How can institutions better explain political trust

than social capital does?

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Abstract

Sweden is an excellent environment to set out a test in: if there's any place we should find a relationship between political trust and social capital it would be here. Having had the last wars at the beginning of the 1800s, Sweden has been a very fertile ground for active popular movements and a vibrant civil society. The crucial question today is, whither there is a connection between lowered political trust in society and activities in these movements and associations. The article examines Robert D. Putnam's claim that social capital spurs the [political] trust in society, but also tests a counter claim. That is, only when we find trustworthy judicial institutions, practicing just and fair procedures, the citizens can relax and feel secure enough to devote time to develop networks of social capital and trust. The tests are carried out on basically three different levels: national, local and on aggregate municipal. The results are proving that in terms of interpersonal trust, Putnam is right. Persons having a higher trust in other people, are also more likely to carry higher political trust. In terms of associational membership and activism, social capital does not explain political trust. The institutional counter-argument, originating from Tom R. Tyler, provides a much better explanation when it comes to understanding political trust on national as well as on municipal levels. This also applies to the aggregate municipal level. In addition, tests are proving that subjective evaluations of service and economic performances also contributes substantially to the explanation of why political trust is higher in some municipalities than in others.

Introduction

THE "CRISIS OF DEMOCRACY" HYPOTHESIS ARE NOT NEW. Quite a number of these arguments have passed over the years, such as the now famous debate between Arthur H. Miller and Jack Citrin on declining trust in government (Miller 1974, Citrin 1974), or the Crisis of democracy-report to the trilateral commission (Croizier, Huntington and Watanuki, 1975). Later on, the Beliefs in Government project (BiG) was trying to investigate wither different aspects of support in government was declining in Western Europe, but the conclusion was that "there 's no immediate crisis in the citizen support in these states" (Kaase and Newton 1996: 119, 141).

Political trust is a topic that has been increasingly discussed the last few years, from different perspectives. Pippa Norris and her colleagues wrote *Critical Citizens* within the frame of the 'Visions of Governance for the Twenty-First Century' at the

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Kennedy School of Government (Norris 1999). An earlier achievement from the same project frame was *Why People Don't Trust Government* (Nye et als. 1997). A more recent achievement in this field is *What is it about government that Americans dislike?* (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2001). The research about political trust has slowly moved from long shoppinglists of hypotheses to more elaborated tests (cf. Pharr 2000: 173). Still, the research in this area is yet underdeveloped, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse puts it this way: "research on public attitudes toward government lags far behind research on participation and vote choice in terms of the scholarly resources (grant money, journal space, etc) devoted to it" (Hibbing et als 2001: 2). There are several reasons for this, political trust is truly a very complex concept and few scholars has had the opportunity to launch investigations here without being criticized for design limitations. A second reason is poor supply of data in relation to the objects that the political trust is focused at. Norris and her colleagues found lots of comparative data on the *support of democracy* level, and the same was true for the BiG-scholars. But when opinions of political trust are being scaled down to specific institutions or even to actors, then the data supply has often been very poor and incoherent.

What I am setting about here is to test two different lines of arguments. The first argument originates from Robert D. Putnam and his colleagues, who tried to find out what characterized a well functioning democracy in Italy (Putnam 1993). His argument would be that a prosperous associative society would result in norms of trust and a well performing democracy. Later on, this conclusion also was transferred to the US, most notably through the book *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000, cf. Putnam 1996). Several of the books on political trust has taken up the social capital hypothesis to tests, for example did Ken Newton discuss the relation between social and political trust in *Critical Citizens*. Also, Pippa Norris and Kenneth Newton discussed the same topic in Pharr and Putnams edited book *Disaffected Democracies* (Pharr and Putnam 2000). Newton found that "political trust cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of, social factors, such as membership of voluntary organizations, community involvement, or social trust." (Newton 1999: 183). Later, Newton and Norris found *weak* relations on individual level between social trust and trust in public institutions (such as for example the government). But on aggregate national levels, Newton and Norris found a substantial relationship between social trust and trust, or confidence, in public institutions. If Putnam was right, looking back to the

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study in Italy, the relationship between social capital/social trust and political trust should possibly *not* be measured at the individual level, but at the aggregate.

The second argument that is up for trial originates from Margaret Levis critique of Robert Putnams conclusions (Levi 1996). First of all, Levi writes that Putnam never claimed to address trust in government or in institutions, but only trust among persons (p. 46). But in that case I would claim, the dependent and independent variables becomes too close, and he sets out to explain *institutional performance* that also highly correlates with *citizen satisfaction*, r=.84 (Putnam 1993: 77). Levis second claim is what I want to put attention to here, that is that *trust of basically any kind* is closely connected to *risk*. A person cannot afford to trust if he lives in an environment of burglars, risky contracts, cheating, law-breaking and continuous free-riding. Levi says, that when public institutions are there to provide security, this can actually work as a cause *why* people's trust-levels start to rise. She writes: "There also needed to be rules and institutions that were transparent and procedurally fair and that had mechanisms for ensuring the credibility of government actors' policy promises." (Levi 1996: 51).

Levi builds her argument on the research of Tom R. Tyler, who in 1990 proved that procedural fairness is an important reason why people accept their fines. He found that people convicted by small crimes like speeding, traffic accidents, carrying drugs, drunk driving etc, they would accept their fine as long as they perceived the *procedures* as just and fair. This included how they had been approached by police and judicial agents, but also how they regarded the process as equal to everyone convicted for the same type of crime (Tyler 1990). Tyler has conducted research within the judicial field as well as the political, and in an article from 1981 he writes:

> "These results support the suggestion from "process politics" that a belief in the fairness of political procedures has a central role in the support that political leaders and institutions receive. They do not support the suggestion of Leventhal et al. (1980) that individuals focus on outcomes rather than procedures in making political evaluations, but do support the suggestion by political scientist that maintaining the "appearance of justice" in government is important. Based on the findings of the studies reported here, it would be expected that a decreased belief that government functions through "fair" procedures would be particularly destructive to citizen support for political leaders and institutions." (Tyler 1981:653)

From these two diverging lines of argument, I started out my dissertation project to find out which was the better explanation for political trust in Sweden. As trust in other persons is comparatively high in Sweden according to the WVS-studies, and the associational life also seemed to be very high in Sweden in international terms (Knack and Keefer 1997, Salamon and Anheier 1997), I decided that *if* there would be a chance to give Putnam's argument a fair try in relation to political trust, it would be here. Another advantage of choosing the Swedish setting was the fortunate data situation. I could test the hypothesis on national level, local level and also on aggregate municipal level. I chose to avoid time-comparative investigations, but to carry out cross-sectional tests from national level year 2000 (RSOM 2000), individuals in 45 municipalities that same year (WSOM 2000)[1] and also to aggregate the data for the 45 municipalities for a separate data file. However, it is a due matter to take up a discussion on how political trust is defined.

The definition of political trust

The numbers of discussions on various sorts of *trust* has enumerated during the last decade, but an important matter is to specify different *types of trust*. First of all we have *horizontal trust* between actors of equal dignity. Horizontal trust most often occur between individuals, but also between organization and partners of equal dignity (cf Offe 1999: 44, 84). Horizontal trust can be both of a *generalized type*, when people trust other people in general, and of a *particularized type*, when people trust other people according to some qualifying criteria.[2] The second main category is *vertical trust*, and this occurs between unequals, such us trust between individuals and institutions or trust between employees and employers.[3] Examples of vertical trust are individuals' trust in the military, in the courts, in the banks, in corporations and in government. Political trust clearly falls into this category.

Political trust was up for discussion already in the 1960s by Robert Lane, William A. Gamson and David Easton (Lane 1962, Gamson 1968, Easton 1965a and b), and the

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[1] I want to thank the SOM-institute at Gothenburg University for their rich supply of data, their cheerful assistance and for having good answers to my questions all the time! www.som.gu.se

[2] Such criteria could be *being a member of an ethnic group, being a member of a certain profession or belonging to certain clubs, fraternities or geographical entities* (see further Warren 1999).

[3] The distinctions are pretty much common knowledge in the *trust*-litterature (but for example it is being used by Offe 1999).

trust concept has also been termed *support* or *confidence*.[4] In an article from 1975, Easton developed his thinking about political support, or political trust, where he explained it as more diffuse in relation to support of the political system, and more precise in relation to the political objects. Easton had an idea of the political system as an input- and output-oriented process, where the support of the input stood in relation to what actually was coming out from the political system (these ideas were developed already in 1965). Eastons argument was far from clear, however, and another contribution were made by Gamson when he defined the different political trust levels as a *hierarchical relation* (Gamson 1968: 50f). Gamson also defined political trust along a single dimension running from high distrust, to neutral trust and to high trust.

These definitions and ideas around the concept of political trust prevailed for much of the 1970s and 80s, and a renewed discussion did not occur until Pippa Norris in the late 1990s developed a five-tier definition of political trust (Norris 1999:10f). The tiers she used was a) *the political community* that was indicated by support for the nation, to be willing to defend the country in times of war and to agree with its defined borders. b) referred to the *core regime principles* such as respect for legal-institutional rights, the rule of law, freedom and tolerance. Level c) was *regime performance*, which related to satisfaction with the performance of democracy and similar issues. d) was support for regime institutions, and Norris here included attitudes towards governments, parliaments, the executive, the legal system, the police, the state bureaucracy, political parties and the military. At the bottom, e), she placed *support for political actors* that included evaluations of single politicians and the performance of particular leaders.

Agreeing that Norris' work is a substantial contribution, I find her definition still too clumsy and a result of the prevailing data situation (cf. Anderson 2000, Huseby 2000: 107-110). Too much interest is being paid to the tiers we know people will support: people in general are happy with how the nations have been defined, they support the principles of democratic rule and the performance of democracy. Further, I think we can miss very important points if we bake all different types of public institutions into the support or trust concept, as the trust or distrust in the military may have

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[4] I will not go into discussion with these terms here, but this is done more explicit in my dissertation. Also, consult Levi 1998).

something important to say about trust in the government or in the congress. Also, I think it is important to think in Eastons terms, not mixing output related items up too much with input related objects.

Therefore, I have chosen a three-tier definition of political trust. It is strongly being influenced by Norris' model, but I have cut out two of the upper levels a) and b). I have kept to Easton's vocabulary, and labelled the three tiers (1) *support of the community,* which is being indicated by support in how democracy works (process item). Second, I have chosen (2) *support in the political institutions*, which is being indicated by trust in government, parliament and political parties. At the local level, I use only one question, support in the municipal council (input item). Third, I have kept the bottom tier (i. e. the most specific), (3) *support in the political actors*. For the national level, this is being indicated by a question on trust in Swedish politicians. At the local level the concept is being indicated by two questions about trust in politicians and local administrators (these are also input items).[5] Figure 1 illustrates my definition of *political trust* as it is being used on national as well as on local levels in the coming analyses.

Figure 1. Components in the concept of Political Trust as used in the article

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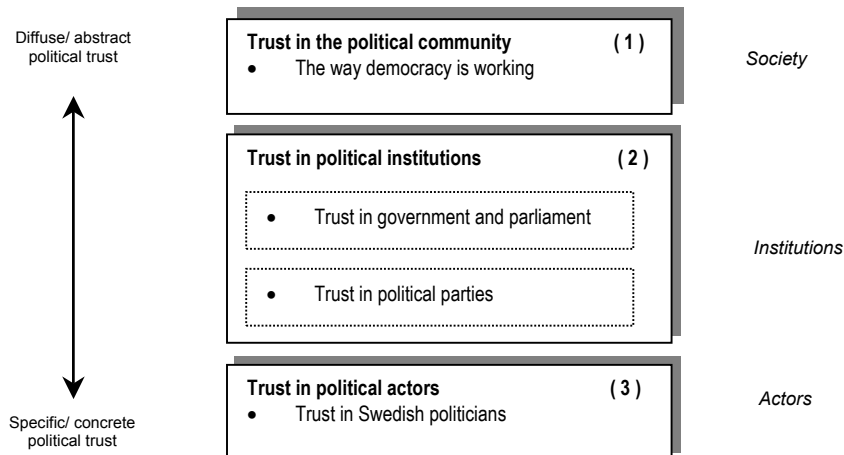
[5] It could be questioned wither local administrators really should be included, as they basically are connected to the executive and output-related activities. However, I have decided that their inclusion improves my indexes and the analyses, and it seem as people in general don't differ very much between the political actors and the executive actors. Of course, this is up to debate.

Figure 1 could be seen as a *model* of how I elaborate and handle the concept of political trust in the rest of the article.

The model to be tested

Let me now specify a different kind of model. An important issue is what *causal* model is assumed in the coming empirical examinations. It is a traditional statistical model that I am elaborating, which begins with a number of background factors. As the effect of *sex* is not significant for Swedish data, it is being excluded in these compressed tests. The same is true on the national level for *age*, but this variable will be included at the local level. Other relevant background variables that I am controlling for are income, political interest, party identification, education, occupation and union affiliation. All of these factors are regarded as SES-factors[6] that can contribute to important background effects, where groups from strong layers of society can be assumed to have a relatively higher political trust (i. e. high income, high political interest, strong party identification, high education, working and white-collar organized). Groups that score low on the same variables may have significantly less political trust.[7]

The possibly most crucial and innovative variable that I use as a background variable, is the factor *ins & outs*. It refers to the old debate between Warren and Citrin back in 1974, where Citrin pointed at the fact that "[w]e tend to trust and like those who agree with us." (Citrin 1974: 973). In *Critical Citizens,* Holmberg elaborates this statement further in general terms (Holmberg 1999: 117). He says, that it is a lot more likely that a person will have higher political trust if he or she has voted for (or sympathize with) any of the parties that constitutes the government. He calls this the '*home team hypothesis*', which means that you will like the party/-ies in government if you voted for any of them, or at least if you sympathize with any of them. As Sweden is a proportional system - even at the local level - several different parties could in coalitions form national as well as local governments. What I have done is to code the variable *ins & outs* for each respondent whither he or she

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[6] SES is short for Socio-Economic Status. For an extended discussion, see for example Verba et. als. 1995.

[7] Occupation and union affiliations are coded as dummy variables.

sympathizes with the parties in the national government[8], or the local government parties, respectively. The coding for the local governments differ from municipality to municipality, depending on which the parties are that have formed the local majority.

Having specified the background variables, it is now time to turn to how the theoretical arguments are indicated and tested. I will begin with the variables related to Putnams theory. Let me first start out saying that there are few indications that the associational life in Sweden should be on the decline, but this is also an unsecure statement due to large variations in methods and reliability in different investigations. At least 85 percent of all citizens are members of at least one association, and the official statistical records indicate that as many as 93 percent of the population do belong to the associational life.[9] The first hypothesis, P_1, that will be tested is wither there is a relation between persons active in associations and higher levels of political trust. I have a qualifying condition when I divide the respondents, where 0=are those who carry no membership at all, .33=those who are members of at least one association, .67=are those who are members and have visited at least one meeting for the last 12 months. Finally, those who carry at least one formal position in any association are coded 1.[10]

The second Putnam hypothesis, P_2, tests if there is any covariation between higher levels of political trust and those having higher (horisontal) trust in other people. Following Putnam, we expect the high-trusters to have a higher political trust that the low-trusters.[11]

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[8] 0 for Social democrats, Left and Environmentalists, 0.5 for "middle parties" like Liberals, Christians and the Center party. 1 is coded for the 'outs' that are the Moderate party and Other parties.

[9] 85 percent of the population are members of popular movements according to the RSOM studies carried out at the University of Gothenburg (refers to year 1998-2000). The national statistical bureau (SCB) counted in 92 percent members in 1994 and the MBU documented even 93 percent memberships. The latter two were OSU-interviews, while the RSOM was questionnaires sent out by the post. The post questionnaires only had eight association items to respond to, while the interview investigations had as many as 30 association items.

[10] At the national level, associatition activity is being asked for the followin categories: a) sports and leisure clubs, b) environmental organizations, c) political parties [excluded], d) union, e) housing affiliation, f) culture and music, g) retired peoples' organizations, h) other association.

[11] This question is measured with a traditional wording: *According to your opinion, do you think that you can trust people in general?* The answer was indicated on an 11-scored scale, transformed to 0 - 1 scale.

As Putnam also refers to the *civicness* of different environments, I wanted to construct an index that would relate to people's perceptions of the *civic spirits* among people in the neighborhood. The third hypothesis that comes up to a serious test here is whither people who estimate the environment to have higher civic spirits also will have a higher political trust. This is hypothesis P_3.[12]

Let us now continue on with the indicators used for Tyler's argument. On national level, I am only able to test if there is a relation between people's trust in judicial institutions, judicial actors and their political trust (T_1). On national level, this is the only Tyler-hypothesis that I test, and it is being indicated by two different indexes. One is *trust in judicial institutions* and it consists of trust evaluations of the courts and of the police. The second is *trust in judicial actors* and it consists of trust evaluations with how judges and lawyers conduct their work. This means that trust in judicial institutions and actors are used as the independent variable, while political trust on three levels (1, 2, 3) are the dependent variable.[13]

At the local level I am going to test two other aspects of Tylers argument. Besides the local test for *trust in judicial actors*[14], I take up two other threads from Tyler's discussion. One thread is the issue of *procedural fairness* that Tyler has emphasized. Tyler has pointed to the facts that the *process issues* are of great importance when it

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[12] I included a question in RSOM and VSOM 2000 that was phrased the following way:

In general, do you think that persons in your neighbourhood…

a) *Would leave a found wallet to the police?*

b) *Withhold income from taxation?*

c) *Would offer help at a traffic accident?*

d) *Are drinking home made liquor? (forbidden in Sweden)*

e) *Take initiatives for the comfort in the area?*

f) *Pays someone salary without reporting to the tax office?*

g) *Would drive drunk in the traffic? [Swedish drunk limits are 0.2⁰⁰/₀]*

Answers were indicated on an 11-scored scale, where the summary index was transformed to 0 -1 scale.

[13] Many American discussants would probably react and say that the judicial system would be regarded as part of the government. I am not convinced that is the case in Sweden, where the courts do not have similar political connections as in the US. Holmberg and Weibull has also shown by factor analyses over different public *institutions*, that the public perceive the police and the courts belonging to the same dimension as the healthcare, the defense, the schools and the universities. For the *occupations*, the public perceive the policemen to the same dimension as social workers, priests, psychologists and teachers, while judges and lawyers are drawn to the dimension of economists and bankers (Holmberg & Weibull 2001).

[14] This index includes [trust in judges, lawyers, prosecutors and policemen]. Cronbach's α=0.86.

comes to how people evaluate the performance of judicial as well as political institutions. I have chosen here to investigate whither there is any correspondence between the citizens' *local political trust* and their understandings of how just or fair the Swedish courts are working. If there exists such a relationship, it would be a substantial proof for Tyler's argument. Respondents were asked here to respond to different questions about *how the Swedish court system works* (for full information on the wording, see Appendix).

The second thread of thought I am taking up from Tyler's discussion is the issue of *process control*. Tyler claims that citizens' possibility to have a say in decisions of either judicial or political matters increases the legitimacy of the final decisions taken - independent of whither the decisions have taken the *voices* into consideration, or not. He states that:

> "Process control involves the degree to which the procedure gives those affected by a decision an opportunity to express their views about how the decision should be made." (Tyler 1985: 72)

The opportunity to have a say has a value in itself, independent of the final outcomes. Based on these assumptions, I will test the correspondence between *local political trust* and the question *Which opportunities do You perceive that You have to affect political decisions in Your municipality?*[15]

To sum up the Tyler part of the discussion, there are three different Tyler hypothesis. The first, T_1, is testing whither there is a correlation between trust in the judicial sphere and political trust. On the national level, I test both for trust in judicial institutions and judicial actors. At the local level, there's only a possibility to test for judicial actors. Hypothesis T_2 and T_3 are only being tested at the local level, where T_2 addresses the issue of *procedural fairness of the Swedish courts*, and T_3 concerns the possibilities of *political decision control*. Let us now turn to the analyses at the different levels to see what we can find out.

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[15] Answers were indicated on a 5-scored scale, plus a don't know box. Answers were recoded to 0 - 1.

National political trust in Sweden

In table 1, I present the results from different multiple regression tests. The dependent variable is an index created by questions from level 1, 2, 3, as described earlier. All together, five different questions have been included, covering evaluation

Table 1. Multiple regression model to explain *national political trust (1, 2, 3)*

Dependent variable: **Political trust, National level (1, 2, 3)**	(bivariate regression)	(multiple regression, backgr.var.)	(multiple: Putnam's variables)	(multiple: Tyler's variables)	(multiple: Putnam's and Tyler's variables)	**(multiple finished model**
Number of variables in the model:	1	14	17	16	19	8
Background factors:	b	b (t)	b (t)	b (t)	b (t)	b (sign.) [VIF][16]
Education	.04	.04 (3.8)	.03 (1.8)	.02 (1.2)	.01 (.98)	-
Income	.05	.04 (2.6)	.00 (.35)	.01 (.49)	.00 (-.15)	-
Political interest	.11	.07 (4.5)	.08 (3.9)	.11 (5.7)	.10 (5.0)	.10 (.00) [1.1]
Union						
Labor	-.01	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
White-collar	.04	.03 (2.5)	.03 (1.8)	.03 (1.9)	.03 (1.7)	-
Academics	.06	.05 (3.1)	.03 (1.1)	.02 (.85)	.02 (.72)	-
Other	-.01	.01 (1.1)	.02 (1.1)	.03 (1.6)	.03 (1.7)	-
Not organized	-.02	.01 (1.4)	.02 (1.2)	.02 (1.5)	.02 (1.5)	-
Occupation						
Working	.01	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
In job-program	-.07	-.08 (-2.7)	-.06 (-1.4)	-.08 (-1.9)	-.06 (-1.4)	-
Unemployed	-.08	-.08 (-4.2)	-.08 (-2.8)	-.10 (-3.9)	-.09 (-3.5)	-.09 (.00) [1.0]
Retired	-.05	.00 (-.76)	.00 (-.65)	.00 (-.50)	.00 (-.60)	-
Working at home	-.07	.00 (-.12)	-.06 (-.98)	-.04 (-.83)	-.06 (-1.1)	-
Student	.02	.02 (1.5)	.03 (1.4)	.00 (.17)	.00 (.42)	-
Ins & outs in relation to governmental parties	-.10	-.12 (-13)	-.10 (-7.6)	-.11 (-8.9)	-.10 (-8.2)	-.09 (.00) [1.0]
Party identification	.09	.10 (9.6)	.11 (6.9)	.09 (5.9)	.08 (5.8)	.08 (.00) [1.1]
Putnam's factors						
P_1 Associational engagement	.06		.03 (1.8)	-	.03 (2.0)	.03 (.02) [1.1]
P_2 Trust in other people	.22		.16 (6.4)	-	.08 (3.5)	.10 (.00) [1.1]
P_3 Civic spirits in the neighborhood	.14		.06 (1.8)	-	.03 (1.6)	-
Tyler's factors						
T_1 Trust in courts and the police[17]	.43			.25 (7.7)	.23 (6.8)	.24 (.00) [1.3]
Trust in lawyers and judges[18]	.33			.15 (5.0)	.14 (4.7)	.15 (.00) [1.3]
Constant		39	.25	.16	.11	**.11**
F		26	16	24	21	**48**
Adjusted R²=		.12	.17	.23	.25	**.25**
Number of respondents (n):		2560	1218	1199	1158	**1158**
(method)		(enter)	(enter)	(enter)	(enter)	(stepwise)

Kommentar: *(b) signifies unstandardized b-values, but standardization is given anyway as all explanators are transferred to a scale between 0 and 1. This results in the possibility to read b-values as percentages of the scales answered in the questionnaire. (t-values) are Student's t , the larger the more significant. Values closer to 0 are hardly significant. In the finished model to the right, significances are entered for all explaining factors.* **Source:** *RSOM 2000, University of Gothenburg.*

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[16] VIF-statistics informs about the collinearity tolerance, where $0.2 < VIF < 10$. VIF is expected to center around 1.0, and when it is approaching 0.2 it tends to be a serious problem, as if it approaches 10 (Field 2000: 153). That is not the case here.

[17] This index is significant for normality, K-S=0.13 (p=.000). Cronbach's α=0.45. α is actually too low, but to minimize the risk of multicollinearity, I mean it is better to build an index of these two questions than analyzing them one by one.

[18] This index is significant for normality, K-S=0.17 (p=.000). Cronbach's α=0.77.

about *society [the way democracy works (1)], trust in political institutions [government, parliament, political partes (2)]*, and the fifth question is an evaluation of the *political actors [Swedish politicians, (3)]*.[19] As we can see, the background variables sums up to an $R^2=0.12$. After adding the Putnam variables, R^2 increases to 0.17, i. e. $\Delta R=0.05$. If we instead add the Tyler hypotheses, ΔR amounts to 0.13, more than the doubled effect compared to the Putnam variables. However, in the finished model, we find that both Putnam's and Tyler's hypotheses are significantly contributing to explain *trust in national political institutions*. I found that very few of the background variables turned out significant in the finished model. People that are *very interested in politics* have 10 percent higher political trust than those *not at all interested in politics*. Unemployed people have 9 percent lower political trust than others do, and those who voted for parties that do *not* constitute the government also tend to have 9 percent lower political trust. Persons who strongly identifies with their party choice tend to have 8 percent higher political trust than those who feel more loosely affiliated with their party choice.

In sum, the Putnam hypotheses contribute with 13 percent increased political trust, where those having a position in an association have 3 percent higher political trust than nonmembers in any association. People who say that *you can trust other people most of the time* in general have 10 percent more political trust than those saying *in general, you cannot trust people*. The Tyler hypotheses on the other hand contributes with 39 percent political trust, where *very large trust* in judicial institutions results in 24 percent higher political trust compared to the nontrusters. Very large trust in judicial actors significantly contributes with 15 percent higher political trust compared to those having very low trust in judicial actors.

It is difficult to compare different b-values to each other, is 15 apples better than 3 pears? It just depends on the relative values, maybe 3 stones of gold are preferred by most people to 15 ordinary rocks (cf. Halleröd and Stern 1991). It is a dubious task to judge wither the Tyler factors override the Putnam factors, but here we can at least conclude that credit and attentions *should* be paid also to the performance of the judicial sphere when we wonder about the decreasing political trust. Putnam's hypothesis P_3 did not receive any significance here, and the strongest factor in his argument proves to be *trust in other people*. This relationship is also being

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[19] Chronbach's $\alpha=0.87$ for the five item scale.

established *under control* for relevant background factors, not the least the *home team hypothesis*. Holmberg is perfectly right here, that it matters for the national political trust levels, if respondents are sympathizers of the current government or not. When the same analysis is being carried out only for a single political trust level, trust in political institutions (2), essentially the same result will appear. Now it is time to extend the analysis to the local level.

Local political trust in Sweden

At the local level, I use the WSOM 2000 dataset, that in many respects is very similarly designed as the national RSOM 2000. The dependent variable is changing substantially here, but not conceptually. Substantially, I am now creating my index from evaluations of *local political objects*, such as the local municipal board, local politicians and administrators. Conceptually, it is still evaluations of the political *society, institutions* and *actors* that stay in focus.[20]

The first question of interest is naturally *if* it at all is possible to transfer the national analysis to the local level. A theoretical argument for the transfer, is that the decentralization trend in Sweden throughout the 1980s and 1990s has turned the municipalities into the primary supplier of welfare such as schooling, social care, housing and child care. Today the municipalities and the *landsting*[21] together make up 72 percent of the total public GNP, and 19 percent of the GNP in the country (SCB 2001). Also, research has shown that the number of newspaper articles covering local politics and matters has increased during the same period of time (Asp, Johansson and Larsson 1997). These facts support the relevance of asking people their trust in local politicians, local political institutions and how they think democracy really is working in their own muncipality. Will there be the same factors that distinguish between the local hightrusters and the local lowtrusters?

Table 2 will contribute to these answers. As party identification is not being asked in the local survey, I haven't been able to control for this factor. However, it really is a complex task to discern local party identification from the national, so I hardly see the relevance. More interestingly, I have coded for local party preference and for

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[20] The four questions that sums up in the *local political trust index* scales together Cronbach's $\alpha=0.82$.

[21] Regional divisions whose major tasks are transportation, healthcare and hospital services.

Table 2. Multiple regression model to explain *local political trust (1, 2, 3)*

Dependent variable: **Political trust,** **Local level (1, 2, 3)**	bivariate regression	(multiple regression, backgr.var.)	(multiple: Putnam's variables)	(multiple: Tyler's variables)	(multiple: Putnam's and Tyler's variables)	**(multiple finished model)**
Number of variables in the model:	1	13	16	16	19	8
Background factors:	b	b (t)	b (t)	b (t)	b (t)	b (sign.) [VIF][22]
Education	.03	.01 (1.2)	.00 (.50)	-.02 (-1.7)	-.02 (-1.9)	-
Income	.05	.03 (1.4)	.00 (.39)	-.01 (-.74)	-.02 (-1.1)	-
Political interest	.09	.06 (3.8)	.06 (.3.8)	.02 (1.5)	.03 (1.7)	-
Union						
Labor	-.03	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
White-collar	.05	.04 (3.3)	.03 (2.1)	.02 (1.5)	.01 (1.0)	-
Academics	.04	.03 (1.6)	.02 (.97)	.02 (1.2)	.02 (1.1)	-
Other	-.02	.00 (-.10)	-.01 (-.79)	.00 (.05)	.00 (-.29)	-
Not organized	.00	.00 (-.40)	.00 (-.48)	.00 (-.60)	.00 (-.43)	-
Occupation						
Working	.00	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.	Ref.
In job-program	-.03	.00 (.12)	.00 (-.00)	-.03 (-.90)	-.04 (-1.2)	-
Unemployed	-.07	-.05 (-2.4)	-.05 (-2.6)	-.06 (-2.6)	-.06 (-2.6)	-.05 (.01) [1.0]
Retired	.02	.03 (2.3)	.02 (2.2)	.02 (1.8)	.02 (1.6)	.03 (.00) [1.1]
Working at home	.00	.02 (.46)	.02 (.65)	-.01 (-.45)	-.01 (-.43)	-
Student	-.04	.00 (.52)	.01 (.95)	-.02 (-1.5)	-.02 (-1.1)	-
Ins & outs in relation to local						
governments	-.05	-.05 (-5.9)	-.04 (-5.6)	-.03 (-4.0)	-.03 (-3.5)	-.03 (.00) [1.0]
Putnam's factors						
P[1] Associational engagement	.02		.00 (1.6)	-	.00 (-.18)	-
P[2] Trust in other people	.24		.20 (11)	-	.10 (5.1)	.10 (.00) [1.1]
P[3] Civic spirits in the neighborhood	.11		.05 (1.8)	-	.06 (2.0)	.06 (2.3) [1.1]
Tyler's factors						
T[1] Trust in judicial actors[23]	.33			.18 (8.7)	.17 (8.0)	.16 (.00) [1.2]
T[2] Procedural fairness of Swedish courts[24]	.34			.18 (7.7)	.16 (7.0)	.16 (.00) [1.3]
T[3] Process control[25]	.30			.23 (15)	.22 (15)	.22 (.00) [1.1]
Constant		.45	.29	.22	.14	.13
F		7.8	16	42	38	88
Adjusted R^2=		.04	.10	.28	.29	.29
Number of respondents (n):		2304	2235	1716	1677	1677
(method)		(enter)	(enter)	(enter)	(enter)	(stepwise)

Comments: (b) signifies unstandardized b-values, but standardization is given anyway as all explanators are transferred to a scale between 0 and 1. This results in the possibility to read b-values as percentages of the scales answered in the questionnaire. (t-values) are Student's t , the larger the more significant. Values closer to 0 are hardly significant. In the finished model to the right, significances are entered for all explaining factors. **Source:** *WSOM 2000, University of Gothenburg.*

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[22] VIF-statistics informs about the collinearity tolerance, where 0.2<VIF<10. VIF is expected to center around 1.0, and when it is approaching 0.2 it tends to be a serious problem, as if it approaches 10 (Field 2000: 153). That is not the case here.

[23] As discussed at page 10.

[24] As discussed at page 10 and Appendix.

[25] As discussed at page 11.

which parties that constitute the local government in each municipality. Depending on in which municipality the respondents are living, I have coded *ins & outs*=0 if they sympathize with local parties in government, and 1 if they sympathize with the local opposition.

A lesson from table 2 is first of all that it is as relevant to analyze political trust in Sweden at the municipal level as it is at the national level, as the R^2 from the finished model is even higher here than at the national level (R_n^2=0.25, R_l^2=0.29). However, the significant effect we found from the background variables at the national level where substantially higher at R^2=0.12, while only R^2 of 0.04 was produced by these variables at the local level. Also, the effect of the *home team hypothesis* was only about a third of the effect we received in the national finished model ($b_{national}$=-.09, b_{local}=-.03). That also makes sense, it is at the national level the voters has the most clear picture of who is in power, and it is very likely that the proportion of respondents that have the political picture correct at the local level is substantially lower.

The most interesting results here however, are that I find similar effects from *trust in other people* as I did nationally, in fact the b-values are the same in the finished models ($b_{national,\ local}$=.10). At the local level I cannot find any significant effect from those active in associations compared to the non-activists.[26] On the other hand, I find a smaller effect from the explanation *civic spirits in the neighborhood* (discussed in detail at page 9f). All together, Putnam's variables sum up to 16 percent of higher local political trust, and here P_2 is validated once again, and P_3 is also validated while no confirmation can be given to hypothesis P_1 at the local level.

What is exciting news for Tyler, is that his hypotheses are also confirmed in all three aspects. There is indeed a relationship between people's local political trust and how they evaluate judicial actors including the police (T_1), and the relationship is also extendable to how people perceive the fairness of judicial procedures (T_2). Even

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[26] At the local level, association engagement is asked for the following categories: a) union, b) parent organization, c) home district organization, d) humanitarian org., e) housing org., f) sports and leisure org., g) immigration org., h) consumer coops, i) culture and music org:s, j) womens org:s, k) local action groups, l) environmental org:s, m) motor org:s, n) retired people's org:s, o) political parties [excluded], p) other organization. Answers indicate 0=Not member in any of the above, 0.33=Member in at least one organization, 0.67=Member and has been to a meeting during the last 12 months in at least one of the above, 1.0=Member and has a formal position in at least one of the organizations above.

though the judicial processes are state (national) matters, they take place in the local environment, and it is impossible here to say if these attitudes are formed by personal experiences or mainly by media messages. However, this is an important finding, as it is of great importance for policymakers and people concerned by lowered political trust statistics, are the cures to be found at the individual level or at the institutional levels of society? Tyler's third hypothesis, stating that it is important that citizens feel they have an opportunity to raise their voices in relation to political decisions (even if this opportunity never is being used), is also being confirmed here (T_3). This result underlines the importance of transparent political structures where people feel that *if* they want to reach out to the politicians or to the deciding bodies, they are not far away. This could vary from locality to locality and could in the end be just a matter of how much information do citizens have about how to raise his or her voice. From the author's experience of politics, three telephone calls to a politician from three different people is often considered as a mass protest. In sum, I find that people who have high trust in [the police, judges, lawyers and prosecutors], and that have very high thoughts about the judicial procedures in Sweden, and who also think that there are good possibilities to affect local politics, those are the persons who in general have 54 percent higher local political trust than others (16+16+22). This conclusion supports Margaret Levi's statement that there might be that where [judicial] institutions are providing trustworthy actors, procedures and opportunities to exercise *voice*, there we will also find trust growing, probably in both *vertical* and *horizontal* directions. The causal directions cannot be proven here, however, but these results may encourage further investigations.

Aggregated political trust

My data allows a third analysis: at the aggregate municipal level. One important reason for this measure, is that Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* was presented at a comparative regional level, and it has been an argument in the social capital debate that this is the appropriate level to find the social capital effects. Also, Newton and Norris' analysis suggests that there might be results to be found in this direction (Newton and Norris 2000). One of the advantages from *Making Democracy Work* is that it uses the design as a *natural laboratory* with before and after observations (cf. Laitin 1995: 172). I have not the opportunity to repeat the before-and-after design in Sweden, but what I can do is to aggregate the individual local political trust measures to the municipal level. After presenting the variation of aggregated local political

trust in 45 of the Swedish municipalities, I will introduce some new variables to the reader apart from the Putnam hypotheses that also will be tested.[27] Table 3 displays the variation of local political trust levels in the 45 municipalities in West Sweden, ranging from 48 as the lowest average to 61 as the highest. Local political trust was measured in the same way as was described for the individual local level, but has here been aggregated to population means (abbreviated LPF). As the same questions has been asked for three years in a row to different respondents in the same municipalities, it was possible to pool the data together over these three years, WSOM 1998, 1999, 2000.

Table 3. Local political trust (LPF) in muncipalities of West 1998, 1999 och 2000 (averages per municipality, n=45)

Municipality	LPF	(n)	Stdev.	Municipality	LPF	(n)	Stdev.	Municipality	LPF	(n)	Stdev.
Strömstad	61	62	19	Ulricehamn	50	161	19	Bollebygd	47	50	19
Lidköping	60	244	19	Götene	50	89	20	Borås	47	606	19
Tipro	58	73	19	Lerum	50	186	19	Partille	47	170	18
Lysekil	58	101	22	Mölndal	49	315	20	Uddevalla	46	276	20
Tranemo	55	71	19	Stenungsund	49	132	19	Ale	45	134	19
Kungälv	53	208	18	Orust	49	96	18	Skara	45	102	19
Mark	53	204	17	Vårgårda	49	63	19	Åmål	44	73	19
Sotenäs	53	55	22	Falköping	49	204	21	Munkedal	43	58	22
Trollhättan	52	304	18	Tjörn	49	88	19	Vänersborg	42	262	20
Skövde	52	314	19	Vara	49	97	20	Karlsborg	41	57	21
Tanum	52	67	20	Härryda	48	171	20	Mariestad	41	164	19
Tidaholm	52	82	19	Svenljunga	47	55	19	Mellerud	41	70	21
Alingsås	50	184	19	Bengtsfors	47	71	19	Herrljunga	40	55	21
Kungsbacka	50	364	19	Göteborg	47	2448	20	Lilla Edet	37	66	22
Öckerö	50	76	21	Töreboda	47	55	19	Hjo	35	51	19
								Total West Sweden:	48	9042*	20

Comments: The records above builds on an index of four questions, a) How satisfied are You with the way democracy is working in Your municipality? b) How do You think the municipal board of Your municipality is conducting its task? c) In general, how much trust do You have in the municipal politicians? d) In general, how much trust do You have in the municipal administrators? (*)=This number is based on all of West Sweden and also include respondents from five of the municipalities that had too few respondents to be presented as separate in the table. In ANOVA analysis, the F-value is 8,4 (,00) for differences in LPF between municipalities. Source: WSOM 1998, 1999 och 2000.

For those interested in how the residuals spread out, consult figure 2 in Appendix. Even if the F-value is relatively low, it is significant and from the residual analysis, we see that there are significant differences in both tails. The figure below maps out how the differences in LPF do spread out geographically. The crucial issue here is to

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[27] Sweden has 289 municipalities in all, and I will present data from 45 municipalities in the region of West Sweden. As a rule of thumb, I exclude municipalities where n<50 respondents (Newbold 1991: 252).

figure out, why are the populations in Strömstad, Lidköping and Tibro so much happier with their local democracy, government and politicians compared to the populations of Lilla Edet and Hjo? Several types of background variables could fairly contribute to the answers, and I have discussed in other material that the effects from municipal structure and size, the population size, age compositions and education proportions per municipality does not really contribute to the story (Norén Bretzer 2002). The background variables I will use here are only of political character:

- What is the proportion of [socialists] in government? (in percent)
- What is the proportion of [socialists and left party] in government? (in percent)
- What is the proportion of [moderate+center+liberal+christian parties] in government? (in percent)
- Does the population sympathize with the parties in government? [mean of *ins&outs*]
- What was the voting turnout per municipality in the election in 1998?

Figure 1. Local political trust in West Sweden, LPF per municipality
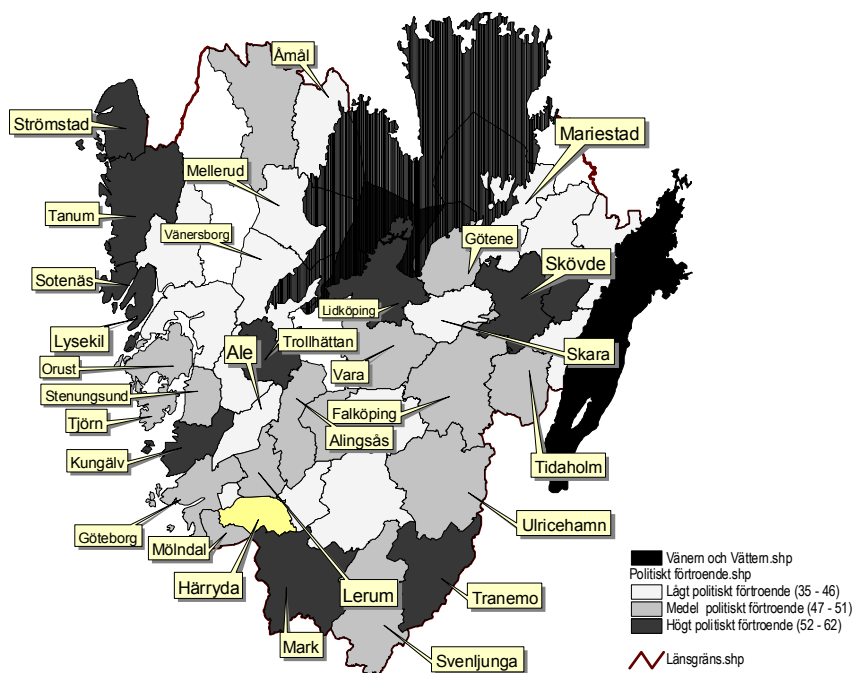
In the debate on political trust, we often hear that economic explanations seem to be of importance to political trust, but the empirical results of economic explanations often go in diverging directions. Some researchers point to their importance (like

Table 3. Political and economic explanations to LPF in West Sweden (bivariate regression)

	Pearsons r	R^2	R^2 (adj.)	b	n	Sign.
Political explanations:						
Percent social democrats in local gov. (public rec.)	.28	.08	.06	.24	45	.06
Percent [social dem+left] in local gov.	.23	.05	.03	.16	45	.13
Percent [right wing parties] in local gov.	-.04	.00	-.02	-.03	45	.78
Ins- & outs mean per municipality	.00	.00	-.02	-.14	44	.99
Voting turnout in municipal elections 1998[28]	-.07	.01	-.02	-.14	45	.64
Economic and service explanations:						
Unemployment programs (net value per citizen) [29]	.16	.03	.00	.00	45	.28
Net cost municipal activities 2000 [30]	-.06	.00	-.02	.00	45	.70
Local municipal tax level 2000 [31]	-.36	.13	.11	-2.9	45	.02
Result (kr) per citizen year 2000 [32]	.11	.01	-.01	.00	45	.48
Subjective opinion about the municipal economy 1998, 1999, 2000 [33]	.78	.60	.59	.26	43	.00
Level of municipal output (serviceindex) 2000 [34]	.17	.03	.00	.14	40	.29
Satisfaction with the municipal service 1998, 1999, 2000 [35]	.77	.59	.58	1.0	45	.00

Comment: The unstandardized b-value is read as the factor as the dependent factor (y) increases with, when the independent factor (x) is increased with 1 unit.

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[28] The results come from the national statistical bureau (SCB) and was published in *Statistiska meddelanden*, Me 10 SM 9801, table 11, p. 46.

[29] This variable is from *What does the activities of Your municipality cost? Bokslut 2000* (SK and SCB). Minimum value is 71kr and maximum is 738 kr per citizen. (kr) is the Swedish currency.

[30] Net cost for the municipal activities minus incomes from state subsidies and user fees. Source: *Vad kostar verksamheten i Din kommun? Bokslut 2000* (SCB och SK s. 88). min=27.024 (Lerum) and max=33.178 kr per invånare (Dals-Ed).

[31] Local tax level in percent of 100kr per municipality. Max=22,97 (Gullspång) and min=19,83 (Kungsbacka).

[32] From *Yearbook for Swedish municipalities 2000* (SCB 2000), table 19. Yearly results in kr per citizen, min=-6.023 (Lysekil) och max=1.519 (Strömstad).

[33] Opinion about the municipal economy. The followint question was asked to selected respondents in West Sweden 1998, 1999 and 2000: *What do You think about the economy in Your municipality?* a) Very good economy, b) fairly good economy, c) either good or bad economy, d) fairly bad economy, e) very bad economy. An additional response was also possible, f) No opinion. After aggregating, averages per municipality is being used here, where min=9 (Karlsborg) och max=92 (Lidköping).

[34] Supply levels of municipal service 2000. For details, consult p. 255 in *Vad kostar verksamheten i Din kommun? Bokslut 2000* (SCB and SK), table 10. Min=84 (Herrljunga) och max=109 (Lidköping).

[35] *Nöjd med service* har ställts som en 5-delad fråga i Väst-SOM 1998, 1999 och 2000. Svaren har anpassats till en 0-100-skala, och här redovisas medelvärden för svarspersonerna i varje kommun. Min=53 (Lilla Edet) och max=71(Lidköping).

Citrin and Lukes 2001, Citrin and Green 1986, House and Mason 1975), while Kirsten Renwick Monroe concluded that economic factors prove to be potent in some political trust studies but not in others (Monroe 1984). The single most important factor she found was unemployment (ibid. s. 178). She also found more significant effects from macroeconomic variables than from redistributive, in other words, people are more concerned with the overall economic situation than with how the wealth is divided between groups. I am testing a few economic explanations above in table 3, to find out whither they contribute to the variation of LPF in the municipalities of West Sweden. I will also include some output-related questions, to investigate if the different service levels are fruitful explanations. It is often suggested, not least by Easton back in 1974, that the political trust levels depend on citizen evaluations of the political output. Let me present the *economic and service explanations* together with the *political* variables in table 3 above.

The finding is that only *one* of the political variables seems to play a possible role of importance, that is the *share of social democrats* that are in power in the local government. The variable is not significant at the .95-percent level, however, but I will include this possible explanation into later multivariate tests. Among the economic indicators, we find two possible suspects. That is the *level of municipal taxes* and the citizen's *average evaluations of the local financial situation*. Finally, among the two service factors, there seems to be another strong predictor in *citizen satisfaction with local services*. Four possible suspects were washed out here, but we need to await the multiple regression test together with possible Putnam hypotheses on aggregate level.

Putnam variables at the aggregate level

Next step in the puzzle is to figure out relevant Putnam indicators at the aggregate level. Luckily, Sweden is a country with comparably well supplies of public statistics, and I shall here continue to combine some of the official records with the aggregate RSOM and WSOM records. Unluckily, I have not been able to trace enough data to be able to test the Tyler hypothesis at aggregate levels. When I aggregate my WSOM 2000 data, I get only 17 municipalities left, which are too few for any significant conclusions. Therefore, I stick only to my Putnam variables at this level.

To test the first Putnam hypothesis, P_1, (activity in associations → higher political trust), I have one official record on how active the municipal populations are in civic clubs, associations and alike. The second indicator is an aggregated variable from WSOM, stating how active the municipal populations are in average in their clubs and associations. I have also created a third indicator, inspired by the Italian study, that only measures the average activities in sports and cultural clubs (cf. Putnam 1993: 96). To test if we at the aggregate level can find any effect from *average trust in other people,* I am testing hypothesis P_2 with the aggregated WSOM data as an indicator. The third Putnam hypothesis about citizen's *civicness*, P_3, will have two different indicators. The first is the level of morning newspaper reading per municipality, where persons reading morning newspapers 4 days per week or more, has been coded 1, and those reading less was coded 0. The average aggregate mean per municipality is used as one indicator of civicness (cf Putnam 1993: 96). A second indicator of civicness is the share of preference voting[36] that all the parties received in the local elections in 1998. Putnam perceives preference voting as a negative indicator, where higher levels of preference voting indicates lower civicness. Below, we can see if the same relationship is being traced in the Swedish case.

Unfortunately for Putnam's theory, the relationships presented here are very weak. *Average associational engagement* even seem to present a negative relationship, in opposite direction than suggested. The same also applies to *newspaper readership*, municipalities with *higher* newspaper readership seems to have *lower* LPF. The odds doesn't look good, but we must await the final multiple regression test before any serious conclusions are drawn.

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[36] This means the share of the population per municipality that voted for a certain person, and not only for a party in general. This was the first election in Sweden when voting for party affiliated candidates was opened.

Table 4. Putnam's explanations to LPF in West Sweden (bivariate regression)

	Putnam's explanations:	Pearsons r	R^2	R^2 (adj.)	b	n	Sign.
P_1	Hours in civic associations per 1000 inhabitants[37]	.05	.00	-.02	.00	45	.75
P_1	Average associational engagement [38]	-.06	.00	-.02	-3.7	45	.71
P_1	Activity in sports- & cultural clubs[39]	.20	.04	.02	.80	45	.20
P_2	Average trust in other people [40]	.17	.03	.01	.34	45	.26
P_3	Average newspaper readership[41]	-.19	.04	.02	-6.8	45	.20
P_3	Percentage preference voting[42]	-.17	.03	.01	-.15	45	.25

Comment: *The unstandardized b-value is read as the factor as the dependent factor (y) increases with, when the independent factor (x) is increased with 1 unit.*

Table 5 displays the multiple regression in three different steps. When I test for the *political, economic* and *service explanations,* I find that these variables together explain as much as 76 percent of the total variance in LPF. The model is significant but at a fairly low level as the F-value is not more than 10. When the Putnam variables are added, the total R^2 increase is not more than 1 percent, and what is even more surprising, is that when most variables are excluded in the last model, we get the highest explained variance, R^2 reaches 78 percent. Only three variables are responsible for this effect, and the primary explanation is *population satisfaction with municipal service*. A population that on average increase their satisfaction from 60 to 70 satisfaction points, should get a 6.5 higher LPF in their municipality. Secondly, if the average satisfaction with the municipal economy increases from 60 to 70, this should result in a 1.8 increase in LPF. The third variable was an early suspect, *proportion of municipal seats held by the social democratic party*. The factor is on the verge of being .95 percent significant, but I find the evidence is too important

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[37] From *Statistiska meddelanden*, (Ku SM 9901), data for civic associations, clubs etc. for 1998. Min=145, max=542 hours per 1000 inhabitants.

[38] The same variable as discussed at page 9. Here VSOM data from 1998, 1999, 2000 has been pooled and aggregated to municipal averages. 1=Nonmember, 2=Member but no meeting, 3=Member and has been to a meeting, 4=Member and has a position. Min=2.6 and max=2.9.

[39] Activities of different levels in sports- and cultural associations, where 0=Non member, 16.7=Member but not active, 33.3=Member and has been to a meeting, and 50=Member and has a position. Maximum for the individual is 100, i. e. the person has a position in both types of organizations. After aggregating means per municipality, min=11.3 (Herrljunga) and max=17.4 (Tjörn). VSOM 1998, 1999, 2000.

[40] Discussed in note 8 (individual level). Responses to the same question has been pooled from VSOM 1998, 1999, 2000 and aggregated to municipal means. Min=57.8 (Tranemo) and max=71.9 (Öckerö).

[41] Reads newspaper <4 days per week=0, Newspaper reading 4-7 days per week=1. Pooled responses for VSOM 1998, 1999, 2000 has been aggregated to municipal means, where min=0.25 and max=0.86 (Bollebygd).

[42] This data is from *Allmänna valen 1998*, del 3, table 6 (SCB). Min=32.8 (Härryda) and max=62.0 (Hjo).

Table 5. Multiple regression model to explain *aggregated local political trust* (LPF)

Dependent variable: **Aggregate political trust, Local level (1, 2, 3)**	(multiple regression, economic & service.var.)	(multiple: Putnam's variables)	**(multiple finished model)**
Number of variables in the model:	12	18	3
	b (t) [VIF]	b (t) [VIF]	b (sign.) [VIF]
Political explanations:			
Percent [social democrats]	.23 (1.7) [5.0]	.43 (2.0) [13]	.13 (.05) [1.1]
Percent [social dem+left]	-.10 (-.89) [5.9]	-.30 (-1.7) [15]	-
Percent [right wing parties]	-.03 (-.43) [3.2]	-.09 (-1.1) [4.3]	-
Ins & outs per municipality	-8.0 (-1.1) [1.2]	-10 (-1.3) [1.6]	-
Voting turnout local elec. 1998	-.52 (1.7) [2.7]	-.72 (-1.7) [5.0]	-
Economic explanations:			
Unemployment programs	.00 (-.25) [1.7]	.00 (-.60) [2.2]	-
Net cost municipal activities	.00 (-.95) [2.6]	.00 (-1.1) [3.4]	-
Local municipal tax level 2000	.23 (.20) [3.6]	-1.4 (-.96) [6.1]	-
Result (kr) per citizen 2000	.00 (-1.8) [1.6]	.00 (-1.2) [3.0]	-
Subjective opinion about local Economy 1998, 1999, 2000	.23 (4.0) [4.8]	.16 (2.1) [9.2]	.18 (.00) [1.5]
Service explanations:			
Level of municipal output 2000	-.12 (-1.4) [1.4]	.02 (.14) [2.7]	-
Satisfaction with municipal service 1998, 1999, 2000	.60 (3.9) [1.9]	.62 (3.6) [2.5]	.65 (.00) [1.6]
Putnam's variables:			
P₁ Hours in civic associations per 1000 inhabitants		.02 (2.3) [2.2]	-
Average associational engagement 1998,1999, 2000		-3.3 (-.42) [2.3]	-
Activity in sports & cultureclubs		.47 (.86) [2.5]	-
P₂ Average trust in other people		.38 (1.1) [6.2]	-
P₃ Average newspaper readership		-2.3 (-.58) [2.5]	-
P₃ Percentage preference voting		-.10 (-.90) [2.8]	-
Constant:	64	89	-2.9
F	10	7.7	49
Number of municipalities (n):	38	38	43
Explained variance (R²):	.76	.77	.78
(method)	(enter)	(enter)	(enter)

Kommentar: (b) signifies unstandardized b-values, but standardization is given anyway as all explanators are transferred to a scale between 0 and 1. This results in the possibility to read b-values as percentages of the scales answered in the questionnaire. (t-values) are Student's t , the larger the more significant. Values closer to 0 are hardly significant. In the finished model to the right, significances are entered for all explaining factors. [VIF-value]=indicates the tolerance for multicollinearity, where VIF >10 is problematic, as VIF<0.2 (Field 2000: 153). Source: RSOM 2000, University of Gothenburg.

here to be left aside. If the percentage of social democrats increases from 30 percent of the seats to 40, that should result in a 1.3 increase in the populations' LPF. But what is interesting to find is also that the b-values are *negative* if we measure [social democrats + left], which is their main coalition partner at the national level. Investigating the local coalitions much closer, I find many more pragmatic constellations, where it is equally common that Social Democrats go into a coalition

cooperation with the *Center party* (Alingsås, Mellerud, Munkedal, Skara, Sotenäs, Stenungsund and Vårgårda) or the *Christian party* (Öckerö), as in coalition with the *Left party* (Ale, Göteborg, Lidköping, Lilla Edet, Mariestad, Mark, Mölndal, Trollhättan and Uddevalla). Some municipalities also have so called "swinging majorities" for different issues (Färgelanda, Orust, Svenljunga, Tidaholm).

Conclusion

Several findings have been reported in this article. First of all, I have shown that it is as relevant to discuss *political trust* at the national level in Sweden as well as at the local (municipal). The *objects* differ, as we have different institutions and actors at the different levels, but it seems as if the survey respondents are able to discuss the two levels in separation from one other. However, the effect of *ins & outs* as a control factor, was much more significant at the national level, compared to the local, which implies that the citizens are not always able to discern the *local political landscape* from the national. In other words, fewer people at the local level knows which party is in a majority position and which is not (cf. Holmberg 1993). Still, we reached an explained variance (R^2) of 0.25 at the national level, and at the local level we explained 0.29 percent of the political trust variation.

The strongest Putnam predictor at both levels was *trust in other people* (b=.10)[43], and the effect of associational engagement contributed only weakly at the national level (b=.03) but not at the local. Instead, I found a weak effect from *civic spirits in the neigbourhood* (b=.06) at the local level. It was not possible to detect any aggregate effects from Putnam's argument, as the explained variance increased only 1 percent when the Putnam variables were added (ΔR^2).

When it comes to Tyler's argument, it was possible to wash out ΔR^2=0.11 at the national level and ΔR^2=0.24 at the local levels, when Tyler's hypothesis were added to the background factors. At least at the local level, these factors seem to be of great importance when we discuss local political distrust. These results are very important findings to base continued research on, as we do not know how the causal relationship is working in reality. Is it, that persons had bad experiences from

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[43] And it also proved to be the strongest of the social capital predictors in the municipal aggregate analysis (table 5).

policemen and courts, and those experiences spilled over to their political trust? Or do they judge what media writes about court cases and unjust procedures, which results in lowered political expectations and trust? Or was there low political trust present in the first place, that later spilled over to lowered trust in judicial actors, institutions and faith in the judicial procedures? To these questions we cannot give an answer, but we should pay interest to what consequences young citizen's experiences from demonstrations like Seattle, Gothenburg and Genua could have. Depending on their information sources and personal experiences, these events *could* have severe effects on their future political trust - or the opposite. These issues remain to investigation, however.

The last finding was not the least. At the aggregate level, it was possible to explain 78 percent of the variance (R^2) with only three variables. In a sense it is not that surprising to find that in municipalities where the populations are satisfied with the local services and the way the politicians handle the local economy, there we will also find the highest measures of local political trust (LPF). What was more unexpected was to find the importance of the Social Democratic dominance, the larger share they hold of the local seats, the greater the chance of higher LPF. A possible conclusion is that where the Social Democrats are in power, there it will be a larger likelihood for satisfaction with service and economy. For game theoretical reasons, that I won't get into here, there might be easier for coalitions with Social Democrats included to provide services and a controlled economy, than for any other type of coalition. It is also possible to phrase the conclusion the other way round - if other types of coalitions shall receive higher political trust levels - they *have to* be able to provide both service satisfaction *and* a controlled economy (at least to the subjective understanding of its citizenry). For space reasons, I am not developing this tests here at the local individual level, but estimations I have done elsewhere of the service and of how the municipality handles the economy have significant effects for the local political trust levels at the individual level as well (Norén Bretzer 2002).

There's also a more important implication to be made: many studies dealing with political trust riddles often use individual level indicators to explain why individuals have the political (dis)trust levels they have. The main discovery here seems to be that explanations to political trust should be derived not from the individual level, but from the *institutional*. Individuals do have relevant opinions about institutional

performances, both of *output* character (service) and of *procedural* character (fairness of the judicial system, transparency, and options for *voice*). In addition, the performance effect from how citizens believe their tax money is being handled should not be underestimated either. The cure for low political trust measures seems to be found not among the citizens and how they spend their daily time, but among the institutions and how they perform as entities and as actors. Here, public relations need to be reconsidered and it is also obvious that *representation and responsibility* does matter.

☙

Appendix

One survey question in VSOM 2000 measured *trust in procedural fairness of Swedish courts*. It was formulated as below (author's translation):

Below follows some questions concerning your trust in the Swedish court system. What do you think about the following statements about Swedish courts?

Disagree completely

Agree completely

Swedish courts:

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Deliver punishments that are appropriate for the crimes that have been committed

Deliver very different sentences for the same type of criminal acts

Always deliver punishments founded on facts

Deliver lighter punishments to persons of higher social status

Figure 2. Residuals of the means of LPF per municipality (VSOM 1998, 1999, 2000)
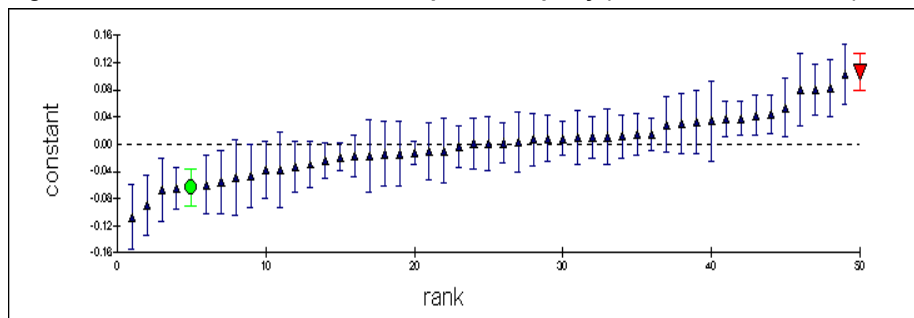
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