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Voter Turnout and Democratic Legitimacy
in Central Eastern Europe*

Abstract: Political participation is one of the most important democratic ideals. Democracy cannot function properly without citizens' involvement. Moreover, low turnout can be a threat to democracy. There are two theoretical arguments why low voter turnout could matter in Central Eastern Europe. Firstly, countries in this region are still in a process of democratization. In such systems legitimacy of a regime by definition cannot be strong. Thus any device enhancing legitimacy, including widespread participation, is desired. Secondly, in non-democratic systems abstaining is one of the most common and well-known ways of de-legitimizing a regime. Therefore the main purpose of this paper is to analyze the relation between electoral turnout and legitimacy of democratic regime in Central Eastern Europe. In the first part I briefly discuss alternative models of democracy, which differently define the role of electoral participation. In the second part both legitimacy and turnout are discussed, while in the third part results of empirical analyses, reporting relations between the two variables are presented. The hypotheses are to be tested on the Consolidation of Democracy data.

Keywords: voter turnout, legitimacy, political support

It is often argued that low[1] voter turnout is a threat to democracy. Wherever and whenever few people participate in the most basic democratic procedure, i.e. election, political scientists launch a debate on democratic deficit. When electoral participation is in decline (which happens quite often in modern democracies) there is much ado about the crisis of democracy. However, low voter turnout is not a threat to democracy *per se*. In fact, low voter turnout can matter in two instances: (i) firstly, when it overlaps with social and political inequalities; (ii) secondly, when it means de-legitimizing a regime (cf. McManus-Czubinska et al. 2004). Often these two situations take place simultaneously, which is not surprising since inequalities usually lead to de-legitimation of regime.

The aim of this paper is to answer the question to what extent low voter turnout matters in Central Eastern Europe. In the first part we briefly discuss alternative

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[1] One of the most important questions in discussions about voter turnout is when it can be considered low. Even though we do recognize the value of this problem we do not pay too much attention to it—instead of searching for a good definition of 'low' voter turnout we aim at answering a somewhat different question: whether and when low voter turnout matters.

models of democracy, which differently define the role of electoral participation. In the second part we discuss legitimacy and voter turnout, while in the third—the results of empirical analyses, reporting relations between the two variables.

Two Concepts of Voter Turnout in Democracy

The question whether voter turnout matters or not is first of all theoretical. In the theory of democracy the issue of citizens' participation in activities of democratic community is one of the most important research areas. The question of citizenship and the resulting right to participate in democratic procedures of decision-making appeared in the works of most classics of political thought, starting from Montesquieu, Locke and Rousseau. It was this issue that divided theoreticians into two factions, 'participationists' and 'elitarists' (or 'elitists'), differing significantly in respect to the role and scope of civic participation. Both these standpoints should be briefly summarized at this point. Participationists claim that the most important element of the democratic rule is citizens' participation in broadly defined governance. The ideal they refer to is Greek *polis*, where every member of *demos* could actually influence the fate of political community. It was not only possible by means of participation in elections, but also by means of participation in assemblies and discussions, i.e. the early stages of the decision-making process, during which certain issues were settled (control of the agenda; Dahl 1989: 112–114). Such participation was important both from the point of view of the system it gave legal validity to, and from the point of view of individuals, who could develop and fulfill their civic roles. According to this perspective, participation is the most crucial of democratic ideals and goals. Participationists claim that only through the citizens' participation the system may be truly democratic, and its citizens capable of self-fulfillment (Lively 1975: 134).

In opposition to the classical theory of democracy, which emphasizes the role of civic participation, is an elitist theory of democracy, also referred to as the competitive theory of democracy (Sartori 1965: 126). Its most important theses were drawn up by Joseph A. Schumpeter in his workmanship *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, which is critical for the contemporary reflection on democracy. His definition of democracy is strictly procedural—democracy is here reduced to a method: 'the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote' (Schumpeter 1957: 269). A constitutive element of the democratic system is not citizens' participation, but competition among the elites: 'To simplify matters we have restricted the kind of competition for leadership which is to define democracy, to free competition for a free vote' (Schumpeter 1957: 271). Thus the central aim of democracy is now to 'make the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding' (Schumpeter 1957: 269).

Schumpeterian vision of democracy results from the assumptions related to human nature. Schumpeter did not have a very high opinion of the ability of an average human to participate in the realm of politics. This standpoint makes him an opponent

of participationists, who are convinced that civic competence is an inherent characteristic of human nature: 'Thus the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again. His thinking becomes associative and affective' (Schumpeter 1957: 262).

The assumptions, which are the basis for the Schumpeterian understanding of democracy, obviously have an enormous influence on the way the role of civic participation in the democratic system is perceived. In consequence, wide participation of citizens in the process of governing is questioned: 'The voters outside of parliament must respect the division of labor between themselves and the politicians they elect. They must not withdraw confidence too easily between elections and they must understand that, once they have elected an individual, political action is his business and not theirs. This means that they must refrain from instructing him about what he is to do [...] this principle clashes with the classical doctrine of democracy and really spells its abandonment' (Schumpeter 1957: 295). Referring to these convictions, this vision of democracy limits the role of citizens to their participation in the procedure of electing representatives. In accordance with this vision it is a sufficient mean of civic activity in contemporary democracy.

Consequently, two perspectives on the role of electoral participation in democracy, related to the two discussed concepts of democracy, are usually distinguished. One of them, related to the participatory theory of democracy, assumes that the democratic regime functions best when it is accompanied by a high level of civic involvement. According to Lipset 'democratic state, unlike a traditionalists oligarchy, must depend on the consent of its citizenry. And a state in which a large part of the population is apathetic, uninterested, and unaware is one in which consent cannot be taken for granted and in which consensus may actually be weak' (1960: 216). Moreover, 'when the vote is low, this almost always means that the socially and economically disadvantaged groups are underrepresented in government. The combination of a low vote and a relative lack of organization among the lower-status groups means that they will suffer from neglect by the politicians who will be receptive to the wishes of the more privileged, participating, and organized strata. Lack of participation and representation also reflects lack of effective citizenship and consequent lack of loyalty to the system as a whole' (1960: 216).

A different approach indicates that high voter turnout may sometimes have a destructive effect on democracy. This approach is related to the elitist theory of democracy, and first of all to its assumptions concerning human nature (i.e. a conviction that citizens have limited abilities to participate in democracy). The followers of this approach claim that low level of participation is an index of citizens' satisfaction with the existing system. Citizens do not vote, because democratic regime functions properly, it is not menaced, as neither are individual rights and liberties. Therefore there are no special incentives to participate in elections. Lipset refers to this question: 'One school of thought welcomes a low voting rate as evidence of the electorate's basic satisfaction with the way things are going [...] apathy may reflect the fact that

people have more interesting things to do with their time than indulge in politics, and suggests that governmental bodies and large-scale organizations function well in spite of great apathy' (1960: 217). In the light of the above, abstention may be an expression of high level of social consensus, people's engagement in things other than politics, while a rapid increase in voter turnout may be perceived as a symptom of serious conflicts and may lead to the crisis of democracy (in this context an example of Weimar Republic is often cited). It should be mentioned here that this approach is particularly popular among researchers describing these democratic systems which function properly despite low voter turnout (e.g. Switzerland, the United States).[2]

Voter Turnout and Legitimacy

Unfortunately, in political science there are few ideas as ambiguous as the idea of legitimacy. The argument should thus begin with settling the conceptions applied further on. Undoubtedly the most important for discussing the question of legitimate power is the following terminological distinction: 'Legitimacy and legitimation are often used as synonyms. They do, however, express two different meanings (cf. Max Weber and Hermann Heller) and thus should not be confused. *Legitimacy* denotes a quality of political power (a quality attached to authority relationship). *Legitimation* denotes the process that leads to legitimacy' (Ludz 1979: 162, emphasis in original). It is also important to recognize that the very concept of legitimacy 'is multi-dimensional in character. It embodies three distinct elements or levels, which are qualitatively different from each other. Power can be said to be legitimate to the extent that: i) it conforms to established rules, ii) the rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate, and iii) there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation' (Beetham 1991: 16).

For students of voter turnout the third level of legitimacy, which concerns actions and behaviors, is especially important. The reason being that in the democratic system 'what is important for legitimacy is evidence of consent expressed through *actions* which are understood as demonstrating consent within the conventions of the particular society, such as: concluding an agreement or entering into a contract with a superior party; swearing an oath of allegiance; joining in acclamation; voting in an election or plebiscite'[3] (Beetham 1991: 12, emphasis in original). The problem is that sometimes citizens refrain from expressing consent. For instance, in modern democracies numerous citizens do not vote. Then the very question is what such a lack of expressing consent means. Usually it is asserted that 'if the public expression of consent contributes to the legitimacy of the powerful, then the withdrawal or refusal of consent will by the same token detract from it'[4] (Beetham 1991: 19). For this

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[2] Both countries are federal. Low voter turnout is observed primarily on federal level. On the level of states, cantons, counties and communes voter turnout sometimes is very high. It must be noticed, however, that despite low voter turnout on federal level (about 50% and less) democracy functions properly and is not threatened.

[3] The importance of consent and its impact on regime stability is also emphasized by Sartori (1987).

[4] It is worth noting that this element of Beetham's theory is strongly at odds with the notion, which is popular in some circles, that abstention may express a high level of social consensus.

reason low or declining voter turnout is so often perceived as a signal of growing dissatisfaction with a regime and, as such, understood as a threat to democracy.

Legitimacy is so important for political regimes because it is a primary source of regime stability, as since Weber many political scientists have assumed. According to this notion, which is well confirmed empirically and, at the same time, very popular among students of politics, legitimate regimes are more likely to endure, whereas illegitimate regimes are more likely to collapse (cf. Lipset 1960: 77). Weimar Republic is one of the most frequently cited examples. There is little doubt that this regime collapsed mainly because of its deficit of legitimacy. The consequences of the collapse were extremely tragic. Furthermore, legitimacy seems to be the best determinant of stability—nothing stabilizes a system better than a widespread belief in its legitimacy: 'Experience shows that in no instance does domination voluntarily limit itself to the appeal to material or affectual or ideal motives as a basis for its continuance. In addition every such system attempts to establish and cultivate the belief in its legitimacy' (Weber 1968: 213). Since stability of regimes is a focal element of any social or political inquiry, consequences that legitimacy has for the character of power relations are among the main concerns of social scientists. Hence studying legitimacy is important and desirable because it 'helps explain the erosion of power relations, and those dramatic breaches of social and political order that occur as riots, revolts and revolutions' (Beetham 1991: 6).

However, it is worth noting that legitimacy is not a *sine qua non* condition of regime stability. In fact other sources of stability can be found. There are many illegitimate regimes which do not fall and last for decades. Legitimacy in these systems is usually replaced with violence. Such extremely oppressive regimes as North Korea, Sudan or Cuba, where belief in legitimacy is totally substituted with fear, do relatively well and do not collapse despite citizens' frustration, international ostracism and various diplomatic constraints and pressures. Saddam's Iraq, the only tyranny that has recently collapsed, is an exception. However, it must be noted that Iraqi regime did not fall endogenously, but was overthrown by foreign military forces.

The concepts of legitimacy and legitimation have similarities with Easton's concept of diffuse political support. While legitimacy denotes a quality of political power and legitimation denotes the process that leads to legitimacy,[5] diffuse political support is an attitude each citizen has towards political power in a given regime. Thus inevitably it must be related to regime legitimacy: the more people support a regime in a 'diffuse way' (the more people legitimize it), the stronger the legitimacy.

Ludz argues that legitimate power 'should always be investigated from the perspective of both parties involved: the rulers and the ruled' (1979: 173). Consequently, diffuse political support should be examined empirically from two perspectives: (i) from micro perspective, as an evaluative orientation each citizen has towards political power; (ii) from macro perspective, as a feature each political regime has (aggregate

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[5] It is worth noting here that both legitimacy and legitimation refer to aggregate level. Meanwhile diffuse political support is a micro phenomenon, which refers to individual level.

level of diffuse political support[6]). Even though according to Easton diffuse political support is a micro level phenomenon, we argue that it can also be investigated from a macro perspective. We follow a rather simplistic notion: individual preferences and attitudes can be aggregated. Each citizen's level of diffuse political support contributes to the overall distribution of diffuse political support, which can be a subject of analysis. Thus it is plausible to analyze diffuse political support from both individual and aggregate perspective.

Diffuse political support, just like legitimacy and legitimation, 'is best interpreted multidimensionally' (Easton 1975: 447). It can be expressed both on the second and on the third level of legitimation: 'support refers to the way in which a person evaluatively orients himself to some objects through either his attitudes or his behavior' (Easton 1975: 436). Thus voting can be plausibly referred to as an action of supporting a regime 'diffusely.'[7] Moreover, as people tend to be coherent in their attitudes and actions towards a regime, voting should be positively correlated with attitudes and opinions expressing diffuse political support.

Easton argues that diffuse political support can be expressed in two forms: 'first, in trust as against cynicism (or what is often ambiguously and, I shall propose, mis-leadingly called alienation) and, second, in belief in the legitimacy of political objects' (Easton 1975: 447). As in this paper we are primarily interested in the question of legitimacy, we shall ignore another form of diffuse political support, i.e. trust (which by the way should be, and in post-communist regimes is, related significantly to both legitimacy and voter turnout).

Last but not least, it is worth referring to the question of the character of legitimacy as a variable, which varies across regimes. This issue has fundamental implications for empirical studies on legitimacy. It is also extremely important for analyses of relations between voter turnout and legitimacy, and especially for estimating the importance of voter turnout for a democratic regime and answering the question whether low voter turnout really matters. Some scholars perceive legitimacy as an all-or-nothing affair, which a regime has or does not have. Such perspective cannot be considered plausible, because legitimacy is subject to gradation. It logically results from the assumption of its multi-dimensionality. As legitimacy embodies three distinct elements or levels, which are qualitatively different from one another, it is implausible to operationalize this concept as a binary variable. Thus any measure of legitimacy must be of continuous character. On the one end of such continuum a perfectly legitimate regime is situated, whereas a perfectly illegitimate regime is placed on the other end of the continuum.[8] Every existing political regime can be situated somewhere on the continuum, as regimes differ in their levels of legitimacy.

This notion has valid implications for studying importance of low voter turnout. As legitimacy is a matter of degree, it can be either evolutionally fostered, or grad-

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[6] When defined in this way, the concept of diffuse political support is very similar to the concept of legitimacy. Thus for the sake of simplicity in the following empirical analyses we will limit ourselves only to using the term 'diffuse political support.'

[7] It is true if voting is so interpreted in a given system.

[8] It is of course unlikely to find any of these ideal types in the real world.

ually weakened. Thus any move towards either of the two ends of the continuum is significant. Any strengthening of legitimacy counts, as well as any weakening of it, according to the unquestionable notion that for a given political regime the more legitimacy the better, whereas the less legitimacy the worse. Consequently, students of politics should in their analyses focus not only on absolute levels of legitimacy of the regime, but also on a direction of the trend (if any exists). Such 'dynamic perspective' should help understand why sometimes low voter turnout matters.

Finally, crucial for understanding the relations between legitimacy and voter turnout is a question of functions performed by elections in a political system. Though important, this issue is rather infrequently discussed in political science. Meanwhile, these functions vary quite significantly across different political systems. Three main functions of elections can be distinguished. First of all, election is a procedure of electing a legitimate government, which will hold the power. According to LeDuc elections 'determine *who* will exercise that power' (1996: 344, emphasis in original). Secondly, election is a procedure of aggregating citizens' interests. LeDuc refers to this function as well: 'elections provide at least a rough guide to the economic, social and foreign policies that will be put in place after the election, that is, to *what* a government in power actually does' (1996: 344, emphasis in original). Thirdly, election is a procedure of legitimation—through participation citizens legitimize a regime. LeDuc assesses that 'by setting limits within which power can be legitimately exercised, elections help to determine *how* a country is governed' (1996: 344, emphasis in original).

Some scholars argue that more functions of elections can be distinguished.[9] But the three discussed above seem to be the most important for a democratic regime: 'Although the actual consequences of an election may not always be the most obvious ones, this "how," "who" and "what" would seem to lie at the very roots of the concept of democracy as it has become established in Western political thought' (LeDuc 1996: 344). These functions depend on institutional framework, patterns of party competition, political culture etc. It is of course an empirical question which of the functions prevails in a given political system, but measuring such an 'importance' or 'prevalence' seems to be a particularly strenuous task.

Citizens, however, can differently define the functions elections perform in a given system.[10] Citizenries need not be homogeneous in this regard. For instance for some citizens the legitimacy function can be of primary importance, while others might tend to understand election as a procedure of appointing representatives. Differences can exist not only within a system, but also among systems. It is also worth noting that the differences in understanding electoral procedure can exist regardless of actual differences in functions, resulting from different institutional design: although citizens' understanding of election is a function of institutional design, it is possible

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[9] Some for instance point to accountability function of election, arguing that election is a procedure of evaluating those in power, making them accountable to citizens' preferences and predilections.

[10] I would like to thank participants of the workshop 9 ('Low turnout—does it matter?,' ECPR Joint Sessions 2004, Uppsala, April 13–18) for highlighting this point. I especially appreciate Martin Rosema's comments and remarks.

that in two systems, where institutional design is the same, understanding of election is, for historical or cultural reasons, very different.[11]

As students of voter turnout are primarily interested in actions and behaviors, the legitimacy function and legitimacy aspect seem to be especially important for them. Hence it is also crucial for the purposes of this paper. Obviously, this aspect of elections is not equally valid for all democracies. In some regimes other functions performed by elections in a political regime are more important. It seems almost certain, however, that the legitimacy aspect of election should be particularly important in these regimes, which are undergoing democratic transition, or the ones which are consolidating their democratic order. As democratic procedures are not yet deeply rooted in these systems, legitimacy aspect of elections and participation of wide masses of citizens should be of particular significance.

Voter Turnout and Legitimacy in Non-Democratic Regimes

The relation between political participation and legitimacy is of particular importance in non-democratic regimes. Such regimes usually tend to be totalitarian,[12] in a sense that they try to overpower all spheres of citizens' lives. In such a regime everything people do is controlled, regulated, related to state ideology. Such an overpowering action always provokes citizens to oppose the state, to be against it. We would perceive such opposition between the oppressors and the tyrannized to be immanent for totalitarian regimes.

In totalitarian systems political participation is a mean of reaching citizens with the official ideology and propaganda—through participation citizens are controlled and indoctrinated. They are forced to attend meetings and demonstrations, to vote in elections, to participate in mass organizations (parties, trade unions etc.), to read political literature, to consume official (usually the only existing) media. Political activity is thus the most appropriate and desired way of behavior. Moreover, it is important because it contributes to regime legitimacy, or at least secures its stability—mass mobilization, no matter how attained, always strengthens and stabilizes the regime. It can be well illustrated by the example of German Democratic Republic (GDR): 'Finally, the political process in the GDR is characterized by attempts of the ruling authorities to get everybody involved in the political process ("mass participation"). In political everyday life this induces a clearly hierarchical system of "participation." On each level of the party and state organization, groups, commissions, etc. are set up by various mass organizations, and each citizen is called upon to participate in those groups to which he is commanded to belong' (Ludz 1979: 170). Therefore passivity is a major threat to such a non-democratic regime: 'If the members or citizens are

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[11] While functions depend on institutional design, perceived aspects are more related to citizens' believes, attitudes, habits etc.

[12] Of course not all non-democratic regimes can be referred to as totalitarian (it would be problematical to label in this way Franco's Spain or Salazar's Portugal). It is by the way worth mentioning here that in authoritarian regimes political participation, including voting, has different meaning than in communist regime (cf. Jackman, Miller 1995: 468).

not "politically" active, they are removed from the influence of the controlling power' (Lipset 1960: 179).

At the same time political passivity is a mean of de-legitimation. Citizens, at least those who are not afraid to be against the regime, oppose the state by being passive— by not getting involved in politics. Such passivity implies, among others, electoral abstention: 'Nonvoting in state socialism, however rare, has been argued to be an act of opposition and hostility, rather than apathy or indifference' (Heyns, Białecki 1991: 356). In fact election is one of the most important institutions of communist politics, but limited political choice and *de facto* mandatory voting [13] reduce its role only to legitimizing the regime. Heyns and Bialecki argue that in communist regime election is 'a ritual of legitimation, rather than a contest for power' (1991: 356). Indeed, this notion has been approved in studies on communism for a very long time. As early as in the sixties Jerzy J. Wiatr referred to this question, arguing that election in communist system is first of all an act of compliance with official pressure and propaganda. He even proposed the concept of 'consent elections', in which the voter does not make any choice, but he can express his approval or disapproval of the regime by abstaining or voting (1962: 239).

Last Iranian election (held on February 20, 2004) provides a good example of such 'consent election'. In this system, due to undemocratic electoral law, election is neither a procedure of electing a government, nor a procedure of aggregating citizens' interests and influencing the course of policies. Institutional design impedes real choice and, as a result, citizens cannot freely express their will. Hence election turns into a 'referendum on the system'—the main function of election is legitimation of the regime, whereas electoral abstention becomes a major vehicle of its de-legitimation. Democratic opposition, heavily repressed and persecuted, can only campaign for electoral boycott, which, if successful, is meant to undermine regime legitimacy. [14]

Voter Turnout and Legitimacy in Post-Communist Regimes

The purpose of this paper is to examine voter turnout and democratic legitimacy in post-communist Europe. More specifically, its aim is to answer the question whether low voter turnout can matter in these democratizing systems. Thus what is the rationale behind discussing voter turnout in communist era elections? Can it have any impact on the present-day voting behavior? In the following section it is argued that there can be a link between the two variables. Crucial here is the question of functions,

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[13] Voting was not *de iure* mandatory in any of the communist systems. However, as nonvoting was perceived as an act of opposition, official efforts to maximize turnout were common. Maximum turnout was achieved by various means: incentives varied from mild persuasion to brutal and violent compulsion. Heyns and Bialecki describe it accurately: 'Food or other scare goods were often available near voting stations; if incentives failed, it was widely understood that nonvoting could jeopardize a bonus or a passport' (1991: 356).

[14] The same can be said about the last Russian presidential election. The level of voter turnout was much more important than the outcome of the election (which, by the way, had been relatively easy to predict). Moreover, as in Iran, democratic opposition campaigned for electoral boycott, which would de-legitimize Putin's regime.

which are performed by elections in political system, as well as the assumption that voting is a habit.

Low voter turnout matters when legitimacy aspect of election is important. In this case dissatisfied citizens abstain in order to de-legitimize the regime, while those satisfied vote in order to legitimize it. It is of course an empirical question which of the three major functions of elections is the most important for post-communist citizens. [15] However, there are two major (theoretical) reasons to believe that in post-communist Europe the legitimacy aspect of election is particularly significant. Firstly, these systems are new democracies. Such systems desperately need every trace of legitimation they can possibly get, to a much greater extent than the consolidated systems, which by definition are not threatened by the return of authoritarianism, totalitarianism or any other form of dictatorship. In these systems any legitimizing behaviors are particularly needed. As in modern democracies the most obvious behavior legitimizing the system is participation in elections, in new democracies citizens are expected to legitimize the system in this very way. [16] For this reason legitimacy aspect of election becomes extremely important.

Secondly, as it was pointed out earlier, in some regimes (Poland for instance) there is a long and well-established tradition of de-legitimizing the system by abstaining. In this way, during the communist era, some citizens used to manifest their disapproval of the system. Electoral boycott was one of the main methods of dealing with illegitimate communist regime.

But can these experiences have any impact on present-day voting behavior of post-communist citizens? How can they influence their attitudes and behaviors? Crucial for understanding this puzzle is the question of 'habitual' nature of voting behavior. According to some scholars casting a ballot is a habit (cf. Plutzer 2002; Franklin 2003a, 2003b, 2004), which is formed in a long process of political socialization, during which citizens learn to participate or to abstain: 'It takes about three elections for people to become established in the habit of voting or non-voting' (Franklin 2003b: 5). However, once established, it is hardly ever subject to change. This element of Franklin's theory is deeply rooted in classical research on voting. At least since Lazarsfeld and Berelson (1944, 1954) we know that ordinary citizens are usually very ignorant about politics. Even more so that normative models of democracy predict citizens' competence in understanding politics: 'The democratic citizen is expected to be well-informed about political affairs. He is supposed to know what the issues are, what their history is, what the relevant facts are, what alternatives are proposed, what the party stands for, what the likely consequences are. By such standards the voter falls short' (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, McPhee 1954: 308). This lack of interest and knowledge implies relative stability of citizens' attitudes towards and opinions about politics, though causal relationship between ignorance about politics and stability of political attitudes is not unambiguous. Classical Columbia School studies (Erie

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[15] Actually they can significantly differ in this regard.

[16] It is manifested in the new political culture, in which voting is defined as a civic duty. This way of thinking about voter turnout has an impact on the whole public discourse, and even on educational syllabi, which propagate the model of an active, participating citizen.

County, Elmira) show that citizens are rarely willing to change their political likes and dislikes. The same is true for political behavior.

Franklin's theory has meaningful implications. 'Habitual' nature of voting can help to understand the puzzle of voter turnout. If voting is a habit, then also the whole perception of the electoral process must be relatively reluctant to change. Moreover, so must be the understanding of the functions of election in political system. And this fact may in turn explain some of the idiosyncrasies of voter turnout in new democratic systems.

Unfortunately, Franklin in his works refers only to well-established democracies. New democratic regimes, transiting from authoritarian or totalitarian rule, are out of his interest. Meanwhile, we argue that his proposition can be useful in this context as well. Crucial for his theory is the idea of stability: Franklin argues that citizens, after reaching a certain point, are not very likely to 'transit' from voting to nonvoting and *vice versa*. We propose to go a step further and argue that not only citizens' behavior, but also their understanding of the whole electoral process is similarly stable and reluctant to change. Since voting is a habit, resistant to any transformations, the same must be true for the understanding of the functions of elections. Citizens get used to perceiving elections as a procedure of particular purpose (e.g. legitimizing the regime, electing a government, aggregating citizens' interests). Up until recently citizens of post-communist regimes have for many years perceived elections first of all as a ritual of legitimation. This way of thinking cannot simply disappear overnight. Moreover, it may determine electoral behavior for many years to come.

In the light of the above argument there is little doubt that voting behavior in post-communist Europe must, at least to some extent, be determined by the communist past. Still for many citizens of post-communist regimes elections should be, first of all, a ritual of legitimation. Thus it is plausible to argue that their decision whether to vote or to abstain is heavily determined by the attitude towards the regime: if they support it, they turn out to vote in order to legitimize it; if they do not support it, they abstain in order to de-legitimize it.

Hypotheses

The main question of this paper is whether low voter turnout matters in post-communist regimes. According to what has been argued earlier it matters (i) when it overlaps with social and political inequalities, or (ii) when it means de-legitimizing[17] a regime. Therefore, as far as legitimacy is concerned, low voter turnout matters when voting is significantly associated with diffuse political support[18] (either positively or negatively). According to the above theoretical arguments we would expect diffuse

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[17] The term 'de-legitimation' might look in this context a little too 'serious.' Non-voting, which leads to low voter turnout, matters also when it means a lack of acceptance, lack of satisfaction, lack of diffuse political support etc. If there is any significant difference in the attitudes of this sort between voters and non-voters, low voter turnout matters.

[18] As we have argued before, following Easton, diffuse political support can be expressed either verbally (as an attitude) or behaviorally (as an action). Here we refer to verbally expressed diffuse political support.

political support to have a positive impact on voter turnout. Therefore we can expect that:

> *Hypothesis 1.* The higher the level of diffuse political support of a citizen, the higher his/her propensity to vote.

While this hypothesis refers only to individual level, it has implications on both individual and aggregate level. On individual level it predicts that those supporting the system will be more likely to vote, while those opposing the system (or those supporting the system less) will be more likely to abstain (or less likely to vote).[19] On aggregate level it indirectly predicts that in systems with higher levels of (aggregate) diffuse political support voter turnout will be higher.

The assumption underlying the hypothesis is that citizens in all the regimes under scrutiny behave similarly; in other words it predicts that the relations between diffuse political support and voter turnout are the same, regardless of the features of the regimes. Therefore the hypothesis does not say anything about possible differences between the regimes. It ignores systemic features (system-level variables), which can have an impact on both diffuse political support and voter turnout, and the relations between them (the latter is of primary interest for us, as we want to answer the question whether low voter turnout matters). In the meantime it is quite likely that the regimes under scrutiny are not the same, at least as far as these relations are concerned. They can vary in respect to (i) their levels of aggregate diffuse political support, (ii) their levels of turnout, and (iii) the character of relations between the two. Consequently, hypotheses explaining these probable differences must be formulated.

If there are any differences in relations between diffuse political support and voter turnout it is plausible to argue that they are first of all related to overall distribution of diffuse political support or voter turnout in a given regime. Firstly, it can be hypothesized that this relation becomes less and less important as the variance of diffuse political support decreases: if all the citizens equally evaluate the regime, equally support it, then there should be no relation between the two variables.[20] Thus we can expect that:

> *Hypothesis 2.* The higher the variance of diffuse political support in a given regime, the stronger the relation between diffuse political support and voter turnout.

Secondly, it can be assumed that the relation between diffuse political support and voter turnout becomes less and less important as level of aggregate diffuse political support increases: the less citizens are satisfied with a regime, the more incentives they have to express it through abstention. Hence we hypothesize that:

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[19] We assume here that both variables are of continuous character—both diffuse political support and propensity to vote can be gradually increased or decreased.

[20] The same can be said about another variable under scrutiny, i.e. voter turnout. However, since in all the regimes that we analyze this variable is not constant (everywhere turnout is not universal), we do not refer to this question.

Hypothesis 3. The lower the level of diffuse political support in a given regime, the stronger the relation between diffuse political support and voter turnout.

Certainly many more alternative explanations of the possible differences in strength of the relation between diffuse political support and voter turnout can be put forward, and various variables can account for these hypothetic dissimilarities. Some scholars would emphasize the importance of socio-economic variables. Others would study carefully institutional designs of the regimes. An important school of inquiry would point to cultural or historical variables: in accordance with arguments pointed out earlier it can be argued that legacies of communism (such as tradition of electoral boycotting) might have an impact on the present-day relations between the two variables under scrutiny. Unfortunately, it is impossible to test hypotheses of this sort with the data we have access to. Thus we must limit ourselves to the hypotheses proposed above.

Operationalization

The main challenge in empirical analysis of diffuse political support is to operationalize it. Easton was aware of these difficulties: 'It has in fact proved to be a comprehensive term difficult to deal with empirically except by means of what appear to be a number of different component meanings' (1975: 446). What makes it so difficult is the very fact that diffuse political support is by definition multi-dimensional in its character—it refers to different elements of political regime: 'It means that we may ultimately have to search for differing determinants of each of the components that go to make it up' (Easton 1975: 447) Thus its measure must combine answers to different questions, related to these particular elements. We construct such variable (herein referred to as diffuse political support index), by referring to three questions which measure attitudes towards different aspects of the performance of democratic regime in a given country (for details see Appendix).

In order to construct a measure of diffuse political support we must use one of the data reduction techniques. We employ principal component analysis, and Table 1 presents its results. The constructed measure explains more than 65% of the variance observed, and it varies from –1.87 to 3.51.

Major argument against this measure could be that it fails to answer an important question—whether a citizen supports a regime or not. In fact, with this variable one cannot set apart the two groups: those who support a regime, and those who do not support it. We do not question the fact that logically such distinction can be made (though we argue that diffuse political support is a continuous variable); there is a certain point on this continuum, which divides the two groups. However, since in truth we are not interested in comparing these two groups, but we rather aim at estimating the importance of electoral abstention in post-communist regimes (and for this purpose continuous measure is more suitable), we do not need any other measure of diffuse political support.

Table 1

Factor Analysis of Variables Measuring Diffuse Political Support
(Q12, Q15, Q56; for details see Appendix)

Communalities					
	Initial			Extraction	
Q12	1.00			0.723	
Q15	1.00			0.645	
Q56	1.00			0.607	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Total Variance Explained[a]					
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.98	65.84	65.84	1.98	65.84	65.84
2	0.59	19.67	85.52			
3	0.43	14.48	100			
Component Matrix					
	Component 1				
Q12	0.850				
Q15	0.803				
Q56	–0.779				

Source: Consolidation of Democracy dataset.

[a] Only one component was extracted, so the solution cannot be rotated.

Another variable that we include in our empirical analyses is voting. We measure it on the basis of a simple question regarding participation in last parliamentary election. An aggregate turnout in each of the regimes under scrutiny, operationalized as percent of those who admitted to having voted, differs quite significantly from official election results. It is so for two reasons. Firstly, citizens of post-communist regimes, just like citizens in other democracies, tend to depart from the truth while being interviewed—many of those who did not participate in election admit to having voted. Thus aggregate turnout, according to survey responses, can be much higher than the one officially recorded. However, regimes are not the same in this respect. In some regimes there are more 'liars' than in others.[21] Hence there is no feasible way to control for this measurement error.

Secondly, the surveys were not conducted in the same period of electoral process: in some countries the fieldwork was completed just a few months after the polling day, while in other countries it was completed two or three years after the election. So whilst in the former case citizens were asked about current affairs, in the latter case they were asked about relatively dated issues. This fact must have also had an impact on citizens' answers: people usually tend to forget their behaviors, and the more time lapses, the weaker are their memories. Moreover, though electoral participation is a relatively stable behavior, citizens sometimes transit from voting to non-voting or *vice versa*; if they do so, they try to 'adjust' their past behavior to current attitudes and opinions. If in a given regime voter turnout increases or decreases (if many people transit from voting to non-voting or *vice versa*), then the answer given to any question

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[21] It is probably related to political culture of a regime—the stronger the 'participation imperative', the more citizens tend to depart from the truth.

about past voting behavior must be inaccurate, and distribution of turnout variable constructed on the basis of survey responses must be different form official statistics. We unfortunately cannot control this measurement error either. But since we are not so much interested in the actual level of voter turnout, but we rather aim to study the relation existing between voter turnout and diffuse political support, we decide to use this 'imperfect' version of turnout variable.

Empirical Analyses

In the following empirical analyses we use Consolidation of Democracy dataset. We exclude 5 cases (Belarus, East Germany, West Germany, Russia and Ukraine), which for us seem to be too 'different' to be compared[22] with the remaining 10 post-communist democracies, at least as far as democratic legitimacy is concerned. We start empirical analyses with presenting the distributions of diffuse political support index in ten post-communist regimes under scrutiny. As reported in Table 2 the regimes differ quite significantly in this respect.

Citizens in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia are the most satisfied with their regimes; the least satisfied are citizens in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia; citizens of Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland are somewhere in between these extremes. As we can see these results are in line with popular evaluation of the post-communist regimes—usually the Czech Republic or Slovenia are much better evaluated (as far as quality of democracy is regarded) than Bulgaria or Romania. Table 2 also shows that post-communist regimes differ not only in respect to index distribution, but also as far as its variance is concerned. The most dispersed index distribution is observed in Bulgaria—the least dispersed index distribution can be observed in Hungary. The Levene test for equality of variance shows that these differences are statistically significant,[23] which means that index is unequally distributed in the regimes under scrutiny.

In order to test our first hypothesis we compare mean values of diffuse political support index in two groups: voters and non-voters. The clearest observable implication of our hypothesis would be a positive relationship between voting and diffuse political support index: mean value of diffuse political support index in voters group should be significantly higher than mean value of diffuse political support index in non-voters group.

Table 3 displays results of this test. Indeed, it presents clear support for the hypothesis, demonstrating statistically significant relationship between voting and diffuse political support index: mean value of diffuse political support index in voters group is significantly higher than mean value of diffuse political support index in

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[22] We follow the MSSD scheme (cf. Pennings, Keman, Kleinnijenhuis 1999: 43–49), which requires inclusion of maximally similar cases. The 5 cases we exclude do not meet this requirement. Our choice is of course arbitrary, but there are good arguments against including these cases in our analyses: East German transition to democracy has been unique; Belarus, Russia and Ukraine have not been fully democratic at the time of survey. For these reasons it was plausible to exclude them from analysis.

[23] Levene's test = 12.11; df1 = 9; df2 = 10990; significance = 0.000.

Table 2

Differences in Diffuse Political Support Index Between Post-communist Regimes

Country	Mean	SD
Bulgaria	–0.32	1.08
Czech Republic	0.26	1.03
Estonia	0.18	0.91
Hungary	0.10	0.90
Latvia	0.11	0.94
Lithuania	–0.00	0.95
Poland	–0.03	0.97
Romania	–0.38	1.01
Slovakia	–0.14	1.06
Slovenia	0.22	0.91
Total	0.00	1.00
Significance	*0.000*	
Eta	*0.210*	
F	*56.406*	

Source: Consolidation of Democracy dataset.

non-voters group. However, according to what has been hypothesized earlier, the relations between the two variables are not equal in all the regimes under scrutiny. They differ not only in distribution of diffuse political support index, but also in the strength of relation between voter turnout and this variable. While in some regimes non-voters are much less likely to support the regime in a 'diffuse way', in other systems there is virtually no relation between the two variables. In six out of ten regimes under examination (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia) the relation takes a predicted direction and it is statistically significant; in the remaining four regimes the relation in insignificant.

Table 3

Differences in Diffuse Political Support Index Between Voters and Non-voters in Post-communist Regimes

Country	Mean		Significance	Eta
	Non-voters	Voters		
Bulgaria	–0.3659	–0.3082	0.426	0.024
Czech Republic	0.1050	0.3598	0.000	0.121
Estonia	0.0698	0.2815	0.000	0.117
Hungary	–0.1038	0.1597	0.000	0.121
Latvia	–0.1189	0.2402	0.000	0.184
Lithuania	–0.0604	0.0253	0.156	0.043
Poland	–0.1575	0.0586	0.000	0.109
Romania	–0.5028	–0.3736	0.308	0.031
Slovakia	–0.0817	–0.1482	0.407	0.025
Slovenia	0.1199	0.2541	0.036	0.063
Total	–0.0656	0.0278	0.000	0.043

Source: Consolidation of Democracy dataset.

While Table 3 is based on bivariate analysis, Table 4 (in Appendix) reports the results of multivariate analysis. We find that diffuse political support index has a positive

impact on voter turnout even when controlling for socio-economic variables, such as gender, age, education, income, place of residence and occupational status. It means that if we take two citizens of exactly the same social status (equal age, education, income etc.), but who differently evaluate a regime, then the person with higher level of diffuse political support will be significantly more likely to vote than the person with lower level of diffuse political support. Like in previous analysis regimes are not the same in this respect: positive and statistically significant relation is observed in seven out of ten regimes under scrutiny (the same ones that in Table 3 plus Bulgaria).

As the relations between diffuse political support index and voter turnout are dissimilar in the regimes under examination, we must test our hypotheses, which aim to explain these differences. In order to test our second hypothesis we compare the strength of the relation between voter turnout and diffuse political support index in a given regime, operationalized as Eta, and dispersion of the diffuse political support index in a given regime, measured by standard deviation. According to the hypothesis we would expect these variables to be positively correlated, with increasing value of standard deviation of the index leading to an increased value of Eta. Indeed, a negative relation would effectively falsify the hypothesis, as it would reveal the opposite of what the hypothesis had predicted.

Table 5

Differences in Mean Index of Diffuse Political Support, Standard Deviation, Turnout (calculated on a basis of survey response) and Relations Between Voter Turnout and Diffuse Political Support (Eta) Between Post-communist Regimes

Country	Mean index	St. Deviation	Turnout	Eta
Bulgaria (BG)	–0.32	1.08	0.72	0.02
Czech Republic (CZ)	0.26	1.03	0.62	0.12
Estonia (ES)	0.18	0.91	0.50	0.12
Hungary (HU)	0.10	0.90	0.78	0.12
Latvia (LV)	0.11	0.94	0.63	0.18
Lithuania (LT)	–0.00	0.95	0.66	0.04
Poland (PL)	–0.03	0.97	0.61	0.11
Romania (RO)	–0.38	1.01	0.94	0.03
Slovakia (SK)	–0.14	1.06	0.80	0.03
Slovenia (SL)	0.22	0.91	0.76	0.06

Source: Consolidation of Democracy dataset.

Table 5 displays test results, which are somewhat puzzling. It presents support for an alternative hypothesis, demonstrating a negative relationship between the two variables under scrutiny. In the ten post-communist regimes under scrutiny the strength of the relation between voter turnout and diffuse political support increases as the variance of the diffuse political support variable decreases: in the regimes where citizens' opinions are more dispersed, the relation is statistically insignificant; in the regimes, where citizens' opinions are less dispersed, the relation takes a predicted direction and it is statistically significant. This analysis is of course of limited value (especially as far as statistical significance is concerned), since it pertains only to ten cases. But at least its results clearly show that the strength of the relation between

voter turnout and diffuse political support does not increase with diffuse political support variance.

In order to test our third hypothesis we compare the strength of the relation between voter turnout and diffuse political support index in a given regime, operationalized as Eta, and the level of diffuse political support in a given regime, operationalized as mean of the diffuse political support index. According to the hypothesis we would expect these variables to be negatively correlated, with increasing value of the mean index leading to decreased value of Eta. Indeed a positive relation would effectively falsify the hypothesis, as it would reveal the opposite of what the hypothesis had predicted.

The results of this test are to be found in Table 5. Also in this case it presents clear support for alternative hypothesis, demonstrating a positive relationship between the two variables under scrutiny. In the ten regimes we examine the relation between voter turnout and diffuse political support becomes stronger as the mean value of the diffuse political support index increases. It means that in the regimes where citizens are relatively more satisfied with democratic regime the relation under scrutiny is stronger, while in those regimes, where citizens are relatively less satisfied the relation is weaker. Thus the results reveal exactly the opposite of what the hypothesis had predicted.

Conclusions

The main objective of this paper is to discuss the relations between low voter turnout and democratic legitimacy. Broadly stated, the paper makes three general conclusions. Firstly, the key finding is that post-communist regimes are not the same, at least as far as the relations between low voter turnout and democratic legitimacy are concerned. In some regimes both variables are closely related: voters are much more satisfied with the regime than non-voters. In other regimes there is virtually no relation between the two variables. Therefore our findings clearly indicate that in post-communist regimes a common pattern ruling the relations between voter turnout and diffuse political support does not exist.

Our second conclusion pertains to differences in relations between voter turnout and diffuse political support. Regarding these differences, we find no evidence to support our two hypotheses (hypotheses 2 and 3). In fact we find something quite opposite to what our hypotheses had predicted. Neither 'dispersion hypothesis', nor 'satisfaction hypothesis' can satisfactorily explain variation observed among the ten post-communist regimes we focus on. Failure to find such a relation effectively falsifies them. It must be noted however that these analyses are of preliminary character. There is no doubt that more research is needed. This future research must take into account the variables, which we were unable to include in our analyses: institutional design variables, historical variables, political culture variables etc.

Our third conclusion refers to the main question we ask in the paper: shall we worry about declining voter turnout in post-communist Europe or not? The results

are puzzling. Empirical analyses show that in those regimes, where voters differ significantly from non-voters in respect to diffuse political support, the overall level of democratic legitimacy is higher, while voter turnout is lower. Thus on the one hand we should worry, because (i) the differences are significant, which means that non-voters are less satisfied with the way democracy works, and (ii) turnout is low, which means that the group of 'unsatisfied' (or at least significantly less satisfied) non-voters is relatively high (and it will probably magnify in the future, if downward trend does not change). On the other hand we need not be very anxious, because the overall level of democratic legitimacy in those regimes is relatively high, which means that democracy should not be seriously threatened. In contrast in those regimes, where democratic legitimacy is relatively weaker, voters and non-voters do not differ in respect to diffuse political support. At the same time voter turnout is much higher there. Therefore again we are in a fix, and again we cannot satisfactorily answer our main question.

Nevertheless, to answer this question it is crucial to take a dynamic perspective on the whole issue: if, on the one hand, the decline of voter turnout[24] is accompanied by decreasing diffuse political support, and at the same time differences in diffuse political support between voters and non-voters remain significant or increase, then the situation will be more and more alarming; if, on the other hand, voter turnout decreases, as it is now, but diffuse political support remains stable or increase, the overall picture will be much more optimistic.

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[24] Which is an empirical fact in the ten post-communist democracies under scrutiny: year of election and voter turnout correlate at a –0.462 level (p < 0.01); data for years 1990–2002, parliamentary elections only.

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Appendix

Questions used in construction of diffuse political support index:

Q12. Are you completely satisfied or completely dissatisfied with the way in which democracy is working in (country) today?

| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 |
Completely dissatisfied   Completely satisfied

98—DK
99—NA

Q15. Are you completely satisfied or completely dissatisfied with the way in which the free market economy working in (country) today?

| 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 |
Completely dissatisfied   Completely satisfied

98—DK
99—NA

Q56. Taking everything into account, how contended are you with the present state of democracy in (country)?

1—Totally
2—To a certain point
3—Little
4—Not at all

8—DK
9—NA

Table 4

Determinants of Voter Turnout in Post-communist Regimes

Country		B	Standard error	Significance	Exp(B)
Bulgaria (BG)	DPSINDEX	0.1730	0.0783	0.0272	1.1889
	GENDER	–0.1585	0.1579	0.3156	0.8534
	AGE	0.0302	0.0050	0.0000	1.0306
	EDUCATION	–0.1088	0.1443	0.4508	0.8969
	INCOME	0.1966	0.1223	0.1078	1.2173
	EMPLOY	0.1932	0.1832	0.2915	1.2131
	RESIDENCE	–0.1168	0.0785	0.1369	0.8897
	Constant	–0.0141	0.4549	0.9752	0.9860
Nagelkerke R²		*0.057*			
Czech Republic (CZ)	DPSINDEX	0.3568	0.0740	0.0000	1.4288
	GENDER	–0.3898	0.1428	0.0063	0.6772
	AGE	0.0355	0.0050	0.0000	1.0362
	EDUCATION	0.5679	0.1278	0.0000	1.7646
	INCOME	0.2418	0.1094	0.0270	1.2735
	EMPLOY	–0.0107	0.1696	0.9497	0.9894
	RESIDENCE	–0.1766	0.0640	0.0058	0.8381
	Constant	–1.6890	0.4707	0.0003	0.1847
Nagelkerke R²		*0.157*			
Estonia (ES)	DPSINDEX	0.3578	0.1061	0.0007	1.4301
	GENDER	0.2026	0.1786	0.2564	1.2246
	AGE	0.0317	0.0076	0.0000	1.0322
	EDUCATION	0.3610	0.1699	0.0336	1.4347
	INCOME	–0.0966	0.1442	0.5029	0.9079
	EMPLOY	–0.0449	0.2591	0.8625	0.9561
	RESIDENCE	–0.3864	0.0976	0.0001	0.6795
	Constant	–1.2683	0.6072	0.0367	0.2813
Nagelkerke R²		*0.111*			
Hungary (HU)	DPSINDEX	0.2793	0.0937	0.0029	1.3222
	GENDER	–0.2757	0.1618	0.0885	0.7591
	AGE	0.0186	0.0054	0.0006	1.0187
	EDUCATION	0.5135	0.1522	0.0007	1.6712
	INCOME	0.3222	0.1305	0.0136	1.3802
	EMPLOY	0.1270	0.1862	0.4951	1.1354
	RESIDENCE	–0.1080	0.0665	0.1044	0.8977
	Constant	–0.3729	0.5369	0.4873	0.6887
Nagelkerke R²		*0.071*			
Latvia (LV)	DPSINDEX	0.4744	0.0807	0.0000	1.6071
	GENDER	0.0935	0.1451	0.5193	1.0980
	AGE	0.0412	0.0049	0.0000	1.0421
	EDUCATION	0.2716	0.1145	0.0177	1.3120
	INCOME	0.1386	0.1110	0.2121	1.1486
	EMPLOY	0.8630	0.1548	0.0000	2.3702
	RESIDENCE	–0.2689	0.0529	0.0000	0.7643
	Constant	–2.0261	0.4768	0.0000	0.1319
Nagelkerke R²		*0.205*			

Country		B	Standard error	Significance	Exp(B)
Lithuania (LT)	DPSINDEX	0.0937	0.0797	0.2397	1.0982
	GENDER	0.0257	0.1489	0.8629	1.0261
	AGE	0.0332	0.0050	0.0000	1.0337
	EDUCATION	0.8330	0.1378	0.0000	2.3003
	INCOME	0.0849	0.1220	0.4864	1.0886
	EMPLOY	0.1883	0.1673	0.2604	1.2072
	RESIDENCE	0.0437	0.0638	0.4935	1.0447
	Constant	–2.7294	0.4879	0.0000	0.0653
Nagelkerke R²				*0.111*	
Poland (PL)	DPSINDEX	0.2613	0.0808	0.0012	1.2986
	GENDER	–0.2289	0.1540	0.1372	0.7954
	AGE	0.0359	0.0059	0.0000	1.0365
	EDUCATION	0.7814	0.1411	0.0000	2.1846
	INCOME	0.1430	0.1210	0.2372	1.1538
	EMPLOY	0.1586	0.1851	0.3914	1.1719
	RESIDENCE	–0.0268	0.0760	0.7241	0.9735
	Constant	–2.3244	0.5318	0.0000	0.0978
Nagelkerke R²				*0.123*	
Romania (RO)	DPSINDEX	0.1599	0.1623	0.3247	1.1734
	GENDER	–0.1729	0.2943	0.5569	0.8412
	AGE	0.0224	0.0103	0.0291	1.0227
	EDUCATION	0.2089	0.2366	0.3771	1.2324
	INCOME	0.0279	0.2584	0.9139	1.0283
	EMPLOY	–0.0214	0.3342	0.9491	0.9789
	RESIDENCE	–0.1384	0.2373	0.5598	0.8707
	Constant	2.0636	0.9276	0.0261	7.8746
Nagelkerke R²				*0.025*	
Slovakia (SK)	DPSINDEX	–0.0217	0.0929	0.8149	0.9785
	GENDER	0.0369	0.1862	0.8431	1.0376
	AGE	0.0575	0.0066	0.0000	1.0592
	EDUCATION	0.6680	0.1740	0.0001	1.9503
	INCOME	0.2659	0.1438	0.0644	1.3046
	EMPLOY	0.7182	0.2038	0.0004	2.0507
	RESIDENCE	–0.4162	0.1299	0.0014	0.6596
	Constant	–2.1180	0.5256	0.0001	0.1203
Nagelkerke R²				*0.219*	
Slovenia (SL)	DPSINDEX	0.2898	0.0961	0.0026	1.3361
	GENDER	–0.0293	0.1748	0.8669	0.9711
	AGE	0.0464	0.0065	0.0000	1.0475
	EDUCATION	0.4126	0.1468	0.0050	1.5108
	INCOME	–0.0618	0.1349	0.6471	0.9401
	EMPLOY	0.3372	0.2018	0.0947	1.4010
	RESIDENCE	–0.0410	0.1202	0.7331	0.9599
	Constant	–1.5061	0.5524	0.0064	0.2218
Nagelkerke R²				*0.118*	

Source: Consolidation of Democracy dataset.