




*Trust Across the Globe
and Time*

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- ▶ Trust has many different meanings:
 - ▶ Strategic trust: trust we gain from daily experience.
 - ▶ Particularized trust: trust in people like ourselves. May stem from direct experience or from stereotypes.
 - ▶ Generalized (moralistic) trust: Trust in strangers, especially people who are different from ourselves. Cannot come from interaction with people we know. We learn it early in life, from our parents, and it is largely stable throughout our life. It does not depend upon our experiences.


- ▶ Strategic trust reflects our immediate experience. But generalized trust does not reflect our immediate experience—such as income, life experiences (divorce, being the victim of crime, friendship patterns, or even civic engagement). Instead, generalized trust is learned early in life and doesn't change much.
- ▶ Generalized trusters generally dismiss negative experiences as exceptions to the rule. They are optimists who believe that they are in control of their lives.
- ▶ We learn generalized trust from our parents, not from our political institutions.

▶ In contrast to strategic trust, generalized trust does not change quickly. It is formed as a young person and stays stable throughout one's life.

▶ Panel surveys ask the same questions to the same people at different points in time. Generalized trust is among the most stable attitudes we find in panel studies—providing support for the notion that it does not change over time.

- ▶ Generalized trust is part of a “virtuous circle” of positive forces and outcomes in a society. Trust stems from equality and fairness and leads to less corruption, better government, open markets, and higher economic growth.
- ▶ Mistrusting societies are caught in an “inequality trap.” They have higher (or increasing) rates of economic inequality, high levels of corruption, ineffective governments, closed markets, and lower growth.

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- ▶ Generalized trusters have positive views toward both their own in-group and out-groups. But they rank their own groups less highly than do particularized trusters. If you believe that things are going to get better—and that you have the capacity to control your life—trusting others isn't so risky.

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- ▶ Trust makes people less likely to see risks wherever they turn—in their own neighborhoods when they walk at night or when they come into contact (or consider coming into contact) with people unlike themselves. If you believe that “most people can be trusted,” you are more likely to hold that people of different backgrounds share the same fate.

Why Trust Matters

- ⦿ People who believe that most people can be trusted are more likely to be tolerant, especially to disadvantaged groups.
- ⦿ Trusting people are more likely to donate to charity and to volunteer their time— to organizations that help people who may be different from themselves. They give of themselves to help the less fortunate. They are *not* more likely to give time or money to their own religious causes.

- ▶ Generalized trust is the key to solving many collective action problems. Countries with high levels of generalized trust have higher growth rates, more open markets, less corruption, less crime, better functioning government, and spend more on redistributive programs that benefit the poor. Generalized trust is also strongly associated with universal social welfare programs such as we see in Sweden.

- ⦿ Trusting people are *not* more likely to help people who are close to them: They don't help their neighbors more than other people.
- ⦿ Nor are trusting people more likely to donate blood or to give money to beggars on the street.
- ⦿ Instead their donations of money and time come through organizations such as the Red Cross—groups that help strangers in trouble.

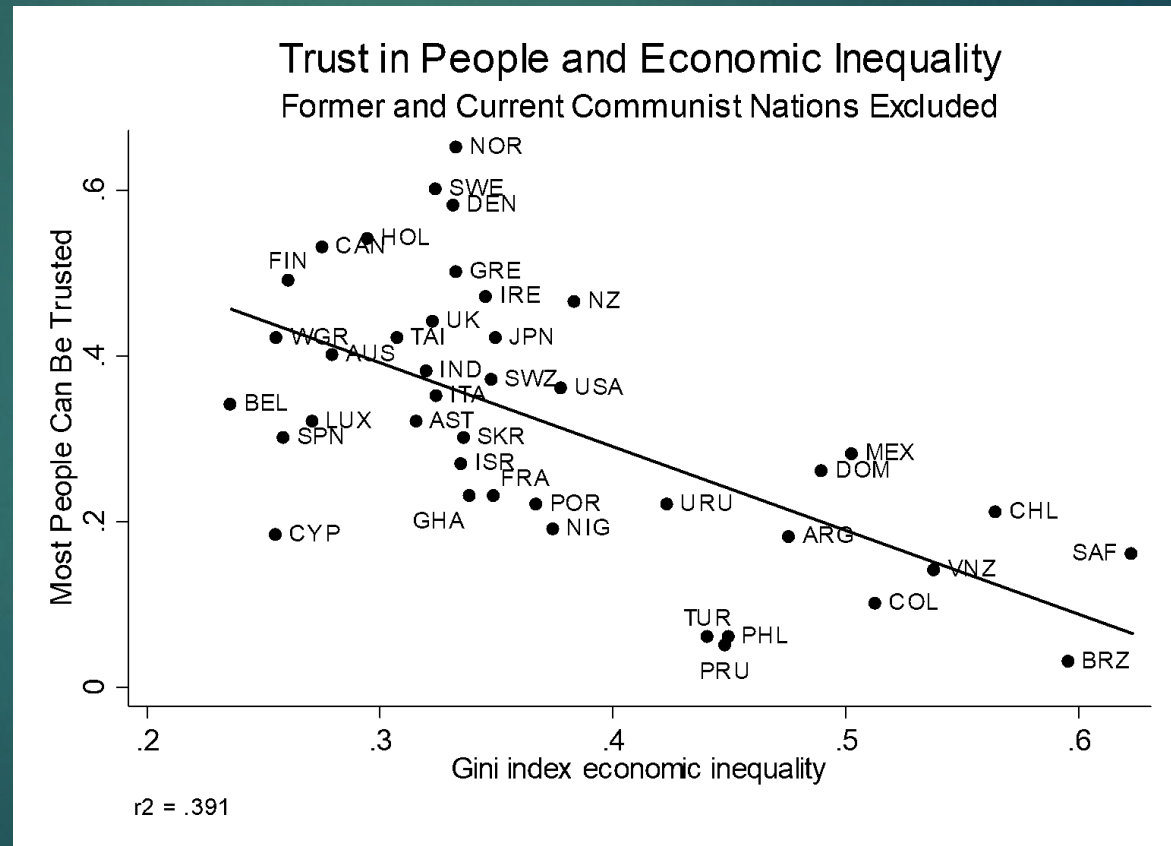
- ▶ In most cases, there is no clear linkage between receiving help or even seeing someone you admire give assistance and whether you volunteer now.
- ▶ We don't learn trust by joining groups since we participate in organizations and social networks with people very much like ourselves.

Institutions and Equality



- ▶ The main driving force behind trust is economic equality.

- ▶ Across many countries (and over time in the United States), there is one “real-life” factor that shapes both optimism and trust: the level of economic inequality in a country. The more inequality, the less trust. Equality promotes the vision of a shared fate, where others are part of your “moral community.”

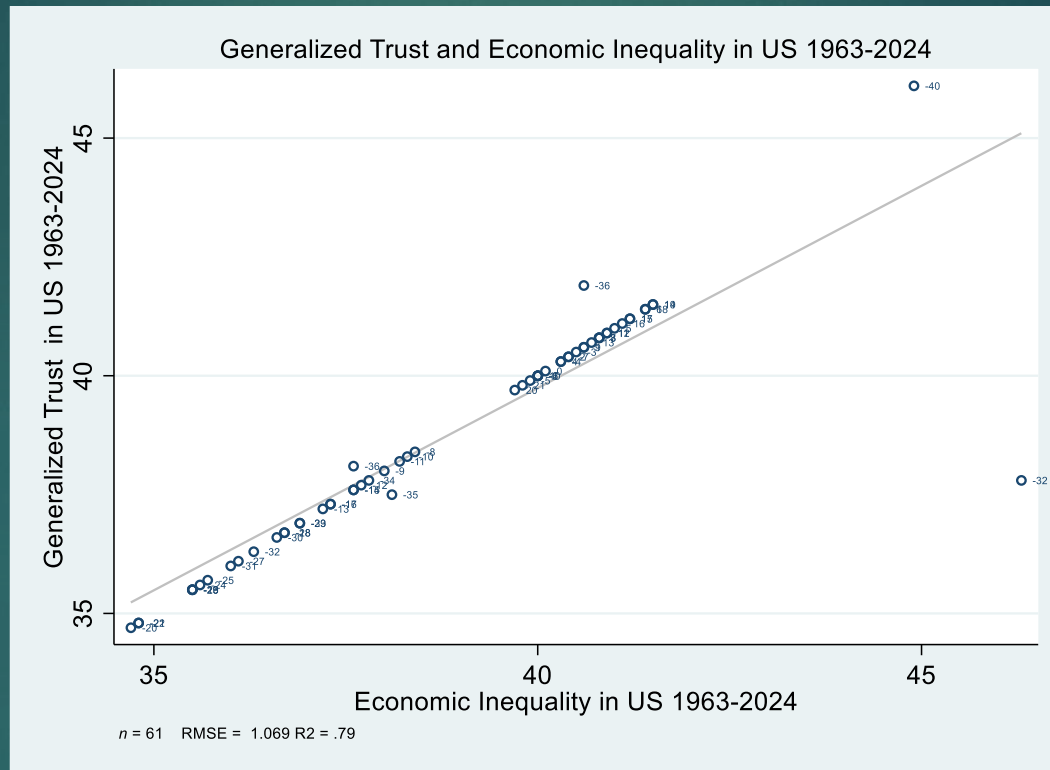





This leads to a more inclusive identity encompassing diverse groups in a society rather than seeing ourselves as members of different ethnic and racial groups—and to expect our leaders to represent all of us rather than just their “tribes.”

Trustees are more willing to admit immigrants to their countries—and are less worried that immigrants will take their jobs. This sense of unity of identity underlies the provision of universal social welfare benefits, where all are entitled to receive benefits such as education from the state simply because they are members of a political and social community.


Trust and Inequality in the American States



- ▶ The great threat to trust and social cohesion is the rise of nationalist politics throughout the world. Nationalist leaders and followers profess an “inclusive” sense of national identity.
- ▶ To be a “true” member of a society according to what Bonikowski considers to be “inclusive” is to share demographic traits such as ancestry and being a member of the country’s majority race, religion, or ancestry – to be a white Christian according to many Americans, to have French blood, according to French nationalists such as, or even to “make Sweden Swedish again.” Leaders such as Donald Trump, Marine LePen, Turkey’s Erdogan, Israel’s Netanyahu, and India’s Modi want to establish a preferred class of citizenship for the country’s majority population at the expense of minorities.
- ▶ This sense of proprietary citizenship strikes at the heart of generalized trust and social cohesion. It compounds social and political divisions in a society and institutionalizes inequality.

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- ▶ My current work examines how this sense of an “inclusive” identity shapes attitudes on immigration in democracies mostly in North America and Europe.
- ▶ Immigration is in the words of Samuel Huntington “who we are” as a nation.
- ▶ As people whose background (race, religion, national customs) increasingly enter wealthier countries, national politics becomes polarized between people who want to shut borders and others who want to help refugees from poverty and discrimination.

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- ▶ Nations can create greater cohesion by enhancing their levels of education and promoting economic inequality. This is not an easy task given the “stickyness” of inequality and the high correlation between mean school years in 1870 and 2010. The past does not “simply matter.” Rather, many countries do not have sufficient resources or the political support to enact policies that would change the distribution of human capital—or economic resources.