Motivation

Chile has one of the lowest levels of generalized trust (ISSP 2017 & ISSP 2018 for Chile).

Percentage of people who trust others

González (UAI), Fuentes (UCL) & Mackenna (UCSD)
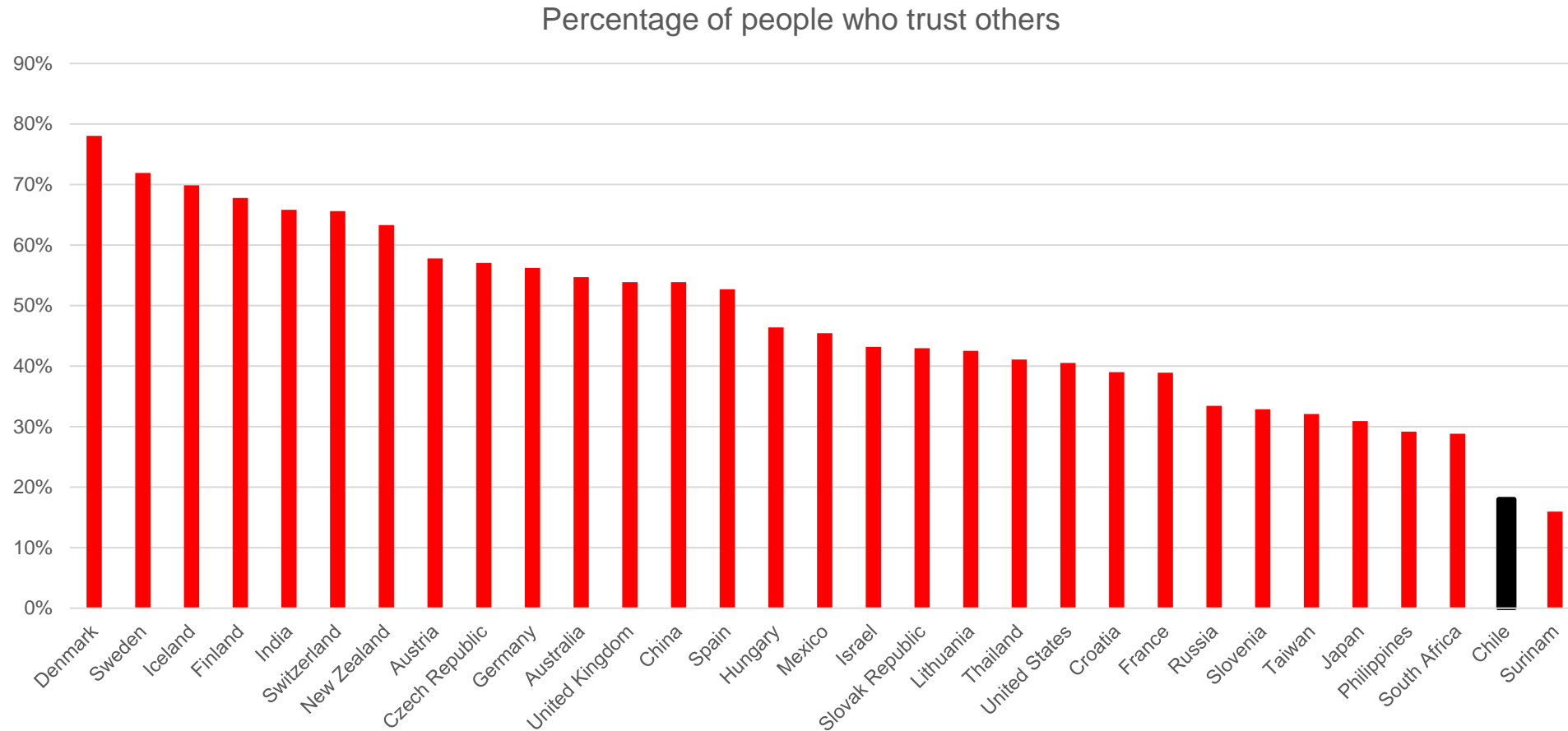
Motivation

Chile has one of the lowest levels of institutional trust (ISSP 2018 for all).

Percentage of people who trust the courts and legal system

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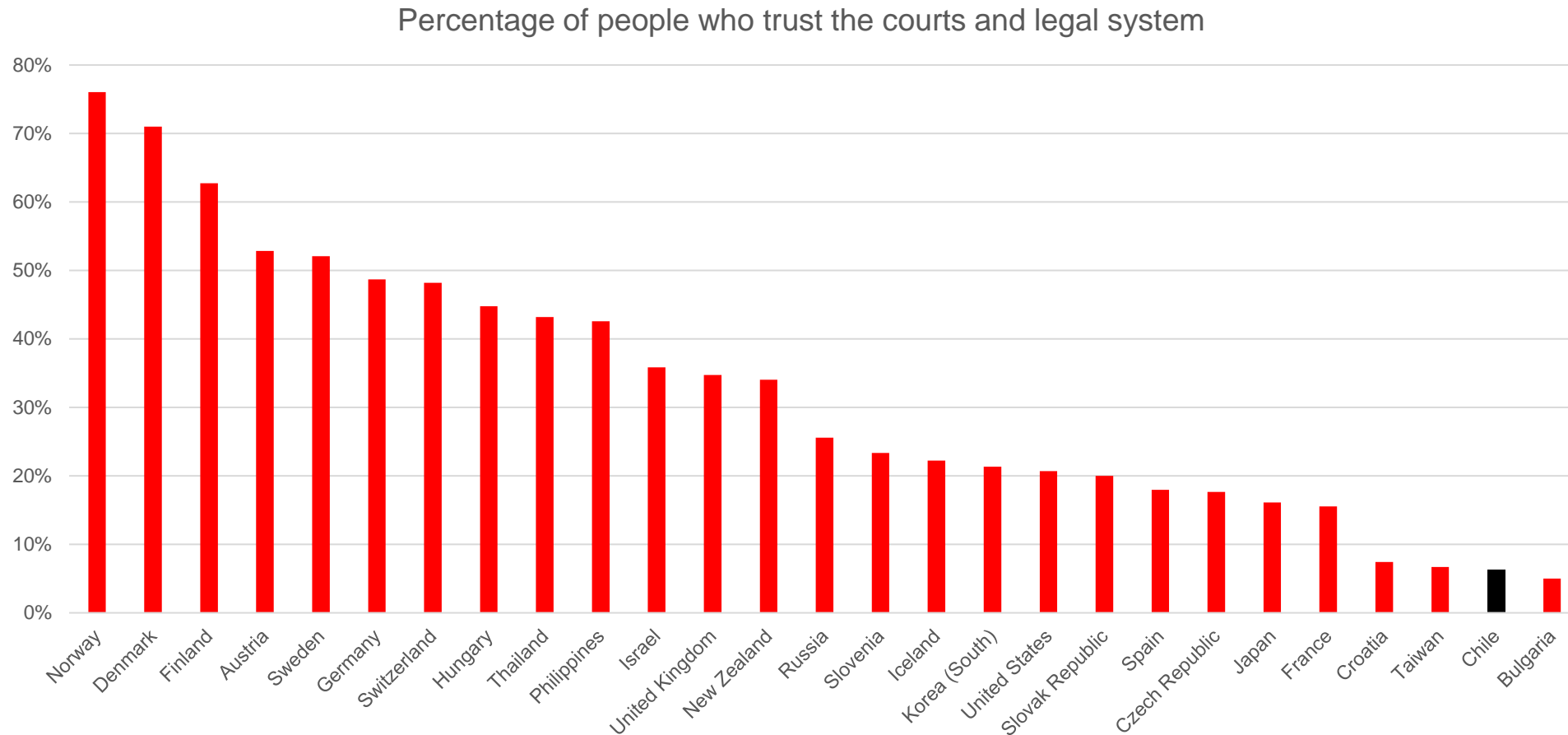
Motivation

But Chileans do trust their family members, friends and strong ties… a lot!

How to make sense of these facts?

1. **Family ties approach** (Banfield 1958).

2. **Context-dependent approach** (e.g. Zucker 1985; Shapiro 1987; Yamagishi and Yamagashi 1994; Yamagashi et al. 1998).

3. **Social capital approach** (e.g. Rothstein 1998; Tyler 1998; Rahn et al. 1999; Knack 2000; Levi and Stoker 2000; Newton and Norris 2000; Putnam 2000; Paxton 2002; Delhey and Newton 2005)

Each approach sheds light on a single perspective of relationship between political and generalized trust.

However, it is not entirely clear how (and why) one form of trust relates to the others (Zmerli and Newton 2018).

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What we do

(RQ1) How does the relation between strong ties and generalized trust vary according to the institutional context?

(RQ2) How can we understand the simultaneous relation between reliance on strong ties, trust in strangers, and trust in institutions?

We develop a theoretical framework accounting for the simultaneous relationship of reliance on strong ties, trust in institutions and trust in strangers.

We provide empirical support of our theoretical framework by estimating multilevel models using ISSP's 2017 Social Networks and Social Resources survey module.

DISCLAIMER: Our analysis will be focused on trust in institutions, i.e. trust people have in national courts and major private companies, not on political trust.

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Theoretical framework

Old insights
Trust is essentially an expectation of others' behavior, that when acted upon -i.e. when someone trust someone or something- exposes individuals, making them vulnerable to harm from others (Rosseau et al. 1998).

Individuals develop their expectations of others' trustworthiness by generalizing on previous and different experiences (Axelrod and Hamilton 1981).

Old insights lead to new insights when combined within a phenomenological framework (Schütz and Luckmann 2009)
The primary form of trust is the one that has the earliest and most commonly repeated interactions, that is, trust in close ones such as family members.

Given limited resources (such as time), interacting with more "distant" others, comes at the expense of interaction with close ones (Yamagishi et al. 1998).

The interaction with less familiar others offers individuals access to a wider array of resources and information, but their access is conditional on their distribution and the structure that makes that interaction possible.

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Main hypotheses

(H1) reliance on strong ties for support will be negatively associated with generalized trust

(H2) people without ties will have less generalized trust than people who rely on strong ties for support.

(H3) Institutional trust will be positively associated with generalized trust

(H4) Institutional quality will increase the association between institutional trust and generalized trust

(H5) Institutional quality will decrease the association between reliance on strong ties for support and generalized trust

(H6) Institutional trust will decrease the association between reliance on strong ties and generalized trust

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Data and method

ISSP 2017 on Social Networks and Social Resources, including data from 30 countries.

Contains data for more than 39,000 respondents for which information relevant for our approach was available.

Each participating country conducts a survey representative of the national population using random probability sampling.

Interviews were carried out by ISSP members from 2017 to 2019.

Data and method

Dependent variable:

Generalized trust (Q11)
- 4-point scale
- Reverse version for the analysis

Main independent variables:

Strong Ties (Q8)
- Number of situations the respondent turns first to a "family member or close friend".
- Ranges from 0 to 5

No Ties (Q8)
- Number of daily life situations in which the respondent does not turn to "no person or organization" or does not respond the question
- Ranges from 0 to 5

Q11. Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

People can almost always be trusted	1
People can usually be trusted	2
You usually can't be too careful in dealing with people	3
You almost always can't be too careful in dealing with people	4
Can't choose	8

Who or where would you turn to first to …	Family members or close friends	Other persons	Private companies	Public services	Non-profit or religious organisations	Other organisations	No person or organisation	Can't choose
(Adapted from ISSP86, Q12a; ISSP01, Q24)								
a. … help you if you needed to borrow a large sum of money?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
b. … help you if you needed to find a job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
c. … help you with administrative problems or official paperwork?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
d. … help you if you needed to find a place to live?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
e. … look after you if you were seriously ill?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Data and method

Main independent variables:

Institutional trust (Q12)
- Standardized version of a cumulative factor calculated using these two items (Cronbach's alpha = 0.66).

Country-level variables:

Institutional quality (WB)

Income inequality (WB's WDI; OECD Stat)

GDP per capita (IMF's WEO)

Other independent variables:

Sex, Age (brackets), Education levels, Unemployed, Married, Divorced, Religious Affiliation (dummies), Life Satisfaction.

Q12. Using the following scale ranging from 0 to 10, where 0 means "No trust at all" and 10 means "Complete trust", please indicate how much trust you **personally** have in...?

PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE

How much trust do you personally have in …	No trust at all										Complete trust	Can't choose
	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	
a. … [COUNTRY]'s courts	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98
(Adapted from ISSP2016, Q19) b. … major private companies in [COUNTRY]	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	98

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Main results

Variables	Model 1 Coef.	Model 1 S.E	Model 2 Coef.	Model 2 S.E	Model 3 Coef.	Model 3 S.E
Ties						
Strong Ties 1	-0.007***	(0.003)	-0.017***	(0.004)	-0.008***	(0.003)
No Ties 1	-0.039***	(0.004)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.038***	(0.004)
Trust						
Institutional trust	0.136***	(0.005)	0.093***	(0.006)	0.112***	(0.011)
Country variables						
ln GDP per capita (PPP)	-0.190*	(0.105)	-0.197*	(0.103)	-0.191*	(0.105)
Gini index	-0.011**	(0.005)	-0.011**	(0.005)	-0.011**	(0.005)
Institutional quality	0.144*	(0.076)	0.098	(0.075)	0.146*	(0.076)
Interactive variables						
Institutional quality x Strong Ties1			0.014***	(0.004)		
Institutional quality x No Ties1			0.017***	(0.005)		
Institutional quality x Institutional Trust			0.067***	(0.006)		
Institutional quality x Strong Ties 2						
Institutional quality x No Ties 2						
Institutional Trust x Strong Ties 1					0.006**	(0.003)
Institutional Trust x No Ties 1					0.013***	(0.004)
Institutional Trust x Strong Ties 2						
Institutional Trust x No Ties 2						
Intercept	4.224***	(1.082)	4.343***	(1.054)	4.235***	(1.081)
AIC	89210.63		89075.38		89205.26	
BIC	89450.89		89341.38		89462.68	
Individual-level R²	0.1069		0.1121		0.1072	
Country-level R²	0.5334		0.5572		0.5341	
Individuals	39.366		39.366		39.366	
Countries	30		30		30	

Method

We apply linear multilevel modelling techniques in order to account for the fact that individual data is nested within countries (ICC = 0.091).
- Order logit multilevel model does not change main results.
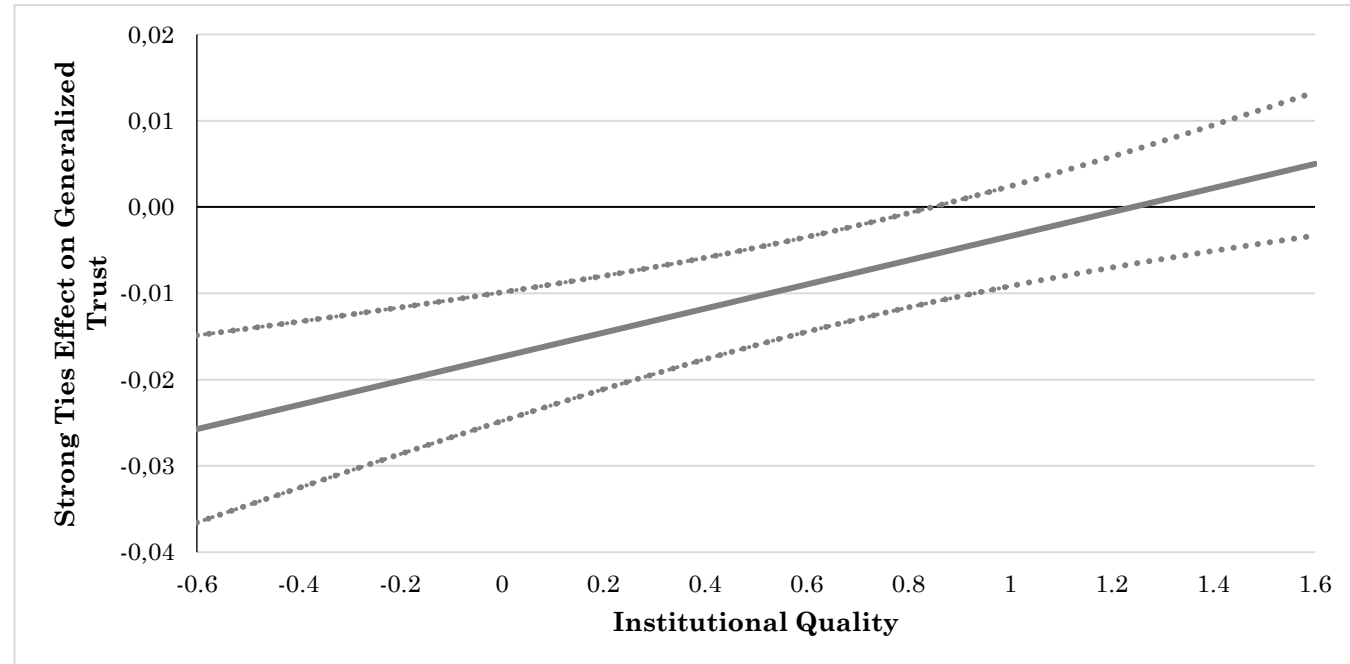- All specifications include sociodemographics (not shown)

H1: negative and significant association of reliance on strong ties for support and generalized trust.

H2: Having no person nor organization to rely on for support is negatively related to generalized trust. Greater size effect.

H3: positive and significant association of trust in institutions and generalized trust.

Predictive margins I

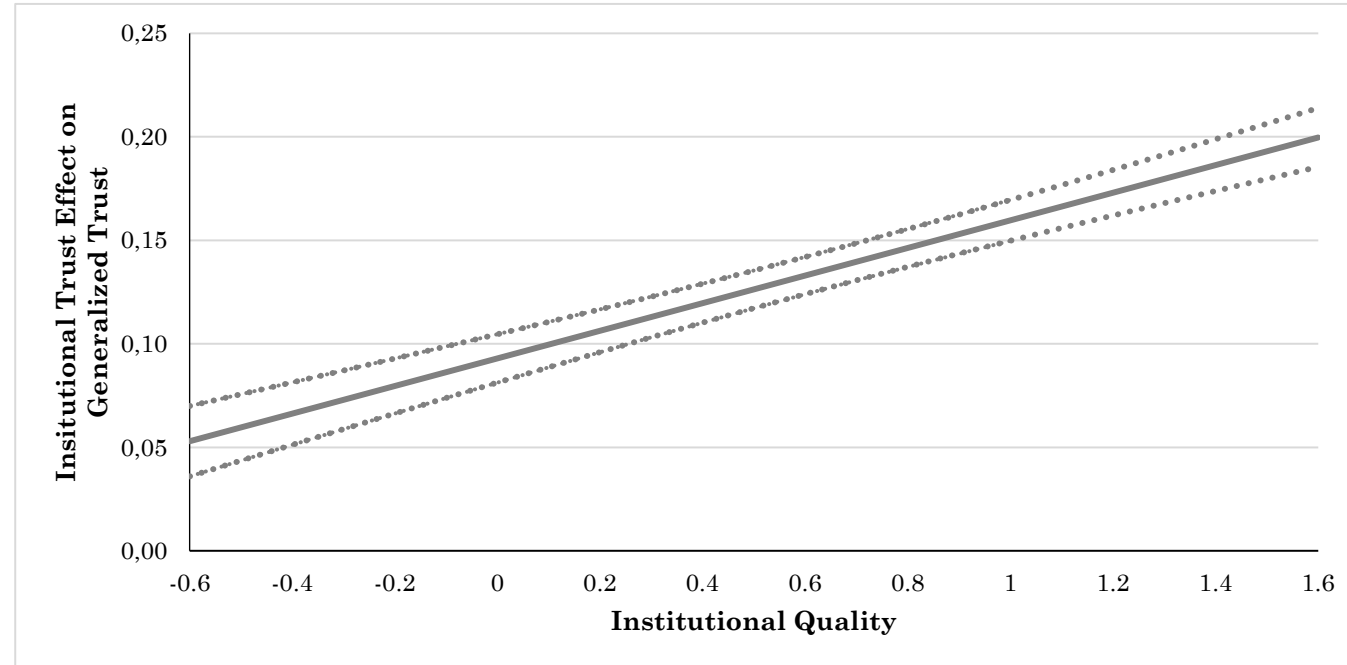| Variables	Model 1 Coef.	S.E	Model 2 Coef.	S.E	Model 3 Coef.	S.E
Ties						
Strong Ties 1	-0.007***	(0.003)	-0.017***	(0.004)	-0.008***	(0.003)
No Ties 1	-0.039***	(0.004)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.038***	(0.004)
Trust						
Institutional trust	0.136***	(0.005)	0.093***	(0.006)	0.112***	(0.011)
Country variables						
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Interactive variables						
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Institutional quality x Strong Ties 2						
Institutional quality x No Ties 2						
Institutional Trust x Strong Ties 1					0.006**	(0.003)
Institutional Trust x No Ties 1					0.013***	(0.004)
Institutional Trust x Strong Ties 2						
Institutional Trust x No Ties 2						
Intercept	4.224***	(1.082)	4.343***	(1.054)	4.235***	(1.081)
AIC	89210.63		89075.38		89205.26	
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Individual-level R²	0.1069		0.1121		0.1072	
Country-level R²	0.5334		0.5572		0.5341	
Individuals	39.366		39.366		39.366	
Countries	30		30		30	

Effect of Strong Ties on Generalized Trust by Institutional Quality.
Note: 95% confidence intervals obtained via the delta method, and with variables set at their observed values.

Results of a linear multilevel modelling for generalized trust (sociodemographics not shown)

Lends support of H4

Predictive margins II

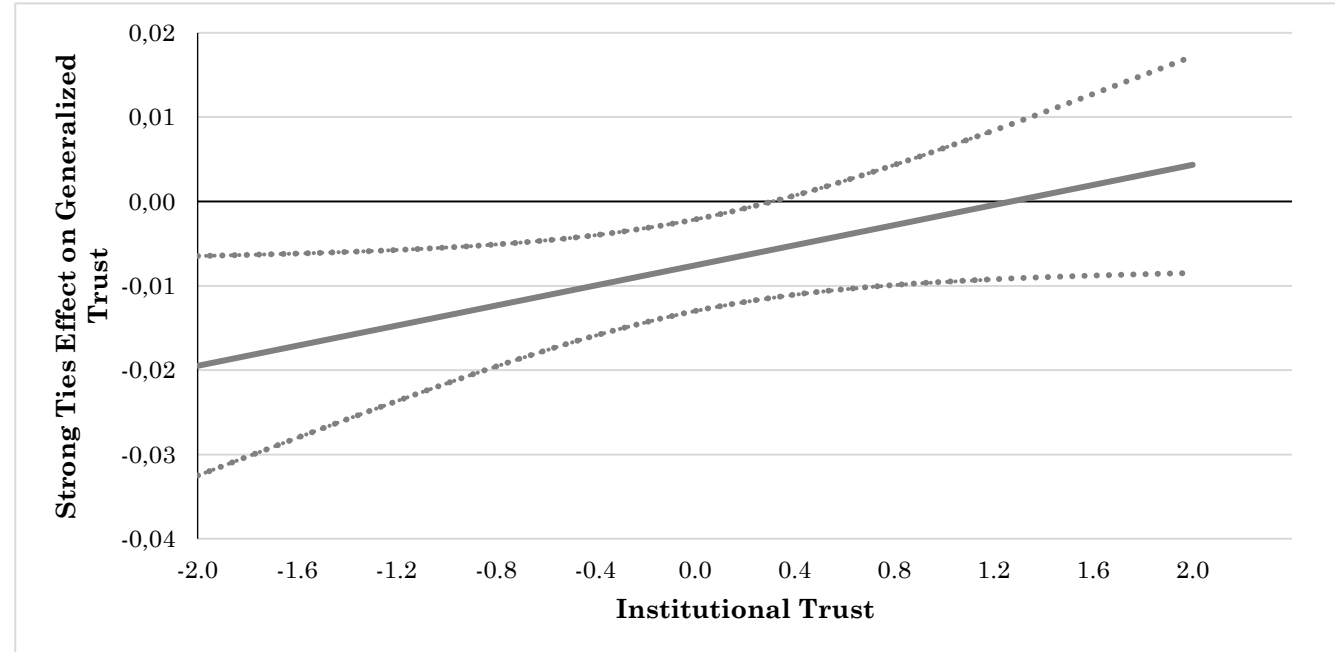| Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coef.	S.E	Coef.	S.E	Coef.	S.E
Ties						
Strong Ties 1	-0.007***	(0.003)	-0.017***	(0.004)	-0.008***	(0.003)
No Ties 1	-0.039***	(0.004)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.038***	(0.004)
Trust						
Institutional trust	0.136***	(0.005)	0.093***	(0.006)	0.112***	(0.011)
Country variables						
ln GDP per capita (PPP)	-0.190*	(0.105)	-0.197*	(0.103)	-0.191*	(0.105)
Gini index	-0.011**	(0.005)	-0.011**	(0.005)	-0.011**	(0.005)
Institutional quality	0.144*	(0.076)	0.098	(0.075)	0.146*	(0.076)
Interactive variables						
Institutional quality x Strong Ties1			0.014***	(0.004)		
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Institutional quality x Strong Ties 2						
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AIC	89210.63		89075.38		89205.26	
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Individual-level R²	0.1069		0.1121		0.1072	
Country-level R²	0.5334		0.5572		0.5341	
Individuals	39.366		39.366		39.366	
Countries	30		30		30	

Effect of Institutional Trust on Generalized Trust by Institutional Quality. Note: 95% confidence intervals obtained via the delta method, and with variables set at their observed values.

Results of a linear multilevel modelling for generalized trust (sociodemographics not shown)

Lends support of H5

Predictive margins III

Variables	Model 1 Coef.	Model 1 S.E	Model 2 Coef.	Model 2 S.E	Model 3 Coef.	Model 3 S.E
Ties						
Strong Ties 1	-0.007***	(0.003)	-0.017***	(0.004)	-0.008***	(0.003)
No Ties 1	-0.039***	(0.004)	-0.051***	(0.006)	-0.038***	(0.004)
Trust						
Institutional trust	0.136***	(0.005)	0.093***	(0.006)	0.112***	(0.011)
Country variables						
ln GDP per capita (PPP)	-0.190*	(0.105)	-0.197*	(0.103)	-0.191*	(0.105)
Gini index	-0.011**	(0.005)	-0.011**	(0.005)	-0.011**	(0.005)
Institutional quality	0.144*	(0.076)	0.098	(0.075)	0.146*	(0.076)
Interactive variables						
Institutional quality x Strong Ties1			0.014***	(0.004)		
Institutional quality x No Ties1			0.017***	(0.005)		
Institutional quality x Institutional Trust			0.067***	(0.006)		
Institutional quality x Strong Ties 2						
Institutional quality x No Ties 2						
Institutional Trust x Strong Ties 1					0.006**	(0.003)
Institutional Trust x No Ties 1					0.013***	(0.004)
Institutional Trust x Strong Ties 2						
Institutional Trust x No Ties 2						
Intercept	4.224***	(1.082)	4.343***	(1.054)	4.235***	(1.081)
AIC	89210.63		89075.38		89205.26	
BIC	89450.89		89341.38		89462.68	
Individual-level R²	0.1069		0.1121		0.1072	
Country-level R²	0.5334		0.5572		0.5341	
Individuals	39.366		39.366		39.366	
Countries	30		30		30	

Effect of Strong Ties on Generalized Trust by Institutional Trust. Note: 95% confidence intervals obtained via the delta method, and with variables set at their observed values.

Results of a linear multilevel modelling for generalized trust (sociodemographics not shown)

Lends support of H6

Final remarks

(RQ1) How does the relation between strong ties and generalized trust vary according to the institutional context?

We find a negative relationship between reliance on strong ties for support and generalized trust, supporting Yamagishi et al. (1998). We also show that this relationship is context-dependent (new finding).

These findings supports the family ties approach and previous findings based on country-specific contexts (Banfield 1958; Enrich and Gambetta 2010; Alesina and Giuliano 2011) and cross-country studies that do not consider the influence of the context on this association (Alesina and Giuliano 2014).

(RQ2) How can we understand the simultaneous relation between reliance on strong ties, trust in strangers, and trust in institutions?

We find a positive relationship between institutional and generalized trust, a positive relationship between institutional and generalized trust is stronger in countries where institutional quality is high, supporting the context-dependent approach (new finding) and that trusting in institutions moderates the negative association between reliance on strong ties for support and generalized trust (new finding).

These findings support the social capital approach.

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Final remarks

Public policy implications

High-quality institutions might reduce the uncertainty in social interactions with strangers, dampening the negative influence of relying on strong ties on generalized trust.

They also strengthen the positive association between institutional and generalized trust, boosting trust in strangers.

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