Social Class Predicts Generalized Trust But Only in Wealthy Societies

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Social Class Predicts Generalized Trust But Only in Wealthy Societies

Takeshi Hamamura[1]

Abstract

This research examined the relationship between social class and generalized trust, or a belief that others have a benign intention in social interactions, in a diverse set of societies represented in the World Values Survey. The strength of the relationship varied significantly across societies: Although social class was a positive predictor of generalized trust in wealthy countries, as reported in past research, among less wealthy countries social class was uncorrelated with trust. These results indicate that resources available to individuals of high social class may make a trusting belief more rewarding; nevertheless, in less wealthy societies, the socio-political-economic infrastructure that supports generalized trust is unavailable, and therefore even individuals of high social class are reluctant to trust others. This finding extends prior theorizing on trust in finding the interactive relationship between an individual-level factor and a society-level factor in shaping individuals' inclination toward trust.

Keywords

trust, social class, wealth, cross-cultural research

Trusting someone that one does not know well, such as a stranger or a casual acquaintance, is a qualitatively different experience from trusting someone of which one has intimate knowledge (e.g., trusting a friend). The former type of trust, often referred to as generalized trust, is defined as one's belief that the target of trust has a benign intention in social interactions (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). In research, generalized trust is assessed by questions such as "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?" The agreement with the former option would indicate generalized trust.

Generalized trust is an intriguing research topic because it is not obvious why anyone would trust others that he or she does not know well. In fact, generalized trust is risky because it exposes one to the possibility that the trustee has harmful intentions. For example, by asking a stranger to keep an eye on one's luggage while he or she goes to the toilet, this person could risk losing his or her luggage. However, despite its inherent risks, generalized trust is widespread. In fact, in some societies the percentage of participants indicating that others are trustworthy (assessed by the above-mentioned question) exceeds 70% (more on this to follow). This indicates that there are incentives in trusting unacquainted individuals that outweigh its risks.

One of the benefits of generalized trust is its role in facilitating interactions among unacquainted individuals. Although these interactions are inherently risky, they can also confer benefits that are difficult to obtain in other types of interactions. This process was articulated by

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Granovetter (1973). Interactions with unacquainted others expose individuals to novel information and resources that are not available in close relationships with others (e.g., family and friends). On the one hand, within a network of close social relationships (or strong ties), because interpersonal contacts tend to be frequent, there is a large degree of overlap in information and resources known to each member (e.g., one's knowledge of good restaurants or mechanics is likely shared by his or her best friend). In contrast, within a network of less close social relationships (e.g., acquaintances), because contacts within the network are less dense and less frequent, there tends to be little overlap in resources and information known to each other, which in turn results in exposure to novel resources and information. In short, generalized trust can bridge networks of close social relationships and is essential in the creation and maintenance of social capital (Putnam, 2000).

Research suggests that the risks and rewards of generalized trust are balanced differently across individuals and societies: Some individuals and societies are more trusting than others are. For example, in answering the question mentioned earlier, the percentage of people indicating that others can be trusted varied substantially across societies, from a high of 74% in Norway to a low of 5% in Rwanda (World Values Survey Association, 2009). The source of this variation is important to understand because it is correlated with a range of important variables of social living. For example, at an individual level those with a higher level of trust tend to be wealthier, better educated, and happier compared to those with a lower level of trust (Delhey & Newton, 2003). Cross-culturally, societies with a higher level of trust tend to be better governed, safer, more egalitarian, and wealthier than societies with a lower level of trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005). Although the cause-and-effect relationship between trust and these indicators has been debated, these findings indicate that generalized trust is integral to individual well-being and to the economic and political fabrics of a society.

For these reasons, trust is one of the most intensively researched topics in social science (Portes, 1998). Research in this area has taken one of two broad theoretical approaches. One approach is to locate generalized trust at the individual level. Individual-level factors examined include personality attributes, such as optimism and a sense of control, as well as demographic factors such as age and social class (Delhey & Newton, 2003). Another theoretical approach is to locate generalized trust at the society level and examine characteristics of society-level processes that predict trust. Society-level factors examined include affluence, inequality, safety and crime rate, ethnic homogeneity, forms of governance (e.g., democracy, corruption), and culture (Delhey & Newton, 2005). In addition to these two approaches, recent research has examined the interactive relationship between individual-level and society-level processes in shaping trust (e.g., Gheorghiu, Vignoles, & Smith, 2009). Following this development, the current research explores how an individual-level factor of social class interacts with society-level factors in predicting the level of generalized trust.

Social Class

Social class, which refers to individuals' perception of rank within a social hierarchy, as well as the amount and quality of resources available to them (e.g., Kraus, Piff, & Keltner, 2009), is a complex construct with profound influence on psychological processes. Implications of social class on important life outcomes, such as academic achievement and physical and mental health, are well established (Adler & Ostrove, 1999; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Social class is also one of the robust predictors of generalized trust: Individuals with a higher social class background are relatively more trusting of others compared to individuals with a lower social class background (Gheorghiu et al., 2009; Putnam, 2000; Whiteley, 1999).

There are two related theories on the relationship between social class and trust. One theory suggests that resources available to individuals of high social class afford protection against the risks of generalized trust (Simmel, 1950). According to this theory, the risk of trusting without intimate knowledge is relatively greater for individuals of lower social class because they are concerned more about meeting basic needs for living. To such individuals, a single interaction with a cheater could be devastating. Hence, generalized trust is highly risky and would not become an adaptive belief. In contrast, individuals of higher social class are embedded in an environment (e.g., effective law enforcement, more savings, extensive social security and insurance) that buffers the risks of generalized trust: An interaction with a cheater would still be painful, but it would not be devastating. Furthermore, a lowered risk of generalized trust would make its benefits, such as exposure to novel information, relatively more appealing. Hence, trust would become an adaptive belief for individuals of higher social class.

In addition, the relationship between social class and trust has also been attributed to patterns of social relationships. One important finding from prior research is that social relationships often develop along social class lines: People tend to form social relationships with others of a similar social class standing (Putnam, 2000). Hence, individuals of low social class tend to befriend others from the same social class, who are likely to possess a similarly distrusting belief about others. Their interactions, in turn, would further strengthen the distrusting belief. The same logic has the opposite effect among individuals of high social class. These individuals tend to interact with others from the same social class, who are likely to have a similarly trusting belief about others. Through their social interactions, a trusting belief becomes self-fulfilling and strengthened.

Past research supports the relationship between social class and generalized trust. Among Americans, social class was positively correlated with generalized trust (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002), and a similar relationship was observed among citizens of European nations (Gheorghiu et al., 2009; Whiteley, 1999). Yamagishi (1999) also reported a positive correlation between trust and social class among Japanese university students. In particular, participants from an elite Japanese university were more trusting of others compared to students from less selective schools.

Is the Relationship Between Social Class and Trust Cultural Universal?

Based on these findings the role of social class in predicting trust has been regarded as cultural universal, as exemplified in Putnam (2000), who wrote, "[I]n virtually all societies 'have-nots' are less trusting than 'haves'" (p. 138). Nevertheless, outside industrialized societies, the linkage between social class and generalized trust has rarely been examined, and an examination of this relationship in a broader range of countries remains the crucial test for the claim of cultural universality. An important boundary condition may emerge in such an examination (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). For example, in the case of the relationship between social class and physical health, such a study did indeed discover a different pattern: Among Nigerian civil servants, high-ranking officers reported *poorer* health relative to low-ranking officers (Bunker et al., 1992), which is reverse of the pattern identified among British civil servants in a classic study (Marmot, Shipley, & Rose, 1984). This example underscores the importance of cross-cultural examinations of social class in predicting trust.

The objective of this research is to examine the relationship between social class and generalized trust in a variety of sociocultural contexts, by taking advantage of a range of cultures represented in the World Values Survey (WVS). Two outcomes are possible. On the one hand, to the extent that the mechanism behind social class (i.e., perception of rank within social hierarchy and differential distribution of resources) is common to many modern human societies

(Greenfield, 2009), its relationship with trust may also be universal: Social class may predict trust in a similar fashion across cultures. On the other hand, the nature of this relationship may vary across cultures. To the extent that there is such a variation, the second objective of this research is to unpack the cross-cultural variation in the linkage between social class and trust.

Potential Society-Level Moderators

There are a few potential society-level moderators in the relationship between social class and trust. First, income equality may moderate such a relationship. The extent to which social class is differentiated varies across societies: The differences between the rich and the poor are more pronounced in unequal societies relative to equal societies (e.g., as indexed by Gini coefficients). One implication of this difference is that ratings of social class might be more predictive of trust in unequal societies relative to more egalitarian societies.

Second, the relationship between social class and trust may be moderated by wealth. Societies' wealth is one of the best predictors of generalized trust: Wealth is associated with a host of socio-political structural attributes (e.g., more efficient government, better law enforcement, more comprehensive social security) that create an environment that is more favorable for generalized trust (Delhey & Newton, 2005). Nevertheless, even in wealthy countries trust is still relatively risky for individuals of low relative to high social class individuals. Hence, in wealthy countries social class should be a positive predictor of generalized trust, as found in prior research (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2002; Gheorghiu et al., 2009; Whiteley, 1999; Yamagishi, 1999). In contrast, in less wealthy countries without an institutional structure that supports a trusting belief (such as an effective government and law enforcement and extensive social security), environment is less favorable for such a belief. For this reason, even though resources available for individuals of high social class may make the risk of generalized trust more manageable, these individuals may remain reluctant to trust others. In sum, social class may be less predictive of generalized trust in less wealthy societies relative to wealthy societies.

Finally, the relationship between social class and generalized trust may be moderated by cultural characteristics, individualism-collectivism in particular. The level of generalized trust tends to be higher in individualistic societies relative to collectivistic societies (Allik & Realo, 2004; Gheorghiu et al., 2009; Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). The difference reflects different degrees to which interactions with outgroup members are sanctioned: Such social relationships are relatively more encouraged in individualistic societies than in collectivistic societies (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994).

Across cultural environments, individuals of low social class would be distrusting of others because the resource-impoverished environment in which they are embedded entails a large risk for generalized trust. In contrast, different norms of social interactions found in individualistic and collectivistic societies may play a role in shaping generalized trust of high social class individuals. On the one hand, the norm of open social exchanges that is characteristic of individualistic societies may further enhance high social class individuals' trusting belief, which is nurtured via a resource-abundant environment that affords the risk of the trusting belief manageable. Hence, there should be a positive correlation between social class and general trust in individualistic societies. On the other hand, in collectivistic societies the norm of social exchange is to maintain tight-knit relations with others belonging to the in-group, whereas social exchanges with those not belonging to the in-group are carefully managed with a risk-aversive mindset. This cultural environment may inhibit the trusting belief, even among individuals of high social class. Hence, the correlation between social class and trust may be weaker, if not absent, in collectivistic societies.

In summary, this research examined the relationship between social class and generalized trust in the WVS data set. To the extent that there is a cross-cultural variation in this linkage, the role of three society-level moderators—income equality, national wealth, and individualism-collectivism—was examined.

Method

Data from the WVS (World Values Survey Association, 2009) was examined. The WVS is administered periodically around the world, most recently in 2005 in 57 societies.

Two measures of generalized trust were identified. One of them was 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?" Responses were either 1 ("most people can be trusted") or 0 ("need to be very careful"). As discussed earlier, this is one of the widely used measures of generalized trust (Glaeser, Laibson, Scheinkman, & Soutter, 2000). Nevertheless, this item also has a few known issues as a measure of trust such as the item being ambiguous and having double-barred meaning (Glaeser et al., 2000; Yamagishi, Kikuchi, & Kosugi, 1999). In addition to this item, the WVS has another less ambiguous measure of trust. This item assesses trust toward "people you meet for the first time" by the quesiton: "I'd like to ask you how much you trust people from various groups. Could you tell me for each whether you trust people from this group completely, somewhat, not very much, or not at all?" Responses ranged from 1 ("do not trust at all") to 4 ("trust completely"). The discussion below refers the first item as "trust in most people" and the second item as "trust in mere acquaintances."

Social class was measured by asking participants to place their household income in one of the 10 income deciles within their country. (The item was: "On this card is a scale of incomes in which 1 indicates the "lowest income decile" and 10 the "highest income decile" in your country. We would like to know in what group your household is. Please specify the appropriate number, counting all wages, salaries, pensions, and other incomes."). To the extent that the item in this research asked about participants' *perception* of their relative standing in society based on income, this item indexes social class subjectively. In cross-cultural research, objective indices of social class (e.g., income in absolute level, educational attainment, occupation) are challenging, as cultures vary greatly across the systems of education and occupation (e.g., completing college education may be a norm in some societies but a sign of elite status in other societies). A subjective index overcomes this problem by anchoring the responses to individuals' perceived rank within their society. In other words, although a response of 10 to the current item in a wealthy country and a less wealthy country would probably indicate something very different in terms of material possessions, psychologically, the two responses would have a commonality to the extent that the responses indicate the perception of occupying an elite social status. Such a perception, in turn, is crucial to the construct of social class (Kraus et al., 2009). This research focuses on the latter aspect of social class in predicting generalized trust.

Society-Level Data

National wealth was indexed by societies' per capita GDP (United Nations Statistics Division, 2010). For the analyses that follow, the original index was divided by 1,000 (i.e., the unit of the index is per capita GDP in US$1,000). Income inequality was indexed by the Gini index (United Nations Development Programme, 2009). Societies' individualism-collectivism scores were obtained from the in-group collectivism practices subscale of GLOBE scale (Gelfand, Bhawuk, Nishii, & Bechtold, 2004).[1]

Table 1. Correlations Among Society-Level Indices

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Correlation between social class and trust in most people	—				
2. Correlation between social class and trust in mere acquaintances	.636**	—			
3. Per capita GDP	.795**	.530**	—		
4. Income inequality	–.535**	–.056	–.614**	—	
5. Collectivism	–.689**	–.523**	–.865**	.441**	—

Note: $N = 31$ for correlations involving trust in mere acquaintances. For others, $N = 36$.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Results

Two items of generalized trust, trust in most people and mere acquaintances, were only moderately correlated at the individual level ($r = .278$; at society level, $r = .700$); thus, they were analyzed separately. There were 36 and 31 countries in which data for the two items, respectively, and all the society level variables were available. The following analyses were conducted on this data set.

First, for each country a correlation between social class and generalized trust was computed. On average, there was a small positive correlation between social class and generalized trust (most people: $M = .078$, $SD = .075$; mere acquaintance: $M = .077$, $SD = .058$). However, the magnitude of these correlations varied substantially across cultures (range: -.075 to .212 for most people and -.057 to .176 for mere acquaintances).

The role of the three society-level factors in moderating this relationship was examined with hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) (Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, Congdon, & Du Toit, 2004). Individual-level data (generalized trust and social class [Level 1]) were nested within society-level data (per capita GDP, income inequality, and individualism-collectivism [Level 2]). Of specific interest was the relationship between social class (Level 1 predictor variable) and the three Level 2 predictor variables in predicting generalized trust (Level 1 criterion variable). In addition, gender and age were also entered as Level 1 predictors, and effects associated with these variables were controlled. All the predictors were centered around the grand mean except sex (1 = male, 0 = female) and social class, which was centered around group mean. As the "trust in most people" item had dichotomized responses, responses were modeled with a logit link function and a binomial error distribution (i.e., the HLM equivalent of a logistic regression). Responses to each item were analyzed sequentially. The base model included only the Level 1 predictors (Model 1). Next, the role of three society-level factors was examined independently (Models 2-4). Finally, to determine the independent contribution of three moderators, which were substantially intercorrelated (Table 1), their role was examined simultaneously (Model 5).

Trust in most people was analyzed first (Table 2). The base model revealed that social class was a significant predictor ($b = .074$, $SE = .010$, $p < .01$). The strength of this relationship, however, varied significantly across societies ($\chi^2 = 219.90$, $p < .001$). Models 2-4 revealed the significant moderation effect of three society-level factors, when their role was examined independently. Finally, Model 5 examined the role of three moderators simultaneously. In this analysis, only per capita GDP was the significant moderator of the relationship between social class and trust ($b = .003$, $SE = .001$, $p < .01$). To probe this interaction, the values of the regression equation for low (-1 *SD*) and high (1 SD) social class across low (-1 *SD*) and high (1 *SD*) per capita GDP were computed, holding all other predictors constant at 0 (Preacher, Curran, & Bauer, 2006). Figure 1 plots these equations. The simple slope for wealthy countries was significant

Table 2. Coefficients and Standard Errors From HLM Analyses: Trust in Most People

		Model 1 (35 *df*)	Model 2 (34 *df*)	Model 3 (34 *df*)	Model 4 (34 *df*)	Model 5 (32 *df*)
Mean differences	Intercept	−.872 (.121)**	−.937 (.103)**	−.912 (.106)**	−.931 (.096)**	−.947 (.095)**
	GDP		.031 (.005)**			.006 (.012)
	GINI			−.040 (.010)**		−.023 (.013)
	COL				−.669 (.113)**	−.489 (.205)*
Social class slope	Intercept	.074 (.010)**	.070 (.007)**	.073 (.009)**	.072 (.009)**	.071 (.007)**
	GDP		.003 (.0004)**	−.002 (.001)**		.003 (.001)**
	Inequality					−.0001 (.001)
	COL				−.045 (.010)**	.014 (.023)
Variance component	Mean differences	.806	.466	.603	.441	.418
	Social class slope	.005	.002	.003	.003	.002

Note: In Model 1, predictors were age, sex, and social class. In Models 2-4, per capita GDP, income inequality, and collectivism, respectively, were entered along with the Model 1 predictors. All the predictors were entered in Model 5. $N = 49{,}342$ individuals from 36 countries.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

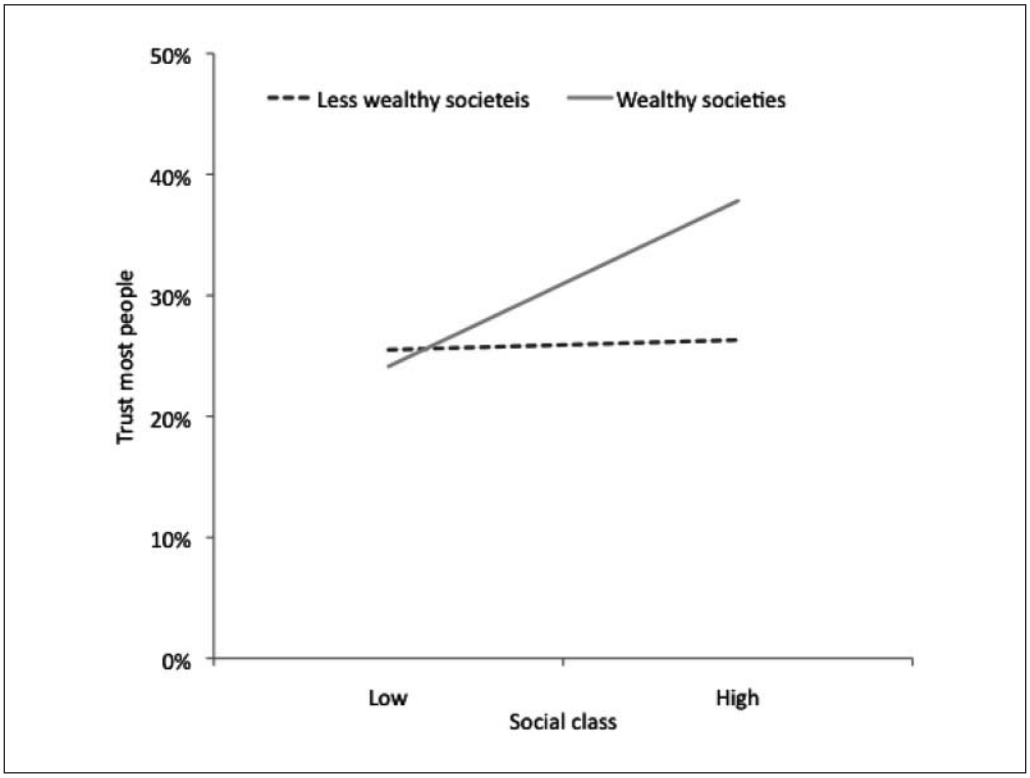

Figure 1. Simple Slopes for Wealthy (+1 *SD*) and Less Wealthy (-1 *SD*) Societies Holding All Other Predictors at Constant

($b = .136$, $SE = .025$, $p < .001$): Social class was a significant positive predictor of trust among wealthy countries. In contrast, the simple slope for countries with lower per capita GDP was nonsignificant ($b = .009$, $SE = .023$, $p > .10$): In less wealthy countries, there was no association between social class and generalized trust.

Table 3. Coefficients and Standard Errors From HLM Analyses: Trust in Acquaintance

		Model 1 (30 *df*)	Model 2 (29 *df*)	Model 3 (29 *df*)	Model 4 (29 *df*)	Model 5 (27 *df*)
Mean differences	Intercept	2.01 (.048)**	2.01 (.033)**	2.00 (.040)**	2.01 (.032)**	2.00 (.031)**
	GDP		.007 (.002)**	−.013 (.004)**	−.200 (.044)**	−.002 (.003)
	GINI					−.011 (.003)*
	COL					−.161 (.099)
Social class slope	Intercept	.026 (.003)**	.027 (.003)**	.026 (.003)**	.026 (.003)**	.027 (.003)**
	GDP		.0005 (0001)**			.001 (.0003)**
	Inequality			.0001 (.0003)		.001 (.0004)**
	COL				−.013 (.003)**	.002 (.007)
Variance component	Mean differences	.072	.037	.051	.034	.033
	Social class slope	.0003	.0002	.0003	.0002	.0001

Note: In Model 1, predictors were age, sex, and social class. In Models 2-4, per capita GDP, income inequality, and collectivism, respectively, were entered along with the Model 1 predictors. All the predictors were entered in Model 5. $N = 43{,}028$ individuals from 31 countries.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Next, the same set of analyses was conducted on trust in mere acquaintances (Table 3). The base model revealed that social class was a significant predictor ($b = .026$, $SE = .003$, $p < .01$) and the strength of this relationship varied significantly across societies ($\chi^2 = 151.74$, $p < .001$). Models 2-4 revealed that among the three moderators, per capita GDP and collectivism[2] significantly moderated this relationship. When these relationships were examined simultaneously in Model 5, per capita GDP was a significant moderator ($b = .001$, $SE = .0003$, $p < .01$). In addition, income inequality emerged as a significant independent moderator of the relationship between social class and trust in mere acquaintances ($b = .001$, $SE = .0004$, $p < .01$). Next, these interactions were probed. With regards to the moderating role of per capita GDP (Figure 2), the simple slope for wealthy countries was significant ($b = .048$, $SE = .008$, $p < .001$): Social class was a significant positive predictor of trust among wealthy countries. In contrast, the simple slope for countries with lower per capita GDP was not significant ($b = .005$, $SE = .007$, $p > .10$): In less wealthy countries, there was no association between social class and generalized trust. With regards to the moderating role of inequality, social class was more predictive of trust in unequal societies ($b = .039$, $SE = .004$, $p < .001$) relative to equal societies ($b = .001$, $SE = .004$, $p < .01$), although the simple slopes were significant in both groups.

The estimates of variance components (Tables 2-3) show that for "trust in most people" item, per capita GDP accounts for 60% of the variance of the social class slope across societies (i.e., variance was reduced from .005 in Model 1 to .002 in Model 2). Similarly for "trust in acquaintance" item, per capita GDP accounts for 33% of the variance of the social class slope across societies.

In sum, this study found that the relationship between social class and generalized trust varies significantly across societies. Of the three society-level moderators considered, societies' wealth emerged as the most robust moderator: Although social class was a significant positive predictor of trust in wealthy countries, in less wealthy countries there was no significant relationship between social class and trust. The role of other society-level factors—income equality and individualism-collectivism—was less consistent. With regards to individualism-collectivism, although its role as a moderator was significant when its role was considered separately from wealth and inequality, the effect became nonsignificant once they were examined simultaneously. With regards to income inequality, the pattern diverged between the two items. In the analysis of trust in most people, inequality was a significant moderator only when its role was analyzed independently. In contrast, in the analysis of trust in mere acquaintance, although inequality was not a significant moderator when analyzed independently, it became significant

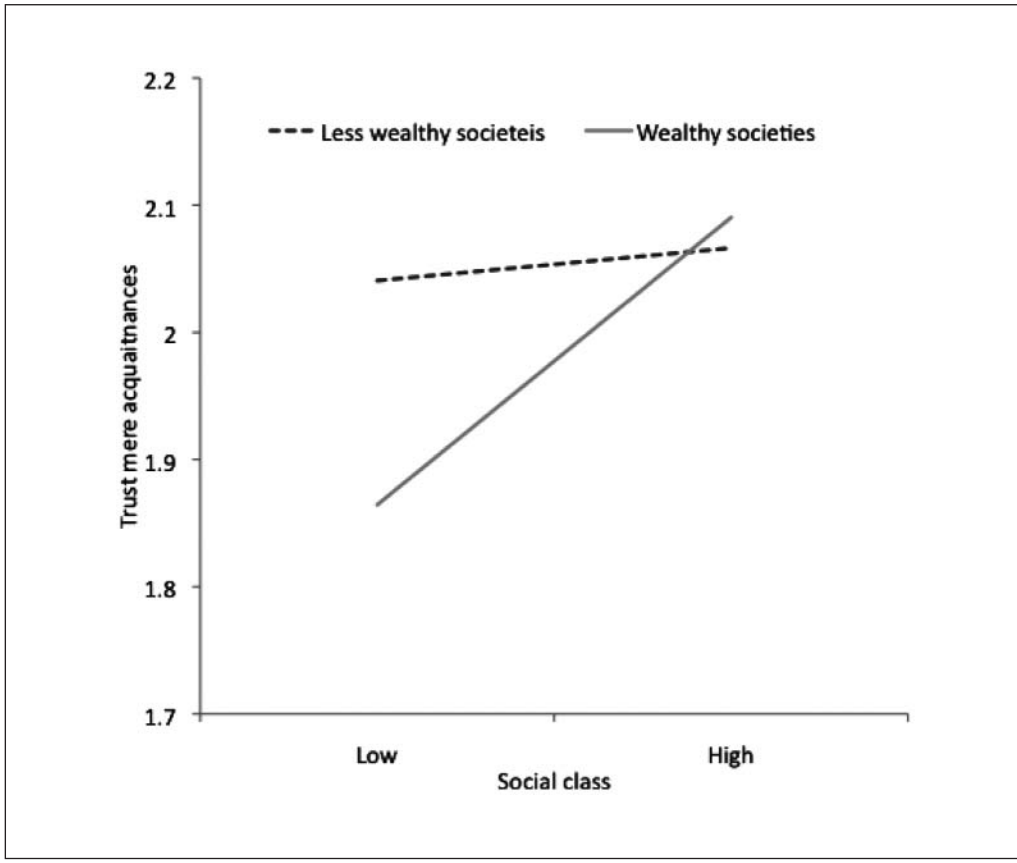

Figure 2. Simple Slopes for Wealthy (+1 *SD*) and Less Wealthy (-1 *SD*) Societies Holding All Other Predictors at Constant

when analyzed simultaneously with wealth and inequality. The pattern of this interaction, in turn, was consistent with the prediction that social class was more predictive of trust in unequal societies relative to more egalitarian societies.

Discussion

Social class has been regarded as one of the potent individual-level predictors of trust. In fact, the linkage has been regarded as universal (Putnam, 2000). In the current research, the relationship between social class and trust was examined in a diverse set of countries represented in the WVS. The magnitude of the relationship between social class and trust was surprisingly small (average $r = .08$ across societies), and this relationship varied substantially across cultures. Of the three society-level moderators considered, per capita GDP emerged as the most robust moderator. In particular, although social class was a positive predictor of trust in wealthy countries, among less wealthy countries there was no significant relationship between social class and trust. Past research raised the possibility of individual-level predictors of trust functioning differently across societies (Delhey & Newton, 2003); nevertheless, to the best of my knowledge, this is the first systematic demonstration of such an effect.

Why Does Wealth Moderate the Relationship Between Social Class and Trust?

This research found that the relationship between social class and trust varies across cultures: Social class was a positive (albeit weak) predictor of trust but only in wealthy countries. This pattern was consistent with the prediction. To reiterate, the wealth of a society is associated with various attributes of sociopolitical systems (e.g., more efficient government, better law enforcement, more comprehensive social security). These institutions create a social environment that supports individuals' trusting beliefs in others. This environment has particularly strong effects on individuals with a high social class background, whose resources and social relationships make a trusting belief relatively more rewarding relative to individuals with a low social class background. In contrast, to the extent that less wealthy societies lack sociopolitical institutions that support a trusting belief, the level of trust is generally lower in these societies. Furthermore, the absence of sociopolitical institutions that are favorable for generalized trust diminishes the effects of social class in making a trusting belief more rewarding: That is, even though resources for individuals of high social class might make trusting beliefs more rewarding, without the institutional environment that supports such a belief, these individuals remain reluctant to trust others. In summary, findings from this research challenge the assumption that the role of social class in predicting generalized trust is a cultural universal.

Social Class in Cross-Cultural Research

Although social class is integral in many programs of research in psychology, cross-cultural examinations of its effects are rare, and the cultural universality of the effect of social class is often assumed based on insufficient evidence. Examinations of such an assumption can reveal an important boundary condition, as seen in the case of a well-established association between social class and physical health (Adler & Ostrove, 1999) not observed among civil servants in Nigeria (Bunker et al., 1992). The current research represents another discovery of a boundary condition of an assumed cultural universality via a cross-cultural examination. Specifically, this research found that the role of social class in predicting generalized trust is limited to affluent societies. Future research should subject other effects of social class in shaping psychological processes to a cross-cultural examination.

Success of such research, in turn, hinges on developing a measure of social class that is applicable to a diverse range of cultural contexts. As discussed earlier, a subjective measure of social class that operationalizes social class via individuals' perception of rank within a society is probably better suited for this purpose than the objective measures that are conventionally used (i.e., classify people by their income, educational attainment, and/or occupation). These issues should also be examined in future research.

Limitations

There are two limiting issues with the measures of general trust used in this research. First, as mentioned earlier, the item on trust in most people has a few known methodological issues (Glaeser et al., 2000; Yamagishi et al., 1999) despite the fact that the item is very frequently used in this area of research. However, to the extent that in the current research the pattern from this item was replicated in another item of trust (trust in mere acquaintances) that is less ambiguous, these issues do not seem to account for the findings.

Second, self-report measures of generalized trust tend to have complex relationships with behavioral measures of trust (Kraus et al., 2009). In a systematic examination of this issue, Glaeser

et al. (2000) found that a trusting belief (as assessed by the standard item) did not predict individuals' trusting behaviors (i.e., a person deciding how much money to allocate to a partner who then would decide how much to allocate back to the person), although it did predict their trustworthy behaviors (i.e., a person deciding how much money to allocate back to the partner who initiated the allocation). Despite these issues, the standard self-report item remains the primary data of generalized trust. In fact, the item has been long incorporated in major surveys such as the WVS and the General Social Survey in the United States. The invaluable data accumulated in these surveys over the years are the subject of intensifying research efforts in multiple disciplines in social science. For this reason, findings from this research, to the extent that they contribute to this body of knowledge, are important in further theorizing the interactive effects between individual- and society-level factors of generalized trust.

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Notes

1. During the review process, a question was raised regarding the index dependent nature of the effects involving individualism-collectivism. To examine, all the analyses [omit below] were also conducted with Hostede's index (Hofstede, 1984), which is less contemporary but available for a greater number of societies (43 and 38 countries for trust in most people and mere acquaintances items, respectively). Divergence between the two sets of analyses is footnoted.
2. When individualism-collectivism was indexed by Hofstede's scores, individualism significantly moderated the linkage between social class and trust (both items) even after controlling for the role of wealth and inequality. Social class was a stronger predictor of trust in individualistic societies relative to collectivistic societies. The moderating effects of per capita GDP were unchanged in these analyses.

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Corrigendum

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In the article above, Tables 2 and 3 appeared incorrectly.

The correct Table 2 and Table 3 are reproduced as below:

Table 2. Coefficients and Standard Errors From HLM Analyses: Trust in Most People

		Model 1 (35 *df*)	Model 2 (34 *df*)	Model 3 (34 *df*)	Model 4 (34 *df*)	Model 5 (32 *df*)
Mean differences	Intercept	−.872 (.121)**	−.937 (.103)**	−.912 (.106)**	−.931 (.096)**	−.947 (.095)**
	GDP		.031 (.005)**			.006 (.012)
	GINI			−.040 (.010)**		−.023 (.013)
	COL				−.669 (.113)**	−.489 (.205)*
Social class slope	Intercept	.074 (.010)**	.070 (.007)**	.073 (.009)**	.072 (.009)**	.071 (.007)**
	GDP		.003 (.0004)**			.003 (.001)**
	Inequality			−.002 (.001)**		−.0001 (.001)
	COL				−.045 (.010)**	.014 (.023)
Variance component	Mean differences	.806	.466	.603	.441	.418
	Social class slope	.005	.002	.003	.003	.002

Note: In Model 1, predictors were age, sex, and social class. In Models 2-4, per capita GDP, income inequality, and collectivism, respectively, were entered along with the Model 1 predictors. All the predictors were entered in Model 5. $N = 49{,}342$ individuals from 36 countries.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 3. Coefficients and Standard Errors From HLM Analyses: Trust in Acquaintance

		Model 1 (30 *df*)	Model 2 (29 *df*)	Model 3 (29 *df*)	Model 4 (29 *df*)	Model 5 (27 *df*)
Mean differences	Intercept	2.01 (.048)**	2.01 (.033)**	2.00 (.040)**	2.01 (.032)**	2.00 (.031)**
	GDP		.007 (.002)**			−.002 (.003)
	GINI			−.013 (.004)**		−.011 (.003)*
	COL				−.200 (.044)**	−.161 (.099)
Social class slope	Intercept	.026 (.003)**	.027 (.003)**	.026 (.003)**	.026 (.003)**	.027 (.003)**
	GDP		.0005 (0001)**			.001 (.0003)**
	Inequality			.0001 (.0003)		.001 (.0004)**
	COL				−.013 (.003)**	.002 (.007)
Variance component	Mean differences	.072	.037	.051	.034	.033
	Social class slope	.0003	.0002	.0003	.0002	.0001

Note: In Model 1, predictors were age, sex, and social class. In Models 2-4, per capita GDP, income inequality, and collectivism, respectively, were entered along with the Model 1 predictors. All the predictors were entered in Model 5. $N = 43{,}028$ individuals from 31 countries.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.