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SOCIAL TRUST IN CHINA: A THREE-DECADE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive examination of social trust in China. It addresses ongoing debates about how much people trust, whether there is a trust crisis, and where trust comes from. Our analysis of the extensive and harmonized data from the Chinese General Social Survey (2003-2021) and from the World Values Survey (1990-2018) spanning three decades shows that 1) Chinese people hold high levels of general trust in others, 2) the high social trust has been largely stable over the last three decades, and 3) political confidence and perceived fairness are two key drivers of trust. That said, Chinese people do show a marked low trust in several groups, such as strangers, businessmen, and religious individuals. Potential explanations are discussed. This study contributes to the key trust debates and also unveils novel trust patterns that can serve as valuable subjects for future research.

Keywords: China, social trust, radius of trust, political confidence, perceived fairness

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A cohesive and well-functioning society requires mutual trust among its members. For this reason, the last several decades have seen growing attention towards questions of who trusts, how it changes over time, and where it comes from (e.g., Alesina and La Ferrara 2002; Delhey and Newton 2003; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015; Paxton and Glanville 2015; Dinesen, Schaeffer, and Sønderskov 2020; Mewes et al. 2021). In this article, we ask these same questions in the context of China. Trust holds great significance for China's social cohesion, economic development, political governance, and population well-being has been well documented (Zhang and Ke 2003; Huhe, Chen, and Tang 2015; Feng et al. 2016; Lu 2020). However, debates are fervent regarding how much people trust, how trust may have changed over time, and the origins of trust.

In particular, a popular narrative suggests that trust is low in China due to the typical close family ties in Chinese societies. Long ago, Max Weber (1951) argued that “sib fetters” (overly restrictive family bonds) hampered the development of generalized trust necessary for the rise of modern capitalism in China. Building on Weber’s work, Fukuyama (1996) also highlighted that the centrality of the family has resulted in the lack of social trust in Chinese societies including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the People’s Republic of China. Deviating from Weber’s perspective, Fukuyama argued that while trust is important, it is not the sole path to modern capitalism. He suggested that low levels of trust have impeded the development of large-scale businesses in such societies (Fukuyama 1996).

Nonetheless, survey evidence does not align well with Fukuyama’s assertion that trust is low in Chinese societies (Steinhardt 2012; Fairbrother et al. 2022; Wu 2022). Many argue that the radius of trust problem that people in Confucian countries are more likely to interpret “most people” as in-group members in the standard measure of trust “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” may explain their exceptional high trust (Delhey, Newton, and Welzel 2011). Others suggest that strong political confidence and rapid socio-economic modernization have generated widespread social trust among Chinese citizens (Steinhardt 2012; Tao et al. 2014; Steinhardt and Delhey 2020).

Here, we outline three key debates within the growing studies of social trust in China. Specifically, a trust-level debate centers on the contrasting perspectives on how trustful Chinese people are (Fukuyama 1996; Steinhardt 2012). A trust-crisis debate revolves around how trust has changed over time, especially since the beginning of China’s reform and opening-up in the 1980s (Hu 2015; Wang, Zhang, and Wu 2017). Finally, a trust-origin debate focuses on where trust comes from in the Chinese context (Tao et al. 2014; Steinhardt and Delhey 2020; Fairbrother et al. 2022). Further, we provide an empirical analysis of these debates using data spanning three decades from the Chinese General Social Survey (2003-2021) as well as the World Values Survey (1990-2018). The extensive and harmonized data have a diverse array of trust measures including those without the explicit mention of “most people”, allowing to test whether high trust among Chinese is indeed from



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their narrow radius of trust (Delhey, Newton, and Welzel 2011). Taken together, the general goal of this study is to offer a comprehensive overview of the literature on social trust in China and present a detailed descriptive account using the extensive data we have compiled.

SOCIAL TRUST IN CHINA: KEY DEBATES

In what follows, we outline several key debates within the growing literature on social trust in China.

First is a level debate. The level debate centers on the contrasting perspectives on how trustful Chinese people are. On one hand, many suggest that social trust in China is scarce. Fukuyama characterized China and China-type societies including Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore as low-trust and argued that trust in China is primarily limited to relatives and close friends. At the same time, distrust towards non-kin and strangers is widespread (Fukuyama 1996). In addition to strong family bonds, China's rapid socioeconomic modernization might have caused low trust in China. For example, scholars have argued that economic development might have given rise to diverse social challenges such as population mobility, heightened inequality, prevalent social conflicts, and the erosion of traditional social norms, yet alternative mechanisms for social integration remain underdeveloped, leading to a state of widespread social anomie and low trust in China (Su, Ye, and Wang 2019).

However, survey-based studies challenge the notion that China is inherently a low-trust society. One common method used in these studies is to gauge social trust by asking respondents whether they believe "most people can be trusted." Data from the World Values Survey (WVS) contradict Fukuyama's assertion that social trust is low in Chinese societies (Inglehart 1999; Delhey, Newton, and Welzel 2011). Some suggest that the high trust from the survey question of "whether most people can be trusted" may come from China's narrow radius of trust problem, where Chinese people are more likely to interpret "most people" as in-group members (Newton, and Welzel 2011). Nonetheless, China ranks highest among Asian countries in trust, even when using a more refined measurement of trust (Tan and Tambyah 2010).

Second is a crisis debate. The trust-crisis debate is closely related to the level debate, but it revolves around how the trust level has changed over time, especially since the beginning of China's reform and opening up in the 1980s. Some suggest that the rapid socioeconomic moderation in China over the last several decades has led a "trust-crisis" that Chinese people have become less and less trusting in others. This has been referred to as "the pessimistic view of modernization" (Steinhardt and Delhey 2020; see also Wu and Shi 2020). There has been also empirical evidence that suggests a decline in trust in China. For example, an APC (age, period, and cohort) analysis shows a declining trend in social trust from 1990 to 2007, net of age and cohort effects (Hu 2015). Another cross-temporal meta-analysis involving 141 studies ($N = 64,853$) found that Chinese college students' scores on Rotter's Interpersonal Trust Scale decreased 0.54 SD from 1998 to 2016 (Yang



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and Xin 2020; Rotter 1967). The rise of income inequality due to rapid economic modernization is often listed as the primary driver for the decline of trust (Sun and Wang 2012; Yang and Xin 2020; Deng and Yu 2021).

On the other hand, an optimistic view of modernization suggests that China's modernization has led to an increase, not a decrease in trust. The underlying argument is that in the process of modernization, high income and better education as well as increasing exposure to diverse groups and reducing traditional social constraints may encourage Chinese people to trust unfamiliar and diverse individuals. Empirical analysis of data from the WVS shows a strong association between regional modernization and higher levels of general trust (Steinhardt and Delhey 2020). The finding that general trust is influenced by the social environment of modernization lends support for the perspective of modernization optimists and challenges the commonly discussed "trust crisis" in China. Other studies have shown that people living in areas with more migrant residents have higher intergroup social trust, which may indicate that exposure to more out-group neighbours can remove preconceived stigmas and foster tolerance (Wang, Zhang, and Wu 2017). Social trust is also found higher among urban residents and younger individuals, particularly those born after 1978 (Zhou and Hu 2013). These studies provide indirect support for the positive impact of modernization.

Third is an origin debate. The origin debate focuses on asking where trust comes from in China. This debate largely follows the long-standing cultural vs experiential debate in broader trust literature. The cultural perspective suggests that trust is learned and stabilized early in life from cultural socialization (Uslaner 2008; Wu 2021), whereas the experiential perspective suggests that trust reflects ongoing experiences and social interactions and hence is malleable (Paxton and Glanville 2015; Mewes et al. 2022).

Evidence supporting the cultural perspective is well documented. For example, Chinese individuals who experienced the totalitarian Mao's Era in the formative stage of their life course stand out in evidently lower trust in generalized others, relative to those cohorts with the formative stage falling in the Reform Era (Hu 2015). A more recent study compares trust among four major Chinese groups living in Canada— Canadian-born Chinese, Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, and Taiwan Chinese and shows that trust variations align well with birthplace origins. Hong Kong-born Chinese exhibit significantly lower social trust, while Mainland Chinese Canadians demonstrate the highest social trust (Wu and Wang 2024). These studies highlight the importance of cultural roots in shaping people's social trust.

Following the experiential perspective, many studies have also demonstrated the effect of ongoing experiences on people's trust in China. An analysis of the family-paired data from China Family Panel Studies reveals that not only does an individual's personal encounter with discrimination affect their trust levels, but the discriminatory experiences faced by their spouse also exert a negative influence (Fan 2019). Complementing this, Cheung et al. (2022) delve into the relationship between social unfairness and trust in



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China. Their findings indicate that personal experiences of social unfairness in 2010 significantly predict lower social trust in 2014 (Cheung, Yeung, and Guo 2022). In Chen et al.'s (2023) study, rural-to-urban migrants exhibit significantly lower levels of generalized trust compared to urban or rural nonmigrants, even after adjusting for relevant sociodemographic factors. This challenges the cultural perspective, suggesting that trust levels are not inherited but influenced by experience-based factors. The lower trust in migrants is attributed to negative experiences in city life, highlighting the role of environmental and experiential factors over cultural heritage in shaping generalized trust.

Within the experiential perspective, a key line of research emphasizes the importance of institutions and individuals' interactions with institutions in shaping social trust. On one hand, positive governmental actions, such as facilitating information flow through active communication and transparent information practices, substantially enhance trust (Sun and Wang 2012). Conversely, negative governmental actions, such as instances of corruption, aggressive law enforcement, and the abuse of privilege, significantly diminish trust (Fairbrother et al. 2022; Wu and Shi 2020). In fact, both the pessimistic and optimistic views of modernization reflect the experiential perspective of trust (Steinhardt and Delhey 2020). China's economic development and the increased level of affluence have the immediate effect of enhancing public support for the government, which may have led to high mutual trust among Chinese citizens (Wang 2005). Superior economic performance and the resultant improvement in living standards—economic modernization—have also led to an increase in political trust and, indirectly, to the rise in social trust (Tao et al. 2014; Steinhardt and Delhey 2020).

The origin debate also includes the radius of trust problem. More specifically, Chinese tend to show a lower radius of trust than people from Western societies, meaning that they also tend to show more trust in in-group people including relatives, friends, and people they know personally, and less trust in strangers and others they do not personally know. The narrow radius of trust makes the Chinese more likely to interpret “most people” as in-group and people they know, leading to high trust (Delhey, Newton, and Welzel 2011). The radius of trust problem raises concerns about comparing levels of generalized trust across these countries and emphasizes the importance of considering variations in the size of trust circles. To address variations in the size of trust circles across countries, Delhey et al. (2011) have used an adjusted trust score. Interestingly, after the adjustment, the trust score for Mainland China becomes less exceptional. However, compared to several other East Asian societies, China requires a less significant adjustment, and despite this adjustment, the adjusted trust score for China remains in the top third among the sampled countries and surpasses the trust scores of France, Spain, and South Korea. Other studies suggest that social trust among Chinese extends beyond immediate family, lineages, and neighbors, encompassing all members of village communities. For example, the average level of trust among Chinese villagers towards relatives and close friends was slightly higher compared to trust in other categories of particularized trust. However, this difference was not significant, indicating that ordinary Chinese villagers generally trust their fellow



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villagers regardless of clan or lineage identities, as well as whether they are neighbors (Huge 2014).

Next, we provide an empirical examination of social trust in China. Our goal is to address these ongoing debates about how much people trust, whether there is a trust crisis, and what are the key factors that may shape trust in China.

AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

DATA

The primary data source for our analysis is the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS).⁴ Initiated in 2003, the CGSS is a comprehensive nationwide survey designed to capture a broad spectrum of social, economic, and demographic information in China. The survey employs a rigorous multistage, stratified, and clustered sampling methodology to ensure a representative sample of the Chinese population (Bian and Li 2012). With its periodic nature, the CGSS provides valuable insights into the dynamics of social change over time. Our analysis will also incorporate data from The World Values Survey (WVS), a global research project that investigates socio-cultural and political change in many countries around the world.⁵ China has been actively participated in the WVS program since 1990. A total of four waves of data that include China samples are available for single-country investigations or cross-national comparative research.

MEASURING TRUST

Numerous tools exist for measuring social trust. In survey research, scholars have often measured trust using people's perception of the trustworthiness of others including, for example, people's perception of the probability of recovering a lost wallet, perception of how helpful most people are, and perception of whether people try to take advantage of others (Glaeser et al. 2000). Among many survey items, the most commonly used are the following three:

1. Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?
2. Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?
3. Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or that they are mostly looking out for themselves?

⁴ More information about the CGSS, please visit: <http://cgss.ruc.edu.cn/English/Home.htm>

⁵ Information about the WVS can be found through this website:
<https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>



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These three items have been routinely asked in major surveys such as the General Social Survey, the World Values Survey, the Global Barometer Survey, and the European Social Survey. Trust scholars often combine all three items and create a scale of trust. The three-item scale has been validated as a reliable measure of trust across cultures and over time (Reeskens and Hooghe 2008; Zmerli and Newton 2008; Dinesen 2011) and is positively correlated with the trust measured using the trust game (Johnson and Mislin 2012). Among these three items, the first item introduced by Rosenberg (1956) - Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with other people? - is widely considered to be the standard measure of trust. Many surveys also include trust in specific groups of people. Respondents were asked how much trust they have in more specific targets ranging from people in general, families, relatives, friends, and strangers.

The Chinese General Social Survey program (CGSS, 2003-2021) includes more than 40 different question items that aim to assess social trust in China. Some questions were also repeated over time. This allows us to study the over-time change in trust. Many questions are the same as those found in other major surveys such as the US General Social Survey and the World Values Survey. This enables us to place China in the global context and understand social trust in China and how it changes over time from a comparative perspective. Throughout the 13 waves of the CGSS (2003-2021), only the 2008 wave lacked any discernible item suitable for evaluating social trust in China. Table A1 provides a summary of the items included in each of the 12 waves of the CGSS that can be used to evaluate social trust in China. In this article, we consider all the measures. Many items were repeated in different years, enabling the tracking of trust changes over time.

RESULTS

To begin with, we consider the extent of trust in others among the Chinese population and assess whether there have been any changes in social trust over time. We achieve this by employing a variety of distinct measures. First, we focus on the standard trust measure- *Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or you cannot be too careful in dealing with others?* This item has also been included in the World Values Survey, a program in which China has participated since 1990. This allows us to incorporate the WVS data to track social trust in China for a longer period. Responses to this standard question were commonly coded in a binary fashion, with 0 corresponding to "you cannot be too careful" and 1 to "most people can be trusted". In WVS and the 2011 CGSS, responses were also coded in the binary format. However, in the years 2006, 2012, 2017, and 2022, responses were categorized into four options: 1) Most people can almost always be trusted, 2) Most people can usually be trusted, 3) You usually need to be careful in dealing with others, and 4) You always need to be careful in dealing with others. For enhanced comparability and longitudinal tracking, I converted the responses from these years into binary format.



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Figure 1

Percentage of people who say most people can be trusted in China, 1990-2021

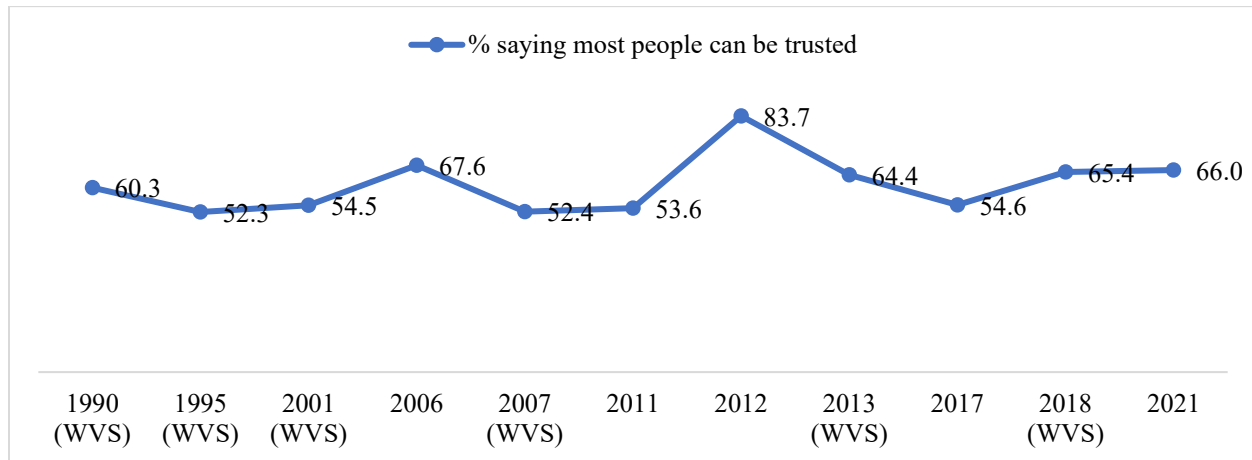
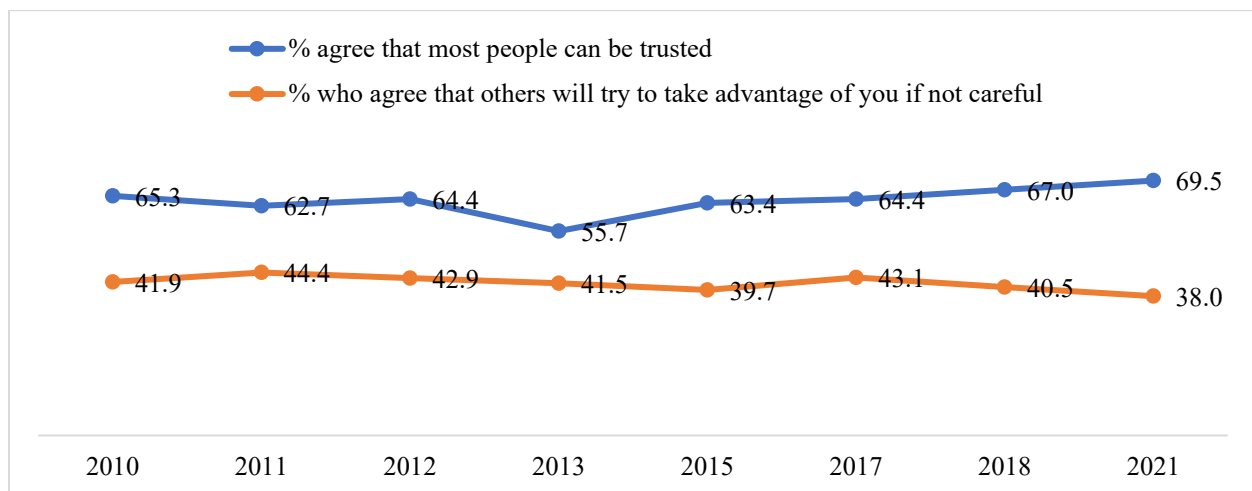


Figure 2

Percentage of people who trust or suspect in China, 2010-2021



Using data from both the WVS and the CGSS, Figure 1 shows that more than half of the Chinese population believes that most people can be trusted, and such a high level of social trust has remained relatively stable since 1990. This finding is consistent with prior research. For example, panel data from the Chinese Family Panel Studies, a nationally representative, biennial longitudinal survey launched in 2010 by the Institute of Social Science Survey of Peking University, also indicate that social trust in China is high: 54 percent, 54 percent, and 56 percent of respondents said that most people can be trusted in 2012, 2014, and 2016, respectively (Fairbrother et al. 2022; Wu 2022). In contrast, data from the WVS suggest that globally, merely a quarter of the world's population (approximately 25%) holds the belief that most people can be trusted. In parallel, data from



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the U.S. General Social Survey revealed that only around 32 percent of Americans expressed trust in most people.

Next, we examine the two most consistent measures of social trust in the CGSS. They are 1) *Generally speaking, do you agree that most people can be trusted*, and 2) *Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?* Both items have been consistently included in every CGSS wave since 2010. Responses to both questions were coded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree, 2=somewhat disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, to 4=somewhat agree, and to 5=strongly agree. We recoded both variables combining the last two categories to indicate the percentage of people who agree that most people can be trusted (trust), and the percentage of people who agree that others will try to take advantage if you if not being careful (suspect). Figure 2 shows that the majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that most people can be trusted. The level has not changed since 2010. By contrast, only about 40 percent of Chinese agree (about 35% all years) or strongly agree (about 6% all years) that in China, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you. This means most respondents would not agree that others will try to take advantage of them even if they are not being careful. These measures consistently suggest that social trust in China is high and stable. The high trust found in the 2021 CGSS suggests that the Chinese did not change their trust in others during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus far, the measures we have discussed all include “most people” in the question wording. Some may argue that the Chinese show high trust in “most people” because they interpret “most people” as in-group members such as families, relatives, friends, and people they know personally, which is described as the “radius of trust problem”. We turn to a few other measures included in the CGSS that do not have the specific wording of “most people”. One item in the 2006 CGSS asked: *Do the following characteristics (not very trusting of others) align with your personality?* Responses were coded with five categories including 1=very much so, 2=somewhat, 3=neutral, 4=not very much, and 5) not at all. The data reveal that only about 26.1% of respondents indicated “very much so” or “somewhat”. This means that the vast majority of respondents (73.9%) do not perceive a lack of trust in others as a defining aspect of their personality. Another item in the 2017 CGSS asked: *Do you think that people, given the opportunity, will try to take advantage of you, or will they try to be fair?* About 80 percent of respondents indicated that they think people will always or usually try to be fair, while the other 20 percent said that they think people always or most of time look to take advantage of you.

In addition to these general trust measures, the CGSS also assesses trust in specific target groups such as families, relatives, friends, those people meet in different contexts and situations, strangers, as well as government officials, policemen and so on. In 2005, the CGSS included a set of questions asked: *In general social interactions or contacts that do not directly involve financial interests, how many of the following individuals do you think you can trust?* A total of thirteen specific groups were listed (see Figure 3). Responses were coded



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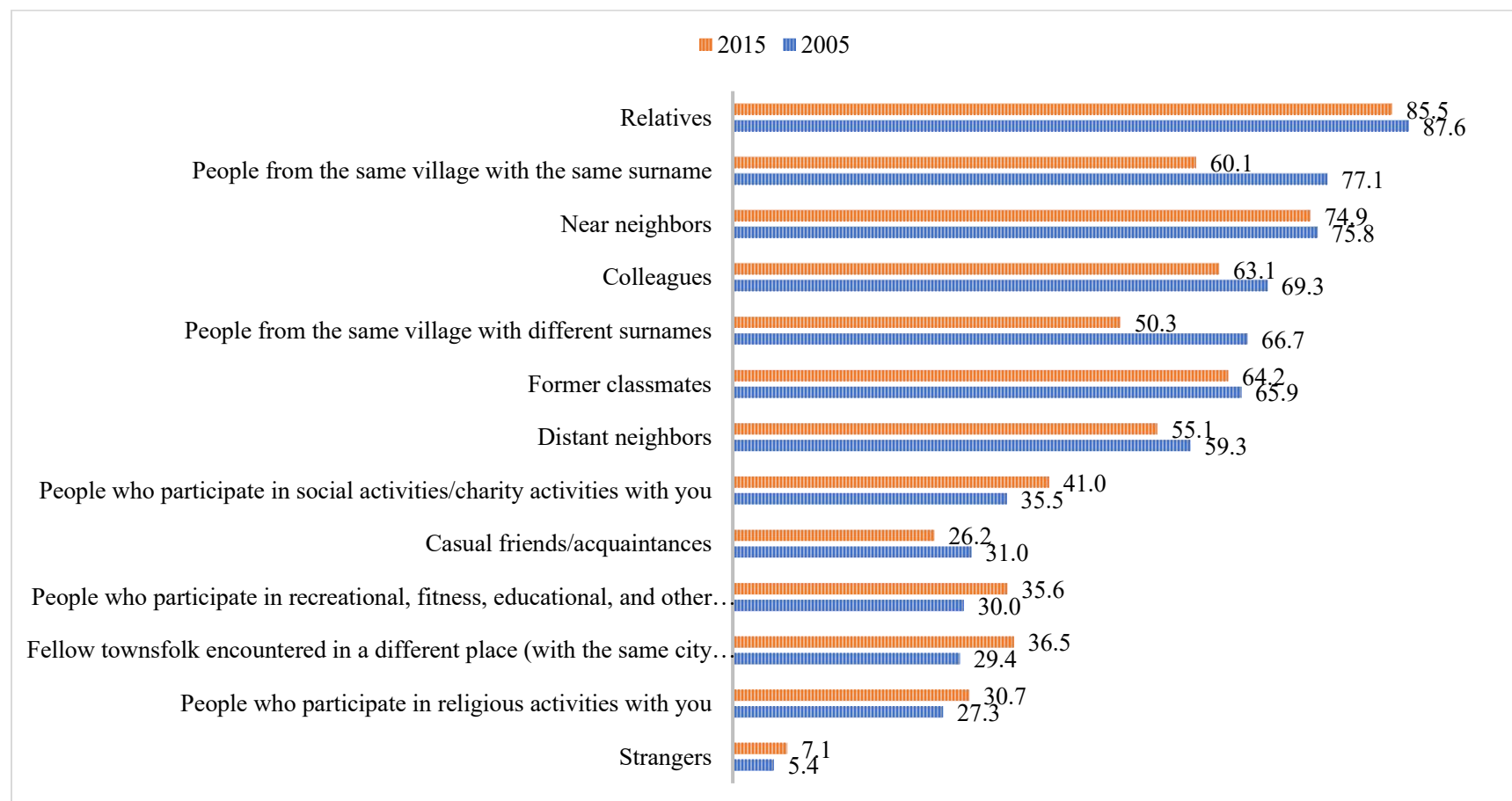
on a 5-point scale, including 1=vast majority cannot be trusted, 2=majority cannot be trusted, 3=half-half, 4=majority can be trusted, and 5=vast majority can be trusted. The same set of questions were repeated in the year 2015. Figure 3 illustrates the ranked variation in the percentage of individuals who expressed trust in the majority or vast majority across various groups in both 2005 and 2015. Clearly, Chinese individuals exhibit substantial trust in in-group members, such as relatives, people from the same village with the same surname (family name), close neighbors, colleagues, and classmates. Nevertheless, their trust in casual friends and those involved in social, charity, and religious activities is lower. Notably, their trust in strangers is exceptionally low, a topic we will delve into further in the subsequent discussion. The overall pattern is largely consistent across both years.



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Figure 3.

Trust In Target Groups in Social Interactions or Contacts That Do Not Directly Involve Financial Interests, 2005-2015

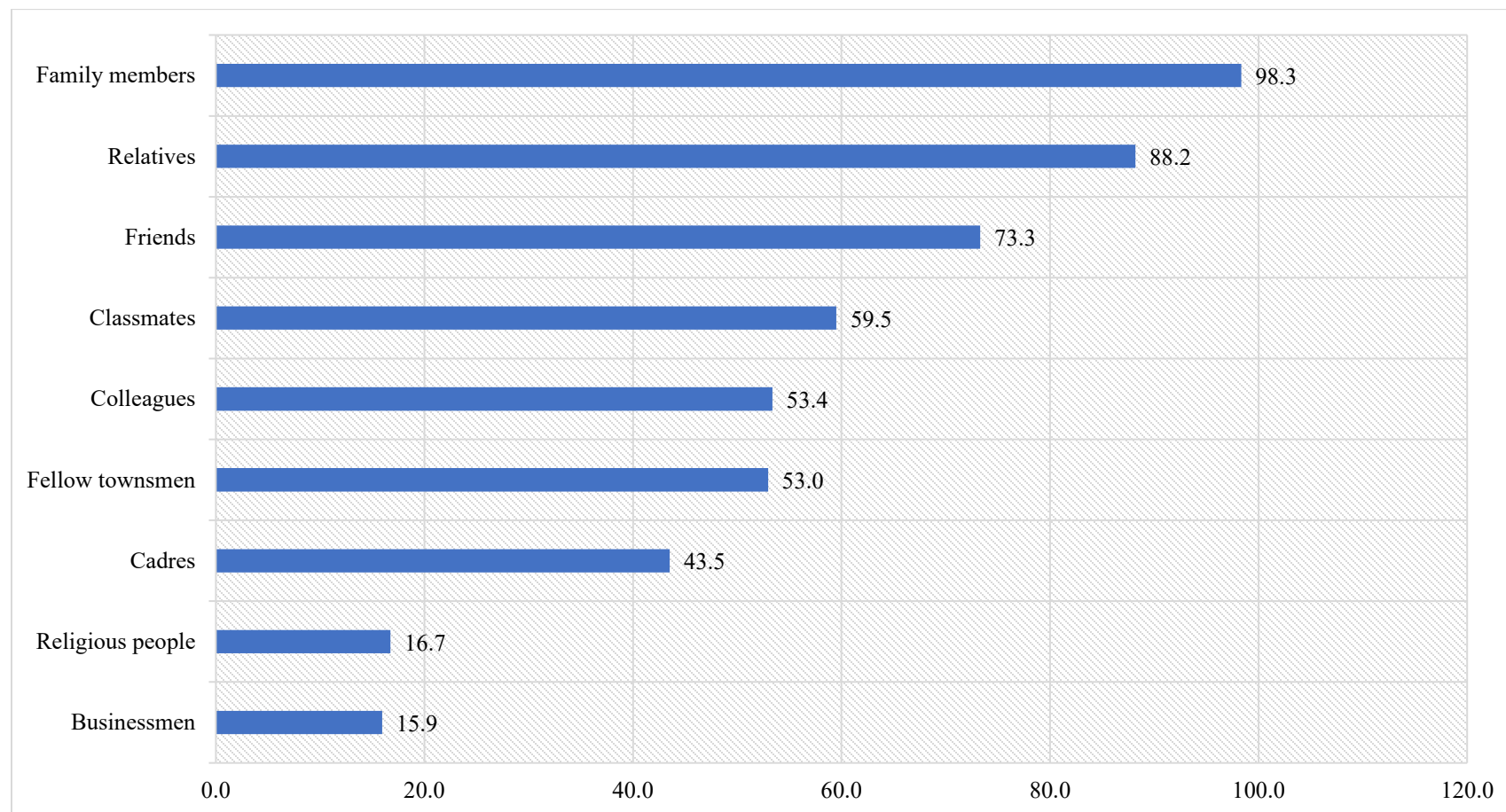




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Figure 4a.

Trust In Target Groups, 2010

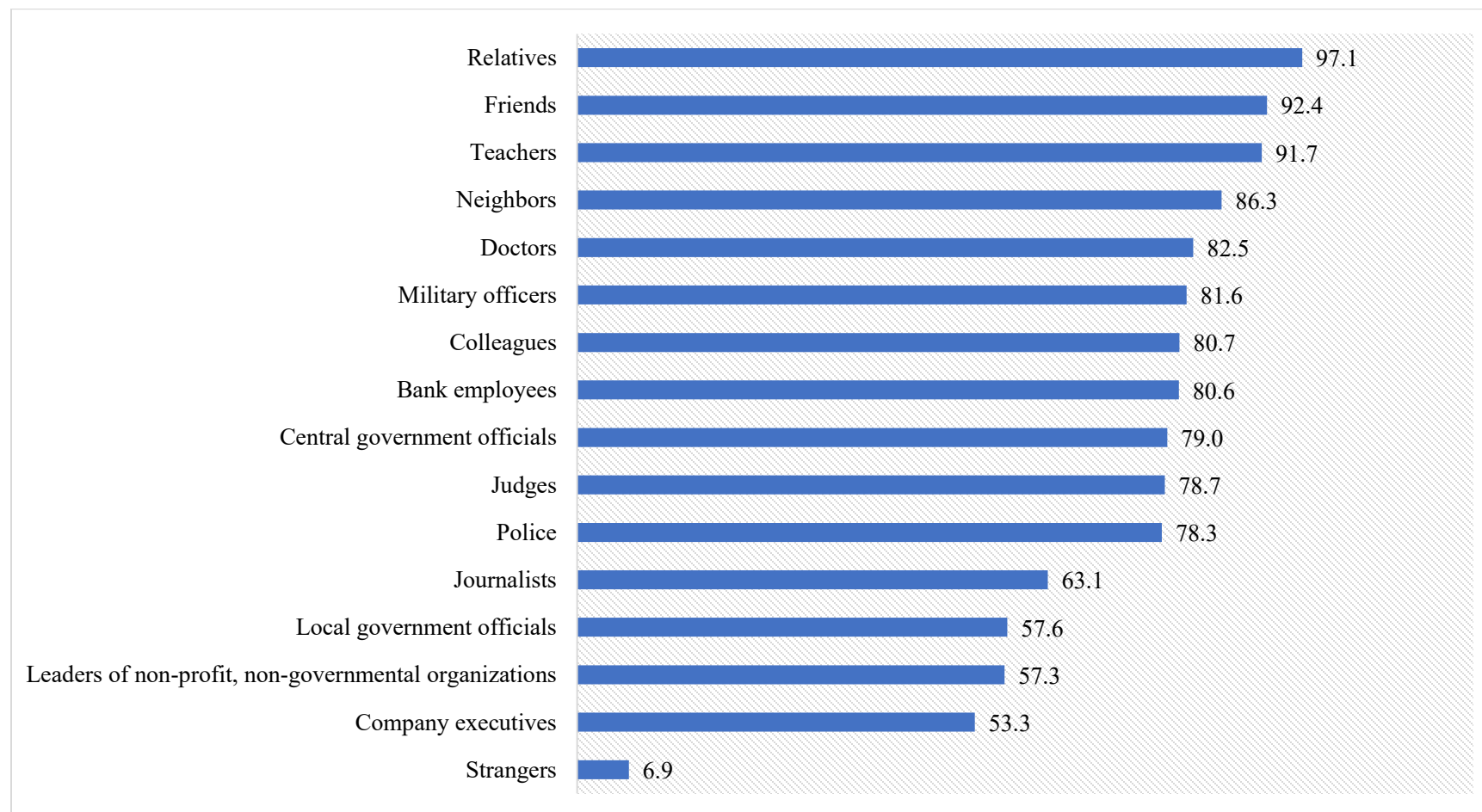




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Figure 4b

Trust In Target Groups, 2012





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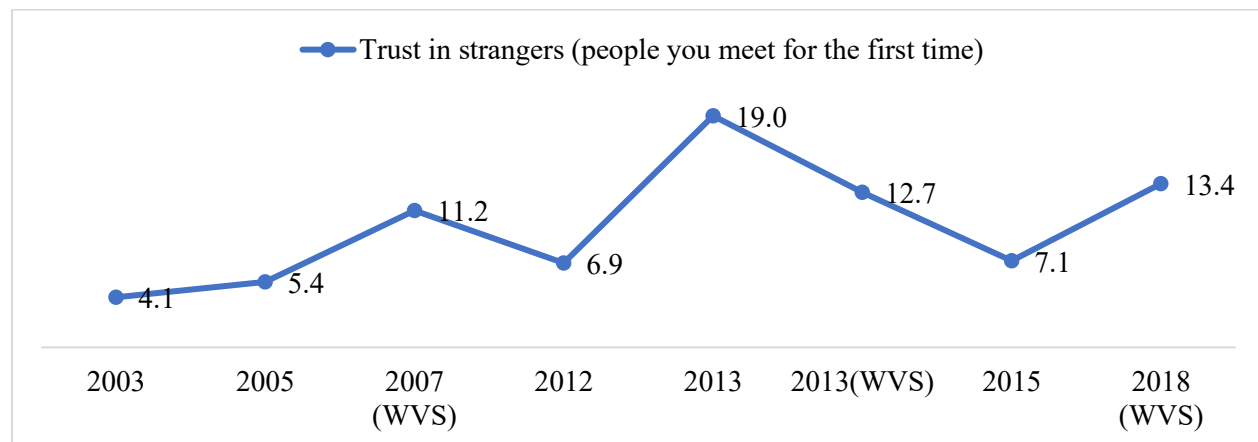
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In 2010 and 2012, the CGSS introduced a simplified set of questions also aimed at gauging people's trust in various specific groups, including relatives, friends, neighbors, doctors, and government officials. The question was: *How much do you trust the following groups?* The two different years featured some common groups but also included distinct ones. Responses were categorized into four options: 1) Completely distrust, 2) Somewhat distrust, 3) Somewhat trust, and 4) Completely trust. To indicate trust, as opposed to a lack of trust, I combined the "somewhat trust" and "completely trust" categories. Figures 4a & 4b show the ranked variation in the percentage of individuals who placed trust in various groups in 2010 (a) and 2012(b), respectively. These figures suggest that Chinese individuals show very high levels of trust in various of groups including fellow townsmen, doctors, government officials, journalists, and NGO leaders. Again, this means that the radius of trust may not be the explanation for why social trust is high in China. Nonetheless, there are several groups Chinese people do not seem to trust much. They are religious people, businessmen, and particularly strangers.

Trust in strangers has sometimes been used to indicate generalized trust (e.g., Stolle 2002; Mewes 2014). This is puzzling in the Chinese context. While Chinese show very high trust in most people and in various groups that they have no contact with, but just not in "strangers". In 2003, the first wave of CGSS included a simple measure of people's trust in strangers. The question asked: Generally speaking, how much do you trust strangers? Responses range from 1=Not at all, 2=Not much, 3=Neutral, to 4=Trust and 5=Very trust. The identical item was administered again in 2013. Additionally, in WVS, an item assessing trust in strangers (specifically, whether one trusts people they meet for the first time) has been included in the most recent three waves. Combining all the accessible data on trust in strangers, Figure 5 charts the level of people's trust in strangers or people they meet for the first time from 2003 to 2018 in China. The data reveals that trust in strangers has consistently remained at a low level in China, although there appears to be a slight upward trend.

Figure 5

Trust in strangers, 2003-2018





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To further address the radius of trust problem, we adopt an approach akin to that employed by Delhey et al. (2011). We examine how the Chinese population perceives the term “most people” and its correlation with specific groups, including relatives, friends, government officials, and strangers. Table 1 presents the correlation matrix that illustrates the relationship between trust in most people (measured by the question “do you agree that most people can be trusted?” on a 5-point Likert scale) and trust in specific target groups. The data used for this analysis are derived from the 2010, 2012, and 2015 CGSS surveys, which included relevant questions on these topics. Correlation coefficients are arranged in order to signify the strength of each correlation pair. The table reveals two notable patterns.

Table 1

Correlation Matrix of Trust In Most People and Trust In Specific Groups of People (Ranked Coefficients)

	Most people can be trusted?
How much do you trust the following people?	2010 CGSS
Cadres	0.23
Colleagues	0.21
Fellow townsmen	0.21
Businessmen	0.18
Friends	0.18
Classmates	0.17
Relatives	0.17
Family members	0.07
Religious people	0.03
How much do you trust the following people	2012 CGSS
Neighbors	0.22
Colleagues	0.21
Local government officials	0.19
Central government officials	0.19
Judges	0.18
Police	0.17
Friends	0.17



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Table 1

Correlation Matrix of Trust In Most People and Trust In Specific Groups of People (Ranked Coefficients) (Contd.)

	Most people can be trusted?
Strangers	0.17
Journalists	0.16
Doctors	0.16
Military officers	0.15
Company executives	0.15
Teachers	0.14
Leaders of non-profit, non-governmental organizations	0.14
Relatives	0.13
Bank employees	0.13
How many of the following individuals do you think you can trust?	2015 CGSS
People from the same village with the same surname	0.29
Distant neighbors	0.29
Near neighbors	0.27
People from the same village with different surnames	0.27
Colleagues	0.26
Fellow townsfolk encountered in a different place (with the same city or county as the boundary)	0.24
Former classmates	0.23
People who participate in recreational, fitness, educational, and other leisure activities with you.	0.23
Casual friends/acquaintances	0.23
People who participate in social activities/charity activities with you	0.22
Relatives	0.21
People who participate in religious activities with you	0.18
Strangers	0.16



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Finally, we consider demographic and social indicators of trust in China. I use the most recent wave of the CGSS conducted in 2021 for this purpose. In particular, I consider how social engagement is (how often do you go out and socialize with friends? 1=never, 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, 4=often 5=very frequently), self-rated general health (1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent), and perceived fairness in society (1=completely unfair, 2=relatively unfair, 3=hard to say whether fair or unfair, 4=relatively fair, and 5=completely fair) are associated with trust (as measured using three different question items). Table 2 shows the correlations of social trust using OLS with standardized coefficients. Largely consistent with findings from previous research, it shows that age, being a CCP member, and being educated, are all associated with higher trust. Trust is also positively associated with higher levels of social engagement and better health. Notably, the results consistently show that perceived fairness has the strongest association with trust among all indicators, regardless of how trust is measured. Model (1) shows that one unit increase in perceived fairness is associated with a 0.3 increase in trust in most people. Model (2) shows that one unit increase in perceived fairness is associated with a 0.19 decrease in saying that others will try to take advantage of you if you are not being careful. Using a slightly different measure, Model (3) shows that one unit increase in perceived fairness is associated with a 0.146 increase in trust in most people.

Table 2.
OLS regression models for social trust in China, CGSS 2021

	Model (1): Agree that most people be trusted?	Model (2): Agree that others will try to take advantage of you if not being careful	Model (3): Believe that most people can be trusted?
Female (0=no, 1=yes)	-0.044 (-1.91)	-0.159*** (-5.86)	0.039 (1.26)
Age (in years, 18-99)	0.008*** (9.76)	-0.003** (-2.90)	0.002 (1.45)
Urban (0=no, 1=yes)	-0.108*** (-3.77)	0.028 (0.81)	0.064 (1.70)
Rural Hukou	-0.010 (-0.34)	-0.075* (-2.21)	0.092* (2.38)
Personal income (in dollars)	0.000 (1.07)	0.000 (0.04)	0.000 (1.47)
University (0=no,1=yes)	0.128*** (3.96)	-0.141*** (-3.70)	0.072 (1.62)
Party member (0=no,1=yes)	0.095** (2.86)	-0.104* (-2.47)	0.069 (1.61)
Religious person (0=no, 1=yes)	-0.052 (-1.11)	0.049 (0.87)	-0.052 (-0.83)
Minority (0=no, 1=yes)	-0.083 (-1.52)	0.026 (0.39)	-0.027 (-0.39)
Subjective social class (1=lower, 5=upper)	0.021 (1.60)	-0.062*** (-3.82)	-0.004 (-0.21)
Perceived fairness (1=completely unfair, 5=completely fair)	0.300*** (21.79)	-0.191*** (-12.40)	0.146*** (8.43)

Table 2.
OLS regression models for social trust in China, CGSS 2021 (Contd.)

	Model (1): Agree that most people be trusted?	Model (2): Agree that others will try to take advantage of you if not being careful	Model (3): Believe that most people can be trusted?
General health (1=very poor, 5=excellent)	0.031* (2.51)	-0.014 (-0.98)	0.004 (0.23)
Social engagement (1=never, 5=very frequently)	0.033** (3.10)	-0.012 (-0.93)	0.050*** (3.49)
Provinces	yes	yes	yes
Constant	2.025*** (21.88)	4.100*** (37.92)	1.998*** (16.98)
N	7077	7060	2404
R ²	0.129	0.054	0.063

t statistics in parentheses

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001



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Discussion

We report several important findings. First, generalized social trust is high and stable in China. Our examination of diverse trust measures consistently reveals that Chinese individuals hold a high level of trust in general others, irrespective of the framing of the question. More than half of the Chinese population asserts that most people can be trusted, and they hold the belief that most individuals aim to act fairly. Most Chinese also express high levels of trust in various target groups, encompassing both in-group members (e.g., relatives, friends, and neighbors) and individuals they might not be personally acquainted with, such as fellow townsmen and professionals in social and political organizations (government officials, journalists, bank employees, and company executives). This high level of social trust was initially documented in 1990 through the World Values Survey (WVS), and this level has remained relatively stable over the years, persisting even amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. China's high social trust is evident across various surveys, encompassing the World Values Survey (WVS), the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), and the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS). Hence, the strong empirical evidence presented here refutes the simplistic categorization of China as a "low-trust society". The available evidence also dispels the narrative about a trust crisis emerging amidst China's swift social and economic modernization.

Second, high trust in China cannot be solely ascribed to problems of measurement validity including the radius of trust problem. Scholars seeking to understand social trust in China have proposed that survey results may be influenced by factors like the authoritarian political system or cultural conditions (Steinhardt 2012). Specifically, the concept of a narrow "radius of trust" (Fukuyama 1995; Delhey et al. 2011), wherein Chinese individuals are more inclined to interpret "most people" as in-group members rather than out-group strangers, is suggested as the reason for the widespread belief among the Chinese that most people can be trusted. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence supporting this explanation. Notably, our analysis of question items without the explicit mention of "most people" also reveals consistently high levels of trust among Chinese individuals. Moreover, Chinese respondents exhibit high levels of trust in various target groups, including neighbors, people from the same village, colleagues, governmental officials, doctors, and teachers.

Third, there is a marked lack of trust in strangers in China. Chinese hold high trust in "most people" and in various groups of people that they do not necessarily know or have contact with. But few of them would say they trust in strangers. Why is there such a discrepancy between "trust in most people" and "trust in strangers"? Some argue that "trust in strangers" reflects generalized social trust (Stolle 2002; Mewes 2014). This may not be the case in the Chinese context. In Western societies, strangers are commonly considered as individuals we don't know personally—essentially, anyone unfamiliar. However, in the Chinese context, strangers (陌生人) are not merely individuals we lack personal acquaintance with; rather, they are those whom we believe we will never establish any *guanxi* relationships within a specific situation (Yao et al. 2017). Chinese individuals might



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label people as "strangers" even if they are personally acquainted with them. They could categorize others as "strangers" simply because they know each other only superficially and have no intention of cultivating *guanxi* relationships. Long ago, Chinese sociologist Xiaotong Fei underscored the distinctive nature of social relationships in China, emphasizing that the distinctions between ingroups and outgroups are not rigid but rather relative and contingent (Fei 1992). His theory of the "differential mode of association" could prove valuable in comprehending trust dynamics in China. Further, the social and political image of "strangers (陌生人)," "often carries negative connotations (e.g., untrustworthy) in China. This is also true for other groups such as "businessmen (商人)", "religious individuals (宗教人士)", and "non-locals" (外地人). To this point, Luo and Wang (2020) have recently used a framed field experiment method with local and nonlocal Hukou pupils to show that young student subjects will show more trust towards local Hukou pupils compared to nonlocal Hukou pupils, and they will show higher trustworthiness towards partners who share Hukou identity than those with a different Hukou identity. This could also be the reason why Chinese express significantly lower levels trust in businessmen, religious persons, and in particular strangers (see Figure 4a). That said, we also see a slight upward trend of trust in strangers among Chinese people (Figure 5). Urbanization and increasing population mobility have significantly transformed Chinese society into what can be described as a "stranger society." This concept reflects a shift from traditional, close-knit communities to more anonymous, individualistic urban settings. As people become more familiar with living with "strangers", their trust in them may increase over time.

Finally, high social trust among the Chinese could come from their strong political confidence and high levels of perceived fairness in Chinese society. It is long argued and empirically well documented that "trusting in state" is highly associated with "trusting in people" both in Western societies (Rothstein and Stolle 2008; Sønderskov and Dinesen 2016), and in China (Steinhardt 2012; Tao et al. 2014). We have also shown strong correlations between Chinese people's trust in most people and their trust in political officials. When people trust their government, they show more satisfaction with government performance (Miao 2023), enhancing their political trust (Sønderskov and Dinesen 2016). This means that Chinese people's high political confidence could be one key cause for their high trust in others.

In particular, we have shown that perceived fairness in society is one of the strongest predictors of social trust in China. This is also highly consistent with existing literature that shows economic equality and equality of opportunity are the two major causes of social trust (Rothstein and Uslaner 2005; You 2012). Our additional analysis shows that over 61 percent of respondents indicated that they believe society is relatively (52.3%) or completely fair (7.97%). Less than 20 percent of respondents said society is relatively unfair (13.98%) or completely unfair (4.28%). Others (21.45%) said it is hard to say. Actual inequality is high in China, but often times, perception of inequality matters more than actual inequality. Low awareness of actual inequality and high levels of perceived fairness may also contribute to China's high trust. Data from the most recent wave of CGSS (2021)



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shows that social trust can be well predicted based on certain demographics, including age, as well as socioeconomic markers such as education, subjective social class, and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) membership. These patterns align consistently with the findings established in the existing literature. This provides indirect support that Chinese people are indeed very trusting.

CONCLUSION

Is social trust really lower in Chinese societies? In this study, we have provided a thorough analysis of social trust in China, utilizing data from the Chinese General Social Survey (2003-2021) and the World Values Survey (1990-2018). We adopted a variety of trust measures including questions that ask about how much trust respondents place in most people and in general and specific targets as well as questions aimed at gauging individuals' self-evaluation of their trusting personality. Results consistently show that Chinese people hold high and stable trust in general others. This challenges the popular assertion that China is a "low-trust society" and dispels the concern of a trust crisis emerging amidst China's rapid socioeconomic modernization over the past few decades. However, Chinese people do show a marked low trust in strangers. Nonetheless, this low trust in strangers may not reflect their general trust in others, but their categorization of "strangers" in their social relationships as well as the social meanings it carries in Chinese culture.

Our analysis also suggests that high trust among Chinese citizens may come from their strong political confidence and high levels of perceived fairness. Why do Chinese people have high and stable political confidence and why they show high perceived fairness despite China's income inequality is among the highest in the world? Some argue that these patterns stem from misinformation driven by political fear. However experimental studies also show that Chinese citizens do express their genuine attitudes toward their government without fear (Stockmann et al. 2018). Finding answers to why the Chinese people trust their government and view their highly unequal society as largely fair may help explain why they hold high trust in others.

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APPENDIX

Table A1.

Trust measures in CGSS, 2003-2021

Year	Variable label	Question wording in Chinese	Original response categories in Chinese	Question-wording	Response categories (recoded)
2003	truststr	一般说来, 您对社会上的陌生人是否信任?	1) 非常不信任 2) 不信任 3) 一般 4) 信任 5) 非常信任	Generally speaking, how much do you trust strangers?	1) Not at all, 2) Not much, 3) Neutral, 4) Trust, 5) Very trust
2004		在不直接涉及金钱利益的一般社会交往/接触中, 您觉得下列人士中可以信任的人多不多呢?	绝大多数不可信 1 多数不可信 2 可信与不可信者各半 3 多数可信 4 绝大多数可信 5	In general social interactions or contacts that do not directly involve financial interests, how many of the following individuals do you think you can trust?	1)Vast majority cannot be trusted, 2) Majority cannot be trusted, 3) Half-half, 4) Majority can be trusted, 5) Vast majority can be trusted
2005	E14	(近)邻		Near neighbors	
	E14a	(城镇的)远邻/街坊 或 (乡村)邻居		Distant neighbors	
	E14b	以外的同村居			
	E14c	同村的同姓人		People from the same village with the same surname	



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2006	E14d	同村的非同姓人	People from the same village with different surnames	
	E14e	亲戚	Relatives	
	E14f	同事	Colleagues	
		交情不深的朋友/	Casual friends/acquaintances	
	E14g	相识		
	E14h	老同学	Former classmates	
		在外地相遇的同乡	Fellow townsfolk encountered in a different place (with the same city or county as the boundary)	
	E14i	(以同市或同县为界限)		
		一起参加文娱,健身,进修等业余活动的人士	People who participate in recreational, fitness, educational, and other leisure activities with you.	
	E14j	士		
		一起参加宗教活动的人士	People who participate in religious activities with you	
	E14k	一起参加社会活动/公益活动的人士	People who participate in social activities/charity activities with you	
	E14l	陌生人	Strangers	
	E14m			
K1	下面这些特征符合您的个性吗?	很符合 1 有点符合 2 无所谓符合 3 不太符合 4 很不符合 5	Do the following characteristics align with your personality?	1) Very much so, 2) Somewhat, 3) Neutral, 4) Not very much, 5) Not at all
K1g	不太信任别人		Not very trusting of others	



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2010	A33	总的来 说，您是 否同意在 这个社会 上，绝大 多数人都 是可以信 任的	完全不同意 1 比较不同意 2 无所谓同意不 同意 3 比较同 意 4 完全同意 5	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	A34	总的来 说，您是 否同意在 这个社会 上，您一 不小心， 别人就会 想办法占 您的便 宜？	完全不同意 1 比较不同意 2 无所谓同意不 同意 3 比较同 意 4 完全同意 6 完全不可信 1	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	D2	对于下面 几类人， 您的信任 度怎么 样？	比较不可信 2 居于可信与不 可信之间 3 比 较可信 4 完全 可信 5	How much do you trust the following people? Family members	1)Completely distrust, 2) Somewhat distrust, 3) Somewhat trust, 4) Completely trust
	D2a	自己家里 人			
	D2b	亲戚		Relatives	
	D2c	朋友		Friends	
	D2d	同事		Colleagues	
	D2e	领导干部		Cadres	
	D2f	生意人		Businessmen	
	D2g	同学		Classmates	
	D2h	老乡		Fellow townsmen	
	D2i	信教的人		Religious people	
	F-6 (mf6)	总的来 说，您认 为大多数 人是可以	人们几乎总是 可以信任的 1 人们经常是可 以信任的 2 您	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try	1)You always need to be careful in dealing with others, 2) You usually need



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	信任的还是您在与人交往的时候不得不小心谨慎?	经常不得不小心谨慎地应付人 3 您几乎总是小心谨慎地应付人 4	to take advantage of you?	to be careful in dealing with others, 4) Most people can usually be trusted, 4) Most people can almost always be trusted,
2011 A33	总的来说, 您不同意在这个社会上, 绝大多数人都是可以信任的?	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 5	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
A34	总的来说, 您不同意在这个社会上, 您一不小心, 别人就会想办法占您的便宜?	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
Q75	总的来说, 您认为大多数人都是能够被信任的还是认为在和人打交道时要非常小心?	大多数人都是能够被信任的 1 和人打交道时要非常小心 2 (不知道 8)	Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or you cannot be too careful in dealing with others?	0) You cannot be too careful, 1) Most people can be trusted



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2012	A33	总的来 说，您同 不同意在 这个社会 上，绝大 多数人都 是可以信 任的？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不 同意 3 比较同 意 4 非常同意 5	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree , 5)Strongly agree
	A34	总的来 说，您同 不同意在 这个社会 上，您一 不小心， 别人就会 想办法占 您的便 宜？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不 同意 3 比较同 意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree , 5)Strongly agree
	N16	您对下面 这些人的 信任程度 如何？	非常信任 1 比 较信任 2 不太 信任 3 完全不 信任 4	How much do you trust the following people	1)Completely distrust, 2) Somewhat distrust, 3) Somewhat trust, 4) Completely trust
	n1601	亲戚		Relatives	
	n1602	朋友		Friends	
	n1603	邻居		Neighbors	
	n1604	同事		Colleagues	
	n1605	陌生人		Strangers	
	n1606	医生		Doctors	
	n1607	银行职员		Bank employees	
	n1608	公司高管		Company executives	
	n1609	记者		Journalists	
	n1610	非盈利、 非政府组 织的领导		Leaders of non-profit, non-governmental organizations	
	n1611	老师		Teachers	
	n1612	地方政府 官员		Local government officials	



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n1613	中央政府 官员	Central government officials	
n1614	警察	Police	
n1615	军官	Military officers	
n1616	法官	Judges	
N18	总的来说，您认为大多数人是可以信任的吗？	大多数人几乎总是可以信任的 1 大多数人通常是可以信任的 2 和大多数人打交道通常需要非常小心 3 和大多数人打交道几乎总是需要非常小心 4	Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or you cannot be too careful in dealing with others? 1) You always need to be careful in dealing with others, 2) You usually need to be careful in dealing with others, 4) Most people can usually be trusted, 4) Most people can almost always be trusted
2013 A33	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会上，绝大多数人都是可以信任的？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 5	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted? 1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
A34	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会上，您一不小心，别人就会想办法占您的便宜？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you? 1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
B6	一般来说，您对现在社会	1) 非常不信任 2) 不信任 3)	Generally speaking, how much do you trust strangers? 1) Not at all, 2) Not much, 3) Neutral,



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		上的陌生 人是否信 任?	一般 4) 信任 5) 非常信任		4) Trust, 5) Very trust
2015	A33	总的来 说, 您同 不同意在 这个社会 上, 绝大 多数人都 是可以信 任的?	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不 同意 3 比较同 意 4 非常同意 5	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	A34	总的来 说, 您同 不同意在 这个社会 上, 您一 不小心, 别人就会 想办法占 您的便 宜?	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不 同意 3 比较同 意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	B10	在不直接 涉及金钱 利益的一 般社会交 往/接触 中, 您觉 得下列人 士中可以 信任的人 多不多 呢?	绝大 多数不可 信 1 多数不可 信 2 可信与不 可信者各半 3 多数可信 4 绝 大多数可信 5	In general social interactions or contacts that do not directly involve financial interests, how many of the following individuals do you think you can trust?	1) Vast majority cannot be trusted, 2) Majority cannot be trusted, 3) Half- half, 4) Majority can be trusted, 5) Vast majority can be trusted
	b1001 b1002	(近)邻 (城镇的) 远邻/街 坊或(乡 村)邻居		Near neighbors Distant neighbors	



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	以外的同 村居		
b1003	同村的同 姓人	People from the same village with the same surname	
b1004	同村的非 同姓人	People from the same village with different surnames	
b1005	亲戚	Relatives	
b1006	同事	Colleagues	
b1007	交情不深 的朋友/ 相识	Casual friends/acquaintances	
b1008	老同学	Former classmates	
b1009	在外地相 遇的同乡 (以同市 或同县为 界限)	Fellow townsfolk encountered in a different place (with the same city or county as the boundary)	
b1010	一起参加 文娱,健 身,进修 等业余活 动 的人 士	People who participate in recreational, fitness, educational, and other leisure activities with you.	
b1011	一起参加 宗教活动 的人士	People who participate in religious activities with you	
b1012	一起参加 社会活动 /公益活 动的人士	People who participate in social activities/charity activities with you	
b1013	陌生人	Strangers	
2017	A33	总的来 说, 您同 不同意在 这个社会	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不
		Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree,



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	上，绝大多数人都是可以信任的？	同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 5		4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
A34	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会上，您一不小心，别人就会想办法占您的便宜？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
C10	您认为：如果有机会人们就会占您便宜，还是会尽量做到公平？	总是想占您便宜 1 大多数时候想占您便宜 2 大多数时候尽量做到公平 3 总是尽量做到公平 4 无法选择 8	Do you think that people, given the opportunity, will try to take advantage of you, or will they try to be fair?	1) Always looking to take advantage of you, 2) Most of the time looking to take advantage of you, 3) Most of the time trying to be fair, 4) Always trying to be fair.
v934	总的来说，您觉得人们总是可信的，还是在和人们打交道时再小心也不为过？	人们总是可以信任的 1 人们通常是可以信任的 2 通常，在和人们打交道时再小心也不为过 3 在和人们打交道时总是再小心也不为过 4 无法选择 8	Generally speaking, do you believe that people can be always trusted, or you cannot be too careful in dealing with others?	1) You always need to be careful in dealing with others, 2) You usually need to be careful in dealing with others, 4) Most people can usually be trusted, 4) Most people can almost always be trusted
2018 v505	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1) Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither



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		上，绝大多数人都是可以信任的？	同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 5		agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	A34	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会上，您一不小心，别人就会想办法占您的便宜？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
2021	A33	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会上，绝大多数人都是可以信任的？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 5	Generally speaking, do you agree most people can be trusted?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	A34	总的来说，您不同意在这个社会上，您一不小心，别人就会想办法占您的便宜？	非常不同意 1 比较不同意 2 说不上同意不同意 3 比较同意 4 非常同意 6	Generally speaking, do you agree that in this society, if you're not careful, others will try to take advantage of you?	1)Strongly disagree, 2) Somewhat disagree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Somewhat agree, 5) Strongly agree
	E34	总的来说，您认为大多数人是可以信任的还	人们几乎总是可以信任的 1 人们经常是可以信任的 2 您经常不得不小	Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or you cannot be too	1)You always need to be careful in dealing with others, 2) You usually need to be careful in



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	是您在与人交往的时候不得不心谨慎?	心谨慎地应付人 3 您几乎总是小心谨慎地应付人 4	careful in dealing with others?	dealing with others, 4) Most people can usually be trusted, 4) Most people can almost always be trusted
P4b	总的来说,您觉得人们总是可信的,还是在和人们打交道时再小心也不为过?	人们总是可以信任的 1 人们通常是可以信任的 2 通常,在和人们打交道时再小心也不为过 3 在和人们打交道时总是再小心也不为过 4 无法选择 98	Generally speaking, do you believe that people can be always trusted, or you cannot be too careful in dealing with others?	1) You always need to be careful in dealing with others, 2) You usually need to be careful in dealing with others, 3) people can be usually trusted, 4) You always need to be careful in dealing with others
P4c	总的来说,您认为大多数人是可以信任的,还是您在与人交往的时候不得不心谨慎?	人们几乎总是可以信任的 1 人们经常是可以信任的 2 您经常不得不心谨慎地应付人 3 您几乎总是小心谨慎地应付人 4	Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or you cannot be too careful in dealing with others?	1) You always need to be careful in dealing with others, 2) You usually need to be careful in dealing with others, 4) Most people can usually be trusted, 4) Most people can almost always be trusted