

ASSOCIATIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND ITS IMPACT ON ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR OF PEOPLE IN THE BALTIC STATES

**Does associational membership promote development of “social capital” in the
Baltic States? A Comparative analysis.**

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Introduction

Robert D. Putnam in his works (Putnam 1993,1995a, 1995b) has stated that members of associations are much more likely than non-members to participate in politics, to spend time with neighbours, to express general interpersonal trust, and to develop so called “social capital” among themselves, in that way furthering the formation and development of civic society, as well.

His concept expressed in mentioned works has raised a lot of debate, critics and followers (Fukuyama, 1997; Edwards, Foley 1998; Eastis 1998; Stolle, Rochon 1998; Rotberg 1999, and others).

Many questions like: how we can measure social capital, observe it, create it or engineer it, how does membership in voluntary associations contributes to the formation and development of civic society, are still left open within the concept of “social capital”, because it has been admitted that particularly the concept of social capital developed by R.D Putnam is very contradictory one (Edwards, Foley 1998).

The aim of this study is to test the approach of R.D. Putnam in the context of Baltic states – to proof whether membership in associations creates generalized interpersonal trust and sense of co-operation, do associations contribute to extend the circle of trust beyond the boundaries of face-to-face interaction to generalized interpersonal trust, are members of associations much more likely than non-members to participate in politics, to spend time with neighbours and friends and so on (Putnam 1995)

particularly in a case of the Baltic states, where the formation of democracy in the terms of development of participatory skills and attitudes towards the freedoms has just began, and also the associational membership in voluntary organizations has only about 10-12 years long history.

Social Capital Theory

One of the most influential publications about social capital is written by James S. Coleman (Coleman 1988). Since then concept of social capital has gained a wide use and interpretation, what has made this concept rather vague (Edwards, Foley 1998; Eastis 1998; Teorell, 2000, and others). R.D. Putnam also has evolved his concept from James S. Coleman.

Within Coleman's concept of social capital, the main characteristics of social capital are social structure emerging out of interactions of individuals and productivity of this structure. In other words, certain interests of individuals are the bases for interactions, and social capital facilitates the implementing of these interests by the means of reciprocity. The mentioned social structure may find its expression in different forms like organizations, extended families, communities, but it always consists of relationships furthering the interests of individuals (Sandefur and Laumann 1998).

Robert D. Putnam has given to the concept of social capital new dimensions, he defined social capital as the features of social organization, such as trust, norms and networks that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit (Putnam 1993) or "features of social life – networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam 1995b, 664).

According to Robert D. Putnam through variety of voluntary associations people establish a capacity to co-operate and to form new associations: "across the 35 countries [...], social trust and civic engagement are strongly correlated; the greater the density of associational membership in a society, the more trusting its citizens. Trust and engagement are two facets of the same underlying factor - social capital" (Putnam 1995a, 73).

Robert D. Putnam has established also tradition to link the concept of social capital to civil society and the development of democracy. According to R.Putnam small, voluntary associations with characteristic face-to-face interactions are very likely to support positive democratic outcomes in the terms of social capital. In R.Putnam's interpretation it is of high importance to further the development of social capital in order to build a strong and active civil society particularly in the new democracies that have emerged over the past decade where "scholars and democratic activists alike have lamented the absence or obliteration of traditions of independent civic

engagement and a widespread tendency toward passive reliance on the state” (Putnam 1995a, 74).

This concept that bounds social capital with civil society has gained a wide resonance. Some scholars like Fukuyama (1997), Rotberg (1999) and others, admit the ideas of R.Putnam: “Civil society presupposes social capital – the norms and values that permit co-operative behaviour on the part of groups” (Fukuyama, 1997, 60). And they use this concept in studies of political culture: “High levels of social capital contribute to the creation of a political culture that is open, pluralistic, deliberative, tolerant, and democratic” (Rotberg 1999, 339).

But R.Putnam, especially his ambitious article “Bowling alone” (Putnam, 1995a) has been criticized a lot, as well. One of the sharpest critics is developed by B.Edwards and M.W.Foley in their article “*Civil Society and Social Capital Beyond Putnam*” (1998): “Work by Robert Putnam and others has assimilated social capital to the civic culture model, using it as just another label for the norms and values of the empirical democratic theory of the 1950s. This strategy undermines the empirical value of James Coleman and Pierre Bourdieu's useful social relational concept” (Edwards, Foley 1998, 124). These authors offended R.Putnam with lack of conceptional clarity and analytic useless, they argued that subject of Putnam’s analysis was not social capital, but characteristics of individuals acquired through social networks, particularly associations of civil society (Edwards, Foley 1998). In their judgement Putnam interpreted social capital as something akin to human capital, and the specific context also was ignored in his analysis.

Concluding the short review of debate about social capital author would like to note that the aim of this chapter is not to solve theoretical problems, but to have a more detailed impression about development and impact of voluntary association in Baltic States, certainly bearing in mind the shortages of this approach, as well. Therefore within this approach it would be useful to sum up this debate in the way J.Onyx and P.Bullen did, outlining the following features of social capital (Onyx, Bullen, 2000):

- 1) Social capital refers to networks of relationships between individuals and groups (Social capital cannot be generated by individuals acting in isolation).
- 2) Social capital has been associated with reciprocity – involved persons are interested to serve others’ interests in the same time serving his or her personal interests (Toqueville: “Self interest rightly understood”).
- 3) A third common feature is reference to general interpersonal trust.

The importance of analysis of involvement in voluntary associations and so called social capital has been shown best of all in works of Putnam, as well as Sandefur and Laumann (1998) who identified three benefits that social capital may confer - information, influence and control, and social solidarity: diverse networks provide access to more timely and relevant information, forms of social capital – trust, obligations, and effective norms – condition an individual’s capacity to influence, and finally social solidarity appears in the form of reciprocity, when “a helpful act is performed, not in response to any specific benefit received, but in honour of the social exchange relation itself” (Emerson 1981, 33).

And it is of highest importance to analyse the development of social capital as R.Putnam interpreted it particularly in the Baltic States, because democratic norms and attitudes has not been established there for a long time, and it is important to find out the way how to facilitate them.

Indicators of analysis and hypothesis

A major data source for the evaluation of impact of voluntary associations and development of social capital in the Baltic States is the survey “Baltic Barometer” organized by Södertörns högskola, Sweden in March 1999¹.

The following indicators have been chosen from the survey “Baltic Barometer” to be observed within the evaluation of impact of voluntary associations and development of social capital:

- 1) Participation and engagement in politics and in the community. As many authors have stated (Almond and Verba, 1965; Stolle and Rochon, 1998 and others) participation in voluntary associations stimulates political involvement and interest in politics. Author will examine the effect of associational membership on interest in politics and different kinds of political participation in all three Baltic States. (Indicators: speaking about political and societal matters, strength of political interest, participation in political activities from contacting politician to participation in illegal protest action, speaking in front of a meeting of a club or organization, writing an article or a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine).

¹ Sample size of survey: 3000 respondents (1000 in Latvia, 1000 in Estonia, and 1000 in Lithuania). Method of sampling: multistage stratified random sample.

- 2) Skills relevant for political involvement, sense of competence and belief to change something (Political efficacy). Previous studies of impact of membership in voluntary associations (Ozoliņa, Čaplinska, 1999) have shown that members of voluntary associations recognize that their sense of political efficacy and competence has increased during their participation in voluntary associations. As it has been found in qualitative research it would be useful to proof it in quantitative approach in all three countries, not only in Latvia. (Indicators: attitudes towards possibilities to influence decision in society, belief in ability to influence politicians and decisions in society).
- 3) Interpersonal trust. R.Putnam has emphasized that networks within voluntary associations further development of interpersonal trust – trust towards others (Putnam 1995b). Here we will examine if it proves within the Baltic States, as well. (Indicators: questions about trust in other people, about whether people in general are helpful and whether people in general try to be fair or they try to take advantage of others).
- 4) Reciprocity within community – networks within different fields of life. One of the hypothesis author would like to test is whether the circle of networks is wider or not in comparison between those who are engaged and those who are not engaged in voluntary associations. (Indicators: contacts with relatives and friends, contacts with people whom respondents do not know particularly well, who have a different lifestyle, who are born in another country, ties of social networks: existence of personal acquaintance whom respondents could easily get help with construction or handyman help, getting products on better terms than in ordinary stores, arranging a large ceremony or party, talking about confidential matters, medical, economical, legal computer expertise).
- 5) Attitudes towards past, present and future economic and political systems. The last hypothesis author would like to test is whether those engaged in voluntary associations are more satisfied with present political and economic system than others or not, how do members of voluntary associations evaluate present democracy compared to soviet regime. And also as D.Stolle and T.Rochon has noted a positive outlook on the future is important characteristics of social capital, therefor the outlook on economic and political systems in five years time will be examined as well (Stolle and Rochon, 1998). (Indicators: evaluation of soviet

economy and political system, of present economy and political system, and notion about future economic and political system).

Summarising it out author will examine the following hypotheses:

- 1) Membership in voluntary associations in the Baltic States is rather similar across all three countries and rather low to compare with Northern countries like Sweden and Norway.
- 2) People are more engaged in recreation and cultural organizations and trade unions, due to subsidization of such organizations during the Soviet period (Salamon, Anheier, and Associates 1998).
- 3) Members of voluntary associations more frequently are those with higher education and income, and young people.
- 4) Members of voluntary associations more frequently are active and interested in politics, they evaluate more frequently their ability to influence politicians and decisions higher, they express higher level of social trust, their circle of social networks is much more wider compared with others, and they more frequently have a positive outlook to future (altogether, in a terms of R.Putnam, social capital is stronger among members of voluntary associations to compare with others).

Nevertheless before the analysis author would like to recall the significant limitations on the analysis mentioned by Edwards and Foley (1998). First of all one should bear in mind that social capital is a collective resource rather than individual one, but within this analyses author will refer to social capital of individuals, who are members of voluntary associations and those who are not. This makes a use of concept of social capital rather contradicting.

Another limitation is the problem of causality: theoretically it has been stated that associational membership creates social capital, but within our study we can not be sure that for example those who participate in voluntary associations have developed the sense of trust working in voluntary associations or they were more trustful before they joined voluntary associations. K.Newton has put this question in a following way: "Do social networks generate the level of trust necessary for civilized social and political life, or is it, on the contrary, the existence of widespread trust that makes the development of social networks possible in the first place?" (Newton, 1997, p. 577). Here we can just find out whether those with an associational membership trust others more or not.

In the analysis one should bear in mind that membership in associations does not appear as the only variable producing different forms of social capital, but as we can not observe all interactions between members of society we will examine only impact of membership in voluntary associations. This approach is rather risky also because of high level of generalization and quantification without well-developed qualitative basis, because not all groups contribute positively to society (Fukuyama, 1997) – in a case of Latvia one can mention for example so called “limonovists” (national bolsheviks) – organization what may produce even negative externalities. Therefore as Fukuyama stated “to measure the social capital derived from association accurately, one must distinguish between groups that produce negative and positive externalities” (Fukuyama 1997, 62) and Fukuyama is not the only one who has noted that not all types of associations will be equally effective in their capacity to create social capital (Stolle, Rochon 1998; Eastis, 1998). Also norms of reciprocity can be shared effectively only among a small subset of a group’s members, but here big organizations are included in some of which a number of members is very big and not every body knows each other (For example Latvian Associations of Retired People or Latvian Association of Teachers).

But unfortunately we can not examine the impact of different associations within this survey, because a number of members of voluntary associations in the sample is too small for more detailed quantitative analysis, therefore in future it would be more useful to widen analysis and to study the differences of impact among different organizations using qualitative methods of sociology – deep interviews or observation.

Membership in voluntary associations: Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania

The involvement in voluntary associations among all three Baltic countries has a certain variance: the most active in associational membership are inhabitants of Estonia, where according to survey 30% of population have a membership in any voluntary organization, 27% are active in their participation and 5% have a position within organization. In comparison there are 22% members, 14% active members and 3% with a position in organization in Latvia. But in Lithuania only 15% consider themselves as members of associations, 11% are active members, but 3% have a position.

What kind of organizations do they represent? In Latvia more than one third of all involved in associations are those from trade unions (91 respondent from 250), 21% - those from sports clubs and 15% – those from cultural, musical, dancing or theatre societies. In Estonia only 18% or 60 respondents from 328 represent trade unions, but 96 respondents or 29% are members of sports clubs, and 91 respondent or 28% are members of cultural, musical, dancing or theatre associations.

In Lithuania respectively 23% or 38 respondents from 167 represent trade unions, but 43 respondents or 26% are members of sports clubs, and 46 respondent or 28% are members of cultural, musical, dancing or theatre associations (Table 1).

Here it is important to mention that religion oriented organizations were not intended to be included here, as exclusion there are some respondents who had chosen category “other organizations” (18 respondents in the sample of Estonia and 7 respondents in the sample of Latvia).

Social-demographic characteristics of members of voluntary associations

Gender

There are no significant differences in voluntary associations’ membership by gender in Latvia and Estonia. The exception is in a case of Lithuania, where according to sample male are more involved in voluntary associations than female (there are 57% of female and 43% of male in sample, but among voluntary associations’ members 48% are female and 52% - male).

Age

The typical feature for the Baltic States is that young people (17-25) are more involved in voluntary associations than older ones – those older than 51. But here again there is an exception, because in Estonia among those aged 26-35 is even more members of voluntary associations than among younger generation.

	Lat: is a member	Lat: is not a member	Est- is a member	Est is not a member	Lit- is a member	Lit is not a member
17-25	31	69	39	61	23	77
26-35	25	75	42	58	18	82
36-50	26	74	25	75	14	86
51+	17	83	24	76	13	87

Ethnicity

Both the questions about interview language and citizenship were combined and used as an indicator of ethnicity, because there was no specific question measuring

ethnicity of respondents. But still we can find a tendency that among people of origin ethnicity of the Baltic States – Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians – are more frequently the members of voluntary associations. It can be very clearly said about Latvia, where 26% of Latvian speaking and only 17% of Russian speaking population are members of voluntary associations.

Marital status and children

In a case of Lithuania those who are married according to sample seem slightly more involved in voluntary associations, what does not appear in two other Baltic States. The another peculiarities can be find examining whether those who are members of voluntary associations have children. Here the case of Estonia seems different from other Baltic States, because only in Estonia those who have children are less involved in voluntary associations than others. Although differences are not very important, these peculiarities have to be checked with following surveys.

Work, income and education

Both among those who work and those with higher income associational membership is more wide spread in all three Baltic States. People with higher education also are more involved in voluntary associations than others: in Latvia among those who have spent 12 and more years for education, 32% are members of voluntary associations compared with those who have spent just 10-12 years for education (19%). In Estonia accordingly 40% and 26%, and in Lithuania – 22% and 9%.

Religion

In a case of Latvia, members of voluntary associations are more among Lutherans and those without any religious affiliation, what you can not observe in other Baltic States. (There are 86% Catholics, 7% of Russian –Orthodox, and 5% non-believers in Lithuania; 28% of Lutherans, 26% of Russian –Orthodox, 23% of Catholics, and 15% non-believers in Latvia, and 31% of Lutherans, 23% of Russian –Orthodox, 3% of Catholics, and 37% non-believers in Latvia.

Political participation and interest in politics

Interest in politics has a rather strong correlation with membership in voluntary associations: people involved in voluntary associations express interest in politics and

admit that they often speak to others about political and societal matters (Tables 2, 3). The difference in answers between those with and those without associational membership fluctuates from 10% to 20% in all three countries. As people involved in voluntary associations are more interested in political and societal matters, they express it in more active political participation in different kind of activities, as well, although here one can observe some distinctions among countries. For example among population of Estonia only 6-7% to 3% (those with and those without associational membership) have participated in demonstrations in the last 5 years or have contacted any person in a responsible position in order to influence a political or societal decision (Table 4). Both in Latvia and Lithuania people have been more active and there are more significant differences among those with and those without associational membership, as well.

As every one could expect those involved in voluntary associations in all countries more frequently have given speech in front of a meeting of a club or organization or have participated in discussions. Those involved in voluntary associations also more frequently have written an article to newspaper. But altogether people in Estonia have more often given a speech or participated in discussion (Tables 5, 6).

Regarding other political activities in all three countries people with associational membership more frequently have contacted an official in central or local government or have contacted a solicitor or judicial body, and also have more frequently donated money, raised funds (Tables 7). Small differences appear also within other types of activities, but surprisingly there is no significant difference between those with and those without associational membership in participation in elections in the Baltic States.

Political efficacy and participatory skills

Qualitative studies of membership in voluntary associations in Latvia have already found out that through the activities in voluntary organizations people have gained the sense of self-confidence, better reliance on their abilities, their opinions and the faith that it is possible to change something to improve the existing situation:

- “My views have changed in the sense that I have felt freedom. You can do whatever you wish – within the law, of course. I wish what I want, and I know what to do (Leader of an NGO)”. (Ozoliņa, Čaplinska, 1999, 36)

- “I understand now that non-governmental organizations can affect the democratic processes here in Latvia, they can affect state policies”. (Ozoliņa, Čaplinska, 1999, 37)

But the aim of this study was to prove it in on more general level with an analysis of quantitative data. A simple cross-tabulations really proof it and shows that people engaged in voluntary associations have a positive experience about possibility to influence decisions in society. They evaluate different ways of influencing decisions as more effective than those who are not members of voluntary associations, although evaluation of different ways of influencing differs among countries. As the most effective variable in all Baltic States “*working to get attention by the press, radio and TV*” has been outlined, and members of voluntary associations more frequently evaluate the effectiveness of this activity higher. Significantly higher effectiveness by members of voluntary associations has been found also through *working in political parties, working with local action groups, personally contacting influential people, working to get attention by the press, radio and TV* (it has also been tested by social-demographic variables). Fewer differences can be found regarding the evaluation of effectiveness influencing decisions by *working in trade unions, participating in public demonstrations* and *participating in illegal protest activities, and voting in elections* (Table 9).

People engaged in voluntary associations also admit that they have a greater chance than others of making politicians pay heed to their demands and of presenting their demands to the politicians, as well as of gaining redress if were treated improperly by a public agency and of understanding what goes on in politics (Table 10). Besides members of voluntary associations have more developed political skills: they can more frequently take upon themselves personally to write a letter appealing against a decision by a public agency (Table 8).

Interpersonal trust

Looking at the results of the survey one can not say for sure that members of voluntary associations has a greater interpersonal trust than others, although you can notice a small tendency towards it. Answers on questions: *Do you, on the whole, think one can trust most people or do you think that one cannot be careful enough when dealing with other people? In general, do you think that people try to be helpful or do they, in general, mostly think of themselves? Do you believe that most people would*

try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair? show a small difference between those who are members of voluntary associations and those who are not (Table 14). But these differences can be explained also by other underlying factors like education and age, because younger generation and people with higher education which are more frequently represented among members of voluntary associations also are more trustful. Besides looking at differences between members of voluntary associations and others one can notice that members of voluntary associations more often choose middle answers (5 and 6) on 10 point scale, while other respondents more frequently choose answers 1-4, which express distrust (Tables 11, 12, 13). Altogether one of indicators of stability of democracy – interpersonal trust (Inglehart, 1997) is rather low in the Baltic States compared with states with longer experience of democracy. According to World Values Survey 1995-1997, people in Northern Europe more frequently admit that *one can trust most people* (65% in Norway, 57% in Sweden and 47% in Finland and accordingly approximately² 35% in Estonia, 22% in Latvia, and 18% in Lithuania).

Social contacts and networks

Altogether those who are members of voluntary associations have more frequent contacts than those who are not members. People engaged in voluntary associations more often speak to others about political and social matters and their circle of contacts is wider - they count more persons to whom they usually speak about political and social matters. Besides political disputes those who are members of voluntary associations more often visit their relatives and friends and have their relatives and friends over for a visit (Table 15). People engaged in voluntary associations more often socialise with people that they do not know particularly well, or with people with different lifestyles, or with people born in another country, as well.

Table 16 shows that members of voluntary associations have a much more wider social network as well, because they more frequently have a personal acquaintance from whom they could easily get help with handyman help, get cheaper products, arrange a large ceremony, talk about confidential matters, medical, economical, legal, computer expertise.

² Unfortunately the scales used in World Values Survey 1995-1997 and in Baltic Barometer

Evaluation of political and economical systems: past, present and future

Members of voluntary associations evaluate the socialist economy and former communist political system worse than others. Altogether members of voluntary associations are more positive towards present political and economic system than others and they also are more optimistic, but here one should be rather careful with conclusions because adding statistical tests these tendencies appear as statistically important only in Lithuania and partly in Estonia.

Conclusions

Summarising results of this study first of all one should mention that the first hypothesis posed at the beginning is only partly approved, because membership in voluntary associations in the Baltic States has some peculiarities in different countries. And the membership in voluntary associations is more frequent in Estonia (30%) and less frequent in Lithuania (15%), and in Latvia (22%). An explanation to this we may find partly in works of R. Putnam and F. Fukuyama. F. Fukuyama has stated that the secular voluntary associations are the heirs of American religious heritage – sectarian Protestant tradition (Fukuyama, 1997), in that way linking dominant religion with development of voluntary organizations. Also according to R. Putnam the Catholic Church in Southern Italy was like an undermining factor of the development of social capital (Putnam 1993). That can be referred to the Baltic States, as well. In Lithuania where dominating religion is Catholic (86% of all inhabitants of Lithuania), membership in voluntary associations is less developed, while in Estonia, where only 3% acknowledge that they are Catholics, people are more frequently involved in voluntary associations. (Latvia is situated between Lithuania and Estonia: there are 23% of Catholics in Latvia and affiliation to voluntary associations is less frequent than in Estonia, but more frequent than in Lithuania).

But still comparing, for example, with Norway, where according to World Values Survey 1995-1997 more than half of population is involved in voluntary associations (58%), membership in voluntary associations in the Baltic States is rather low.

The second posed hypothesis seems to be proofed because in all three countries the biggest number of all involved in voluntary associations belongs to sports clubs, cultural, musical, dancing or theatre societies or trade unions. Therefore the idea that

1999 were different therefore comparison is rather inaccurate.

people are more engaged in recreation and cultural organizations and trade unions, due to subsidarization of such organizations during the Soviet period might be truthful.

The analysis of data also shows that members of voluntary associations more frequently are those with higher education and income, young people, and those of origin ethnicity of the Baltic States.

Regarding the different indicators associated with social capital, this study has shown that members of associations have been frequently found to be to some degree higher on some indicators of social capital. But these differences are not very sharp among members of voluntary associations and others in the Baltic States. Associational members are the highest on political participation, interest in politics and frequency of engaging in political discussions. Belief to change something and political skills also has been found more frequently among members compared to non-members. The smallest differences or in some countries on some indicators no differences between members and non-members has been found on interpersonal trust, evaluation of political and economic systems, and moral values.

Altogether one might say that voluntary associations in the Baltic States are not as important factor what influence attitudes as it is in some other countries, and their impact is not always so strong as one could wish. Still people engaged in voluntary associations are more communicable, more frequently interested and active in politics, they more frequently evaluate their ability to influence politicians and decisions higher, and their circle of social networks is much more wider compared to those who have not involved in voluntary associations.

Finally this study only shows that voluntary associations are developing sector in the Baltic States and their capacity to develop social capital might be increased. The analysis proof that these countries are characterized by transition circumstances, where according to Almond and Verba (Almond and Verba, 1965) subject political culture is dominating, and mythological thinking and ideologization very slowly has been replacing by rational and active attitude toward society (Lauristine, 1997). And we can also conclude that further and deeper analysis in the form of longitudinal and qualitative study is necessary to make more accurate conclusions about the impact of voluntary associations on development of social capital in the Baltic States.

Tables

Table 1. Membership in different associations: Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.
%

Members of voluntary associations in Lithuania: N=167

Members of voluntary associations in Latvia: N=250

Members of voluntary associations in Estonia: N=328

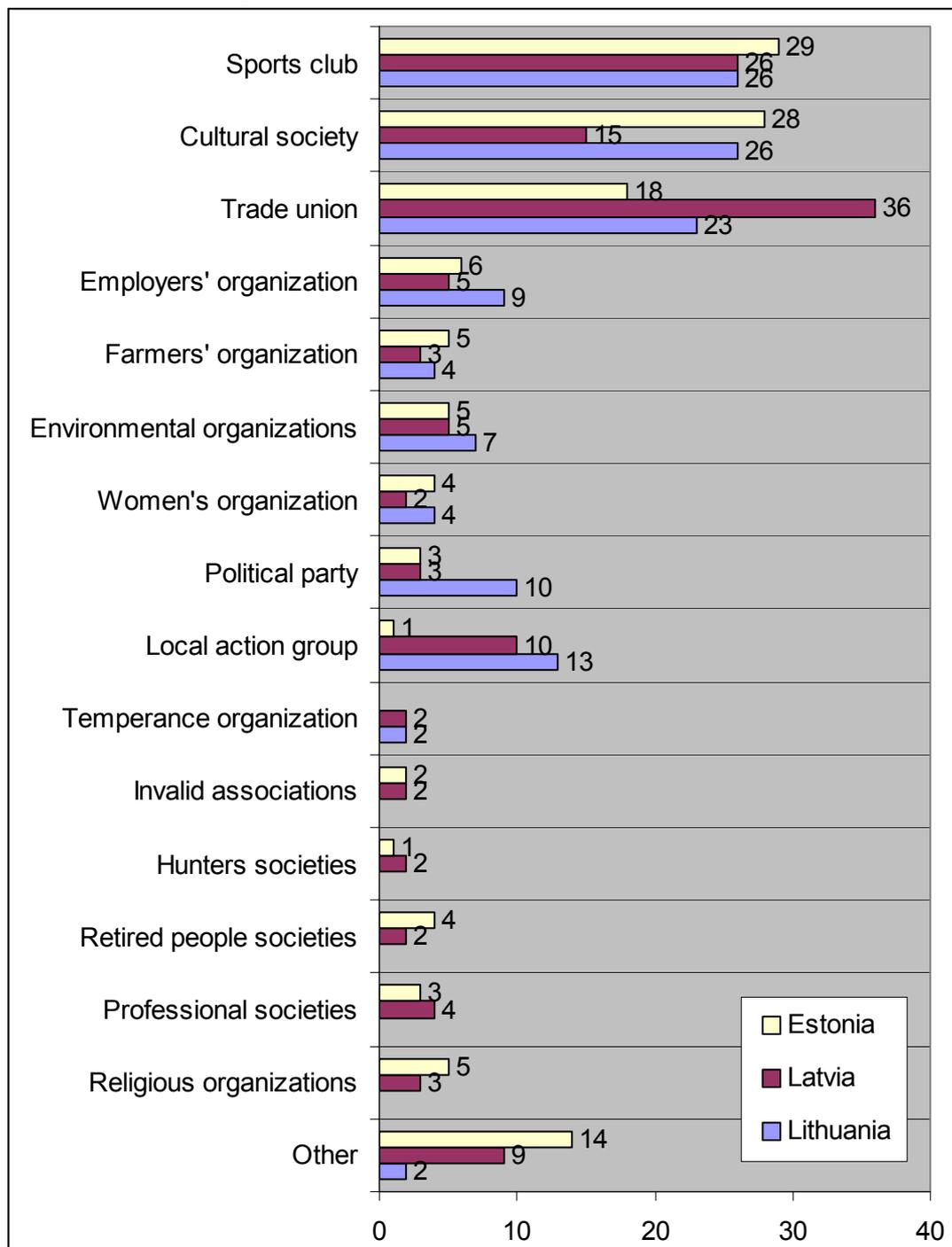


Table 2. How often do you usually speak to others about political and societal matters? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. %

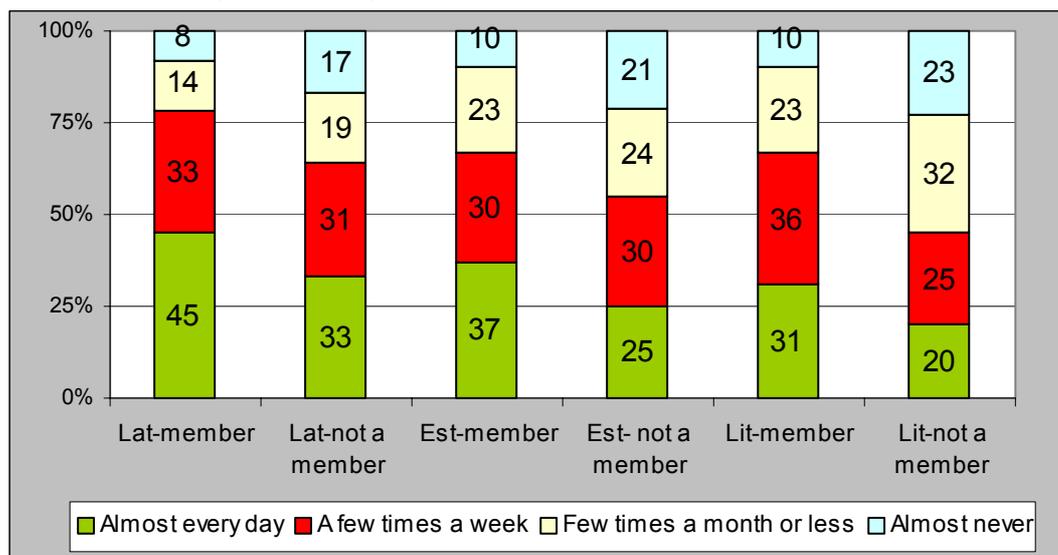


Table 3. In general, how interested in politics are you? Answers: “very interested” and “fairly interested”. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. %

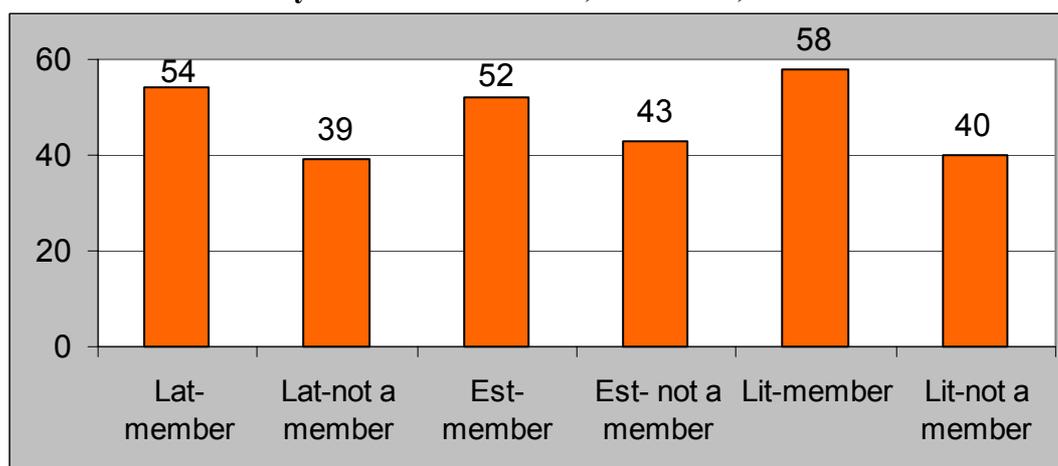


Table 4. Participation in demonstrations and contacts with responsible persons. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Participated in demonstrations or protest meeting in the last 5 years	13%	6%	7%	3%	11%	5%
Have contacted any person in a responsible position in order to influence a political or societal decision	24%	9%	6%	3%	20%	5%

Table 5. Have you ever spoken in front of a meeting of a club or organization? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Gave a speech	13%	2%	23%	7%	14%	2%
Took part in discussion	7%	4%	19%	8%	16%	4%
Have not done anything	80%	94%	58%	85%	70%	94%

Table 6. Have you ever written an article or a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Wrote an article to newspaper	8%	4%	15%	5%	10%	2%
Wrote a letter to newspaper	5%	2%	4%	1%	3%	2%
Have not done anything	87%	94%	81%	94%	87%	96%

Table 7. During the past year have you done any of the following? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Contacted politician	18%	5%	5%	1%	12%	3%
Contacted association or organization	22%	6%	8%	2%	22%	7%
Contacted official in central or local government	35%	17%	18%	8%	27%	12%
Worked in political party	3%	1%	3%	0%	13%	1%
Worked in a local action group	22%	1%	3%	0%	19%	1%
Worked in another organization	21%	2%	19%	2%	20%	2%
Worn or displayed campaign badge/ sticker	4%	1%	4%	1%	7%	1%
Signed a petition	12%	4%	20%	8%	16%	8%
Taken part in a demonstration or protest meeting	6%	3%	3%	2%	8%	3%
Taken part in a strike	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%	2%
Boycotted certain products	12%	5%	10%	4%	4%	2%
Donated money, raised funds	39%	16%	37%	19%	42%	17%
Contacted or appeared in the media	11%	3%	5%	1%	8%	2%
Contacted solicitor or judicial body	20%	8%	14%	8%	21%	12%
Participated in illegal protest action	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other activity	8%	2%	2%	0%	7%	1%

Table 8. Political skills. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Can you personally take it upon by yourself to write a letter appealing against a decision by a public agency?	55%	38%	22%	12%	49%	34%
Do you know anyone that you could get help from in such a case?	44%	32%	56%	38%	32%	23%

Table 9. There are many opinions on how one can effectively influence decisions in society. I have here a list of a few ways that are used, and I would like to ask how effective you think that they are. 10 point scale, where 1 means “not at all effective”, but 10 – “very effective”. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. Means.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Working in political parties	4.99	4.43	4.91	4.33	5.10	4.94
Working with local action groups	4.09	3.27	4.70	4.07	4.64	4.45
Working in trade unions	3.94	3.19	4.35	4.25	4.93	4.49
Voting in elections	5.11	5.04	5.89	5.47	7.54	7.37
Personally contacting influential people	4.81	4.06	4.87	4.42	6.51	6.19
Working to get attention by the press, radio and TV	5.94	5.23	6.17	5.70	8.14	7.80
Participating in public demonstrations	3.87	3.51	3.56	3.44	4.43	5.01
Participating in illegal protest activities	2.38	2.16	2.30	2.34	3.55	4.05

Table 10. Political efficacy. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. Means.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
How much importance do politicians attach to demands presented, for example, by local organisations or groups of people?	3.15	2.92	3.96	3.62	3.71	3.06
How much chance do ordinary people have of presenting their views to the politicians?	3.54	2.81	3.69	3.32	3.03	2.66
How much chance of redress is there for a person who is treated improperly by a public authority?	2.74	2.44	3.63	3.18	2.77	2.20
What ability do ordinary people have to understand what goes on in politics?	4.26	3.92	4.21	3.78	4.38	3.84
To what extent do ordinary people have the knowledge required to make political decisions?	3.98	3.91	4.25	4.03	3.44	3.36
Do people like you have a greater or smaller chance than others of making politicians pay heed to their demands?	3.50	2.78	3.64	2.80	3.34	2.46
Do people like you have a greater or smaller chance than others of presenting their demands to the politicians?	4.21	3.23	3.85	2.99	3.64	2.73
Do you have a greater or smaller chance than other people of gaining redress if you were treated improperly by a public agency?	3.47	2.87	3.51	2.89	3.27	2.40
Do you have a greater or smaller chance than other people of understanding what goes on in politics?	5.14	4.21	4.49	3.80	5.29	3.95
Do you have the knowledge required to make political decisions, to a greater or smaller extent than other people?	4.71	3.89	4.71	3.95	4.45	3.24

Table 11. Do you, on the whole, think one can trust most people or do you think that one cannot be careful enough when dealing with other people? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
One cannot be careful enough (1-4)	56%	65%	36%	44%	56%	69%
Answers 5-6	26%	19%	33%	32%	26%	19%
One can trust most people (7-10)	18%	16%	31%	24%	18%	12%

Table 12. In general, do you think that people try to be helpful or do they, in general, mostly think of themselves? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
People think mostly of themselves (1-4)	45%	62%	42%	47%	68%	77%
Answers 5-6	31%	24%	30%	33%	22%	17%
People try to be helpful (7-10)	14%	14%	28%	20%	10%	6%

Table 13. Do you believe that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair? Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Most people would try to use me (1-4)	37%	47%	43%	47%	55%	65%
Answers 5-6	40%	31%	35%	35%	29%	24%
Most people would try to be fair (7-10)	23%	22%	22%	18%	16%	11%

Table 14. Interpersonal trust. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. Means.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Do you, on the whole, think one can trust most people or do you think that one cannot be careful enough when dealing with other people?	4.14	3.72	5.15	4.71	4.10	3.28
In general, do you think that people try to be helpful or do they, in general, mostly think of themselves?	4.08	3.79	4.94	4.55	3.45	2.85
Do you believe that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or would they try to be fair?	4.91	4.59	4.84	4.54	3.99	3.53

Table 15. Social contacts. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Visiting relatives: often	43%	32%	51%	49%	40%	32%
Having relatives over for a visit: often	41%	30%	41%	41%	31%	29%
Visiting friends: often	42%	28%	50%	43%	45%	36%
Having friends over for a visit: often	41%	28%	47%	42%	43%	38%
Socializing with people that you do not know particularly well: often	19%	8%	36%	24%	34%	19%
Socializing with people that have a different lifestyles to yours: often	22%	9%	32%	19%	31%	18%
Socializing with people that are born in another country: often	13%	8%	22%	9%	17%	10%

Table 16. Social networks. Do you have any personal acquaintance or person you are close to from whom you could easily get help with the following... Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
Construction or handyman help	82%	74%	62%	53%	79%	65%
Getting products on better terms	58%	39%	32%	25%	40%	29%
Arranging a large ceremony or party	64%	44%	26%	18%	53%	37%
Talking about confidential matters	76%	68%	64%	58%	60%	46%
Medical expertise	66%	49%	54%	41%	77%	57%
Economical expertise	60%	38%	37%	26%	45%	29%
Legal expertise	53%	31%	37%	23%	52%	26%
Computer expertise	56%	34%	38%	19%	52%	24%

Table 17. Evaluation of economical systems: past, present and future. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. Means.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
The socialist economy before independence	5.71	5.98	5.07	5.65	5.93	6.78
Present economic system	3.79	3.74	4.73	4.38	4.10	3.46
Economic system in five years time	5.58	5.58	6.16	5.91	5.34	4.79

Table 18. Evaluation of political systems: past, present and future. Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia. Means.

	Lat-member	Lat-not a member	Est-member	Est-not a member	Lit-member	Lit-not a member
The former communist political system	3.66	4.04	4.55	4.74	4.21	5.14
Present political system	4.75	4.49	5.54	5.03	4.91	4.24
Political system in five years	6.08	5.88	6.78	6.33	6.37	5.61

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