

Institutional Trust in Bangladesh and Nepal: Puzzling Trends from Survey Evidences

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INTRODUCTION

This paper tries to cast light on a puzzling trend emerging from different surveys in two South Asian countries: Bangladesh and Nepal. Surveys like the World Values Survey (WVS) and Governance and Trust Survey (GoT) indicate that there is higher institutional trust in these two countries compared to different better performing countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Germany. This inflated trust is not any survey-specific or survey-round specific trend. Different surveys on different respondents at different times show similar trends.¹ So, this inflated trust may not be related with the quality of survey data. There is another possibility to have such inflated trust; the fear factor may matter – people may fear to provide their real opinions about the authorities. If this assumption is correct, then people may also not talk about the corruption of their authorities. However, we can see that people are giving their opinions about the corruption of their authorities.² Now the question is why people are having higher institutional trust in these two countries. This paper tries to explore the answer of this inconsistent trend based on empirical data and previous studies.

¹ Baniamin, H. M. 2019a. "Linking socio-economic performance, quality of governance, and trust in the civil service: Does culture intercede in the perceived relationships? Evidence from and beyond Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka". *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration*, 41 (3): 127–141, (<https://doi.org/10.1080/23276665.2019.1658926>); Baniamin, H. M. 2019b. *Relationships among governance quality, institutional performance, and (dis)trust: Trends and tensions: A quest for critical ingredients of institutional trust*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Bergen, Norway.] Bergen Open Research Archive.

² Baniamin, H. M. 2019b. Op. cit.

INSTITUTIONAL TRUST IN BANGLADESH AND NEPAL: THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS AND SURVEY EVIDENCES

Trust in institutions usually reflects how public organisations are managed and how successful they are in addressing the need of the people.³ Van de Walle Miller and Listhaug⁴ define institutional trust as the “evaluation of whether or not political authorities and institutions are performing in accordance with normative expectations held by the public.” This definition is consistent with the rationalist understanding of institutional trust. From a rationalist perspective, performance and governance quality are two key variables which are used to explain the degree of institutional trust.⁵ For example, if the parliament or civil service of a country formulates policies by reflecting people’s expectations and people benefit from those policies, then they should have higher institutional trust. Usually, this reflection of people’s expectations is known as the ‘input’ side of a governance system. Similarly, if people do not face any unfair treatment or corruption from the state machinery, then they should also have higher institutional trust.⁶ These mechanisms are known as the ‘process’ or the ‘throughput’ of a governance system. Rothstein and Teorell⁷ labelled them as ‘quality of governance’. And when institutions can produce better results, like to generate better economic performance or provide better services in different sectors like health and education, then the respective institutions should enjoy higher institutional trust. This performance dimension is known as ‘output’ of

³ Askvik, S. 2007. “Political regime and popular trust in the civil service: South Africa and Norway compared”. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 9 (1): 69–85; Bouckaert, G., Lægred, P., and Van de Walle, S. 2005. “Introduction”. *Public Performance and Management Review*, 28 (4): 460–464; Mishler, W. and Rose, R. 2001. “What Are the Origins of Political Trust? Testing Institutional and Cultural Theories in Post-communist Societies”. *Comparative Political Studies*, 34 (1): 30-62.

⁴ Miller, A. H., and Listhaug, O. 1990. “Political parties and confidence in government: A comparison of Norway, Sweden and the United States”. *British Journal of Political Science*, 20 (3):357-386.

⁵ Baniamin, H. M. 2019a. Op. cit.

⁶ Chang, E. C. and Chu, Y. H. 2006. “Corruption and trust: Exceptionalism in Asian democracies?”. *The Journal of Politics*, 68 (2): 259–271; Mishler, W. and Rose, R. 2001. Op. cit.; Wong, T. K. Y., Wan, P. S., and Hsiao, H. H. M. 2011. “The bases of political trust in six Asian societies: Institutional and cultural explanations compared”. *International Political Science Review*, 32 (3): 263-281.

⁷ Rothstein, B. O., and Teorell, J. A. 2008. “What is quality of government? A theory of impartial government institutions”. *Governance*, 21 (2): 165-190.

a governance system. From a rationalist approach, performance is one of the main determining factors for institutional trust.

Based on these elaborations, we would expect to find lower institutional trust in both Bangladesh and Nepal, as in terms of governance quality and policy performance, both countries show a lower performance than most developed countries. However, both countries show relatively higher institutional trust than those better performing countries. For example, trust in government and civil service are 83 and 77 respectively in Bangladesh (Table 1). The trust in those organisations is relatively lower in Nepal (67 for government and 72 for civil service) compared to Bangladesh, but still higher than other better performing countries like Australia, New Zealand, and Germany (see Table 2). The Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) indicates that both of these countries' policy outputs are poor. This index captures three key policy performances: per capita income, and performances in health and education respectively.⁸ These performance indicators are based on objective data of the respective countries. According to HDI, Bangladesh is in position 135 and Nepal is in position 147 out of 189 countries. On the other hand, for better performing countries which have a higher ranking in HDI, like Australia, New Zealand, and Germany, we find lower institutional trust in government. The trust level in government is 55 in Australia, 64 in New Zealand and 59 in Germany (Table 1). Not only do these three better performing countries have lower trust rates than Bangladesh and Nepal but also for other better performing countries like Japan, USA, and South Korea, we find lower institutional trust in government.

⁸ UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2020. Human Development Index (HDI), (<http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi>), accessed on August 29, 2020.

Table 1: Institutional Trust in Bangladesh and Nepal in 2020.

Institutions	Bangladesh		Nepal	
	Trust in Institutions (1-4)	Trust in Institutions (1-100)	Trust in Institutions (1-4)	Trust in Institutions (1-100)
Confidence in Government	3.32	83	2.69	67
Confidence in Parliament	3.37	84	2.69	67
Confidence in Civil Service	3.08	77	2.89	72
Confidence in Higher Judiciary	3.35	84	3.00	75
Confidence in Lower Courts	3.22	81	2.94	74
Confidence in Police	2.44	61	2.90	73
Confidence in Army	3.57	89	3.19	80
Confidence in NGOs	3.00	75	2.68	67

Source: Governance and Trust Survey (GoT⁹), 2020.

From Table 2, we can see that the magnitude of corruption is also very high in these two South Asian countries compared to many other countries, but still these two countries have higher institutional trust. However, corruption is a very important variable for defining the quality of the processes involved in providing public services. According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International¹⁰, the CPI value for Bangladesh and Nepal are 26 and 31 respectively¹¹ (Table 2). Again, Australia, New Zealand and Germany, which have higher CPI value, i.e., are corruption-wise 'clean' countries, rank lower than Nepal and Bangladesh with regard to institutional trust.

⁹ This is a survey conducted by researchers from four universities with the financial grant from the Norwegian government; the universities are: University of Bergen, Norway, North South University, Bangladesh, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

¹⁰ Transparency International (TI). 2020. Corruption Perceptions Index, (<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi>), accessed August 30, 2020.

¹¹ Lower values indicate higher corruption.

Table 2: Trust in Government across the World.

Country	Trust in Government (1-4) *	Trust in Government (transformed to 1-100) *	CPI**	HDI***
China	3.44	86	41	0.7580
Tajikistan	3.43	86	25	0.6560
Bangladesh (GoT survey)*	3.32	83	26	0.6140
Vietnam	3.30	82	37	0.6930
Indonesia	3.15	79	40	0.7070
Philippines	3.12	78	34	0.7120
Bangladesh	3.11	78	26	0.6140
Myanmar	3.10	78	29	0.5840
Kazakhstan	2.89	72	34	0.8170
Turkey	2.86	72	39	0.8070
Ethiopia	2.81	70	37	0.4700
Pakistan	2.71	68	32	0.5600
Nepal (GoT survey)*	2.69	67	31	0.5790
Thailand	2.60	65	36	0.7650
New Zealand	2.55	64	87	0.9210
Russia	2.52	63	28	0.8240
Hong Kong SAR	2.50	62	76	0.9390
Malaysia	2.48	62	53	0.8040
Kyrgyzstan	2.48	62	30	0.6740
South Korea	2.48	62	59	0.9060
Zimbabwe	2.47	62	24	0.5630
Taiwan ROC	2.45	61	65	N/A
Iran	2.42	60	26	0.7970
Germany	2.38	59	80	0.9390
Japan	2.36	59	73	0.9150
Nigeria	2.31	58	26	0.5340
Cyprus	2.29	57	58	0.8730
Jordan	2.19	55	48	0.7230
Chile	2.18	55	67	0.8470
Australia	2.18	55	77	0.9380
Ecuador	2.09	52	38	0.7580
USA	2.08	52	69	0.9200
Argentina	2.06	52	45	0.8300
Nicaragua	2.06	52	22	0.6510
Bolivia	2.06	51	31	0.7030

Country	Trust in Government (1-4) *	Trust in Government (transformed to 1-100) *	CPI**	HDI***
Yugoslavia	1.95	49	39	0.7990
Lebanon	1.91	48	28	0.7300
Colombia	1.88	47	37	0.7610
Romania	1.84	46	44	0.8160
Iraq	1.73	43	20	0.6890
Brazil	1.71	43	35	0.7610
Guatemala	1.68	42	26	0.6510
Mexico	1.68	42	29	0.7670
Greece	1.65	41	48	0.8720
Tunisia	1.60	40	43	0.7390
Peru	1.55	39	36	0.7590

* Sources: Data is from WVS 7 (World Value Survey).¹²

** Source: The Human Development Index (HDI) by UNDP (2018). The HDI covers 189 countries that are categorised into 4 groups: very high human development 1.00-0.80; high human development 0.79-0.70; medium human development 0.69-0.55; low human development 0.54 and below.

*** Source: The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by Transparency International (TI) (2018). Here, 0 means higher corruption and 100 means lower corruption.

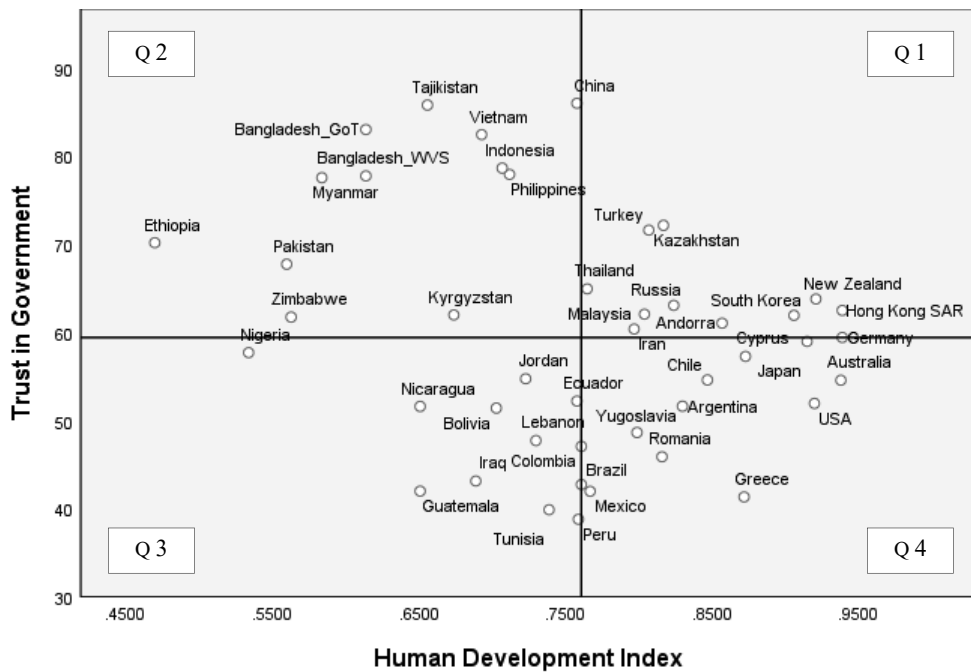
The inflated trust does not only exist in these two underperforming South Asian countries; it also exists in other countries as well. In Figure 1, we can see that a number of Asian and African underperforming countries have higher institutional trust (countries in Q2). The countries which are in Q1 and Q3 fit more with rationalist logic, i.e., higher performances have an association with higher institutional trust, and lower performances have an association with lower institutional trust. The countries which are in Q4 have better performance but lower institutional trust. Different scholars¹³ explain this lower trust by the rise of post-materialist views and

¹² Haerper, C., Inglehart, R., Moreno, A., Welzel, C., Kizilova, K., Diez-Medrano J., M. Lagos, P. Norris, E. Ponarin and B. Puranen (eds.). 2020. World Values Survey: Round Seven – Country-Pooled Datafile. Madrid, Spain and Vienna, Austria: JD Systems Institute and WWSA Secretariat (<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WWSDocumentationWV7.jsp>); Governance and Trust Survey. 2020. Op. cit.

¹³ Inglehart, R. and Baker, W. E. 2000. "Modernization, cultural change and the persistence of traditional values". *American Sociological Review*, 65 (1): 19–51; Norris, P. 2011. *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

critical citizens. In some of these lower trust countries, there is a rise of populist parties and trends of right-wing voting. Probably because of these inconsistent trends, Van de Walle and Bouckaert criticise rationalist approaches and argue that “this is a very rational and mechanistic reasoning, only part of which corresponds to reality”.¹⁴ There are improvements of socio-economic conditions in different countries greater than ever before, but there is no sign for continuous increase of institutional trust; rather, in some countries, that trust is reducing.¹⁵

Figure 1: Trust in Government and Human Development Index by UNDP.



¹⁴ Van de Walle, S., and Bouckaert, G. 2003. “Public service performance and trust in government: The problem of causality”. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 26 (8-9): 891.

¹⁵ Wong, T. K. Y., Wan, P. S., and Hsiao, H. H. M. 2011. Op. cit.; Zhao, D., and Hu, W. 2017. “Determinants of public trust in government: Empirical evidence from urban China”. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 83 (2): 358-377.

WHERE DOES TRUST INTO INSTITUTIONS COME FROM?

The existing studies¹⁶ on institutional trust in the sample of the two South Asian countries (Bangladesh and Nepal) indicate that higher authoritarian cultural orientation (ACO) may contribute to higher trust levels in those two countries. This ACO indicates unquestioning obedience and reliance on authorities who have higher social status or position than the individuals concerned like older people, government officials, politicians and teachers.¹⁷ Because of ACO, people have 'blind trust' rather than calculation-based judgements. The people who have this orientation do not apply their logical cost-benefit framework to assess institutional performance and governance quality. Alternatively, the people who do not have this orientation have higher assertiveness and they can easily apply calculative judgements to assess institutional performance. Thus, the degree and nature of actionability varies between these two types of people. A study based on African countries indicates that people with lower assertiveness have higher ratings on different institutional performance, such as management of the economy, crime controlling, providing health and education services.¹⁸ The same study also reports lower magnitude of governance-related problems such as the problems of corruption and unequal treatment with the lower assertive people. This lower assertiveness found in Africa can be related with higher ACO found in South Asia¹⁹ as people with higher ACO are less assertive due to their nature of obedience.

Along with this variation of the assessment of policy performances and governance quality, there may be another mechanism; due to ACO, people may not connect the assessment information to their measurement of institutional trust. They may focus on the 'logic of hierarchy' rather than the 'logic of reciprocity'. Thus, because of ACO, one's rational calculative logic can be different. It is more like one's trust in his or her father; one person's trust in his or her father may not be dependent on the father's level of earnings compared to others or even the nature of the father's character. A person may know that his or her father may have questionable attributes, like the involvement with different corrupt practices, but still

¹⁶ Baniamin, H. M. 2019a. Op. cit.; Baniamin, H. M., Jamil, I., and Askvik, S. 2020. "Mismatch between lower performance and higher trust in the civil service: Can culture provide an explanation?". *International Political Science Review*, 41 (2): 192–206.

¹⁷ Ma, D., and Yang, F. 2014. "Authoritarian orientations and political trust in East Asian societies". *East Asia*, 31 (4): 323-341.

¹⁸ Baniamin, H. M. 2020. Op. cit.

¹⁹ Baniamin, H. M. 2019b. Op. cit.

that person may not use that information to define the degree of trust to him. In many societies, like in China, the relationship between government and citizens is considered as the extension of the father-son relationship.²⁰ Ma and Yong find that authoritarian cultural orientation contributes to higher trust in 13 East Asian societies. Like China, in Bangladesh, civil servants, particularly those working in different districts, are known as guardian or parent (in Bangla: *ovibabok* or *bap-ma*) of the respective areas.²¹ Another study by Jamil and Baniamin²² indicates that the institutions in Bangladesh and Nepal which have higher visibility, and higher perceptions of having administrative power, tend to have higher institutional trust among the people who have higher ACO. For example, the civil service has higher administrative power than academic institutions, and accordingly, the civil service has higher institutional trust among the people who have higher ACO.

Further, we need to look at variations in the level of expectations, as expectations can significantly affect a person's level of trust or satisfaction. Röder and Mühlau²³ indicate that the frame of reference is important for perceived performance and institutional trust. If a person has lower expectations, then she or he may be satisfied with lower performance and accordingly can have higher trust in institutions with such lower performance. The studies that we discussed here do not capture the variations of this expectation dimension. People from better performing democracies may have higher expectations from their government; and in other places, people may not have such expectations as the state-citizen relations there differ. People may be happy with what they get from the state as in other types of regimes, people are not often part of the governance system. Still a king-subject type relation may exist, where people consider any kind of contribution by the government as an act of benevolence by the authority. As such, they may express their gratitude to the authority for the little they get. For example, Ali et al.²⁴ indicate that

²⁰ Ma and Yang, 2014. Op. cit.

²¹ Baniamin, H. M. 2019a. Op. cit.

²² Jamil, I., and Baniamin, H. M. 2020. "Representative and responsive bureaucracy in Nepal: A mismatch or a realistic assumption?". *Public Administration and Policy*, 3 (2): 141-156.

²³ Röder, A., and Mühlau, P. 2012. "Low expectations or different evaluations: What explains immigrants' high levels of trust in host-country institutions?". *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38 (5): 777-792.

²⁴ Ali, T. O., Hassan, M., and Hossain, N. 2021 (online first version). "The moral and political economy of the pandemic in Bangladesh: Weak states and strong societies during Covid-19". *World Development*, 137: 1-10. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105216>).

in Bangladesh the state is broadly considered as a benevolent patron, provider and protector, rather than as 'political representative' of the general people.

The definition that is usually used to define institutional trust comes from rationalist calculative perspective. To apply that calculative perspective, people need to be individualistic and assertive to question the authority. This means, people should have a higher perceived ability about their own actionability. In general, Western societies are rights-based and individualistic; and Dalton and Ong²⁵ claim that these qualities are necessary requirements for a competitive democracy. In such societies, people enjoy more freedom to disagree with leaders and can claim for more consultative leadership. On the other hand, societies like the ones at hand are considered collective; their relationship with others shape the nature of their calculation. Many Asian societies have this collective nature. By observing Asian culture, Fukuyama states "...people are born not with rights but with duties to a series of hierarchically-arranged authorities, beginning with the family and extending all the way up to the state".²⁶ However, in individualistic societies, personal rights are important, people are vocal for those rights and bargain with the authorities for those rights. For this bargaining, they also need to be assertive. In different Western countries, higher assertiveness may lead to cynical behaviours which may cause a reduction of trust in the established institutions and divert peoples' support towards populist parties who raise questions against the established authorities. On the other hand, the countries where there is higher ACO, people are more obedient or indifferent due to lower assertiveness; and in many cases they end up having authoritarian regimes. Thus, we can get two kinds of attributes causing deviations from a rational calculation-based approach of institutional trust: *higher assertiveness-based disobedience or cynical behaviours* (for example, some populist party supporters have tendency to disobey established institutions and directives) and *lower assertiveness-based obedience*. The first one is working as a 'push' factor to reduce institutional trust in some higher performing countries, and the second one is acting as a 'pull' factor to create inflated institutional trust in some underperforming countries. The two South Asian countries at hand may fall in the second category. Combining institutional performance and an individual's orientation, we can develop the following matrix:

²⁵ Dalton, R. J., and Ong, N. N. T. 2005. "Authority orientations and democratic attitudes: A test of the 'Asian values' hypothesis". *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 6 (2): 211-231.

²⁶ Fukuyama, F. 1998. "Asian values and civilization". In: ICAS Fall Symposium *Asia's Challenges Ahead*. University of Pennsylvania.

Figure 2: Possible explanatory variables for institutional trust and their relationships.

Institutional Performance	High	Higher trust due to higher performance and ACO	Higher trust due to higher performance	Lower/medium trust due to critical citizens, despite higher performance
	Low	Higher trust despite lower performance due to higher ACO,	Lower trust due to lower performance	Lower trust due to lower performance
		Authoritarian cultural orientation: higher obedience	Rationalist approach: objectivity	Assertive culture: higher self-expressive values
		Individual's Orientation		

Performance and Assertive Culture

In developed countries with relatively high institutional performance where citizens demonstrate a high degree of assertive culture (i.e., self-expressive values) lower or medium levels of trust can be explained by citizens being more critical as compared to less developed countries. Due to assertive culture, here, people's perceived ability for actionability can be higher. This may happen in Q4 of Figure 1. Thus, the rise of 'critical citizens' may act as a 'push' factor for lower trust despite higher institutional performance.

Performance and Authoritarian Cultural Orientation (ACO)

Authoritarian Cultural Orientation (ACO) makes people obedient to authority. People with this orientation usually respect authority and seldom question, let alone challenge the existing power structure. This authoritarian cultural orientation affects their perceived ability for actionability to raise questions, and as such it may be lower. This condition may influence citizens' assessment of institutions and contributes to higher levels of trust in the institutions. Thus, ACO can explain higher institutional trust in some of the countries positioned in Q2 of Figure 1.

Performance and a Rationalist Approach

People who do not have either higher ACO or cynical assertive nature may evaluate institutional performance more 'objectively'. If so, when an institution performs well, they may award it with a high level of trust, or, alternatively, consider it untrustworthy when it performs poorly. Though, there can be other orientations or values apart from the above-mentioned individual orientations which can affect citizens' objective evaluation of institutional performances. We need to explore them as well.

GOVERNANCE QUALITY AND AUTHORITARIAN CULTURAL ORIENTATION

The study by Welzel and Dalton²⁷ shows that while an allegiant (obedience-based) culture can be beneficial for effective governance as there is less resistance, it may not be suitable to establish accountable governance. For accountable governance, an assertive culture is important. In the sample of the two South Asian countries, there is allegiant culture (obedience-based culture) due to lower assertiveness or authoritarian cultural orientation (ACO). In allegiant culture, a country may prosper with proper leadership; Southeast Asian countries like Singapore and Malaysia serve as examples for this kind of development. However, in such allegiant cultures, it is difficult to make a government accountable if the leadership becomes corrupt. Probably, this is why Bouckaert and Van de Walle²⁸ claim that having lower trust is healthy for democratic attitudes. However, too low trust can also be problematic for the proper functioning of a government, as in that case, people may not cooperate with the government. Kim²⁹ claims that higher citizens' trust in public institutions is necessary for the proper implementation of policies. Van der Meer and Dekker³⁰ describe further mechanisms of the role of trust in a governance system — like a

²⁷ Welzel, C., and Dalton, R. 2017. "Cultural change in Asia and beyond: From allegiant to assertive citizens". *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 2 (2): 112-132.

²⁸ Bouckaert and Van de Walle. 2003. Op. cit.

²⁹ Kim, S. 2005. "The role of trust in the modern administrative state: an integrative model". *Administration and Society*, 37 (5): 611-635.

³⁰ Van der Meer, T., and Dekker, P. 2011. "Trustworthy states, trusting citizens? A multilevel study into objective and subjective determinants of political trust". In: Zmerli, S. and Hooghe, M. (ed.). *Political trust - Why context matters: Causes and Consequences of a Relational Concept*. Colchester: ECPR Press: 95-116.

glue, it keeps the governance system together, and like oil, helps to lubricate the policy machine. If citizens do not have trust, they may not follow rules, or respond properly in times of necessity.³¹

Those countries which enjoy blind trust due to ACO or lower assertive people, may not be able to enjoy that in the long term. People gradually may become critical towards authority, and authoritarian cultural orientation may slowly disappear. The enhancement of education level and gradual development in a country may contribute to such changes. Hakhverdian and Mayne³² mention two possible mechanisms associated with role of education: the norm-inducing function and the accuracy-inducing function. In the norm-inducing function, people with higher education are more likely to face moral troubles facing any corruption; and in the accuracy-inducing function, educated people develop more sophisticated skills for assessing institutional performance and processes.

Empirical evidences indicate that even in China which has this kind of obedience, the number of critical citizens is gradually increasing.³³ Welzel³⁴ explains this kind of change with the 'Emancipation theory' and connects it to the 'human ladder of freedom'. Some countries are slower than others to move upwards in the ladder. Inglehart and Welzel³⁵ connect such empowerment framework with the 'need hierarchy' of motivation theory, where after fulfilling the basic or materialistic needs, people look for freedom and self-esteem. In that case, just traditional development may not be enough; people may demand more. The demand for freedom remains dormant when people face 'existential constraints'.³⁶ Accordingly, citizens who develop post-materialist values increasingly challenge elitist rule and reject authority.³⁷

³¹ Van Ryzin, Gregg G. 2011. "Outcomes, process and trust of civil servants". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 21 (4): 745-760.

³² Hakhverdian, A., and Mayne, Q. 2012. "Institutional trust, education, and corruption: A micro-macro interactive approach". *The Journal of Politics*, 74 (3): 739-750.

³³ Wang, Z., and You, Y. 2016. "The arrival of critical citizens: decline of political trust and shifting public priorities in China". *International Review of Sociology*, 26 (1): 1-20.

³⁴ Welzel, C. 2013. *Freedom rising*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

³⁵ Inglehart, R., and Welzel, C. 2005. *Modernization, cultural change, and democracy: The human development sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁶ Welzel, C. 2013. Op. cit.

³⁷ Wang, Z. and You, Y. 2016. Op. cit.

CONCLUSION

This paper analysed the puzzling institutional trust levels in two South Asian countries. Both countries have inflated institutional trust, i.e., have higher institutional trust despite lower performance and poor governance compared to other better performing countries. Authoritarian cultural orientation or lower assertiveness are possible explanations for such inflated trust in those two countries. Due to this hierarchical cultural orientation, people's calculative logic differs from those holding other cultural orientation. Due to authoritarian cultural orientation, they are less likely to use information about performance to evaluate the authorities. Ruscio³⁸ claims that one person's social obligations can influence his or her calculations as social norms and values influence individual's behaviour in combination with self-interest. Thus, their evaluation is more affected by the logic of appropriateness rather than the logic of consequence³⁹ and their nature of actionability is different compared to higher assertive people. Sztompka⁴⁰ defines this kind of inflated trust as blind or naive trust as people disregard negative evidences and take a 'pure leap of faith'.

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³⁸ Ruscio, K. P. 1996. "Trust, democracy, and public management: A theoretical argument". *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 6 (3): 461-477.

³⁹ Baniamin, H. M. 2019b. Op. cit.

⁴⁰ Sztompka, P. 1999. *Trust: A sociological theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.