POSTURE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL FOR COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION *(CASE STUDIES IN YEZIDIS RURAL POPULATION OF ARMENIA)*

Akbar VALADBIGI
Yerevan State University (YSU)
E-mail: karvan74@gmail.com

Abstract:

This article is concerned with the peculiarities of social capital focusing on the alterations of social trust and the social factors that influence it among the Yezidi rural population of Armenia. Our theoretical framework has been adopted from the following theorists: the theory of social system in terms of the theory of action – Parsons and the theory of structure-agency – Giddens.

Our sample contained 300 of the over 20-year old residents of the Yezidi rural population of the Republic of Armenia. When validity and reliability of our questionnaire were tested, we applied survey research to collect data for analysis.

There is difference between kinds of trust and they don't have the same mean. The mean of basic trust was 16%, generalized trust 15% and abstract trust mean was 74%. Thus, our study shows that in the society under study the rate of basic trust is no less than other kinds of trust. In other words, the mean of basic trust is something more than generalized trust but less than abstract trust.

The value of the correlation coefficient was positive, and this shows that by increasing the rate of religious tenets, the level of social trust will increase subsequently, and vice versa. In this article, unlike the usual procedure of articles, I have tried to focus on the results part – because of its importance – and only referred succinctly to other parts.

Keywords:

Social capital, Social trust, Ethno-religious minority, Transition, Yezidis, Armenia

1. Introduction

With respect to the history of trust, it should be noted that trust has existed in different forms from the earlier days of the history. The historical record of trust rates back to the appearance of people on the earth. In the

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area of this research, too, trust has been dominant among native peoples, family members, known and strange people, and to somehow among the foreigners of this country. Without trust, social relationships rarely form and sustain. This, in turn, is in need of a culture, which Zetomka (2007) calls it "trust culture".

According to some commentators, trust is the most important aspect of social trust that can touch other aspects of which trust is an important facet of human relations that facilitates cooperation among the members of the society. (Valadbigi, 2010) Trust, however, can be assessed in different areas of society like having trust in self, family, friends, formal and informal institutes, and social jobs.

Khodyakof(2007) has approximately mentioned such a classification. To define trust is not a simple job and numerous writings have been devoted to it. Whereas, trust is related to concepts like empathy, reciprocity, respect, integrity, tolerance, and benevolence (Newton, 2001), social trust or universal trust include our trust in others such as family members, peers, neighbors, the government, and social organizations. (Gliser, 2000; Newton, 2001; Delly, 2002)

2. Research significance

Social trust is one of the critical aspects of human relations which pave the ways for human beings cooperation and social engagement. It is why it has always been the focus of sociologists' research. Social trust is understood as a focal basis for social capital which on the one hand represents individuals' trust in one another, and on the other hand it shows the citizens' trust in those who are in charge of society. In this situation, force no longer does work in guaranteeing the exchanges and realizing their goals and the exchanges among individuals take place among them at social, cultural, political, and economic levels. Accordingly, social trust represents individuals' goodwill in other members of society which in turn develop and facilitate social relations.

The rate of social trust in most of the societies is so low that scholars like Putnam (1995) have introduced the theory of "trust decline". Therefore, investigating social trust and its low rate among the Yezidi rural population of Armenia, as a problem, is justifiable and this research tends to identify, analyze, and clarify the elements that influence social trust in this society.

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In the current research, the social theories of scholars like Giddens, Szetomka, Tonnies, Offe, and Parsons were discussed in detail. Furthermore, theories of Coleman, Putnam, Weber, Durkheim, Zimmel, Fukuyama, and Valadbigi (2011) on social trust were reviewed briefly. Social trust has been a controversial concept for these scholars and each of them has examined some aspect of it. In other words, social trust, like other sociological concepts, is subject to dispute and complexity, and each one of these theories has approached it from a different perspective.

3. Justification

Studying and promoting social trust in society will:

- Facilitate individuals' participation in the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres;
- Contribute to launching quality social and pathological initiatives across society;
- Promote recognizing social order and discipline, cohesion, and social unity;
- Help the governments to stay on power, stabilize socio-political order;

4. Literature review

Social trust is one of the essential key concepts in the social sciences, and particularly sociology. This concept has been treated in the works of scholars as diverse as: Durkheim, Zimmel, Tonnies, Webber, Parsons, Giddens, Offe, Szetomka, Coleman, Fukuyama, Putnam, and so forth. These scholars, however, have investigated social trust in their sociological theories.

The first component of social capital relates to the type of trust among individuals. Interestingly enough, the literature has investigated trust more than other types of relationship. A great deal of the theory of social capital discusses trust; at the other side, trust is in close relationship with generalized mutual relationship and it is regarded as an appropriate for the positive mutual relations.

To Parsons, however, trust is a component that gives rise to social unity and cohesion. He argues that trust gives this insight to individuals that in order to accomplish a collective success, people ignore their own interests. Trust causes people to expect others to accomplish their obligations and understand the situation of others. He believes that a

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cohesive system has actors in whom one can trust and this in turn contributes to a sustainable order in the society. (Valadbigi, 2001)

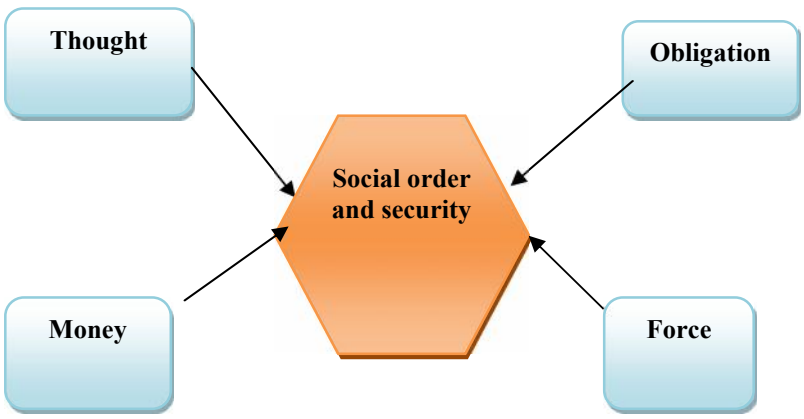


Fig. 1. Elements that build social order and security in the theory of Parsons

5. Theories of social capital and social trust

The purpose of theoretical framework is to produce a model to extract hypotheses, concepts, and variables from it, and test them in the society under study, here the Yezidi rural population of Armenia. It is only after the final demonstration of the hypotheses and reaching to the stage of authenticity that the theoretical framework is revised and becomes a theory along with some robust rules. This research reviewed different theories each of which tried to investigate trust from a certain point of view. For example, Giddens was said to classify trust into three types: basis, generalized, and abstract.

This research adopts as its theoretical framework the theory of social system borrowed from Parsons' action theory or Giddens's agency/structure theory.

Along with the theory of Giddens, we have also applied construct-function theory as well as Parsons's action system theory. Social system, according to Parsons, is composed of four sub-systems: cultural, social, personal, and economic. Social trust is the function of these four items which contains social correlation and cohesion, pattern keeping, determining and achieving to goals, and adaptation. According to Parsons, symbols of thought, force, obligation, and money in these four sub-systems

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protect social order and security. If every action system functions properly in the social systems, then one can expect a sustainable secure social order.

If social trust falls short of its functions in establishing correlation, social order and security encounter threats and doubt spreads across the society. Accordingly, social security, as the core of trust, and specially abstract and generalized trust, will be at stake.

6. Elements of social trust

Generally trust is of three types

Basic trust: one's attitude toward himself or the world around. This attitude is the result of one's experiences from the earlier years of life.

Generalized trust: in this type of trust, one trusts the others based on his knowledge of them. In other words, here one is dependent on the information he obtains from others.

Abstract trust: Giddens asserts that those who enjoy an industrialized lifestyle, higher education, and higher social classes can be characterized as having higher rates of abstract trust.

7. Methodology

Survey study was adopted as the methodology of the present study. This approach focuses on making hypothesis and identifying the relationships among the variables. This study deals with statistical samples which have been taken with special methods from the original society. With regard to our facilities, personnel, and expenses involved in completing the questionnaires and conducting the interviews, we used Cochran formula to determine our sample size.

In the case of examining the relationship between those variables whose evaluation level is synthetic we will use the appropriate statistical tests (e.g. X2, Spearman, and Ken dual B, and V -Cramer). In the case of having distance or relative variables, we adopt Pearson correlation coefficient.

With regard to the fact that our research is intended to examine social trust and the elements influencing it among the Armenian Yezidi-populated rural areas, our analysis is decided to be the individual respondent, and then it is conducted at a micro-level.

8. Research hypotheses:

- It is supposed that familial sociability is the most important source of generating social trust;
- The religious tenets are a meaningful and influential element in rising social trust;

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• The social values are meaningful and influential elements in rising social trust.

9. The conceptual and operational definitions of the terms:

Social trust: In the current research, social trust is treated as an independent variable. According to Durkheim, however, social trust has its roots in collective spirit and ethical conscience. In measuring social trust, then, items in connection with generalized trust (trust among the citizens), abstract trust (people's trust in the administrative organizations), and the rate of self-trust which indicates of one's trust in himself, will be adopted.

Generalized trust: in this type of trust, one trust the others based on his knowledge of them. In other words, here one is dependent on the information he obtains from others. Generalized trust can be illustrated through items such as having trust in colleagues, citizens, having obligation toward the external individuals, trust in the relatives, and peers.

Familial sociability: Theories of socialization regard family and especially the parents as the most influential element in familiarizing the children with the received values of society. In this viewpoint, however, along with the process of socialization, parents teach their children how to understand the familial values, how to institutionalize the values of the larger society through learning norms, social patterns, and orders.

Social values: Social value is one of the essential conceptions of the social sciences and it has drawn the attentions of different scholars. Sociologically speaking, social value is agreed by all the members of society. Social value constitutes realities and matters which are desirable and most of the people are in search of it. Therefore, the variable of social value can be operationalized in terms of indicators such as: truthfulness, keeping promises, social justice, social cohesion, commitment, creativity, self-confidence, and competition

Religious tenets: It refers to a set of religious beliefs and tenets that result in increasing faith in religion and social life and finally links society' members to each other. In light of faith, however, self-interest, as the cause of social interruption, decreases in the social spheres and then social relationships will continue their life in the course of knowledge and trust.

10. Summary and conclusion

Indeed, the subject of conclusion links various parts of research. Thus, there is relation and linkage from the beginning to the end of the research which will help us to deliver and highlight the important points, findings and implications based on the results of the research. In short, we can

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classify the results of research into two parts i.e. descriptive results and analytic results, which will be discussed in here.

Summary of the descriptive findings

- 141 of the respondents (47%) were men and 159 of them (53%) were women, thus compared with men the number of women is dominant in our sample.
- As for the age item, the age cohort of the respondents indicated that they were as young as 17 to as old as 84 year old. The average age of the respondents was 48. Regarding to age groups nearly the majority of all the respondents 30% was located in the age cohort of 20-30. The age cohorts of 60 and 64, with making up 7% and 100% of the total sample were of the lowest rate of frequency. The age mean for our respondents was 41. Thus, the majority of respondents were middle aged and belonged to active population.
- As for the marital status 66.7% of the respondents were married, 26% were single, and the remaining 7.3% were classified as other (e.g., widowed (6.3%), divorced (1%)).
- As for the level of education, 0.6% of the society under our study was illiterate. 83% were general secondary, nearly 6.1% had primary professional level and a few of them (10.3 %) had incomplete higher & secondary professional education.
- As for state of activity, nearly 47.4% of the population under study were housekeepers, 26.0% were employed, 27.3% of them were unemployed but searching for job, approximately 8.7% were students, nearly 14.7% of them were retired.
- As for the social class, 3% of the population under study were the representatives of Low class, 22.3% represented Middle to low class, 55% belonged to middle class, 14.7% were Middle to High and nearly 5% belonged to High class.
- The results of research show that household expenses of 73% of the people were very low and 20% of them were low. 5%mean 1.7% high and 0.3% of people had very high household expenses. Based on reports of the respondents the average monthly expenses of families were nearly 30500 AMD per month.
- 100% of the respondents reported their birthplace was rural settlement. (triplet regions populated dominantly by rural Yezidis)

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• 68.6% of the respondents believed that they could trust other people, whereas 10.5% of them said that the majority of people were not trustworthy. So, it can be concluded that one fifth of the society under study had generalized trust and they trusted strangers.

• 1.3% of the respondents had little trust towards their families. For 8.3% of them familial trust was in mean level and 23.3% had high and 66.7% had very high trust in their families.

• 3.7% of the respondents had little trust towards their relatives. For 18.3% of them this trust was in mid-level and 37.7% trusted their friends and relatives fully.

• In in-group trust nearly 5% of the respondents had little trust in their own friends. Nearly 26.7% of them had somedeal of trust and 68.4% of them said that they had much trust in their friends.

• In in-group trust nearly nearly 8.3% of population under this study had little trust in their neighbors. For 25.3% of them this rate was mean and nearly 31% of the respondents said that they had much trust in their neighbors.

• Comparison of the rate of trust according to three elements of informal network (trust to relations and kinfolks, friends and neighbors) illustrates that at first our respondents had trust in their kinfolks and then the high rate of trust was expressed towards their friends. Only one fifth of the respondents believed that they had high trust in their neighbors, consequently the trust in their neighbors was the least.

• The results of the study show that nearly 12.8% of the respondents had little trust in their informal networks. 20.9% of them said that their trust in these networks was mean and 25.8% of them mentioned that they had high rate of trust in their informal networks. This result indicates that there is not much difference between generalized trust and trust in informal network. It seems that people in this framework had high level of trust only in their family and outside of the family circle; they had no much trust in their acquaintances, friends, neighbors and strangers.

• In out-group trust nearly 13.3% of the respondents had little trust in statesmen and politicians, for 19.3% of them this rate was somedeal and nearly 20.7% of the respondents said that they had much trust in statesmen and politicians.

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- In out-group trust nearly 12.3% and 16.3% of the respondents had little trust in Administrative clerks and Foreign media, for 22.7% and 23.7% of them this rate was somedeal and nearly
- 29% and 24% of the respondents said that they had much trust in Administrative clerks and foreign media.
- In this research nearly 9% of the respondents had little trust in businessmen. Nearly 18% of them had somedeal of trust and 29.7% of them said that they had much trust in their businessmen.
- In out-group trust the comparison of the results of abstract trust in three mentioned cases shows that the high rate of trust belonged to Administrative clerks and Foreign media (some 53%), and trust in statesmen and politicians was 20.7% and for businessmen it was 29.7%.
- The rate of in-group trust among 4.6% of the respondents was low, whereas for out-group trust, this number was 12.8%. In other words, the in-group trust among half of the people is low. 31.4% of them had high rate of in-group trust, whereas only 25.8% of our respondents had the high rate of out-group trust.
- The rate of belief of people under our study in social values is as follows: Justice- 26.3%, in mean level, humanism and benevolence- 23.3%, in mean level, honesty- 21.7%, in mean level, keeping promises- 23%, in mean level, endeavor- 31%, in high level, sacrifice- 30% in mean level, and belief in trusteeship was 25.3% in mean level.
- Among 16 kinds of social values under study, the item of Social justice had the highest rate and level (with 31.7%) and the item of creativity with 19.3% had the lowest rate. The majority of social values including: truthfulness, keeping promises, social justice, social cohesion, commitment, creativity, self-confidence, and competition is reported to be mean level.
- Regarding to this item:" How do you consider yourself as a religious person?" 34.6% of the respondents consider themselves as a religious person in high level, and 3.5% of them consider themselves in low level.
- Our results show that 7.1% of people under study absolutely lack religious commitment, or were in the lowest level. Regarding to the rate of importance and obligation to religion among the respondents, for about 2% of them it was very low, 5.1% low, 23.6% mean, 36.4% high and the remaining 32.9% expressed it in a very high level.

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• For Human relationships, approximately 9.6% of the respondents were in very low and 27.9% in low level. Thus, for 32.9% of our respondents, the existence of human relationships in their society was in mean level. For 19.8% of them it was in high level and for 9.8% in very high level.

• Concerning social order and security item, approximately 2.9% of the respondents evaluate it in a very low and 8.9% in low level, for 36.6% of our respondents, the existence of social order and security in their society was in mean level. For 33.3% it was in high level and for 18.3% it was very high.

• For 2.1% of our respondents, there are no traits of gemeinschaftic community in their society. 5.7% estimate this trait in low level 16.5% in mean level 37.3% high and 38.4% in a very high level.

• Regarding to response of this question:" How much do your family members contribute to your socialization?" 2.8% mentioned that their family didn't have any role in their socialization process or it was very low. 6.8% evaluate its role in low level, 27% in mean level, for 33.8% the socialization role of their family was high and for 29.6% it was very high.

• The rate of social trust in society under study was in high to very high level, as for 23.3% of the respondents social trust was in mean level and for 59.7% of them it was in high and very high level

The rate of generalized trust

• Generalized trust was measured by 9 items. Generally 38.26% reported a very high generalized trust. The percentages for very low, low, mean, and high were 2.5%, 8.0%, 20.9%, and 30.4%, respectively.

Row	Items	Very low	Low	Mean	High	Very high
1	**Family**	0.3	1.3	8.3	23.3	66.7
2	**Relatives**	1.0	3.7	18.3	37.7	39.3
3	**Friends and aquaintences**	0.3	5.0	26.7	33.7	34.4
4	**Neighbors**	1.3	8.3	25.3	31.0	34.0
5	**Colleagues**	1.3	8.3	25.7	35.0	28.3
6	**Townsmen**	2.7	13.3	23.3	31.7	29.0
7	**Sympatries**	2.0	15.0	25.0	26.7	31.3
8	**Armenians**	2.3	5.0	17.7	23.7	51.3
9	**Foreigners**	10.7	11.3	17.3	31.0	29.7
Total		2.5	8.0	20.9	**30.4**	**38.2**

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents by their trust in the indicators of generalized trust

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Abstract trust:

Abstract was measured by 19 items:

Row	Group/Organization	Never	Low	Mean	High	Very high
1	**Members of parliament**	8.7	13.3	19.3	20.7	38.0
2	**Courts and the judges**	9.0	15.0	19.0	28.0	29.0
3	**Statesmen**	9.0	14.3	22.3	22.7	31.7
4	**Military forces**	3.7	7.3	16.0	30.0	43.0
5	**Clergymen**	5.3	10.3	19.3	28.3	36.7
6	**Village council members**	8.0	8.7	26.7	31.0	25.7
7	**Domestic radio/TV**	5.7	11.0	29.7	27.3	26.3
8	**Foreign radio/TVs**	7.3	16.3	23.7	24.0	28.7
9	**Physicians**	5.0	6.0	19.3	28.0	41.7
10	**University professors**	7.0	7.0	20.7	20.0	45.3
11	**Teachers**	3.3	10.0	16.3	25.3	45.0
12	**Athletes**	5.0	6.7	20.3	23.3	44.7
13	**Businessmen**	7.7	9.0	18.0	29.7	35.7
14	**Taxi/bus drivers**	8.7	12.7	16.3	30.0	32.3
15	**Artists**	7.7	11.7	20.3	29.7	30.7
16	**Administrative stuff**	7.0	12.3	22.7	29.0	29.0
17	**Municipality**	7.3	9.3	22.7	29.3	31.3
18	**Hospitals and health care centers**	5.0	8.0	18.0	30.0	39.0
19	**Police**	10.7	8.3	16.3	22.3	42.3
Total		6.9	10.4	20.4	**26.8**	**35.6**

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents by their trust in the indicators of abstract trus

Basic trust:

• Basic trust was measured by 10 items. 21.4% of the respondents reported a very high rate of this type of trust, 26.7% high, 28.7% mean, 13.1% low, and 10.1% very low rate. That is to say, in comparison with other two types of trust (abstract and generalized) had a higher rate, as 48.7% of the respondents had a high or very high rate of this trust.

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Rate of Basic trust	Number	Percentage	Aggregated percentage
Very low	30	10.1	10.1
Low	39	13.1	23.2
Mean	87	28.7	51.9
High	80	**26.7**	78.6
Very high	64	**21.4**	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents by their trust in the indicators of basic trust

Social trust:

Social trust includes three types of trust: basic, abstract, and generalized:

The rate of social trust	No	Percentage	Aggregated percentage
Very low	20	6.5	6.5
Low	31	10.5	17.0
Mean	70	23.3	40.3
High	84	**28.0**	68.3
Very high	95	**31.7**	100.0
Total	300	100.0	

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents by their trust in social trust

Analytic and indicative results

- There is difference between the different kinds of trust and they don't have the same mean. The mean of basic trust was 28.7%, generalized trust, 20.9% and abstract trust mean was 20.4%. Thus, our study shows that in the society under study the rate of basic trust is less than other kinds of trust.
- In the society under study, the rate of abstract trust and generalized trust was in high level, while for the basic trust we had low level.
- There is correlation and meaningful relation between social trust and familial sociability, as the higher the socialization of children by their families is, the higher the rate of social trust will be and vice versa.
- The values of β show that the crucial factor in generation of social trust in the society is familial sociability in the society with traits of gemeinschaftic community. Gemeinschaftic community is the second

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important factor in the generation of social trust in the society under study. Thus, familial sociability and religeouse tenets can be considered as the most important factors in creating social trust.

- Based on Durkheim theory if the rate of correlation within one group is low the rate of social order and social trust will also be low. In other words, if the correlation and solidarity among the family members are high, it will result in high social trust. In other social groups such as colleagues, friends, relatives or acquaintances, even in bigger groups, if the homogeneity and correlation is low, we can observe the case of low rate of social trust.
- According to the correlation coefficient of Spearman, there is relation and solidarity between religious tenets and social trust, i.e. the higher the religious commitments is, the higher the social trust is, and vice versa, the lower the religious interests is, the lower the social trust is and in our society under study this item i.e. religious tenets was one of the most important items.
- There exists direct and meaningful relation between gemeinschaftic community and social trust. Based on Tonnies' theories in gemeinschaftic communities there is relation based on trust as people have trust in their families and friends. However, in modern society where we lack personal relationships, the rate of social trust is low. In this study the direct relation between two observed variables and (β) coefficients show that gemeinschaftic community has tremendous influence on social trust.
- There is no meaningful relation between social values of society and social trust, i.e. if social values increase in the society, there is increase in social trust as well, and vice versa, if there is decrease in social values, there is decrease in social trust. Thus, social values are meaningful and effective factors in the increase or decrease of social trust in the society.
- The hypothesis that if human relationships became more vulnerable social trust would decline; has been proved. Thus, based on intensity and direction of correlation coefficient we can claim that the improvement of human communication results in high rate of social trust and the vulnerability of it results in the decrease of the rate of social trust.
- There is no relation between social order and security in the society and the rate of social trust.

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- There is meaningful relation between sex and social trust. Thus, there is any difference between the rate of male and female social trust.
- There is meaningful relation between age and social trust. Thus, the rate of social trust among various age groups is not the same.
- There is relation and correlation between education level and the rate of social trust. The correlation between these two variables is positive.
- The correlation and relation between social class and the rate of social trust has not been observed. The correlation coefficient proves that there is not any relation and correlation between these two variables. Thus, the assumption of H0 is proved, whereas the assumption of H1 between these two variables is rejected.
- Correlation coefficient between household economic expenses and social trust indicates that there is a correlation between them.
- There is no meaningful relation between marital status and social trust. Thus, being single or married has no influence on decrease or increase of social trust in the society under our study.
- The individual characteristics have any effect on the rate of social trust in this society.

Studies of, Dic lo (1995), Inglehart (1993), Giddens (1998), Fukuyama (1999) and (Valadbigi,2012:84-90) show that in a society with lack of trust there are the following features:

- People generally are pessimistic and suspicious of each other.
- People think they should protect their personal belongings.
- The costs of negotiation and bargain is high.
- People strongly need security and calmness.
- In trade the calculation of risk is very difficult and long-lasting, meanwhile it is considered to be a very necessary process for these kinds of societies.

11. Path analysis

- Path analysis is a kind of multiple regression analysis which can contribute hugely to the fulfillment of research. Path analysis contributes to testing the research hypotheses and also measuring the direct, indirect, and total impact on the dependent variable. What follows is a sketch of the process of path analysis, diagrams, measuring path coefficients, analyzing the correlation to direct and indirect impacts, fitness of the model, and finally interpreting the obtained results.

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• The research hypotheses posed in the third chapter are here depicted in form of a causal model. The path diagram shows a series of one-sided lines joining the variables. Regression is needed in measuring the path coefficients, in order to identify the direct and indirect impacts of the independent variables on the dependent variable of social trust. Path coefficient is a part of the variance of the dependent variable which is explained though an independent variable. In measuring the path coefficient we use β or other standardized regression separate coefficients. The fitness of the model can be identified through the multiple determination coefficient.

• According to the coefficients of β as shown in the above table, the amount of the direct impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable of social trust was 0.89, the indirect impact was -0.3, and the total amount of the direct and indirect impacts was 0.59. However, in the process of path analysis there still remains an unknown element called "Error quantity", which indicates of the value of a variable's variance which has not been explained by the other independent variables.

Independent variables	**Indirect impacts**	**Direct impacts**	**Total effect of direct and indirect impacts**
Familial sociability	-	Direct	0.34
Social values	-	Direct	0.02
Gemeinschaft communities	-	Direct	0.21
Religious tenets	-	Direct	0.21
Social security and order	Indirect	-	-0.30
Human relationships	-	Direct	0.11

Table 5. The total amount of the direct and indirect impacts of the independents variables on social trust

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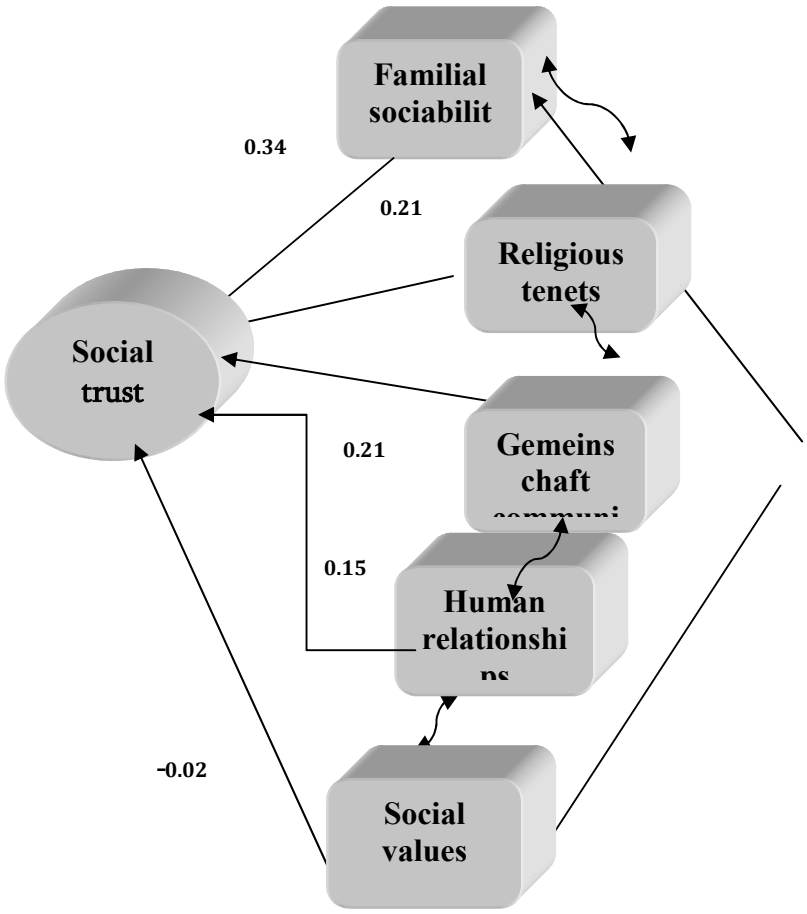


Figure 2. The path analysis diagram and the path coefficients (Beta)

12. Beyond the analysis

The tradition of social trust has studied with interrogation. The reason why I came to my favorite country, i.e.to Armenia is not only for educational purposes but also for my deep interest and eagerness to know more about these peaceful, tolerant and cultured people living in the territory of Caucasus.

I am a Kurd living in Armenia having the same features and backgrounds as my nation and this factor motivated me to study them. Thus, I have lived among them for three summers engaging in cattle

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breading and agriculture. I had personal contact with them having formal and informal interview with them; in short, I lived among them in actual situation. As a matter of fact, my work is based not only on theory but also on actual and real situation, with the help of which the analysis and interpretation of sociological results were much easier to gain.

The interpretation, analysis and justifications of the results of the work are as follows:

- The rate of generalized trust is in the highest level compared with the other two types of trust (abstract and basic).
- The results show that the Yezidis have very high level of trust toward university professors, teachers and Armenians, which proves my claim that Armenians are cultured, intelligent, open-minded and cultural and peaceful.
- Family and familial sociability were crucial factors in social trust, followed by religion and traditional structure of the society (Gemeinschaft society). The total rate of social trust among rural Ezdies was nearly 60% which is quite acceptable compared with the results of other studies in other countries where Yezidis live.

This result is quite satisfactory and it comes to prove that this is the result of the tolerance and co-existence of the Armenian people toward Yezidis. Based on my actual experience and various interviews among Yezidis it can be mentioned that the low level of basic trust is the result of the socio-economic crisis in the territory of Caucasus after the independence, the difficulty of life, high rate of household expenses and the vagueness of their religious and ethnic future.(Dulz,2004)

Engelhart (1990) examined the cultural and economic prerequisites of a stable democracy. They have represented the features of this political culture through three indicators including having trust in each other, satisfaction with life, and supporting revolutionary changes. Their studies revealed that like satisfaction with life and the sense of luckiness, trust in each other has a high correlation with economic development. However, they were at loss to determine if that correlation was the result of trust's contribution to economic development, or that economic development leads to increased sense of security and trust, or if these two processes reinforce each other. (Engelhart, 1990)

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• The high rate of generalized trust in our society under study can be justified by the relative improvement of life conditions and economic prosperity in Armenia during the last decade compared with the first years of independence (i.e. The 90s).

Due to his emphasis on trust and investigating its economic effects, Fukuyama has got a significant place among the scholars of the very field. According to Pessey (2000), Fukuyama has striven to compare the economic performance of different communities based on the varied levels of trust. As the existing level of trust in the society determines the amount of democracy and the society's potentials for competing in the economic area.

Researches in 29 countries revealed that there is a relationship between the level of trust and the economic performance of the society. To struggle with public chaos we need large amounts of money, however, cultivating trust decreases most of these costs.(Valadbigi,2011)

Various variables of social capital and trust have been applied in the international values surveys. Among the 29 under study countries, Knack and Keefer (1997) have reported a strong relation between universal trust and the level of investment.

• Gemeinschaft society is stimuli for high rate of trust and most of the classic figures of sociology confirm it. Yezidis living in rural community have acceptable rate of trust which is relevant with the traditional structure of their society. (Durkheim, 2006)

According to Tunnis, the trust-based relationships just can be observed in the gemeinschaft. Trust is an end taking place within the social context and gemeinschaft economy. The trust-based relationships and trustworthy individuals, at the other hand, are just present in the natural community. One trusts his family members and friends as his sense is based on the similarities and mutual understanding and this process is consistently enriched by the common activities and experiences. Trust is the core concept of social integrity that is strengthened by the religious and ethical values, and trust in turn, facilitates trust relations and increases social integrity. In the traditional communities or gemeinschaft, like respect and the sense of personal assets, trust is a virtue; however, in gesellschaft, trust is treated as an impersonal formal asset. (Tonnies, 2005:156)

Parsons argue that how a community functions is well dependent on the type of the community (i.e., local, national, and international) and the

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characteristics of other sub-cultures (cultural, political, and economic) and how the interact with each other. In the traditional communities where minor local communities are common, particularism, emotionalism, relationalism, and predilection are the major characteristics of the community. In contrast, in the modern communities, however, generalism, intellectualisms, respecting the criteria, and so on are widespread.

In Parsons' point of view, then, the societal community at macro-level is the sign of collective integrity and national unity. (Valadbigi, 2009: 199-200) Putting it differently, traditional social capital or in-group trust exists in the traditional communities, at the other hand; the modern society enjoys new social capital of out-group trust.

- Religion and religious tenets have always been a crucial factor in social environments which is considered to be one of the basic institutions of society and in this study it is as an independent variable or social factor.

One of the major peculiarities of Yezidis is their religious identity. Most of the time they are recognized by their religion and they think that due to this factor they are differentiated or separated from others.

If we compare the life of Yezidis in Caucasus countries such as Armenia and Georgia with other countries where Yezidis live -especially in Iraq- we can notice that they are under pressure, pursuit and torment. Inhere they experience tolerance and freedom in their believes. During this study many times the emphasis was on this essential factor.

If we take a look at the model of this study, we can easily notice that throughout the investigation the results prove the theory and the theory is proved by the results.

According to Giddens, trust is the inevitable way of social life and a component of modernity. In the traditional cultures, however, four local areas including kinship, local community, tradition, and religious cosmology are in distinctive relation with trust. (Giddens, 2004:181)

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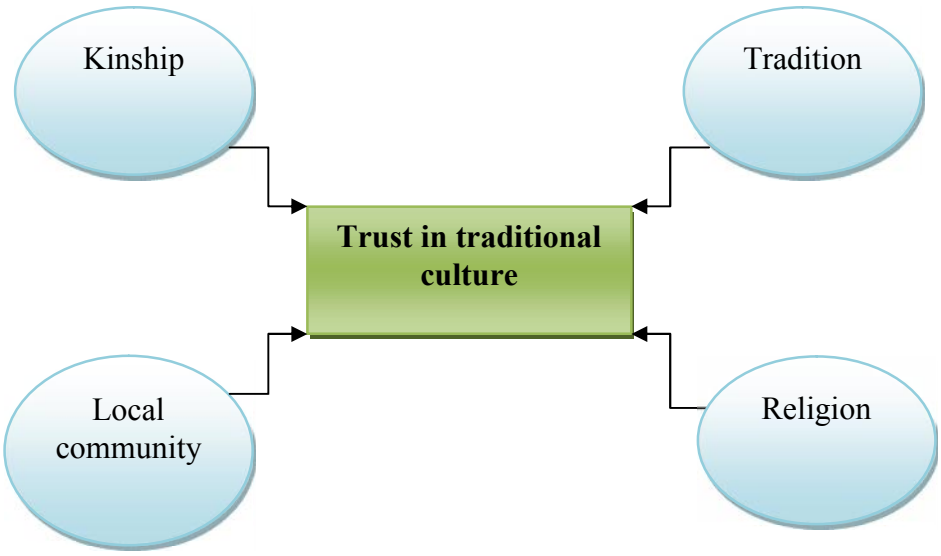


Fig. 3. Factors affecting social trust in the traditional culture (Giddens, 1999: 120)

Giddens argues that the main sources of trust of the traditional societies no longer hold their importance in the modern ones. He asserts that a genuine relationship is dependent on a close relationship with intimacy. If one wants to build trust, he should trust the other side and he himself be trusted in the context of his relationship. Maintaining the authenticity of this intimate relationship requires us to consider the same balance that we hold between autonomy and integrating with the other side.

According to Yezidi religious teachings, relationships are not defined by blood ties alone. They may also be defined by belief in the same deity and by the symbols of tribes and clans. There is a Yezidi saying, "Believing in the same God unites people," meaning that people of different blood can be thus united by their beliefs. Every Kurd is proud of his tribe and dynasty.(Valadbigi,2012)

Giddens applies distrust as the opposite of trust which contains distrust in the abstract individuals and systems. Trust in the systems, however, takes the shape of a faceless fidelity through which the faith in efficiency of knowledge is kept, to which the individual has no idea. (Giddens, 1998:119)

Valadbigi believes abstract trust has a long history in the eastern societies, as these groups and institutes satisfy peoples' needs through their

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activities, establish social obligation and bonds among them and provide them with relief. Peoples' satisfaction with these groups results in their satisfaction with the whole system and government and creates public legitimacy. Across those societies where the institutes which function as the mediator between the nation and the government, have not taken shape, however, the NGOs can do this and contribute to social integrity and cohesion. Unfortunately, the Iranian' today society does not enjoy from a high rate of this type of trust. (Valadbigi, 2011)

- The high rate of trust of Yezidis or their considerable trust to organizations or institutions is relevant again to the structure of their social environment. The rate of 60% of trust can be as an indicator of their deep satisfaction of their society as well as homeland. The results of my various interviews state that most of them are free and happy among the Armenian nation without any obvious discrimination or segregation.

In Armenia, the 42,000-strong but declining Kurmanji (Kurdish)-speaking Yezidi population lives peacefully alongside the Orthodox apostolic Armenian majority. It is a conditional coexistence. (Ahiyan, 2008)

Of a total Kurdish population of 20 million worldwide, perhaps five percent or 1 million identify as Yezidi, but only in Armenia is there a war of words over the reality of a Yezidi/Yezidi Kurd divide. At public meetings in Armenia where minority issues are discussed, Yezidi Kurds are mocked and often shouted down, as if their mere presence threatened Armenian Yezidis' tenuous survival odds. (Asiyan, 2008), (Ahiyan, 2008), (Asatryan, 2012) and (Valadbigi, 2012)

- Family was another crucial variable in this studying order to trace and evaluate the trust. It has been a very important social institution in every society as well as among Yezidis under study with strong and determined roles and functions. (Durkheim, 2008), (Parsons, 2006), (Marx, 2004) and (Valadbigi, 2011) have always emphasized the role and importance of the function of family especially in traditional societies.

Social system, according to Parsons, is composed of four sub-systems: cultural, social, personal, and economic. Social trust is the function of these four items which contains social correlation and cohesion, pattern keeping, determining and achieving to goals, and adaptation. According to Parsons, symbols of thought, force, obligation, and money in these four sub-systems protect social order and security. If every action system

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functions properly in the social systems, then one can expect a sustainable secure social order. (Parsons, 1996:86)

A decisive clue to the differences and the similarities among cultures and to the economic patterns shaped by them can be found in family structure. No society is without one. Yet, the family can become a decisive center of exclusive loyalty to its own members or a center that nurtures those values that encourage family members to interact easily with people outside their family. (Valadbigi, 2012:128)

If all other institutions are seen as threats or as resources to be exploited for the family, it is likely that certain family-based institutions will become the primary network of economic activity, and other institutions will have diminished levels of commitment, time, energy, money, and power. People do not share resources with groups they do not trust. The range of trusting and trustworthy interaction can be contracted or expanded by the family and the family's relationship to other institutions in society.

13. Tentative conclusions

Social trust is one of the critical aspects of human relationships which pave the ways for human beings cooperation and social engagement. It is why it has been always the focus of sociologists' research.

With respect to the fact that our research is intended to examine social trust and the elements influencing it among the Armenian Yezidi-populated rural areas, our analysis id decided to be the individual respondent, and then it is conducted at a micro-level.

There is correlation and a meaningful relationship between social trust and familial sociability, as the higher the socialization of children by their families is, the higher the rate of social trust will be and vice versa. That is, by increasing the social values of the target society, the rate of social trust increases, and vice versa. So, the social values were not considerably affecting the state of social trust in the society under study. The value of the correlation coefficient was positive, and this shows that by increasing the rate of religious tenets, the level of social trust will increase subsequently, and vice versa.

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