



Cultural socialization and the formation of trust in others

Wu, Cary "Cultural socialization and the formation of trust in others" *CRDCN research-policy snapshots*. January 2022

What the researchers did

The researcher investigated when do people to trust in others. Using migration as a "natural experiment", the researcher considers whether growing up in a low trust place and then migrating to a high trust place would change migrants' trust and vice versa. The researcher used the General Social Survey (2014) and measured trust using the survey item that asks people's *trust in strangers*.

What the researchers found

The researcher found that in Canada, trust is lower in Quebec. Quebecers who emigrated to live in other regions of the country continued to show a lower level of trust. English Canadians who migrated to live in Quebec remained more trusting than local natives. This is especially true among migrants who migrated as an adult. The pattern suggests that an individual's trust in others is learned early in life and learned trust persists into adulthood.

RDC Datasets used

Statistics Canada's General Social Survey (2014)

Policy areas this research can inform

- Children and youth
- Education, training and learning
- Immigration and ethnocultural diversity
- Population and demography
- Society and community
- Statistical methods

Policy implications of this research

This research yields two general policy implications. First, since trust matters for individuals' socioeconomic status and well-being as well as for economic growth and social cohesion at the societal level, the finding that not all Canadians trust equally suggests a new direction to understand and address inequality in Canadian society – that is, to promote trust for all. Second, the finding that trust is acquired at an early age from cultural socialization and remains relatively stable in adulthood suggests that policy interventions to promote trust and address trust inequality will need to pay attention to how people are socialized differently early in life. This means considering differences, for example, in parental influence and schooling.

Read the full article

Wu, C. (2021). How stable is generalized trust? Internal migration and the stability of trust among Canadians. *Social Indicators Research*, 153(1), 129-147.

