

Factors of citizens trust in Local Authorities

Vilma Tubutiene¹

Diana Saparniene²

Gabriele Norvaisaite³

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine factors of citizens trust in local government. The theoretical part reveals the phenomenon of trust as an object of many scientific disciplines - psychology, sociology, economics, etc. Each of the listed disciplines interprets trust differently, based on a unique structure and analysis. It is generalized that trust is determining as a feature of social relationships where members of society trust each other, and the higher level of trust tend to cooperate. Whereas WBG report “Building Trust in Government through Citizen Engagement” defined trust in governance as a necessary precondition for representative democracy. Moreover, The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities 2019 point out that “local and regional democracy is a central pillar of European democracy” and stressed the role of citizens’ trust in strengthening the representative democracy. In the relationship between citizens and government the scientific literature suggests term of political trust. It explains expectations which citizens experienced in relationship with governing institutions. Changing nature of relationship between government and society force governing institutions to find new ways of decision making and implementation and to pursuit citizens trust in their efficiency, transparency etc.

Political trust could be analysed at three levels: micro, mezzo and macro. The same factors could be recognized at each level, but their significance may vary. Micro-political trust is also called individual political trust, where trust is directed at individual political or administrative leaders. It involves a person-centred approach where citizens become confident or distrustful of government because of a particular leader. It is also an individual trait where trust is based on a personal perception of the activities of each institution, where citizens expect public institutions to meet the needs of society; when citizens value the government and its institutions, policy-making, individual political leaders - their activities, keeping promises, honesty. At the mezzo level, public policy-making and implementation can depend on citizens' trust when municipal authorities operating in specific public services, such as health, education etc. Macro-political trust means when citizens trust or distrust a government in general because they are satisfied or dissatisfied with its work. Citizens also value a common political system, different institutions. The macro level includes the highest, general level of trust in public authorities, which may even be limited by some structural reforms or various systemic changes. According to scientific review there are defined two levels of variables affecting citizens trust in local government – external and internal. External factors such as economic situation, performance of governing bodies, social capital, inter-institutional trust in political and administrative system, ethical behaviour and competence of civil servants and politicians, reputation, and communication style, political or administrative management events, transparency, media etc. were defined. Internal such as – gender; age; education level; socio-economic status; political engagement and activity in local events and elections etc. Those factors became a basis for elaboration of questionnaire for empirical research. Two sets of independent variables – mentioned external and internal factors together with demographic factors were used to determine variations of the dependent variable - trust in local governments. Siauliai district municipality was chosen as a case for survey. Siauliai district municipality was chosen as a case for survey (N=207). Survey helps to identify the prevailing factors of political trust in the case of small municipality.

Points for Practitioners

¹ Lecturer, PhD student, Vilnius University Siauliai academy, Siauliai, Lithuania

² Professor, Vilnius University Siauliai academy, Siauliai, Lithuania

³ Graduate of Siauliai university, Siauliai, Lithuania

Research results could be informative for understanding of unique prevailing factors of political trust in the case of small municipality. It could be identified as local experience of implementation of European Charter of Local Self-Government and explain dependence of specific socio-economic factors on strengthening of representative democracy. The results of survey could help politicians and managers of municipalities to understand and strengthening citizens trust and develop representative democracy.

Key words: Political trust, trust factors.

Introduction

Different disciplines describe trust as a phenomenon of relationships between people, a personal trait, a trait of way that helps maintain safe, positive relationships with others. In the context of the sociological sciences, trust is understood as the cooperation of individuals or institutions. From a psychological point of view, trust is a cognitive process that seeks to find out whether it is worth believing and trusting a particular person. Economists describe this term as the calculated and targeted results achieved by a individual or organization. Each of the listed disciplines interprets trust differently, based on a unique structure and analysis. It can be argued that different approaches to the trust prove that this concept is ambiguous and complex, the meaning of which may depend on the focus of different disciplines.

Trust is not only important for interpersonal relationships. Blind (2006) reveals phenomena of trust as political and social. Social trust defines the experience of members of society and the sustainability of relations with each other, and political trust determines who and how is a close and reliable government structure for the citizen. According to Burnytė (2013), political trust is trust in a government institute or government institutions in general. In this way, citizens form an opinion about the whole political system and decide whether it is worth trusting. This assessment is not described by a separate institution or actor (eg political parties, parliament, government or individual politicians) but presents a more generalized approach to the functioning of the entire political system, thus assessing its transparency, efficiency and competence. According to M. Tang and N.Huhe (2016), political trust is the belief of citizens that political actors or institutions will deliver results that meet their expectations. M. Piryaei et al. (2015) stresses that there is a tendency to observe the leaders of the community (institutions) and evaluate them from the positions of political trust. According to Blind (2006), political trust is one of the key indicators of the success of a state's existence. This trust arises when citizens become interested in the governance of the state, value political and administrative institutions, general national policies, or individual leaders. This suggests that the actions taken by the government are not contrary to the interests and aspirations of society.

In the context of the development of democracy, trust is called a value whose spread among the people is most needed to maintain a democratic society (Putnam, 2001). Paliszkievicz (2011) singled out the advantages of trust, which can also be useful in public administration, because they:

- facilitates work and negotiations;
- reduces transaction costs;
- regulates international conflicts;
- influences investment decisions.

Government of the state helps to build trust, without excluding procedural factors and functions and public participation. According to Saltelli et al. (2011) make it clear that in the context of trust, it is important to inform the public about public governance and related actions. Consequently, the dissemination of information and public involvement in governance and information reduces the likelihood of misconduct by civil servants and contributes to the growth of public confidence. It can be stated that the civic participation in the life of the state, awareness of the activities of state institutions and public service has a positive effect on citizens' confidence in governance.

Blind (2006) argues that political trust arises when citizens value government and its institutions, policy-making, individual political leaders, keeping their promises, efficiency, justice, and fairness. Davis (2007) adds that political trust can be analyzed as a public expectation that politicians elected by society will not abuse their power, will work honestly.

Political trust is described as heterogeneous phenomena. E.g. Blind (2006) divides political trust into two categories: macro and micro:

- **Macro-political trust** which means citizens trust or distrust of government because they are satisfied or dissatisfied with its work. Citizens also value a common political system, different institutions.

• **Micro-political trust** also called individual political trust, where trust is directed at individual political leaders. Individual political trust involves a person-centred approach where citizens become confident or distrustful of government because of a particular political leader.

Nakrosis (2017) reveal third level as **mezzo-political trust**, and explains it as the formulation and implementation of public policy which may depend on citizens' trust in state and municipal institutions operating in specific public policy subsystems, such as health or education.

Piryaei et al. (2015) argue that political trust underscores the tendency to monitor community political leaders. Moreover, according to Tang, Huhe (2016), political trust could be presented as the belief of citizens that political actors or institutions will “deliver” results that meet their expectations.

According to Blind (2006), trust in public authorities can be determined by a country's economic situation, tensions in labour market, declining social inequality, citizens' understanding that the government can address current financial challenges, and increasing transparency in public services. These listed factors promote not only citizens' trust in government, but also active participation in public administration, expression of opinion in democratic elections, and interest in politics. In other words, as trust grows, so does public satisfaction with the state.

Factors determining Trust in Local Authorities

Thus, citizens' trust in governing institutions is a condition of political order. It arose when civil servants, politicians, and other public sector artificial actors operate in a public, transparent, and efficient manner, and members of the public want to engage in public governance processes through joint efforts (Curristine et al., 2007). Trust is a feature of *social relationships* where members of society trust each other and tend to cooperate. It is also an *individual trait* where trust is based on a *personal perception* of the activities of each institution, where citizens expect public institutions to meet the needs of society; when citizens value the government and its institutions, policy-making, individual political leaders - their activities, keeping promises, honesty.

Few factors that can work reliably for trusting governing bodies are highlighted below:

Social capital. Nakrosis (2017) links trust management institutions to social capital (social networks, relationships, norms, etc.). It is argued that the public trusts the authorities if only the rule of law, i. y. if their activities are regulated by legal norms and effective laws. Meanwhile, social capital can be understood as a general trust in people in a social environment. He knows when the society is intensively involved in various actions shaping citizenship, objectively participating in the non-governmental sector or communities (Starnes et al. 2016).

Economic situation. A good economic situation in a country is one of the important factors in building trust in institutions (Yann, Pierre, 2013). Various macroeconomic indicators (unemployment or inflation rate, GDP) can also affect the population when assessing various institutions. Nakrosis (2017) states that the population that evaluates the country's economy more favourably tends to have more trust in state institutions.

Composition of Parliament and Government. According to Nakrosis (2017), citizens' trust in public authorities can also be measured by the extent to which they support politicians working in the legislature or the executive. It is said that the stronger the support for politicians, the more trust there is in the government itself. Imbrasaitė (2011) also emphasizes that if citizens' personal priorities coincide with current policies, then they tend to be more supportive of the political system as well.

Performance of managing authorities. Although there is no direct relationship between institutional outcomes and trust, it is agreed that they are related (Nakrosis, 2017). With declining performance, society tends to value institutions worse, while as the situation improves, people do not necessarily value them favorably. According to Nakrosis (2017), it is necessary to emphasize that performance is not easy to measure, and not only objective results but also their expectations are important for citizens.

Political or administrative events. Confidence can also be affected by significant political and administrative scandals, which in one case can have a positive impact (after the scandal, an initiative to improve public governance is successfully implemented) and in another negative, as such events usually occur unexpectedly (Nakrosis, 2017).

Interinstitutional trust in the overall political and administrative system. According to Nakrosis (2017), not only interpersonal but also declared inter-institutional trust in the political and administrative system is important. Interaction between politicians, civil servants and citizens in various networks and cooperation in the public policy process depends on the level of trust between the parties. It is noticed that with the increase of mutual trust, people are willing to cooperate with each other, solve various public policy problems and strive for higher results (Nakrosis, 2017).

The behavior, reputation, and communication style of civil servants and politicians also affect trust in government. Marozzi (2015) states that trust in the public service can be described as “vertical trust”, which means

trust in the country's government and institutions (such as the court, the Parliament, medical institutions, etc.), and it is also the opposite of “horizontal trust,” meaning trust between people who know each other. Rolle (2016), supplemented by Marozzi (2015), notes that trust in public service is very different from trust among people, as there may be no meetings with individuals and groups. This trust is made a complex phenomenon by the impersonal nature of trust in the civil service, where it is problematic to trust anonymous or abstract principles that are not expressed in any meetings or emotions. Civil servants often do not express human feelings, do not disclose their activities in public, moreover, in the media they are usually presented on the negative side

Improving information technologies (e-democracy, e-government). According to Petrauskienė (2005), information technologies encourage the involvement of the population in public administration processes, thus increasing trust in public authorities: citizens are much more quickly informed about the activities of institutions and their results, can more easily order certain public services and consult freely with various public administration specialists. The concept of e-government focuses on the needs of the information society and on a more modern and up-to-date public administration.

In addition, the **media also has an important impact** on trust in public authorities. It usually presents the most relevant approaches and trust related to institutions (Aalberg, Curran, 2012). The media tends to shape public opinion and often too much information can be misleading, as it is often based on subjective assessments, stormy emotions rather than personal experience. Imbrasaitė (2011) emphasizes the negative impact of a dramatic and critical tone of articles and information about politicians and authorities on political trust. Saltelli et al. (2011) suggest that trust in public institutions is largely determined by the following two factors: information on the activities of government institutions; public involvement and information of government institutions. Such information most easily affects those sections of the public who have the least experience or no personal experience of positive interactions with the authorities. The media becomes a mediator between the government and the population, as it helps to shape the political imagination and introduces them to the changing political life.

Nakrosis (2017) divides the listed factors into *external and internal*. Internal factors include open and transparent governance, significant government developments, and inter-institutional trust (the relationship between politicians, civil servants, and citizens in public administration). Meanwhile, external factors include social capital (relations, norms), economic situation and the composition of the ruling majority.

Table1 **Internal and external Factors influencing citizens trust in public authorities**

External factors (social, economic and political)	Internal factors (system of public governance)
Social capital (social trust)	Effective, open and transparent government
Economic situation (economic growth or recession)	Significant management events (victories and defeats, scandals)
Composition of the ruling majority (Parliament or Government)	Relations between politicians, civil servants and other stakeholders (interinstitutional trust)

Thus, trust in public authorities becomes an important condition for trust in the state itself and for the active participation of citizens. Trust at the municipal level (*mezzo*) is particularly important, as citizens who are interested and involved in community affairs are much easier to accept new challenges and have a better understanding of how decisions are made and how local government works. Expressed political trust can reveal the support of direct, constructive interaction of local government with the nearest citizens. The authors point out that the dialogue has a significant impact not only on documentation issues or administrative problems. Maintaining a strong relationship with the population allows local authorities to ensure the survival of democratic principles, as citizens are informed about the transparency of the decisions taken and the importance of the actions envisaged. Active participation of citizens in governance and their involvement in decision-making processes is an aspiration of every democratic state (Carreira, Machado, Vasconcelos, 2016). It promotes a reciprocal link between society and government (Yang, 2006). Citizens can have their say and they will be heard. In addition, the transparency and accountability of public authorities is increasing, and the needs and priorities of communities are being explored

Methodology of empirical survey

The goal of empirical survey: to find out predominant factors of trust in public authorities within the population of Siauliai district municipality. The data collection method was an anonymous online questionnaire (n = 207).

The questionnaire

Respondents were asked 18 closed-ended and five semi-closed-ended questions. Two Likert scales were used to assess the trust of residents Siauliai district municipality Siauliai district in municipal institutions. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first part asks the respondent questions about the determinants of trust. This part consists of 9 topics (factors): economic situation; performance of management institutions; social capital; interinstitutional trust in the political and administrative system; confidence assessment; the behaviour, reputation and communication style of civil servants and politicians; political or administrative management events; Information Technology; the media. The questions in the second part were intended to reveal the characteristics of the respondent, such as gender, age, education, employment, place of residence (see table 2)

Table 2. The topics of Questionnaire topics and their content

Topic / diagnostic block	Content
Determinants of trust	Economic situation, performance of government institutions, social capital, inter-institutional trust in political and administrative system, trust assessment, behavior of civil servants and politicians, reputation and communication style, political or administrative management events (eg corruption), information technology, media.
Demographic characteristics of the respondent	Gender, age, education, employment, place of residence

Organization of the survey. The questionnaire was prepared in electronic form, using the tool of the website www.apklausa.lt. The survey was conducted in January 2019.

The survey sample. The study chose to interview adults (18 years and older) residents of Siauliai district municipality, as they have the right to vote and can express their opinion about Siauliai district municipality institutions (mayor, municipal council, director of municipal administration, municipal administration, elder, eldership, elders). Quota sampling was used to select respondents, assessing the distribution of adults (18 years and older) in Siauliai district municipality by sex, age, education and place of residence. The sample was designed to correspond to the distribution of all adults (18 years and older) in Siauliai district municipality according to the above-mentioned indicators.

The sample size (n) was calculated based on the formula:
$$n = \frac{t^2 N p(1-p)}{\Delta^2 N + t^2 p(1-p)}$$

The values of the variables:

N - population size. According to the data of the Lithuanian Department of Statistics (2018), the number of permanent residents (adults) registered in Siauliai District Municipality at the beginning of 2018 was 29,870.

t - Student's coefficient (confidence level). 95% selected. confidence level, hence $t = 1.96$.

p is the expected distribution. When the value of p is not known, we assume that the distribution of responses is 50%. ($p = 0.5$), then $p(1 - p)$ acquires the largest value.

Δ - deviation. The selected deviation rate does not exceed 7%. ($\Delta = 0.07$).

Intending to draw conclusions about all adult residents of Siauliai district municipality and wishing that in the presence of 95 percent. for the confidence level the result would be +/- 7%. within the margin of error, of the 29 870 potential respondents, at least 195 respondents had to be interviewed in order to be representative of the data obtained. The study surveyed 207 respondents, so this sample size allows conclusions to be drawn with no more than 7 percent. maximum possible deviation.

Reliability of the survey. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the KMO and Bartlett sphericity test. The KMO value is 0.876 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity significance level (Sig.) Is <0.0001. Therefore, it can be concluded that the variables are significantly interrelated. An internal compatibility check was also performed using the SPSS software. In the analysed case, the average score of seven confidence scale questions

of Siauliai district municipal institutions was calculated, which is used to analyse the research data, the Cronbach's α value = 0.91 was obtained. Using the SPSS software, a frequency distribution was constructed and it was estimated that visually the frequency distribution is quite close to the normal distribution because the results of the variable are arranged similarly to the Gaussian distribution on the interval scale.

Survey ethics. In order to ensure the well-being of the respondents both at the beginning and at the end of the survey, the following basic ethical principles were followed: voluntary participation in the survey; informed consent to participate in the study; ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of information received; avoidance of harm to respondents.

Sociodemographic sample characteristics. 207 adults (18 years and older) residents of Siauliai district municipality participated in the questionnaire survey. Such a sample is sufficiently representative, as it corresponds to the characteristics of the adult population of Siauliai district municipality according to the selected control features, i. y. gender, age, education and place of residence. The maximum possible error is not more than 7% at 95% confidence level.

Similarly, male (48.3%) and female (51.2%) respondents participated in the survey. The study surveyed residents of all ages: 24.2 percent. respondents ranged in age from 18 to 29. population; respondents aged 30-39, 40-49. and 60 m. and more evenly distributed (19.3%); the smallest part of the respondents was 50-59 years old. persons (17.9%). In terms of place of residence, the majority of respondents were from towns (35.7%) and Kursėnai (32.9%). Meanwhile, 30.9 percent. respondents indicated that they live in a rural area. It can be stated that the distribution of respondents according to these sample categories basically corresponds to the distribution of adult population data of Siauliai district municipality. The survey data can be summarized for the surveyed population of the district with no more than 7 percent. error at 95% confidence level.

The majority of respondents had secondary (23.2%), higher education (22.7%) or secondary education with a professional qualification (22.2%). A smaller share of respondents had higher non-university education (19.8%), while only 24 respondents have primary education (11.6%).

A significant part of the surveyed residents of Siauliai district municipality classified themselves as farmers (28%) and employees or specialists (20.3%). Respondents who indicated they were students, schoolchildren, or retirees were evenly distributed (16, 9 percent). Business owners, managers (9.2 per cent), the unemployed (7.2 per cent) and housewives or persons raising a child (3.9 per cent) consist the smallest part of respondents.

Assessment of internal trust factors by citizens of Siauliai district municipality

The internal factors impacting the population's trust in local authorities include: the performance of management institutions, significant management events and inter-institutional trust.

In order to reveal the relationship between trust in local government and internal factors, the average of the trust and internal questionnaire questions and the statistical significance of the differences (ANOVA test) are analyzed below.

Table 3. Relationship between trust and governance performance indicators.

	Mean				ANOVA test		
	Very good, the area is showing bright and good changes	Okay, but there aren't many positive changes	Bad, nothing in the area has changed or changed for the worse	Very bad, the situation in the district has deteriorated significantly	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	3,93	3,45	2,65	1,75	20,508	0,000	0,257

The directionality of the noticeable changes in the population determines their confidence in self-government. The better the residents appreciate the changes that have taken place in the district during the 3-year period, the more trust in the self-government they expressed. Residents who think the decisions made by the municipality are very

good, their overall trust is 3.93, while the overall confidence of the respondents who rate the decisions as very bad is only 1.75.

Relationship between indicators of trust and significant management events

Table 4. Relationship between the trust and the perception of corruption in the Siauliai district municipal institutions (municipal mayor, council, director of administration, etc.)

	Mean				ANOVA test		
	Verry corrupt	Partially corrupt	Non-corrupt	No opinion	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	2,30	2,95	3,92	3,55	28,895	0,000	0,299

The non-corruption of municipal institutions leads to greater trust in self-government. The table below shows that respondents who trust that municipal institutions are non-corrupt have the highest overall confidence (mean 3.92), while those who believe that institutions are highly corrupt have the lowest overall confidence (mean 2.30).

Table 5. Relationship between the trust and experience by encountering dishonest, non-transparent behaviour of the employees of the district municipality or eldership.

	Mean		ANOVA test		
	Yes	No	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	2,78	3,40	15,632	0,000	0,071

The results of the survey revealed that residents who have not encountered dishonest, non-transparent behaviour of the employees of the district municipality or eldership have more trust in local government institutions (mean 3.40).

Table 6. Relationship between trust and experience with the bribery (money, gifts in kind, services, etc.) for solving problems in Siauliai district municipality

	Mean			ANOVA test		
	Usually helps	Sometimes helps	Does not help	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	2,38	3,18	3,80	35,435	0,000	0,258

The survey revealed that residents who believe that a bribe does not help solve problems in the municipality are more confident in self-government, as their overall trust is 3.80. Meanwhile, those who think they help the most have lower overall confidence (mean 2.38).

Relationship between trust and inter-institutional trust indicators

Table 7. Relationship between trust and experience of applying to Siauliai District Municipality or Eldership during the last three years

	Mean			ANOVA test		
	The issue was resolved quickly	It was, but the issue was not resolved quickly	I did not apply	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	3,78	2,67	3,09	30,328	0,000	0,229

The trust of the population in self-government is determined by good experience with self-government institutions. Respondents who approached and their questions were resolved quickly had the highest overall confidence (mean 3.78). Respondents who had negative experiences (their issues were not resolved quickly) in the municipality or eldership have the least trust in them (mean 2.67).

Table 8. Relationship between the trust and submission of any proposals (in writing or orally) to the district municipality or eldership regarding the decisions to be made in the last three years

	Mean			ANOVA test		
	I submitted and my suggestions were taken into account	I provided, but no one has taken it so far	I didn't	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	3,88	2,90	3,22	8,759	0,000	0,079

Citizens' civic activism determines their trust in self-government institutions. The more often local authorities take into account the suggestions made by the population, the more trust there is in self-government. Respondents who have made suggestions in the last three years and have been taken into account have more trust in the institutions (mean of overall trust 3.88). Otherwise, the overall confidence of the population whose suggestions were not taken into account is lower (mean 2.90).

Table 9. Relationship between trust and interest in the problems of district

	Mean			ANOVA test		
	Mostly I am interested	Sometimes I get interested	I am not interested	F	P	Eta square
Overall trust	3,66	3,19	2,79	11,515	0,000	0,103

The table 9 shows that the more frequent interest of the population in the problems of their district leads to a higher trust in self-government institutions (mean 3.66). Otherwise, respondents who are not interested in the district's problems do not trust the institutions themselves (mean 2.79).

The obtained research results revealed that the trust of Siauliai district municipality residents in local self-government institutions is determined by the results of the activities of management institutions, significant management events and inter-institutional trust. The relationship between the performance indicators of trust and management institutions has shown that the directionality of the changes observed by the population determines their trust in self-government. The relationship between indicators of significant management events and trust has revealed that the non-corruption of municipal institutions, the fair and transparent conduct of employees and the failure to take bribes affect the trust of the population. Internal factors include inter-institutional trust, the analysis of the indicators of which revealed that the trust of the population is determined by good experience with self-government institutions, civic activity (submission of proposals) and interest in the problems of one's district.

The magnitude of the effect of influence of internal factors on trust in self - government institutions was expressed as the square of the coefficient eta. We could see from the tables below that trust is most strongly associated with the assessment of corruption. Residents who believe that local authorities are corrupt and that bribes are more likely to help solve problems have the least trust in them. The evaluation of decisions made and recourse to local authorities also have a significant impact on trust. Respondents, who rated the decisions very well and had to contact the institutions (their question was resolved quickly), have the most trust in the municipal institutions. Trust, meanwhile, is weakest in terms of interest in the district's problems, bidding, and dealing with unfair and non-transparent employee behaviour.

The relationship between trust and external factors

The figure 1 shows the magnitudes of the influence of external factors on trust in self-government institutions. The interpretation of the data is based on the main values of the influence size (eta-square) singled out by Watson (2018): 0.01 - small, 0.06 - medium and 0.14 - large.

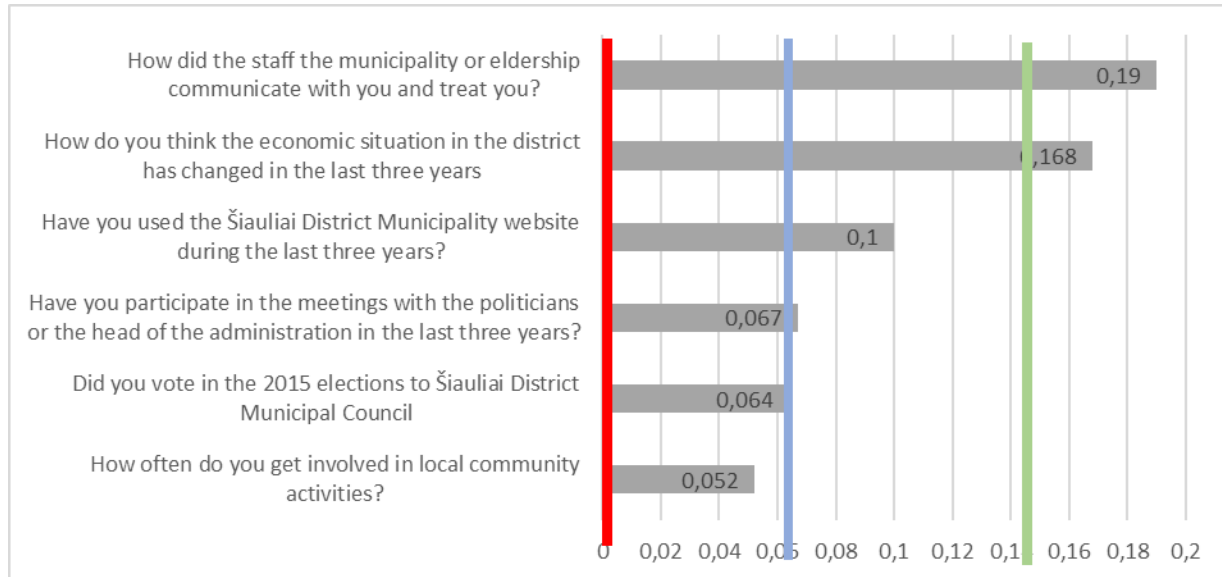


Figure 1. The magnitude of the effect of influence of external factors on trust in self - government institutions expressed as the square of the coefficient eta.

In the figure 1 below a small value of the influence size is marked in red; blue indicates the mean value of the effect size; a large value for the effect size is highlighted in green.

The survey data revealed that trust is most strongly associated with civil servants' behaviour and communication. Respondents who are not exposed to unpleasant and disproportionate communication and behaviour by employees are more confident in self-government institutions. The second most important factor is the assessment of the economic situation. The better the residents assess the economic situation in the district, the more self-confidence they have. The use of the municipality's website, participation in the consents prepared by the mayor and members of the council, and voting in elections have a lesser effect on trust. Meanwhile, the weakest link is seen between trust and participation in community activities.

Conclusions

Citizens' trust in public authorities is an important condition for political order, which arises when civil servants, politicians and others working in the public sector act in a public, transparent and efficient manner, and members of society work together to engage in public governance processes.

The main determinants of trust in public authorities are good governance, significant governance events, inter-institutional trust, social capital, economic situation, composition of the ruling majority, behaviour of civil servants and politicians, reputation and communication style, evolving information technologies, media.

The obtained research results revealed that statistically significant variables influencing trust in local government institutions in Siauliai district municipality are economic situation, social capital, behaviour of civil servants and politicians, reputation and communication style, information technologies and media.

References

1. Aalberg, T., Curran, J. (2012). *How Media Inform Democracy: A Comparative Approach*. New York: Routledge.
2. Blind, P. (2006). *Building trust in government in the twenty-first century: Review of literature and emerging issues*. <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN025062.pdf>.
3. Burnytė, M. (2013). Pasitikėjimas politinėmis ir teisėsaugos institucijomis Lietuvoje. *Teisės problemos*, 4(82), 97-112.
4. Carreira, V., Machado, J., Vasconcelos, L. (2016). Engaging Citizen Participation — A Result of Trusting Governmental Institutions and Politicians in the Portuguese Democracy. *Social sciences*, 5(40), 1-11.
5. Curristine, T., Lonti, Z., Joumard, I. (2007). Improving Public Sector Efficiency: Challenges and Opportunities. *OECD Journal on Budgeting*, 7(1), 1-41.
6. Davis, D. W. (2007). *Negative liberty: Public opinion and terrorist attacks on America*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.
7. Imbrasaitė, J. (2011). Sociotropiniai vertinimai ar asmeninės patirtys? Politinis pasitikėjimas Lietuvoje. *Kultūra ir visuomenė*, 2(1), 11-26.
8. Yann, A., Pierre, C. (2013). Trust, Institutions and Economic Development. *Handbook of economic growth*, 1, 1-86.
9. Hakhverdian, A., Mayne, Q. (2012). Institutional Trust, Education, and Corruption: A Micro-Macro Interactive Approach. *Journal of Politics*, 73(3), 1-33.
10. Marozzi, M. (2015). Measuring Trust in European Public Institutions. *Social Indicator Research*, 123, 879–895.
11. Nakrosis, V. (2017). *Pasitikėjimas valstybe: prielaidos, išūkiai, sprendimai*: monografija. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla.
12. Piryaci, M., Akhlaghi, F., Saeed, M. (2015). An investigation into the factors affecting people's trust in government performance. *Science journal*, 36(6), 1152-1156.
13. Tang, M., Huhe, N. (2016). Does decentralization bring the people back to the government? An empirical analysis of the effect of decentralization on political trust. *Policy and politics*, 44(3), 403-426.
14. Paliszkievicz, Joanna Olga (2011). Trust management. *Management*, 6 (4), 315-331.
15. Putnam, R. D. (2001). Kad demokratiją veiktų. Vilnius: Margi rastai.
16. Saltelli, A., D’Hombres, B., Jesinghaus, J., Manca, A. R., Mascherini, M., Nardo, M., & Saisana, M. (2011). Indicators for European Union policies. Business as usual? *Social Indicators Research*, 102(2), 197-207.
17. Starnes, B. J., Truhon, S. A., & McCarthy, V. (2009). Organizational Trust: Employee Employer Relationships. *Human Development and Leadership Division, ASQ Quality Press*, 1-16.