Supplementary Online Materials

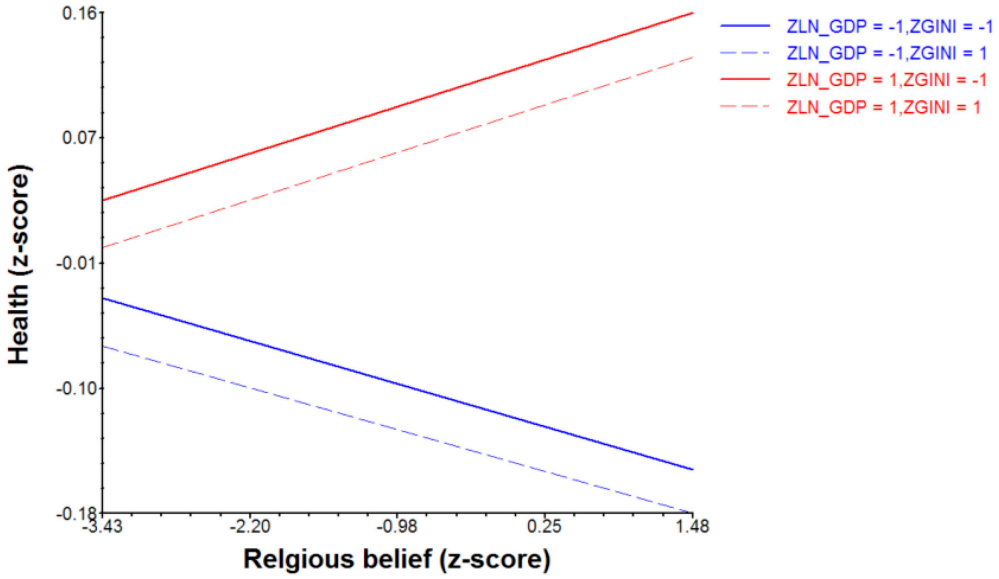
In light of the debate around the role of personal control in different economies, it is also worthwhile to consider how religious belief and trust in government fare. Presumably, if people rely on God and boost their trust in government, especially to gain control over their life, it would make sense that those mechanisms become more important in times when countries face economic difficulties, either with declining GDP or rising Gini. So, similar to the predictions on personal control, we expected that religious belief and trust in government would also be more strongly linked to well-being when country's GDP is lower or Gini is higher. We conducted the similar model used to look at the personal control × GDP × Gini interaction but this time replaced personal control with religious belief and trust in government.

Religious belief × GDP × Gini. There was a significant three-way interaction between religious belief, country's GDP and Gini on health (see *Table* 4). Religious belief significantly interacted with income inequality both when GDP was high and when GDP was low, but in different directions. Overall, religious belief correlates positively with health when country's GDP is higher and correlates negatively with health when country's GDP is lower. Within high and low levels of country's GDP, the interactions between religious belief and health are small but statistically significant. When country's GDP is high, religious belief correlates with health at $\beta = .045$ ($p < .001$) when Gini is high and at $\beta = .013$ ($p < .001$) when Gini is low. When country's GDP is low, religious belief correlates with health at $\beta = -.036$ ($p < .001$) when Gini is high and at $\beta = -.01$ ($p = .529$) when Gini is low. (see *Figure 2*). Importantly, religious belief does not reduce the gap in health as created by income inequality; instead, religious belief is linked to reduced health when country's GDP drops below its average.

Trust in government × GDP × Gini. There was no significant three-way interaction between trust in government, country's GDP and Gini. There were significant two-way interactions of trust in government with country's GDP as well as with country's Gini. Those interactions suggested that the links of trust in government to greater happiness and life satisfaction were stronger when country's economy was lower. On the other hand, the link of trust in government to greater life satisfaction was weaker when country's inequality was higher (see *Table 5* and *Figure 3a-b*)

Table 4
Religious belief as moderator of the effects of GDP and Gini on well-being outcomes

	Happiness			Health			Life satisfaction		
	ß	*t*	*p*	*ß*	*t*	*p*	*ß*	*t*	*p*
Level-1									
Age	-.11	-52.29	<.001	-.30	-154.55	<.001	-.06	-28.44	<.001
Marital status	.21	54.84	<.001	.08	22.82	<.001	.13	33.08	<.001
Gender	.02	4.53	<.001	-.12	-34.48	<.001	.01	2.36	.018
Social class	.17	90.12	<.001	.15	82.70	<.001	.20	109.78	<.001
Religious belief	.08	27.29	<.001	.00	1.52	.129	.08	27.29	<.001
Religious belief x GDP	.00	.82	.412	.02	8.21	<.001	.00	1.50	.135
Religious belief x GINI	.00	.38	.702	.00	.07	.947	.00	.41	.680
Religious belief x GDP x GINI	-.00	-.76	.446	.02	4.68	<.001	.00	1.35	.176
Level-2									
GDP	.11	4.85	<.001	.12	7.55	<.001	.17	7.98	<.001
GINI	-.03	-1.14	.257	-.02	-.87	.385	-.04	-1.51	.133
GDP x GINI	.01	.54	.590	.01	.57	.572	.01	.27	.786
Level-3									
DUM 1	.06	.63	.531	.10	1.26	.209	-.36	-3.81	<.001
DUM 2	.07	.90	.372	-.02	-.24	.810	-.09	-1.20	.234
DUM 3	.49	2.36	.021	.45	2.64	.010	.43	2.07	.041
DUM 4	.48	3.83	<.001	.23	2.24	.027	.45	3.60	<.001
DUM 5	.36	3.07	.003	.13	1.38	.170	.39	3.28	.001

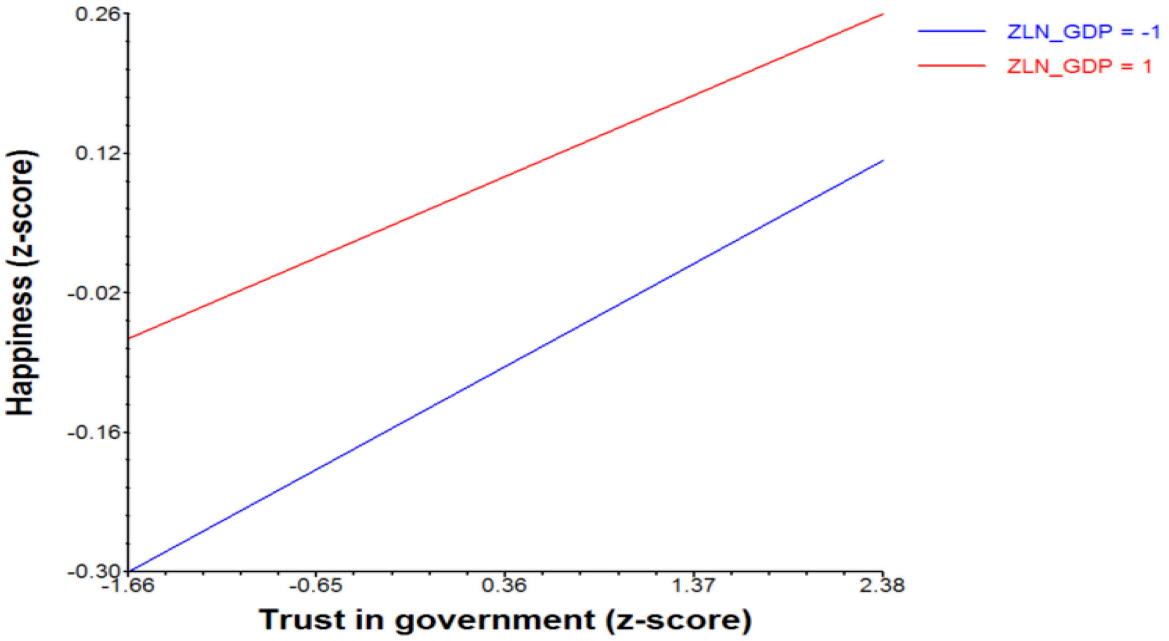


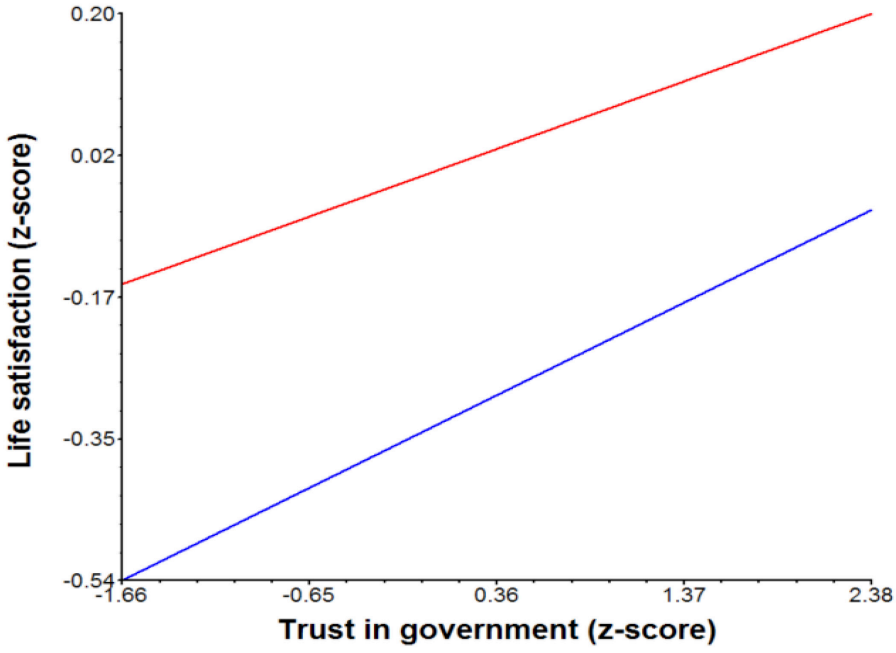
Notes. Religious belief correlates positively with perceived health when GDP is high, and this positive correlation is stronger when Gini is also high. On the other hand, religious belief correlates negatively with perceived health when GDP is low, and this negative correlation is stronger when Gini is high.

Figure 2. Interaction of religious belief with country's GDP and Gini.

Table 5
Trust in government as moderator of the effects of GDP and Gini on well-being outcomes

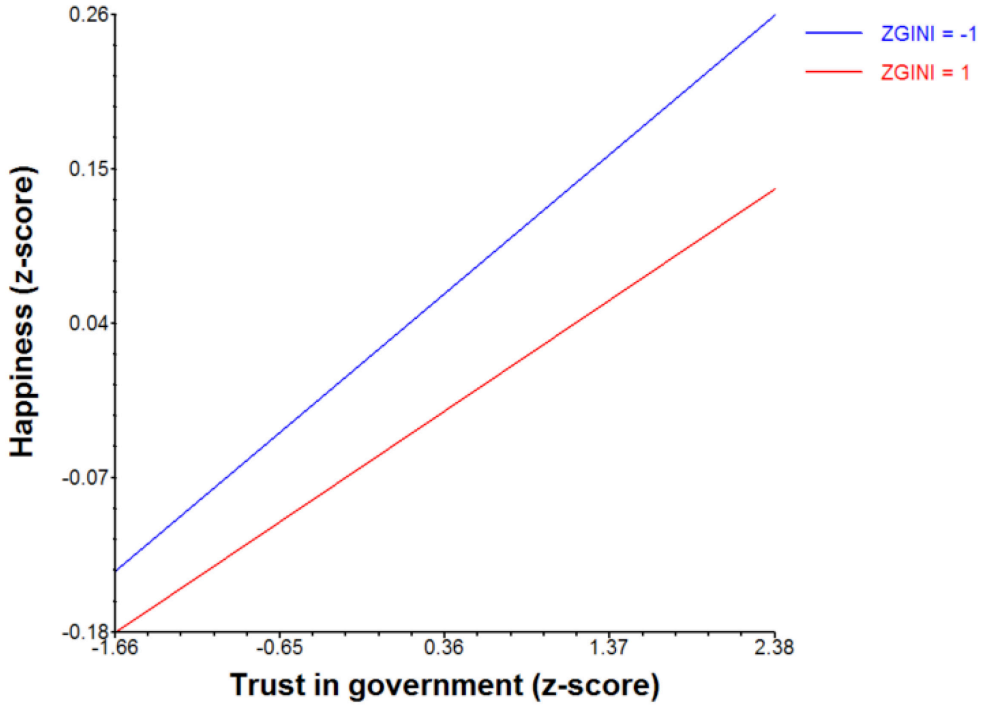
	Happiness			Health			Life satisfaction		
	ß	*t*	*p*	*ß*	*t*	*p*	*ß*	*t*	*p*
Level-1									
Age	-.10	-48.87	<.001	-.30	-151.14	<.001	-.05	-26.34	<.001
Marital status	.22	54.84	<.001	.09	22.69	<.001	.13	33.86	<.001
Gender	.03	7.92	<.001	-.11	-32.52	<.001	.02	5.28	<.001
Social class	.17	85.89	<.001	.14	79.25	<.001	.20	105.09	<.001
Trust in government	.09	35.65	<.001	.05	19.47	<.001	.10	41.89	<.001
Trust in government x GDP	-.01	-3.95	<.001	.00	1.21	.228	-.02	-6.10	<.001
Trust in government x GINI	-.01	-3.16	.002	.00	1.25	.211	-.00	-.20	.840
Trust in government x GDP x GINI	.00	.96	.337	-.00	-.91	.365	.00	.67	.501
Level-2									
GDP	.10	4.31	<.001	.11	7.29	<.001	.17	7.67	<.001
GINI	-.04	-1.51	.133	-.03	-1.54	.125	-.04	-1.78	.077
GDP x GINI	.02	.83	.406	.02	1.31	.192	.01	.43	.669
Level-3									
DUM 1	.15	1.58	.118	.13	1.75	.083	-.28	-3.10	.003
DUM 2	.09	1.16	.249	-.03	-.50	.618	-.09	-1.26	.213
DUM 3	.49	2.42	.017	.44	2.66	.009	.43	2.20	.030
DUM 4	.57	4.66	<.001	.24	2.39	.019	.54	4.52	<.001
DUM 5	.45	3.86	<.001	.16	1.66	.101	.46	4.13	<.001





Notes. Trust in government correlates positively with happiness and life satisfaction, and this positive correlation is stronger when country's GDP is lower.

Figure 3a. Trust in government interacts with GDP and Gini to predict happiness and life satisfaction.



Note. Trust in government correlates positively with happiness, and this correlation is stronger when country's Gini is lower.

Figure 3b. Trust in government interacts with country-level Gini to predict happiness.

Discussion

Exploratory analyses also showed that religious belief and trust in government also interacted with country's GDP and Gini in different ways. Religious belief is linked to greater health when country's GDP is high, but is associated with lower health when country's GDP is low. Religious belief also moderates the negative link of country's Gini to health, such that religious belief is linked to perceived health more strongly when Gini is high than when Gini is low. But, this is only the case when GDP is high. When GDP is low, religious belief is linked to

health more negatively when Gini is high than when Gini is low. Considering the compensatory control model, religious belief only serves compensatory functions when a country is doing well economically compared to when it is not.

The finding that religious belief does not serve a compensatory function when a country is poor can be explained by understanding how economic growth affects a country's citizens. In a growing economy with more job opportunities and better living conditions, being religious will help those who are not affected by the stress of inequality. Past studies that have shown positive correlations between religiosity and well-being were also conducted mostly in the United States—a country with greater economic growth but also exceptionally high rate of income inequality. However, given that poor countries are often populated with more religious people, the negative association between religious belief and citizens' health and the fact that that negative association is exacerbated by country's income inequality suggested that there is a limit to how much one can rely on a supernatural deity. Perhaps, when a country's economy is poor and resources are not equally distributed, the belief in a higher order might prevent individuals from actively taking things in their own hand to get out of their negative situations.

Trust in government is also linked to greater happiness and life satisfaction in general, but the associations also vary at different levels of GDP and Gini. Citizens who have higher trust in their government benefit from a greater boost in happiness and life satisfaction when a country is poor compared to when the country is wealthy, providing support for the system justification theory hypothesis. On the other hand, citizens who have higher trust in their government experience a greater boost in happiness and life satisfaction when wealth is more equally distributed compared to when it is not. These interactions appeared very trivial when they were illustrated in the graphs (Figures 3a and 3b), making it difficult to interpret the findings in any

meaningful way. However, because trust in government consistently yielded positive association with happiness and life satisfaction, this suggested that those living in poor economy or unequal system gain benefits from having more trust in their government.

From these exploratory analyses, we found that when people rely on a supernatural power or a government, the confidence in one's government might be a more stable and sustainable psychological resource whereas the psychological benefits of believing in God might go away for those living in poor economies, presumably because belief in God does not provide any tangible benefits. However, that conclusion calls into mind whether such compensatory control also might only be useful when resources for living well are available.