Stability and Interpersonal Trust: A Critical Relationship

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Who do you trust?

- Family, friends, professional associates, strangers, etc.

- Why do you trust or distrust them?
Interpersonal Trust

- Fairness (Carlin, Love, & Smith, 2017)

- Benefits: civic activism (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2012) and social capital (Andersen, 2018; Suh & Reynolds-Stenson, 2018).

- Trust and social capital lead to democracy, productive economies (Andersen, 2018), and life satisfaction (Carlin et al., 2017).
But...

- Regional concentrations: Some nations with much, others with little interpersonal trust.
- Hypothesis: A lack of economic and political stability leads to low interpersonal trust.
- If people do not trust the institutions, they will not trust others being governed by the institutions (Players/Rules).
- Case studies: Denmark v. Brazil
Denmark

- Bastion of stability
- Regional: Norway, Sweden, Finland
- Social unity, little corruption (Andersen, 2018)
Brazil

- Economically plagued
- Recent political history is turbulent: President Jair Bolsonaro (Tharoor, 2018).
- Problems: separation of powers, militarism (Moises, 2006).
How do we test the hypothesis?

- OECD and Andersen for Denmark
- WVS and Aquino for Brazil
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

2013: Denmark- highest interpersonal trust of over two dozen states measured (published 2017).

2008: Denmark- above the other mostly European states in the study in interpersonal trust (published 2010).

- Bested in some regards by Sweden and Norway.

- Consistently outranked the European Union, including by amounts high as 35%.
Andersen, 2018

- 2009: 79% of Danes trusted others.

-Historic framework for trust
  - Peasants and equipment, late 1800s.
  - Social/civic participation of Americans with Scandinavian ancestry.
World Values Survey, 2014

- More than 92% of Brazilians think they “need to be very careful.”

- Just over 7% believe that “most people can be trusted.”
The WVS Skeptic: Aquino

- Dislikes WVS, claims potential misunderstandings.
- Created his own survey, but not meant to be representative, 95% highly educated.
- 327 Brazilians, an atypically high 28.5% were atheists.
- **Results**: 31% trusted others, but most were cautious.
Conclusion

- Brazil: poor economic/government stability & poor interpersonal trust.

- Denmark: great economic/governmental stability & great interpersonal trust.

- Hypothesis confirmed
Why care?

- The intro
- International relations to the supermarket