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### **Eastern Europeans and their lower levels of Bridging Social Capital: Between individual and societal determinants**

The literature about social capital exponentially increased during the past 10-15 years (Halpert, 2005). The bulk of it focuses on the levels of the social capital, or following Putnam's legacy, on its effects for various macro-level outcomes, particularly development and producing the public good. Very few studies discuss and empirically test assumption related to the determinants of social capital. Even fewer consider simultaneously the impact of individual and contextual factors.

On the other hand, many studies (Bădescu/Uslander, 2002; Halman/Luikx, 2005; van der Meer, 2008; Raiser et al., 2001; Voicu, 2005; etc.) provide evidences that, in Europe, the former communist societies display lower levels of bridging social capital (BrSC). This paper considers the levels of BrSC displayed by the individuals, and tries to find out if the difference between Eastern and Western Europeans lies rather at individual or at societal level. More, I explore the impact of the totalitarian past, rejecting the hypothesis that it directly influences the development of the BrSC. Using the ESS01 data set I show up that the individual traits are the ones that define the development of the "cultures of social capital" (Wallace, 2007). However, one may also argue that the structure of the respective individual traits is partially due to the impact of the former totalitarian rule.

In the beginning of the paper I briefly review the existing perspectives on social capital. I focus on the bridging-bonding distinction. Conceiving social capital as a latent trait with various manifestations, I choose to measure its bridging form through four manifestations: meeting friends, membership in associations, generalized trust and confidence in institutions. In the second section of the paper, I build explanatory models for the BrSC, focusing on the above-mentioned four dependent variables. The main research question becomes the core hypothesis of the paper: individual traits are determining most of the variation of the BrSC that one can access. Several additional hypotheses complete the explanatory models. The paper focuses mainly on the relation between the importance of the individual and of the contextual determinants, with a special interest for the effects of the former communist experience of the Eastern societies. Therefore I do not detail very much the mechanisms which underlie the additional hypothesis that describe the individual level determinants. However they are briefly sketched in the second section of the paper. For testing the hypothesis, I use data from the European Social Survey, as described in the third section of the paper. The forth section is devoted to presenting the findings. Four sets of multilevel regressions are employed to predict the four types of BrSC manifestations. In the final section I consider the

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implications that the findings may have on medium and long run for the differences between Eastern European societies and the Western ones.

There are two main contributions that I bring to the existing literature. First is to consider the use of the communist past in multilevel models as predictor for BrSC. The existing literature considers the impact of communist, respectively other totalitarian rule on the development of social capital, but adequate empirical tests are lacking<sup>2</sup>. Second, I empirically document the impact of the aggregate levels of social capital to the individual stocks of BrSC, which, as far as I know, is not yet addressed by the existing studies.

### **Defining social capital**

Despite the novelty of the debates around social capital, substantially, the concept is not so new, being rather a contemporary refinement of the old ideas of such as *Gemeinschaft* or civic culture (Paxton, 2007: 47). Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988, 1990) and Putnam (1993) provided the basic framework which led to defining social capital as an attribute of social interaction, which finds its manifestations through various patterns of cooperation. This allowed a very wide range of issues to be covered by social capital. Moreover, Coleman opted for defining the concept through its functions, which left room for using social capital in many different and very broad understandings. The numerous assigned effects transformed the term, at the end of the 90s, in a sort of universal antidote (Portes, 1998) which might be used in no matter context in order to generate social and community development.

Most of the current literature follows Putnam's operational distinctions between trust, relations and norms of cooperation, considering them as manifestations of social capital. The terms itself is conceived as a multifaceted phenomenon (Halman/Luijkx, 2006; Pichler/Wallace, 2007; Voicu, 2005b), sometimes being explicitly measured as a latent construct (Anheier et al., 2004; Paxton, 1999; van Oorschot et al., 2006). The most frequently used dimensions include trusting people, confidence in institutions, involvement in voluntary associations, various other forms of social contacts, expressions of norms of cooperation.

Another important distinction is the one between bonding and bridging social capital (Narayan, 1999; Putnam, 2001). No matter which social relation one considers, it can actually be described as encapsulating bonds between the involved actors. However, some connections target very similar people, having the same main affiliation groups, while others underlie existing relations which bridge various social status groups. The first type of relation and the associated norms and trust are said to contribute to keeping small groups/communities together, and form the bonding social capital. The second type of social capital, labeled as bridging social capital (BrSC) is said to be more productive for social development and to make societies work.

The distinction between bridging and bonding social capital is a rather loose one. It is quite difficult to decide if a specific connection rather is of bridging or of bonding type. For instance, the frequent relations within the extended families are more likely to be manifestations of bonding

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<sup>2</sup> The exception is Paxton (2007) analyses of the determinants of generalized trust, as well as the recent contributions of Meulemann (2008b) and van der Meer et al (2008) in analyzing involvement in associations, respectively the frequency of meeting friends. However, the later two studies test for the totalitarian experience, not differentiating between communism and other forms of ex-totalitarian past.

social capital. But kinship does not necessarily mean similarity. Larger families may include very different people, belonging to groups which may be traditionally opposed within the society, and otherwise never interacting. In this case, the kinship relation if converted in contacts between the respective relatives, trusting each other and developing norms of cooperation, actually plays the role of a bridging connection. However, the usual situation is the one where family is rather the place where bonding social capital manifests.

Assigning connections and trusting in neighbors, co-workers, and friends as manifestations of BrSC is even more difficult. Many times these categories involve individuals which are very similar to the referred one. Other times, particularly when discussing about friends, such as, for instance, old schoolmates, their presence is rather an indicator of bridging social capital. A more precise approach would probably be to assess the content of the respective relation, as the Resource Generator method does, measuring which type of resources can be mobilized by the relations in whom someone is involved (van der Gaag/Snijders, 2005). From this point of view, as data for Romania shows (Voicu, 2005a), friends are more useful than the current colleagues and co-workers, which are more resourceful than neighbors.

The most used measure for social capital is the involvement in voluntary associations, following Putnam's option based on the observations of Alexis de Toqueville regarding the 19<sup>th</sup> century USA.

Trusting people is also a loose concept. However, putting trust in people, at a general level, and trusting specific individuals or status-groups creates a useful distinction (Uslander, 2002; Paxton, 2007). The first form, generalized trust involves a diffuse confidence in all the people. This constitutes by itself and contributes to further creating bridges between different groups within society. As opposed to this social or generalized trust, the more particularistic forms of trust, directed for instance towards neighbors or family, are more likely to express bonding social capital.

Confidence in institutions creates a basis for cooperation and producing public goods, and involves at its turn a diffuse trust in society.

The focus of this paper is on BrSC, the interest being related to its production, and more specifically to the contribution given by societal determinants as compared to individual ones. In particular I am concerned with the impact of totalitarian and ex-communist experience. In the following sections, I limit the analysis of manifestations of BrSC to the above-mentioned four types of expression: contacts with friends, involvement in voluntary associations, generalized trust, respectively confidence in institutions. Studying their variation across Europe serves as empirical basis for this paper, and provides validation for the hypotheses that I state in the next section.

### **The impact of the communist regimes on the individual levels of social capital**

According to Putnam (1993), social capital is a cultural phenomenon, and it is located rather at societal level. It depends on the history of the collectivity and its accumulation requires long periods of time. Building on this argument, many scholars (Åberg/Sanberg, 2003; Pichler/Wallace, 2007; Raiser et al., 2001; Rose, 2000; etc.) note that communism destroyed social capital. Voluntary associations were discouraged to exist in their original form, the state trying to control them. At least in its final forms, communism produced societies of "double morale" (Verdery,

1996). People were formally agreeing with the principles officially stated by the rulers through the propaganda, but, in their daily life, actually followed different logics, no matter that they were regular citizens or members of the nomenklatura. Lacking the market, the functioning of the society was partially due to an economy of “blat” (Ledeneva, 1998), where the informal ties replaced the market mechanisms. Both the double morale and the blats contributed to subverting trust and bridging relations, and to strengthening bonding connections. When practicing double morale, with anyone around as a potential delator, the social relations tend to limit to the close circle of trust, which become smaller and smaller and tend to resume to the kinship if not even to family.

The resulting society is close in its functional aspects to the Southern Italian regions as described by Putnam (1993), being sometimes dominated by a sort of “amoral familism” (Banfield, 1958). This impedes communication and developing relations and trust outside the main membership groups, which, at their turn, are often defined by ethnic, religious, kinship and very narrow social status attributes.

Similar processes occurred in other totalitarian regimes, as Torcal/Montero (1999) show out for the case of Spain during Franco’s regime. Some scholars (Fidrmuc/Gërkhani, 2008; Paldam/Svendson, 2001) advance the hypothesis that the totalitarian regimes, particularly the communist ones, through their institutional arrangements are the main responsible for the relative underdevelopment of social capital in Eastern Europe as compared to the Western European societies. The later ones had several decades more the opportunity to develop a functioning civic society, to better know people and to be more familiar to the existing institutional system. This would finally lead to a higher generalized trust, participation in voluntary associations, propensity for meeting friends, and confidence in the existing institutions. On the opposite, the totalitarian rule blocks such evolutions.

Most of the debate on these topics conceptualizes social capital as an attribute of the collectivities, particularly the society. As Coleman (1990) coined out, social capital is an attribute of social interaction. However, its embedment in social relations does not necessary implies that it belong solely to collectivities. Individuals also “have” and can make use of their stocks of social capital (Halman/Luijckx, 2006). They can convert it in human capital (Coleman, 1988), they can use it to control and access others’ actions and resources (Portes, 1998; Grootaert, 1998). The levels of BrSC of the individuals are likely to be determined, controlling for the influence of the collectivity, by various individual traits, from personality and biological determinants to resources, opportunities, values (Halpern, 2005).

This paper asks the question of what is more important for determining the differences of social capital among Europeans. The existing literature infrequently provides simultaneous empirical testing of both the societal and the individual factors that might determine individual manifestations of social capital. Various forms of regression analysis were already used for predicting generalized trust and/or institutional trust (Halman/Luijckx, 2006; Paxton, 2007; Neller, 2008), membership in associations (Schofer/Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001; Fidrmuc/Gërkhani, 2008; Meulemann, 2008b), volunteering for formal associations (Curtis et al., 2001), involvement in informal networks (Fidrmuc/Gërkhani, 2008; van der Meer et al, 2008), social capital as a whole (van Oorschot et al., 2006), norms that may promote social capital (Curtis et al., 2001; Halman/Luijckx, 2006). They converge in presenting evidences that when considering explaining the

production of social capital at individual level, the individual factors are more important than the societal ones.

When considering the impact of communism or of the totalitarian past, no matter of its form and ideology, one may also note that it is also reflected in attributes that the individuals have today, such as levels of education, religious practice and belief, incomes. Therefore it might have a more important indirect contribution, mediated through these factors, than a direct impact for determining the current levels of bridging social capital.

The hypothesis that I test in this paper is that (H1) *considering the population of European countries, the direct influence of the ex-totalitarian past on the current levels of BrSC noticeable at individual level is rather low.* More, (H2) *what matters are the individual factors.*

Second, as I already mentioned, when discussing about the impact of the ex-communist past on the social capital formation, the existing literature focus on the aggregate stocks of BrSC that exist at societal level. With other words, the ex-communist, respectively, the totalitarian past may affect the creation of consistent cultures of social capital. This leads to the third core hypothesis, stating that (H3) *the (communist) totalitarian past is contributing more to explaining the cross-country variation of the social capital than to the variation across individuals.*

### **Producing the bridging social capital: other country-level factors**

As Meulemann (2008a) observes, there are two basic mechanisms through which the country context determines the individual levels of social capital. The first is the *social order*, which, through the existing social norms, directly guides the individual actions. The second is represented by the *opportunity structure* of a country, which “provides options and sets restrictions” for individuals as well as their own resources do.

The four core hypothesis of this paper derives from Meulemann’s argument about the effect of the existing social order. If “cultures of social capital” do exist, and social capital is produced at country level too, then the norm of developing BrSC within a certain society should reflect in the individual stocks of social capital. This leads to (H4) *Individual BrSC levels depend on the aggregate stocks of BrSC that exist at societal level.* With other words, it is likely to have a higher propensity towards BrSC in those societies where more individuals have BrSC. Producing and having BrSC become a societal norm. Individuals have to conform to the norm, in order to avoid exclusion. The weaker the norm is, the less it impacts on the individual levels of bridging social capital. On the other hand, individuals need a certain time to adopt new norms and values, created rather in critical communities, and spread in the entire collectivity (Berger, 1995). The impact of the existing societal stocks of BrSC on the individual level social capital should be a slightly delayed one: today’s norms impact tomorrow’s behaviors.

Besides the four core hypotheses, there are several *additional hypotheses* given by considering various control variables for explaining the individual levels of BrSC. They refer control variable which act as determinants of the social capital as identified by the existing literature. Most of the additional hypotheses state a clear determinism, while few others offer alternative views which are empirically tested within the paper.

Religious tradition is also part of the same social order determinants as the norms

represented by the social interaction practices. However, religious tradition is not important per se. It rather acts as a proxy for a general cultural orientation. Orthodox and Catholic tradition are more hierarchic in their usual organization of the society and social relation. Protestantism is more egalitarian and put more emphasis on individual responsibility and involvement in creating the public good. It should involve more participation in collective-oriented associations (Curtis, Grabb, Baer, 1991; Meulemann, 2008b). Hierarchical, stratified cultures are less likely to lead to high levels of social trust (Putnam, 1993), but rather to norms in which reducing uncertainty is done by strong obedience to the existing hierarchies. Previous studies (e.g. Neller, 2008) provide empirical evidences that Protestant tradition leads to higher levels of social trust.

I also consider several country-level determinants which are part of the opportunity structure provided by each society. Some of these factors were already suggested, particularly ethnic and religious homogeneity. Two contradicting assumptions may be formulated here (Halpern, 2005:260-261). At one hand, more diverse societies are likely to display lower social trust and involvement in bridging connections, due to the potential for existence of prejudice, discrimination, and conflict. The greater the difference between the mixed groups, the lower would be the chances for developing bridging connections and trust (Delhey and Newton, 2005; Alessina/Ferrara, 2002). On the other hand, mixed societies offer more opportunities for interacting and bonding outside the ascribed group, for understanding how other people behave and think. They implies more possibilities to increase the knowledge and its predictive power, enabling the use of trust in the Luhmann (1979) sense, that is as a mechanism to reduce the complexity of the world, limiting uncertainty and increasing the predictability of the others.

Social capital may be seen as both a prerequisite and an outcome of development (Putnam, 1993). This holds true for both economic and cultural development (Curtis et al., 2001). As Inglehart (1997) shows, specific manifestations of social capital, such as trust, may be explained through a more general orientation towards rational and self-expressing values. Development, as well as a higher societal orientation towards modern and postmodern values, implies more differentiation, both social and professional. These creates the space where more associations and of more diverse types may blossom, providing more opportunities for involvement (Curtis et al. 2008, Meulemann, 2008b). It also stimulates social participation (van der Meer, 2008), supplying more and more diverse places where socialization may occur.

### **Producing the bridging social capital: individual level variables**

Four types of individual-level explanatory variables may be identified. They related to (a) existing resources, constraints and opportunities; (b) defining the situation according to the individual perceptions and representations; (c) values and ideologies; (d) other manifestation of BrSC.

The impact of the **existing resources** was frequently discussed in the literature. Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988, 1990) relate social capital to the individuals' investments in social networks. Therefore, BrSC depend on the characteristics of the individuals, particularly to the available resources, and existing constraints. These may facilitate/limit one to involve in relations or

to develop trust. Time, income, education, age, gender, marital status, employment status, being part of the global world, ethnical and religious belonging may constitute such resources, opportunities and constraints.

Education is crucial for providing more abilities to share and, consequently, more opportunities for involving in bridging social networks. More, education also means knowledge, a better understanding of world and its functioning. This implies that the other people are more predictable, which, following Luhmann's (1990) argumentation, determines higher levels of social trust. Also, education has an indirect effect due to the fact that it leads to more open-minded attitudes (Freitag, 2003; Halman/Luijckx, 2006; Kumlin/Rothstein, 2005).

Financial resources are important for involvement in voluntary associations, higher income being positively related both to membership and to volunteering in such organizations where people share their resources and use them in the sake of other or for the common benefit (Smith, 1994; Wilson, 2000; Voicu/Voicu, 2003). People from better off households may also have a certain material security that would lead to higher generalized trust, confidence in institutions and more frequent contacts with friends (Alessina/La Ferrara, 2002; Kumlin/Rothstein, 2005; van Oorschot et al., 2006).

Women are less likely to be present in public space, and they may display lower propensity to participate in formal associations, and to have confidence in formalized institutions, as previous studies shows off (Schofer, Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001; Fidrmuc, Gërkhani, 2008). There are evidences showing that women might display higher levels of social trust (Freitag, 2003), while other analysis (Paxton, 2007) found out no significant relation between gender and generalized trust.

Age impacts differently on various BrSC manifestations. Aging means better knowing people, contributing to increasing trust as some analyses confirm (Kumlin/Rothstein, 2005; van Oorschot et al., 2006; Paxton, 2007). However, other scholars (Alessina/La Ferrara, 2002) provide evidences on an inverse U shaped relation: when controlling for various other predictors, trust increases with age up to a certain point, then it starts to decrease. Also, older people may display higher levels of confidence in institutions (van Oorschot et al., 2006). Participation to voluntary associations is said to increase with age (van Oorschot et al., 2006; Schofer/Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001; Curtis et al., 2001). However, in most European countries, younger people tend to have a higher probability to volunteer (Voicu/Voicu, 2003). Fidrmuc/Gërkhani (2008) shows that the actual relation is a quadratic one: younger and older people are less likely to participate or volunteer in formal associations. Probably this is due to the less frequent opportunities to involve in such association, and, through a certain preference to spend time with friends in less formal set ups (as also documented by Fidrmuc/Gërkhani, 2008).

One may not participate in associations if time constraints are too strong (Putnam, 2001). For instance, spending a lot of time at work, doing housework, or taking care of young children and/or elderly<sup>3</sup>, would reduce the opportunities to do any other thing. Specific types of leisure, such as the "electronic" one (Putnam, 2001), involving frequently watching TV, may further reduce the opportunities to spend time together with other people, and, overall, may erode social capital

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately ESS01 does not provide indicators to measure the time spent for housework or for caring for children or elderly.

(Freitag, 2003). On the other hand, television may act as vehicle to increase knowledge about the institutional system, and, indirectly, may contribute to increase confidence in institutions.

Internet use may constitute an indicator for being part of the global world, and accessing information which may be useful to interact with other people, enlarging the potential bridges (Halman/Luijkx, 2006), increasing the capacity to share knowledge, and to trust people and institutions due to the higher level of understanding of their functioning. On the other hand, Internet use may fall under Putnam's label of electronic leisure, decreasing the propensity to interact with other people. However, Internet is nowadays more about communicating, through various means, from e-mail and chat to the network games, all of this involving spending time with friends, even if virtually.

When considering the pressure of time and money as an obstacle for the development of social capital, Putnam (2001) questioned the possibility that being employed and having many working hours would not have a potential to decrease BrSC. However, as empirical evidences confirms (Schofer/Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001; van Oorschot et al, 2006; Paxton, 2007; Fidrmuc/Gërkhani, 2008), the status of being employed implies a more active behavior, also including a higher propensity towards participation in civic organizations and trusting people. Even the number of working hours may have a positive impact, since full time employees are more likely to participate in associations than part-timers (Curtis et al., 2001). However, confidence in institutions may be lower for employed people, which also do not differ from other employment status, except for the students, when consider the frequency of meeting friends (van Oorschot et al., 2006).

The structure of the family offers both resources and constraints which may determine the levels of BrSC (Halpern, 2005). Presence of children may diminish the time one may spend for meeting friends or participating in associations, but it also may offer opportunities to meet other parents in various formal and informal set ups, and can contribute to increasing social capital. Small children have a higher chance to bring time constraints, while older ones increase the potential opportunities to set bridging connections. Also, presence of children implies more frequent contacts to institutional system, particularly to health care and education. As Sztompka (1999) notes, familiarity with the institutions increases the probability that individuals develop higher levels of confidence in institutions. The relation is empirically documented for the contacts with universalistic institutions by Kumlin/Rothstein (2005). The existing literature does not provide many empirical evidences about the relation between BrSC and the presence of children, except for the positive effect on generalized trust (Alessina/La Ferrara, 2002; Paxton, 2007).

Living with a partner also determines more possibilities to extend the social contacts, by accessing the social network of the spouse. However, existing empirical studies provide contradictory documentation for the relation: positive impact of being married on participation in associations is reported by Schofer/Fourcade-Gourinchas (2001), Curtis et. al (2001) not significant effects, while Fidrmuc/Gërkhani (2008) report positive effects for Western Europe and negative ones for the Western countries. Alessina/La Ferrara (2002) reports that being married has no effect on generalized trust, and that divorced people tend to trust people less.

Being divorced is also related to the past life experiences. The migration experience adds. New immigrants, lacking connections and knowledge about their new society, are likely to have



lower probability to involve in associations and to trust others (Alessina/La Ferrara, 2002).

Urban settlements are likely to decrease social capital, through their more formal daily interactions, particularly in Eastern Europe (Fidrmuc/Gërkhani, 2008).

As Thomas pointed out long ago, people's representations about the context in which they live often determines their behaviors. **Defining the situation** in a negative way involves certain mistrust towards the (unfair) society and the people around, which is likely to decrease the social trust, the propensity to cooperate, and the confidence in the institutions which lead or allowed such a negative situation to occur. If one sees oneself as being enclosed in a very small circle of connections, this also involves much more cautions for the respective person when developing relations, or entrusting individuals or groups of people. The same may be valid for defining the social environment as unsafe. Defining as belonging to an ethnical or religious minority, to representing oneself as not having close friends (Paxton, 2007), or defining the neighborhood as being unsafe, plenty of crimes (Alessina/La Ferrara, 2002) are therefore expected to lead to lower levels of social capital.

Life satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with society as a whole, acts in the opposite direction, increasing the propensity to develop BrSC (Freitag, 2003; Halman/Luijckx, 2006; Kumlin/Rothstein, 2005). People defining their situation as a good one, are more likely to share their time with others, to see the optimistic side of a relation, to look for the good parts of the other and to have a higher confidence that the surrounding people and environment may contribute to positive outcomes.

**Values and ideologies** have their importance in determining the individual levels of BrSC. Moral values and civic mindness are expected to lead to prosocial behavior, cooperative action, and trusting people and institutions (Raiser et al, 2001; Halman/Luijckx, 2006).

Individualism contributes to decreasing participation in voluntary associations due to the less interest paid to cooperation with others, and more emphasis on egoistic, hedonistic goals (Halman/Luijckx, 2006). Trust is sometimes seen as an expression of self-expressing and rational orientations of value (Inglehart, 1997). Since individualism is related to such values, it may contribute to increasing social trust. Also, individualist values suppose the existence of a certain way to reduce uncertainty, to control and predict the processes and phenomena from the social environment (Voicu, 2005a), social trust and confidence in institutions being part of the mechanisms which result from sharing individualistic values.

Leftist or rightist political values are also important. 'Right' is usually associated with more emphases on individual action, independent individuals, class society. 'Left' relates to a higher extent to equality and collective action. Rightist people are less likely to participate in associations, to trust others and institutions (Kumlin/Rothstein, 2005; Halman/Luijckx, 2006; Oorshot et al., 2006).

Religiosity is positively associated to most BrSC manifestations (Wuthnow, 2002; Halman/Luijckx, 2006; Oorshot et al., 2006). Religious belief enhances prosocial behavior and social trust. Religious practice is likely to increase the opportunities to associate and for social participation, due to more intense contact with the fellow believers.

All forms of bridging social capital may be strengthened in the presence of **other BrSC manifestations**. The whole social capital debate underlines the positive effect that general trust has

on relations, the contribution of social interaction to trust and trustworthiness; Membership in associations is also a way to meet new people, to make friends that one may meet outside this formal set up, and also act as a tool for social learning which may lead to generalized trust (Bădescu, 2002: 125); meeting people increases the access to information, improving knowledge about the society and its institutions, creating premises for a certain confidence in institutions; etc.

### **Strategy for analysis**

There are a few large scale data sets which include good measures for BrSC. Particularly the 1999-2001 wave of the values surveys<sup>4</sup> and the first wave (2002-2003) of the European Social Survey<sup>5</sup> are useful for the goals of this paper. These two datasets provide information at individual level which can be employed for measuring all the four manifestations of BrSC for which I have formulated hypotheses.

The third core hypothesis states an expected influence of the existing stocks of social capital at societal level on the BrSC present at individual level. I have also argued that the respective effect should become visible with a short lag, due to the time needed by any norm to spread within the collectivity. EVS/WVS 1999-2001 provides such aggregate level data which may be used in predicting the individual levels available from the first wave of ESS (ESS01).

ESS01 has the limitation that only 24 countries were included in the sample. For two of them (Norway and Switzerland), EVS/WVS do not provide data in the 1999-2001 wave. I have also left Israel out of the analysis, due to its differences from the other countries in the data set: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden. I have distinctly treated West and East Germany, therefore the total number of societies considered in the analysis is 20. For some of these remaining countries, the data set lacks information for the considered variables, as I describe in the following.

Multilevel regression is the option for analyzing the data. The cases are naturally clustered in societies, and the research question is related to the effect of country variables, when controlling for individual characteristics.

For each of the four dependent variables (meeting friends, membership in associations, generalized trust, and confidence in the institutions) I have set up similar regression models. First I have considered only the impact of the level 1 variables. Then I have checked up for the supplementary contribution given by the country level predictors. A chi-square test confirmed if the growth of the proportional reduction of error for predicting the individual levels of BrSC is or not significant.

The employed models are specified in the annex. Models labeled as “02” include all level 1 variables except for “moral sense” and “individualism”, which can not be measured in Luxembourg and Italy. Models 04 further exclude income – not recorded in France, Ireland and Hungary,

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<sup>4</sup> European Values Survey (EVS) and World Values Survey (WVS) are well known comparative research. They are fully described on the internet pages of the groups which coordinate the studies: [www.europeanvalues.nl](http://www.europeanvalues.nl), respectively [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org).

<sup>5</sup> ESS is a cross-european survey, which schedule every 2 years data collection on various topics. More details are available on the Internet: [www.europeansocialsurvey.org](http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org).

satisfaction with society – not available for Ireland, and Internet use – missing in the case of France and Germany. Model 09 (not shown in the Annex) is derived from model 04, but includes controls for moral sense, respectively, individualism.

Among the models which include only individual level variables, model 04 is the one which rely on all 20 available societies<sup>6</sup>. This is the basic startup level 1 model, from which models 80, 81, and 82 from the Annex were derived by adding level 2 controls. Similar models (not shown) were derived from models 02 (including all level-1 predictors, but not moral sense and individualism) and 09 (including all predictors, but relative income and overall satisfaction with society), in order to see which might be the changes given by controlling for the level 1 variables which have incomplete data for certain countries.

Due to the small number of cases on the second level (country), I had to set up several models for each of the four manifestations of BrSC. In each of them I have controlled for another set of country level predictors: Models 80 include controls for aggregate stocks of BrSC. Models 81 control for the length of democratic experience. Models 82 consider the impact of ethnical and religious structure. In all these models there are controls for the communist past and for the economic output (GDP/capita).

A further problem was the lack of data about membership in association in the Czech sample. Therefore, supplementary models were run excluding the respective variable, but including the cases from the Czech Republic, otherwise excluded from the analyses.

In the end, in order to ensure the reliability of the results, all the above-described models were compared. I have checked if there are important differences given by restraining the set of predictors due to including all the countries in the analysis, or the number of countries due to including all the predictors.

For all models, listwise deletion of missing values was employed.

For about 7% of the respondents to the ESS01 survey, the experimenting of certain socialization under totalitarian or democratic rule might be miss-attributed, since they are immigrants in the country where they were surveyed. Since there was no information that would allow attributing them their real experience, they were simply treated as members of the current host society. The procedure is imprecise. For instance if a 50 year old Spanish or Polish immigrant to Belgium was present in the sample, the respective person was treated as experiencing no socialization under totalitarian rule. Similarly, if the sample included a young Austrian immigrant to Prague, the respective young person is considered as part of the Czech society. The country-level attributes refer to common features for the respective society, and should have a similar effect no matter of the *personal* experience. However, this holds true when controlling for the experience of the respective person. More, if a person lives in a closed collectivity of migrants, their past experience should be controlled, particularly when is different from the one of the host society. The overall sample contains a small proportion of immigrants (7%), distributed in all the included countries. The errors given by the lack of possibility to control for their experience are probably

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<sup>6</sup> Within the literature dealing with multilevel modeling, there is not much of a consensus regarding the minimal number of cases need on the second level. For instance, Heck/Thomas (2000) indicate a minimum of 20 groups, Hox (2002) as well as Kreft and de Leeuw (1998) specify a minimum about 30. Maas/Hox (2004: 135) suggest a rule of thumb, according to which ten groups can lead to good estimates of the fixed effects, while for the contextual effects 30 groups are needed.

small, but one should keep the above cautions in mind when interpreting the findings.

### **Measurement: the dependent variables**

*Generalized (Social) Trust.* ESS01 includes three items which measures generalized trust. Each of them opposed a pair of affirmations, and the respondents were asked to specify their position on 11 points scales, coded from 0 to 10, with 0 corresponding to the first affirmation and 10 to the second one in the respective pair: “People can be trusted” vs. “you can’t be too careful in dealing with people”; “most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance” vs. “they try to be fair”; “most of the time people try to be helpful” vs. “they are mostly looking out for themselves”. Factor analysis confirms that the three items belong to the same dimension: all communalities are over 0.4; the explained variance, with Principal Axis Factoring used as extraction method, is 48%; the scree plot visually confirms the presence of only one factor. A factor score was computed and used as explained variable in the next sections.

*Confidence in institutions.* There are several institutions for which ESS01 measures trust on the same 0-10 scale. Confidence in some of them, like the Parliament, is exposed to the election cycles, and performance of the government. For other three, namely the legal system, the police, and the UN, factor analysis was used and a factor score of confidence in institutions was computed (explained variance is 47%, all communalities are over 0.2, the scree plot visually confirms the presence of only one factor).

**Table 1. The average levels of the dependent variables (ESS01)**

	Generalized trust	Confidence in institutions	Meets friends at least weekly	Types of associations where one is member
	Factor score	Factor score	%	mean (no. of types)
Austria	0,176	0,244	66%	1,62
Belgium	0,053	-0,247	68%	1,47
Denmark	1,025	0,924	79%	2,14
Finland	0,779	0,818	69%	1,25
France	-0,012	-0,143	68%	0,86
Germany (West)	0,128	0,357	62%	1,45
Greece	-0,760	0,263	43%	0,32
Ireland	0,456	0,109	75%	1,34
Italy	-0,257	0,244	62%	0,55
Luxembourg	0,119	0,312	66%	1,78
Netherlands	0,440	0,040	71%	1,90
Norway	0,870	0,575	80%	2,14
Portugal	-0,276	-0,414	75%	0,37
Spain	-0,032	-0,343	71%	0,58
Sweden	0,713	0,461	69%	2,26
Switzerland	0,442	0,392	71%	na
United Kingdom	0,215	-0,008	72%	1,38
Czech Republic	-0,215	-0,497	47%	na
Germany (East - former DDR)	0,082	-0,054	53%	1,10
Hungary	-0,319	-0,147	37%	0,34
Poland	-0,535	-0,507	45%	0,24
Slovenia	-0,311	-0,442	53%	0,77

*Meeting friends.* An ordinal variable is used in ESS01 for assessing the frequency of socially meeting friends, relatives, or work colleagues. The possible response choices were: never; less than once a month; once a month; several times a month; once a week; several times a week; everyday. I have recoded the answers into a dummy variable, such as value 1 mean that the respondent has social contacts at least once a week. This is the dependent variable that I use for meeting friends. Since it combines contacts with friends, co-workers and relatives, the measure is not as accurate as required by the conceptual considerations. However, at aggregate level it orders the considered countries close to the hierarchy given by the EVS1999-2001 measure which considers only the frequency of meeting friends.

*Membership in associations.* For each individual, the ESS01 questionnaire asks if he/she is member in different twelve types of associations: sports clubs or clubs for out-door activities; organizations for cultural or hobby activities; trade unions; business, professional, or farmers' organizations; consumer or automobile organizations; organizations for humanitarian aid, human rights, minorities, or immigrants; organizations for environmental protection, peace or animal rights?; religious or church organizations; political parties; organizations for science, education, or teachers and parents; social clubs, clubs for the young, the retired/elderly, women, or friendly societies; any other voluntary organizations. For each respondent I have counted the number of types of associations for which he/she declared membership. Since the religious associations may become manifestations of bonding social capital, particularly in small communities, they were excluded from the index.

### **Measurement: the individual level independent variable**

#### *Resources, opportunities, constraints*

*Age* is measured as years turned on in the year of survey. *Gender* is included in the regression models as dummy variable (women=1). Two other dummy variables stand for *children under 18* (Number of children in the family) and *Children under 6 in the household* (Number of children younger or 6 year old, in the household).

*Education* is measured as completed years of full-time education.

*Relative income* represents the class of household's total income: 12 pre-coded classes for each country.

*Employment status* includes two categories recoded as dummy variables: *Employed* - the respondent is employed (includes self-employment) and *Student* - the respondent is student, while the control group, left out of the equations consists of retired, not in the labor force, or unemployed.

*Working hours* indicates the answers to the question: "Regardless of your basic or contracted hours, how many hours do/did you normally work a week (in your main job), including any paid or unpaid overtime."

*Living with partner* indicates if the respondent is living with a partner, no matter if this is considered cohabitation or marriage.

*Immigrant* indicate that the respondent is not born in the country where interviewed (dummy

variable). *Non-citizen* indicates that the respondent is not citizen of the country where interviewed. (dummy variable).

*Urban* takes the value 1 only if the respondent declares to live in an urban area, not in “a county village” or in “a farm or home in the countryside”.

*Internet use* is measured through the answers to the question „How often do you use the internet, the World Wide Web or e-mail – whether at home or at work – for your personal use?”, with the possible choices ranging from “No access” to “Every day” (8-point scale).

*TV use* is registered as number of hours spent watching TV in a regular weekday, coded as from “No time at all” to “More than 3 hours”, on a 8-point scale

### *Values, ideologies*

*Individualism* is measured similarly to Halman/Luikx (2006), “as emphasizing personal freedom and autonomy”. I have used a set of items where each respondent was asked to assess how close he/she is to some people described through their main characteristics. Answers are coded on 6-point scale, ordered from “Very much like me” to “Not like me at all”. Three items are related to individualism: “Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to him. He likes to do things in his own original way”; ‘It is important to him to make his own decisions about what he does. He likes to be free and not depend on others’; “Being very successful is important to him. He hopes people will recognize his achievements’. Factor analysis was applied (explained variance is 30%, all communalities are over 0.2, the scree plot visually confirms the presence of only one factor), and a factor score was computed.

A similar approach to individualism is used to compute a *moral sense* indicator. The indicator is a shorter version of the one used by Halman/Luikx (2006), the measurement model including the following five items from the above-mentioned module: „It is important to him to listen to people who are different from him. Even when he disagrees with them, he still wants to understand them.”; „It is important to him to be humble and modest. He tries not to draw attention to himself.”; „It's very important to him to help the people around him. He wants to care for their well-being.”; „It is important to him always to behave properly. He wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.”; „It is important to him to be loyal to his friends. He wants to devote himself to people close to him.”

*Left-right* denotes the self-positioning of the respondent on a 11 points left-right scale.

*Religious belief* is measured as the of answers at a 11-points scale question “Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?”, ranged from “Not at all religious” to “Very religious”.

*Church attendance* indicates the answers to the question: “Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?”, with the possible choices: Every day; More than once a week; Once a week; At least once a month; Only on special holy days; Less often; Never.

*Religious denomination* is included in the models through dummy variables which were computed for being Catholic, respectively Protestant. The remaining control group is formed by atheist, Orthodox, Muslim etc.

### *Definition of the situation*

*Minoritar* indicates the respondent self-defines as belonging to minority ethnic group in the respective country (dummy variable).

*Lonely* means that the respondent self-defines as having anyone with whom he/she can discuss intimate and personal matters (dummy variable).

*Unsafe* denotes positive answers to the question: “Have you or a member of your household been the victim of a burglary or assault in the last 5 years” (dummy variable)

*Life satisfaction* is measured as a 11-point scale of life satisfaction.

*Satisfied with society* is computed as factor score using three 11-points satisfaction scales with: the present state of the economy in the respective country; the way in which the [country] government it is doing its job; the way in which democracy works in the respective country. The extracted factor explains 54% of the total variance, all communalities are over 0.4, the scree plot visually confirms the presence of only one factor.

### **Measurement: the country level independent variables**

At the country level, the *Past societal experience* is measured through the belonging to the former communist block (dummy variable), and through the number of years of democracy in the respective country starting with 1950, respectively, as alternate measure, starting with 1920. The two variables of the exposure to democratic rule are computed based on various sources describing the history of the respective countries.

The *Cultures of bridging social capital* are measured using data from EVS 1999-2001. Frequency of meeting friends is the percentage of people who declared that they meet friends at least weekly. Generalized trust is the percent of respondents who declared that “Most people can be trusted”, as opposed to “you can't be too careful in dealing with people”. Membership in associations is the average number of types of association to which one belongs to in the respective society. Confidence in institutions is the country average for a factor score computed at individual level, which explains some 45% of the variation of the confidence in press, labor unions, police, civil service, and the UN. Finally, importance of friends is computed for each individual comparing the answers to two 4-point scales tapping for the importance of friends, respectively for the importance of family. The aggregate independent variable that I use here denotes the percentage for each society of those people who give friends an importance at least equal to the one given to the family.

Other controls include *religious*, respectively *ethnic concentration*, computed as Herfindahl-Hirschman concentration indexes<sup>7</sup>. They are computed considering, for each country, the weight of the three most important religious denominations, respectively ethnic groups. Input data for computing the concentration indexes come from various official statistics and estimates of

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<sup>7</sup> The history of the index is described in Hirschman (1954). Its computational principle is to sum up the squared percentages of the constituent parts of an aggregate, which naturally vary from 0 to 1. The index also varies from 0 to 1. A value of 1 indicates total concentration. In the case of ethnical concentration, for instance, higher values of the index indicate a larger majority, and less minority groups.

NGOs and survey data, always checked to produce a maximal convergence for the estimate considered for each society.

As in other studies (Meulemann, 2008b; Neller, 2008; van Oorschot et al, 2006; etc.), for the country development I employ the level of the economic output. *GDP/capita* is measured in PPP and stands for the overall development of the country. I do not provide controls for other indicators of development since most of these are highly correlated with the economic output.

## **Results**

Four sets of multilevel regressions were run, using HLM 6. For all four sets of models, the variance among countries turns out to be much smaller than the variance among individuals within countries. The ICC takes the value of 14% when predicting the frequency of meeting friends, 9,4% for social trust, 15% for membership in association, respectively 10% for confidence in institutions. Even if the ICC values indicate that only a small amount of variation is among countries, the chi-square tests of the estimated between-country variance component proved to be highly significant for all the four BrSC manifestations. Multilevel analysis is therefore appropriate for explaining their variation.

Table 2 summarizes the main findings related to the significant effects of the independent variables. He Appendix displays more information, showing out the coefficients for selected models. Table 3 offers details about the explained variance.

The former communist societies tend to display lower levels of BrSC (see Table 1). If arranging the societies existing in the ESS01 data set in the descending order given by each of the four considered dependent variables, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovenia and Eastern Germany are always among the bottom ranked. The regression analysis confirms the existence of a certain negative effect of the communist rule on the frequency of meeting friends and confidence in institutions. The residents of the Eastern European countries tend to meet their friends less often than the Western Europeans. They also have a lower level of confidence in institutions. The communist experience is likely to seeded suspicion towards the others, as well as mistrust directed to society. However, when considering the generalized trust and the membership in associations, the communist heritage does no longer work as explanatory factor.

The other ex-totalitarian experiences, except for the communist rule, provided no effect on the BrSC manifestations at individual level. It might be the case that autocratic rule does not impact on social capital for long after it is replaced with democracy. However, most of the Western countries from the ESS01 database experienced quite similar recent past, with more than half a century of stable democracy. The same is valid for the Eastern Europe, too, but in the opposite sense. The very low variation of the respective factor, is likely to diminish its effect.

The dominant norms of social capital, expressed through the aggregate levels of BrSC, do impact the individual behavior, but not to the extent suggested by the literature focusing on the cultural embedment of the social capital. The most visible impact is the one of the societies richer in confidence in institutions. Living in such society, increases the likelihood to have more frequent social contacts, a higher social trust, and to participate in more associations. The results also suggest that a high involvement in formal associations may hinder the frequency of meeting friends (outside



these associations). This is likely to be related to the time constraints that one naturally has.

Other country-level factors have a low effect on the individual manifestations of BrSC. As expected, overall development is positively related to generalized trust and vibrant associative life. Ethnical homogeneity increases the confidence in institutions, but decreases the frequency of meeting friends, probably moving the focus of sociability towards family.

**Table 2. A summary of the multilevel regression models for BrSC: the significant effects**

Independent variables		meeting friends	social trust	mbship. assn.	confid. in instit.
<b>Country level</b>					
<i>Past societal experience</i>	ex-communist	-			(-)
	years of democracy				
<i>Norms of BrSC</i>	meeting friends	(+)			
	generalized trust				
	membership in assn.			+	
	confidence in institutions	+	(+)	(+)	
	importance of friends		+	+	
<i>other controls</i>	religious concentration				
	ethnic concentration	(-)		(-)	+
	GDP/capita, PPP		(+)	(+)	
	% of protestants				
<b>Individual level</b>					
manifestations of BrSC	meeting friends	////////	+	+	
	generalized trust	+	////////	+	+
	membership in associations	+	+	////////	
	confidence in institutions	+	+	(+)	////////
resources, opportunities, constraints	age	U shaped	+	∩ shaped	
	gender (women=1)		(+)	-	-
	children under 18				+
	children under 6 in the household	(-)	-	-	
	employed	-		+	
	student	(+)		+	+
	working hours	(-)	-	+	
	living with partner	+		+	-
	immigrant			-	
	urban	-		-	-
	education		+	+	+
	relative income	(-)		+	
	Internet use	+	+	+	+
TV use			-	+	
values, ideologies	moral sense				
	individualism	(+)	+	-	+
	right (left-right scale)		-	-	
	religious belief		+		+
	church attendance			+	(+)
	protestant		+	+	+
catholic	(+)	+	(+)		
definition of the situation	minoritar		-	(+)	
	lonely	-	-	(-)	-
	unsafe		-	+	-
	life satisfaction	+	+	(+)	+
	satisfied with society		+		+

Significant effects are indicated through their sign. Brackets indicate that the effect become significant only in a few models. Empty cells mean that there is no significant effect to be reported for the respective relation.

Considering the individual-level determinants, the mutual interdependency between the four manifestations of BrSC is confirmed. Frequent social interactions lead to trust, which, at its turn, creates the premises for further contacts and common activities.

Time-related constraints, positional opportunities, the existent resources have generally the

expected impact. Higher education increase confidence in institutional, social trust and participation to voluntary associations. Higher income increases the propensity to participate in voluntary associations. However I found no support for the relation between income and trust. As expected, being women is negatively related to the levels of social capital which manifest in formal frameworks of reference (associations and formalized institutions), but have a positive impact on the generalized trust. Younger and older people have more frequent social contacts, but are less likely to share their interests with others by involving in voluntary associations. On the other hand, social trust comes with age. Employment and long working hours act as barrier for frequently meeting friends, but increase the potential of sharing resources through membership in associations. Living with partner offers the opportunity to access partner's social networks. The pressure of having small children decreases trust and involvement in any type of social contact outside the family. However, having older children positively impact on confidence in institutions, which become more familiar due to direct interaction. The immigrants are less likely to involve in associations. Internet use positively impacts all four forms of BrSC which I have considered. TV use decreases the time one may use for involvement in associations, but it also increases the confidence in institutions.

Defining situation in a negative way, including unsafeness and loneliness, negatively impact BrSC. On the opposite, life satisfaction and satisfaction with society increases trust and sociability.

Individualist people are less likely to join associations, have less confidence in institutions, but give a little more power to their networks, and have higher generalized trust. Moral sense proves to have no significant effect on BrSC when controlling for the other individual level predictors. Rightist people are less likely to participate in association and to trust others. Religious belief is important for supporting social trust, while religious practice increase confidence in institutions, as well as the number of types of associations in which one is involved. As compared to other religious and atheism, Protestantism and Catholicism seem to favor BrSC.

In order to assess which type of factors, the individual or the societal ones, contribute more to explaining individual levels of BrSC, one may investigate the contribution of these blocks of factors to the explained variance. For each explained variables, as already mentioned, I have run several regression models, part of them being described in the annexes. For all this models, included or not in the annexes, Table 3 provides a summary for the changes in the coefficients that describe the proportional reduction of error.

$R_1^2$  and  $R_2^2$  reported in Table 3 are proposed by Snijders and Boskers (2002) and reflect the proportional reduction of the unexplained variance. The computation of this  $R^2$ s considers both the level 1 and the level 2 variances for the model 0 and for each described model. Therefore the testing of the (H3) hypothesis can be approached by studying the variation of the respective  $R^2$ s.

**Table 3. Summary of the multilevel regression models for BrSC: the explained variance**

	social trust	mbship. assn.	confid. in instit.	meeting friends**
gain in $R_1^2$ when adding level 1 variables to the empty model*	~0,24	0,03-0,09	0,20-0,27	~0,13
gain in $R_1^2$ when adding level 2 variables to the empty model*	~0,08	0,05-0,12	~0,03	~0,04
gain in $R_1^2$ when adding level 2 variables to the models including only level 1 variables*	0,01-0,04	0,05-0,12	0,01-0,04	0,01-0,04
$R_1^2$ in the models with both level 1 and level 2 predictors*	0,25-0,27	0,08-0,15	0,22-0,24	0,14-0,17
$R_2^2$ in the models with both level 1 and level 2 predictors*	0,46-0,84	0,43-0,89	0,45-0,72	

$R_1^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting an individual outcome;  $R_2^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting a group mean (Snijders/Bosker, 2002).

\*Several models were employed. Due to the variation of the number of level 2 cases considered, these models are not necessary fully comparable. The reported coefficients/differences summarize the findings from all these models.

\*\*The predicted variable is binomial, only the dichotomous R square was computed.

Except for the membership in associations, for all other three dependent variables, the individual factors bring more explanation than the context indicators. For the involvement in associations the level 1 and the level 2 factors have a similar contribution to the explanation. For all the sets of models, the additional contribution of the level 2 variables, even if small, is significant, as proven by chi square tests of difference.

Analyzing the level-1 and level-2 variances (see Appendix), the findings is similar. The effect of the country context on the individual manifestations of BrSC is generally lower than the one of the individual factors, but it does exist. In the case of the membership in association, the societal context is relatively more important than for the rest of the social capital manifestations that I have considered. Among these country level determinants, the most influent seem to be the aggregate levels of BrSC. Totalitarian past does not matter so much, except for the experience of communist rule which decreases the probability to frequently meet friends, as well as the likelihood to have confidence in institutions. Even for these, the effect of the former communist rule disappears when controlling for the aggregate levels of BrSC.

In the case of between-countries variation of social capital, level 2 indicators have a higher contribution to reducing the prediction errors. However, this result should be considered with some caution, due to the low number of level 2 cases which were investigated.

## **Discussion**

Like other papers that consider the determinants of various forms of BrSC (Halman/Luijck, 2006; Paxton, 2007; Meulemann, 2008b; Neller, 2008; etc.), the present study fails in using predictors for the community level. One may argue that the society is a too broad aggregate to have a huge impact on the individuals' life, but rather smaller collectivities are to be considered. As

Halpern (2005) explains, the social capital factory also finds its ingredients at meso-level. However, even with this caution in mind, the argument that the individual factors are more important than the societal ones is unlikely to change if controlling for community attributes.

The results support the four core hypotheses that I have tested for. Across Europe, the individual levels of BrSC depend rather to the individuals than to the context given by the society where one lives. Education, age, work load, life and societal satisfaction are among the most important predictors in all of the proposed models. Their contribution to explaining the variance of the BrSC manifestations exceeds the one due to the societal traits. Twelve years after the fall of the communism, the impact of the former regime on the social capital is quite low, and virtually disappears when controlling for the aggregates which taps for the “cultures of social capital”.

However, this might reflect a deeper effect, on long run, of the former regimes. As Howard (2002:179) points out, “the attitudes, norms and behavioral patterns have a powerful effect that lasts beyond the institutional context within which they first arose”. Across Europe, the Eastern societies display a higher weekly working load, in terms of time spent to work, their citizens are rather dissatisfied with their life and the functioning of society, display slightly lower levels of education than the Western countries. All these may be the effect of the former communist rule. Its heritage is often labeled in terms of poverty, chaotic social order, less developed technology and lower productivity of labor. They translate, at individual level, in low incomes, dissatisfaction with society, more time spent at work. Former communist also display lower levels than most of the rest of the European countries when considering the share of higher educated people among the population aged 25-64. All these are factors which determine lower propensity towards developing BrSC manifestations. Some of them are still presents in the societies with relatively recent non-communist totalitarian past, such as Spain, which also display lower social trust and membership in associations. The effect of the respective recent societal on the BrSC experience may therefore be mediated by other consequences of the institutional arrangements, which are still shaping the profiles of the people from such societies.

On the other hand, such individual characteristics do not necessary represent the effect of the communist or totalitarian rule, but might find some even older roots in the pre-communist social order. Low levels of incomes, for instance, may come from an older lag of development as compared to other European societies.

The same is valid for the aggregate levels of BrSC. For instance, low participation in voluntary association may be further explained through the smaller number of such associations which are active in the former communist societies, due to some structural constraints: their activity was hindered in the beginning of the 90s by the lack of legislative framework, inherited from the old regimes. Also, the lack of financing, due to the economic recession might acted as a barrier which stopped the development of such associations, decreases the opportunities that people might had to participate in their activities. However, this would not explain why people did not associated more frequently outside such a formal framework, and why they have less frequent social contacts, particularly in a society where such contacts may easily convert in economic capital (Ledeneva, 1998; Rose, 2000).

A long term cultural pattern may also be considered. It finds some roots in the practices of using the land and the more hierarchical social order that existed a few centuries ago in the East as

compared to the West (Voicu, 2005a). Two different patterns found their symbolic delimiting border on Elba (Rösener, 2003). The first one supposed a certain level of cooperation and common decision to be made in a more participative way. The second one implied the centralized decision of the landlord in all the community issues. The first pattern may reflect nowadays through higher levels of BrSC as compared to the second one.

No matter the historical causes of the today differences, the contemporary cross-european variation of the social capital existing at individual level is due rather to the individuals than to the societies. The “cultures of social capital” are likely to become more similar, eventually converging to very close patterns, if individuals would become similar in terms of education, employment status and work load, number of children, etc. In such case the differences would be given by biological factors, such as age, and also by various values and ideologies, from political opinions or individualism to religiosity.

The dependence of the BrSC rather to individual than to societal factors may also produce implications to the policies for developing the bridging social capital. Many times these policies address the formal structures through which BrSC manifests, aiming to create NGOs or at least informal community-based organizations (CBO) to stimulate civic participation, setting up bridging relations and creation of generalized trust. However, since the main determinants of bridging social capital come from the individual level, it might be a good idea to also direct the policies towards the individuals or towards the relation between the individuals and the institutions. This comes close to Sztompka’s (1999) agenda for increasing confidence in institutions in the former communist societies, using tools such as increasing transparency and familiarity of the institutions to the individuals, and promoting quality face-to-face relations with the public clerk. It also adds the possibility that, on long run, certain information campaigns may have a great pay off, if centered on revealing and stimulating activities which involve meeting friends, other than relatives, no matter if the respective activities have a direct output in producing the public good.

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## Appendix: the regression coefficients in the multilevel models

Table 4. Multilevel binary regression models for FREQUENTLY MEETING FRIENDS: regression coefficients

Independent variables	Model	f02	f04	f80	f81	f82
<b>Intercept</b>		1,71 **	1,65 ***	0,52	1,89 ***	1,72 **
<b>Individual level</b>						
manifestations of BrSC	confidence in institutions	0,14	-0,08	-0,10	-0,14	-0,09
	generalized trust	0,30	0,59 **	0,57 ***	0,58 **	0,57 ***
	membership in associations	1,31 ***	1,38 ***	1,33 ***	1,29 ***	1,33 ***
resources, opportunities, constraints	age	-4,63 ***	-5,10 ***	-5,11 ***	-5,12 ***	-5,11 ***
	age <sup>2</sup>	3,80 *	4,42 ***	4,41 ***	4,42 ***	4,42 ***
	gender (women=1)	-0,15	-0,04	-0,58 *	-0,04	-0,04
	children under 18	-0,78	-0,28	-0,29	-0,30	-0,29
	children under 6 in the household	-0,77	-0,54	-0,55 *	-0,53	-0,55 *
	employed	-0,29 *	-0,23 *	-0,24 ***	-0,23 **	-0,24 ***
	student	0,30	0,43	0,09	0,43	0,42 *
	working hours	-0,48	-0,64		-0,59	-0,59 *
	Living with partner	-0,34 **	-0,44 ***	-0,44 ***	-0,44 ***	-0,44 ***
	health problems	-0,02	-0,10	-0,09 +	-0,10	-0,09 +
	immigrant	0,27	0,13	0,12	0,12	0,12
	non-citizen	-0,21	0,22	0,22	0,21	0,22
	urban	-0,07	-0,13 +	-0,04	-0,14 +	-0,14 ***
	education	-0,18	-0,12	-0,05	-0,07	-0,04
	relative income	-0,58 *				
	Internet use	0,07				
TV use	0,25	0,10	0,09 +	0,10	0,09	
values, ideologies	right (left-right scale)	-0,19	-0,05	-0,06	-0,06	-0,06
	religious belief	-0,03	-0,05	-0,04	-0,05	-0,04
	church attendance	-0,15	-0,10	-0,10 *	-0,08	-0,09 *
	protestant	0,21	0,02	0,01	0,08	0,01
	catholic	0,30	-0,17	-0,19 +	-0,10	-0,15
definition of the situation	minoritar	-0,22	-0,13	-0,14	-0,10	-0,13
	lonely	-0,47 **	-0,43 ***	-0,45 ***	-0,44 ***	-0,45 ***
	unsafe	0,17	0,10	-0,14 ***	0,10	0,09 +
	life satisfaction	0,73 **	0,68 ***	0,65 ***	0,64 ***	0,65 ***
	satisfied with society	-0,19		0,42 *		
<b>Country level</b>						
<i>Past societal experience</i>	ex-communist			-0,33	-1,02 **	-0,56 *
	years of democracy				-0,48 +	
<i>Norms of BrSC</i>	meeting friends			0,75 *		
	generalized trust			0,32		
	membership in assn.			-0,73 +		
	confidence in institutions			0,99 *		
	importance of friends			-0,11		
<i>other controls</i>	religious concentration					0,32
	ethnic concentration					-0,50
	GDP/capita, PPP			0,70	0,85	0,78
	% of protestants					0,05
<b>Explained variance R<sup>2</sup></b>		0,139	0,140	0,173	0,162	0,166

R<sup>2</sup> is computed according to Snijders/Bosker (2002). All variables in the models were rescaled to vary from 0 to 1. The figures represent unstandardized regression coefficients.

**Table 5. Multilevel regression models for GENERALIZED TRUST: regression coefficients**

Independent variables		Model	t02	t04	t80	t81	t82
<b>Intercept</b>			0,15 ***	0,20 ***	0,05	0,17 ***	0,25 ***
<b>Individual level</b>							
manifestations of BrSC	confidence in institutions		0,17 ***	0,22 ***	0,22 ***	0,22 ***	0,22 ***
	meeting friends		0,02 **	0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***
	membership in associations		0,04 **	0,05 ***	0,05 ***	0,05 ***	0,05 ***
resources, opportunities, constraints	age		0,10 +	0,08 *	0,08 +	0,08 +	0,08 +
	age <sup>2</sup>		-0,03	-0,04	-0,04	-0,04	-0,04
	gender (women=1)		0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 +
	children under 18		0,02	0,00	0,00	0,01	0,00
	children under 6 in the household		-0,06 **	-0,04 **	-0,04 **	-0,04 **	-0,04 **
	employed		-0,01 **	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01
	student		-0,02 +	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01
	working hours		-0,06 **	-0,05 **	-0,05 **	-0,05 **	-0,05 **
	Living with partner		-0,00	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01
	immigrant		-0,00	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01
	urban		0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	education		0,19 ***	0,15 ***	0,15 ***	0,16 ***	0,15 ***
	relative income		0,00				
	Internet use		0,03 ***				
	TV use		0,02 *	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
values, ideologies	right (left-right scale)		0,00	-0,04 ***	-0,04 ***	-0,04 ***	-0,04 ***
	religious belief		0,02	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***
	church attendance		-0,00	-0,00	-0,00	-0,00	-0,00
	protestant		0,02 **	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***
	catholic		0,03 **	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***
definition of the situation	minoritar		-0,03 ***	-0,02 **	-0,02 **	-0,02 **	-0,02 **
	lonely		-0,03 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***
	unsafe		-0,02 ***	-0,01 ***	-0,01 ***	-0,01 ***	-0,01 ***
	life satisfaction		0,11 ***	0,12 ***	0,12 ***	0,12 ***	0,12 ***
	satisfied with society		0,12 ***				
<b>Country level</b>							
<i>Past societal experience</i>	ex-communist				0,02	-0,04	-0,01
	years of democracy					-0,06	
<i>Norms of BrSC</i>	meeting friends				0,01		
	generalized trust				0,03		
	membership in assn.				0,02		
	confidence in institutions				0,09 *		
	importance of friends				0,11 **		
<i>other controls</i>	religious concentration						0,00
	ethnic concentration						-0,06
	GDP/capita, PPP				0,01	0,22 **	0,08
	% of protestants						-0,06
level 1 variance (r)	model 0: 0,03222	0,02489	0,02561	0,02560	0,02560	0,02560	0,02560
level 2 variance (u <sub>0</sub> )	model 0: 0,00334	0,00170	0,00168	0,00060	0,00124	0,00107	0,00107
Explained variance at level 1 ( $R_1^2$ )		0,252	0,234	0,263	0,245	0,252	0,252
Explained variance at level 2 ( $R_2^2$ )		0,486	0,492	0,809	0,621	0,654	0,654

$R_1^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting an individual outcome;  $R_2^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting a group mean (Snijders/Bosker, 2002). All variables in the models were rescaled to vary from 0 to 1. The figures represent unstandardized regression coefficients.

**Table 6. Multilevel regression models for MEMBERSHIP IN ASSOCIATIONS: the regression coefficients**

Independent variables		Model	ma02	ma04	ma80	ma81	ma82
<b>Intercept</b>			-0,16 ***	-0,12 ***	-0,24 ***	-0,20 ***	-0,09 +
<b>Individual level</b>							
manifestations of BrSC	confidence in institutions		0,02 *	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	generalized trust		0,02 **	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***
	meeting friends		0,04 ***	0,05 ***	0,05 ***	0,05 ***	0,05 ***
resources, opportunities, constraints	age		0,41 ***	0,41 ***	0,41 ***	0,41 ***	0,41 ***
	age <sup>2</sup>		-0,41 ***	-0,46 ***	-0,46 ***	-0,46 ***	-0,46 ***
	gender (women=1)		-0,01 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***
	children under 18		-0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	children under 6 in the household		-0,00	-0,02 *	-0,03 **	-0,02 **	-0,03 *
	employed		0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***
	student		0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***
	working hours		0,08 ***	0,08 ***	0,08 ***	0,08 ***	0,08 ***
	Living with partner		0,00	0,01 **	0,01 **	0,01 **	0,01 **
	immigrant		-0,01 *	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***	-0,02 ***
	urban		-0,00	-0,01 **	-0,01 **	-0,01 **	-0,01 **
	education		0,18 ***	0,27 ***	0,27 ***	0,27 ***	0,27 ***
	relative income		0,09 ***				
	Internet use		0,03 ***				
	TV use		-0,01 **	-0,04 ***	-0,04 ***	-0,03 ***	-0,04 ***
values, ideologies	right (left-right scale)		-0,01	-0,01 **	-0,01 **	-0,01 *	-0,01 **
	religious belief		0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	church attendance		0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***
	protestant		0,01	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 *
	catholic		0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***
definition of the situation	minoritar		0,01 *	0,01	0,01 *	0,01 *	0,01
	lonely		-0,01	-0,01 +	-0,01 +	-0,01 +	-0,01
	unsafe		0,01 +	0,01 **	0,01 **	0,01 **	0,01 **
	life satisfaction		0,00	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 *	0,01 *
	satisfied with society		-0,01 +				
<b>Country level</b>							
<i>Past societal experience</i>	ex-communist				-0,00	-0,02	-0,04
	years of democracy					-0,02	
<i>Norms of BrSC</i>	meeting friends				-0,02		
	generalized trust				-0,02		
	membership in assn.				0,07 **		
	confidence in institutions				0,06 +		
	importance of friends				0,14 ***		
<i>other controls</i>	religious concentration						-0,03
	ethnic concentration						-0,02
	GDP/capita, PPP				0,09	0,28 **	0,13
	% of protestants						-0,07 *
level 1 variance (r)	model 0: 0,01465	0,01307	0,01436	0,01436	0,01436	0,01436	0,01436
level 2 variance (u <sub>0</sub> )	model 0: 0,00268	0,00268	0,00268	0,00029	0,00154	0,00091	0,00091
Explained variance at level 1 ( $R_1^2$ )		0,091	0,017	0,155	0,083	0,119	
Explained variance at level 2 ( $R_2^2$ )		0,000	0,000	0,889	0,424	0,659	

$R_1^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting an individual outcome;  $R_2^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting a group mean (Snijders/Bosker, 2002). All variables in the models were rescaled to vary from 0 to 1. The figures represent unstandardized regression coefficients.

**Table 7. Multilevel regression models for CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS: the regression coefficients**

Independent variables		Model	c02	c04	c80	c81	c82
<b>Intercept</b>			0,25 ***	0,29 ***	0,33 **	0,20 ***	0,15 *
<b>Individual level</b>							
manifestations of BrSC	generalized trust		0,25 ***	0,26 ***	0,26 ***	0,26 ***	0,26 ***
	meeting friends		0,01 *	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01	-0,01
	membership in associations		0,04 **	0,01	0,00	0,00	0,00
resources, opportunities, constraints	age		-0,14 *	-0,03	-0,05	-0,05	-0,05
	age <sup>2</sup>		0,10 +	0,07	0,07	0,07	0,07
	gender (women=1)		0,03	-0,01 **	-0,01 **	-0,01 **	-0,01 **
	children under 18		0,03	0,06 **	0,06 **	0,06 **	0,06 **
	children under 6 in the household		0,00	0,01	0,01	0,02	0,01
	employed		-0,01 +	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	student		0,00	0,02 **	0,02 *	0,02 *	0,02 *
	working hours		0,02	0,02	0,02	0,02	0,02
	Living with partner		0,00	-0,01 +	-0,01 *	-0,01 +	-0,01 *
	immigrant		-0,01	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	urban		-0,02 ***	-0,01 *	-0,01 *	-0,01 *	-0,01 *
	education		0,01	0,06 ***	0,06 ***	0,06 ***	0,06 ***
	relative income		0,01				
	Internet use		0,02 **				
TV use		0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,03 ***	0,02 ***	0,02 ***	
values, ideologies	right (left-right scale)		0,00	0,01	0,01	0,01	0,01
	religious belief		0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***	0,04 ***
	church attendance		0,00	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 +	0,01 +
	protestant		-0,01	0,02 +	0,02 +	0,02 *	0,02 +
	catholic		-0,01 +	-0,01	-0,02	-0,00	-0,00
definition of the situation	minoritar		-0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00
	lonely		-0,02 *	-0,02 **	-0,02 **	-0,02 **	-0,02 **
	unsafe		-0,01 **	-0,01 +	-0,01 +	-0,01 +	-0,01 +
	life satisfaction		0,05 ***	0,13 ***	0,13 ***	0,13 ***	0,13 ***
	satisfied with society		0,37 ***				
<b>Country level</b>							
<i>Past societal experience</i>	ex-communist				-0,09 *	0,03	-0,06 *
	years of democracy					0,06	
<i>Norms of BrSC</i>	meeting friends				-0,08		
	generalized trust				0,09		
	membership in assn.				0,01		
	confidence in institutions				-0,07		
	importance of friends				-0,08		
<i>other controls</i>	religious concentration						0,03
	ethnic concentration						0,15 **
	GDP/capita, PPP				0,17	0,14	0,14 +
	% of protestants						-0,03
level 1 variance (r)	model 0: 0,03780	0,02716	0,03067	0,03066	0,03066	0,03066	
level 2 variance (u <sub>0</sub> )	model 0: 0,00401	0,00357	0,00286	0,00217	0,00206	0,00109	
Explained variance at level 1 ( $R_1^2$ )		0,265	0,198	0,215	0,217	0,241	
Explained variance at level 2 ( $R_2^2$ )		0,111	0,286	0,457	0,485	0,725	

$R_1^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting an individual outcome;  $R_2^2$  is the proportional reduction of error for predicting a group mean (Snijders/Bosker, 2002). All variables in the models were rescaled to vary from 0 to 1. The figures represent unstandardized regression coefficients.