Social life and political trust in China: Searching for machers and schmoozers

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Abstract

Previous literature has provided little evidence regarding the ways in which China's burgeoning social life and rapid urbanisation shape Chinese people's level of trust in their government leaders. This article builds on Robert Putnam's conceptualization of maching and schmoozing as formal and informal forms of social involvement, respectively. Using the 2012 Chinese General Social Survey, we identify four types of participants in social involvement, namely the inactives, machers, schmoozers, and all-rounders, to untangle various aspects of social life in China. Our empirical analysis shows that the sociodemographic positions of the four types of social involvement are largely distinct. Our findings also contribute to the study of political trust by offering insight into the complicated associations between social involvement, hukou status and political trust in contemporary Chinese society.

Keywords

Social capital, political trust, hukou, migration, China

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Introduction

Political trust reflects people's belief and confidence in government and presents significant impact on political governance and regime stability. While the issue of political trust is well recognized by academics in Western societies (Easton, 1965; Newton, 2001),it has also received a great deal of attention in China in recent years (Li, 2016; Wu and Wilkes, 2017). The growing body of work in this terrain reflects increasing concerns about the political implications of social change in China. China's development has largely shaped the structure of contemporary Chinese society, which is mirrored in the massive internal migrations and the long-existing *hukou* (i.e. household registration) system. Moreover, although civic engagement is still a relatively new concept in China, some scholars have noticed the emergence of new forms of civic and social involvement from China's nondemocratic yet rapidly modernizing society (Chen and Lu, 2007; Li, 2013). These changes have raised many unanswered questions among scholars and policy makers in China: What are the patterns of social life in the Chinese context? How can the dynamics of social involvement explain political trust in today's China, which has become more diverse owing to internal migration and the *hukou* system? Although they are crucial for our understanding of political attitudes in contemporary Chinese society, little research has investigated these questions systematically.

This study is intended to help fill this gap by exploring the key features of social life in China and the effects of social involvement on political trust. Accordingly, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature in three ways. First, the impact of social life has been insufficiently considered in the previous literature on China's socio-political development. Hence, this study first contributes to the classification of social life in China in line with

Robert Putnam's conceptualization of 'machers' and 'schmoozers', which focus on both the formal and the informal facets of social involvement (Putnam, 2000: 93). Second, it investigates the sociodemographic determinants of maching and schmoozing. Specifically, the results shed new lights on the impact of China's social change on the patterns of social life among Chinese people. Third, it examine the effects of social involvement and individuals' *hukou* status on the level of trust in local and national government officials, both generally and in terms of interaction. This allows us to depict the relationship between social involvement and political trust more comprehensively.

Introducing machers and schmoozers

In his landmark study, *Bowling Alone,* Putnam builds a neo-Tocquevillian framework for understanding the nature and implications of social capital in a democratic society (Putnam, 2000, 2007). One of the core ideas contributing to Putnam's civic approach to social capital is that social connections are essential ingredients of social order and political engagement. Putnam distinguishes between 'maching' and 'schmoozing', two distinctive aspects of social life represented by Yiddish terms (Putnam, 2000). Machers are people who 'make things happen in the community' by volunteering, getting involved in politics, working on community projects, and the like (Putnam, 2000: 93). Machers refer to people who are actively involved in formal social participation. They tend to be active members of formal associations and make substantial contributions to the wider community. By contrast, schmoozers refer to people who are frequently engaged in informal social participation, the social life of schmoozers is more casual and less purposeful than that of machers (Putnam, 2000: 94). Schmoozers tend to invest time primarily in a wide range of informal communions and gatherings such as sport or leisure activities, hanging out with friends and visiting

relatives. Newton characterizes them as 'the very substance of society – its basic woven fabric' (Newton, 1999:10). Therefore, while maching mirrors formal social involvement, schmoozing sheds light on the informal aspect of social life.

Previous findings in Western democracies have pointed towards the strong sociopolitical impact of social involvement. Social connections, especially those embedded in formal civic engagement, may foster a link between citizens and political institutions at various levels. For example, individuals who actively volunteer in civic associations display much higher levels of political trust and efficacy than non-participants (Li and Marsh, 2008). It is plausible that such contacts can lead to greater satisfaction with governments as they allow public voices to be heard by government leaders and lead to more efficient conflict resolution. Consequently, civic engagement provides opportunities for citizens to evaluate politicians and political institutions (Bäck and Kestilä, 2008). Furthermore, social capital and norms derived from social involvement have been found to present salient sociopolitical implications. Active social capitalists tend to have a more optimistic worldview, which enhances their perceived ability to influence politics (Uslaner, 2002; Hooghe and Stolle, 2003). Likewise, there are statistically significant correlations among social trust, confidence in political institutions, and satisfaction with democracy (Tao et al., 2014). Citizens who are disengaged from the social norms of reciprocity and interpersonal trust fostered by civic life are in turn less able to trust the institutions that govern political life (Keele, 2007: 241).

Political trust in China: Its nature and determinants

Previous studies have pointed to contrasting patterns of political trust in China and Western societies. At the outset, Chinese citizens appear to exhibit much higher levels of political trust than citizens of other countries, particularly in terms of trusting the national government

(Newton, 2001; Yang et al., 2014). Furthermore, Chinese citizens tend to display very high levels of trust in the central government and much lower confidence in lower-level political authorities and bureaucrats – a pattern that is called 'hierarchical trust' in the work of Li Lianjiang (2016). In contrast to China, Western countries present an opposite pattern, with more trust in local governments than in national government. Arguably, the hierarchical trust pattern reflects the unique social, cultural, and political characteristics of social involvement and citizen-government relationships in China.[1] Some recent studies have revealed a rural-urban divide in trust patterns in China (Hu et al., 2011; Huhe, 2014). Findings in these studies show that rural residents in China tend to display greater political trust than urban residents, which is more observable in the case of trust in the central government.[2]

The roles of maching and schmoozing

The work of Putnam and other Western social capital writers shows that social involvement is positively associated with political efficacy, democratic development and institutional performance (Putnam 2000; Keele, 2007; Li and Marsh, 2008). In mainland China, social involvement is shaped by rather different logic of politics and governance, which is particularly discernible in the case of maching. On the one hand, the presence of the government's hand is still observable in most formal organizations (e.g. Communist Youth League and All-China Federation of Trade Unions) (Chen and Lu, 2007). On the other hand, traditional culture tends to discourage people from engaging in various political activities and make people more passive in formal civic engagement (Shi, 2015). Taken together, the previous literature tends to assume that the combination of China's top-down political control and the traditional cultural norms on the societal level constitutes a barrier to civic life and democratic transition.

However, more recent findings suggest that China's social and economic development driven by the post-Mao reform has become an incubator of new forms of social involvement in China (Liu et al., 2013). Although civic engagement is still in its infancy in China, studies in sociology suggest that China's marketization and modernization have generated fertile ground for modern forms of associational participation (e.g. owners' associations, professional organizations, and various types of NGOs) (Chen and Lu, 2007).. To be sure, most of these organizations are not directly involved in politics due to government restrictions. Nevertheless, they appear to be highly generative of *guanxi*, which is characterized by favouritism and reciprocal feelings (Bian, 2001). Some found that social networks embedded in various forms of associational participation in China tend to reinforce social trust and to facilitate community and political participation, a finding that coincides with Putnam's observations of maching (Chen and Lu, 2007; Palmer et al., 2011). Similarly, individuals who display greater concern about community and social issues appear to have more trust in the central government (Hu et al., 2011). It is thus plausible that maching has taken root in China.

As far as schmoozing is concerned, existing findings suggest that informal social connectedness presents pronounced social implications as it does in Western societies. Frequency of social eating, number of friends and social activities during the Chinese New Year appear to have significant effect on individuals' *guanxi* resources, economic participation and social integration (Bian, 2001; Liu et al., 2013). In respect to the relationship between schmoozing and political trust, informal social involvement perhaps has a weaker impact on social and political development in China than in Western democratic societies. The underlying argument of this observation is that social trust and social connectedness in China is based on a much narrower relational circle in China than in Western societies (Delhey et al., 2011). The eminent sociologist Fei Xiaotong (1992)

suggests that there is a 'differential mode of association' (*chaxu geju*) in Chinese people's social networks, providing a framework for social actions. He argues that, as compared to those in Western societies, social connections in China are highly 'egocentric' and depict a structure of non-equivalent, ranked categories of relational links[3] (Fei, 1992: 20). Consequently, informal social connections in China tend to be instrumental and are less likely to be translated into involvement and consciousness in the wider community.

Urbanisation and social change in urban China

The combination of the *hukou* system and the huge influx of migrants to Chinese cities have largely shaped the social structure of urban China in the past four decades. Consequently, four 'urban groups' have emerged during this period: The first group is rural to urban migrants, who reside in urban China with their rural hukou. Second, owing to the central government's effort to gradually relax hukou restrictions, there are a growing number of new urbanites who were rural hukou holders have now managed to obtain urban hukou. The third group is urban to urban migrants, while the last group consists of urban locals. With China's rural residents accounting for a fifth group, members of these five groups tend to vary significantly in terms of social and economic outcomes (Treiman, 2012; Chen et al., 2015).

The distinctions between urban and rural, and between local and non-locals, are indicative of variations in social involvement and trust in today's urban China. New urbanites exhibit no significant gap to urban locals in terms of social and economic participation. As granting of urban hukou has been highly selective historically, a large proportion of new urbanites consisted of well-educated university students, veterans, or communist party members (Wu and Treiman, 2004). Patterns of political trust across different types of migrants in urban China are underresearched. Nevertheless, existing studies of social trust

and social involvement are suggestive of a clear distinction between urban and rural *hukou*. Overall, citizens of rural hukou are more likely to be trusting than those with urban hukou (Li., 2013). Compared to urban locals and new urbanites, rural and urban migrants tend to display a much lower level of public consciousness and formal civic engagement (Wang et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2015). Nevertheless, they appear to be actively engaged with neighbourhood social interactions, as many migrants tend to live in deprived neighbourhoods segregated from local *hukou* holders (Palmer and Xu, 2004; Li, 2013).

Hence, China offers a particularly interesting context for the study of social involvement and political trust due to its unique five-tiered social structure, which reflect inherent differences in social standing, social networks, and community attachment. We thus speculate that *hukou*-related disparities may well be present in the case of political trust. Although academics have noted the rural-urban distinction in political trust patterns in China, few studies, if any, have assessed the interplay of social involvement and *hukou* status in China's urban areas. Therefore, it is both theoretically and empirically important to address this research gap in that it allows us to advance our understanding of social involvement and political trust specific to the context of social change in rural and urban China.

Data and measures

Our study is based on the 2012 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) data. The national representative cross-sectional survey, consisting of two sub-surveys (Survey A and Survey B), has a relatively large combined sample size of 12,000. Both sub-surveys cover perceptions of informal social involvement whereas Survey A also gathers data regarding formal civic engagement. Consequently, our attention to both maching and schmoozing motivates closer examination of the Survey A sample, which includes 5,800 respondents. CGSS data

collectors provide cross-sectional weights for selection biases, which are used in all analyses reported in this paper.

Specifying machers and schmoozers

The key issue in this study is whether we can capture machers and schmoozers in the CGSS data in a way that does sufficient justice to Putnam's conceptualization and enables us to develop his ideas. To this end, we aim to identify the types of social life in which respondents are involved and to determine whether these activities tap into the conceptual distinction between maching and schmoozing. While a series of variables about associational membership and participation are used as indicators for maching, four variables indicative of individuals' informal social connectedness are used as indicator for schmoozing (Appendix 1). Based on these manifest indicators, we use latent class analysis (LCA) to establish patterns of social involvement.

Table 1a indicates that a model postulating four latent classes fits the data adequately (McCutcheon, 2002). The first latent class, comprising, 33% of the study population, has very low probabilities of being involved in both maching and schmoozing. It thus represents 'inactive' social involvement. The largest latent class (class 2) captures 53% of the sample. Members in this group show high probability of engagement in all four types of schmoozing activities. Moreover, class 3, containing just 5% of the sample, has high probability of engagement in three of the eight formal associations, including 'political', 'community/neighbourhood', and 'social movement'. Hence, classes 2 and 3 appear to represent 'schmoozing' and 'maching', respectively. The patterns here suggest that most CGSS respondents appear to have vibrant informal connections whereas only a few appear to be enthusiastic joiners of formal civic associations. Finally, members in the last latent class

show high propensities to be engaged in both maching (including 'community/neighbour' and 'social service') and schmoozing (including 'visiting with friends or acquaintances' and 'socialising or hanging out with friends or other people'). Accordingly, members of class 4 are called 'all-rounders' in this study.[4]

To be sure, there are limitations in mapping quantitative data as such onto conceptual notions. For example, it neglects the notion of time (particularly in the case of maching) whereas Putnam's research has found that the intensity of social involvement may present important and distinctive social consequences (Putnam, 2000). Similarly, our measures for schmoozing do not include informal group activities, social media contacts, and other types of informal social connectedness documented in *Bowling Alone*. In addition, the CGSS data only allows us to identify structural characteristics of machers and schmoozers, not attitudinal ones. Nevertheless, to reiterate, there are no data that would cover all aspects of social involvement, and we argue that our specifications are able to capture the distinctions between maching and schmoozing to an empirically useful extent.

[Tables 1a and 1b]

Independent and dependent variables

A number of independent variables are used in the multivariate analysis, including hukou status as another core explanatory variable in this study. Besides, the analysis also controls for personal traits including age and gender, as well as variables indicative of individuals' social standing, including CCP membership, education, and social class (Appendix 2).

The previous literature on political trust has used both trust in political institutions and trust in government leaders or politicians as dependent variables (Citrin, 1974; Li, 2004; Hu

et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2014). In this study, we use trust in government leaders at both local and national levels as the measure for political trust. A detailed description of the characteristics of the two political trust variables and the independent variables can be found in Appendix 2.

Multivariate analysis

The multivariate analysis in this article consists of three parts. First, we use a multinomial logistic regression model to investigate how personal traits and socioeconomic variables predict social involvement. Then, two binary logistic regression models are fitted with trust in local and central government leaders as dependent variables. Finally, we calculate predicted probabilities in the last part of the multivariate analysis to illustrate how patterns of the association between social involvement and political trust vary across the five *hukou* status categories.

Determinants of social involvement

Table 2 shows the net effects of independent variables on forms of social involvement through the lens of multinomial logistic regression. We use ‘inactive’ as the base group and each of the other groups is contrasted with the inactive form of social involvement. The coefficients in Table 2 suggest that the three forms of social involvement exhibit distinct patterns. Controlling for all other factors in the model, we find that rural residents have discernible differences in social involvement to all urban residents, especially to urban locals. Moreover, urban locals are more likely to be active in all three forms of social involvement compared to rural residents. Rural migrants are significantly more likely than rural residents

to be schmoozers, whereas the differential in maching is considerably smaller. Urban locals are also less likely than other urban residents to be engaged in all-round involvement. By contrast, new urbanites appear to be particularly active in maching as compared to the other groups. Here, it is noteworthy that rural and urban migrants are significantly less likely than urban locals and new urbanites to be machers whereas differentials across the various groups are smaller for schmoozing.

Turning to the effects of other independent variables, we find that respondents younger than 30 tend to be more active in schmoozing, while the gradient for maching moves in the opposite direction. Women are more likely than men to take part in informal social activities but less likely to be engaged in maching and all-round involvement. Moreover, it is worth noting that socioeconomic factors, including CCP membership, education, and social class, play perhaps the most prominent role in determining social involvement; their effects are most strongly associated with maching. In most cases, CCP members and individuals with better educational and occupational attainment are consistently more likely to be actively engaged in maching and schmoozing than others. The only exception is that degree holders are less likely to be schmoozers than people with senior high school or junior high school qualifications. The results in Table 2 also illustrate that members of the service class are considerably more engaged in all three forms of social involvement than other people.

These patterns show that maching and schmoozing in general present distinctive sociocultural characteristics, which are to a large extent consistent with Putnam's findings (Putnam, 2000). It is necessary to point out that the patterns of machers and all-rounders are sometimes similar. This is not unexpected as our data show machers to be significantly less common than schmoozers (see Table 1b). Therefore, it is plausible that the factors determining maching also tend to have a considerable impact on all-round participation.

[Table 2]

Social involvement, hukou status, and political trust

Having discussed at some length the sociodemographic characteristics of various aspects of social involvement, we now turn to the impacts of *hukou* status and social involvement on political trust in China. The dependent variables are two binary variables representing political trust at the local level and at the central level as shown in Table 3. Three models are constructed for each subset. In Model 1, only *hukou* status and social involvement are included as the explanatory variables. The other control variables, including age group, gender, partnership status, CCP membership, education, and social class, are added in Model 2. Finally, in Model 3, we take the interplay of *hukou* status and social involvement into account by including the interaction effects of the two variables. The first key question is in what ways and to what extent the inclusion of more factors affects the overall influence of social involvement and *hukou* status on political trust. The results are displayed in Tables 3 and 4 (results from full logistic regressions are available upon request).

It is shown in Table 3 that urban residents are considerably less likely than rural residents to have trust in local government leaders. However, the effects of *hukou* status tend to weaken substantially as more factors are included. When other independent variables are conditioned, the contrast between rural migrants and rural residents becomes insignificant (Model 2). Decreases in the levels of significance of the coefficients are also observable in the cases of the other three categories across Models 1 to 3. In all three models, social involvement demonstrates only a modest association with political trust at the local level.

Although schmoozing and maching seem to be positively related to the dependent variable, the relationships are not statistically significant.

Next, in Table 4, we may discern some patterns that differ from those shown in Table 3. The most interesting finding in Table 4 is that social involvement plays a more significant role in the level of trust in central government leaders than it does in the case of local government leaders. Machers are significantly more likely than inactive individuals to be trusting of central government leaders. In Models 2 and 3, the all-round category is also associated with a greater level of political trust. It is thus clear that maching tends to have a stronger overall effect on trust in central government leaders than does schmoozing. With regard to *hukou* status, urban residence is associated with a lower propensity to trust central government leaders. Urban migrants exhibit a significantly lower level of trust than other people. Although the differentials narrow with the inclusion of more factors, the urban-rural gap in political trust at the central level is still notable across all three models.

[Table 3]

[Table 4]

The second key question in the statistical modelling concerns the interaction effects of social involvement and *hukou* status. In the next analysis, we calculate predicted probabilities of trusting local and central government leaders, respectively, based on the third model in both Tables 3 and 4. It aims to explain how the associations between *hukou* status and the two types of political trust can be shaped by different forms of social involvement. Accordingly, Figures 1 and 2 illustrate how different forms of social involvement shape the predicted probabilities of trusting local and central government leaders among individuals with a particular *hukou* status.[5]

Figure 1 shows the results for political trust at the local level. The dotted line connects the markers representing the group means of predicted probabilities for the five *hukou* status categories. One of the main findings here is that social involvement appears to have a more significant impact on urban residents than it does on rural residents in terms of trusting local government officials. It is noteworthy that the patterns of social involvement's impact on political trust do vary across different *hukou* status groups. First, among new urbanites and urban locals, those who are classified as machers have a much higher propensity than their inactive peers to be trusting. This is not the case with rural migrants and urban migrants, among whom both forms of social involvement tend to weaken political trust.[6] Similar patterns are evident in the case of all-rounders. We thus argue that although the results in Table 3 demonstrate only a modest association between social involvement and political trust at the local level, the effects of social involvement, especially in the cases of machers and all-rounders, are still significant among certain groups of urban residents in China. Second, notwithstanding an overall lower level of significance, similar patterns are also found among schmoozers. The predicted probabilities of trusting local government leaders are above average among rural migrants, urban migrants, and urban locals who are active in schmoozing; while opposite patterns emerge among rural residents and new urbanites. Third, it is noticeable in Figure 1 that social involvement tends to have a marked effect on urban locals, as those urban locals who are involved in maching and/or schmoozing display a higher propensity to trust local government leaders. Such patterns appear to be more complicated among the other four groups.

Turning to the results for trusting central government leaders (Figure 2), we find that the patterns across the four urban groups are much more consistent than the patterns found in the analysis for trusting local government leaders (Figure 1). In all four groups, maching, schmoozing, and all-round involvement are observably associated with greater political trust

at the central level. Moreover, the effects of maching and all-round involvement are overall larger than that of schmoozing, though this is not the case among urban migrants. Urban migrants and urban locals who are active in maching are nearly 10% more likely than their inactive counterparts to be trusting. Moreover, schmoozing has a considerable impact on trust among new urbanites and urban migrants: schmoozers in these groups are approximately 5% more likely than their inactive counterparts to trust central government leaders. As far as rural residents are concerned, those who have an active formal social life tend to have a higher propensity to trust local government leaders. However, schmoozers in this group are less likely than their inactive peers to be trusting, which render them an anomaly in the analysis. Maching seems to have a more significant and positive association with trust in central government leaders than it does with trust in local government leaders. The role of schmoozing is still relatively weaker than maching.

[Figure 1]

[Figure 2]

Conclusion

This study is a contribution to the literature on social involvement and political trust in China. In the last few decades, China's rapid modernization and urbanisation have created more sources of social involvement (Chen and Lu, 2007; Li, 2013). However, the ways in which the country's burgeoning social life affects political trust as well as other aspects of political participation among Chinese citizens has rarely been explored. In this paper, we have addressed three issues. Conceptually, we built on Putnam's theories on maching and schmoozing, which reflect the formal and informal aspects of social life. Empirically, we

were able to capture four forms of social involvement using LCA and examine their sociodemographic characteristics. Then, we investigated patterns in the associations between social involvement and political trust. Our analysis also pays particular attention to the interplay of migration and *hukou* status, both of which have been shown to have salient social and political implication (Wang et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2015). Our main findings are summarized as follows.

The characteristics of the four forms of social involvement are indeed distinct. In particular, our analytical results also suggest that access to socioeconomic resources, including CCP membership, better education, and social class prestige, is a pivotal determinant for machers and all-rounders. These findings resonate strongly with existing research on civic engagement in both China and Western societies (Li and Marsh, 2008; Li, 2013). By contrast, the effects of socioeconomic variables are weaker on schmoozing. To be sure, while maching is often built upon civic skills and certain forms of economic and human capital, informal types of social involvement such as visiting and hanging out with friends tend to be less clearly associated with these resources (Putnam, 2000: 95). In addition, there is a clear rural-urban divide in social involvement as urban residents appear to be much more active than rural residents in both maching and schmoozing. In addition, patterns of social involvement are also determined by personal traits including age and gender. The distinctions between men and women, between young and old people, reveal important sociodemographic variations among machers and schmoozers.

We have employed binary logistic regression models to explore how social involvement and *hukou* status explain political trust in local and central government leaders in China. The results are supportive of the hierarchical trust patterns found previously in China (Li, 2016). Overall, rural residents and rural migrants appear to be more trusting than

new urbanites, urban migrants, and urban locals. This is not unexpected as it coincides with existing findings in China (Li, 2004; Wang et al., 2015). While *hukou* status has a significant overall effect on political trust at both local and central levels, the overall effects of social involvement are positive but comparatively smaller. Moreover, social involvement displays stronger effect on trust in central government leaders as compared to trust in local government leaders. It seems plausible that political control still presents a significant impact on the political consequences of social involvement in China (Wu and Wilkes, 2017). The findings also sheds some light to Shi's (2015) conceptualization of group-oriented culture in China, as all respondents in the CGSS data, regardless of *hukou* status and social involvement patterns, appear to be more tolerant towards the national government.

The inclusion of interaction effects in the analyses allows us to gain insights into how social involvement shapes political trust within *hukou* status groups. The first main finding here is a clear relationship between the form of social involvement an individual follows and his/her confidence in government leaders. Importantly, the impact of maching and schmoozing on political trust are indeed dissimilar, which lends some support to Putnam's argument that the socio-political implications of the two syndromes are largely different (Putnam, 2000). The previous literature has indicated that civic organizations in China have emerged as powerful incubators for political efficacy, political social capital and *guanxi* resources (Palmer et al., 2011; Li, 2013). The empirical analysis in this article does confirm that maching presents a more significant impact than schmoozing on political trust. Among most *hukou* statuses, respondents who are involved in maching (i.e., machers and all-rounders) are more likely than inactives and schmoozers to trust their political leaders at both central and local levels.

Second, while the distinction across different *hukou* status in terms of social trust and political participation has been documented in the past literature (Chen et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2015; Li, 2016), our analysis is able to extend scholarly understanding by identifying *hukou* differences in relation to the effect of social involvement on political trust. Such differences are particularly evident between rural and urban migrants who are often identified as disadvantaged people and urban locals and new urbanites that are higher in the social status. On the one hand, this study finds that migrants who are active in maching exhibit low confidence in their local leaders. A possible explanation is that machers with migrant background are more likely to experience various forms of institutional discriminations than their inactive counterparts, which shapes their orientations towards the authority and self-interest via formal social and political activities (Shi, 2015). It seems plausible that they are more likely to find themselves in confrontation with local officials, who often 'bear the brunt of citizens' anger' for scandals or bad policy implementation as a result of political control (Cui et al., 2015).

The CGSS data also suggests that both rural and urban migrants are considerably less likely than established urbanites to be involved in political and community organizations, both of which tend to be important mechanisms for essential political capital and *guanxi* resources. On the other hand, the relationship between social involvement and political trust at the national level is more consistent. Although migrants who are classified as machers and all-rounders tend to be distrusting of local government leaders, they appear to be significantly more trusting of central government leaders relative to other migrants who are inactive in social involvement. The variations across different *hukou* statuses tend to echo Treiman's (2012) observation that the distinctions between local and non-local and between rural and urban *hukou,* have led to many 'parallel lives' and become the major source of social division

in the Chinese city. Such division, as shown in this study, is also evident in social involvement and citizen-authority relationship.

As such, these findings reveal the underlying implications of the dynamics of social involvement and *hukou* status on political trust, which the existing political trust literature has failed to address. We would argue that social stratification in China cuts deep into the realm of maching and schmoozing in China and that the form of social involvement an individual adopts, together with his or her *hukou* status and migration conditions play an important role in shaping political trust.

We conclude by discussing the limitations of our study. As discussed earlier, our measurement strategies of maching and schmoozing may not cover all domains related to these concepts. Then, as is common with the use of cross-sectional data like the CGSS, it is difficult to gauge potential causalities between social involvement and political trust. Due to the restriction of our sample size, this article does not ground its findings in some key contextual factors such as regions, migration experience, and political capital, which may potentially impact the interpretation of these findings. We would also need to explore the mechanism through which maching negatively affects trust in local government leaders. Further investigation is needed to explore, for example, how the interaction and the dynamics of traditional and modern cultural values in times of China's social change may affect the incentives for maching and schmoozing in China (e.g. Shi, 2015). That said, it is important to emphasize that our classification of types of social involvement has empirical purchase in that the differences among these types have proven to have a significant impact on Chinese political society. Findings of this study may be used to initiate a broader, more in-depth examination of how government officials at different levels in China might be working to shape and direct social integration of citizens, especially those moving into their jurisdictions

from elsewhere. Therefore, we would argue that the concepts of maching and schmoozing and our elaboration of these concepts in China deserve future attention, which particularly entails qualitative research that explores the mechanisms through which Chinese social life affects and responds to government leaders and actions.

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Notes:

1. For example, scholars have noted that hierarchical trust is to a large extent a result of political control, particularly in the form of censorship, in that state-owned media in China tend to use local level officials and institutions as scapegoat in order to mobilize popular support for the central government (Li, 2016; Wu and Wilkes, 2017). Meanwhile, other studies have pointed towards a salient cultural impact on political trust in China. Owing to the influence of Confucian tradition, many Chinese believe that their relationship with the authority should be hierarchical and that it is a responsibility and expected virtue of the central leaders to serve as ‘guardians’ to protect the general public from corrupt local government officials (Li, 2004; Shi, 2015). The group-oriented culture also encourages individuals to tolerate policies that hurt their interests but benefit the collective majority (Shi, 2015; Wu and Wilkes, 2017). Consequently, it is perhaps not a surprise that, as an empirical matter, Chinese citizens appear to be much more critical of local authorities in evaluations of government policies performance (Cui et al., 2015).

2. Interestingly, Li (2004) has found that, while the majority of peasants tend to trust the central government's 'willingness' to achieve good governance, many fewer believe that the central government is capable of achieving its goals.
3. Putnam's classification of bonding and bridging social capital has also shed some light on differential modes of association (Putnam, 2000: 22-23). Many examples of high-ranking social connections in China such as networks of relatives and close friends may also fall into the category of bonding social capital as they are often pre-set and tend to be highly exclusive. Low-ranking connections may also become sources of bridging social capital in some ways as they tend to be inclusive of an extensive range of relational links. Academics following instrumental approaches to social capital have found that, in China, bonding social capital is often more useful than bridging social capital in terms of economic outcomes such as employment and social mobility (Li, 2011).
4. Arguably, the measures for maching and schmoozing overlap to some extent. Schmoozing, for example, are very likely to be cultivated in a formal organization. Putnam himself also mentioned that some social settings may fall into a gray area between the formal and the informal (Putnam, 2000: 94). Empirically, however, a number of studies have shown that the nature and implications of formal civic engagement and informal social life still are largely distinct (Putnam, 2000; Li and Marsh, 2008; Palmer et al., 2011). Accordingly, we would argue that it is reasonable to determine the two types of social involvement by distinguishing between formal associational participation and informal social connectedness.
5. An important point to grasp here is that some contextual factors are shown to be important determinants of political trust (Model 3 in Tables 3 and 4). In regard to the effects of control variables in these two models, we find that age is negatively associated

with political trust at both local and central levels. Women are significantly more likely than men to trust local government leaders, while the effect of gender is weak in the model for trusting central government leaders. In both analyses, CCP members are not surprisingly significantly more trusting than non-members. The effect of education is rather different in the two models. On the one hand, it displays a moderate association with trusting central government leaders. On the other hand, individuals whose qualification are degree or higher appear to have a significantly lower level of trust in local government leaders as compared to other respondents.

6. To explain this distinctive pattern, we pay closer attention to the specific types of formal organizations associated with machers among rural migrants and urban migrants. Compared to urban locals and new urbanites, we notice that rural migrants and urban migrants are nearly 10% less likely to report active involvement in ‘political’ and ‘community/neighbourhood’ organizations. While maching among urban locals and new urbanites are more common in these two types of organizations, most migrants who are machers tend to be members of ‘religious’, ‘alumni, or ‘occupational/professional’ organizations. The analysis is unable to test the effects of belonging to these organizations on trust in local government leaders. Therefore, further research is required to examine whether certain types of associational participation in China may improve or undermine political trust at local levels, as well as to investigate the relevant underlying mechanisms.

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Author biography

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Tables and Figures

Table 1a. Model fit of latent class measurement on social involvement

#classes	df	Loglikelihood	AIC	BIC	Entropy	LRT k-1 vs. k *p-value*
1	9	-10398.387	20814.773	20868.168	-	-
2	27	-9135.043	18308.085	18420.807	0.975	0.000
3	44	-8558.499	17074.997	17247.046	0.911	0.000
4	61	-8438.533	16965.066	17136.442	0.811	0.075
5	78	-8406.112	16951.764	17191.565	0.551	0.016

Table 1b. Estimated size of the latent classes and the conditional probabilities of membership (N=5,800)

	Latent class			
	1	2	3	4
Relative size (%)	0.358	0.501	0.052	0.089
Political	0.001	0.005	0.459	0.201
Community/neighbourhood	0.002	0.048	0.367	0.312
Social services	0.000	0.015	0.045	0.391
Social movement	0.000	0.071	0.357	0.073
Religious	0.000	0.002	0.212	0.255
Alumni	0.001	0.014	0.181	0.096
Trade Union	0.000	0.003	0.278	0.025
Occupational/professional	0.000	0.090	0.142	0.006
Leisure, entertainment, and sports	0.000	0.068	0.075	0.397
Visiting with relatives who do not live with you	0.000	0.518	0.008	0.193
Visiting with friends or acquaintances	0.001	0.682	0.051	0.321
Socialising or hanging out with neighbours	0.000	0.357	0.011	0.276
Socialising or hanging out with friends or other people	0.003	0.675	0.017	0.339

Note: Data from CGSS 2012. Shaded cells are conditional probabilities greater than 0.300

Table 2. Multinomial logistic regression coefficients for types of social involvement (base group: 'inactive')

	Schmoozing	Maching	All-round
Hukou status			
Rural migrants	0.563**	0.172	0.086
New urbanites	0.271	0.829***	0.598**
Urban migrants	0.258	0.012	0.423*
Urban locals	0.426*	0.702**	0.660**
Age group			
18 to 30	0.400*	-0.417*	0.157
31 to 45	-0.311*	0.282	0.125
46 to 60	-0.342*	0.513**	0.060
Gender			
Female	0.573**	-0.742***	-0.442*
Partnership			
Unpartnered	0.018	0.287	0.215
CCP member			
Yes	0.108	1.498***	1.210***
Educational qualifications			
Degree or above	0.077	1.889***	1.712***
Senior high	0.816***	1.455***	1.280***
Junior high	0.470*	0.551**	0.873***
Occupation			
Service	0.389*	1.017***	0.995***
Routine non-manual	0.411*	0.685**	0.742***
Manual	-0.003	0.196	0.186
Other	-0.116	-0.203	-0.011
Home ownership			
Homeowners	-0.098	0.521*	0.122
Constant	-1.575***	-3.999***	-3.712***
Pseudo R^2		0.120	
N		5,802	

Note: Data from CGSS 2012. Reference groups are rural residents, 61 or above, male, partnered, non-CCP members, illiterate or with elementary education, and are agricultural workers and Other.*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table 3. Binary logistic regression coefficients of trust in local government leaders: overall effects of *hukou* status and social involvement

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hukou status (ref: rural residents)			
Rural migrants	-0.403**	-0.195	-0.068
New urbanites	-0.501***	-0.412***	-0.297*
Urban migrants	-0.489***	-0.396***	-0.301*
Urban locals	-0.443***	-0.372*	-0.120
Forms of social involvement (ref: inactive)			
Schmoozing	0.012	0.078	0.098
Maching	0.213	0.211	0.176
All-round	0.108	0.103	0.115
Control variables	No	Yes	Yes
Interaction effects	No	No	Yes
Constant	0.604***	0.619***	0.577***
Pseudo R^2	0.012	0.040	0.043
N	5,816	5,802	5,802

Note: Data from CGSS 2012. Control variables are age group, gender, partnership, CCP membership, educational qualifications, and social class. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

Table 4. Binary logistic regression coefficients of trust in central government leaders: overall effects of *hukou* status and social involvement

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Hukou status			
Rural migrants	-0.567***	-0.460**	-0.296*
New urbanites	-0.580***	-0.489**	-0.316*
Urban migrants	-0.898***	-0.703***	-0.597***
Urban locals	-0.744***	-0.632**	-0.583***
Forms of social involvement			
Schmoozing	0.234	0.257	0.236
Maching	0.427**	0.513***	0.491**
Both	0.198	0.308**	0.334**
Control variables	No	Yes	Yes
Interaction effects	No	No	Yes
Constant	1.171***	2.206***	2.091***
Pseudo R^2	0.020	0.044	0.049
N	5,816	5,802	5,802

Note: Data from CGSS 2012 Control variables are age groups, gender, partnership, CCP membership, educational qualifications, and social class. *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

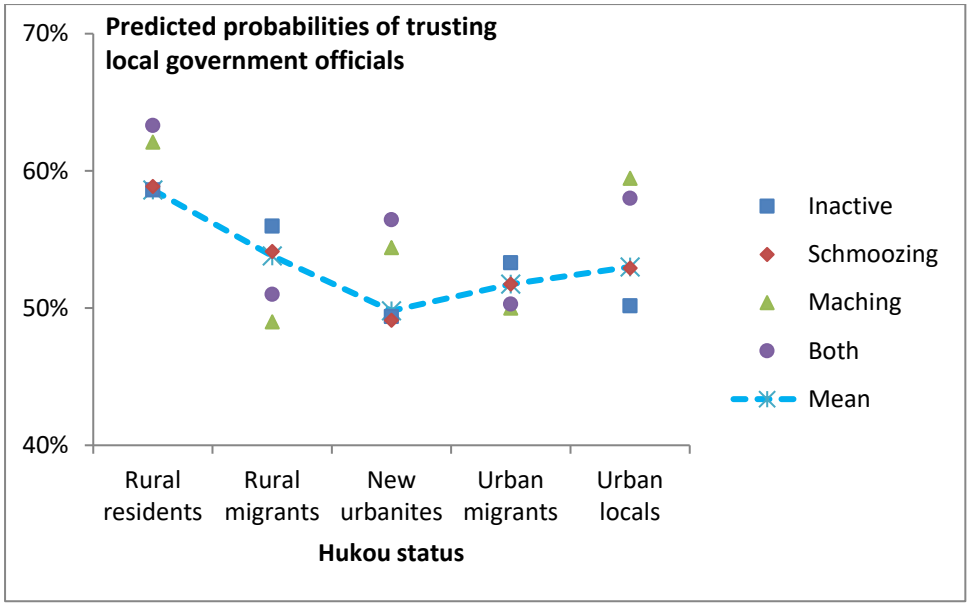

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities of trusting local government leaders according to *hukou* status and type of social involvement

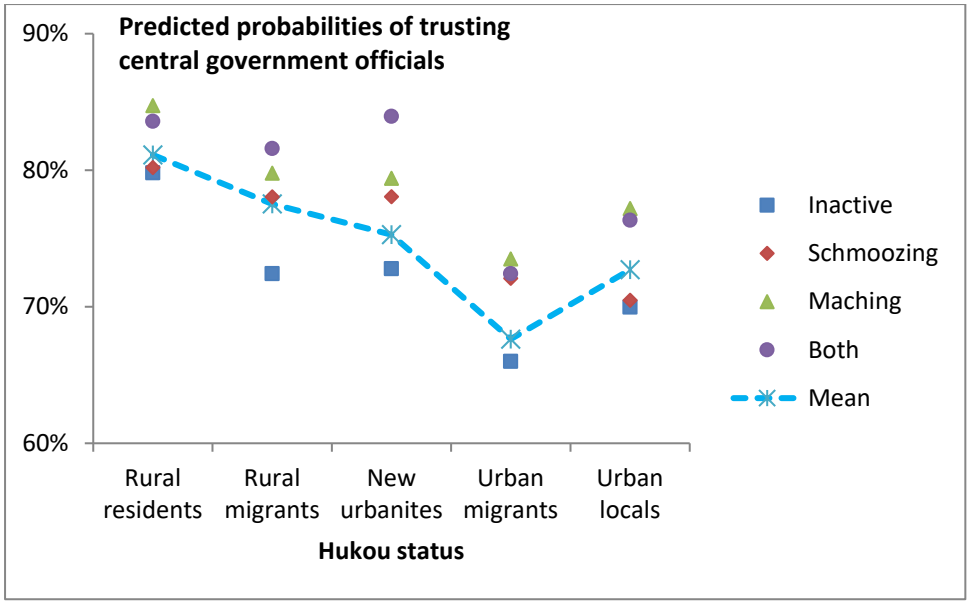

Figure 2. Predicted probabilities of trusting central government leaders according to *hukou* status and type of social involvement