

The Impact of Socialization Preferences on Perceptions of Generalized Social Trust in China

Authors : Mengzheng Yao

Abstract : Generalized social trust among Chinese has been declining in the past few decades, making the search for its causes necessary. Drawing on the symbolic interaction theory and the 2012 Chinese General Social Survey data, this research investigated the impact of people's socialization preferences and frequencies on their perceptions of generalized social trust in China. This research also took a preliminary step towards understanding the spatial differences of the generalized social trust using the ArcGIS software. The results show that respondents who interacted with their neighbors more frequently were more likely to have higher levels of perceptions of generalized social trust. Several demographics were also significantly related to perception of generalized social trust. Elderly and better educated Chinese and people with higher self-perceived social status were associated with greater levels of generalized social trust perception, while urban dwellers and religious respondents expressed lower levels of such perception. Implications for future research and policy are discussed.

Keywords : China, generalized social trust, symbolic interaction, ArcGIS

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