



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Public Opinion on a Foreign Government: Paraguayan Attitudes Towards the Chinese Government

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Introduction

- **Research question:** What affects Paraguayan attitudes towards the Chinese government?
- **Motivation:** Chinese investment in LAC region has increased. Paraguay is the only South American country to recognize Taiwan. Previous scholarship has not yet explored Paraguayan opinions on China

Main Hypotheses

- **H1:** Support for democracy -> lower trust in the Chinese government
 - Scholars argue that individuals are more likely to approve of countries with similar governing styles
- **H2:** More economic concern (at the state and individual level) -> higher trust in China
 - Scholars argue that prioritizing the economy -> trust major powers

References: [Nincic and Russett 1979; Morgenstern and Bohigues 2021]

Other Hypotheses

- **H3:** Higher attention to media leads to higher trust in the Chinese government
 - Scholarship shows that mass media in Paraguay has shunned China and supported Taiwan
- **H4:** Leaning right on ideology will lead to higher levels of trust in the Chinese government.
 - Scholars argue that right leaning parties in LAC -> lower trust in China

References: [Ribeiro, Burian, and Urdinez 2022; Morgenstern and Bohigues 2021; Carreras 2017]

Data

- 2023 AmericasBarometer national survey of Paraguay conducted by LAPOP Lab at Vanderbilt University

Key Variables

- **Dependent variable:**
 - Trust in the Chinese government (1-4 scale, higher values = more trust)
- **Independent variables:**
 - *Support for democracy measures:* (1) Support for democracy scale (0-1); (2) U.S. model versus China model (0,1); (3) Trust in the Russian government (0-1)
 - *Economic factors:* MIP is economic (0,1); levels of wealth (0-1)
 - *Attention to media:* Frequency of news consumption (0-1)
 - *Ideology:* Left-right self-placement (0-1)

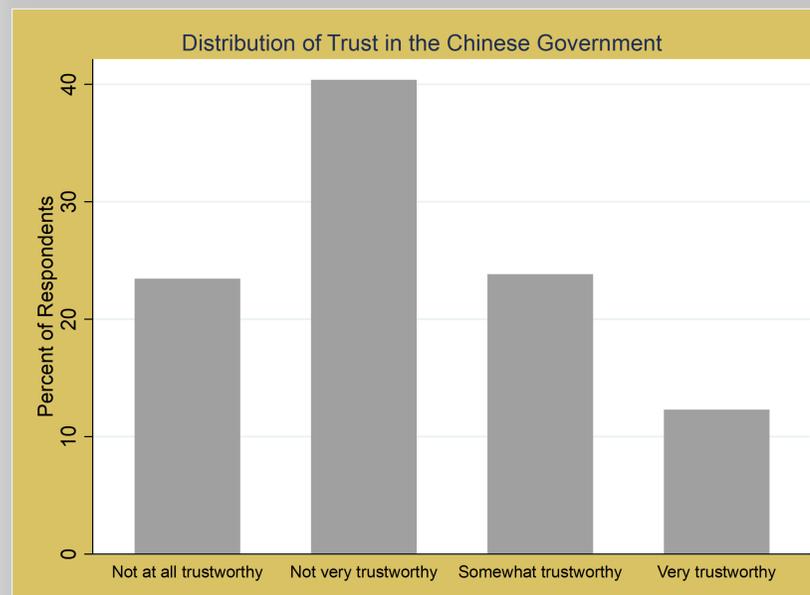


Figure 1: Distribution of Trust in China for Paraguayan's who have an opinion on the Chinese government

Results/Discussion

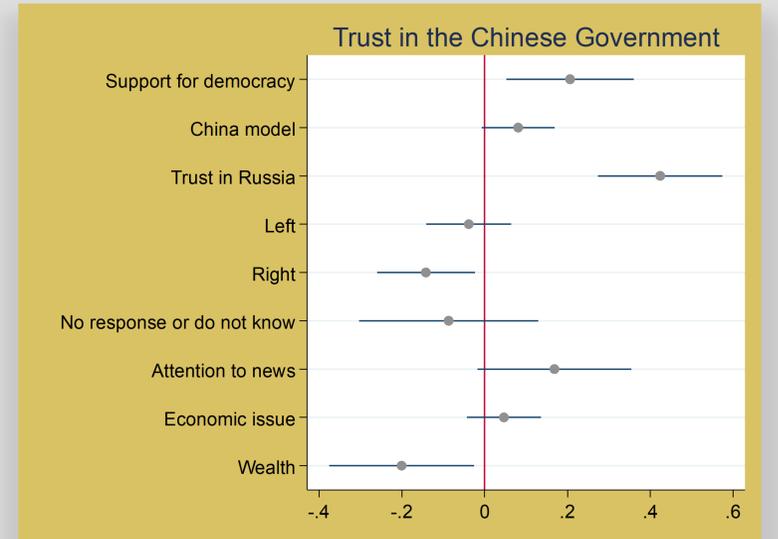


Figure 2: OLS Regression model with control variables (p-value < 0.05)

- **H1:** Some consistency with the hypothesis, support for democracy is associated with higher trust in China but trust in Russia increases trust in China
- **H2:** Somewhat consistent with the hypothesis. More economically vulnerability predicts higher levels of trust, but having economic concern shows null results
- **H3:** No support for the hypothesis, attention to media shows null results
- **H4:** Supports the hypothesis, leaning right is associated with lower levels of trust

Conclusion

- Public opinion is important to research because it could shape Latin America's role in U.S.-China tension
 - Future research should consider why support for democracy increases trust in China
 - Future research should look to understand high levels of non-response to questions on trust in China
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