

CITIZENS' TRUST IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES OF LATVIA AND PARTICIPATION PARADIGM

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Abstract

Lack of trust in public authorities is a problem not only in Latvia. The trend of decreasing citizens' trust can be observed all over the world. However, Latvian government and the parliament enjoy an extremely low level of trust. According to the Eurobarometer 79²⁰² data of Spring 2013, only 15 % of respondents tend to trust in the parliament of Latvia, and 20 % of respondents have tend to trust in national government. The gap between the society and political power has grown considerably. The majority of electors are neither satisfied with the democracy form of the parties, nor do they approve of their activities in the state and local governments. At the same time citizens' trust in local governments is much higher than in the national government and parliament, namely, 42% of residents trust in local public authorities. This article deals with the theoretical aspects of public trust, as well as, on the basis of survey, analyzes public opinion about various public authorities in Latvia. This publication aims to explore whether there is any coherence between the levels of trust that the public expresses in various public institutions? Whether citizens' positive assessment of the performance of local authorities has positive impact on evaluation of the national parliament and government? Whether in local authorities where citizens are more satisfied with local authorities' work, the citizen participation is also higher?

Keywords: Citizens' trust, local governments, national government, parliament, participation

Introduction

The decrease of public trust in governments is a problem in the last decade, which has attracted huge attention by public administration researchers all over the world. The explicit decrease of public trust in governments and national parliaments is observed in so called developed democracies – the USA, Canada, Sweden, Great Britain and other EU member states. The renewal or increase of public trust is urgent question for many countries.

In Latvia too for the last 20 years explicit public trust decrease to parliament and government is observed, but, in comparison with above mentioned states, the public trust indicators are critically low and indicate at fundamental problems in state administration. The majority of population is not satisfied with previous political parties' activities and political culture. Unlike in the other states, although the problem of public trust in Latvia is admitted by both researchers of the politics and politicians themselves, yet there are not research carried out in systematical and extended manner that would examine relations between society and government as well as the causes for public trust decrease.

According to the latest Eurobarometer¹ data only 15% population of Latvia tend to trust parliament of Latvia (Saeima), 85% - tend no to trust. It means that only every sixth inhabitant of Latvia trusts parliament work. Trust level to government is higher for 5

²⁰² Standart Eurobarometer 79, Public Opinion in the European Union, Fieldwork: May 2013. Available: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_en.htm

percentage points, government is trusted by 20% or each 5th inhabitant. Citizens' trust to political parties is critically low. In Latvia only 9% population trust political parties which is one of the lowest indicators among European Union member states. At the same time comparatively high level of trust to local authorities is observed in Latvia – 42% Latvia's population trust local authorities which is the only trust indicator that corresponds EU average level – 43%.²⁰³

If trust indicators at the local level are satisfactory then public trust indicators at the national level are alarming and show that the majority of Latvia's society does not trust public administration institutions and its representatives at the level of national administration already for longer time period. National sustainability cannot be imaginable without renewal of society's trust to public authority institutions as society's trust reflects population's attitude towards the situation in the country and creates conditions for the state to exist, for example, grounds necessity to pay taxes, engage in business and after all, grounds the choice to live in the particular country. Till now neither politicians nor political scientists have found the solution to renewal of public trust to government and parliament in Latvia.

As the result of economical and far-gone public trust crisis the consequences of public trust is observed – citizens emigrate to other countries, in search for better life conditions and do not associate their lives with Latvia any more. The remaining part of society still distrust that politicians are able to direct the country in direction of development, that citizens' needs correspond with politicians' comprehension about citizens' needs, that the aim of the ruling coalition is to serve the interests of all society rather than active lobby of certain interests or interests of narrow group of society. The trust of remaining population is decreased by domination of negative information in media sphere about professional activity of public authority officials, as well as politicians' inability to balance contradictions between citizens' immediate social needs and national financial resources.

Theoretical framework and research hypothesis

Definition of trust

Trust is a complex concept and its comprehension depends on the fact which factors are being researched²⁰⁴. Psychology defines trust as cognitive notion among those who are being trusted and those who trust. (Rotter, 1967)²⁰⁵. Economists define trust according to calculations and rational expectations from a party or an organization (Williamson, 1993)²⁰⁶. Sociologists see trust as totality of relations between a person and institutions (Lewis & Weigert)²⁰⁷. Researchers of public administration justify the meaning of trust with necessity to acquire public trust at least in the minimal level for those programmes, which political parties decide to implement (Ruscio, 1997)²⁰⁸.

Trust is formed from one person's assumptions about other person and/or process in which she/he trusts. The author Margaret Levi emphasizes – the more a person is tended to trust the less he/she would try to acquire additional information about the person who is trusted and his/her reliability.²⁰⁹ People trust because they consider that from positive cooperation and

²⁰³ *Standart Eurobarometer 79, Public Opinion in the European Union, Fieldwork: May 2013*. Available: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_en.htm

²⁰⁴ Kim, Seok-Eun *The Role of Trust in the Modern Administrative State :An integrative Model* In: Administration & Society 2005 November, Kansas State University, 2005. 611-617.p.

²⁰⁵ Rotter, J.B. (1967) *A new scale for the measurement of interpersonal trust*. In: Journal of Personality, 35, 651-660.p.

²⁰⁶ Williamson, O.E. (1993) *Calculativeness, trust, and economic organization*. In: journal of Law&Economics, 36, 453-458.p.

²⁰⁷ Lewis, J.G. & Weigert, A. (1985) *Trust as a social reality*. In: Social Force, 36, 967-985.p.

²⁰⁸ Ruscio, K.P. (1997) *Trust in the administrative state*. In: Public Administration Review, 57, 454-458.p.

²⁰⁹ Levi, M. *A State of Trust* In: Braithwaite, V. and Levi, M. (Editors.) *Trust& Government*, Volume I in the Russell Sage Foundation Series on Trust, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1998. 78. p.

their trust use in a positive sense it can benefit a person. The author Margaret Levi considers knowledge as one of the main trust factors: „Although a reasonable belief that the trustee will act consistently with the truster’s interests depends on knowledge of the trustee, this can but need not be detailed, personal knowledge.”²¹⁰ In case a person has not necessary knowledge or right information about another person it can trust incorrectly.

The researcher Russell Hardin has defined public trust very generally, he has explained: „Trust has three parts: A trusts B to do X (or respect to matters X).”²¹¹ Hardin describes trust as a form of encapsulated interest. A trust in B is typically encapsulated in A’s interest in fulfilling B’s trust. A trusts B because A presumes it is in B’s interest to act in a way conformable with A’s interest.

Examining various definitions of public trust, the authors conclude that some authors incline more on psychological aspects of the concept, for example, by defining trust as „A psychological construct, the experience of which is the outcome of the interaction of people’s values, attitudes, and moods and emotions.” (Jones and George, 1998).²¹²

Others – in their turn consider that formation of trust is more affected by conclusions about previous deeds and rational considerations, - as “an expectation about outcomes based on perceptions and life experiences” (Golembiewski, R.T. and McConkie, M.L., 1975).²¹³

Also as the basis of citizens’ formation of opinion about ruling politicians there are various considerations – some, by evaluating government, parliament or local authorities’ work, use rational arguments. Such people adopt decisions, by analysing particular facts, calculating expenses and benefits which they acquire from events, decisions which can influence them. But there is also irrational part of people which draw conclusions based on various social groups or general opinion of society.²¹⁴

Speaking about trust in the context of society the authors sympathize division in 2 aspects. One is the so called political trust, but other – social trust. Political trust clearly manifests itself, when citizens evaluate the work of government and its institutions, government’s implemented policy (it is called macro-level trust or organization trust) and /or the work of individual leaders, honesty and abiding by ones’ promises, which is called individual political trust or micro-level trust. The political trust can be defined as “judgment of the citizenry that the system and the political incumbents are responsive, and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny” (Miller and Listhaug, 1990).²¹⁵

The political trust does not exist outside society and its established norms, therefore important role is played by social trust. Social trust is trust among the members of society. Majority of theoreticians admit that social and political trust does not exclude one another, however, the theoreticians have different opinions whether political trust is going to increase, if social trust increases and vice versa. Public administration researchers Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba have emphasized that: “Belief in the benignity of one’s fellow citizen is directly related to one’s propensity to join with others in political activity. General social trust is translated into politically relevant trust.”²¹⁶ Whereas, sociologists associate increasing social distrust, with a more active political involvement, and eventually, enhanced political trust (Gamson, 1968)²¹⁷.

²¹⁰ Ibid. 78.p.

²¹¹ Hardin, R. *Trust in Government* In: Braithwaite, V. and Levi, M. (Editors.) *Trust & Government Volume I* in the Russell Sage Foundation Series on Trust, Russel Sage Foundation, New York.1998. 12. p.

²¹² Jones, G.R. and George J.M. (1998) *The experience and evolution of trust: Implications for cooperation and teamwork*. In: *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 532.p.

²¹³ Golembiewski, R. T., & McConkie, M. L. (1975). *The centrality of interpersonal trust in group processes*. In: C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of group processes*. New York: John Wiley. 131-185.p.

²¹⁴ Houghton, Patrick, *Political Psychology* Routledge, 2009 , New York. 6.p.

²¹⁵ Miller, A. H. and Listhaug, O. *Political Parties and Confidence in Government: A Comparison of Norway, Sweden and the United States*. In: *British Journal of Political Science* 20, 3(July 1990), 358.p.

²¹⁶ Almond, G., & Verba, S. (1965). *The civic culture*. Boston, MA: Little-Brown. 228.p.

²¹⁷ Gamson, W.A. *Power and Discontent*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey, 1968.

Public trust and participation

Just the same as theoretical literature does not comprise united opinion about the interaction of social and political trust, the political researchers have various opinions about the importance and necessity of participation as well as the influence of participation on formation of public trust.

Political researchers who have admitted elections as the only important instrument of democracy (Dahl, 1956, Sartori, 1987), considered that the use of other participation forms are not necessary, it is even obstructive and can cause threats for stability of democracy. Whereas at the end of 20th century the participatory democracy theory was topical (Almond & Verba, 1963, Pateman, 1975), where participation was evaluated as important part of democracy, as participation creates understanding for citizens about democratic procedures, teaches tolerance, responsibility, develops skills and enhance interest about political processes, and makes public administrators give an account to citizens.

Sociologist and politologist Robert Putnam was one of the first who admitted the necessity for organizations to socialize their members, by teaching them trust, cooperation and solidarity. According to him, the political and civic culture of society is characterized by knowledge about political events, interest and also attitude towards political life in general.²¹⁸

Trust according to Inglehart ensures authorities' legitimacy, but not only – Putnam declared that trust also establishes individual's readiness to adopt and realize decisions adopted by state authority. Putnam believed that political participation and activity depends on the role an individual takes on, by taking part in a political organization. Whether an individual takes part in any activity related to politics depends on motivation. For example, if his/her activity shall benefit, produce a profit and other factors. The lack of motivation is observed in cases when an individual considers impossible to change anything, or does not see meaning to his/her political activity. Although in democracy an individual has the most chances to influence the political situation and situation in the country, often it is not used.²¹⁹. As democracy defends individuals' rights, take into account their interests, there is no real necessity for oneself to get involved as regards introducing or passing legislation.

Other political researchers studying the link between participation and public trust are not so optimistic. For example, political researcher Zmerli (2007) in his research concluded, that although in theoretical literature there is evidence that between participation in voluntary organizations and trust exists a close link, in his opinion this link is very weak and fragmentary, and is proved only in particular countries.

Interesting is researchers HiaoHu Wang and Montgomery Wan Wart (2007) study about participation's influence of public trust. The authors concluded that trust formation is influenced by behavioural factors of two main public administrators.

„First, participation affects trust when it produces high-quality services that the public wants. Second, enhanced ethical behavior on the part of administration is another reason that participation leads to trust. Public trust increases when public officials demonstrate integrity, honesty, and moral leadership and when ethics are institutionalized in government through the process of participation.”²²⁰

At the same time we have to take into accounts how much the administrators themselves are ready to trust and trust their citizens. The author Kaifen Yang admits that large part of theories that explain increase of public trust in governments is insufficient, as they overlook the condition that trust is mutual and reciprocal. Citizens would not trust public administrators and would not want to take part, if they knew and/ or feel that public administrators do not trust them.

²¹⁸ Putnam, R. *America's Declining Social Capital*. In: *Journal of Democracy* 6:1, Jan 1995, 65-66.p.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 65-66.p.

²²⁰ XiaoHu, Wang, *When Public Participation in Administration Leads to Trust: An Empirical Assessment of Managers' Perceptions* In: *Public Administration Review*, March /April 2007, 276.p.

Mutual trust between citizens and public administrators is a part of democratic governance, and is necessary so that society might develop, it is as a precondition for collective action and learning.²²¹ Consequently, the more qualitatively and ethically public administrators shall exercise their functions the more citizens shall trust them. If citizens themselves shall feel efficacious and more trusting, the more citizens are going to participate in democratic processes.

Although in democratic societies the public trust is important in order to ensure the legitimacy of authority, yet in the context of representative democracy also public scepticism brings some benefits, as it shows citizens' ability to assess the events and requires the involvement of society. For example, researcher Russel Hardin in his studies concludes that also citizens' reasonable distrust may bring some benefits to state administration - "First, citizens might actually constrain their government by distrusting it within reason. Second, by cooperating with their government - also within reason - citizens generally enhance the effectiveness of the government."²²²

By decreasing citizens' support to political parties, democratic institutions and diminishing activity at the elections, the efficiency of representative democracy is being criticized. As a solution to diminished trust representative democracies offer to introduce the instruments of direct democracy and let citizens be more involved in the processes of decision making.

Research design

The basis of the research is citizens' survey carried out in Latvia in July, 2012 by the author and Marketing and Public Opinion Research Centre (SKDS).

Research hypothesis

- (1) Citizens' positive assessment of the performance of local government has positive impact on evaluation of the national parliament and government.
- (2) Citizens' satisfaction with local authority's work enables more trust in local authority and more active level of participation.

Using stratified random sampling, 1050 permanent residents of Latvia aged 15-74 were surveyed, which is the representative sample of the general population. All regions of Latvia were included in the polling. The survey data was analysed using SPSS statistics program.

By elaborating the theoretical framework of the research, the authors used the methods of scientific literature and statistics data analysis, as well as the research of European Commission's Standard Eurobarometer on citizens's trust in public authorities in time period of 2003 -2014.

Analysis of Latvia's case

During the last ten years the split between the society and public authority institutions in Latvia has increased considerably; it is characterized by citizens' trust indicators. In comparison with the time period ten years ago, i.e. 2003, citizens' trust level in government has decreased for 26 percentage points, but trust level in the Parliament (Saeima) – has shrunk for 24 percentage points (see Fig.1)

Trust in political parties historically in Latvia has been low.²²³ In 2003 only 12% Latvia's

²²¹ Kaifeng, Y, *Public Administrators' Trust in Citizens: A Missing Link in Citizens Involvement Efforts* In: *Public Administration Review*, Volume 65, number 3, May/June 2005, ISSN 0033-3352, Print in the USA by American Society for Public Administration. 273.p.

²²² Hardin, R. (2013). *Government without trust*, In: *Journal of Trust Research*, 3:1, 32-52, DOI: 10.1080/21515581.2013.771502 Publisher: Routledge, Published online: 29 April 2013. Available <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21515581.2013.771502> 33-34.p.

²²³ *Standard Eurobarometer 79, Public Opinion in the European Union, Fieldwork: May 2013*. Available: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb79/eb79_en.htm

population trusted in political parties, but in 2013 – 9% (-3%). It has to be admitted that in the last Eurobarometer survey (spring 2013) the trust level has increased for 3% in comparison with autumn 2012, when trust level in political parties in Latvia was only 6%, which was one of the lowest trust level in political parties among all European Union member states.¹⁸

Data about trust in local authorities are not examined in this period. First data about trust in local authorities are summarized, beginning with the autumn 2008 and show that in local authorities in Latvia trust 44% of Latvia's population.

Trust in local authorities' work in 2013 has remained comparatively steady without large variations with previous periods – 42% (-2%). If comparing citizens' trust level in particular institutions in Latvia with the average indicators in European Union member states, then only trust in local authorities (42%) correspond with the average level in EU member states (43%). Citizens' trust in parliament, government and political parties in Latvia is lower than on average in EU.

Although trust in local authorities in Latvia is higher if compared with trust in parliament and government, yet citizens' activity at local elections in comparison with parliament elections is lower (See Table 1). Moreover, at the last local authorities' election which took place on 1st June 2013, the citizens' activity has been the lowest in 23 years of the renewed Latvia's state.

Table 1 Voters turnout in the parliamentary and local elections in Latvia (1993 – 2013), (%)

Year	1993	1994	1995	1997	1998	2001	2002	2005	2006	2009	2010	2011	2013
Parliamentary elections	89.9		71.9		71.9		71.5		60.9		63.1	59.4	
Local elections		58.5		56.8		61.9		52.8		53.8			46.0

Source: The Central Election Commission of Latvia, 2013

In the research²²⁴ of the electoral attitude after the local authorities' elections, the respondents who did not vote at the elections were asked for the reasons of their inactivity, 18% answered "there is no point" and 12% answered "they do not believe, do no trust anything"

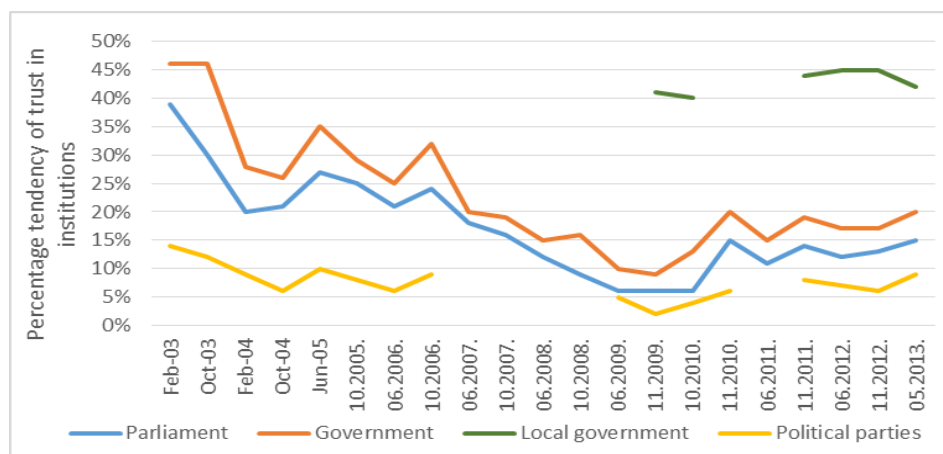


Figure 1 Citizens' trust in public authorities (percent, %)²²⁵

Apart from parliament and local authorities' elections, the legislation of the Republic of Latvia provides various ways how citizens can be involved in adoption of decisions of state administration and local authorities. Moreover, for cooperation with residents the local

²²⁴ Public opinion survey *Electoral Attitude Research 2013* in Latvian. (June 2013). The Central Election Commission of Latvia. Available at: http://cvk.lv/pub/upload_file/Petijumi/atskaite_CVK_062013.pdf

²²⁵ *Standart Eurobarometer* (2003.-2013.) Available: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb_arch_en.htm

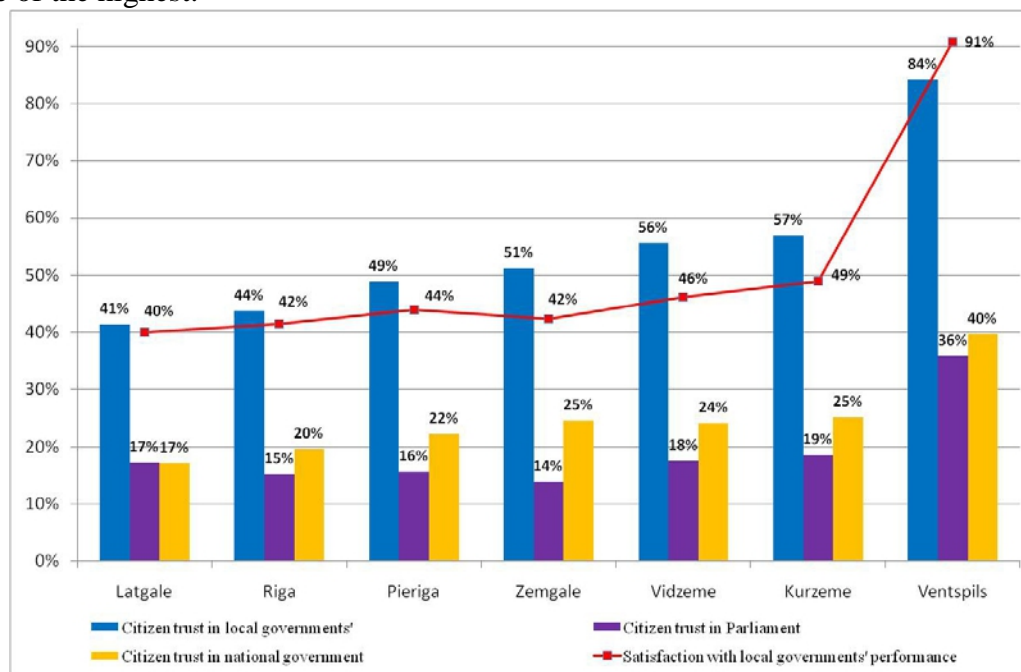
authorities in their administrative territories can realize volunteering initiatives regarding any question which is in their competence and are not prohibited by law. However, the author's research carried out in 2012 revealed an explicit tendency that citizens quite rarely take part in officially regulated participation forms. More popular are those cooperation and communication forms that are outside the official participation framework (for example, the use of social media etc.), which means that a considerable revision is needed throughout the regulated participation mechanisms.

Citizens' satisfaction with local authorities work and citizens' trust in national public authorities

One of the aims of the publication was to examine if residents' satisfaction level with the performance of local authorities leave positive impact also on trust indicators to central power institutions. Whether resident's positive assessment on the work of local authorities correlates in evaluation of national parliament and government?

Inspecting acquired data in regional distribution, this hypothesis proved true in Kurzeme and Vidzeme – in regions where respondents are most satisfied with their local authorities' performance and trust them most (see Fig.2). Respondents from both regions relatively higher assessed also their trust in national parliament and government (see Fig.2). However, acquired data do not allow this conclusion generalize regarding all statistical regions. For example, respondents in Latgale region in comparison with respondents from other regions assessed both their satisfaction with local authorities work the lowest and their trust in local authorities, yet they trust in the Parliament even more than respondents from Zemgale, Riga and Pieriga, who assessed the performance of their local authorities and their trust in them higher.

By comparing two municipal governments in Latvia (see Fig.2), whose work was the most satisfying for citizens – Riga and Ventspils, two different sceneries were revealed: Riga has the lowest trust indicators in Latvia's parliament and government, whereas Ventspils – one of the highest.²²⁶



Source: Author's calculations on survey conducted by Lilita Seimuškāne and SKDS, 2012 (n=1050).

Figure 2 Coherence between public appraisal of local governments' performance and trust in different level of public authorities (local government, national parliament and government)

²²⁶ Seimuškāne, L., Market and Public Opinion Research Centre (SKDS), 2012. Public opinion survey: *The Evaluation of Citizen Participation Process in Latvia*.

It allows draw conclusion that satisfaction with one's local authority' performance and trust level in it is important factor in forming attitude towards activities of central power institutions, but certainly it is not the only influential factor.²²⁷ The acquired research data in correlation with the nationality structure in statistical regions acquired in 2011 Population Census process in Latvia, affirm already mentioned conclusion, than public power institutions in Latvia are more positively evaluated by respondents in regions with most number of Latvians, i.e. Vidzeme region (87% Latvians), Kurzeme region (76% Latvians).²²⁸

Whereas in regions where proportion of Latvians are less than half – in Latgale (46%) and Riga (40%) respondents have assessed their trust in national government the lowest (see Fig. 2).

Citizens' trust and participation

Within the research the authors also tend to examine the hypothesis – whether in local authorities where citizens are more satisfied with the local authority' work, the level of citizens' participation is higher.

During a survey on different aspects of citizen participation in local governments, when asked what would be the respondent's reaction in case the local government council made a decision in conflict with the interests of the residents of the local government, half (50%) of the respondents said they wouldn't engage in any activity, even if the local government council made a decision which interfered with their interests. Only one third or 35% of the respondents stated that they would actively respond to such doings of the local government²²⁹.

Examining research data in territorial division between statistical regions, it can be stated that most active respondents live in Vidzeme, almost 48% would be ready to take part in any activities, if local authority adopted a decision which interfered with citizen interests. In respect of activity Zemgale and Pieriga follows (38%), then Riga (34%). Less active would be residents of Latgale (26%) and also Kurzeme (30%).

By comparing research data in Riga and Ventspils, i.e. municipal governments where residents are very satisfied with local authority's work, the research data show that the level of citizens' participation is the lowest, even lower than the average activity level in Latvia. The lowest activity would be in Latgale region, characterized by the lowest socio-economic indicators. However, interconnection between the activity of other regions and the level of regions' socio-economic development is not observed.

Verifying interconnection between answers about active performance and citizen trust indicators to local authorities, it was revealed that most inactive are residents in those regions, where they trust most in their local authorities – Kurzeme (60%) and the least – in Latgale (46%).

The coherence between citizens' readiness to get involved in activities in case local authority adopted a decision which interfered with their interests, people's trust indicators and satisfaction with self-government work is given in Figure 3.

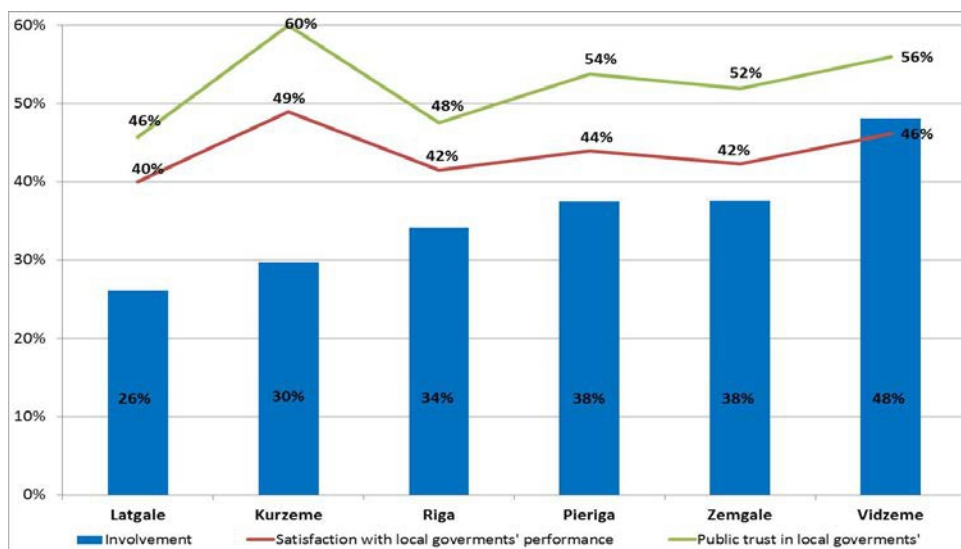
Inspecting distribution of respondents' answers in similar question about citizen satisfaction with local authorities' work, the acquired data match with assessment in question about public trust – the most satisfied with the work of their local authority are residents of Kurzeme, but the most dissatisfied – residents of Latgale.

²²⁷ Seimuskane, L., Vilka, I. (2013). *Relations between citizen's trust and participation in local governments in Latvia*.

NISPAcee 21th Annual Conference proceedings.

²²⁸ Central statistical Bureau of Latvia. Central statistical Bureau of Latvia. 2011 Population census data in brief. Informative survey. Available at: www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/publikacijas/nr_13_2011gada_tautas_skaitisanas_rezultati_isuma_12_00_lv.pdf

²²⁹ Seimuškāne, L., Market and Public Opinion Research Centre (SKDS), 2012. Public opinion survey: *The Evaluation of Citizen Participation Process in Latvia*.



Source: Author's calculations on survey conducted by Lilita Seimuskane and SKDS, 2012 (n=1050).

Fig. 3 The coherence between residents' readiness to act in situation if local government adopted decision that interfered with residents' interests, citizen trust indicators and satisfaction with local government work

The acquired data of the research updates necessity, by studying residents' participation motivation, to pay more attention to this aspect, whether:

- residents' low participation level is related to discontent, distrust in institutions of public authority;
- residents' low participation level is related to distrust, that it is possible to change anything by participation; lack of seeing the point of participation;
- the basis of low participation level is consideration that people's everyday life and well-being is not endangered in any way; residents are convinced that their lives are well represented within the local authority.

Conclusion

Although the local authorities in Latvia enjoy more citizens' trust in comparison with the national level authorities – Parliament and government, yet at the local level in the area of democratic participation citizens are very passive. Moreover, this passivity has no connection with citizens being more or less satisfied with their local authorities' performance. The results of the research demonstrated that the most passivity in the area of participation is in those local authorities where citizens are the most satisfied with the local authority' work (Kurzeme) and the least satisfied (Latgale).

During the last elections which took place in Latvia in June 2013, the analysis of citizens' activity demonstrated that there is no explicit correlation between citizens' satisfaction with local authorities' work and electorate activity. So, for example, in Kurzeme region where citizens in authors' survey expressed the most satisfaction with the work of their local authority, the electorate activity during these elections was one of the lowest (41%), even lower than on average in Latvia. Only for one percentage point it was higher in Latgale region (42%) where citizens were the least satisfied with their local authority's work.

Citizens' satisfaction with their local authority's work is an important factor in formation of citizens' attitude towards authority as such. At the level of local authorities citizens' satisfaction has the closest interconnection with the trust level, namely, the most satisfied are citizens with the work of the local authority the higher the trust level. However, in formation of attitude against the state authority – i.e. parliament and government the influence of this factor was not absolute. In the authors' research certain local authorities demonstrated this influence, whereas in others there was no interconnectedness. Wherewith it can be concluded

that trust in institutions of national level is formed by other factors as well.

The majority of traditional forms of representation become weaker. What is there to offer instead? How to renew trust in public authority institutions and how to rouse citizens' interest in decision making, especially if those decisions refer to citizens themselves? Those are the problem questions, easier to discuss than implement. The authors see as one of the directions of possible action policy in Kaifen Yand's expressed conclusion – maybe, thinking about trust, it is worth to think about the development of mutual process – not only citizens' trust in public authorities administrators, but also public authority's trust in its citizens.

The profesor at the University of Pittsburgh, authority in the field of public administration Guy Peters²³⁰ admits that not only in Latvia but also in many other countries the wish of authority representatives to involve citizens in decision making is very formal. Most often it is based on requirements of legislation or good management. But in majority of cases the agenda is already established – citizens simply have to render answers on the options that are already decided in administrative offices. But in fact people have to be given chance to search and debate about their choices themselves. Because trust is never single-acting, it is reversible and mutual.

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