

## Accepted Manuscript

Title: On the Relationship between Subjective Inequality and Generalized Trust

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PII: S0276-5624(16)30207-4

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1016/j.rssm.2017.03.003>

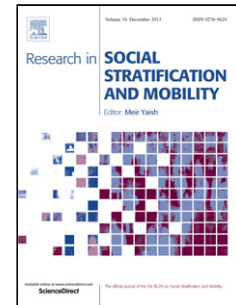
Reference: RSSM 324

To appear in: *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*

Received date: 7-12-2016

Revised date: 15-2-2017

Accepted date: 27-3-2017



Please cite this article as: Hu, A., On the Relationship between Subjective Inequality and Generalized Trust, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2017.03.003>

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## On the Relationship between Subjective Inequality and Generalized Trust

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Acknowledgement: An earlier version was presented at the sociological seminar of Fudan University and the winter forum of social stratification and mobility at the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Science. The author very much thanks the participants for their insightful comments. This work was supported by the National Social Science Foundation [11&ZD149].

### Abstract

Despite the well-received detrimental effect of socio-economic inequality on generalized trust, the role of subjective inequality, as defined to be the joint outcome of one's perception of factual unequal social resource distribution and normative belief about the ideal state of inequality, is elusive, which constitutes a research gap, especially in light of the increasing evidence for the independent role of subjective inequality in people's social life. Drawing on the sixth wave of the World Values Survey, this study shows that, other things being equal, one's subjective judgment of inequality has an inverted-U shape relation with generalized trust, from those who perceive the society to run short of inequality to motivate social members, to those who regard the current situation of inequality to be too serious. Such a curvilinear pattern is robust by applying to the trust in people one meets for the first time, and holds across countries with different economic, institutional, and cultural characteristics. Theoretical and policy implications are discussed.

**Key words:** Generalized Trust; Subjective Inequality; Curvilinear Relation; Social Capital

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