

# **Societies, High Trust and Low Trust**

## **Preamble:**

What follows is a list of the differences between 'High Trust' and 'Low Trust' societies.

## **High Trust Society:**

- People at the top of the hierarchy view those at the bottom with compassion. A rich man thinks, "As one of the most powerful people in this society, I have an obligation to ensure that the poor and powerless are taken care of."
- People at the bottom of the hierarchy view those at the top with respect.
- Businesses put doing the morally right thing above profits, and view their employees as family members who should be taken care of in both good times and bad.
- Random people walking down the street trust each other.
- Violent crime is rare.

## **Low Trust Society:**

- People at the top of the hierarchy view those at the bottom with disdain. They exploit those below them with impunity.
- People at the bottom of the hierarchy view those at the top with resentment.
- Businesses view morality as a joke, and their employees as chattel to be worked to death then discarded.
- Random people walking down the street distrust each other.
- Violent crime is common.

## **Inequality Erodes Social Trust:**

Generally speaking it is the case that societies with intense wealth inequality (high Gini coefficients) have low levels of social trust, while societies with gentle

inequality (low Gini coefficients) have high levels of social trust. The relationship is causal; intense inequality *causes* trust to erode.

### **Historical Examples:**

1950 America was a high trust society.

2020 America is a low trust society.

2020 Brazil is a low trust society.

Historically, low trust societies with intense inequality have been the rule, and high trust societies with gentle inequality have been the exception.