ rather than ‘trust’ in institutions, these survey data have been used previously in a discussion of trust in post-communist countries (see Mishler & Rose 1997, pp. 428–29).
It would be wrong however, to regard the lack of contemporary institutional trust as being solely conditioned by the past. A recent study of several post-communist countries that included Russia has shown that evaluations of institutional (i.e. economic and political) performance in the contemporary period are also an important determinant of institutional trust (Mishler & Rose 2001, p. 155). In particular, factors such as institutional inefficiency, corruption and a sense of alienation on the part of the population have all contributed to low levels of institutional trust in Russia (Shlapentokh 2006). Moreover, this lack of trust may have had direct behavioural consequences. Many Russians are unwilling to participate in either social or political organisations (Sundstrom & Henry 2006, p. 306), which is reflected in the weakness of civil society in post-communist Russia. Indeed, using survey data, Howard (2003, pp. 72–73) has shown how the comparatively low number of 0.65 organisational memberships per person in Russia in the period 1995–1997 fell still further by 1999 to 0.45. This bodes ill for the future as it suggests that the movement away from political diversity and the increasing concentration of power that has occurred in Russia in recent years, which has been partly attributed to the weakness of civil society, may continue unchecked (Evans 2006b, p. 153).

The study: aims and methods

The aims of the study

The current study examines institutional trust and the factors associated with it in Moscow in 2004. Although there is some debate around the notion of whether it is actually possible to trust an institution (Hardin 1999, 2006, pp. 62–70), this study follows Warren’s (1999a, p. 349) reasoning that institutional trust stems from the normative expectations of an institution that are shared by individuals and which are ultimately backed by sanctions that help ensure that institutional behaviour accords with expectations. As yet, few quantitative studies have examined trust at a sub-national level in Russia. This may be an important omission as a recent survey has suggested that levels of institutional trust may differ in the Russian ‘capitals’, Moscow and St Petersburg, from elsewhere in Russia (Levada Centre 2007a).

Indeed, having been at the forefront of change in the post-Soviet period, Moscow offers an ideal location to examine the impact of transition on citizens’ institutional trust. It is the richest city in the Russian Federation, with a smaller percentage of its population living in poverty compared with Russia as a whole (Nemtsov 2003, p. 299). Nonetheless, many of its citizens are still experiencing severe financial difficulties (Secor & O’Loughlin 2005, p. 73), and it also has the highest level of inequality throughout Russia as measured by the Gini coefficient.3 Moreover, the city has not been immune from the other social problems of transition, which have been exacerbated by a rapid growth in its population of over 17% between 1990 and

3The Gini coefficient measures inequality on a scale running from 0 (most equal) to 1 (most unequal). The extent of the inequality in Moscow can be gauged from the fact that in 2004, while the Gini coefficient for the Russian Federation was 0.407, in Moscow it was 0.578. The next most unequal region was Tymen oblast’ with a Gini of 0.450 (Rosstat 2006, pp. 160–61).
2004 (Rosstat 2005, p. 82). For example, against this backdrop the number of registered crimes (per 100,000 of the population) rose by almost three times during the same time period (Rosstat 2006, p. 322).

Sample data

The data in the present study come from the ‘Moscow Health Survey 2004’. There has been a sharp deterioration in public health in Russia during the post-Soviet period as witnessed by an alarming rise in mortality and a sharp fall in life expectancy (Brainerd & Cutler 2005). In relation to this, the main aim of this survey was to gather data on the health and health-related behaviour of Muscovites. In addition, information was also collected on other topics such as the respondents’ standard of living, as well as about the levels of social capital present in Moscow, as seen in membership of voluntary associations, informal networks and the levels of support and trust. The survey was carried out in Moscow in Spring 2004 by Swedish and Russian researchers during the period both before and after the presidential election of that year. A sex and age-stratified random sampling technique was used across the 125 municipal districts of greater Moscow. As 98% of the flats in Moscow have a telephone, the Moscow city telephone network was used as a database for the random sampling of addresses. The sample primary response rate was 47%. As our initial aim had been to sample 1,200 residents, in conjunction with Russian survey traditions, non-responses were replaced with new subjects randomly drawn from a ‘reserve list’ comprising the same target population that had been created before the survey began. The final sample consisted of 1,190 people aged 18 and above, whose social and demographic characteristics (including sex, age and marital status) were broadly representative of greater Moscow’s population, save for a certain over-representation of highly educated respondents. Information was obtained from respondents using a structured questionnaire that was administered during face-to-face interviews. To account for the over-representation of the highly educated, in the analysis that follows both unadjusted and education-adjusted percentages in the levels of institutional trust were calculated and then compared with each other. As the chi-square statistic showed that there were no significant differences between the two sets of results, the unadjusted figures are thus presented (see Table 1).

Variables examined in the study

To gauge the degree of institutional trust in Moscow, respondents were presented with a list of institutions and asked to state how great their trust (doverie) was in each of them. These institutions ranged from the political (the president, government, parliament, political parties and local authorities) through to the social (the church and hospitals). In order to determine which factors are associated with institutional trust in contemporary Moscow a number of demographic, socioeconomic and other independent variables are examined in the current study. The first variable relates to

4For a more detailed description of the survey and its sampling methodology and procedure see Vägerö et al. (2008).
the generational age of the respondents, as even in the Soviet period there was a
difference in political behaviour between people belonging to different generations
(Bahry 1987). To examine the effects of this we have used the generational categories
recently proposed by Mishler and Rose (2007, p. 825) in their analysis of political
attitudes in Russia. The age variable is therefore divided into three generational
categories: those born before 1945 (who Mishler and Rose term the ‘survivor
generation’); those born between 1945 and 1965 (the ‘normal generation’); and those
born after 1965 (the ‘transitional generation’). Other socio-demographic variables
examined include the respondent’s sex, marital status (married or co-habiting and
non-married), ethnicity (Russian or non-Russian) and level of education. In regard to
religion, although some earlier studies have examined the impact of church attendance
on regime support in the post-communist period (Mishler & Rose 2002; Munro 2002),
our measure of religion touched rather on the respondents’ perception of their own
level of personal religiosity. Hence, interviewees had to choose one of five response
alternatives that ran from the option of describing oneself as religious through to
describing oneself as a convinced atheist. Interviewees were subsequently categorised
as being either religious or non-religious.

Respondents were also asked questions concerning their household’s current and
prospective economic situation. The first measure enquired about the degree of
economic hardship experienced by the household in the previous year. Four scenarios
were presented where the household may have had to go without some basic goods or
services. A hardship index ranging from 0 to 4 was then created by summing the
respondent’s scores across the questions. This was preferred to a more conventional
monetary measure of household wealth, as in post-Soviet Russia the non-payment,
late payment, or payment ‘in-kind’ of wages has led many Russians to rely on what
Rose et al. (2006, p. 82) have described as a ‘portfolio of economies’ where official and

\[
\text{TABLE 1}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Distrust</th>
<th>Mean† (s.d.)*</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>3.41 (1.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>3.33 (1.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>3.06 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>2.41 (1.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>2.29 (1.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>2.27 (1.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>2.33 (1.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television, radio</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>2.38 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>2.38 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>1.86 (1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>1.99 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>1.93 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>1.89 (1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>1.95 (1.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: †The mean score was calculated by using the scale scores running from 1 (no trust) to 5 (greatest trust).
The higher the mean score the greater the degree of trust placed in an institution.
*Standard deviation.
unofficial income is combined with socially exchanged services. A second (egocentric) economic evaluation was elicited by asking the respondents to describe what they thought the economic situation of their family would be in five years’ time, with responses being dichotomised into the ‘economically optimistic’ and ‘economically non-optimistic’.

The relation between what are usually regarded as measures of social capital (Putnam 1993) and institutional trust has been extensively investigated both around the world more generally (Brehm & Rahn 1997; Kim 2005; Newton & Norris 2000) and within the former communist countries (Mishler & Rose 2001, 2005; Lühiste 2006). In the current study, two of the most commonly used measures of social capital were examined. The first question related to (generalised) interpersonal trust. In response to the statement ‘In general, do you think that one can trust most people or do you think that one cannot be careful enough when dealing with other people?’, the interviewees were asked to show their degree of agreement by marking a scale which ran from 1 (one cannot be careful enough) through to 5 (most people can be trusted). Respondents were then categorised as being either trustful or non-trustful. The second question asked the interviewees about whether they belonged to any organisations or associations. Two final measures concerned perceptions of institutional unresponsiveness and life satisfaction. Thus, the interviewees were asked about how they evaluated the worth of writing to officials and whether they were satisfied with their lives at the current moment in time.

**Analytical procedure**

The study has four stages. First, descriptive statistics are presented showing the levels of institutional trust amongst the interviewees. To determine the level of institutional trust, respondents were presented with a list of 14 institutions and a five-point scale running from 1 (have no trust at all) to 5 (have greatest trust) and then asked to indicate how great their personal trust was for each of the listed institutions. An alternative answer, ‘difficult to say’, was also presented. To determine the degree of institutional trust a mid-point score (3) is used to indicate neutrality, while higher scores (4–5) indicate trust and lower scores (1–2) signify distrust.

Second, following on from an earlier analysis of institutional trust in various post-socialist societies (Mishler & Rose 1997), a factor analysis is performed to determine the attitudinal dimensions underpinning institutional trust in Moscow. Third, we go on to examine which individual-level demographic, socioeconomic and other variables are important in explaining institutional trust by using the factor scores obtained from the analysis as dependent variables and performing an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis. 5

5All interviewees who had answered ‘difficult to say’ on any of the questions relating to trust for any of the designated institutions were subsequently excluded from this analysis. However, an additional examination of these omitted respondents showed that they did not differ significantly in terms of their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (age, educational level and level of economic hardship experienced) or in terms of their levels of interpersonal trust from those included in the analysis.
Before undertaking this analysis, however, the institution of the presidency was removed and the factor scores recalculated. This is done in order to allow a separate analysis to be undertaken of those variables that are associated with trust in the president. The theoretical justification for doing this comes from the fact that it has been previously argued that Russians personalise the institution of the presidency (Levada 2004, pp. 158–60) and that because of this, during the period of Putin’s presidency, ‘institutional trust in the presidency appears to be confounded with personal trust in President Putin’ (Mishler & Rose 2005, p. 1056). This analysis is performed by using a logistic regression model where the results are presented in the form of odds ratios (ORs) with 95% confidence intervals (CIs). This strategy allows us to determine whether there are differences in the variables associated with trust in the president and other political institutions.

The level of trust in social and political institutions

As can be seen from the results presented in Table 1, there are only two institutions which are trusted by more than 50% of the respondents (the church and the president), and only three where there is more trust than distrust and where the mean score on the five-point scale is greater than 3 (the church, the president and hospitals). The remaining institutions are all highly distrusted. Ten of the institutions have 50% or more of the respondents distrusting them, while political parties, the courts, police, trade unions and parliament elicit extremely high levels of distrust with very few people trusting them.

This scenario of overwhelming distrust is confirmed when the data are presented visually (Figure 1). Moreover, the polarised views of Moscow’s residents become more apparent, as there is not one institution where neutrality predominates—institutions are either trusted or rather, predominantly, distrusted. These findings tally with other recent research on Russia’s social and political institutions which has shown that the church and the president are the most trusted institutions (Levada 2004, pp. 160–61) and that political parties, parliament, the police, courts and trade unions are all highly distrusted (Levada 2004, pp. 160–61; Mishler & Rose 2005, pp. 1055–56; White & McAllister 2004, pp. 83–84). However, there are some interesting differences. Levels of support for the army seem to be lower in Moscow than across Russia more generally—which agrees with a recent finding by the Levada Centre (Levada Centre 2007a). Moreover, the media also seem to elicit a lower level of trust in Moscow than elsewhere in Russia. This might possibly be related to a greater degree of media sophistication amongst Moscow’s residents in terms of such things as having more access to, and making greater use of, different media sources, including those from abroad.

More generally, our results seem to coincide with the findings from national surveys in Russia carried out in earlier periods, as well as with later research. For example, a study which examined levels of trust in Russia’s institutions between January 1995 and September 2005, found consistently low levels of trust in legal institutions, political parties, the government and banks, while the army and church were much more trusted (Levashov 2005, pp. 31–32). Interestingly, the level of trust in the army remained well above that recorded in the current study at every point in time—falling (just) under 30% on only two occasions. One reason for the low level of trust we
recorded for the army among our respondents might be connected with the over-representation of the highly educated with their possibly more ‘liberal’ views. Alternatively, less trust might emanate from greater access to information about negative practices in the army. In a survey carried out in 2004 only 20% of Russians said that they would want a family member or close relative to serve in the army—principally because of the practice of ‘hazing’ (dedovshchina) and other forms of violence within the ranks, as well as fears about combat injuries (Levada Centre 2007b).

According to more recent data from 2007, levels of institutional trust continue to be extremely low in Russia, with one survey showing that only four institutions were more trusted than distrusted—the president, church, army and media (Levada Centre 2007a). Indeed, these findings have also been replicated when Russians have been asked whether they ‘approve’ or ‘disapprove’ of the activities of institutions. For example, approval ratings have been used to argue that there are only two institutional ‘allies’ of the Russian people—the army and media (VTsIOM 2007). However, survey data also show that, at least for the president, levels of trust can change. In January 1995 only 9% of Russian respondents expressed trust in President Yel’tsin. However, by June 2004 this figure was 53% for Putin (Levashov 2005, p. 32) which accords closely with the figure we obtained from our respondents in Moscow.

The dimensions of institutional trust

A factor analysis produced four factors with eigenvalues equal to or greater than 0.89. Similar to Mishler and Rose’s (2001, p. 43) earlier study, one factor predominated.
This provides support for their earlier finding that trust (and distrust) in social and political institutions tends to be generalised across those institutions in post-communist countries. To maximise the clarity of the factor structure, an orthogonal (varimax with Kaiser normalisation) rotation was subsequently performed. This revealed the four factors presented in Table 2.

Using 0.50 as the cut-off point of the factor loadings, trust scores towards five institutions (the president, government, parliament, political parties and local authorities) loaded on the first factor. All these institutions are clearly connected with the political sphere and we have designated this factor as pertaining to ‘political’ institutions. The second factor is more difficult to interpret as it encompasses trust towards institutions with seemingly different functions (the police, courts, army and trade unions). However, one element that is common to all four institutions is their supposedly protective role with regard to both external threats (to the country) and internal threats (to citizens or workers). Hence, these institutions have been designated as ‘protective’ institutions. Three institutions loaded on the third factor—banks, the press, and radio and television. Thus, this factor represents trust towards ‘media and monetary’ institutions. The final factor encompasses the church and hospitals and has been designated as representing trust towards institutions of ‘spiritual and physical well-being’. Together these four types of institution, trust in which is independent from that towards any other, form a ‘space’ of institutional trust in which citizens’ opinions are grouped.

**Trust in social and political institutions**

The demographic, socioeconomic and other correlates of trust in Russian social and political institutions are presented in Table 3. Although the explanatory power of the model was somewhat limited, as signified by the comparatively low $R^2$ values, some

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Protective</th>
<th>Media and monetary</th>
<th>Well-being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local authorities</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td><strong>0.70</strong></td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td><strong>0.77</strong></td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td><strong>0.70</strong></td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade unions</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td><strong>0.58</strong></td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television, radio</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td><strong>0.82</strong></td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td><strong>0.86</strong></td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banks</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td><strong>0.61</strong></td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td><strong>0.84</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td><strong>0.50</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eigenvalue</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of variance</td>
<td>44.10</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>7.55</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Scores with a loading of 0.50 or greater on each factor are presented in bold text.*
### Table 3
Socioeconomic, Demographic and Other Correlates of Institutional Trust in Moscow in 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Political (b, standard error)</th>
<th>Protective (b, standard error)</th>
<th>Media and monetary (b, standard error)</th>
<th>Well-being (b, standard error)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born 1945–65</td>
<td>−0.03 (0.11)</td>
<td>−0.07 (0.11)</td>
<td>−0.25* (0.11)</td>
<td>0.29** (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born pre-1945</td>
<td>0.01 (0.14)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.14)</td>
<td>0.08 (0.14)</td>
<td>0.45*** (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>−0.27** (0.10)</td>
<td>0.07 (0.10)</td>
<td>−0.03 (0.10)</td>
<td>−0.09 (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>−0.11** (0.04)</td>
<td>0.06 (0.04)</td>
<td>−0.01 (0.04)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (non-Russian)</td>
<td>−0.01 (0.19)</td>
<td>0.17 (0.19)</td>
<td>0.12 (0.19)</td>
<td>0.07 (0.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>−0.22* (0.11)</td>
<td>−0.22* (0.11)</td>
<td>0.05 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.74*** (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (co-habiting)</td>
<td>−0.13 (0.10)</td>
<td>−0.04 (0.10)</td>
<td>−0.19* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.22* (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational membership</td>
<td>0.06 (0.10)</td>
<td>0.14 (0.10)</td>
<td>0.04 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.04 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal trust</td>
<td>0.33** (0.12)</td>
<td>0.15 (0.12)</td>
<td>0.13 (0.13)</td>
<td>0.03 (0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic hardship</td>
<td>0.03 (0.04)</td>
<td>−0.08* (0.04)</td>
<td>−0.01 (0.04)</td>
<td>−0.01 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic optimism</td>
<td>0.03 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.08 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.16 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.18 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional unresponsiveness</td>
<td>−0.26* (0.11)</td>
<td>−0.44*** (0.11)</td>
<td>−0.22* (0.11)</td>
<td>−0.02 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>0.15 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.00 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.21 (0.11)</td>
<td>0.07 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *$p \leq 0.05$; **$p \leq 0.01$; ***$p \leq 0.001$. 

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significant relations were nevertheless found between these variables and trust across different institutions. One variable that seems to be important across nearly all the institutions is perceived institutional unresponsiveness. Those who are seemingly dissatisfied with the performance of officials exhibit less trust in all kinds of institutions—in most cases, to a significant degree. This finding accords with earlier studies that have highlighted the important effects of institutional performance on trust in political institutions in the former communist countries (Lühiiste 2006; Mishler & Rose 2001).

Similarly, the significant effects of one’s self-identification as being religious stretched across three of the institutions, having a negative impact on trust in political and protective institutions and a predictably positive effect on trust in institutions of well-being. As noted above, earlier studies of institutional trust in post-communist societies have used the variable ‘church attendance’ as either a social background variable, as a proxy for political socialisation or alternatively, as a measure of social capital while examining regime support. Our variable may have captured a different effect as in Russia many people who state that they are religious (Orthodox) do not actually attend church (Rose et al. 2006, pp. 113–14; White & McAllister 2000, p. 365). In particular, this may have possibly related to the personality characteristics of those who identify themselves as being religious as there is agreement that believers tend to be more conservative in their views (White & McAllister 2000, p. 368). This conservatism manifests itself in attitudes that are less supportive of a multiparty system and market economy (White & McAllister 2000, p. 368) and with the ascribing of a higher significance to moral and ethical values (Matsuk 2003, p. 162). In relation to the current study, it is therefore not surprising that against a backdrop of a general distrust of election procedures in Russia (Shlapentokh 2006, p. 157), those who regard themselves as religious should be less likely to trust institutions such as political parties that are often transitory and unaccountable (Rose et al. 2006, p. 138), or government authorities perceived as being uninterested in the problems of the everyday citizen (Carnaghan 2007, p. 64). Moreover, the fact that the supposedly ‘protective’ institutions are also significantly less likely to be trusted highlights the popular disdain towards these institutions. The courts and police employ working practices that are often regarded as arbitrary and lawless (Shlapentokh 2006, p. 160) and which sometimes, in the case of the police, are even perceived as a threat by citizens (Andreev 2005, p. 112) with seemingly good reason (Gerber & Mendelson 2008), while trade unions are conceived by most Russians as being ‘sham organizations created solely to make the leadership rich and the average person poor’ (Davis 2006, p. 207).

It is also noticeable that the social capital variables have different effects on institutional trust. Although organisational membership was unimportant, generalised interpersonal trust was associated with a significantly higher level of trust in political institutions. Although this latter relation has been found in other post-communist countries (Lühiiste 2006), our finding differs from the results of several earlier studies in Russia which have examined interpersonal trust and its relation to support for democratic institutions (Gibson 2001) and institutional trust (Mishler & Rose 2005). Moreover, it also contradicts the finding of an earlier study in Moscow which showed that while there was no relation between trust in others and trust in parliament, there
was a relation between distrusting others and distrusting parliament (Secor & O’Loughlin 2005, pp. 73–74). These contradictory results concerning the impact of interpersonal trust on political trust mirror those from other countries around the world (Brehm & Rahn 1997; Kim 2005). This has led to the suggestion that this relation may be different at the individual and aggregate (societal) levels (Newton 2001, pp. 211–12). As regards the present study, it is possible that our finding concerning this relation may be something that is unique to Moscow, as the same effect is not seen in smaller Russian towns (White 2006, p. 298). Nonetheless, it provides some support for Putnam’s (1993) social capital thesis which argues that social trust (trust in others) and political trust are likely to be linked. Several other variables also had significant effects. The negative impact of education on trust in political institutions has been noted in previous studies of the former communist countries (Johnson 2005; Lühiste 2006), although an earlier study of Moscow residents linked higher levels of education with more trust in parliament (Secor & O’Loughlin 2005, pp. 78–79). This being said, even during the Soviet period a higher level of education was linked with lower support for regime norms in the Soviet Union (Silver 1987, p. 126). A possible explanation for why lower levels of institutional trust are recorded amongst the more highly educated has been recently advanced by Lühiste (2006, p. 493) who has examined political trust in the Baltic states. She has argued that education endows the individual with a greater ability to decipher political information and that this results in a more critical stance towards governmental performance.

It is also noticeable that men are less trusting of all institutions and significantly so, in the case of political institutions. Following on from the above, this might emanate from a greater degree of institutional (political) knowledge as it has been claimed that the contemporary political sphere in Russia is constructed as a gendered space with institutional politics being considered very much masculine territory (Salmenniemi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
<th>(95% Confidence interval)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born 1945–65</td>
<td>1.49*</td>
<td>(1.07–2.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born pre-1945</td>
<td>2.49***</td>
<td>(1.72–3.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.76*</td>
<td>(0.58–0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level</td>
<td>0.77***</td>
<td>(0.70–0.86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (non-Russian)</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>(0.74–1.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>1.47*</td>
<td>(1.09–1.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married (co-habitating)</td>
<td>0.75*</td>
<td>(0.57–0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational membership</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>(0.61–1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal trust</td>
<td>1.94***</td>
<td>(1.39–2.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic hardship</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>(0.88–1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic optimism</td>
<td>1.40*</td>
<td>(1.02–1.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional unresponsiveness</td>
<td>0.72*</td>
<td>(0.53–0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life satisfaction</td>
<td>1.57**</td>
<td>(1.16–2.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>−2 Log Likelihood</td>
<td>1317.360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke $R^2$</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.005; ***p ≤ 0.001.
2005). It could also be linked to men having more direct (negative) experiences with these institutions. Above it was shown that perceived institutional unresponsiveness was an important factor in low levels of trust and a recent study has provided further support for this notion, as it was demonstrated that in the former communist countries unfair treatment at the hands of officials is strongly correlated with distrusting officials (Miller et al. 2004, pp. 144–45).

The effects of generational belonging on institutional trust were variable. Being older was associated with having greater trust in the institutions of ‘well-being’. This finding may be related to greater use being made of these institutions with increasing age. However, there was a noticeable divergence in the results of the ‘survivor’ and ‘normal’ generations in relation to the other institutional groups. This would seem to provide further evidence for the notion that generational differences might have potentially important effects upon trust in different institutions and should therefore be taken into account when examining this phenomenon.

**Trust in the president**

As can be seen from Table 4, a number of variables seem to be important in terms of explaining trust in the president. Older respondents were far more likely to trust the president—with those born before 1945 being nearly 2.5 times more likely of doing so. This finding contradicts recent research which has suggested that levels of presidential trust are higher among the young (Levada 2004, pp. 160–61). Further, men were significantly less inclined to trust the president, as were those with a higher level of education, findings which mirror our earlier results for political institutions more generally. This negative effect of education also accords with other recent research for the whole of Russia (Levada Centre 2007a). Similarly, those who were married were significantly less likely to exhibit trust, while being religious was associated with a significantly higher level of presidential trust. Tying these elements together, it would seem that those who exhibit trust in the president in Moscow are on average likely to be, amongst other things, older, female, less educated, single and religious. This finding seems to partly accord with an earlier study of President Putin’s electoral support which found that people who voted for him were more likely to be located at the ‘Old Soviet’ end of a ‘Liberal–Old Soviet’ continuum, being older, having lower incomes and a lower level of education (Rose et al. 2000, pp. 300–01).

As regards the remaining variables, there was an interesting split between both the social capital and economic measures. Organisational membership had no impact on trust in the president. In contrast, as was observed with other political institutions, the interpersonal trust variable was positive and highly significant, with those who exhibited generalised trust being far more likely to trust President Putin. Similarly, although experiencing economic hardship was unimportant, those who were

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6Miller et al. (2004, p. 150), have however, argued that the negative effects of bad experiences with officials are limited in their scope in that ‘unfair treatment by street-level bureaucrats erodes trust in the bureaucracy but not in central government’.

7Similarly, it has been shown that Putin voters (in 2000) and his supporters a year later were most likely to identify the Soviet system as the best political system (White & McAllister 2003).
economically optimistic about the future were much more likely to exhibit trust in the president. This latter finding concurs with the results of an earlier study that examined support for President Yel’tsin (Hesli & Bashkirova 2001) but it contradicts the idea previously advanced that in Russia, presidential support flows from economic evaluations that are based on concrete (past) experiences as opposed to prospective economic outcomes (Mishler & Willerton 2003, pp. 134–35). Moreover, it is noteworthy that this effect is specific to the president and does not impact significantly on trust in other institutions. Similarly, those who were currently satisfied with life were over 50% more likely to trust the president but not other institutions. Finally, perceived institutional unresponsiveness was associated with a person being significantly less likely to trust the president. This finding taken in conjunction with our earlier result for other institutions suggests that perceptions of institutional performance are one of the most powerful determinants of institutional trust in post-Soviet Russia.

In our survey people who are content with their current situation or who expect it to improve in economic terms seem to make the president the sole beneficiary of their satisfaction in terms of increased levels of trust. This accords with recent research that has highlighted the importance of economic prosperity to the ‘Putin phenomenon’ (White & McAllister 2008). It is also possible, however, that Putin’s support and the trust some people placed in him stemmed from their expectations concerning his future behaviour (Colton 2007, pp. 44–49; Kapustkina 2004, p. 172; Levada 2004, p. 164) and the benefits that may occur in society more generally as a result of it. Indeed, this may help explain the noteworthy difference on the religion variable in the current study between support for the president (positive) and other political institutions (negative). As was stated above, those who are religious tend to have more conservative attitudes. It has been argued that this manifests itself in a favourable predisposition towards order above democracy, as well as ‘positive [attitudes] towards Nicholas II, but also to Stalin’ (White & McAllister 2000, p. 368). In such circumstances, as many Russians consider Putin as being a tsar merely by another name (Carnaghan 2007, p. 62), it is not surprising that those who consider themselves as religious may have placed their trust in this modern day ‘good tsar’ (White 2006, p. 298) whose main task is seen as restoring order over chaos (Carnaghan 2007, pp. 63–64). However, as our results demonstrate, this division between the presidency and other institutions may not always necessarily be absolute in the minds of the citizenry. Those who were generally dissatisfied with the responsiveness of officials were also significantly less likely to trust President Putin.

**Conclusion**

Using data drawn from the Moscow Health Survey 2004 this study has shown that firstly, the level of institutional trust is extremely low in Moscow and that only three institutions (the church, president and hospitals) have more people trusting them than distrusting them. Second, institutional performance as measured in the current study by perceived institutional unresponsiveness seems to have the strongest and most

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8It should be noted that in their study Mishler and Willerton advanced this idea in relation to prospective sociotropic (i.e. macroeconomic) evaluations.
consistent (negative) impact on trust across different institutions. Third, the differing effects of the religion variable and the unique effects of the economic optimism and life satisfaction variables in terms of trust in the president lends support to those commentators who have previously argued that trust in the institution of the presidency was not separable from trust in Putin personally.

More generally, in the light of several recent and important studies by Rose and his colleagues which have suggested that a lack of institutional trust may have only limited, if any effects at all, on regime support in Russia (Mishler & Rose 2005, p. 1069; Rose et al. 2006, pp. 142–43; Rose 2007, pp. 107–11) and despite the fact that President Putin envisioned a ‘quasi-civil society’ (Evans 2006b, p. 152), Russian civil society may nevertheless be taking its own distinctive, Russian form (Sundstrom & Henry 2006, p. 319), it seems sensible to ask whether a lack of institutional trust in Russia really should be a cause for concern. This question becomes even more pertinent when it is acknowledged that several recent studies have argued that levels of interpersonal trust are not particularly low in Russia (Rose-Ackerman 2001, p. 426), and that Russians have extensive social networks that may have enabled them ‘to accomplish many of their goals without resorting to formal organizations’ (Gibson 2001, p. 66).

In response to the above question, the answer must be yes, that a lack of institutional trust in Russia does matter and not simply for its potential effects on such things as citizens’ involvement in politics (Mishler & Rose 2005). It matters because despite the claim that Russians are not socially atomised (Gibson 2001, p. 60), other evidence suggests that under the strains of transition mutual support networks have been breaking down (Twigg & Schecter 2003a, p. 4) and that this has been accompanied by increasing poverty and ill health (Hosking 2004, p. 60). Indeed, between 1990 and 2005 the total Russian population fell in number by over four million people (Rosstat 2005, p. 82). This was partly due to a sharp increase in mortality, which included a growing number of deaths among unidentified working-age men who were homeless and socially marginalised (Andreev et al. 2008). This highlights how, in conditions of social and economic crisis, it is essential that people in need of help should be able to turn to both the social and political institutions within a society. Moreover, as Shlapentokh (2005, 2006) has perceptively noted, against a background where institutional distrust is pervasive and pessimism amongst ordinary citizens concerning the future is rife, the best that Russia can possibly expect in the immediate future will be a continuation of the chronic problems that have plagued it throughout the post-Soviet years.


