

Status consistency and Trust in Central Asia

In this paper the relationship between status inconsistency and trust will be examined in the case of Central Asia. Central Asian societies are experiencing rapid social, economical changes after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Status inconsistency more often occurs during socio-economic changes. In our study the data from the World Values Survey was used. Status inconsistent groups are divided according to the combination of education and income statuses of individuals. Four groups were established: 'high education-high income', 'high education-low income', 'low education-high income', and 'low education-low income'.

Introduction

Social trust may be stated as people's belief that other people can be relied upon, and it "is one of the most important synthetic forces within society" (Simmel and Wolff 1950). Trusting someone that one does not know well is a different attitude from trusting the people you know, the former is in other words called 'generalized trust' (Kiyonari and Yamagishi 1999).

In our study generalized trust is measured according to Rosenberg's method (Rosenberg 1956). Generalized trust is an interesting topic because we don't know much about why people would take a risk on relying on others that they do not know well. Generalized trust is a risky attitude because it embodies a possibility that the trusted people may have a corruptive aim. But, despite all of its risks, generalized trust is a prevalent situation in many societies. This implies that trusting other unknown individuals may have benefits, or rewards that are higher than its risks. One of the benefits of generalized trust is it is essential in establishing social interactions. These secondary interactions are important in gaining more social capital (Newton 2001; Putnam 2001).

Although, some individuals and societies tend to have a higher level of trust than others. The percentage of social trust between people changes in different societies, from a highest of 66% in the Netherlands to a low of 5% in the Philippines (World Values Survey, 2014). It shows that there are social properties of trust. For example, better governed, safer, more egalitarian, and wealthier societies are more trustworthy (Delhey 2005). Also, individually the people who are wealthier, better educated, and happier have higher levels of trust (Brandt et al. 2014; Delhey and Newton 2003; Sztompka 1999).

Relationship between social-economic class and generalized trust was indicated by many studies (Brandt, Wetherell, and Henry 2014; Delhey 2005; Kornai, Rothstein, and Rose-Ackerman 2004; Li 2009; Lount Jr. and Pettit 2012). A positive correlation was observed between social class and generalized trust in American society (Alesina and La Ferrara 2002), in European societies (Gheorghiu, Vignoles, and Smith 2009), and in Japan (Kiyonari and Yamagishi 1999).

Social stratification is one of the main topics in sociology from the beginning. For Marx the main source of social conflict was economical class divisions. According to Weber, class is just one aspect of the social structure, and social status and parties were other contributors of social stratification (Marx and Engels 1848; Weber, Gerth, and Mills 2009).

Later on Lenski brought a more complex model of statuses in modern societies. This model assumes that the structure of stratification is not just a single vertical hierarchy, but there are multiple status hierarchies. According to Lenski, the social position of an individual constitutes a set of positions in different horizontal dimensions of structure such as income, education, occupation, ethnicity, etc. An individual's position in one of these dimensions may or may not be equal to the position in another dimension (Lenski 1954). For example, someone may have a high education and low position in occupation. Lenski called this phenomenon 'status crystallization'. If an individual's social positions in all dimensions are at the same horizontal level the person has consistent statuses. Otherwise it is called 'inconsistent statuses' or low 'status crystallization'. Lenski studied and showed that there is significant correlation between status inconsistency and political view (Lenski 1954), social isolation (Lenski 1956) and religious interest (Lenski 1953).

Status inconsistency can add a new dimension to the studies about the relationship between social class and trust. As we noted above, many studies have been done in this topic, but the relationship of status inconsistency and trust was not examined before. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationship between status congruence and generalized trust in the case of Central Asia.

Methods

The data for this study are taken from the World Values Survey Longitudinal database (World Values Survey, 2014). An SPSS data file was retrieved and all the analysis work was done using SPSS. These surveys are administered every 5 years around the world, the latest was done in 2014. Our population was selected from Central Asian countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan. Although the longitudinal data includes data from 1984 to 2014 in more than 50 countries, the first survey in Central Asian countries was administered in 2011. Questionnaires were administered face-to-face. Total size of our sample was 8549.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with 10 respondents as follows: 10 with native language speakers (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, or Uzbek) (5 women and 5 men in ages 18-24, 25-39, 40-54, 55 and over) 50% of all in a village.

Sample was designed to be representative of the entire adult population and respondents' age were 18 years old and above. The countries have been divided into regions, differing in geography and basic economic, social and demographic attributes. In Kazakhstan two or three oblasts were selected per region, in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan all oblasts were selected. The number of interviews within the regions was defined proportional to number of residents. Overall 131 sampling points, clusters in Kazakhstan, 75 points in Uzbekistan and 77 points in Kyrgyzstan were selected in urban, and rural areas. Sampling points with 20 interviews to conduct, were selected in every cluster.

After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the five Central Asian countries gained independence: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In all the new States, the power received those who had been the presidents of the Union republics before the collapse of the Soviet Union. The political stability of the region was mostly preserved, except for the civil war in Tajikistan. In 2005, the Kyrgyz president was expelled as a result of the Tulip Revolution.

Despite the fact that Central Asian countries are preserving political stability, the main agenda in all post-soviet countries was economic reform. This meant deep changes in socio-economic structure as well. Based on Lenski's prediction, status inconsistency should have much influence on social interactions (Lenski 1956) during social and economic transformations in a society. And Central Asian countries can be a good laboratory to examine the theories about social change, social structures and status congruence.

Country	Area km ²	Population (2012)	Nominal GDP millions of USD (2012)	GDP per capita in USD (2014)
Kazakhstan	2,724,900	17,948,816	196,419	12,456
Kyrgyzstan	199,900	5,604,212	6,473	1,152
Tajikistan	143,100	8,052,512	7,592	903
Turkmenistan	488,100	5,171,943	33,679	5,330
Uzbekistan	447,400	30,185,000	51,168	1,867

(CIA 2015; International Monetary Fund 2014; Wikipedia 2015)

Generalized trust was measured according to Rosenberg's method (Rosenberg 1956). This is one of the widely used measures of generalized trust. The item "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?" Responses were either 1 ("most people can be trusted") or 0 ("need to be very careful"). The second question is "How much do you trust people from various groups? Could you tell me for each whether you trust people you met for the first time?" Answers were 1= completely, 2= somewhat, 3= not very much and 4= not at all. And index of Trust was measured adding these two items and dividing by 2.

Status inconsistency was measured comparing level of education and income level. Level of education was recoded from "Highest educational level attained" originally containing 8 levels, in which 8th value was "University with degree/Higher education - upper-level", and others were graduates of elementary, high school, or secondary school degrees. For high education level I took only the 8th, and all others were considered as low educational level. Level of income was recoded from the item "Scale of incomes", originally divided into 11 scales, 11th is the highest. It was divided into two levels: from 1-6 as low level, and 7-11 as high income level.

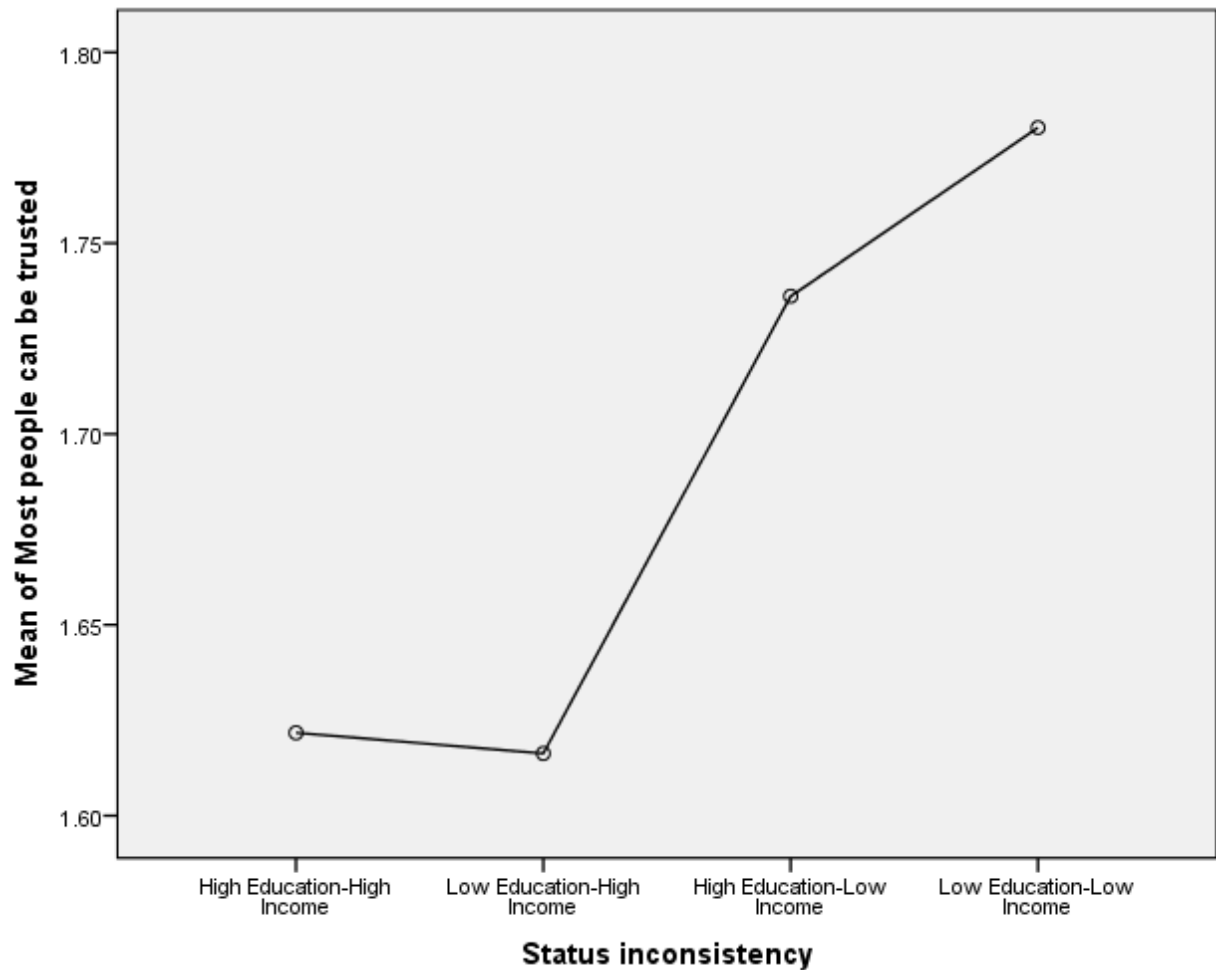
Bivariate correlation test with Pearson was used to test the correlation and to see the strength of correlation between nominal and scale variables. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to

test if the variation exists between the groups. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$ or smaller in all tests.

Groups	Frequency	Percent
High Education-High Income	318	3.7
Low Education-High Income	438	5.1
High Education-Low Income	2167	25.3
Low Education-Low Income	5626	65.8
Total	8549	100.0

Results

There was a small positive correlation between status inconsistency and generalized trust (Pearson $r=0.113$, $\alpha=0.000$, $p<0.01$).



As we see in the above graphic, there is a slight difference between trust levels of four groups, changing between 1.6-1.8. (We should note that the overall percentage of respondents' generalized trust was 24.5% in Central Asia) Also, the level of trust in high-income groups is higher than low-income groups and level of education was not affected much. The correlation between level of income and trust is higher ($r=0.14$) than the correlation between level of education and trust ($r=0.03$). Namely, education does not have much impact on trust. Level of income is a more important factor.

To the question "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?"; 37.9% of High education-High income group, 38.4% of Low Education-High income group, 26.4% of High Education-Low income group and 22% of Low education-Low income group answered ("most people can be trusted").

Much of the studies about the effect of socio-economic status on generalized trust were done in economically developed and stabilized countries. Hamamura showed that this relationship exists only in wealthy societies (Hamamura 2012). As we see in our results, in countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan which are still in the process of building a stable economic system, the socio-economic status has a weak effect on generalized trust.

Ethnicity

Originally Lenski argued that there is a correlation between status inconsistency and political view (Lenski 1954). Lenski missed the effect of particular patterns of status inconsistency which was later indicated by Treiman (Treiman 1966). One of the important factors in Lenski's analysis was ethnic status. The relationship existed especially when there is a sharp difference between ethnic status (ascribed status) and socioeconomic status (achieved status), not only with inconsistencies based on occupation, education, and income. For instance, status inconsistency in the example of Jews (as a low ethnic status in some societies) with high education and high income statuses, may have strong correlation with political liberalism.

In the beginning of 20th century as a result of nation-building projects 5 nation states were established during Russian colonization in Central Asia. These countries were not ethnically homogenous. As a result ethnic differentiation played an important role in exclusion and discrimination (Devlet 1997; Fedorenko and Rethink Institute Washington 2012). After the collapse of Soviet Union, the states of Central Asia moved from Soviet Communist into nationalist ideologies, which strengthened the discrimination on ethnic identities. So, in this study we should take into consideration ethnic status as well.

Given this information, the Partial correlation test was used in order to measure the relationship between status inconsistency and generalized trust, controlled by variable 'Ethnic groups'. Two groups were established, "Native" (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz) and "Others" separately for each country.

As a result (Pearson $r=0.156$, $\alpha=0.000$, $p<0.01$) a small uplift in correlation strength ($r=0.1$ to $r=0.156$) was observed in Uzbekistan. Ethnic differentiation did not have much influence in the case of Kazakhstan. In Kyrgyzstan smaller uplift was observed from 0.05 $r=0.065$.

Conclusion

After Lenski's first analysis (1954), a lot of attempts to examine the status congruence have been done, studying its relationship with various variables such as prejudice (Treiman 1966), religious interest (Demerath 1965), social movements (Geschwender 1968). In this paper I examined the relationship between social inconsistency and generalized trust in Central Asia.

Even though a significant level of correlation was observed, the relationship was not as strong as it was predicted. And income scales had much more influence on generalized trust compared to education status. Our tests approved Hamamura's analysis, social class influences generalized trust only in wealthy countries (Hamamura 2012). The overall trust for other people (24.5%) is low in Central Asia. In Central Asia, economies are still on the progress after the communist regime, social-economic classes are not sharply separated from each other yet.

And ethnic status was also used as a controlling variable. Ethnic identity in Central Asian societies play an important role in distribution of power and wealth. Socio-economic stratification, structure is mainly shaped on wealth and ethnic statuses.

This topic needs further and more detailed, more accurate studies. Especially, the relationship between ascribed statuses (race, ethnicity, and religion) and achieved statuses (education, income, occupation) and the effect of this relationship on other aspects of social and individual properties in Central Asia need to be explored.

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