

The need to understand the ongoing process of democratization has led to the revival of interest in the topics such as legitimacy of the democratic regimes, the creation of political culture and inevitably also in the question of the role of trust in these processes. These topics will be closely examined in this work.

In the first - theoretical - section we introduce the evolution of the concept of trust, its various definitions and categorization. The concept of social capital, which is often linked to the topic of trust, will be also addressed in this chapter. A special attention will be paid to the paradigm of so-called collective social capital (Putnam, Halpern, Fukuyama), which focuses on the relationship of trust and democracy.

The second part of the thesis maps theoretical work on trust and democracy, paying special attention to the arguments of culturalists and institutionalists. When we talk of the role that trust plays in a given democratic system, we use three basic channels of their relationship: legitimacy, social trust and trust in institutions. Legitimacy in a given government and its institutions - a form of systemic trust - is considered to be the key founding block of the democratic system. Based on divergent theories we continue the debate to what extent, and if at all, is legitimacy influenced by social trust and trust in institutions. We focus our attention especially on the stance of the culturalists who claim that institutional as well social trust both positively affect the legitimacy of a given regime. This school of thought further believes that social trust is strongly linked to civic participation and is even derived from it. (...)