TRUSTING PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW MORE THAN TRUSTING YOUR MANAGER – A PARADOX OR IS IT POSSIBLE TO EXPLAIN? LESSONS FROM CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES ON TRUST

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Abstract

The main purpose of this paper has been to explore the results from two cross-cultural studies of trust; one about generalized trust on country level, and one about subordinate-manager trust on organizational level. The paper attempts to answer two questions: (1) How is the relationship between societal and interpersonal trust, and (2) does levels of subordinate trust in manager vary significantly across countries and cultures, and if so how is it possible to explain these variations. The study somewhat surprisingly revealed a negative relationship between scores on generalized trust and scores on interpersonal trust. In order to explain these results, it has been necessary to employ cross-cultural theories, as well as to critically evaluate the research methods used in the trust studies. The assumed explanation of the findings are believed to be the moderating effect of culture on manager-subordinate relationships. The cultural dimensions "Power Distance" and "Collectivism/Individualism" are believed to have the most profound impact on the trust relationship between subordinates and managers.

Keywords: trust, culture, leader-subordinate relationship

INTRODUCTION

According to the introductory article of the special issue on trust of the Academy of Management Review (Rousseau et. al., 1998), trust is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary concept which requires theory and research methodology that reflects trust's many faces and levels. In spite of this acknowledgement, the authors of the introductory article have to admit that the focus of a great majority of articles in the special issue of AMR have an often exclusive focus on the individual. Also in the special issue only two out of twelve articles pay attention to possible interconnections between trust and national cultures. Consequently the conclusion of Rosseau et.al (op.cit., p. 402) where they state that "... The scholars who have contributed to this special issue have undertaken the challenge to be consciously integrative in their approaches to fundamental problems surrounding trust in organizational settings" is underestimating the fact that several important trust-related problems have barely been touched by the authors. Consequently in the special AMR issue, which to this day continues to be used as a central reference by scholars focusing on the concept of trust (see e.g. Becerra et al., 2008; Lewicki et.al., 2006; Akinnukave et. al., 2009), questions concerning important issues such as the relationships between different levels of trust (societal and individual) as well as the nature and level of trust in different cultural contexts, were not attracting much attention. It may be a coincidence, but the fact remains that with a few notable exceptions, there is still a paucity

of research in the area of national culture's effects on trust (Wei Hua, 2003, see also Ping Li, 2010). Therefore it is still not clear whether national culture has a main or moderating effect on trust, which at least raises the question of generalizability of US-based trust models across cultures. As for the relationship between societal or generalized trust and interpersonal or individual trust, the situation is even poorer. The main reason for this is probably because the two types of trust have often been studied separately (Jennings et.al., 2009), and, one may add, by scholars belonging to disciplines that almost never communicate. Typically trust on a societal level is primarily studied by political scientists and sociologists and articles are published in journals such as European Sociological Review, American Journal of Political Science, or Political Science Quarterly. Interpersonal trust, on the other hand, is typically studied by psychologists and organization scientists who publish in journals such as Human Resource Management Review, Journal of Applied Psychology, or Journal of Business Research. And the two groups rarely meet. It is almost as C.P. Snow's famous essay of "two cultures" (1959) can be used to describe this situation.

In this paper a truly integrative perspective on trust is chosen. Within a cross-cultural context both societal trust and individual trust, and not least the relationship between the two, are examined. Societal trust is in the present paper defined as the belief that others will not deliberately or knowingly do us harm, if they can avoid it, and will look after our interests, if this is possible (Delhey and Newton, 2005). Individual trust is defined as "willingness to be vulnerable", as proposed by Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995). While the societal trust concept is defined and examined based on conventional definitions and empirical examples of variations in the level of societal trust across countries, we have chosen to examine interpersonal trust in an organizational context, i.e. as subordinate trust in manager. The reason for this particular approach is twofold: While past research has offered multiple perspectives to advance our understanding about the nature of trust relationships in an organizational context (Bachmann and Zaheer, 2006), focusing on interpersonal trust in a hierarchical relationship may contribute to refining our understanding of personal trust in organizational settings. Also the fact that this author has been co-author of a paper of trust in manager-subordinate relationships in eighteen countries (Akinnukawe et.al., 2009), and thus has access to fresh empirical data of these relationships has obviously influenced this choice. The fact that sixteen of the eighteen countries in the manager-subordinate study are also represented in what is probably the most cited societal study of trust, the World Values Survey, see e.g. Ingelhart and Klingelman,(2003), Delhey and Newton, (2005), made it possible to analyze the relationship between societal and individual trust, and thus get further insights into how the two may be dependent of each other, or, in other words, to what extent high or low levels of social trust correlate with high or low levels of interpersonal trust across cultures.

ON TRUST

According to Delhey and Newton (2005), in spite of all that has been written about social trust in recent years, there is still no general theory of societal trust to be found. On the other hand there exist a variety of theories that may have implications for such a general theory. One approach looks to social-psychological belief-congruency theory which argues that there is "a natural tendency to people to associate with, socialize with and be more comfortable with others having similar belief systems (Rockeach et al., 1960:161). Based on the assumption that collective trust is a social property it is also likely to be influenced by social institutions and structures. Consequently we also find approaches to social trust which focus on economic development and modernization, democracy and good government, voluntary organizations and civil society, and religion and culture, see e.g. Paxton,(2002); Ingelhart, (1999); Uslaner, (2002), and Fukuyama (1995). As social or generalized trust is

trust in people we may not know (as opposed to personal trust) it is not surprising that the level of generalized trust rises where ethnic homogeneity is strong (see Rockeach et.al., above), democracy is well-established (which encourages trust between individuals who are given the same rights and duties of citizenship, see e.g. Levi and Stoker, 2000), equality is strong, and where institutional structures are generally believed to support, not suppress civic engagement (Fukuyama,1999).

What is particularly interesting is that the above mentioned theories of general trust also emphasize aspects like ethnic homogeneity. This implies that generalized trust is strongest where we have something in common with others, especially where we are from the same ethnic background (Delhey and Newton, 2005). But this similarity-attraction paradigm is often associated with personal trust as well (Thomas and Ravlin, 1995), which may lead to the assumption that generalized and personal trust are somehow associated.

As is the case with societal trust, to date a universally accepted scholarly definition of personal trust does not exist (Rousseau et.al., 1998). The "willingness to be vulnerable", however, which means to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of behavior of the other, is probably the closest we come to an universally accepted definition (Rousseau et.al., ibid).

(Inter)personal trust is reciprocal of nature (Schoorman et. al., 2007). In an organizational setting, the hierarchy of supervisors and subordinates is the most important and prevalent form of relationship. Hierarchical relationships are characterized as profound and consequential differences in the power, status, dependence, and control that subordinates and their supervisors enjoy. In such relationships, because of the vulnerabilities and uncertainties that are always inherent here, obviously trust will play a central role (Sitkin and Roth, 1993).

WHY TRUST MATTER

Trust is important to study because it is a necessary component of all human relationships, and a necessary component of all human organizations. Trust is increasingly important in the business world, not least because globalization has allowed us to interact with a number of dissimilar cultures. This also emphasizes the need for more knowledge of the meaning of trust and the role trust plays in personal relationships across cultures. What we know is that trust is a valuable contributor to many forms of exchange. In interfirm relationships it is well known that researchers credit trust with lowering transaction costs (Williamson, 1975), and relationships between managers and employees where mutual trust exist are known to lead to improved employee job satisfaction, commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and perceived organizational effectiveness (Money et.al., 1997; Euwma et. al., 2007). Societal trust, on the other hand, is particularly important in large-scale societies where personal relationships are weak, but extensive (Granovetter, 1973), and where society is mobile, differentiated, heterogenous, and individualistic, because high or low levels of societal trust influence a wide range of significant economic and political phenomena (Glaeser et.al., 1999). Also studies of trust both on the level of societies and organizations associate trust with social capital. Social capital – which is often measured with questions about the level of trust – enables participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives (Putnam, 1995). In short, the economic function of social capital is to reduce the transaction costs associated with formal coordination mechanisms like contracts, hierarchies, bureaucratic rules, and the like (Fukuyama, 1999). On the societal level, the importance of an abundant stock of social capital produces a dense civic society which in turn has been almost universally seen as a necessary condition for democracy (Fukuyama,1999), while on

the organizational level social capital, whether it is used as a metaphor or a network structure, facilitates advantageous performance among the members of an organization (Lin, Cooik and Burt, 2001, Adler and Kwon, 2000).

CULTURE AND TRUST

It has been asserted that in the trust literature too little attention has been on cross-cultural issues of trust. For example, in his comment to the Special Topic Forum on Trust issue of AMR (1998), Noorderhaven (1999) criticizes the fact that only two of the twelve articles pay attention to the issue of culture and trust. Also the current situation is such that while surveys of social trust normally deal with similarities and differences across cultures, i.e. whether people in general agree or disagree with statements like "most people can be trusted" (see e.g. World Values Surveys, 1990, 1996; Glaeser et.al., 1999). cross-cultural studies of trust on the organizational level, however, are rare. Thus In spite of the fact that past research has offered multiple perspectives to advance our understanding about the nature of trust relationships in an organizational context (see Bachmann and Zaheer, 2006 for a comprehensive review) there is still some rather unanswered questions that deserve further attention (Akinnukawe et. al., 2009). Studying trust in the dyadic hierarchical relationship between managers and subordinates across several cultures could refine our understanding of trust in organizational settings, and not least, allow us to look further into the relationship between societal and interpersonal trust.

Building on these arguments this study attempts to (1) investigate the relationship between social and interpersonal trust, and (2) compare levels of manager-subordinate trust across cultures in order to improve our understanding of how subordinates from different cultures evaluate a potential trustee. By doing this, hopefully more light can be shed over trust-related issues that are viewed as important, but where our current understanding is limited (Browwer, Schoorman and Tan, 2000; Schoorman et.al., 2008: Tsui, Nifadkar and Ou, 2007).

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERALIZED, SOCIAL TRUST AND INTERPERSONAL TRUST

According to Delhey and Newton (2005), generalized trust is harder to understand than personal trust. While general trust expresses itself as the answer given by country-representative samples on the question:

"Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" (World Values Survey, Wave III; see also Uslaner, 2004),interpersonal trust is more easily understood because it is strongest in close personal relationships. While generalized trust is trust in people we may not know and who may not be like us, interpersonal trust is trust in people we know, or who are like us. Thus there could well be a theoretical argument that generalized and personal trust constitute two different kinds of trust. But at the same time, research clearly documents that generalized trust is highest in the Nordic countries, and one of the independent variables which demonstrate the strongest positive correlations with generalized trust (alongside income equality) is ethnic homogeneity. This means that generalized trust is strongest where we have something in common with others, especially where we are from the same ethnic background (Ingelhart and Klingemann, 2003). But this is also the condition many associate with interpersonal trust because social psychological theory and research have stressed that common identities in groups create the basis for trust among group members (Kramer et.al., 1996). What this implies is that in spite of what was argued above, there seems to be a

relationship between generalized societal trust and particularized interpersonal trust, meaning that the difference between the two concepts is more a difference in degree, rather than in kind (Delhey and Newton, 2005). Another interesting observation is that generalized trust on the macro level aligns to "dispositional trust" on the micro level (Helm, 2004; Bianchi and Brockner, 2009). Contrary to the mainstream trust literature where trust is consistently represented as a relationship-specific construct, dispositional trust is described as "an individual difference variable" which impacts the way individuals interpret actions, and their expectations for trustworthy behavior (Helm, op,cit, p. 345). Dispositional trust could just as well be labeled "initial trust" (see e.g. McKnight et. al., 1998), meaning that inter-personal trust does not necessary begins at a zero baseline and develops gradually over time. In fact, several studies (Kramer, 1994, Meyerson et. al., 1996) demonstrate that even where no interaction history exists, participants often show remarkably high trust for each other. While disposition for trust is partly grounded in personality factors, still some societal cultures tend to be more trusting than others (Fukuyama, 1995). Dispositional trust is often measured the same way as generalized trust (Bianchi and Brockner, op.cit), which means that high generalized trust could in fact be the aggregated result of high dispositional trust. Consequently a sensible hypothesis would be that: *In homogenous countries with high dispositional / generalized trust, we will also find high inter- personal trust.*

TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS. THE CASE OF NORWAY

Norway seems to be a near perfect case in order to test the above formulated hypothesis. The results of the World Values Survey (1990 and 1995-7) show that Norway has the highest level of generalized trust of all (the 60 countries surveyed) as 65% of the population express such trust. Based on the above assumed connections between generalized and dispositional trust, this also suggests that Norwegians as individuals generally tend to be trusting. Also Norway, as is the case with the other Nordic countries which all score high on generalized trust, is an ethnically homogenous country. If the hypothesis assuming a positive relationship between generalized and interpersonal trust in homogenous countries holds, then the Norwegian level of interpersonal trust, should indeed be high too. Data on interpersonal trust in Norway are scarce. However, having access to the results of the recent cross-cultural study of subordinates' trust in supervisors (Akinnukawe et.al, 2009), which also includes data from Norwegian supervisors and subordinates, makes it possible to test the hypothesis stated above.

DATA AND METHOD OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF GENERALIZED, SOCIETAL TRUST

 As is mentioned above, a measure of trust is available for 60 countries based on the World Values Survey (1990 and 1995-7). The WVS questionnaire asks the tried and tested standard question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?"

Even if the WVS is assumed to have some problems because urban and high income groups tend to be over-represented in some countries (Delhey and Newton, 2005), these problems do not seriously detract from the randomness of the samples. WVS is the only survey available covering a wide range and large number of countries, and are therefore heavily used in work on trust.

DATA AND METHOD OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF MANAGER-SUBORDINATE TRUST

In the study by Akinnukave et al. (op.cit), data from manager-subordinate dyads covering a total of 18 countries from different regions of the world were collected. All in all 737 managers and 2111 subordinates participated in the study. The sample represents a wide variety of sectors and organizations. Both middle and top managers working in both public and private sectors are included in the sample. Questionnaires were constructed in English and then translated into the local language, using back-translation method (Brislin, 1986). Each country collaborator subsequently checked the quality of the translation before starting data collection. Data collection was based on the use of two separate surveys; one for the managers and one for the subordinates. Managers were contacted directly by the researchers in each respective country and then asked to identify up to three subordinates to whom the subordinate survey was forwarded. The managers' and subordinates' surveys were identical: managers were asked to rate their trust in their subordinates, while subordinates were asked to rate their trust in their managers.

All variables were measured using multi-item 5-point Likert scales. Items were placed in random order in the questionnaire.

In order to measure subordinate trust in manager a 4-item measure adapted from McAllister (1995) was used. Each of the items reflected statements of various ways of subordinates being vulnerable to their direct manager. An example of the items is: " I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that she/he will listen". Cronbach's alpha for the subordinate trust in manager scale was .83.

RESULTS OF THE TWO CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES

As for the variable "subordinate trust in manager" the results revealed a mean score of 3.96. Among the 18 countries participating in the study, Russia had the highest score (4.22) and Norway the lowest (3.46).

Table 1: Mean scores for Subordinate trust in manager

Brazil	4.15
China	3,78
Colombia	4.17
Germany	3.88
Greece	3.66
Ireland	4.10
Mexico	4.18
Norway	3.46
Pakistan	3.68
Peru	4.13
Phillipines	4.15
Poland	3.91
Romania	3.91
Russia	4.22
Spain	4.09
Thailand	3.71
United States	4.08
West Africa	4.05

These results stand in sharp contrast to the results of the World Values Survey on trust where Norway has the highest score of all and was labeled a "high-trust society" with its score of 65% (agreement with statement "most people can be trusted"), while Russia was labeled a "low-trust society" based on its score of 24%. Based on the results from the two surveys on trust, Brazil represents perhaps the most striking example of this lack of a positive relationship between the two trust-surveys as Brazil has the lowest score of all on the WVS-survey with a meager 3% (which labels Brazil a "no-trust society"), while the Brazilian score of subordinate trust in manager is 4.15 which puts Brazil in the fifth highest position among the 18 countries. The result of a unrelated t-test shows that Brazilian subordinates' trust in their manager were significantly higher (t = 7.395, DF = 235, p < .01) than the Norwegians. Also, the Norwegian level of trust is found to be significantly lower than the overall mean of 3.96 among the 18 countries included in the survey (t = 7.575, DF = 2109, p < .01).

The fact that sixteen of the eighteen countries surveyed in the manager-subordinate study are also included in the WVS, makes it possible to rank the scores of the two surveys. A rank order calculation resulted in a Rho of -.33, meaning that for this sample a fairly strong negative correlation between trust on a societal level and interpersonal trust was found.

Table 2: Rank orders of 16 countries on Social Trust and Subordinate trust in manager

Rank Social Trust		Rank Trust in manager
Norway	1	16
China	2	14
Irland	3	7
Germany	4	12
USA	5	10
Spain	6	8
Mexico	7	2
Russia	8	1
Romania	9	13
Poland	10	11
Pakistan	11	5
W.Africa	12	9
Peru	13	6
Columbia	14	3
Phillipines	15	5
Brazil	16	3

What this reveals is that high country scores on societal trust, i.e. trust on a macro level, give no basis for predicting high scores on subordinate trust in manager, i.e. interpersonal trust within a formal hierarchy. On the contrary, the comparison of the results of the two studies indicate that high scores on societal trust go together with low scores of subordinates' trust in managers. Consequently the hypothesis stating that we will find a positive relationship between societal trust and interpersonal trust – at least when the latter is measured in an organizational context - has to be rejected.

DISCUSSION

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that focuses on the relationship between societal trust and interpersonal trust within a cross-cultural context. The study reveals the somewhat surprising result that there seems to be a negative association between trust at the societal level, and interpersonal trust within an organizational context.

Based both on social-psychological belief-congruency theory, and social identity theory, the hypothesis that the greater the perceived similarity of other people, the more they are trusted, is expected to reveal high trust both on the individual- and a societal level, while the greater the dissimilarity, the more suspicion and distrust. Of the countries included in the present comparative study, according to Delhey and Newton (op.cit), Norway and China are the only "high trust societies" with 65 and 52 percent respectively agreeing with the statement "most people can be trusted". Of the eighteen countries participating in the "manager-subordinate study", however, Norway and China are ranked as no 18 and 14 respectively when "subordinate trust in manager" is measured, both with scores significantly below the mean. Particularly the fact that Norway, being a homogenous, democratic, and equality-based country (Grenness, 2003; Scramm-Nielsen et.al., 2004), has the lowest level of subordinate trust in managers of all the eighteen countries surveyed comes as a surprise. Also the fact that the number one and two ranked countries of the "subordinate trust in manager-study", Russia and Mexico , are both named "low-trust societies" on the WVS, give reason for some afterthought.

In order to explain results of cross-cultural studies, the use of cross-cultural theories as well as critically evaluating methodological practices are commonly recommended (see e.g. Schaffer and Riordan, 2003, Tsui et. al.,2008). Cross-cultural studies in cross-national contexts require both cross-level theorizing and research methods by relating national level characteristics to individual or team-level responses (Tsui et. al., 2007). Also cross-national data collection introduces a host of issues which have been documented in several reviews of cross-cultural management research that have been published in leading management journals (see e.g. Earley and Gibson (1998), Werner (2002), Schaffer and Riordan (2003), and Gelfand, Erez, and Aycan (2007). The importance of not overlooking potential methodological challenges when doing cross-cultural research is well put by Schaffer and Riordan (2003:169) as they state " If researchers ignore the methodological issues common to cross-cultural research, they risk interpreting findings that may actually be meaningless, inconclusive, or misguiding ". Among such issues that are often mentioned are matching samples, conceptual equivalence, semantic equivalence, scale equivalence, survey administration, in particular what Schaffer and Riordan label levels of rapport with respondents which refers to the respondents' confidence in the researchers , and level of analysis.

While the measurement of generalized trust uses a relatively simple one-item instrument ("Most people can be trusted"), interpersonal trust measures are generally much more complex. In their study Akinnukawe et. al (2009) use a four item questionnaire designed in order to reveal *vulnerability.* (**See appendix I**).

But according to the trust literature trust is not only about vulnerability (Mayer et.al.1995, Davis et.al., 2000). In order to trust someone, the trusting party's perception that the trustee cares about you (benevolence), and will not take advantage of your vulnerability is certainly important, but characteristics such as ability, i.e. the trustee has the necessary skills and competencies, and integrity i.e. the trustee adheres to a set of acceptable principles also play significant roles in trust formation (Mayer et.al., 1995). As a matter of fact, in their study of trust in managers (Mayer and Gavin, 2005), their findings reveal that the

correlations of subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' ability and integrity with subordinates' trust in them are stronger than the perceived benevolence (.38, .39 and .22 respectively). The fact that supervisors' benevolence is the only aspect of trust which has been measured in the Akinnukawe (op.cit) study may thus have an effect on the outcomes as the benevolence aspect of the trust concept may be perceived as of being of different importance across cultures. The fact that the study took place within the framework of the hierarchical relationships between managers and subordinates, which is well known to vary with variations of levels of Power Distance (Hofstede, 1984, House et. al., 2004), may further have modified this relationship, and thus affected the results. There is ample evidence that relations between leaders and followers vary across cultures (Javidan et.al., 2006, Hofstede, 2007, House et. al., 2004). From Hofstede's well known cultural framework , the dimensions "individualism" and "collectivism" together with "power distance", have shown to have the most profound impact on these relationships (Hofstede, 2007). While in individualistic countries ties between individuals are loose, in collectivistic countries individuals are integrated into strong cohesive in-groups, which throughout their lifetime continue to protect them, in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (Hofstede, ibid). Markus and Kitayama (1991:229) put it this way when discussing people's relatedness with others: "Although people everywhere must maintain some relatedness with others, an appreciation and a need for people will be more important for those with an interdependent self than for those with an independent self". According to Brockner et. al., (2000: 141), this means that " Thus, differences in the nature of the social exchange, such as the degree of trust inherent in the relationship, are more significant and therefore more likely to have an impact on people from cultures that foster interdependent self-construals". And they continue:"Consistent with this reasoning, people from cultures fostering interdependent self-construals should make more of their distinctions of their exchanges with in-group members (in which trust is relatively high), than their exchanges with out-group members (in which trust is relatively low) than do those from cultures that foster independent self-construals". As for differences in power distance, individuals from high power distance cultures tend to behave submissively around managers and avoid disagreements (Hofstede, 2001).

Among the countries surveyed in the Akinnukawe study, Norway represents a typical individualistic, low power-distance culture, while Brazil represents a typical collectivistic, high power-distance culture (see e.g. Hofstede, 2001). In their discussion of the results of the GLOBE (2004) study, Javidan et.al.,2006 : 76) write that: "Brazilians believe that people in position of authority deserve to be treated with respect and deference" . This description of manager–subordinate relationships stand in sharp contrast to how Schramm-Nielsen et. al., (2004) describe the relationship between leaders and subordinates in Scandinavia. Here subordinates' attitudes to "the higher ups" are described as non-deferential, loyalty to the decision process may in many cases be stronger than loyalty to particular leaders, and personal problems are generally dealt with on a general level. Although none of the two studies deal particularly with manager-subordinate trust , the implications of the descriptions give reason to assume that the formation of trust, as well as what manager-subordinate trust is about, varies between the two. As have been pointed out above, the trust measure used in the Akinnukawe study covers one dimension of trust, vulnerability, which is probably more align with what Brazilian subordinates tend to associate with trust in their managers, than is the case in Norway, where trust in your manager is less based on emotions and respect, but is more a question of whether one has trust in the competence and ability of a manager (Schramm-Nielsen et.al., 2004).Similarly, Chen, Chen, and Meindel (1998) posited that because cognition-based trust is based on knowledgeable role performance whereas affect-based trust is based on emotional bonds, cognition-based trust will be a stronger determinant of relationships in individualistic cultures than in collectivist cultures, whereas affect-based trust will be a stronger determinant of relationships in collectivist than

individualist cultures. Another point worth noticing is that the fact that the Brazilians' low score on the WVS, which made Delhey and Newton,(2005) to label Brazil a "no-trust" country, may have affected the answers from the Brazilian subordinates participating in the manager-subordinate trust survey. As was mentioned above, according to Schaffer and Riordan (2003), respondents' confidence in the researchers is an issue when doing cross-cultural research. In the Akkinukawe study, the way the surveys were administrated implied that the researchers often came to be in direct, face-to-face contact with the managers in each country. In a "no-trust" country like Brazil, this could obviously lead subordinates to question the confidentiality of the survey, and as a consequence of this, to answer the questions in a way that would cause no problems if their managers got access to them.

The fact that the Russian subordinates show the highest level of trust in their managers (4.22), while at the same time the Russian result of the WVS puts Russia in the "low-trust country" department obviously needs to be discussed as well. Based on the results of the GLOBE study, contemporary Russia revealed several extreme scores: very low on Uncertainty Avoidance, Future orientation, Performance Orientation, and Humane orientation, and very high on Power Distance. As for the scores on GLOBE's leadership dimensions, Russian managers would typically be described as autocratic, non-participative, and self protective, Grachev (2006). What matters is a good "image" (linked to success, competency, and personal and social recognition), however in his/her actions there is not much interest in humane orientation to others (Grachew, ibid). As for the relationship between managers and subordinates, this is characterized by subordinates exercising caution and formal obedience to those with (formal) authority (Bergelson, 2004). Probably most important in order to explain the high Russian scores on subordinates trust in managers is the term "Social politeness" (Brown and Levinson, 1987). According to these authors there is a linear relationship between relative social power and politeness investment from the part with the least power, and according to Leontovitch, (2002), Russians are typically insistent on expressing positive politeness and on expecting it. Finally, most social politeness appear to be expected in relationships with familiars, but non-intimates, as would be the case in a subordinate manager relationship (Bergelson, 2003). The low Russian score on generalized trust, however, is probably a consequence of the still lasting effects of the Communist regime of the 20th century when the general feeling certainly was that "you can't be too careful when dealing with other people". According to Mikheyev, (1987), there was at the time a general perception of the environment as hostile and dangerous.

Together with Norway, China (PRC) was the only country participating in the Akkinukawe (2009) survey which was labeled a "high trust" society based on the results on the WVS. As is the case with Norway, Chinese subordinates demonstrated relatively low trust in their managers (ranked 14 of the 18 countries). In order to explain this we have to look at the influence of Chinese Confucian values and principles of interpersonal relationships which reinforce the subservience of subordinates and their dependence on superiors (Bond and Hwang, 1986). As such, Chinese organizations tend to be characterized by vertical relationships that promote a top down hierarchy featuring work situations that are highly structured where subordinates are told what to do (Redding, 1990). That Chinese subordinates find themselves in a high power distance collectivistic culture (Hofstede,1980), results in a paternalistic work relationship between superior and subordinate. Typical for a paternalistic relationships between leaders and subordinates is that subordinates develop a feeling of obligation, obedience and respect for hierarchical relations (Pellegrini et. al.,2008). Also, this type of relationship is based on the assumption of a power inequality between a leader and his/her subordinates which is accepted in high-power distance societies (Aycan, 2006). The relatively low trust in managers among Chinese subordinates documented in the Akkiniwave (2009) study, might thus well be a consequence of the paternalistic relationship

where obedience, respect, and obligations on behalf of the subordinates are dominating aspects (Fahr and Cheng, 2000). While organizing dependent on personal relationships has long been recognized, and has been called organizing by trust (Arrow, 1974; Brandach and Eccles, 1989), many who have observed behavior in relationship-dependent societies have remarked on the lack of interpersonal trust among participants (Rao et.al., 2005), and Pearce (2001) suggests that such relationships are better described as relationships of mutual dependence rather than of trust. According to Casimir et al. (2006) in collectivistic cultures heavily influenced by Confucian values supportive on Power Distance, individuals may be more accepting of autocratic leadership practices, but acceptance does not necessarily translate into trust in the leader.

 Because China is a highly relation-based society, the relatively high scores on societal trust could be viewed as something of a paradox as relation-based societies tend to lack public trust, i.e. trust in strangers (Li et.al., 2004). One likely explanation would be that within Confucian ideology, which largely portrays the state as an extension of the family, the traditional "strong-tie" trust that exists among family members and relatives is extended to also include outer layers of the social structure (Jennings and Zang, 2009).

KEY FINDINGS

The objective of this study has been to explore the relationship between societal trust and interpersonal trust, the latter defined as subordinate trust in manager, and to do so in a cross-cultural perspective. What was found was that in spite of the theoretically based assumption that we should expect to find a (positive) relationship between societal and interpersonal trust, no such relationship was found. As we have discussed above, the reason for this lack of relationship is most probable due to the moderating effect of national cultures on the relationship between a subordinate and the supervising manager. National cultures can be assessed along many dimensions (Hofstede, 1980; House et.al., 1999). Among the cultural dimensions, "Collectivism" and Power Distance" have shown to influence the relationship between subordinates and managers. Typically these relationships vary from being relationships between two (almost) equal parties where subordinates' attitudes to managers are non-deferential, and where subordinates are not dependent of the goodwill of the managers, to a highly asymmetric relationship where unequal distribution of power combined with a more paternalistic approach on behalf of the manager make the subordinate more dependent and vulnerable. These different forms of relationships seem to have consequences for the trust subordinates have in their managers. That the highest levels of subordinate trust in manager were found in collective and/or high power distance cultures such as e.g. Brazil and Russia may also be a result of the way trust has been measured in the Akinnukawe (2009) study. The fact that the four items used measured only affective trust (McAllister, 1995), may have distorted the results as subordinates in different cultures may have different feelings about being affectively related to their managers.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Unlike most previous studies of trust, this study has taken a truly integrative approach as the relationship between trust on a societal and an interpersonal level across 18 countries has been explored. Obviously this rather ambitious study is not without limitations. Typically cross-cultural studies are in the form of quantitative surveys using self-report questionnaires. The data used in the present study in order to discuss variances in subordinate trust in manager have been collected using a self-report questionnaire. It is disputable whether a self-report questionnaire is an effective way to measure culture (Shaffer and Riordan 2003). For example, simple double translation is not sufficient to ensure cross-cultural equivalence of survey instruments, equivalence of items functioning for versions of the survey in different

languages should also be established (Taras et.al., 2009). This would probably demand a more qualitative approach – at least in the form of a pre study. The operational definition of trust used in the Akkinukawe (2009) study, which focuses solely on the affective component of trust, could be a possibly explanation for some of the variances in subordinate trust in manager found across the eighteen countries. Thus these variances do not necessary imply that e.g. Russian subordinates have significantly more trust in their managers than Norwegian subordinates, but rather reflects that Norwegian subordinates are less emotionally attached to their managers than is the case in Russia. In order to find out if this is the case, a more emic approach will be necessary. This is in line with Li (2010) who claims that, while trust as a general notion may be conceptualized as etic (i.e. culture-general or universal), the specific forms and bases of trust as well as the specific mechanisms and phases of trust-building must be conceived as emic (i.e. culture-specific or indigenous). Consequently the general assumption underlying most cross-cultural surveys, i.e. that "trust is trust" and thus are referring to the same thing or being measured in the same manner across cultures is dubious. The cultural embeddednes of trust makes it hazardous to compare levels of trust across countries unless the different features of trust have been accounted for.

Future cross-cultural research on intra-organizational trust should take this into consideration. There is an increasing need for more cross-cultural trust research. More business is becoming global and international. As a result more managers will have to work with people from different cultures. This present unique challenges as employee behavior, expectations and values across cultures are likely to be different. Consequently issues of trust in inter- and intra-organizational relationships will be of increasingly importance. One implication of this study for future cross-cultural research on intra-organizational trust is the need to combine etic and emic perspectives. The trust measure used in the Akinnukawe (2009) study implies that this way of measuring trust is equally relevant to all cultures. The above discussion, however, suggests that the variance found in subordinate trust in manager across cultures may just as well indicate that the "universal" measure used did not produce comparable results. Another implication is to take into consideration the modifying role of culture on the relationship (and hence the level and form of trust) between subordinates and managers. Whether the culture to be studied is dominated by collectivistic or individualistic values, or is characterized by high or low power distance have obvious consequences for the relationship between a manager and his or her subordinates (Javidan and House, 2001). Consequently this will not only influence the level and forms of trust inherent in this relationship, it will also help explain the relationship (or lack of) between societal trust and interpersonal trust in an organizational setting.

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APPENDIX I

The four items used in the Akkinukave et. al., (2009) study in order to measure subordinate trust in manager.

If I shared my problems with this person, I know s/he would respond constructively and caringly.

I can talk freely to this individual about difficulties I am having at work and know that s/he will listen.

We have a sharing relationship. We can freely share our ideas, feelings and hopes
We would both feel a sense of loss if one of us was transferred and we could no longer work together.