Relationships of Horizontalism and Hierarchy: Exploring Divergent Forms of Sociopolitical Trust

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Objective. Propose a conceptualization of trust that acknowledges varying levels of power between trusting partners. The weak, positive statistical correlation between social and political trust conceals very different experiences of trust. While many people possess either high or low levels of both forms of trust, others have divergent levels of the two forms of trust. Present a simple typology of sociopolitical trust that categorizes individuals as trusters, distrusters, hierarchalists, and horizontalists. Methods. Exploratory analysis of United States using the World Values Survey. Multivariate analysis of sociopolitical trust’s effect upon protest and voting. Results. Americans have low levels of political trust and higher levels of social trust. Protesters possess social trust and political distrust, and voters are both social and political trusters. Conclusion. The combination of social trust and political trust impacts public participation preferences. Protesters embody a libertarian-socialist orientation toward sociopolitical trust, while voters possess a social-democrat orientation.

Individual social trust is indicative of a successful, thriving civil society, while political trust indicates the state’s legitimacy. This difference, while intuitive, is overlooked in the sociological and political studies on trust. Luhmann’s (1979) oft-repeated quote—about how trust is the foundation of whether people feel like they can leave their home “unarmed”—is a telling explication of trust dilemmas. Some people leave the home unarmed because they generally trust (not only people like them but also the state), while others leave the home armed (metaphorically or literally) because they feel that neither their social equals nor the state can be trusted. Thus, trust (or distrust) in various partners is congruent. However, other people also “arm” themselves because they feel that one or the other actor cannot be trusted (while simultaneously trusting the other). Some who distrust their social equals may have trust in the state. Others lack trust in the state but feel that most others can be trusted. Thus, the reasons for arming oneself differ, and are therefore contingent upon who is and is not trusted.

Trust is a potentially important factor in social relations as it facilitates actions that would not otherwise be possible, it results in better outcomes than if trust were not placed (assuming the target or trustee is trustworthy), and it places resources at the disposal of others who would not have them if they were distrusted (Coleman, 1990). For social movements and others who may oppose the state’s legitimacy (and its exercise of power over people)—but valorize the collective strength found in social relationships, equality, and cooperation—social trust is imperative. I will argue and demonstrate that social movement

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1“One who goes unarmed among [others] puts trust in them” (Luhmann, 1979:25).
participants tend to have a unique combination of social and political trust, which assists their cooperative, anti-authoritarian actions.

Social trust is an orientation people have about various others, while political trust is a specific orientation people have toward the state (to a particular institution or the entire state system). Trust is experienced differently depending on the trust partner in question. Thus, with social trust, the trust partner is “the people” (or all others) of a given society. This is an out-group assessment of people not defined as similar or known to us. Other people are often social equals, but may still be vastly different, thus making it difficult to predict behavior and attitudes, therefore leading to great unpredictability in the many, frequent interactions. Some of these differences may be due to social distance (Vela-McConnell, 1999), as people may be both equal and “distant” concurrently. For political trust, the trust partner is the state, which constitutes a much more unequal, but perhaps more predictable, if not bureaucratized, relationship. Yet, unlike with social trust, political trust requires less frequent expression and is likely experienced differently based on one’s relationship toward groups of ruling elites. All these imply that social trust is commonly activated in community and daily interaction, while political trust is periodic and intersects with state power. Indeed, social and political trust can have opposite effects when predicting institutionalized and noninstitutionalized participation (Hooghe and Marien, 2013).

This article synthesizes the literature and assumptions about social trust and political trust in ways that most scholars do not. The contingency of how each form influences the other is commonly omitted, and this research attempts to creatively theorize about and move this line of study forward. In what follows, I propose a framework for understanding the relationship between social and political trust. First, I provide an overview of past scholarship on social and political trust with an emphasis on empirical studies that compare the two forms. Based on a consideration of past research and theoretical assumptions, I develop a simple sociopolitical trust typology based on social and political trust, balancing the various concerns of who trusts whom and in what type of trust relationship. Then I apply this typology to a sample from the World Values Survey (WVS) to assess sociopolitical trust’s distribution within the U.S. population. I explore what sociodemographic factors most influence each type. This analysis reveals the contentious nature of sociopolitical trust hiding behind a weak positive correlation, and, finally, what these patterns imply for two familiar forms of public participation: protest and voting.

Social and Political Trust

Next, I address empirical evidence and theoretical considerations that meaningfully contribute to the construction of a sociopolitical trust typology (as presented in the following section). First, I detail the complicated statistical relationship between social and political trust, and review the research literature that has explored how they predict each other. The unsatisfying messiness of this research suggests the need for a new conceptualization. Thus, a few theoretical concerns are presented that highlight how these trust forms work in combination. Finally, I describe how social and political trust impacts various forms of political participation; this illuminates not only the value of understanding the differences between trust forms, but also key outcome preference upon which a sociopolitical typology ought to rest.

Numerous studies have found a weak positive association between individuals’ social and political trust (as reviewed in Levi and Stoker, 2000; Nannestad, 2008). Some research has pursued nonpredictive techniques that do not place social or political trust as the sole
Sociopolitical Trust

Whether for samples of many countries (Kaase, 1999; Newton, 2001; Tan and Tambyah, 2011) or just one or two countries (Brehm and Rahn, 1997; Secor and O’Loughlin, 2005), social and political trust have a positive (although usually weak) relationship. This relationship has also been modeled in a variety of ways that use predictive techniques (often linear regression). Two contrary approaches have been adopted to assess the relationships between social and political trust, indicated by which trust forms are treated as independent and dependent variables.

Since the polity is simply one institution within a broader society, political trust may be subordinate to social trust. But, studies have provided mixed results when modeling individual social trust’s effect upon political trust. While some studies have found a positive effect (Catterberg and Moreno, 2006; Peng, 2013; Roßteutscher, 2010), others have found no relationship (Cook and Gronke, 2005; Damico, Conway, and Damico, 2000), and even a negative effect (Kim, 2005). The positive effects were found when assessing a wide diversity of countries, no effect in the United States itself, and the negative effect for a case study in South Korea. This suggests that social trust has an inconsistent ability to predict political trust, depending on the sample.

The opposite approach views the political sphere as the dominant, directing feature of society, setting the ground for civil society’s potential for social trust. Here, the statistical association for political predicting social trust is wholly positive, within samples focused on both the United States (Keele, 2007; Irwin and Berigan, 2013) and elsewhere (Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009; Robbins, 2011; Rothstein and Stolle, 2008). The effect is consistent, whether measured as confidence in police (Freitag and Bühlmann, 2009; Robbins, 2011), local and national government (Tao et al., 2014; Irwin and Berigan, 2013), or multiple institutions together (Rothstein and Stolle, 2008).

There have been a few, limited attempts to theoretically combine social and political trust, without prioritizing how one predicts the other. Putnam prioritizes social capital, distinguishing between social and political trust: “One could easily trust one’s neighbor and distrust city hall, or vice versa” (2000:137). Social and political trust indicates a community’s strong social capital; locales that lack social and political trust possess weak social capital. Zmerli and Newton (2017) describe “compatible” and “incompatible” models for understanding the relationship between forms of trust. The compatible model understands trust forms to be positively associated with each other, while the incompatible model does not make any such assumptions about how trust forms relate to each other. The influence of the compatible model has been strong, but not without problematic consequences. By assuming that social and political trust are positively correlated, previous research has tended to obscure the functioning of hierarchy in trust relationships. Offe (1999) offers a rare exception to this pattern by noting a trust dichotomy that hinges on the vertical or horizontal relationship between an individual and his or her trust partner. Indeed, power inequality can exist between individuals and their trust partner(s), indicating stratified trust. For most people, social trust exists (or does not) among people who are usually political equals (although often different in terms of social distance and other social inequalities), while political trust exists (or does not) among politically unequal actors (i.e., citizens and the state). Thus, the stratifying role of hierarchy within both social and political trust is not only widely overlooked, but may be a key factor in explaining individual patterns of trust. Prioritizing how varying levels of social and political trust are linked to different types of trust partners helps to elaborate and fully embody what social and political trust are, especially in relation to each other.

Finally, scholarship on individuals’ political participation and trust has generally been divided between informal (i.e., extrainstitutional) participation and formal (i.e.,
FIGURE 1
Sociopolitical Trust Typology, with Common Political Economic Ideology, and Relations to the State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Social Trust</th>
<th>High Social Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Political Trust</strong></td>
<td><strong>High Political Trust</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distruster (Libertarian, ultra-individualism) apathy/antipathy</td>
<td>Hierarchicalist (Fascism) obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socially Pessimistic</strong></td>
<td><strong>Socially Optimistic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Social Trust</strong></td>
<td><strong>Truster</strong> (Social democracy) institutional action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontalist (Libertarian socialism) extrainstitutional action</td>
<td><strong>Anti-authoritarian</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authoritarian</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in institutional) participation. The former includes various forms of social protest, while the latter tends to emphasize voter turnout.

Research has typically found a positive association between protest and social trust (Kim, 2014; Togeby, 2004), but the effect has been not always been significant (Crepaz, Jazayeri, and Polk, 2016; Dalton, van Sickle, and Weldon, 2009; Welch, Sikkink, and Loveland, 2007). Bivariate analyses have shown that social trust functions as a useful protest resource, in particular for engaging in riskier, more militant tactics (Benson and Rochon, 2004; Kaase, 1999). Social trust increased protest in democracies while decreasing it in autocracies (Roßteutscher, 2010). In Europe, social trust increased protest, while political trust decreased protest (Hooghe and Marien, 2013). Greater protest has been consistently associated with lower political trust (Braun and Hutter, 2016; Gamson, 1968; Secor and O’Loughlin, 2005; Nilson and Nilson, 1980).

Generally, voter turnout increases with greater social trust (Crepaz, Jazayeri, and Polk, 2016). Social trust positively influenced turnout in local elections (Togeby, 2004), including among immigrant minorities (van Londen, Phalet, and Hagendoorn, 2007). However, this has not been a universal finding (Hooghe and Marien, 2013); interpersonal trust was also not significantly associated with voter turnout in national or E.U. elections (Cox, 2003). Unsurprisingly, political trust is positively associated with individual voter turnout (Kim, 2014; Grönlund and Setälä, 2007; Hadjar and Beck, 2010; Hooghe and Marien, 2013). While generally true, this may be an indirect effect influenced by mediating variables (Wang, 2016).

**Modeling Relationships of Sociopolitical Trust**

The many existent and possible contradictory orientations toward social and political trust indicate that a typological model for sociopolitical trust is warranted. Thus, a simple four-category typology is presented in Figure 1, showing the various potential combinations of trust explored in this article (category labels first proposed in Williams, 2017). Sociopolitical trust may be conceived of as the intersection between social and political trust. Trusters and distrusters possess congruent trust, where political and social trust are positively associated; this is indicated by a weak statistical correlation. Horizontalists and hierarchicalists possess stratified trust, where political and social trust are negatively associated, and where differences in power result in divergent trust relationships.
Authoritarian and anti-authoritarian positions are suggested by the political trust axis; the former involves trusting state authority over society, while the latter distrusts a state’s authority. Socially pessimistic and optimistic positions are suggested by the social trust axis, implying a presumption of negative versus positive, respectively, outcomes for placing trust in fellow nonstate actors.

Next, I argue that these four positions describe unique orientations toward people of varied social rank, associations with prominent political and economic positions, and orientations toward social change. First, trusters (high social trust, high political trust) have a generally positive view toward everyone, independent of their position. Implicitly optimistic, this is a liberal, social-democrat position that argues that both people and the state can be trusted (Gärtner and Prado, 2016). Supportive of civil society, trusters have confidence in political systems they believe benefit others (and are constitutive of everyone), and therefore social change reasonably comes from the manifested “will of the people” working through government. The state acquires its authority from citizens’ social optimism about society. Trusters are most apt to vote regularly and maintain an interest in politics.

Second, distrusters (low social trust, low political trust) have a generally negative view of everyone, regardless of their position. Implicitly cynical, this is a neoliberal, Libertarian, or ultraindividualist orientation that considers no one to be worthy of an individual’s trust (Rand, 1992). While family, friends, and others sharing one’s culture are trustworthy, generally others are not, nor are the major institutions that are perceived to not represent them—thus social change is perceived to be improbable. For these anti-authoritarian and socially pessimistic people, the only real change is personally initiated and achieved by autonomous individuals; thus social movements and voting are both unattractive.

Third, horizontalists (high social trust, low political trust) are skeptical of those in power, while considering average people to be generally trustworthy. Trust is extended toward social equals, but withheld from authority figures, thus indicating an anarchist or libertarian-socialist orientation (Kropotkin, 2006). People can freely cooperate with others and do not need (or greatly benefit from) the state. Anti-authoritarian in orientation, horizontalists limit their trust to those who lack dominant power in society, and consequently believe that social change occurs from the bottom up, most dramatically via social movements. Their fellows are more trustworthy collaborators than the state and movement participation implies social optimism. Thus, horizontalists would be most apt to protest and engage in other extrastitutional actions. Horizontalists’ social trust constitutes a belief in “the will of the people,” although that will is polluted once contained in an untrustworthy political state—thus voting is a less desirable action than movement participation.

Fourth, hierarchicalists (low social trust, high political trust) hold a generally favorable view of those more powerful than “average” people. Social equals are not afforded trust, while those who hold power over others are, thus indicating an authoritarian or fascist orientation (Arendt, 1966). Hierarchicalists focus their trust on the political system, suggesting obedience to authority and a belief that change occurs from the top down.3 Thus,

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2 Libertarians in the United States differ from “libertarians” elsewhere in the world. American use of the term almost exclusively references pro-capitalist, state minimalists, and has been consciously appropriated from left-wing anarchists (Rothbard, 2007:83). Throughout the world, “libertarian” is commonly amended with the suffix “-socialist” or “-communist.”

3 The labels for the “horizontalist” and “hierarchicalist” categories are inspired by Offe (1999), who described horizontal and vertical trust. However, I eschew these specific terms for two main reasons. First, horizontal and vertical were meant to describe the simple direction of trust, not its exclusivity vis-à-vis the other direction. Second, horizontalism references a specific term in popular usage by anti-authoritarian movements throughout Latin America (horizontalidad), meant to consciously reject political trust, electoral action, and party politics.
while political trust might imply an endorsement of electoralism, their social pessimism suggests a belief that fellow voters are unreliable partners in a political system.

Trust is important for how individuals participate publicly. Those who have great political trust in the system will likely act differently than those with lower political trust. Yet, possessing social trust will also impact how political trust or distrust operates. Only with social trust are individual nonelites capable of social action. One could hypothesize diverse patterns of obedience, institutionalized action, apathy, or extrastitutional action (to name a few) resulting from this complex. In the public sphere, trusters will be able to choose institutional action, which distrusters—who are wracked with apathy or antipathy—will not be able to. On the other hand, horizontalists will have the ability or preference for extrastitutional action outside the state. Hierarchicalists, lacking social trust, will be disabled and only enjoy the possibilities available via political obedience.

The critical implications of this sociopolitical trust typology and its hypotheses for political participation vary depending on the audience. Presumably, autocratic states seek to reduce their subjects’ social trust, while improving political trust (enhancing their own political capital and diminishing others’ social capital), thereby bolstering gesellschaft. Hypothetically, but perhaps not always in practice, democracies seek to improve citizens’ political trust, too, and maybe social trust, too, insofar as it enhances the state’s legitimate authority (see Gerth and Mills, 1946). For social movements, it is crucial to mobilize supportive populations that are disposed to distrust and resist elite authority (i.e., libertarian), yet who possess social trust and value collective action (i.e., socialist). For civil society advocates, determining what factors—micro as well as macro—facilitate greater trust (of whatever variety) is crucial knowledge toward establishing or strengthening the necessary elements of precontractual solidarity (see Collins, 2005).

Data and Methods

This research makes some initial, exploratory observations of the patterns between types of sociopolitical trust and certain individual characteristics. Additionally, I assess whether expectations are upheld for each of the four trust types. To accomplish this, I operationalize a trust typology using the categories described above. Here, I use the U.S. sample respondents (n = 1,959) from the sixth wave of the WVS in 2011, and focus on the social trust and institutional confidence variables. Social trust is derived from four questions that incorporate in-group and out-group relations (see Delhey, Newton, and Welzel, 2011). The index ranges from “cannot trust” (0) to “can trust” (3). The standard “generalized social trust” question—inquiring whether “most people can be trusted” or if one “cannot be too careful”—is too abstract and excludes the many regularized encounters and relationships people possess. Arguably, others are viewed as specific types of people, rather than just generically, as “most people.” These trusting partners include neighbors, people of other religions, other nationalities, and those met for the first time.4

Political trust is drawn from two separate variables on confidence with two major governmental institutions: the U.S. Congress and the police. These measures assess trust in lawmakers and law enforcers—political authorities that respondents are unlikely and more likely to personally encounter, respectively. Each variable measures whether the

(Sitrin, 2006). Likewise, hierarchalist appropriately describes not just a vertical relationship, but an exclusively vertical form of trust.

4The available WVS-particularized trust measures also include trust in family members and those personally known. These are highly incompatible with a notion of generalized social trust and thus not used.
TABLE 1
Percent of Respondents in Sociopolitical Trust Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Political Trust</th>
<th>High Political Trust</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low social trust</td>
<td>Distruster 33.1</td>
<td>Hierarchicalist 7.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High social trust</td>
<td>Horizontalist 39.5</td>
<td>Truster 19.6</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: World Values Survey (Wave 6), U.S. sample; N = 1,959.

respondent has no (0), not very much (1), quite a lot (2), or a great deal (3) of confidence in that respective institution. These two government measures are combined into an index (the mean of each individual variable) for political trust.\(^5\) Despite the ubiquitous use of such survey questions to operationalize political trust (Marien, 2017), this is not without controversy, as confidence in an institution is not quite the same as “trust.” Confidence implies predictability, often based on a target’s familiarity, adherence to rules, and accountability, while trust presumes an acceptance of risk within a relationship (see Luhmann, 1988). While a “relationship” with an institution—in which we cannot choose whether to share risk—is not equivalent to trust in a person, these variables are still reasonable approximations for our purposes.

The sociopolitical trust typology is created from these social trust and political trust indices, using 1.5 (the mid-point of the 0–3 scale) as the cutoff for each category. For respondents who possessed high social trust, those with low political trust were coded as horizontalist, while those with high political trust were coded as trusters. Additionally, for those possessing low social trust, respondents with low political trust were coded as distrusters, while hierarchicalists possess high political trust. While there are potential problems with these operationalizations (as pointed out in various overviews, such as Levi and Stoker, 2000; Nannestad, 2008), these data permit a meaningful theoretical construct for sociopolitical trust that can be further refined in the future as well as tested longitudinally and cross-nationally.\(^6\)

Independent control variables drawn from the WVS include sex, race, age, education level, and political ideology. Variable codings are described in the Appendix. The following analysis uses one-way analysis of variance to establish patterns in group differences across these four sociopolitical trust types. Finally, two political participation measures, protest (demonstration attendance and strike participation) and voting (in local and national elections), are regressed upon sociopolitical trust.

Analysis

Americans possess rather low levels of at least one form of trust (80 percent, see Table 1). Much of the truster scarcity stemmed from low political trust (73 percent),\(^7\) more than

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\(^5\)The WVS is preferred over the General Social Survey because the latter lacks a variable addressing trust in police.

\(^6\)This article proposes a typology; more refined measures of political trust could permit a better test.

\(^7\)These results are in agreement with Pew findings, which reflect historically low trust in government (Pew, 2015).
TABLE 2
Mean Differences Between Sociopolitical Trust Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Distruter</th>
<th>Hierarchicalist</th>
<th>Horizontalist</th>
<th>Truster</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protest</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>0.610</td>
<td>0.760</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.712</td>
<td>4.873**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td>1.134</td>
<td>1.161</td>
<td>1.496</td>
<td>1.506</td>
<td>1.353</td>
<td>44.489***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0.468</td>
<td>0.524</td>
<td>0.518</td>
<td>0.587</td>
<td>0.515</td>
<td>4.967**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td>0.820</td>
<td>0.728</td>
<td>34.357***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>1.627</td>
<td>2.054</td>
<td>1.998</td>
<td>1.859</td>
<td>30.028***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>44.772</td>
<td>42.596</td>
<td>52.782</td>
<td>51.796</td>
<td>49.140</td>
<td>42.871***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal ideology</td>
<td>4.432</td>
<td>3.838</td>
<td>4.278</td>
<td>4.151</td>
<td>4.208</td>
<td>2.238†</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; †p < 0.10.

SOURCE: World Values Survey (Wave 6), U.S. sample.

low social trust (41 percent). Approximately two-fifths of Americans were horizontalists (39 percent). More Americans were distrusters (33 percent) than trusters (20 percent). Overall, hierarchicalists were the smallest portion of the American population (8 percent); there were five times more horizontalists than hierarchicalists in the WVS. It should be noted that nearly half of the population fell into stratified categories (either horizontalist or hierarchicalists), reflecting past observations of a weak, positive association for sociopolitical trust \( r = 0.322, p = 0.000 \), indicating the need to closely investigate the stratified trust of a sizable minority.

There were statistically significant mean differences across sociopolitical trust categories for protest, voting, sex, race, age, and education. While means varied for political ideology, the differences across trust groups were only marginally significant \( p > 0.10 \). Numerous tentative conclusions can be drawn about the social characteristics for each sociopolitical trust group (as shown in Table 2). In the following, I describe each group’s social characteristics and discuss some potential sources for these patterns.

Upon comparison of the largest and smallest sociopolitical trust category means for each significant variable, certain patterns emerge. As expected, horizontalists protested the most, significantly more (post hoc test not shown) than hierarchicalists and distrusters, who protested the least. Social movements are social enterprises requiring cooperation, as well as a certain cynicism about the state’s willingness to act in good faith. Horizontalists were the most likely to protest as protest requires collaboration with social equals, as well as an opposition to the actions of powerful actors (often states). Trusters had the highest voter turnout; voting necessitates political trust in a way that protesting does not. Distrusters and hierarchicalists had significantly lower levels of voting than trusters. Thus, their lack of social trust impaired their frequency of voting (which was also significantly lower than horizontalists).

Distrusters were the most male category, likely embodying the masculinist preference for only trusting one’s own instrumental agency, while trusters were the most female category. Public institutions—even hierarchical states—often achieve more equitable outcomes (especially compared to private institutions like corporations), and may even serve as a buffer against a macho world. Hierarchicalists were the least white category, perhaps since the wider society is racist and highly white, and states may be perceived as “neutral” actors. Trusters were the most white, benefiting from the cultural trust afforded them and unthreatened by acts of state intervention against their racial hegemony. Distrusters were the least educated category; lacking educational credentials may position distrusters to experience substantial disadvantage in society and thus lack
trust for their fellows or the state. Horizontalists were the most educated; although heavily indoctrinated for powerful positions, they have also learned enough about social patterns to believe that most people warrant their trust and have adopted a critical view of familiar political institutions. Hierarchicalists were also the youngest category—they are a group most likely to be socialized in an era of scary TV news featuring pro-police stories about lawless American citizens. Horizontalists, however, were the oldest category—they may be old enough to recall the corrupting influence of power and have had enough experiences to acquire the wisdom that people are generally trustworthy. Horizontalists were the most left-wing; this transcends the common assumption that leftists trust the state (and perhaps even its redistributive efforts). Unsurprisingly, hierarchicalists were the most right-wing, valuing political control over social equals. But, importantly, these final interpretations are speculative; only marginally significant differences for political ideology existed between the trust categories.

All of these conclusions about the relationships between sociopolitical trust and other factors are tentative. Consequently, participation was regressed upon social and political trust, while holding constant the aforementioned sociodemographic controls. As expected, social trust played a key role in significantly increasing both protest and voting. These forms of participation are performed publicly and are social in nature, thus necessitating the assistance of strong social trust. The role of political trust in participation is less consistent. As hypothesized (and shown above in the means comparisons), political distrust increased protest, even when controlling for other sociodemographic variables. Political trust’s effect upon voter turnout was the direct opposite: greater political trust is associated with more voting. Thus, depending on the form of public participation, political trust’s pairing with social trust has divergent effects upon Americans. Protesters distrust the state, while voters tend to trust it (see Table 3).

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has proposed a framework for assessing the intersection between social trust and political trust. By examining the divergent, stratified forms of trust (hierarchicalism and horizontalism), a more complex view of trust emerges that hinges upon differing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social trust</th>
<th>0.119 (0.024)**</th>
<th>0.117 (0.025)**</th>
<th>0.399 (0.030)**</th>
<th>0.178 (0.029)**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political trust</td>
<td>-0.066 (0.022)**</td>
<td>-0.048 (0.022)*</td>
<td>0.036 (0.028)</td>
<td>0.052 (0.025)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>-0.048 (0.022)*</td>
<td>0.014 (0.001)**</td>
<td>0.014 (0.001)**</td>
<td>0.014 (0.001)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>-0.134 (0.028)**</td>
<td>0.061 (0.032)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.032)</td>
<td>0.061 (0.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.050 (0.012)**</td>
<td>0.189 (0.013)**</td>
<td>0.189 (0.013)**</td>
<td>0.189 (0.013)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.001 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.001)</td>
<td>0.001 (0.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-wing ideology</td>
<td>0.040 (0.006)**</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.007)**</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.007)**</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.007)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>0.618 (0.044)**</td>
<td>0.425 (0.060)**</td>
<td>0.656 (0.056)**</td>
<td>0.044 (0.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>13.440***</td>
<td>17.483***</td>
<td>101.365***</td>
<td>107.618***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted-R²</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Unstandardized coefficients (standard errors in parentheses); **p < 0.001; *p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; +p < 0.10.
Source: World Values Survey (Wave 6), U.S. sample.
relationships to authority and power. Stratified trust indicates a preference for particular kinds of social change efforts: via movements or state-directed action.

The general preference among Americans for social trust over political trust may indicate that many people perceive the state failing to address social problems. Presumably, slightly more potential can be found in others, specifically through nonstate-based activities like social movements. But, higher levels of social trust compared to political trust also suggests a serious dilemma, as many people believe that remedies for social problems derive from government action (Pews, 2015).

Hierarchicalists are those who would likely be the first to resist popular, grassroots social change (as they are pro-political system and lack social trust)—especially, if they have the ability or interest in doing so. Hierarchicalists seem to prefer going along with the political status quo; they have no interest in influencing it through either protest or voting. In contrast, horizontalists’ pro-protest orientation puts them at odds with the state and in solidarity with their peers. Their precontractual solidarity encourages them to trust each other, while the state’s distance discourages political trust. Consequently, horizontalists protested the most, suggesting that social movement activity, in general, is likely the highest among this group. The personal and emotional relationships built among horizontalists—and social movement participants in particular—signify a longing for a gemeinschaft society, as opposed to one ruled by rationality (gesellschaft).

Among those with congruent forms of trust, distrusters’ orientation is devastating for social capital, optimism, and the pursuit of social change. As Luhmann (1979) argues, trust helps to simplify complex situations; thus, distrusters are likely bewildered or overwhelmed by society’s chaos, and lack an orienting vision. Increasing distrusters’ social trust is the only way to pivot them into the horizontalist category, which protests the most. While not a large percentage of the American population, distrusters would appear a key demographic for recruitment to social movements. Such recruitment would necessitate demonstrating the possibilities and rewards of social trust—to demonstrate the value of precontractual solidarity with others—and ultimately involve them in social change efforts. Through such participation, distrusters may reassess their peers and their joint potential. However, to transform distrusters into horizontalists requires greater state cynicism, all the while retaining their social trust. At present, distrusters may undervalue the need for social protest as they perceive the state to already be worthy of their political trust.

Since no statistically significant differences were found between the means of trusters and horizontalists, actual differences between these two categories may reside in unmeasured features. Social trust is a fundamental component of democracy, which is a form of public decision making (Newton, 1997; Warren, 1999). Thus, orientations toward democracy may serve as distinguishing characteristics between trusters and horizontalists. Hypothetically, trusters’ confidence in political institutions indicates trust in (and a belief in the trustworthiness of) representative democracy (i.e., existing authorities), while horizontalists distrust political institutions, which could suggest an affinity for direct democracy (i.e., people collectively making their own decisions, sans politicians). Habermas’s (1981) lifeworld is most embodied in a direct democracy, while the removed, calculating behavior of elected officials in representative democracy mirrors “the system.” Historically, American

Although surely not all horizontalists have overt libertarian socialist identities or sympathies, this group likely possesses an even more pronounced anti-gesellschaft orientation, as the “rational will” Tönnies was most concerned with was mediated by money (Tönnies, 1957).

This assumption presumes that protest primarily targets the state. While this is generally true, many other protest targets exist (see Van Dyke et al., 2004).

These concerns are also reflected in Tocqueville’s (1956) contrast between majorities and minorities within democracies.
Sociopolitical Trust

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direct democracy was indeed “colonized” by representative forms, replacing interactive, organic structures like town hall meetings with well-funded elections and political machines (see Bookchin, 1996; Polletta, 2002). The insignificant difference between trusters and horizontalists also may simply indicate that social trust can equalize the differential impacts of political trust.

During the Trump Administration, America’s liberal-left has mobilized in ways not seen during the Obama years. Opposition to the perceived extremeness of the Trump Administration’s initiatives has spawned numerous national mobilizations, such as the Women’s March, March for Science, the gun-control March for Our Lives, and many other decentralized mobilizations supporting climate justice, refugee and immigrant rights, and anti-fascism. America’s far-right has also mobilized in support of Trump and his perceived priorities. Neoconfederates and white nationalists have protested since the 2016 election, many claiming Trump represents their positions, despite his disavowal (which suggests dog-whistling). Interestingly, they possess political trust in Trump, but little trust in the rest of American democracy (e.g., the patriot movement’s federal government criticisms).

Future research into sociopolitical trust may wish to seek better data and more finely tuned measurement of both trust forms. In particular, political trust’s operationalization ambiguously assesses “confidence” in political institutions, without a clear understanding of whether this political trust is of an institution’s predictability, or a respondent’s support for its action or mission (i.e., the distinction between trust and trustworthiness). With a better operationalized variable for political trust, the typology may more closely represent the ideal categories detailed here. Additionally, a modified social trust variable that incorporates the level of social difference or social distance (see Vela-McConnell, 1999) in trust targets would help to clarify whether the key factor of importance is social equality or social similarity.

To the extent to which these four typological designations are temporary orientations and impermanent worldviews, the boundaries between categories are likely porous. Consequently, the analysis here is meant to be demonstrative, not conclusive. Longitudinal analyses would be able to discover how sociopolitical trust has changed and what temporal, county-level factors have led to such changes. For example, has the United States become less sociopolitically trusting over time, and, if so, what are the predictable consequences of this trajectory? Longitudinal data would facilitate the elimination of other possible explanations.

The presumption of causal direction between political behaviors and sociopolitical trust may be only partly correct. Individuals may not just vote because they believe that political institutions are trustworthy. Perhaps afterward, voters may rationalize their claimed political trust, since to vote without trust would seem pointless. Similarly, individuals who protest may come to believe more strongly that others can be trusted due to the shared experience of collective effervescence. Additionally, given the hesitancy—or at least slowness—of government to respond to demands for change, individuals may also come to believe that political institutions are not to be trusted. Or, at the very least, protesters may rationalize their efforts, post hoc, that the populace will rise up in support. Protesters may, in fact, just be publicly advocating political distrust, despite an unspoken hope that government may be responsive to their protests. Given the infancy of the line of inquiry on sociopolitical trust, the recursive nature or rationalization of political behaviors and trust will need further investigation, again with an eye to strategic longitudinal design.

Finally, the general sociopolitical trust model can be conducted upon cross-national data, perhaps via multilevel models or case study comparisons. How does sociopolitical trust vary across the world and what factors are predictive of such country-level differences? Are there societies with disproportionately high numbers of trusters, distrusters,
hierarchicalists, or horizontalists, and are these patterns explained by social, cultural, political, or economic factors? Surely, the presumed correspondence between social and political trust is as simplistic throughout the world as it is in the United States.

**Appendix**

**TABLE A1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Value Codings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Social trust  | How much trust for neighbors, people of other religions and nationalities, people met for the first time | 0 = Do not trust at all
                                                          |                                  | 1 = Do not trust very much       |
                                                          |                                  | 2 = Trust somewhat                |
                                                          |                                  | 3 = Trust completely              |
| Political trust| Confidence in parliament (Congress) and police                           | 0 = None at all                    |
                                                          |                                  | 1 = Not very much                 |
                                                          |                                  | 2 = Quite a lot                   |
                                                          |                                  | 3 = A great deal                  |
| Protest       | Attendance at a demonstration and joining a strike                       | 0 = Would never                   |
                                                          |                                  | 1 = Might                         |
                                                          |                                  | 2 = Have                          |
| Voting        | Voting in local and national elections                                   | 0 = Never                         |
                                                          |                                  | 1 = Usually                       |
                                                          |                                  | 2 = Always                        |
| Female        | Biological sex                                                            | 0 = Male                          |
                                                          |                                  | 1 = Female                        |
| White         | Race                                                                       | 0 = Person of color                |
                                                          |                                  | 1 = White                         |
| Age           | Age                                                                        | Years old                         |
| Education     | Highest degree attained                                                   | 0 = Less than high school         |
                                                          |                                  | 1 = High school                   |
                                                          |                                  | 2 = Some college                  |
                                                          |                                  | 3 = College degree                |
| Liberal ideology | Political ideology                                                        | 0 = Right                        |
                                                          |                                  | 9 = Left                          |
REFERENCES


